









John J. Falter Dec. 1902

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# *Divisions in the Church*

TWO SERMONS PREACHED IN TEWKESBURY ABBEY  
ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1902

BY THE

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LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON  
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY

1902

THESE sermons have grown out of a visit of the Kensit party to Tewkesbury; they were inspired by a strong desire to give to those who are at all likely to be influenced by this or other similar agitations some matter for reflection before they make up their minds. I am sorrowfully aware that the noisier agitation does not stand alone, but that in many parts of the country the same kind of ends are being sought in more refined and reputable ways: there is a deliberate and organized endeavour to discredit and decry one party in the Church.

What has moved me to intervene in a matter in which I am in no way personally involved, is not only the concern which every lover of his country must feel at seeing such an apple of discord thrown down in its midst, but also as a student the instinct of protest against historical and actual misrepresentation.

The current popular view of the English Reformation greatly needs revision and correction. The writings of such men as the late Canon Dixon, Mr. James Gairdner, Dr. Gee, Mr. W. H. Frere, and others, are gradually putting us in a position really to understand what happened; but it will take some time before this understanding becomes general, and the confusions of thought that so widely prevail are dissipated. I do not claim to speak with any authority on the history of this period, but I believe that the facts which I have assumed are quite beyond question.

The paragraph in brackets on p. 25 was not delivered.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD,  
*September, 1902.*

## I.

‘For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.’—I COR. xii. 12, 13.

I SUPPOSE that the dominant feeling in all our minds in this year of grace is a feeling of great thankfulness. We have had unusual reason—at least very special reason—to be thankful to Almighty God for mercies vouchsafed to us. We have been relieved from a serious war, the pressure of which has been felt by high and low, which had called for great efforts, and has cost many precious lives. We have been relieved from a great anxiety and had our sorrow turned to joy in the coronation of our King.

And along with all this—through these trying vicissitudes, and to a large extent in consequence of them—we have been conscious of a great drawing together among ourselves. The distant parts of our widespread Empire have felt their kinship as they had never felt it before. It has been brought home to them by common suffering, by common exertions, and by common loyalty. The English race is being welded together, and welded as iron is welded, by passing through the fire.

One of our experiences that has contributed not a little to this drawing together is the fact that we have been exposed as a nation and as a race to a great amount of hostile criticism. In part we feel that this criticism has been unjust, and that we can afford to disregard it. But

that is not the case with all. In part we have brought it down upon ourselves by our own fault. We have been too ready to pass judgement upon others; and we ought not to be surprised if they in return pass judgement upon us. 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.'

This is a lesson which it is to be hoped we shall not forget. It is a lesson that we really need. It is perhaps partly in consequence of our freedom of speech and active political life that we are very ready to speak our minds in censure of others; and we do not always do it as considerately and as gently as we should. These strictures of ours are felt most keenly where they go along with a certain assumption of superiority. Perhaps the assumption has not been always quite so bad as it might seem. It has often not been very deliberate or deeply intended, but just an outcome of exuberant content with our own freedom and our own comparative prosperity. Now that we can see our fault, it is to be hoped that we shall avoid it more.

And I am not sure that we do not need to learn the same sort of lesson in matters of religion. There too I suspect that we have been too ready with our judgements. Have we always remembered that large-hearted advice of St. Paul's, 'Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. . . . He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. . . . Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall



all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ' (Rom. xiv. 3, 4, 6, 10)?

There is one sphere in which I am afraid that the drawing together has not been as complete as it has in others. There *has* been a drawing, but it has been checked and counteracted by tendencies of an opposite kind. Thoughtful men who look out over the life of our Church, although there too they may see cause for thankfulness, will have it dashed with not a little anxiety. Of course the divisions are old divisions. But just at this moment they are rendered rather acute. And the prospect is dark. The clouds do not seem to be lifting. To all appearance things are likely to be still worse before they are better.

For this is the unhappy feature in the situation: that a serious and widely diffused agitation is going on. Good men are agitating against good men. They are seeking for ends that they cannot attain. Much friction is sure to be generated in the process. And it is hard to see what good will be done to counterbalance the harm.

It is a strong sense of the hopelessness of all this that has brought me here. I am one of those who cannot help looking out at the present state of things with grave concern. And it is more and more impressed upon me that if we are to make any real progress, if we are to have any real hope of composing our divisions, we must make a new departure and find a new method.

