

# The Reformation: Its Unity and Solidarity<sup>1</sup>

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The Reformation restored a New Testament truth, which as we have seen, had been largely forgotten or obscured throughout the Middle Ages. Men realised once more the primitive conception of the Church as a body of believers acknowledging the One Lord, and professing the One Faith in Christ as Saviour and Redeemer; and its members being baptised by One Spirit of Unity. They also learnt that they could belong to the Catholic or Universal Church of Christ far more perfectly by *not* belonging to the Church of Rome. They learnt this, not only because of the corrupt doctrines which the Roman Church had added to the Catholic Faith, but also because of its intolerant unchristlike attitude of “forbidding” those “who follow not with us.” The medieval and Roman Church confined the Universal Church of Christ to “all those who profess and call themselves papalists”; the Reformers in the language of our own liturgy and Bidding Prayer, defined the “Catholic Church” as “all who profess and call themselves Christians.” And they taught us to pray for “Christ’s holy Catholic Church, i.e. for all Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world.”

But the Reformation was in the main a disconnected, sporadic, spontaneous movement, rather than an organised and internationally concerted revolt against medieval teaching and worship. The one great unifying link between the Reformers of different countries was their common appeal to the Scriptures as the final and divine *Rule of Faith*. It was conspicuously through this appeal to the Scriptures that the doctrinal Reformation was a return to primitive Catholic Truth. And we should not forget that in this respect Wycliffe justified the title bestowed on him of being the “Morning Star of the Reformation.” For he had fully anticipated this Catholic appeal. “If,” he said, “there were a hundred Popes supported by all the mendicant friars turned into Cardinals, we could only believe them in regard to matters of faith in as far as they were able to verify their words from the Bible.” Exactly the same appeal was made by the German Reformers at the Diet of Spires in 1529, when they affirmed that “The Word of God is the only truth, the sure rule of all doctrine and life and can never fail or deceive us.” In fact it was this historic positive “Protest” which fastened on the Reformers the title of “Protestant.” And our own English Reformers also accepted it for exactly the same reason as their Lutheran brethren. “Call me ‘Protestant’ who listeth,” said Bishop Ridley. “My ‘Protestation’ shall be thus, that my mind is and ever shall be, to set forth the true sense and meaning of God’s most holy Word, and not to decline from the same.” Unfortunately there still seems to be so much ignorance on this point, that it is necessary to emphasise the fact that “Protestant” is not a *negative* term opposed to “Catholic” in the way so many people carelessly use it. It is still not uncommon to hear even educated Church-people say—“I am not a Catholic, I am a Protestant.” This is a deplorably ignorant blunder. For a “Protestant” is one who “witnesses *for*” the truth of Holy Scripture as the Catholic “Rule of Faith.” The Protestant Reformation was primarily concerned with restoring Scriptural and Catholic Truth, and only accidentally with repudiating the medieval and Roman teaching which conflicted with primitive Truth. The “Protestant” is therefore the truest “Catholic.” As Bishop Latimer said at his Trial: “I confess a Catholic Church spread through all the world in the which no man may err, but I know perfectly by God’s holy Word that this Church is in all the world, and hath not its foundations in Rome only . . . whereas

you join together Romish and Catholic, stay there I pray you. For it is one thing to say Romish Church and another to say Catholic Church.” It is a pity that some Churchmen *today* are not more mindful of this most important distinction.

But it was this common acceptance of Holy Scripture as the sole Rule of Faith which was the great bond of unity amongst all the Reformers. In each country in Europe the Reformers were disciples of the One Book, and they were ever learning from its pages the way of pardon, peace and power over sin. And it was also from this appeal to Scripture that they discovered the falsity and the danger of the penitential and sacramental teaching of the Roman Church, and they were united in rejecting it.

Again it was from the free study of the Scripture that they were led into a practical *unity of doctrine*; while the common danger of persecution by their Romish opponents soon promoted a strong desire for a clear united declaration of their common Scriptural Faith. On apologetic and defensive grounds alone, the exhortation of the Apostle came home to them with special force—“I beseech you that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Cor. i. 10).

