

## **The Church of the Future.\***

**THE charge of the Archbishop might easily be passed by, with very many other documents of the sort which have a**

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merely ephemeral interest, were it not for the quiet assumption by which his Grace attempts to speak for the entire Episcopate of the Anglican Church, not omitting the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. No one will ever know exactly what has been passed upon in those private Synods, held at Lambeth, to which American bishops have been twice admitted. There are published declarations which appear from time to time—*pronunciamentos* which are entitled to respectful consideration, and some of them to much comment. If it be true that the Archbishop is the spokesman of the collective Episcopate of the Anglican Communion, there can be no question that his charge is most important. There is nevertheless some doubtfulness felt about this claim.

American Churchmen are not much concerned with the *obiter dicta* of the Archbishop as regards the English controversies about the Public Worship Regulation Act and the Burials Bill. They will be more interested in what his Grace has to say about the other contests of the day. If his proposed new and comprehensive Church were anything more than an impossible dream, the Archbishop might hope for many helpers in his schemes; but he ought to know—and if he does not know the fact already he must be told—that dissenters, whether English or American, are not to be caught by his seemingly very charitable compromises. Given those few dogmas which his Grace puts as the required teaching of his "Church of the Future," they are simply such teachings as are already common in nine out of ten of those separated denominations to which he proposes to truckle. As a *pessimist* or as a Broad Churchman, the Archbishop of Canterbury can suggest any amount of lowering or belittling the claims or the teaching of the Church of which he is the "official" head. But he cannot be taken as the exponent of the opinions or the teaching of his suffragans. Certainly he is without authority to speak for American bishops. Every one knows that Dr. Tait is merely an Erastian. No one is insane enough to believe that he speaks even officially, except as the more than possibly un-infallible occupant ("by luck") of his See. No one who reads this charge doubts that he is amiable and extremely liberal, as the world counts "liberality" and "catholicity." At the same time his schemes of "comprehension" have been proposed over and over again, and have an ample illustration in the want of success which characterizes the American and Irish attempts in that direction. It would be at once the question which Dissenters or Atheists, Deists or Rationalists, are entitled to put to his Grace: If you dislike or disapprove our system or teaching, what do you

propose as a substitute for it? The answer is not far to seek. The Archbishop demands for his own opinions an acceptance which will hardly be granted to them.

C. M. P.

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