

## Suggestions towards Reunion.<sup>1</sup>

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NO subject is to-day more prominently before the Church than that of Reunion. Not alone that the external pressure of unbelief and indifferentism, especially in our great cities, is forcing Christians to consider the possibilities of united action; nor even that in the present increase of missionary opportunity the immense waste of energy and the scandal of religious rivalry are more keenly felt than ever, though these are among the causes. But the increase, we may believe, of Christian charity, the broader outlook of modern times, and the fresh impetus of the Pan-Anglican Congress, have turned all minds in the direction of Christian unity. No. 58 of the Lambeth resolutions repeats the words of the last Conference (1897): "Every opportunity should be taken to emphasize the *Divine purpose of visible unity* amongst Christians as a fact of revelation." The Dean of Westminster's now famous sermon, "The Vision of Unity," is an eloquent appeal to the enlightenment and the charity of twentieth-century Christianity. He claims there that the Anglican Communion has "been set by Providence in the middle place, between the old and the new, for the very purpose of reconciliation." Nor is the desire for unity, as sometimes is supposed, confined to our own Church and Communion. Presbyterian reunion is occupying a large place in the plans of the Christians of Scotland at the present time. And further, there have appeared in the course of the last two years some very remarkable utterances from Presbyterians, notably one from Dr. Archibald Fleming in the *Nineteenth Century and After* of March, 1909, hailing with joy the increased possibilities of Catholic reunion, and one from Dr. Stalker in the *CHURCHMAN* of July of the same year. With all this, and more, before us it

<sup>1</sup> A paper read before the Liverpool Clerical Society.

is natural to wish to consider again the position of our own Church with regard to this question.

We turn first to the Report of the Lambeth Conference, and there the evidence is of a doubtful nature. While insisting upon the need for action, the Report declares that "In all partial projects of reunion and intercommunion the final attainment of the Divine purpose should be kept in view as our object; and that care should be taken to do what will advance the reunion of the *whole* of Christendom, and to abstain from doing anything that will retard or prevent it." After this follow sections on various Churches: Orthodox Eastern Church, Separate Churches of the East, the Latin Communion, the Separate Churches of the West (*i.e.*, the Church of Holland and the Old Catholics of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria), the *Unitas Fratrum* (Moravian Church), the Scandinavian Churches (with almost exclusive reference to the Episcopal Church of Sweden), and lastly (four pages and two appendices out of fifteen pages) Presbyterian and other Non-Episcopal Churches.

One cannot but be struck by the proportions of this Report. The comparatively small space allotted to home reunion is a noteworthy and disappointing feature. For we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that reunion with many of the sections of the Church treated in detail here, is of comparatively little importance, and, one may add, would be of problematical value if attained. That the union of the whole Church is the true ideal no one will deny; but after centuries of division we may be excused for looking with suspicion on projects so wide that they appear really more academic than practical. Not to speak of the references to the smaller Communion of Old Catholics, the *Unitas Fratrum*, etc., it is difficult to believe that much can be gained from discussing the reasons which kept the Armenian Church away from the Council of Chalcedon, or even that the taint of Apatharto-docetic heresy among the East Syrians or the Monophysite tendencies of the Syrian Jacobites are matters of vital import to the Church of England. Of the Orthodox

Church of the East we in England know little, and that little does not lead us to suppose that reunion with that Church is really a matter of practical politics at present. It will be a later century than the twentieth which will see the Slav races on any terms of close relationship with Anglo-Saxons, whether in forms of government or of religious worship.

Nor can we believe that at present the time is ripe for discussing intercommunion with the Latin Church. We in England (the majority, at least) feel that reunion with Rome is a dream. Official Rome has not scrupled to tell us so (*Apostolicæ Curæ*, 1896).

It is, indeed, true that there is a sound of "going in the tree-tops," and some of us may live to see official Rome shaken to her foundations. Tyrrell in England, Abbé Loisy and Sabatier in France, Fogazzaro in Italy, are only the signs of a far-reaching movement of freer thought. The Roman Church is stirring uneasily in her age-long sleep. There may yet be an awakening, and if it comes it should come soon.

But these are speculations, and our concern is with practical matters.