For this purpose Cranmer strove earnestly to procure a Conference in England of the leading Protestant divines in Edward VI’s reign, so that a concord on the main points of doctrine could be drawn up. All sections of Reformers were united in this design, and the practical success of such a Synod was assured from the fact that there were already in England, on Cranmer’s invitation, both Lutheran and “Reformed” divines, who were working together most harmoniously. But Cranmer was especially anxious for an agreement to be reached on the Sacramentarian controversy, which was at this time dividing the Lutheran and Swiss Reformers. He wrote to Melancthon emphasising the importance that “the members of the true Church should agree among themselves upon the chief heads of ecclesiastical doctrine and attest their agreements by some published document.” He also impressed on Calvin the urgency of “coming to an agreement upon the doctrine of the Sacrament.”

It is well here to notice that although the Lutheran doctrine of Consubstantiation was definitely rejected by all the other Reformers, and had occasioned a sharp division at the Conference of Marburg (1530), it did not break their fundamental solidarity. As time went on there was an increasing tendency to concentrate on the main points of common agreement, and thus present a united front to Romish antagonists. Calvin and Bullinger discovered a formula of agreement in the “*Concensus Tigurinus*” of 1549, and prominent Lutherans, like Melancthon, Bucer and Paul Fagius, were earnestly seeking a similar *rapprochement*. We get a conspicuous illustration of this conciliatory movement in a letter which Bishop Hooper wrote to Bucer in 1548. Hooper was a convinced Zwinglian, and therefore a strong opponent of the Lutheran teaching on the Sacrament, and so he entreats Bucer “not to burden the consciences of men with *Luther’s* words on the Holy Supper”; but he readily acknowledges with thankfulness the gifts of God in Luther and says that the Zurich Ministers felt that in Luther’s death “they had lost an ally and partner in their glorious work.” He assures Bucer that although he differs from his doctrine of the Eucharist, this “does not make any breach in Christian love or any hostility.”

Although political circumstances at the time prevented Cranmer from securing this united Conference of Protestant divines, his object was practically achieved in Elizabeth’s reign when the *Harmony of Protestant Confessions of Faith* was issued in 1581, and Bishop

Andrewes was able to quote this document to Cardinal Bellarmine as evidence that “we (Protestants) hold one Faith as the Harmony of our Confession showeth.” Early in this same reign Bishop Jewel had told the Swiss divines that Anglican Churchmen did not differ from their doctrine by a “nail’s breadth”; and in the next reign the celebrated French Reformed divine, Peter du Moulin, declared that the doctrine of the Anglican Articles was “wholly agreeable” to their Confession of Faith.

This statement of Jewel’s concerning the doctrinal harmony of the Anglican and Swiss Churches is confirmed by the correspondence of the Anglican divines with the foreign Reformers in Edward VI’s reign. On the Eucharist especially, their sympathies were with the Swiss and not with the Lutheran teaching. This was evidenced by the doctrine “set forth” in the “Forty-Two Articles” of 1553. An erudite effort made by Mr. C. H. Smyth in his *Cranmer and the Reformation under Edward VI* to prove that Cranmer accepted what he calls “Suvermerian” or semi-Lutheran views—a doctrine of spiritual eating—is not altogether convincing. For it overestimates and overemphasises certain figurative and symbolical statements of Cranmer’s Eucharistic teaching, to the neglect of others which are far dearer and more definite. It also ignores the fact that Zwingli himself believed in the “spiritual eating” of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. Moreover, a careful review of Cranmer’s teaching on the Eucharist leads us to the conclusion that his general position practically coincides with the “receptionist” view enunciated later by Richard Hooker: that “the real presence of Christ’s most blessed Body and Blood is not to be sought for in the Sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the Sacrament.”

But this real unity of the Reformers was not only very practically illustrated by the hospitable way in which so many refugees from the Continent were welcomed and provided for in England under Edward VI, but especially by the friendship, fellowship and help which was so generously bestowed by the Swiss and other Reformers on the English exiles while on the Continent in Mary’s reign. In Edward’s reign numbers of foreign divines and students sought refuge in England and Cranmer’s hospitality seemed boundless. Leading foreign Reformers like Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr and Paul Fagius were given important and lucrative posts at the Universities. Students were assisted financially and received as members of the different Oxford and Cambridge Colleges. Martin Micronius, the Minister of the Flemish Church in London, told Henry Bullinger that the Archbishop of Canterbury was “the chief support and promoter of our Church.” Hooper promised to help students from Zurich as far as “his slender means would allow.”