I would invite you to consider, and I would fain address a larger public still, and invite the whole Church of England to summon up all its calmness and collectedness of mind and to consider, where it stands, and whither it is moving, and what sort of ways of working are hopeful and what are not. What is needed is that sober men and women the whole country over should, as it were, take counsel together and see how these differences can be composed.

And the first thing that I believe has to be realized, and without which no progress is possible, is that the question lies between good men on both sides.

So long as one side regards the other as utterly in the wrong, and conceives it to be only due to moral defect that it fails to see that it is in the wrong; so long as one side confines itself to protestings and denouncings, the breach will only be widened, and the antagonisms will be hardened and confirmed.

Really the problem is a very difficult and delicate one. To get down to the root of the evil we need to dig deep. It is a matter of study, and of very close and careful study. Party cries are misleading, and the whole spirit of party is fatal to justice and to seeing things truly as they are.

It is an utter mistake to suppose that the issue is clear, and that only moral obliquity prevents it from being seen to be clear; and that this moral obliquity can be beaten down by public meetings and strong language. Where the other side is no less convinced, and feels that it has good ground for its conviction, the result can only be a deadlock, and what amounts practically to civil war.

To escape from this is, as I have said, difficult; and it is difficult chiefly because the problem is not only moral but intellectual. It implies a verdict upon a great multitude of delicate questions of fact. And unfortunately these questions of fact are not present to the public mind in such a way as to admit of a clear and simple verdict of Aye or No upon them. The history of the English Reformation is a very complex history. Some of the most important features in it do not appear upon the surface. And although students of it have not been wanting and a great deal of excellent work has been done, I think I may venture to say that the results have not yet been so clearly formulated as quite to take hold of the popular mind. There must be not only a steady

contemplation of a great multitude of facts, some upon the surface and some rather below it, but also careful attention to the validity of the inferences that are drawn from them.

It is not a case for rough and ready common sense. Where these qualities only are applied, it is very easy for great injustice to be done.

I have before me a conspicuous instance in point. It is the more conspicuous because it is supplied by an excellent man who was animated in part by excellent motives.

I suppose that most of us had our impression of the late Bishop of Liverpool. He was a very manly, straightforward figure, with a gift of direct and vigorous speech. He had decided opinions of his own, which he did not hesitate to express. He would have frankly admitted that he belonged to a party, and he frankly argued in favour of that party. Some twelve years ago he brought out with this object a volume entitled *Light from Old Times ; or, Protestant Facts and Men. With an Introduction for our own days.* This book has been recently reprinted on a large scale ; it is sold at a low price, and is as I know being very widely circulated and enthusiastically recommended. It is intended to serve as a sort of call to arms. The spirit and energy with which it is written makes it well adapted for that purpose. It is intended to strengthen the convictions and rouse the zeal of those who are on the same side as its author ; and it is intended also to whet their swords and to give impetus to their attack upon the enemy.

The book consists of a number of short biographies—biographies of men who played a prominent, and even, as it might be said in some cases, heroic part on the side which is espoused. The author would not have hesitated to confess that the selection is one-sided. It

was not meant to represent the Church of England as a whole, but rather one party within the Church. And it is used with effect for the same purpose now, to exalt and in-spirit that party, and to depress and denounce its opponents.

It is quite true that this method of employing history has been much used in the past. It is a dangerous method from the point of view of the historian. It does not profess to state things strictly as they are and in their true proportions, but it makes a selection with a view to a particular object. It is like an advocate stating his case before a jury.

Even so we need not demur, so far as the author makes it his aim to cultivate and encourage a certain type of mind and character, provided that in so doing he does not misrepresent and create a prejudice against other types that are equally legitimate.

I am afraid that the late Bishop of Liverpool did not sufficiently observe this distinction. We may sympathize with him so far as his biographies tend to encourage a particular ideal of character and conduct. It is good for the nation, and good for the Church, that this ideal should be represented; but it is another thing when the opportunity is used to decry and assail other ideals that the writer does not understand and therefore cannot really appreciate.

This is, I am afraid, what has been very largely done, and is being done, not only through this particular book but in many other ways throughout the length and breadth of the land at the present time.

We may see by the Preface how easy it is to pass from the one ground to the other. The greater part of this Preface is taken up with a vigorous defence of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England. All this is perfectly reasonable, and we should almost all, including even opponents, give our assent to it. We should be the more ready to do this because the writer expressly concedes the same right to exist to others that he claims for himself.