The important matter is our attitude to the separated Communion at home—the Presbyterians and Nonconformists—and in particular, as standing nearest to us in point of Church order, the Presbyterians. As the Dean of Westminster points out, of the four conditions necessary to reunion laid down by the Lambeth Conference in 1888—*i.e.*, agreement upon the Holy Scriptures, the two great Creeds, the two great Sacraments, and the historic Episcopate—three are found in the Presbyterian bodies. The fourth, "the historic Episcopate," is paralleled by the system of presbyteral government, a trace of which, be it remembered, remains in the form of ordination retained in our own Church. The question for us, then, is, Is the want of Bishops to be a final bar to reunion?

It is true that Presbyterianism, like Protestantism, is a name of varied signification, and that there are bodies claiming that title which have in some respects deviated very considerably

from Catholic standards. But if we take the Church of Scotland, representing as it does the best part of the religious life of Scotland, and standing, as the Established Church of that country, in a peculiar relation to the Anglican Communion, we shall find much that is surprisingly hopeful for reunion in the history and accepted disciplinary statements of this branch of Presbyterianism.

Not, indeed, that the main body of the Church of Scotland has as yet shown any very marked wish for corporate reunion with ourselves. No doubt ignorance and traditional prejudice have as much to answer for north of the Tweed as south. A well-known minister of that Church told the writer not long ago that, though many leading Presbyterians would welcome reunion, yet in the main body there was still a considerable fear of Episcopacy. But if we turn to the authoritative documents of the Scotch Church, what view do we find of Episcopacy and Orders generally?

Firstly, we find that Calvin himself, the founder of modern Presbyterianism, takes a high view of the due succession of Orders. He makes it quite plain that in his view Presbyterian Orders were not a new creation, but derived their commission from the ancient Orders of the unreformed Church. He refers to the unreformed Church as retaining the "foundations" and the "ruins" of the true visible Church. Though the "First Book of Discipline," it is true, referred to the imposition of hands as non-essential to ordination, yet this book was never sanctioned by the "Estates"; and the second book, twenty years later (1581), restored the true form. And there is good evidence for believing that even in the intervening period imposition of hands was customary, while, in 1645, the form of ordination agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly distinctly enjoins it. Apart from the form, there is no reasonable doubt that from the first the Presbyterian Church (Scots) has insisted upon a duly ordered ministry and succession with adequate safeguards. Knox and the other leaders of the reforming party were not newly commissioned by the "Congre-

gation"; they were regarded as drawing their commission from their original Orders.

How high a view of the ministry Calvin himself held is obvious from the chapter (iii.) on the subject in the "Fourth Book of the Institutes." In Section 2 he says of the ministry: "Whoever studies to abolish this order and kind of government of which we speak, or disparages it as of minor importance, plots the devastation, or rather the ruin and destruction, of the Church. For neither are the light and heat of the sun not meat and drink, so necessary to sustain and cherish the present life, as is the Apostolical and pastoral office to preserve a Church in the earth."

Though Calvin makes very much of the "consent and approbation" of the people as necessary to valid ordination, yet he allows that ordination itself is conferred by the imposition of hands. In § 16 (ch. iii.) we find: "It is certain that when the Apostles appointed anyone to the ministry they used no other ceremony than the laying on of hands." And "Lastly, it is to be observed that it was not the whole people, but only pastors, who laid hands on ministers, though it is uncertain whether or not several always laid their hands," etc.

From these passages it appears that, far from depreciating due ordination, Calvin was anxious to restore what he believed to be the full primitive form of it; and moreover that he—and with him the Presbyterian Church—accepts the Apostolical Succession through the old Episcopal Orders, if not as a necessity, at least as a matter of high importance in the discipline of the Church.

Secondly, with regard to the actual offices of Bishop and Presbyter. It may be freely admitted that Calvin took an uncompromising view on this subject. He held that the two offices were in reality one. He asserted the Divine right of Presbytery as eagerly as any High Churchman now holds the Divine right of Episcopacy. But it is more than doubtful whether his views in this matter represent the thought of Presbyterian Scotland to-day. It is quite certain that they