In reading the records of this close intercourse we also get incidentally many friendly and domestic touches which prove that human nature is much the same in all ages and circumstances. It is interesting to learn that a grave and learned Reformed divine possessed a “sweet tooth.” He troubled to write from London to the great Swiss Reformer Henry Bullinger, asking him to forward him a “spiced cake” of the same kind which he had tasted two years previously when at Zurich. This cake had evidently made a lasting impression on his palate, although the much-occupied Zurich theologian overlooked this trivial request. Consequently two years later, this same divine prefers his plea that a “large cake” similar to the one of such happy memories four years ago, should be sent him. Then again Mrs. Richard Hilles, a prosperous merchant’s wife, asks for Bullinger’s prayers for her approaching confinement, and thanks the eminent Reformer for his present of some shoes for her small boy of two years. Christopher Hales asks Rudolph Gualter to get six portraits of the leading foreign Reformers painted for him, to adorn the walls of his library; but much to his disgust, through the “Puritan” scruples of Burcher, his request is refused, for fear of “opening a door

to idolatry"! One imagines that photographers would have done a poor trade under a strict Puritan régime!

This close unity and friendship was put to a severely practical test with the considerable exodus of English Protestants to the Continent to escape the fury of the Marian persecution, and the foreign Reformers bore the strain most nobly. Hooper from prison made a pathetic appeal to the Church of Zurich to be "merciful to those wretched and unfortunate individuals who have fled from hence for the sake of the Christian religion." And this appeal did not fall on deaf ears. Bullinger received many refugees into his own house and the magistrates supplied the wants of many families, while the magistrates at Strasburg showed similar kindness and hospitality. Many godly merchants there defrayed the cost of the education of numbers of English youths studying for the Ministry. John Ponet, the future bishop, praises God for having placed over His Church in "this calamitous age," such a benefactor and teacher as Henry Bullinger; while in 1557 a number of exiles at Frankfort wrote a special letter of gratitude to Bullinger for his self-sacrificing efforts. "You," they say, "have not sought for any benefit for yourself but the comfort of the churches groaning under the Cross, placing your hand, as it were, under the burden and partaking and sympathising in our calamities."

The very intimate and affectionate correspondence which these Anglican exiles maintained with their Swiss benefactors during the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign, is proof that this striking spirit of unity and fellowship was not merely occasioned by necessity or misfortune. Moreover, we get remarkable evidence of this unity and solidarity between all the Reformers, even including the Lutherans, in a letter written to the Polish divine John à Lasco by Hierome Zanchius in January, 1559. Zanchius, the public Reader in Divinity at Strasburg, held moderate Lutheran views on the Eucharist, and he was fully aware that the "Elizabethan Settlement" of religion was not being conducted on Lutheran lines as far as Eucharistic doctrine was concerned. Yet he tells à Lasco, with reference to the English exiles who had just returned home, "I do not doubt that the Lord will make use of the services of many of them for the restoration of the Reformed Faith in England as a real support and strength to *all other branches of it* in Europe." "We are persuaded," he adds, "that the happy introduction of the kingdom of Christ into the kingdom of England would be no small help to *all other Churches* dispersed through Germany, Poland and other regions." These "Churches" were of course Lutheran, and he thus recognises that the fundamental unity between all the Reformed, especially in their basic appeal to the Scriptures, was far more important than any minor difference between the Lutheran or Swiss view of the Eucharist. Bishop Jewel probably correctly expressed Zanchius's views on this latter point when, referring to the Lutherans and Zwinglians, he said "in very deed they of both sides be Christians, good friends and brethren. They vary not betwixt themselves upon the principles and *foundations* of our religion . . . but upon one only question, which is neither *weighty* nor *great*, neither mistrust we, or make doubt at all, they will be shortly agreed."

When we turn to the doctrine of the "Church and the Ministry" we find that the teaching of all the Reformed Churches is in practical accord. Even in the tentative effort towards some doctrinal reform seen in the *Institution of the Christian Man* in 1537, we find the Scriptural distinction between the "Visible" and the "Invisible" aspects of the Church clearly expressed. The "invisible" Church is described as the "Company of elect and faithful people of God" both here and in heaven, "ordained to everlasting life." This teaching is amplified and emphasised in Dean Nowell's *Catechism* of 1562—"This communion of Saints," says Nowell, "cannot be perceived by our senses . . . since it is the congregation of those whom

God hath by His secret election adopted to Himself through Christ.” Yet he adds, “there is a Church of God visible . . . the tokens or marks whereof He doth show and open to us.” And Richard Hooker warns against the mistakes which have been made by failing to observe the clear difference “first between the Church of God mystical and visible, then between visible sound and corrupted,” while the prayer in our Communion office definitely implies an “invisible” aspect of the Catholic Church, when it speaks of the “mystical body of Thy Son . . . which is the blessed company of all faithful people.”