'I willingly admit that there are other honest "schools of thought" within our pale besides the Evangelical, and I disclaim all sympathy with those who would exclude them. From the time of Charles I there have always been High and Broad, as well as Low Churchmen, and probably there always will be till the Lord comes. The inherent imperfection of language, and the consequent impossibility of making all men put the same meaning on words, are the explanation of this condition of things. There have been at one and the same time within our camp, for 250 years and more, divines like Davenant and Andrew[e]s and Whichcote in the seventeenth century, and Bishops like Sumner and Whately and Blomfield in our own day. I have not the slightest desire to narrow our limits, to unchurch and ostracize any of the men I have named, or to confine honest and loyal Churchmanship to any one of the three schools I have just mentioned. I do not pretend to claim any exclusive possession of learning, zeal, or devoutness for any of them.'

If that promise were faithfully kept, if there were really no wish and no attempt to 'unchurch and ostracize' any members of the other parties, then I do not doubt that the great mass of quiet churchmen would be perfectly content to go their own way and leave the Evangelicals in the Church of England unmolested.

Up to the very last page of the Preface the argument is conducted on these lines; but then suddenly and without any warning a new term is introduced and the ground is quite changed.

'My own sentence,' the writer says, 'is clear and distinct. If we cannot maintain the Established Church of England without giving up Protestantism and admitting Romanism, we had better have no Establishment at all.'

It will be observed that here the attitude suddenly turns round from defence to attack, and it becomes a question

of 'admitting Romanism' into the Church of England. And then we know what a horribly loose and ambiguous and question-begging term we have to deal with. There is hardly a word in the language that is more charged with explosive material than this word 'Romanism,' and it does in fact explode, as I believe, to the wreck and ruin of the book, and it converts what might have been otherwise innocent and beneficial into an instrument of strife and contention.

I believe that I am to be allowed to continue what I am saying this evening, and I hope, if all is well, to return to this subject. But before I go further, I must needs pause to say a word of very earnest warning on this head. The use that is made by controversialists of this charge of Romanism is most disastrous.

It is true that there are some things that are really Roman, and as such really matter for reprobation. But a great deal of what is often called Romanism is not peculiar to Rome in the strict sense at all, but is only part of the old religion, of our common Christianity as it was before there were these clefts and divisions in the Church.

And then the controversialist, who has a very vague idea of what this old Christianity was like, who has formed for himself one narrow conception and goes about the world thinking that he alone is right and that all who differ from him are wrong, includes in one sweeping condemnation that which is only ancient and that which is in the bad sense Roman, and makes use of the reprobation which naturally attaches to the latter in order to discredit and denounce what really belongs to the former and is in itself quite innocent and lawful.

I think you will be able to see even from these few words what a serious pass things are coming to, and how much harm is being done. I do not blame the motives of those who are acting in the way that I have just described.

I believe that they desire to uphold what they think is true and sound in religion. If they would keep to themselves we should welcome them as honest men and good citizens. But when they take these confused opinions of theirs as a standard by which others are to be judged, unconscious all the time of their own confusion of thought and want of knowledge, it is easy to see what mischief is sure to be done, and how all the real difficulties of the position are sure to be aggravated.

This is a second piece of advice that I would venture to give. When the charge of Romanism is brought against good and devoted men, cross-question those who bring it as to what they mean, and make sure that it is not merely some feature in the old religion that has never been legally forbidden in the Church of England, and that only serves to unite the practice of Christian men in the present with the practice of days that are long past and gone, with the practice of days when the whole Church was one.

I will go on to speak of another fallacy into which the controversialists are constantly falling. They constantly appeal to the Reformers as though they were an ultimate authority in the Church of England; and they forget that those whom they include under that name were only a fraction of the whole Church, a fraction that from the first was trying to make the Church go farther than it was willing to go, and that failed in part of their attempt, though in part they succeeded.

There is always this misfortune in history, that the party that is loudest and most assertive is apt to bulk larger to the eye than the thousands and tens of thousands of sober and moderate men who form the great mass of the Church or of the nation, and really give it its character.

I have no wish to disparage the English Reformers. I am glad that they showed so much zeal; and I think that we owe them a debt of gratitude. But we must not

treat them as though they stood for the whole Church, or as though they represented the mature and deliberate mind of the Church of England.

