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THE CHURCHMAN

March, 1918.

The Month.

C.M.S.
Affairs.

THE Report of the Memorials Sub-Committee presented to, and adopted by, the General Committee of the Church Missionary Society, on Tuesday, February 12, was so carefully balanced in its conclusions that neither set of Memorialists can claim a victory. From the point of view of the Society, and the Society's work, this is a great gain. It was the work of the Sub-Committee to heal, if so it might be, the divisions over grave questions which were threatening to split the C.M.S. in twain; and if they had issued anything approaching a partisan Report the results must have been disastrous. Yet it is not by any means a colourless statement. On the contrary, on all the points in dispute the Report is clear, emphatic and convincing; and the conclusions assume a greatly added importance from the truly remarkable fact that they are subscribed to by each of the twenty-one members of the Sub-Committee. When the composition of that body is considered such unanimity is little short of wonderful. The members consisted of three groups, of seven members each—one group representing the original memorialists, another the counter-memorialists, and the third nominated by the President of the Society. There was all the material available for discord; but instead of that the result has been absolute harmony. How was it achieved? The Report explains it thus: "Prayer was made without ceasing unto God for us by friends of the Society. Those prayers were wonderfully answered." And the Sub-Committee offer "humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God for His manifest guidance and help in all our deliberations." Friends of the Society will join heartily in this thanksgiving to the Most High; and, next, they will not fail to recognize how very much they owe to the Bishop of Liverpool, whose wise statesmanship and leadership proved, under God, of such unspeakable value to

the Sub-Committee, of which he was Chairman. It is a great report the Sub-Committee have produced, and it will accomplish great things. "May we not believe," the Sub-Committee say, "that His loving-kindness to us is an earnest of His guidance and help in the near future, and that, with the good hand of our God upon us, this same spirit of mutual confidence, of Christian courtesy, of keen consideration for the convictions of others, and of overmastering desire for the glory of God, combined with a burning jealousy for the truth, will be given to the friends and supporters of the C.M.S. throughout the world?"

**The
Conclusions
Examined.**

The full text of the Report has been so widely circulated that it is not necessary, having regard to the limited space at our disposal, to reproduce it here. But some of its conclusions may briefly be examined. The terms of the three Memorials are not given: the Sub-Committee, however, extracted from them five subjects for consideration. The first related to the general spirit of the Society. If there has been in any mind a suspicion that the Society is leaving its old moorings this Report should promptly reassure them. The Sub-Committee affirm their "full confidence that there is not, and has not been, on the part either of the officials at home or of the missionaries abroad, any thought of swerving, or any desire to swerve, from the well-understood principles of the Reformation and of the Evangelical founders of the Society, which principles have been openly expressed and deeply valued during the whole period of the Society's existence. They are frankly recognized by those Churchmen who do not themselves adopt them. We are sure that the General Committee will never contemplate any departure from them." This is sufficiently definite, and we hope now we shall hear no more of the charges of "unfaithfulness" which, of late, have been bandied about rather too freely. The Society has always "a hearty and brotherly welcome" for men and women of Evangelical convictions who can give assurance of "their absolute devotion to our Lord, and their deep love and reverence for the Bible." We are sincerely glad that in this, and a subsequent paragraph in the Report, such strong emphasis is laid upon personal devotion to Christ and His Word. It is a point which was strangely left out of account in recent controversies, and we hear far too little of it in

controversial discussions at all times. Yet it is the one thing that matters, above all else. On the question of Ceremonial the Sub-Committee find in favour, as, indeed, we should expect them to do, of the North side as the traditional position of the Evangelical School, and they express the hope that this use will, as far as possible, be "the normal practice of the officers of a Society so distinctly Evangelical as the C.M.S." But there are occasions when considerations of Christian courtesy may arise which might appear to a deputation of the C.M.S. to "make it a matter of obligation to conform to the custom of the church in which he officiates." These occasions, the Sub-Committee think, must be left "to the judgment of the individual conscience," and they say "it is not desirable to assert a strict obligation on the subject." How far the granting of this measure of liberty will appeal to those who hold that under no conceivable circumstances should an Evangelical clergyman take the Eastward position we do not know, but the emphasis with which the North side is declared to be "the normal position" may well be pointed to as determining the attitude of the Society as a whole.

