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THE CHURCHMAN

June, 1916.

The Month.

**A Criticism
and an Appeal.** THE National Mission of Repentance and Hope has been, and we trust ever will be, so sympathetically referred to in these pages that we hope it will not be misunderstood if we venture upon a word of criticism and a word of appeal in regard to it. The criticism is this: there seems to be a tendency in certain quarters to exploit the Mission in the interests of one party in the Church, and that party by no means the most representative of the Church itself. Such a course of action is a great mistake from every point of view, and from communications which reach us from various quarters there is no doubt it is becoming increasingly resented. No doubt the divided state of the Church presents difficulties in the way of united action, but having regard to the purpose of the Mission, it was hoped that the deep solemnity of the occasion would have facilitated the laying aside for the time of all points of disagreement in order that the whole Church might proclaim with united voice the message of the Gospel to the people. It is not yet too late to secure a substantial measure of agreement among all who will put the cause of the Mission above and before their own preferences, but if this is to be done the course of preparation will have somewhat to be changed. It is not right, for instance, that Retreats, Quiet Days, and Services of Preparation, which Churchmen of all schools of thought are expected to attend, should be held at churches where the methods and practices are, to say the least, unacceptable to a large section of those invited; nor is it right that on such occasions the chief speakers should be those associated with extreme views. But even these things could be tolerated, objectionable to many as they are, if only the conductors would abstain from dealing

with controversial questions, either of doctrine or practice. But this is precisely what, in many cases, they do not do. In not a few instances of which we have heard the spiritual usefulness of some Quiet Day or Retreat has been entirely destroyed because the conductor of it has seemed to be more anxious to promote his own views than to give a spiritual uplift to the people whom he is addressing. It is in these respects that we venture to make an appeal to the authorities of the Mission, both Diocesan and Central. Is it not possible to arrange that gatherings of clergy, which are to be representative of the Church and not of one particular party in it, shall be held in churches which occupy ecclesiastically a Central position? Is it not possible, again, to arrange that these gatherings shall be addressed by men who are known for their spiritual power rather than for their advocacy of extreme views? Is it not possible, once more, to arrange that speakers at such gatherings of clergy shall carefully avoid controversial subjects and give themselves more fully to prayer and the exposition of God's holy Word? These three points are of very real importance and need the immediate attention of the authorities unless they are prepared to see much of the good work of the Mission wrecked on the rocks of theological controversy.

The more simple the preparation for the Mission
The Value of can be, the better; and the more simple the Message
Simplicity, of the Mission can be made, the greater will be its
 spiritual effects. Cannot the Church make up its mind to get back, just for once, to the simplicity of the Gospel? It is the Gospel the Church needs to-day; and we should like to know that the exposition of the simple truths of the Gospel—salvation from the guilt and power of sin through the Precious Blood of Christ and full equipment for spiritual service through the indwelling in the heart of the believer of the Holy Spirit—was given due emphasis at all gatherings of the clergy held in preparation for the Mission. "But these things are elementary," objects some one. Yes, they are elementary, and it is because they are elementary that they are so often overlooked. The Church as the witness of God has largely lost its spiritual power, and it will never recover it until it gets back to, and appropriates anew, the simplest truths of the Gospel. And as with the Church, so with the people: it is the

Gospel they need, the Gospel in all its simplicity and saving power. If the National Mission is to "turn the world upside down" as the Apostles did, it will only do so in so far as it adopts Apostolic methods, and the one method the earliest missionaries adopted was the preaching of a full salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. In this connexion we may refer to the letter issued by the Committee of the Church Pastoral-Aid Society to all clerical grantees. The counsel they offered was most timely and useful—

We do not need to seek a new message. The message of a perfect Atonement for sin made on the Cross, sufficient for the sins of the whole world, efficient in all who believe, is still the heart of the unchanging Gospel, the only Good News for guilty sinners. But we may need to learn to convey that message in fresh, living language, such as the people of to-day can appreciate and understand.

We shall not ignore the many difficulties that must arise, but we believe that the clergy, and especially those faithful men who hold posts of honour in poor and populous parishes, will find it true, that, "When a man is face to face with his great difficulty, he is on the verge of making his great discovery." We believe, therefore, that every one of us will thankfully and boldly plunge into the campaign inspired by the conviction that God in His mercy is giving him one of the most magnificent opportunities of his life, and that in the courage of faith we shall this autumn see wonders of grace wrought by the Holy Spirit, without Whose power and blessing all our efforts must be in vain. If the National Mission is conducted on these lines we are persuaded that it will result in a great spiritual blessing of which the Church and the world will feel the uplifting effects for generations yet to come.