Let us look at the state of things when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, and when the 'Elizabethan Settlement,' as we call it, was made. The thread of events was taken up where it had been left on the death of Edward VI, but not without some allowance for the reaction of the reign of Mary. The exiles flocked back from abroad, from Zürich and from Frankfurt and from Strassburg. But it must be remembered that these exiles were but a handful as compared to the whole body of the Church. And during their stay on the Continent they had been indoctrinated with the teaching of Calvin and Zwingli, teaching that was never accepted by the Church of England, which took a way of its own between the different extremes.

From the moment of their return the exiles were an active and aggressive wing of the Church, that tried hard to shape things after its own mind, but met with no little resistance, and had in the end to put up with what was only half a victory.

The Marian reaction had been drastic. The Church and nation had been reconciled to Rome. The Church was filled with professing Roman Catholics; some of them no doubt discontented and uneasy, and many more hesitating and uncertain, but yet definitely committed to the religion of the Queen and of the Government.

The clergy numbered, roughly speaking, about 9,400; and there can be no doubt that, on the whole, they were favourable to the old religion. Their temper was apparent from the proceedings in Convocation which met at the beginning of the new reign. Many of the Bishops refused to take the oaths, and were deprived of their sees. And yet the vast majority of these clergy accepted the new Settlement. Less than 200 in all were removed from their



office. We have to remember that the 9,000 and more remaining formed the working clergy of the first part of Elizabeth's reign. So that the Church was very far from consisting of the exiles alone. It consisted of the exiles *added to* these 9,000 and odd clergy who had been definitely committed to Roman Catholicism in the reign of Mary. I have said that the exiles were the more active and energetic; they did their best to leaven the mass to which they were reunited; and, as I have said, in part they succeeded. They succeeded to the extent of producing in the end that *via media* which became the true nucleus of the Church of England, as it is represented in the writings of our first really great theologian, Richard Hooker. At the head of the middle party, guided perhaps by her instincts more than by her reason, was the Queen herself; and she exercised a powerful influence in keeping the second reaction within bounds.

But you will see what a mistake it is to regard the returned exiles as though they were in a position to speak for the Church of England as a whole, and still more as though they could lay down the law for the Church throughout all time. It would also be very wrong to suppose that all the goodness and piety and devotion was monopolized by this small section. Very far from it. Some of the best and most beautiful characters of the age were Roman Catholics who never surrendered the name; for instance, Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher of Rochester, who died on the scaffold under Henry VIII because they would not go against the dictates of conscience, men who were as true martyrs as Ridley and Latimer themselves; and another very fine character, who held his see all through the troubled times, was Bishop Tunstall of Durham. It would not be easy to find a nobler example of those who conformed both under Mary and under Elizabeth than Bernard Gilpin, whom Bishop

Lightfoot most fitly included among the 'saints of the Northern Church.'

I often think that those who lived through the succession of changes which began under Henry VIII and ended under Elizabeth, and who tried to steer a straight course through them all, deserve our sympathies almost as much as the actual martyrs. How severe must have been the strain for men of scrupulous conscience in those days! Probably there were few among them who were not conscious of the abuses of the Church of Rome; but there must have been many who felt not less acutely the pain and loss of being severed from the rest of Christendom. It is something to be thankful for that the final separation, when it came, came from the other side and not from ours (the Bull of Pope Pius V, dated Feb. 25, 1569-70).

I have no doubt whatever that there were truly Christian men, men who held all the essentials of the Christian faith with unfeigned sincerity, and who lived up to their faith, among all the different shades of opinion that were ultimately gathered together in the Church of England. They lived in very difficult times; in times when it was hard to strike a balance between conflicting claims and truths that seemed to be conflicting. To strike a right balance required high qualities of head as well as of heart. And in our own day there are a great number of subtle questions abroad which it may well tax all our powers to decide rightly. But do not let us complicate the situation by deliberately sowing dissension and raising a clamour on grounds that we very imperfectly understand and have certainly not fully thought out, against those who are trying to do their duty to the best of their conscience and to the best of their ability. 'Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ.'

## II.

‘For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body ; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free ; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.’—I COR. xii. 12, 13.

IT was a wonderful providence of God which shaped the Church of England and made it what it is. It might so easily have been a far poorer and more dwarfed and stunted thing. It might so easily have been just a sect among the sects<sup>1</sup>—containing one single type of mind and character, and developing this on hard and narrow and contentious lines.