We find these same distinctions clearly made in the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession*, in the Calvinistic Scotch Confession, and in the Second Helvetic Confession (1566). The latter defines the “one Catholic Church” as “a company of the faithful, a communion of all saints, that is of them who do truly know and rightly worship and serve the true God in Jesus Christ the Saviour, spread abroad through all parts and quarters of the world.” And it adds that this Church may “be termed invisible,” because its true members “being known only to God, cannot be discerned by the judgment of man.” But in its “visible” aspect it declares, “not all that are reckoned in the number of the Church are saints and lively and true members of the Church.”

Neither is this Reformation “harmony” broken, when we turn to the question of the Ministry for the Visible Church. The same unity and unanimity is clearly evident regarding the necessary “Notes” of the Church. The Anglican Article defines these “Notes” as “the preaching of the pure Word of God” and “the due ministration of the sacraments,” a definition which is based on the almost identical language of Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession*. The outstanding Elizabethan theologian Richard Hooker declares that “the unity of the body (the Church) consists in these three things. Its members own one Lord, profess one Faith, and are initiated by one baptism. . . . In whomsoever these things are, the Church doth acknowledge them for her children, them only she holdeth for aliens and strangers, in whom these things are not found.”

It was the failure to realise this basic truth which led, as Hooker said, to the foolish question, “Where did our Church lurk . . . before the birth of Martin Luther?” “As if we were,” Hooker adds scornfully, “of opinion that Luther did erect a new Church of Christ.”

The French Confession and the Second Helvetic Confession, both insist on the same two “notes” of “sincere preaching” and “ministration of the Sacraments ordained by Christ”: while the Scottish Confession of 1560 adds to these two “Ecclesiastical discipline uprightly administered as God’s Word prescribes.”

It may of course be objected that while all this is true in *theory*, in *practice* this Reformed harmony was broken on the question of Church Polity, by the fact that the Anglican Church required episcopal ordination while almost all the Continental Reformed Churches either rejected or neglected it. But a careful examination of the facts and evidence will clearly prove that this objection cannot be maintained, since it is evident that the Anglican and all the other Reformed Churches held the common belief that there was *no obligatory divine form of polity* laid down in Scripture for the Christian Church. The Anglican Reformers, it is true, both in Edward VI’s reign and also under Elizabeth, retained the ancient historic Catholic form of government and Ministry, but there is abundant evidence to prove that they did not regard episcopacy as a necessary “note” of the Church, but rather as an ancient scriptural and expedient form of Church organisation which the State had decided to retain for the Anglican Church. Cranmer had declared “that in the beginning of Christ’s religion bishops and priests

were no two things, but both one office, and that in the New Testament he that is appointed to be a bishop or priest needeth no consecration by the Scriptures, for election and appointing thereto is sufficient." Prebendary John Bradford, the martyr, says: "You shall not find in all the Scripture this your essential point of succession of bishops." Consequently the retention of the historic Catholic polity did not in any way interfere with the fellowship and unity of spirit and interest, shown by the early Anglican Reformers to their Continental Reformed brethren.

It should also be remembered that it was usually only the force of adverse circumstances which occasioned the abandonment of episcopal government by the Continental Reformed Churches. Melancthon in Article VII of his *Apology* states clearly: "The severity of the bishops is the cause whereby that canonical polity is dissolved anywhere, *which we very greatly desire to preserve.*" In the *Wittenberg Reformation* of 1545 the Lutheran theologians declare their willingness to accept episcopal ordination and polity if the bishops "will maintain true doctrine and the right use of the Sacraments and the abolition of private masses." Calvin and Bullinger actually wrote to Edward VI offering to have bishops in their Churches so as to illustrate the real organic unity amongst those adhering to the Reformation. Certainly the "Elizabethan Settlement" did nothing to change this spirit of unity and fellowship. The Ordinal reaffirmed the Anglican determination to "continue, and reverently esteem" the orders of bishops, priests and deacons which had existed "from the Apostles' time"; but there was no thought or wish that this "National" regulation should challenge the validity of the Ministry and sacraments of the Scotch or Continental non-episcopal Churches.

