

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY
ABOUT THE CHURCH?

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WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE CHURCH?

BEING

THE SUBSTANCE OF TWO PAPERS READ BEFORE THE REUNION
CONFERENCE AT LUCERNE, ON JULY 12 & 14, 1893.

BY

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“The doctrine of the Church has been nearly erased with many of us, not indeed from our creed, but from our practical apprehension of religion.”—GLADSTONE, *Church Principles*, p. 118.

“Many Dissenters have completely lost consciousness of the Church as such.”—Mr. H. P. HUGHES, *Review of the Churches*, iv. p. 375.

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PREFACE

It may be well that I should explain briefly the circumstances which have led to the publication of these papers. Something of the kind appears to be necessary, if only to account for their fragmentary character.

On September 16, 1892, the day when the Grindelwald Conference on "The Reunion of the Churches" came to a close, I addressed a letter to the *Times*, which raised the question of *Polychurchism*, affirming that there are no "Churches," properly so called, in England to reunite, God's Church being "one body;" and I expressed the hope that some future Conference might have the courage to face this and similar questions, which must be faced, if ever we are to touch bottom. This led to a long correspondence, which, however, was void of any practical results.

Accordingly, when a second Conference on the same basis was announced as about to be held at Lucerne, after some hesitation I wrote to the promoters, asking whether, if I attended it, I might hope for a hearing. The result was a cordial and courteous invitation to attend, with the assurance that I should have ample opportunity of stating my position.

I therefore did attend, and on July 12 read a paper on *Polychurchism*, the substance of which appeared in the *Church Times* of July 29. This gave rise to so much discussion, that a second evening was assigned to me, to enable me to reply to the objections which were alleged. Most of this second paper appeared in the *Church Times* of August 5. The two papers were also

printed *in extenso* in the *Review of the Churches* of that month.

One result of the publication of these addresses was—a bundle of letters from different parts of England and some from Canada, urging that they should be reprinted in a cheap form for general circulation.

An exact reprint appearing to me to be of doubtful utility, I have rewritten them, adapting them, as far as I could, to the wants of a humbler class of readers. I hope that in this their revised shape their usefulness may be considerably increased.

As they are both little more than *outlines*, I may perhaps be allowed to refer the reader who desires further information on the subject to two works in which I have endeavoured to afford it, viz., *Church or Chapel?—an Eirenicon*, and *English Nonconformity and Christ's Christianity*, both published by Messrs. Wells Gardner, Darton & Co.

WEIMAR, October 3, 1893.