The Dean of Durham has entered the lists in
 Dean Henson's
 View. opposition to the proposal to make the Holy Communion the principal Sunday service. His letter, which appeared in the *Record* and the *Challenge*, puts so forcibly and so clearly some of the objections to the proposal, that it may be useful to transfer some of its chief passages to these pages—

The change proposed is of the utmost gravity, and must needs induce consequences of great magnitude. The issue is obscured by the references to the Holy Communion as "the Lord's own service," and so forth, for nobody questions the origin or supreme importance of the Sacrament, but only the position it ought to have in the working system of the National Church here and now. There is nothing in the sacred record of the institution, and nothing whatever in the writings of the Apostles, which bears directly or obviously on this question. We are left to experience and the fitness of things. Here it cannot be improper for an Anglican to recall that the change proposed is literally an "undoing" of the Reformation. That may or may not be wise, for Reformers, as little as popes and fathers, were infallible; but at least it must be admitted to be a formidable step for a Reformed Church to take.

What would be the probable consequences? I discern the following—

1. An immense impetus would be given to the process by which the Holy Communion in the Church of England is being conformed to the Mass in the Church of Rome.

2. The connexion of the Lord's Supper with the communion of the faithful will everywhere be brought into difficult question.

3. Mattins or Evensong (or possibly both, because it is not difficult to imagine arguments for extending the advantage which *ex hypothesi* is secured by substituting "the Lord's own service" for some inferior form of worship) will practically fall out of the use and wont of English Churchmen.

4. The public reading of the Scriptures will tend to be limited to those portions of the New Testament which are appointed to be read as "Gospels" and "Epistles."

5. The Reformed Church of England will make a sharp departure from the general tradition of Reformed Churches and approximate to the unreformed type.

6. Much offence will be given to many loyal Anglican laity in many parishes.

On any showing these are formidable consequences, and a project which could with any measure of plausibility be said to entail them ought not to be bound on the National Church in the "hustle and bustle" of a "Mission," but by the deliberate and determined action of the Church's Executive after adequate counsel taken in the Church's assemblies.

There is another consideration not unworthy of attention. This much-pressed substitution of the Holy Communion for Mattins is not unknown among us. Of recent years it has been effected in many parishes. Will any serious, unprejudiced, and informed man be prepared to maintain that the problem of commending Christianity to the acceptance of the English people is better solved in those parishes than elsewhere? Have the clergy working thus any marked superior spiritual success over those working on the traditional Anglican lines? For the whole question turns on this, if once (as I conceive you must) you allow that the appeal lies to experience. Is Christianity more securely rooted, and more fruitfully active, in Roman Catholic communities than in Protestant? Is the failure, if failure there be, more marked in England than in France?

We expressed our own view in last month's *CHURCHMAN*, and we have nothing to add at present beyond this: the proposal is being pushed vigorously, and is finding favourable consideration in some rather unexpected quarters; it is, therefore, of the utmost importance that those who hold to the traditional view should be carefully on their guard lest in some weak moment they are tempted to yield to so specious a proposal without fully considering its true import and meaning.

The *English Church Review* seeks to explain what "To Plead the Passion," precisely is that which the presence of habitual communicants who do not intend to receive at that particular Eucharist represents. "What is it," it asks, "that they conceive themselves to be doing? Why are they there?" These

are very important questions, and the *English Church Review* faces them as follows—

The meaning of the practice is that Jesus Christ, Who was once for all sacrificed as our Victim in the Death of the Cross, never ceases to present Himself in our behalf to the Father, according to the Scripture teaching, "He has gone to appear in the presence of God for us." Now the effect of the Eucharistic Consecration is to secure the Eucharistic Presence of Christ. He is literally there, invested with the signs which represent His Death; there with the intention of being presented, and of presenting Himself, to the Father. Thus the Eucharist is Christ's self-presentation before the Father. It places before the eyes of God the Death of His Son. It is infinitely pleasing in God's sight. It renders Calvary effective towards the worshippers. It is the divinely appointed way of pleading the Passion. It is the Atonement which the non-communicating attendant celebrates.

Surely it must be good for souls to stay in church and plead the Redemption. The Offering is, of course, no substitute for the reception. The reception is the ultimate purpose for which the Eucharist was ordained. But there may be reasons why the individual is not prepared to receive at a given time. That is no reason why he should not plead. Surely it is better to plead the Passion than to go away. Whenever this use of the Eucharist as an Offering is realized, belief in Redemption is strengthened.