do not represent the attitude of Knox and the earlier Scotch reformers towards Episcopacy. While the question of early *ἐπίσκοποι* and *πρεσβύτεροι* is still not completely settled, and probably will never be so, and while Lightfoot's great name stands for the belief in the gradual development of the Episcopate out of some form of presbyteral government, we cannot deny to Presbyterians the right to their view of Church history. But the Church of Scotland, at least, is not pledged to the theory of the "Divine right" of the Presbytery. John Knox at one time ministered in an English parish, was offered an English bishopric (Rochester), and appointed one of King Edward VI.'s chaplains. Quite recently a Moderator of the Church of Scotland addressed to the General Assembly in Edinburgh (1907) the following words: "For the alienation (between Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches in Scotland) Presbyterians cannot be blamed. *They* set up no exclusive claim; *they* do not unchurch their brethren. Most of them would admit that the precise form of Church government is a matter of minor importance; that the most efficient is the most Divine; that one form suits one nation, as Presbytery Scotland and Episcopacy England," etc.

If this be the position of the Presbyterian Church towards Episcopacy and the succession of the ministry, what is our position? How far are we prepared to go to meet this view? What theory of the ministry is truly that of the English Church? No responsible person imagines that the Church of Scotland would approach the question of reunion or intercommunion on any terms except those of complete equality. Still less is it possible to suppose that the Church of England would surrender any part of her heritage. But on what grounds do we put forward episcopal government?—on grounds of expediency or of necessity? Do we make due Apostolical Succession through Bishops necessary to the validity of the Sacraments? These are questions which lie at the root of all discussions of reunion, not alone with Presbyterians, but with any non-episcopal reformed Communion or Nonconformist Church.

It is undoubted that there is a tendency in certain sections of the English Church to insist upon the Divine rights of Episcopacy in such a way as logically to involve the denial of a true ministry to Churches with a different form of government. This view is latent, we believe, in such a phrase as that of the Lambeth Report : "Anglican Churchmen must contend for a *valid* ministry as they understand it." Similar also are the Bishop of Salisbury's guarded phrases about a ministry "recognized as *valid* by the whole Church" (*Guardian*, August 26, 1909 (?)). It is all too painfully apparent in a letter written not long ago by the Vicar of a certain city church, in which he plainly intimated that for an English Churchman to preach in a Nonconformist place of worship was, to his mind, "to *degrade*" his Orders.

On this view Episcopacy is not the highest Order in the Church for purposes of government and preservation of doctrine : rather, in Canon Beeching's words, the Bishop is a necessary link in the chain by which the Divine gift of grace for administering valid Sacraments is transmitted from the Apostles to modern days." This view is fatal to all hope of reunion with Nonconformist and Presbyterian Churches. So long as the Anglican Church does not clearly repudiate it, all negotiations are in vain.

But is it the view of the Church of England? We think not. Good evidence can be adduced from history, we believe, to prove that it is not the view of the Reformers, nor of the greatest leaders of thought in the English Church. In fact, it is a comparatively modern growth.

The studied moderation of Article XXXVI. of Articles of Religion cannot possibly be supposed to pronounce against the validity of Orders other than episcopal : it merely defends those of the Anglican Communion. The prohibitory clause in the Ordinal dates from 1662 : before that date we have Bishop Cosin's authority (in a letter, date 1650, cited Goode's "Rule of Faith," vol. ii., p. 293, second edition) for saying that the Church of England admitted validity of ordinations in foreign Protestant churches. His words are : "If at any time a

minister so ordained in these French churches came to incorporate himself in ours and to receive . . . a cure of souls . . . in the Church of England (as I have known some of them to have so done of late, and can instance in many other before my time), our Bishops did not reordain him to his charge, as they must have done if his former ordination here in France had been void."

The clause introduced in 1662 merely took away this liberty of access to our Church without episcopal ordination. It surely could not go back upon the principle admitted for so long in practice.