I am afraid that if the Reformers, as we call them, had had their way, that would have been its fate. And it was the Providence of God that saved it for something better. I say that it was the Providence of God, because there was no one leader to impress his own stamp upon it, but it was rather the result of the imperceptible co-operation of a number of minds ; it was no one party, but really—as we have so often seen in English history—the nation acting as a whole, using the friction of parties, and overruling their divergent efforts to an end higher than that which was the aim of any one of them, an end which, unconsciously to themselves, might yet be described as common to them all.

It took a whole century to mould the Church of England. Nations do not convert themselves and find their true direction in a day. With us in England the process is usually long, and all the better because it is long.

<sup>1</sup> To use this phrase is, I hope, consistent with the fullest respect for the ‘Federation of Free Churches,’ which expresses the opposite principle.

The act becomes a much more national act than it would be otherwise. Every individual seems to tell. Very often he tells not so much by making his own opinion prevail in its crude form, but rather by contributing to modify the opinions of others.

Let us glance over the history of the sixteenth century and see this shaping process at work.

When Henry VIII began his reign there was a great amount of dissatisfaction with the existing state of things. England had always been galled by the yoke of Rome; and the English kings and people had almost always maintained a certain degree of independence. But the pressure continued, and there were a great many abuses, and there was a rising determination in the national mind to make the independence more complete. The king, largely for selfish reasons and to gratify his own imperious will, but also partly because he really shared in the national feeling, took advantage of it to throw off the yoke once for all. So far he did but interpret the national mind, and although he met with some opposition from good men like Fisher and More, he carried with him the great body of the nation, including many who, like Gardiner and Tunstall, had certainly no wish to break off all communion with Rome.

Other influences were at work; some bad, but more good. There was the greed of many among the courtiers and the laity for the property of the Church, which at that time was perhaps really over-endowed. Then there was the growth of the New Learning, improved knowledge and deepened insight into the meaning of the Bible. There was a real striving on the part of many individuals up and down the land after a simpler and purer form of faith. After a time the stir made by Luther upon the Continent found an echo across the Channel. And when Edward VI came to the throne there was enough zeal for reform abroad to enable

his Council to carry through such measures as the two Books of Common Prayer. Here again motives were mixed. Some of those, both under Henry and under Edward, who did much to press on reform were certainly self-seeking men. Some, like Cranmer, were weak and temporizing, though really at heart sincere and possessed of gifts that have proved of great value. But, as a whole, the Reformation under Edward VI moved too fast. Neither the nation nor the agents themselves who were carrying it out were really ripe for it. There can be no doubt that the reign of Mary at first came as a relief. Changes had followed each other so precipitately that men were glad to see them arrested. But they were also not prepared for the extent of the reaction that soon set in. Mary herself is a pathetic figure that has been too hardly judged. She meant well, and she was a religious woman at heart, but she was very solitary and she was ill-advised; grievous blunders were made; indeed, the whole direction in which she sought to move was wrong.

So it was that in four short years things were brought to such a pass that it was again a relief when she died and Elizabeth succeeded. The nation once more breathed freely, and once more set itself to carry on the work that had been begun. This time with more success: the forty years that follow are the really crucial years. But the settlement had to be made at once; it had to anticipate the growth of national sentiment and opinion by which it was to be ultimately supported. And here it is that I think that we may see the hand of Providence most signally. The forces that brought about the Settlement were anything but homogeneous or harmonious. On the one hand there were the eager Reformers, the exiles returned from the Continent, who came back imbued with what we should call Calvinism. In opposition to them there was the great mass of the nation, which in its

instincts and feelings was Catholic, if not Roman Catholic. The problem was to strike a balance between these mutually antagonistic influences. If there had been a middle party with a body of belief clearly formulated, the command of the situation would have lain with it. But as yet there was no such party ; it was beginning to form itself, but it was not as yet formed. As I said this morning, it had its best representative in the governing instinct of the Queen. She felt what the nation wanted, though neither she nor any one else at that moment could have exactly put it into words. Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* was not published until 1592. Then, and not till then, the broad foundation of the Church of England was really laid. But what I have called the providential guiding lies in this, that although the settlement at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign was some thirty years in advance of any philosophically reasoned account of the principles to which it gave expression, it yet did, roughly and sufficiently, express those principles. And although there are many gaps and, so to speak, loose and ragged ends in the Settlement, which under the circumstances were almost inevitable, even now as we look back upon it there is very little that we should greatly wish otherwise ; there is nothing at all that had to be forcibly undone before the Church could find its balance.