Against this teaching of the *English Church Review* Not a Sacrifice, we may set that of a sound and accurate theologian, the Bishop of Durham. One passage from his contribution to *English Church Teaching* (Longmans, Green & Co.) will suffice—

Is the Holy Communion (he asks) itself a sacrifice, in the sense that in it the Church re-offers the Christ to His Father, in a way at all resembling, or continuing, the great Sacrifice of Atonement? We answer as earnestly as possible, No. The thought is not countenanced by Holy Scripture. There are, indeed, certain passages often quoted in its favour; they are quoted, but without adequate ground. One is: "*Do this in remembrance of Me.*" It is said that this should be rendered, "*Offer this as My memorial-sacrifice.*" But the Greek words quite refuse to bear this strain. The Greek word rendered "*do*" is exactly as simple and elastic as our word "*do.*" Like it, it may mean, in a clear context, "*do a sacrifice*"; but it wants a clear context to give it the meaning. And, as a fact, it is *never* (unless here) in the New Testament, used in a sacrificial context. Again the word rendered "*remembrance*" is never for certain used in the Greek of the Scriptures for a sacrificial "*memorial*"; Levit. xxiv. 7 is the one very doubtful exception. The word denotes "*recollection,*" that is, here, the Christian's believing recollection of his dying Lord. It is remarkable that the early Christian writers, with one very doubtful exception, do not find the meaning "*offer*" and "*memorial*" in the words; they explain them simply in the sense in which our English Bible renders them.

Dr. Guy Warman's little book, "The Evangelical
A Stimulating Movement: its Message and its Achievement," furnishes
Story. a wonderfully stimulating story, and should prove a tonic in times when men are apt to bemoan the dark and troublous

times through which we are now passing. The period just before the rise of the Evangelical Movement was even darker than our own day, yet God used it to bring light and life to the Church, and history may repeat itself. "There is need," says Dr. Guy Warman, "of some great movement which shall bring us back to God. Some of us have faith enough to believe that it is coming; some of us have hope enough to trust that we may have some little share, as instruments in the hand of God, in helping the movement to come. How shall we prepare ourselves to be useful? There are many ways: the way of prayer and of thoughtfulness; of service and of sacrifice; there is also the small but not unimportant way of studying the movements of the past." Such a study of the Evangelical Movement Dr. Guy Warman gives us in these pages, giving us pen-portraits of its leaders, summarizing its messages, describing its activities, estimating its influence, and pointing out its message for our own times. We commend this little volume most heartily to the attention of our readers. There is much we should like to quote from it. Almost every page tempts us to snatch a sentence or two, so vivid is the description and so forcible the application, but we must yield only in one case. In the section on the leaders of the Movement Dr. Guy Warman refers among others to Daniel Wilson, Vicar of Islington, and afterwards Bishop of Calcutta. It was in 1824 that he came to Islington, then a suburb of London with a population of 30,000. The seatholders of the Parish Church regarded it as their personal property, and the Vicar as their private chaplain. He had no easy task:—

Wilson won his way, however, and made changes which the critics, who stood aloof, regarded as revolutionary and insane. He divided the parish into districts and appointed visitors. He opened fifteen Sunday Schools. He had an eight o'clock Celebration of Holy Communion, then rarely found except in Evangelical churches, and regarded as a curious innovation there. He conducted a service on every Saint's day, and said the Litany on Wednesdays and Fridays. It is not surprising that at one Confirmation alone he presented 780 candidates for Confirmation to his Bishop. It is not surprising that he built new churches to seat some 6,000 more of his parishioners. It is not surprising that he left behind him a flourishing parish and a well-organized Church. It is not surprising that his influence still lives.

Yet Wilson was at Islington for only eight years, and this story of the work he accomplished there in so short a time may be commended to the attention of those who are always sneering at Evangelicals as deficient in Churchmanship.

“The Best Witness.” We permit ourselves one more quotation from the Dean of Canterbury’s speech on Biblical criticism, to which we referred last month, for on the main practical question the Dean spoke with remarkable acuteness. What, he asked, is the purpose of all these disputes ?

We want to know whether we can trust the Bible in reading is straightforwardly ; whether it is true history from the beginning to the end of it. I do not know that any reasonable Englishman would trouble himself to maintain that every single detail that is mentioned in the present texts of the Old and the New Testament is exactly correct. There are some apparent discrepancies. If there were none in such a Book it would be the greatest miracle that ever happened. It never disturbs you if two people telling a story make a slight discrepancy in detail. If God has not thought fit to preserve in absolute accuracy the original texts of the New Testament, we must expect to find some difficulties and discrepancies. But that does not affect the question whether the story is true. What we are concerned with is to tell the average man, the man in the cottage, the working man, that the Bible is infallible in a general, reasonable sense ; that as he reads it through he may place his confidence in what he reads, in the statements that the Bible makes respecting the will of God. The Bible itself is in its broad statement the best witness to its general historical truth.

This is the conclusion of the whole matter, for if a book is discredited historically, can it continue to carry with it any animating force in the realm of morals ?