Hooker, in his discussion of Episcopacy (Book vii., chap. xiv., § 11), says: "Now, whereas hereupon some do infer that no ordination can stand but only such as is made by Bishops, which have had their ordination likewise by other Bishops before them, till we come to the very Apostles of Christ themselves . . . to this we answer that there may sometimes be very just and sufficient reason to allow ordination made without a Bishop. The whole Church visible being the true original subject of all power, it hath not *ordinarily* allowed any other than Bishops alone to ordain; howbeit as the ordinary course is ordinarily in all things to be observed, so it may be in some cases not unnecessary that we decline from the ordinary ways. Men may be extraordinarily yet allowably two ways admitted unto spiritual functions in the Church. One is when God Himself doth of Himself raise up any whose labour He useth without requiring that men should authorize them. . . . Another extraordinary kind of vocation is when the exigence of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the Church, which otherwise we would willingly keep; where the Church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath nor can have possibly a Bishop to ordain. . . . And therefore we are not simply without exception to urge a lineal descent of power from the Apostles by continued succession of Bishops in every effectual ordination." It is noteworthy that in this passage Hooker appears to have in mind Beza's ordination by Calvin; he may

therefore be clearly seen not to hold the view that the validity of ordination is dependent upon an episcopal succession.

Again, though it is certain that the Caroline divines took a "higher" view of the claims of Episcopacy, yet even they do not deny the validity of other ordination nor assert the absolute necessity of succession. Laud, in his conference with Fisher the Jesuit (§ 39, vii.), denies the necessity of "continued visible succession," or the existence of any promise that it should be uninterruptedly continued in any Church. He proceeds to say: "For succession in the general I shall say this: it is a great happiness where it may be had visible and continued, and a great conquest over the mutability of this present world. But I do not find any one of the ancient Fathers that makes local, personal, visible, and continued succession a necessary mark or sign of the true Church in any one place." Bishop Cosin (*op. cit. supra*), while censuring Protestant churches of France and Geneva for their "defect of Episcopacy," says: "I dare not take upon me to condemn or determine a nullity of their own ordinations against them." He acknowledges that, in face of passages in St. Jerome, Jewel, Field, Hooker, and others, he cannot say that the French ministers, "for want of episcopal ordination, have no Order at all."

These quotations, we fear, are somewhat lengthy, and might be much extended. It is necessary, however, to show that the true spirit of the English Church is not that exclusive spirit too often manifested to-day with regard to non-episcopal reformed Churches. Indeed, it is very little in accord with the best traditions of our Church. Bishop Cosin recommended those who asked his opinion to receive the Holy Communion if need be at the hands of French Protestant ministers rather than at those of Romanists. Archbishop Usher expressed his affectionate willingness to share the Blessed Sacrament with Dutch or French Protestants.

If, then, this is the true position of the Church of England from an historical point of view, we may reinforce it by another consideration. One of the great changes which has come over

modern thought may be described as the change from the static to the dynamic view of life. Indeed, in all our thinking since Darwin the idea of organic development holds a large place. This applies to the Church as truly as to any other institution which is the manifestation of a vital force. In vital organic development many things are secondary; one thing is primary—the vital force itself. *So is it in the Church.* We must not confound any form of government with the Spirit of life which animates the whole body. Newman Smyth, in his remarkable book, "Passing Protestantism and Coming Catholicism," has an image which aptly illustrates this point. He says: "A biological analogy may aid us in determining the natural relation of Orders of the ministry to the organic life of the Church. Life begins with a single cell. For the perpetuation of life it is not necessary that different organs should be developed. . . . We might say that the life is in the whole organism rather than dependent upon any part of it. . . . Now, the Orders of the ministry in the Church resemble the organs of a body," etc.

The point made is a true one, though, of course, it might be pressed too far. The primary and essential matter is the immanent Spirit of life. This it is which preserves the true continuity of the Church. This it is which expresses itself in various forms and Orders—at one time in an episcopal, at another in a presbyteral form of polity. Different forms of administration may, then, be held to be but varied functions of the life of the Church, and, as the Presbyterian Moderator suggested, "the most efficient will be the most Divine." If at one of those doubtful points in history it should some day appear that the historic succession of our Orders did after all break down, we shall not be dismayed. The life is not in the historic succession—the life is in the Church itself. Is not this what Hooker himself teaches in his saying that "the whole Church visible is the true original subject of all power"? That power and life still rests with the whole body, and not with any organ, however important or necessary.

In view of all this, we must admit, as Canon Beeching said

in a sermon already quoted above, that "It is not (the Prayer-Book or) the Ordinal, nor the historic Episcopate, which stands in the way of reunion, but a certain doctrine of the Episcopate." But if, as we believe, the Church of England is not pledged to this doctrine, and has not, in the main, held it since the Reformation, the first and most important practical step towards reunion is to rid our minds of it. To explain clearly that our Church upholds the "historic Episcopate" as a true and Apostolical Order of the Church, but not as the only possible channel of valid ordination. Were this once made unmistakably clear, we might approach the non-episcopal Churches with genuine overtures of intercommunion. We might then attempt to arrive at some satisfactory definition of a "charismatic" ministry under different forms from our own.