The Authority of Holy Scripture. By far the most difficult question with which the Sub-Committee had to do was that connected with the Authority of Holy Scripture, and the conclusions at which they arrived are of great interest and not a little significance. The subject of "Higher Criticism" is not so much as mentioned, but the principles the Sub-Committee enunciate will be found to determine much in regard to not a few matters which some people would like to regard as open questions. The paragraphs in this section have evidently been drawn with the utmost care. The Sub-Committee assume the acceptance by members of the C.M.S. of the views with regard to Revelation and Inspiration which are expressed in the formularies of the Church, but since these have been variously interpreted, they think it right to state that "to all of us these views involve a recognition of Holy Scripture as the Revelation of God mediated by inspired writers, and as holding a unique position as the supreme authority in matters of faith." While they deprecate any attempt to lay down a formulated definition of the mode of inspiration, they say it is clear that in Articles vi. and xx., inspiration, in whatever way defined, "is attributed to Holy Scripture as a whole." Then as no knowledge

of Holy Scripture is adequate which does not lead to a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, they recognize that "our use and treatment of the Bible should be in harmony with His." Further they hold that "it is the duty of the student of Holy Scripture, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to employ every faculty in its study, and to take into the fullest consideration every light that scholarship and saintliness can furnish." There are at least two points of outstanding importance in these conclusions, viz. (1) that Holy Scripture "as a whole" is "inspired"; and (2) that "our use and treatment of the Bible must be in harmony" with Christ's. We are thankful for these distinct and definite declarations. They carry us a long way—in fact all the way—and so long as these principles are faithfully observed the student of the Bible cannot go far wrong. It is when men hold loosely to them—particularly in relation to our Lord's attitude to the Bible—that the trouble and the danger come. These questions were considered chiefly in view of the responsibilities of the Candidates Committee. The Sub-Committee give this body something in the nature of a vote of confidence, the justice of which will be generally acknowledged. "We have no reason," they say, "to believe that the present Committee have failed to maintain the high level of loyalty and devotion to the Society exhibited by their predecessors." But having regard to the special difficulties of students and young people at the present time, they offer in their case three suggestions, which have such an immediate bearing upon the controversies which led to the appointment of the Sub-committee that we quote them in full:—

(1) That every student should be interviewed by some who know and understand the life of students to-day.

(2) That personal devotion to Christ as Lord and Saviour should be a primary condition for acceptance, and that such doctrinal definitions as are more appropriate to maturer years should not be required.

(3) It is desirable that among the officers of the Society there should always be one or more attached to the Candidates Committee who possess a personality attractive to students as well as to other candidates, so as to carry on a work in the student world calculated to show that the Society is neither out of date nor impervious to new ideas or new methods of working.

The Report deals very fully with the question **Other Points**, of the relation of the C.M.S. to other Societies. It distinctly sets aside the suggestion that the Committee have had at any time "any thought of amalgamation with any

other Society," and goes on to affirm that the growth of friendly intercourse in missionary work is to be welcomed and fostered. The work of co-operation which, since Edinburgh, has centred round the Annual Conference of Missionary Societies, is warmly referred to, and the Report points out that the C.M.S. is specially called upon to show brotherly fellowship towards the missionary agencies of its own Church "provided"—and the proviso should be specially noted—"that in all such intercourse the adherence of the Society to great Evangelical principles be maintained." In regard to co-operation with the Central and Diocesan Boards of Missions the Sub-Committee hold that "each new call must be considered by itself in the light of our responsibility to our own tradition and to the needs of the Church as a whole." These words will be hailed with real relief; it would have been disastrous if the Sub-Committee had deprecated the fostering of missionary unity; and it is just as fortunate that they have indicated the importance of the adherence of the Society to great Evangelical principles. With a brief recommendation that the Committee should give attention to the question of administration "without delay," and a solemn appeal that we should "settle our differences," the Report closes. It will, of course, be eagerly discussed by the Society's friends and supporters throughout the country, and we are persuaded it will make for unity. With confidence re-established, and peace reigning, the Society will be able to go forward to the great work awaiting it, strong in the power of its living, reigning and coming Lord.

