

THE
Church Review

FOUNDED 1848

EDITED BY THE REV. HENRY MASON BAUM

VOLUME LVII

APRIL, 1890

PUBLISHED IN

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Contents.

	PAGE
CHRISTIAN REUNION ON THE BASIS PROPOSED BY THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE, LAMBETH CONFERENCE REPORT, ENCYCLICAL LETTER . . .	11
<i>Definite Teaching of the Faith</i>	12
<i>Home Reunion</i>	14
<i>Relation to the Scandinavian Church</i>	15
<i>To Old Catholics and Others</i>	15
<i>To the Eastern Churches</i>	16
<i>Authoritative Standards</i>	16
REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:—	
<i>Home Reunion</i>	21
<i>Scandinavians.—Old Catholics</i>	26
<i>Eastern Churches</i>	31
<i>Authoritative Standards</i>	35
THE BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN REUNION PROPOSED BY THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE OF 1888	40
THE HISTORIC EPISCOPATE AS A BASIS OF REUNION:—	
Article I. <i>Prof. Charles A. Briggs, D.D.</i>	41
" II. <i>Prof. Egbert C. Smyth, D.D.</i>	72
" III. <i>Rev. Edward T. Horn, D.D.</i>	77
" IV. <i>Rev. Robert S. MacArthur, D.D.</i>	82
" V. <i>Prof. William J. Mann, D.D.</i>	92
" VI. <i>Prof. E. J. Wolf, D.D.</i>	97
" VII. <i>Rev. William V. Kelley, D.D.</i>	105
" VIII. <i>Prof. George R. Crooks, D.D.</i>	112
" IX. <i>Rev. Henry J. Van Dyke, D.D.</i>	117
" X. <i>Rev. Thomas Armitage, D.D.</i>	125
" XI. <i>Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D.D.</i>	129
" XII. <i>Rev. James McCosh, D.D., LL.D.</i>	132
" XIII. <i>Rev. John Hall, D.D., LL.D.</i>	134
" XIV. <i>Rev. Lyman Abbott, D.D.</i>	136
" XV. <i>Rev. J. M. Buckley, D.D.</i>	138
" XVI. <i>Rev. Howard Crosby, D.D., LL.D.</i>	139
" XVII. <i>Rev. Talbot W. Chambers, D.D.</i>	140
" XVIII. <i>Rev. Thomas S. Hastings, D.D., LL.D.</i>	141
" XIX. <i>Rev. William M. Taylor, D.D.</i>	142
" XX. <i>Rev. Edward B. Coe, D.D.</i>	143
KING'S COLLEGE, WINDSOR, NOVA SCOTIA.	
<i>Prof. Henry Youle Hind, M.A.</i>	145
BROTHERHOODS OF CLERGY FOR CITY WORK.	
<i>Rev. Arthur C. A. Hall, M. A.</i>	204

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

bury of 350 years ago [Cranmer, *Questions and Answers concerning the Sacraments*, etc. 9], thus, "Sometimes the people did choose such as they thought meet thereunto; and when any were appointed or sent by the Apostles or others, the people of their own voluntary will, with thanks, did accept them, — not for the supremity, impery, or dominion that the Apostles had over them to command as their princes or masters; but as good people, ready to obey the advice of good counsellors, and to accept anything that was necessary for their edification and benefit."

In these views I hope it is not irreverent for me, not animated by an overpowering faith in the success of a movement with which yet every good man must be in sympathy, to conclude by adopting S. Paul's hortation: "Brethren, let each man wherein he was called, therein abide with GOD. Art thou bound under obligation of love and duty unto a bishop, seek not to be loosed; art thou loosed from a bishop, seek not a bishop. But and if led in conscience, or by taste, thou do so, thou hast not sinned."

HENRY M. DEXTER.

THE REV. JAMES McCOSH, D.D., L.L.D. [PRESBYTERIAN],
EX-PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON COLLEGE.

Federation of Evangelical Churches.

I TAKE it very kind that the Editor of the CHURCH REVIEW has asked me to write on Church Reunion. I am sorry to be obliged to begin by saying that I do not see any prospect of an immediate full reunion. I am not to inquire who are to blame for this state of things, or whether we may not all be so far in fault.

As requested, I have weighed carefully the overtures proposed in evident kindness by the Lambeth Conference. With most of them there would be a general accordance. But there will be a decided aversion to the Fourth Article as to the Historic Episcopate as it is understood by the Churches. Churches not Episcopal interpret it as meaning that their ministers must be reordained before they can be admitted into the united Church. I am not authorized to speak for my own Church, the Presbyterian, or any other denomination. But from a large acquaint-

ance with the Churches of Europe and America, I know, as a matter of fact, that the great body of the non-Episcopal Churches are not prepared to submit to these conditions, and that it is utterly useless to try to persuade them to do so. In these circumstances I have been led to inquire whether, though not able to obtain all that we wish, we may yet secure some of the most valuable advantages of a union, these being good in themselves, and fitted to lead to something farther and higher.

If we cannot have an incorporation of the Churches, let us have a federation. It is known to all who have looked around them that there are dense districts in all our great cities, and they are increasing in number, and that there are scattered people in our villages and in our rural districts, East and West, North and South, where there is no provision for taking care of the immortal souls of all, rich and poor, old and young. This being so, as is known and acknowledged on all hands, it follows that every professing Christian, every congregation, and every Church is under obligation to inquire how this evil is to be met, and CHRIST'S command be fulfilled to preach the Gospel to every creature.

In the plan of federation, it is to be understood that a minister's care is to be primarily over his own people, and he may visit them wherever they reside, and do good among them in every way sanctioned by Scripture. But surely his duty does not end there. Like his MASTER, he has to seek in order to save that which is lost. Let a convenient district be allotted to him of which he has special charge, say of five hundred or one thousand people, where his office is to secure that every person knows that a SAVIOUR has been provided for sinners. There need be no compulsion laid on ministers to undertake this work. Those who have the spirit of the SAVIOUR will offer themselves willingly, and will be glad to find that instead of being required to scatter their energies over an undefined region, there is a special field allotted to each. The minister should take charge of the whole machinery, but he will commonly call in to work with him all his Church agency, — his elders and deacons and deaconesses, his Sabbath School teachers, and all members who are willing to work; and where his congregation is large, he should have a paid agent, male or female, to visit daily among the people. In this way CHRIST'S message of mercy will be delivered to all, — to the forgotten and forlorn, to the deserted

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?