It is true that the rigid enforcement of the accepted principle of "National" or "territorial" religions, presented at times certain *legal* obstacles for the exercise of *non-episcopal* ministries in the episcopally governed National English Church. But the Act of 1571 (XIII Eliz. cap XII) was interpreted as permitting foreign presbyterian ministers to exercise their ministry and receive cures of souls in England on their acceptance of the Articles of Religion; and several availed themselves of this privilege. Accordingly Elizabethan theologians and Churchmen were most careful to express their teaching on the Ministry in merely general terms which could not be considered or construed as reflecting on the value of non-episcopal Orders. This indefinite language employed in Article XXIII is all the more significant because of the revision of the Article in 1571. It was at this very period that a new and intolerant party of English Presbyterians was arising, led by Thomas Cartwright, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, which denied the Scripturalness of episcopal government. This was the precise time therefore, if the Anglican bishops believed in the doctrine of "No bishop, no Church," to make this teaching clear in their authorised Confession of Faith, which was then being ratified. But instead of such a pronouncement, we find only ten years later that Archbishop Grindal officially declared that a Scotch presbyterian divine had been ordained according to the "laudable form and rite of the Reformed Church of Scotland"; and he accordingly licensed him "to celebrate the divine offices and minister the Sacraments throughout the whole Province of Canterbury." We get also from the language of this licence an incidental testimony to the close accord in *doctrine*, as well as in fellowship, then acknowledged between the Churches of England and Scotland, since it states that "the congregation of that county of Lothian is conformable to the orthodox faith and sincere religion now received in this realm of England and established by public authority." This testimony is especially significant because episcopacy was at this time (1582) abrogated in the Scotch Church.

This practice of admitting foreign presbyterially ordained divines to cures of souls in England was continued till the middle of the next century according to the contemporary testimony of such trustworthy witnesses as Bishop Cosin, Bishop Burnet, Lord Chancellor Clarendon and others.

This full expression of unity and fellowship has, however, been questioned on account of three or four special cases when it is asserted that Elizabethan Churchmen refused to accept the validity of foreign presbyterian Orders. The names usually brought forward in support of this contention are those of Dean Whittingham of Durham, Walter Travers, the Reader at the Temple Church, and Adrian Saravia, a Dutch Reformed divine, and Robert Wright, a Puritan minister. All these, except Saravia, were cases of *Englishmen* who had obtained presbyterian ordination *abroad*. And we have to remember in this connection that at this time the toleration of different religious systems or polities *in one State* was unknown, and the “*cujus regio ejus religio*” principle was strictly enforced. Consequently for *Englishmen* to attempt to “contract out” of their own National system of established Church government by securing presbyterian ordination abroad, and then try to exercise this ministry in England was considered as tantamount to rebellion against the law of “Church and Realm” concerning Ordination in the English Church. For it was really an attempt to thwart the National rule for episcopal ordination which had been laid down as best suited for England. Therefore in strict “law” all *Englishmen* trying to exercise such non-episcopal ministries could have been at once refused as not *legally* qualified. But in practice, however much such attempts were discredited as clandestine and unpatriotic, this strictly “legal” policy was not pursued; and this fact is in itself another illustration of the tender regard and solicitude of the English bishops and clergy for their former friends and benefactors in the foreign Reformed Churches. They were reluctant *in any way* even to seem to reflect on their ministries. But when such “disloyal” English Puritan ministers, in addition to securing their Orders in this illegal manner, also stirred up faction and strife by reviling the Anglican Liturgy or polity and discrediting its clergy, it was not very surprising that they encountered opposition and that their professed foreign credentials were narrowly questioned.

Such was the case with William Whittingham, who obstinately refused to conform to the “habits,” and was also so contentious that Archbishop Sandys was led to question whether he had really been ordained presbyterially at Geneva. At the same time the Archbishop expressly disclaimed any intention of discrediting the Orders of the Church of Geneva. Travers was a similar case. He was, says Fuller, greatly “disaffected to the discipline,” and he deliberately controverted the teaching given by Hooker, who was the Master of the Temple, where Travers was the Reader. So that, as Fuller quaintly expresses it: “The pulpit spoke pure Canterbury in the morning and Geneva in the afternoon.” But here again Archbishop Whitgift clearly pointed out that it was Travers’s “contempt for the Ministry of his own Church” and “the condemning of the kind of Ordering of Ministers” in England, by sneaking across to Antwerp to receive presbyterian Orders, which led his position and ministry to be questioned, at least as to its *legality*. This, in fact, was the line which Whitgift was ultimately forced to take with Travers. He himself had previously elected Travers as a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, but he soon discovered his great hostility to the established Church discipline, and he declared that he “never found any who showed less submission and humility.”

