

THE CHURCHMAN

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The Month.

The "Guardian" and Reunion. THE strong hold which the question of Reunion has taken upon the minds and aspirations of Churchmen receives a fresh illustration in the recent action of the *Guardian*. In its issues of October 10 and 17, it published a series of articles contributed by distinguished representatives of the Church of England and other Churches dealing with various aspects of the subject, each from his own point of view, and in so doing it has rendered distinct service to the cause. The contributors include men of most diverse views, and they write with perfect freedom and frankness, thereby enhancing the value of their articles as genuine attempts to find some solution of this very difficult problem. It would be too much to say that the solution has been found, but these articles represent an advance on the part of not a few of the writers, and leave the impression that the way is at last really opening out towards the consummation of a great ideal. The one point upon which the articles are disappointing is in relation to Episcopacy which, as we all know, is the rock upon which so many efforts in the past have been wrecked. But even here there are signs of a better understanding, although, as far as we have seen—and we are obliged to write before the publication of the second issue of the *Guardian*—there is a lack of definiteness on both sides; the *Churchman* does not sufficiently define his views of what is involved in the acceptance of "the historic episcopate"; the Presbyterian and Nonconformist, while being quite clear in regard to what he cannot accept, does not tell us precisely to what view of Episcopacy he can subscribe. This is a great loss, and the sooner Nonconformists give their attention to it the better. It will be remembered that Dr. Forsyth met the view indicated in the Second Interim Report of the Faith and Order Committee, with a

simple "This will not do," but he ought to have gone on to tell us what will do. Probably the definition in the Cheltenham Findings would come nearest to winning the favour of Nonconformists, but then how is it viewed by our High Church brethren?

It is certainly worth while to examine what some
 Views on
 Episcopacy. of these writers have to tell us about Episcopacy. Professor William A. Curtis, of Edinburgh University, speaking for Presbyterians, says he sees "no sign of weakening in our conviction that the presiding Bishop is merely *primus inter pares* or *senior frater*. So far from renouncing Episcopacy, or repudiating it, we distribute it among the Presbyters who minister, and share it in our courts with laymen selected to bear rule with us. A separate House of Bishops is not on our horizon, but an elective Episcopate, able to assert its wisdom and experience in the open counsels of our Church Courts through its gifts of inherent leadership and proved capacity, we would readily make room for and gladly trust, were the old quarrel thereby terminated and one of the old rents in the Seamless Garment thereby repaired. We have been, and remain, as jealous for the honour and continuity of our Orders, our Baptism, and our Communion as our Anglican neighbours. We have erred in our zeal and pride as they have done. We will not desert our fellow-Presbyterians to merge our life in another system that cannot be harmonised with theirs." These words have not exactly the ring of peace about them, but Professor Curtis, we are glad to see, ends upon a happier note. "If the movement so happily inaugurated by the Lambeth Recommendations, and furthered by the Reports of the recent Conferences between Anglican and Free Church representatives, goes forward, I cannot believe that Presbyterians will be found to lag behind in the path to brotherly reunion." The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, Secretary of the Baptist Union, dealing with the Second Interim Report, of which he was one of the signatories, writes more hopefully. He says it is in the third condition laid down in the Report that the solution really lies, viz., "that acceptance of the fact of Episcopacy, and not any theory as to its character, should be all that is asked for." "There are," says Mr. Shakespeare, "theories of Episcopacy which we who are Free Churchmen could not be asked to accept. For example, we do not believe that the existence of the Church depends upon

any one form of government, but it is the glorious comprehensiveness of the Church of England that it does not require the acceptance of any particular theory of Episcopacy. It unites its clergy and people together in the fact and not in the theory. Its scholars differ widely on the explanation, but all accept the fact." We do not know how far Mr. Shakespeare speaks for other Baptists, or for Nonconformists generally. It was this condition which Dr. Forsyth said would not do, but Mr. Shakespeare is convinced that it "is simply an idle dream, it is a waste of time and breath to seek the reconciliation apart from Episcopacy, and if it could be achieved the result would be a more disastrous division than that which was healed. Is it worth while then? Our answer will depend upon the value we set on Christian Unity, and whether we regard it as a pearl of great price." There the matter rests, but we cannot but wish that some representative of the High Anglican School would tell us frankly and freely where he stands in relation to Episcopacy in its bearing upon the Reunion question.