The discussion on the appointment of Dr. Henson to the Bishopric of Hereford has had one excellent result—it has shown how wide and deep is the agreement among Churchmen, alike of the Evangelical and the Neo-Anglican Schools, that acceptance of the Creeds in their natural and received sense is fundamental to the position of a clergyman of the Church of England. Dr. Henson himself, before his consecration, gave the Archbishop the assurance that when he repeats the words of the Creed he does so *ex amino* without any desire to change them, and he rather bitterly complained that it should be thought by any one to be necessary that he should give such an assurance. The Rev. Gerald V. Sampson, Vicar of New Beckenham, who himself "accepts the historical statements of the

**Interpretation
of the Creeds.**

Creed in their traditional meaning," has an interesting letter in the *Guardian*, in which he says he "cannot accept the conclusion that, things being as they are, our attitude is inconsistent towards those who, in their traditional sense, reject them":

For, in our use of the Offices of the Church, we make mental reservations again and again. Every Sunday morning we do this when we bid people refrain from work on the Sabbath and tell them that the earth was created in six days. On certain great Festivals we do the same when we affirm that those who withhold faith from sundry theological definitions will without doubt perish everlastingly. On many Sunday afternoons we do the same when we describe as children of wrath those whom Christ described as of the Kingdom of Heaven and demand belief in the Resurrection of the Flesh rather than of the Body. On other occasions we do the same when (as sometimes happens) we invoke the blessing of a mystical union in the Divine love upon a profligate man and an erring woman, or when we thank God for the deliverance from this sinful world of a wicked person whose sole desire was to remain in it, and commit to the earth in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life a body which was the bond-servant of sin. We do the same once more when we proclaim in a Lesson as actual fact that the prophet of Nineveh survived his envelopment in a large fish, and exact from choristers the plea that the sin of the mother of the ungodly be not done away.

From this very slender foundation he argues that "consistency seems to require that either we must be ready to allow a non-natural interpretation of the historical clauses of the Creed or else agree to alter our own usages." We are unable to follow this argument. The historical clauses of the Creed are fundamental to the Christian faith, whereas the examples he gives of "mental reservation" are not. Mr. Sampson's references to the Creation and to the story of Jonah are sufficiently indicative of his own attitude towards the Old Testament. In regard to some of the other matters he mentions they undoubtedly present difficulties if regarded from the narrowest point of view, but is there not good reason for interpreting the formularies of the Church in the spirit of the widest Christian charity?

The Rev. William Temple's sermon on "The Philosophy of the Incarnation" preached before the University of Cambridge and published in the *Guardian* of February 14, contained a much-needed re-statement of the relation of the Divine to the Human in the Person of our Lord. We quote the following passage chiefly for its vindication of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection:—

It must be insisted that the human life of the Incarnate Word of God

was perfectly and utterly human. The New Testament gives no encouragement to the effort to separate within it the spheres of the Divine and the Human Natures. He was in all things made like unto His brethren; He was made perfect through suffering, learning obedience by the things which He suffered. He grew up to the perfect unity with the Father, and yet at every stage was in unity with Him. This may be hard to express, but is not specially hard to understand. If we trace the life of a great man from infancy to old age, we know that the man is more than the child, yet that the child may have perfectly fulfilled his own part. So Christ is perfect as child, as youth, as man. In every stage He corresponds to the Divine Will for Him at that stage; but in that unbroken correspondence to the Divine Will He is carried forward step by step until He is called to make the absolute surrender wherein He reaches the perfection of obedience and unity with God beyond which there is no further step to take. In the moral sphere His Deity reveals Itself through a perfect, yet normal Humanity.