Consequently when Lord Burghley petitioned the Queen to appoint Travers to the Mastership of the Temple instead of Hooker (in 1585), Whitgift warned her against him “as likely to do very much harm.” He told Elizabeth that “Travers hath been and is one of the chief and principal authors of dissension in this Church, a contemner of the Book of Prayers, an earnest

seeker of innovation, and either is of no degree of ministry at all, or else ordered beyond the seas, *not according to the form in this Church of England used.*” It is well to notice here that Whitgift does not here deny the validity of this foreign presbyterian “ordering,” or call it “of no degree of ministry at all”; but simply states that it is not *legally* regular or valid for an *Englishman*. All the same, a little later, Whitgift tells Burghley that if “time and years have altered” Travers’s “disposition” and attitude (which he doubts), he “will be ready to do him good as any friend he hath.” But as the Archbishop found that Travers, by his writings and actions, was just as obstinate and mischievous an opponent of episcopal government and discipline as ever, he determined, before he would consent to his appointment to the Mastership or any other post, to make him prove that “he is a minister ordered according to the *laws* of the Church of England.” This was a most natural and sensible way of excluding men of this troublesome type. The wisdom of this policy was at once apparent, since Travers, who was then Reader at the Temple, soon made Hooker’s life miserable by continually and publicly from the pulpit controverting his teaching, until at length he was suspended.

With regard to Saravia, who was admitted to preferments and benefices in England, there is no evidence to show that he was ever re-ordained by an English bishop, and the inference is entirely against any such supposition. He certainly wrote strongly in favour of episcopacy, but he expressly taught that when bishops, as in the Roman Church, “fell away into idolatry,” the “episcopal government of the Church is devolved upon the pious and orthodox presbyters.” He would certainly regard the Dutch Reformed Church as being in this position of “necessity.”

The case of Robert Wright is more complicated and requires more detailed consideration. Bishop Frere declares that Wright was “convented in 1582 for taking upon himself to minister, having only received Presbyterian orders at Antwerp.” But a careful examination of the actual evidence available will not support this assertion. There is little doubt from the statements or “Charges” made against Wright at his different “Trials” or “Examinations,” that he was a very stiff and mischievous Puritan, noted for his “nonconformities” and also for his very uncharitable and sweeping criticisms of all non-Puritan clergy and dignitaries of the Church as “dumb dogs” and “clogs of anti-Christ.” Wright had spent about thirteen years at Cambridge University and during the last seven years he had acted as a sort of lay Puritan preacher by reason of his status of M.A. He left Cambridge towards the end of 1578 being then of “full purpose of serving in the Ministry when God should call him thereto.” Obviously from this statement he was not *then* ordained. But about this time he was welcomed into the Puritan household of the second Lord Rich at Rochford Hall in Essex. Here by a sort of “Anabaptist” “call” of the “household,” Lord Rich appointed Wright as a sort of private Chaplain and “esteemed him as his Pastor.” He also actually appealed to Bishop Aylmer to grant Wright a Public Preachers’ licence. Aylmer naturally refused this request, when as Wright says, “he understood I was no minister.” Wright himself confesses that he did not regard this irregular “call” of the “household” as any ordination, and admits that he only “took himself to be a private man to do them some good till they might have a sufficient Pastor.” But writing in May, 1582, he adds that “he had been called since the death of the old lord unto the Ministry.” As the second Lord Rich died in February, 1581, this would seem good evidence to show that Wright’s ordination took place *after* this date, since he also adds that “this (present) lord being desirous to use his Ministry, with promise that he would labour to have it public, and my lord of London not utterly denying Licence, but saying he would first see some testimony that the said Minister was ordained Minister.” Wright in this same account also tells us the manner of his ordination with an indication of its date. He says that “being in Antwerp, whither he went to see the Churches from *whence*