All that we need at the present day is to put upon this Elizabethan Settlement a broad and liberal interpretation ; such an interpretation as is really required by the conditions under which it was made and can alone reflect the nature of those conditions.

To put the same thing in homely and simple words, what is needed is for the different parties in the Church just to 'live and let live.' Each of these parties really represents some definite Christian ideal. And the best result will be obtained if they each do all they can to

work out that ideal, with constant reference to the New Testament and to the life of Him in whom every Christian ideal is summed up. It was good advice that was given to the Philippians of old: to 'work out their own salvation with fear and trembling'; that is, to live up to the very best of the light that is in them without meddling with others. To do our own duty in the state to which God has called us is enough for most of us. If all Christians would but obey this rule, they would have confidence that other Christians were doing the same. That would mean that each was attending to the health of his own soul, which he can surely understand better than others can understand it for him, and which only too often they utterly and grievously misunderstand.

The rule of working out one's own salvation with fear and trembling applies not only to parties and to individuals but also to Churches, even to widespread and national Churches. I feel sure that there is no advice that is to be so earnestly commended to the Church of England at the present time. If we let the imagination soar it is easy to see, or at least to dream of, great and notable functions to which the Church of England may be called in the distant future. But it must not put its hand to those functions too soon. It must not let itself be accused of pride and presumption. Its duty for the present certainly is to go on its way humbly, 'with fear and trembling.' Let it first seek its own conversion; that is, put itself to its best uses. And then perhaps, 'when it is converted,' it may be given to it to 'strengthen the brethren.'

My reason for thinking that great and high hopes may be entertained—though before all things humbly entertained—for the Church of England is that, through that providence of God of which I have spoken, it kept open room within itself at its Reformation for different types or elements. It made room for the zeal of the Reformers,

but—if one may say so—for a *sifted* zeal, for a zeal not quite in the crude form in which it was at first conceived, but to some extent tempered and harmonized. And at the same time it did not expel but rather retained much of the pieties and beauties of the old religion. Of course one can only speak in general terms. There was sadly too much wanton and rude destruction. Wherever we go throughout England we see only too many traces of beautiful things destroyed by the intemperate zeal of people who knew not what they did. That they did it in ignorance is the best excuse that can be made for them. But what would we not often give now to be able to repair the loss?

Look at this beautiful church in which we are met for worship. Was not that reared by pious and reverent hands? Those who reared it may not have thought exactly as we do; but we may be sure that they had somewhere among them the root of true religion.

For I can never believe that the art and architecture in which religious aspiration has found fitting expression is wholly separable from the aspiration in which it took its rise. It is common to hear these things spoken of as if they could be assumed or rejected, put on or put off, just at will. In the same way music is often treated as though it was possible to have a musical service just for the sake of the music and without regard to the religious emotion which it expresses. Of course it *is* possible in a literal sense to have such things. It is possible to have highly elaborate music and gorgeous architecture that stand in no relation to the spirit that animates the worship which they subserve. But any such art for the sake of art is out of place in connexion with religion. It is hollow and insincere, empty and futile. True religious art, whatever form it takes, whether it is expressed in notes or colour or carved and vaulted stone, must be the natural outcome



of a devout and beautiful mind; a mind at once devout and beautiful; not the beauty alone, and the devotion alone, but the two fused and indissolubly united together, so that the one is only the outward expression of the other, as the spoken word is the utterance of the living voice and living soul.

There was a time, about a third of the way down the last century, some seventy years ago, when men suddenly became conscious of this connexion in a way in which they had not been conscious before. Or rather, I should not perhaps say 'suddenly,' because great movements like this are rarely sudden. They are usually preparing and gathering force for some time before they appear upon the surface, though when they appear they may seem sudden. In this case, as so often, the impulse came partly by way of reaction. In the England of that day the dominant spirit was a spirit of utilitarian liberalism, which had just won a conspicuous triumph in the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. For myself I believe that we owe a great deal to that particular phase of liberalism. It did substantial good, though it also did some harm. But at that time many good men were alarmed at it, and not without reason. It was not confined to politics, but it affected the whole intellectual life of the nation. There was a utilitarian philosophy, and utilitarian literature, and even a utilitarian religion. The spirit of which I am speaking had its destructive side. It was cold and hard. It made little of the imagination and of the products of imagination. It was wanting in reverence for the past. It was ready to sweep away the old in order to make room for the new.