But such correspondence with the Divine Will on the part of human nature is itself unique. And it is therefore in no way and from no justifiable point of view incredible that He should have been born into the world without human volition and action, but through the energy of the Holy Ghost, or, in other words, of God's love at work in the world. Nor is it in any way incredible that the Body which had been the organ of that unique life should itself be delivered out of the corruption of death. It is indeed more worthy of notice that the deliverance did not come until the last, worst agony had been faced and endured. He was not saved from suffering, but through suffering; and it is so that He saves us.

His protest against a scheme of teaching which results in an unconscious Arianism may also be quoted:—

The traditional theology of the Church, at least as popularly expounded, has never been thoroughgoing in its philosophy of the Incarnation. It has approached the subject, as it was bound to do, with certain preconceived notions as to the nature of God and the nature of man, and has never allowed the revelation given in the historic fact to react fully on those conceptions. Thus what we see on the Cross is the Suffering of God; and it is the Divine Passion that converts. Yet a Greek notion of the Divine impassivity has been allowed to prevent theology from fully grasping and expressing what every simple believer knows perfectly well. Similarly it has been assumed that human powers are limited to those with which apart from faith we are familiar; therefore all that Christ did which we are unaccustomed to suppose that we could do is attributed to His Divinity and not to His humanity. But similar actions are reported of His Apostles, of saints in all ages, and indeed of holy men other than Christian. Thus we have failed to find in the Incarnation either the perfect revelation of God, for we do not read back His agony into the Life of God, or the perfect revelation of Man, for we exclude from the human sphere all in which He differs from ourselves. The result is virtually an unconscious Arianism, which is of small philosophic or spiritual value. But the teaching of the New Testament is quite plain. In the Gospels we read the story of a perfectly human Life that was lived by God. We spoil its value utterly if we regard the Life as in any way other than human, or Him Who lived it as in any way other than God. As we watch Him, we are watching God. But we watch God living under strictly human conditions.

But is not this the "traditional theology" of the Church as set

forth in the *Quicumque Vult*? Mr. Temple, however, saves himself by adding "at least as popularly expounded."

Revision
Once More.

If ordinary people find it difficult in these sad days to conjure up any degree of enthusiasm over Prayer Book Revision, the Bishops of the Province of Canterbury suffer from no such handicap, and at the last session of Convocation they devoted a considerable amount of attention to it, although, to do them justice, they did not neglect questions relating to the war and reconstruction after the war. The Revision matters came before them in the Report of Resolutions passed by the Lower House, presented for concurrence by the Upper House. That concurrence, we are glad to note, was refused on three very important points. The Bishops by a unanimous vote decided not to concur in the resolution to reinsert the name of King Charles the Martyr in the Calendar on January 30 as a Black Letter Day. This result is probably due to the way the matter was ridiculed in the public Press, which seems greatly to have impressed some of their lordships, the Bishop of Oxford remarking that the attempt to restore the name "had already brought upon the Church a great deal of what he must call mockery." The proposal to reinsert All Souls Day was, however, only defeated by one vote. The Bishops, by 17 to 6, also rejected the proposal to reduce the number of those who must communicate with the priest from three to one, which, if it had been carried, would have "legalized," as the Bishop of Chelmsford pointed out, something in the nature of "solitary masses." A notable feature in the debate was the strong speech by the Bishop of Hereford, who pointed to the fact that a section of the Church of England was bent on making changes always founded on the model of the Romish Church, and they must be careful not to support any proposal which at all lent countenance to that movement. He strongly opposed the alteration on those grounds. On the question of the rearrangement of the Canon the Bishops, by 13 votes to 7, accepted the resolution of the Lower House.