*idolatry had been lately driven*, and English Merchants desiring him to assist in the Ministry he was religiously ordained thereunto and there did execute it.” At his trial in November, 1581, Wright also declared that Villiers, the Minister of a Reformed Church at Antwerp, had ordained him. Now in July, 1581, a definite Edict had suspended the exercise of the Romish religion in Antwerp, so that if Wright had been ordained there shortly after this date, his description of “Churches from whence idolatry had been lately driven” would be exactly accurate. This approximate date for his ordination is also confirmed by a reply which he made in an Examination which he underwent while in prison early in 1582. This answer implied that he had been “called by the Reformed Church” some time within the past year. As Wright was arrested and examined in October, 1581, for condemning the observance of the Queen’s birthday as “making her an idol,” he must have visited Antwerp and been ordained some time between July and October, 1581. In fact it was in September, 1581, that the third Lord Rich asked Aylmer to license Wright, and received the reply from the bishop that he must first receive testimony that Wright had been ordained. In addition to that evidence Aylmer refused to license Wright unless “he would subscribe to the orders of the Church.” That is, that he would promise to “conform” to the Church regulations for worship. Lord Rich apparently could not at that time supply the necessary evidence of Wright’s ordination at Antwerp, and so Aylmer reported that “he could not tell how or where he was ordained.” In November Wright was imprisoned for “maligning the Queen and for rejecting the Book and many other disorders”; but no specific charge was made against his foreign Orders, and there is no evidence to show that Aylmer ever described Wright as “no minister” *after* he had been “called by the Reformed Church to the Ministry.” The fact that seven years later he was instituted to a benefice in Suffolk would point to the definite acceptance of his foreign presbyterian Orders. There is nothing in Aylmer’s actions in this case to lead us to think that he differed materially from Archbishop Whitgift in his estimate of episcopacy or of the value of non-episcopal Orders. “We do not take upon us,” said Whitgift, to Cartwright, “either to blame or to condemn other Churches, for such Orders as they have received *most fit for their estates.*” “As no certain manner or form of electing ministers is prescribed in Scripture, every Church may do therein as it shall seem most expedient.” “The ordering of ministers,” he adds, “does not appertain only to bishops . . . and it doth not therefore follow that there must always be one kind and form of government.”

Just as the Reformers generally agreed that there was no one essential divinely appointed form of Ministry, so they were in accord that there was no such thing as a necessary uniform “Catholic order of worship and usage. The Anglicans expressed this in the language of Article XXXIV that “every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man’s authority, so that all things be done to edifying.” We find therefore a diversity of usage and services and ceremonies amongst the different Reformed Churches, but an examination of the various Reformed Liturgies will show that these divergencies only affected minor questions of ritual or ceremony and did not affect doctrine. A further careful study of these different Liturgies will also disprove a common view that while the Anglicans conserved a number of Catholic and ancient elements and customs in their worship, the other Reformed Churches completely disregarded such standards and broke away from everything which could claim the sanction of antiquity.

There is, in fact, on the other hand a surprising agreement in the general acceptance or retention of definitely ancient and Catholic rites and customs amongst the Reformed Churches. Thus the imposition of Hands in Ordination was retained in all these Churches. Fasting during Lent, special Orders and Forms of Excommunication and Absolution, as well

as the use of Sponsors at Baptism and the observance of Festival and Saints' Days, were all but universal. This desire to retain as much as possible of ancient traditional ritual customs and usages was specially evident in the Swedish and other Lutheran Churches, and the *Augsburg Confession* describes it as a "calumnious falsehood that all the ceremonies, all things instituted of old, are abolished in our churches." Luther was most insistent in claiming that the German Evangelical Church "was a member of the old true Church, inasmuch as it possessed the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the power of the Keys, the Word and preaching, without any addition of man, the ancient Faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed."

Even if the distinctively "Reformed" Churches were less conservative than the Lutheran, there was also no desire in them to discard ancient forms of worship and usage which were innocent, helpful and Scriptural. Consequently in the Scotch, Swiss, French and even Dutch Liturgies, we find many prayers and features which are similar, if not identical, to those of the Anglican Liturgy; and this is especially true of the Communion Service. A French Reformed Professor of Divinity probably accurately summed up the general attitude of the foreign Reformed Churches on this question when he said that "set forms of Liturgy were composed and prescribed by the several authors of the Reformation in the countries where they lived *varying as little as might be from the ancient forms of the Primitive Church*. And these set forms have been happily used with profit and advantage by the Reformed Churches of every Nation."

We may therefore confidently claim that as regards respect for Christian antiquity and the profitableness of ancient and primitive worship and usages, there was no real breach in the unity and solidarity of the Reformation Movement.

### **C. SYDNEY CARTER**

Endnotes:

- 1) The third of four lectures delivered at Dean Wace House, 1935.