

THE
Church Review

FOUNDED 1848

EDITED BY THE REV. HENRY MASON BAUM

VOLUME LVII

APRIL, 1890

PUBLISHED IN

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THE
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VOLUME LVII. * APRIL, 1890

Christian Reunion.

On the Basis Proposed by the Lambeth Conference.

WE thought it would be, not only a courteous act, but that it was due to representative men of the chief Christian Communions in this country, to offer them an opportunity to say in the pages of the CHURCH REVIEW how far they were willing to accept the basis for Christian Reunion proposed by the Lambeth Conference. Invitations to write were sent out to several leading clergymen of each Communion here represented, and we are glad to state that they were accepted, with but three or four exceptions.

Before entering upon the discussion of the basis proposed for Christian Reunion, we give so much of the Report of the Lambeth Conference of 1888 as relates to the subject.

Representative bishops and priests of the English and American Churches will reply, in our July issue, to these distinguished contributors to the great subject now under fraternal consideration. The replies will be written for the purpose of giving more definite information upon the points raised in these articles and not for the sake of controversy.

EDITOR.

ENCYCLICAL LETTER.

TO THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS, GREETING: —

WE, Archbishops, Bishops Metropolitan, and other Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church, in full communion with the Church of England, one hundred and forty-five in number, all having superintendence over Dioceses or lawfully commissioned to exercise Episcopal functions therein, assembled from divers parts

wife, to neglected children, to the bedridden, to those in sickness and in sorrow, to all who are looking forward to death, to the wanderer, the vagrant, the beggar, the outcast. As the most difficult work of all, prayers will be offered and opportunities watched, to discover a way in which the Gospel may find an entrance into the dwellings of the rich and proud who will not wait on the public ministrations of the Word.

This work may be begun by a few ministers agreeing to divide their district among them. As it advances, the country will come to be divided into districts, — let them be called parishes after the ancient usage, — and the whole land may be covered.

This plan is easily understood, and is perfectly practicable. It needs only a willingness on the part of ministers in order to carry it out. It interferes in no way with the rights and privileges of any Church or any individual minister. It secures one of the great advantages of the union of Churches, that CHRIST'S salvation be known to every one.

In unfolding this scheme I claim no originality, I take no credit to myself. The plan has occurred to hundreds, and has been carried out in a few places. What is needed now is to have it executed over the country. It was adopted by the early Church before it was divided into sects. It seems to me to be the only plan available in the present divided state of the Church. It has been continued in every country in Europe; let it be adopted in America. It can be started in any one district; it is capable of being spread over the whole country.

Being so long a parish minister with fourteen hundred communicants, I am prepared to enter into details. But my present desire is to have conferences where measures may be proposed and adopted for wisely carrying out the plan.

JAMES McCOSH.

THE REV. JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D. [PRESBYTERIAN], NEW YORK CITY.

EDITOR OF THE CHURCH REVIEW, SIR:

THE phrase "Christian Reunion" is, in one point of view, vague. Is a union like that of the Evangelical Alliance contemplated? In what sense is the proposed result a "reunion"? Is organic union contemplated?

To Article 1 of course there can be no objection. As to Article 2, explanation is needed as to the meaning of "the Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol." The Nicene Creed I do not think a "sufficient statement of the Christian Faith" in our time. We are bound, I think, to have a creed that discriminates between great truths and current errors. We are bound, I think, to embody in our creeds a protest against mediæval substitutes for the truth, still urged over a part of Christendom.

So, as to Article 3, the question comes up: Can some administer the sacraments, teaching that their efficacy is dependent on the minister, while others in the same "Christian Reunion" teach that their efficacy does not depend on anything in them nor in him that doth administer them? This is, it seems to me, a vital matter, as is recognized within the Anglican Church at this day.

With regard to Article 4, the words "Historic Episcopate" do not define enough. One large denomination claims that the "bishops and deacons" of Philippi, the former being elders or presbyters without any superior, constitute the "Historic Episcopate." Is this claim admitted by the Lambeth Conference? Our Methodist brethren, in America, elect bishops. Does the Conference propose to regard them on the same foundation as the Anglican bishops? Are archbishops included in the "Historic Episcopate"? Again, the word "historic" is too vague for a definition so vital as is here involved. How much of time does "historic" include? There are many things for which "historic" claims could be set up, which as Protestant New Testament Churches we could not accept. There is need of greater definiteness of statement.

Once more: One cannot, however anxious for a fitting display of the relations of all believers to GOD in CHRIST, and to one another in Him, ignore the antagonizing views regarding the "Catholic Church," which must be settled. Does the "Catholic Church" consist of "the Church of Rome, the Greek Church, and the Anglican Church"? Are the outside "Protestant religious bodies sects, so called from a Latin word 'to cut off,'" and is it to be held that "they have cut themselves off from the full fellowship of the Catholic Church"? Does the Lambeth Conference deny all this, and favor the receiving of their ministers, for example, as ministerial brethren? Or must they be somehow taken back into the "Catholic Church,"

and if so, in what way? Are their orders to be recognized, or is there to be devised some way of giving orders, say to the Methodist Episcopal bishops? If they have "abandoned the Catholic ministry, sacraments, and Liturgy," how are they to be restored?

These are only specimens of many questions that must arise, requiring more explicitness than Article 4 involves. Are "bishops" of the "Catholic Church," as defined above, the only officers having the right to ordain? Do such bishops "keep up the Church" by consecrating their successors to the "Episcopate," etc.? In other words, is the tenet of "Apostolic Succession" involved in, or excluded from, the basis of the Lambeth Conference?

But I fear my questions and difficulties will take too much of your space. The statement of these gives me pain; but Christians are bound to be true to the truth of things, and any show of union not based on actual harmony of beliefs is, for all the purposes of a spiritual Church, of little value.

I am always glad to co-operate with my brethren of the various Protestant Churches, and I would rejoice in the removal of obstacles to closer fellowship. To exchange pulpits with the Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, and others, has been a pleasure, and has also been a manifestation of oneness in great common aims. All action consistent with fidelity to vital truth, and with frank openness in the profession of unity, I would welcome thankfully.

Yours most truly,

J. HALL.

THE REV. LYMAN ABBOTT, D.D., LL.D. [CONGREGATIONALIST], EDITOR OF THE *Christian Union*, NEW YORK.

EDITOR OF THE CHURCH REVIEW, SIR:

IT can hardly be necessary for me to say that I am very earnestly in favor of all practicable measures for Christian union in Christian work, since I have been for over ten years the Editor of a paper whose title thoroughly indicates this to be one of the fundamental principles which it has endeavored to inculcate. I welcomed, therefore, most cordially the basis for Christian Reunion proposed by the Lambeth Conference in