There are also other aspects of the question dealt with by the *Guardian* writers which claim attention. **Reunion and Self-Government.** Dr. William Temple, the apostle of the "Life and Liberty" Movement, claims that self-government for the Church is "an indispensable preliminary" to Reunion. There are sanguine souls among us who believe that self-government on the lines laid down by the Church and State Report is already within the sphere of practical politics, and may be realised soon. We would not damp their ardour, but we remind ourselves that much must happen before it will be possible to go to Parliament for an Enabling Bill with any hope of success, and we should be sorry to think that the Reunion movement must be delayed accordingly. Dr. Temple does not miss this point, but we cannot feel that his views are reassuring. We give a crucial passage from his article:—

Three points demand consideration: 1. Will the proposals of the Church and State Report lead to a position for the Church of England which the Free Churches could agree to accept? 2. Will the Free Churches ask for a similar position, even apart from Reunion? 3. If Disestablishment is an indispensable pre-requisite for Reunion, is it desirable to move for it at once? Clearly the two first questions only admit of proper discussion at a Round Table Conference, but it may be permissible to indicate hopes if not expectations. With regard to the third question, it may be urged that the policy of immediate Disestablishment is full of difficulties. It would almost cer-

tainly involve a definition of the Church by the State for the purposes of tenure of property, and it would throw open new assemblies, unfamiliar with their functions, and inheriting from the existing assemblies the procrastinating habit of mind which is caused by constitutional impotence, the enormous task of reorganizing the whole of the Church's activities. If Reunion were at this moment attainable by such a means, the cost would not be in any way too great. But, rapid as recent developments have been, Reunion is not so near as that. If Disestablishment is to come, a period of self-government under such a scheme as that advocated in the Report is most desirable as a preliminary; during that period the Church will become a recognizable body which can be dealt with by the State without any necessity for the State first to define it. The Church will moreover be able to set up the administrative machinery which may take over the whole task of administration without chaos when Disestablishment comes. And the period allowed for this—say ten or fifteen years—will not postpone the actual achievement of Home Reunion. But there are some of us who desire, if possible, to avoid the severance of connexion between Church and State. Scotland is a standing proof that freedom and Establishment are compatible.

Against Dr. Temple's proposals, which we confess
A More Excellent Way. raise a suspicion of uneasiness, we may set the plan proposed by Sir Joseph Compton-Rickett, M.P., a leading Nonconformist layman and, unless we are mistaken, a convinced Disestablisher. He writes:—"In this country if the Episcopal Church and the Free Churches were to form a strong Association to cover the whole of England and Wales through local Committees of clergy and laymen from all denominations, the problems of society might be studied, and united work undertaken for the benefit of every class. To that Association nothing would be foreign or unsuited. . . . This Association would beget comradeship and a better understanding between Christian people. The common atmosphere of spiritual activity would do more for union than repeated argument and debate. In that common atmosphere we shall find the Way, the Truth, and the Life." There is wisdom in this proposal, and the creation of this "common atmosphere of spiritual activity" is a matter of urgent importance.

The Bishop of Durham, who is among the *Guardian* "Our Supreme Need." contributors, lifts the whole question to the highest level of spiritual thought and life, and his solemn heart-moving words deserve the closest attention of Churchmen and Nonconformists alike. He confesses his deep belief that "our supreme need"—even in view of Reunion—is a new and reviving breath from above, an "enduing with power from on high." He continues:—

There is a great restraint at present, whatever be the cause, upon spiritual force, spiritual effect, in the public ministrations of the pastors both of Anglican and non-Anglican churches. My long life holds in memory "years of the right hand of the Most High" when it was not so. And I am sure the conviction is not confined to Evangelicals like me. Only the other day I had a letter from an old friend, a lady of gifts and experience, and a most decided High Churchwoman. She lamented, from her long knowledge of a typical countryside, the enfeebled hold of the Church upon the people. Why was it? She thought it was largely because the younger clergy preached a system more than their Lord, and did not love the people enough to go in and out among them with His message, visiting, as of old, from house to house. We want seers (of the vision of the Almighty) that we may have prophets. And the more we have of them, the more, I am sure, the hard edges which make Reunion difficult will melt towards a large and living cohesion.