This it was that caused the alarm. Men saw many things that were dear to them threatened, old customs, old beliefs, their old haunts and old shrines. A few persons who shared this feeling most strongly banded themselves together to resist the tide of innovation. And

as they undertook to fight the spirit of the age, it was natural that they should fight it all along the line. The qualities and things that it rated high they rated low, and the things and qualities that it rated low they rated high. But the opposition was greatest on the ground of religion. This was the primary interest with the leaders of the movement of which I am speaking; and the form which the movement took in their hands was especially that of a return to what was old. They did not like new ideas, and especially the new bare and utilitarian ideas. They loved and cherished and defended what the others despised. Where the others thought only of the present and the future, they turned their faces towards the past; and it was in the past that they sought their inspiration.

That was the origin of what was called at the time the Tractarian Movement or the High Church Movement, or of what became in another phase the Ritualistic Movement. The common element and principle that underlies all these was the appeal to what was old, the love for what was old, the attempt to revive what was old. Many call it a Romanizing Movement; but the so-called Romanizing was and is only an accident. The men to whom I refer were not content to begin at the Reformation. They wanted to go behind the Reformation, and to trace their beliefs and usages up to the fountain-head; back through the Middle Ages, and beyond the Middle Ages to Christian antiquity, to the time of the Undivided Church.

They had good warrant for this. The English Reformation itself was based upon a return to Antiquity<sup>1</sup>. This was its distinctive note from the first. How it came about I do not exactly know, and I should much like to dis-

<sup>1</sup> On the Appeal to Antiquity in the Church of England see especially a discussion at the Brighton Church Congress last year. I have before me a paper read there by the Rev. B. J. Kidd which abundantly illustrates the importance attached to this appeal.

cover<sup>1</sup>; but whereas the foreign Reformation also began with an appeal to Antiquity, it soon dropped this and went on its course without much regard to it. But in England the appeal to Antiquity was never dropped. Even an exile like Bishop Jewel, who brought back with him something of the Calvinistic temper in other respects, put the claim to have Antiquity on his side in the very forefront of his teaching. He challenged his Roman opponents to produce 'one sufficient sentence out of any old Catholic doctor, or father, or general council, or Holy Scripture, or any one example in the primitive Church during the first six hundred years' in support of the customs for which they contended and which the Church of England had abandoned.

The appeal is to the *primitive* Church. The date down to which it was to be taken as extending varied somewhat. Some placed it at 450 years after Christ, some at 500, some at 600. But the principle was that it was an appeal to the time when the whole Church of Christ was one, before it was broken up into a Church of the East and a Church of the West and all the multitude of subdivisions which have come in since that time.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Kidd has an excellent suggestion on this head. He observes that the foreign Reformers began by making the same appeal. 'Luther, before Cajetan, subordinated the papal decrees to Scripture, the Fathers, the Oecumenical Councils, and individual reason; but the appeal was never sustained. Luther was too self-willed, and Calvin too systematizing a theologian to admit it. The one was a scholastic, the other a lawyer, and to neither was the verdict of history a sacred thing. It was sacred to the Humanists; and when we consider that the Humanists, who first turned scholarship to account in the opening up of Christian antiquity, broke with the Reformation abroad, but in England were the friends of the Old Learning and the teachers of the New, we can understand how the impetus to make antiquity the touchstone originated, and how it came to be the principle accepted by both parties, which differentiates our Reformation from that which took shape abroad.' The connexion of the English Reformation with the Humanists, and of the English Church with Learning, was a favourite topic with Bishop Creighton.

There are very many in the Church of England who still cherish this appeal. They want to feel their brotherhood with those early Christians, and to remind themselves of it by doing as they did and worshipping as they worshipped.

Surely there is nothing wrong in this. It does not interfere in the least degree with the supremacy of Holy Scripture, because those early Christians bowed as entirely to the authority of the Scriptures as their successors have ever done.

Nor can the appeal to ancient usage rightly be called Romanism. The Church of Rome is only one among a number of Christian Churches, only one among a number of *regular* Christian Churches, which those of whom I am speaking have taken specially for their model. I do not believe that any one wishes to introduce what is peculiar to the Church of Rome, and least of all the corrupt practices that came in during the Middle Ages.

But there are many, as I have said, who *do* wish both to feel and to show their kinship with the early Christians before the Church was divided. They think that at the Reformation some were inclined to go too far, and did actually go too far, and destroyed what need not have been and ought not to have been destroyed. They think this, and they have tried to repair some of the destruction, and to re-introduce into the Church some things that they believe to have been wrongly given up.