It will be clear that the first necessity from our point of view is full *recognition* of the ministry of non-episcopal Churches, or, to return to our original proposition, of the Presbyterian Church. Recognition must obviously precede reunion. If we are ready to admit the validity of the Orders and the Sacraments of the Presbyterian Church; to see in their form of government a parallel development with our own; to recognize that, whatever view of history we may believe, yet God had unmistakably set His seal upon their work and their churchmanship, *then* we may proceed to the second practical step towards reunion.

That second step, we venture to believe, would be the holding of authorized conferences of representatives from both Churches, not so much with a view to drawing up schemes of reunion, but rather of discussing at close quarters our differences. We must remember that it is not schemes of reunion that we want at this stage, but a better understanding.

If the two great Christian bodies could by this means discover the narrowness of the line that divides them, and could see how far from being primary or essential are their differences, surely the time would soon arrive when *intercommunion* would be possible. We may even foresee that in the future some

such expedient as that suggested by the Lambeth Report—consecrations to the Episcopate *per saltum*—might be the means of bridging over the remaining difference of government between the Communions. But even if this never came about with regard to Presbyterians, if to the end the Church of the future is to include more forms of government than one, is that a reason for setting aside so great a hope? Can we not believe that, under the influence of growing knowledge and a toleration which is already full grown everywhere, except in a few extreme sections of the Churches, recognition might develop into intercommunion, and that again into true brotherly fellowship and co-operation?

The results to be hoped from such a regained unity are great indeed. Not alone would the two Churches of which we speak benefit immensely by the gain of each other's spiritual possessions. The process, once begun, would be both an augury and a vantage-ground for wider reunion. We can well imagine that from such a united Church the Nonconformist Churches would be willing in their time to accept some form of ordination, so it were offered to them on grounds of unity and regularity, and not of validity. Even further than this, Presbyterianism would form the connecting link with those Reformed Churches of the Continent, whose development is rather Presbyterian than Episcopal.

And in matters of doctrine, too, the gain to the Churches, and through them to the world, would be immense. There is a sturdy common sense, a fresh and accurate scholarship, at work in many of these Churches, which only needs the steadying influence of a more central Catholic doctrine to make it the most hopeful and important symptom of modern thought.

And, on the other hand, it will hardly be denied that much of our Anglican theology suffers from the lack of fresh thoughts; it needs restatement in the light of the wider knowledge. The truth remains with us, but we are too easily content with traditional forms and antiquated terminology. Intercommunion with some of the non-episcopal Communions would bring our

Catholic doctrine into touch with the most vigorous and earnest thought of to-day, and Christian theology—too often supposed to have had its day—would take a fresh lease of life, and be seen to be both God's revelation of truth and also the highest and best explanation of the universe that man's mind is capable of.



## The Moral Attitude of Spenser and Milton.

By MARY BRADFORD WHITING.

**A**MONGST that large class of persons who pass judgment upon writers without having read their works, the idea is frequently met with that a sharp line of demarcation divides the moral attitude of Spenser and Milton—that, to put it briefly, the first is the poet of worldliness, the second of other-worldliness.

How far does a study of their poems bear out this opinion, and especially of those two poems which are so often compared, and even more often contrasted, the "Faerie Queene" and "Paradise Lost"?

It is quite true that these two great poets did not look at life from the same standpoint, nor couch their interpretation of it in the same terms; but though the "stern, God-fearing spirit of Judah" of which Heine writes, is so persistently present in the one, we are not therefore justified in assuming its absence from the other.

So far as the actual circumstances of their lives go, there is a strong resemblance between the two men. They were both born in London—Edmund Spenser in the year 1552, John Milton in the year 1608; both were of gentle, though not of noble birth; both were educated at London schools—Spenser at Merchant Taylors', Milton at St. Paul's; both went to Cambridge—Spenser to Pembroke, Milton to Christ's—and neither of them seem to have met with much appreciation from the University authorities; both wrote some charming and well-