The Bishop's weighty words come with appealing force to us all. The danger is very real lest we so concern ourselves with questions of organization and administration that we forget or neglect the sole source of spiritual power, without which neither the Church nor Nonconformity, nor even the two united together, can maintain an effective witness in the world.

Of wide and commanding interest is the pamphlet **A Reminiscence of Charles Simeon.** just issued giving "a short history" of the Cambridge Association of the C.M.S. which is about to celebrate its centenary. It is written by the Rev. S. Symonds and the Rev. T. Lang, and their narrative makes very pleasant reading. The Association was established on November 3, 1818, but the call to missionary service had stirred the heart of Cambridge men some years earlier, and we get in these pages a delightful glimpse of "the heroes of our past days." We quote the reference to the chief of these:—

We can at once picture the vigorous form and earnest face of Charles Simeon. A caricaturist has immortalized him as he was often seen walking from his rooms in King's College Fellows' Buildings to his parochial duties at Holy Trinity Church, in knee-breeches, shovel hat and flowing gown, with an umbrella under his arm, which is even now to be seen in the Church's Vestry.

Of course Simeon stood sponsor to the new offspring of the Church, for we remember that it was he who in 1796 at the Eclectic Clerical Society opened the discussion on "Missions to the heathen from the Established Church." Of him in 1797 Wilberforce said, "Something, but not much, done. *Simeon in earnest.*" And when in March 1799 John Venn inquired further: "What methods can we use to promote the knowledge of the Gospel among the heathen?" it was Simeon who, exclaiming "What can we do? When shall we do it? How shall we do it?" answered with characteristic directness, "Not a moment is to be lost: we have been dreaming these!

four years while all Europe is awake"; and on April 12 the Church Missionary Society was established.

Though nineteen years elapsed before the Cambridge Association was formed, Simeon was not silent. He had gradually won his way to the confidence of his people. When he was appointed Vicar, in 1782, most of the pew doors were locked against the crowd of excited people who thronged the aisles to hear a young man burning to deliver the message which had brought such light and grace to his own soul, and his new parishioners determined to give him no welcome either in the Church, or at their doors when he would pay them pastoral visits. In 1798 we read that "those who worshipped at Trinity Church were supposed to have left common sense, discretion, sobriety . . . and almost whatever else is true and of good report, in the vestibule." (Moule's *Charles Simeon*, p. 74.) Even in 1812 Scholefield had difficulty in overcoming the feeling of shame at being seen, as an undergraduate, to enter Trinity Church for the Service.

The Trinity Congregation, whether parishioners or not, did not leave their purses either in the vestibule or at home, for from 1804 Simeon had frequent collections in Church for the Society, which began with £50 and by 1813 had risen to £114, several notable men being the preachers. Henry Martyn was his curate for two years, and under his influence was the first Englishman to offer to the new Society, his heart being touched by the needs of India.

Charles Simeon's name and memory are an indestructible heritage of Evangelical Churchmen. He stood for spirituality in religion, and it entered into his whole life. Where are the Simeons to-day? He has, we doubt not, many successors, not, perhaps, occupying positions of prominence, but quietly, unobtrusively in their parishes seeking to win men and women to God, and having upon their souls the burden of the great responsibility for the evangelization of the world. Evangelical Churchmen will never want for power or influence so long as they keep these two points steadily in view—the conversion to God of their own people, and the spread of the Gospel among the nations of the world. These two ideas go together; they must never be separated. The Bishop of Durham contributes a Preface to the pamphlet, which is published by A. P. Dixon, Ltd. (6d. net).