In so doing they are exercising a liberty to which they are certainly entitled. They are taking their stand upon a principle which we have seen to be acknowledged in the Church of England from the first and never repealed. They are the direct descendants, not of the Reformers in the narrower sense of the term, but of a large party in the Church which subsisted all through the Reformation, and, though it has had varying fortunes, has never died out, and is now strong and well established.

[I am aware that questions of some difficulty may be raised on the other side as to the exact relation between the laws of the National Church to which they themselves belong, and the laws and usages of the wider Church of which it forms a part. Questions of this kind may be raised, and it is not difficult on points that as I believe are all of subordinate detail to represent the two sets of laws and usages as coming into collision. But it is very much to be hoped that such questions will not be raised wherever it can be avoided. Every National Church has its own history, and it is sure to drift into peculiarities of local usage which it is best that its members should be content to observe, even though they may come to think that they do so at some sacrifice. The Church of England has definitely asserted its freedom of action in such matters; but it by no means stands alone in regard to them. All Churches are in the same case; and there is no Church in regard to which embarrassing points of casuistry may not be raised which it is easier to state than to answer, and which may cause friction and difficulty out of proportion to their real importance. The true rule in such matters is the rule of charity—to do nothing by which a brother is offended or made weak. And the brother who is most to be considered is he who is nearest at hand.]

I have been a long time in coming round to the text which I took for both these sermons; but really I have had it in view all the time. Or rather, perhaps I should say that I have had in view the principle which the text expresses. Many other passages would have answered the purpose equally well, for the truth is one that is often stated in Holy Scripture, especially in the writings of St. Paul. We may call it if we will by the well-known name of Diversity in Unity and Unity in Diversity.

‘As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body;

so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free ; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.'

We must expect that there will be differences—wide and marked differences—in the Church of Christ. And yet these differences need not be, and ought not to be, incompatibilities ; they may all be bound together by a common purpose and work towards a common end. St. Paul, as you know, is fond of illustrating this by pointing to the body. The body is made up of many members which are unlike each other ; the foot is very unlike the hand, and the hand is very unlike the eye ; and yet foot and hand and eye do not fight and quarrel with one another, but work together in a beautiful harmony, and all obey the directing mind.

So ought it to be in the Church, which is Christ's Body. The Church is made up not only of a multitude of individuals that no man can number, but also of many nationalities and groups and parties within those nationalities. Each of these has distinctive features of its own, and many of them differ widely from others. St. Paul speaks, for instance, of 'Jews and Greeks,' of 'bond and free.' The differences between Jewish Christians and Greek or Gentile Christians were very great indeed. They were differences of history, of temperament, of habits and practices. However much they might be bound together by a common belief in Christ, yet subject to that belief they must have presented great contrasts. At any time, on the strength of those contrasts, it would have been easy for them to break up the Church into parties ; one saying, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, and another, I of Cephas, and so on. They did as a matter of fact break themselves up into parties, into mutually antagonistic parties, in this way. But St. Paul rebuked them for it. He told them that it was not necessary and that it was

not right. He asked them if Christ was 'divided'—which was as much as to remind them that they were one in Christ, that they had been all baptized into one body, and all made to drink of one Spirit. That was the bond of union ; and it was bond enough.

The Church of Christ is a far richer and nobler thing, made up as it is, than it would be if all were cast in the same mould, if all had exactly the same opinions and exactly the same practices. We should remember that we are men, very fallible and short-sighted men, and that we are not in a position to set up a standard to which we can expect all others to conform. Our common union in Christ, our common Baptism, the common outpouring of the Spirit, our common hope of salvation should be sufficient for us. We should give others credit for knowing what is best for themselves and leave them to go their way unmolested. The limitations of the human mind are such that one man cannot adequately enter into the thoughts and wants and aspirations of another. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy' is a wise saying uttered long ago. The guidance of all these diverse and wandering growths does not rest with us, but with One who has infinitely greater insight into their needs and capacities than we have. He is like a gardener who trains his vines in one way and his ivy in another and his roses in a third ; and weaves them all into a subtle and intricate beauty which a less wise and instructed hand could never attain. The Church is the garden of the Lord : let us be careful how we tread in it ; let us be careful how we pluck up even what seem to us weeds, lest peradventure in so doing we should really pluck up flowers that are dear to Him.

OXFORD: HORACE HART  
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY









