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# THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1920.

## THE MONTH.

**The  
Response.** THE response of Nonconformity to the Lambeth Appeal on Reunion has, with very few exceptions, been of a distinctly encouraging character. It is true, of course, that no official reply has yet been made from any of the Free Churches, for no opportunity has yet arisen for a corporate consideration of the Appeal, but the comments of individual ministers, many of them holding distinguished positions in Nonconformity, show clearly enough that they have caught the spirit of Lambeth, and that they are desirous of reciprocating to the full the aspirations of the Bishops towards a closer Christian fellowship. And this is a great gain, for when men of widely diverse views seek to know each other better in the fellowship of the Spirit a long step has been taken towards the removal of misunderstanding and, with that, the removal of barriers which have hitherto blocked the way to a realization of Christian unity. But we should be deceiving ourselves if we did not acknowledge that, at least so far as Reunion at home is concerned, it is still the day of small things. The spirit of separation in the past has been too strong and too deep to be suddenly cast out ; but a new thing has happened and is happening—men are coming to view their differences with a fresh vision ; they are approaching their problems with a fresh purpose ; they are animated by a fresh spirit. We thank God, Who maketh men to be of one mind in a house, for this gracious beginning—so full of encouragement, assurance and hope—and we pray that He Who has begun the good work may so move in the hearts of men that His blessed purpose for the unity of His Church may be fulfilled in His own time and in His own way. For this we must labour, for this we must pray.

But there are many difficulties to be overcome, and much patience is needed. If the Lambeth Appeal is approached in the old spirit and with the memory of old recriminations still in heart and mind, we readily admit that there is in it much that is open to discussion and to disputation. One or two writers of distinction have taken up the position that it still offers no real basis of agreement, and that the old difficulty of the acceptance of episcopacy still remains even though it appears in a new dress. As an illustration of what we mean we quote a passage from the letter of the Rev. Archibald Fleming, D.D., the well-known minister of St. Columba's (Church of Scotland), Pont Street :—

It is when the Lambeth Encyclical proceeds to utter and require a shibboleth in the region of Church Order that the trouble begins. That shibboleth is the "historic episcopate" (a phrase which in itself seems to many of us to embody a *petitio principii*). And episcopacy is postulated not merely as being, on the whole, in the view of the Conference, the most workable system of government and organization. Had that been all, the Bishops would surely have said to their non-episcopal brothers—Come, and let us discuss this point together; not—Come, but you must regard that point as beyond dispute. As the Bishop of Zanzibar—one of the authors and signatories of the Encyclical—puts it, in a widely circulated statement explanatory of its sense, the Bishops (*suaviter in re, fortiter in modo*), "gently" but firmly require us to bring our several "groups" "within the historical episcopal Church"; and "to present their ministers for episcopal ordination." How much farther does this take us than we had reached before? It is but the old prescription, offered by Rome to Anglicanism, offered by Anglicanism to us—the prescription of reunion by absorption.

The position is not improved, except in the seeming, by the Bishops' suggestion that this reordination (or "recommissioning," to use the new, less ingenuous vocabulary) should be reciprocal. The minister of either Church is to be "recommissioned" according to the forms prescribed by the religious body into whose territory he proposes to make occasional or permanent incursion. Is it to be thought that in practice many Anglican clergy would submit to this process—at any rate, at the hands of any of the Reformed Churches? But even if it were so, the "reciprocity" of the arrangement would be empty and fallacious. For Presbyterians never question the validity of Anglican orders (any more than did Anglicans those of Presbyterians in the classic age of Anglicanism). We feel as sure of their validity as we do of that of our own; and that is putting it pretty high. There is, therefore, no reciprocity except in the sense that giving something for nothing is reciprocal. In Scotland we should have no scepticism to express, and no questions to ask regarding Anglican orders. On the other hand, we certainly should wish to inquire about that to which we do attach an anxious and traditional importance—academic and theological attainment.

We refer to this passage in Dr. Fleming's letter because it is typical of the difficulties which will have to be faced when the several

churches come to closer quarters with the Lambeth proposals. But the difficulty is not insuperable ; nor is it greatly to be feared. Given the right spirit it may be faced in the full assurance that it can and will be overcome. We do not regret that Dr. Fleming has raised it ; we do regret, however, the tone he has seen fit to adopt in his letter ; and the covert sneer in the last sentence of the above quotation is distinctly unworthy of the man and of the great position he occupies.

The Lambeth Appeal stands by itself, and he who runs may read. It is its own interpreter, but if any interpreter be really needed the Bishop of Zanzibar is not quite the one we should choose. Bishop Waller, of Tinnevely, is a much safer guide. In his article in the *C.M. Review* for September on "Lambeth and Reunion" he gives an extremely interesting glimpse of the working of the mind of the Reunion Committee ; and in reference to the question of the Ministry he writes :—

We did not repeat the Lambeth Quadrilateral, too often taken to be a statement of terms on which the little Anglican Church will unite with a neighbour. We tried to see the structure of the one great Church of Christ. And then we thought of our own trust committed to us. And we pleaded that, as a bond of unity alike with East and West, the universal episcopate would supply the universally recognized ministry. The history of 1800 years seemed to show no other institution suitable. But it was a constitutional episcopate we wanted. No papacy, no prelatical order would be the bond of union we sought. A council presided over by a bishop, but a council in which clergy and laity had their proper voice—a council representative of the Body of Christ and endued with His Spirit—that was our vision. Could we do or offer to do anything to show our real sincerity in the ideal ? Opinions were divided, but the thought prevailed that ministries were sometimes unacceptable because doubts were felt about the universality of their recognition—and so the offer was made that if all other obstacles to union were happily surmounted, not one of us would scruple to take part in receiving afresh a commission or recognition, if that were needed to reassure doubtful minds, and we pleaded that others would do the same. We felt that no one dare claim to be a minister of the whole body unless he were called of God, commissioned by Christ, and recognized by all. In our divided state how can this general recognition be secured ? It is not a magic gift, it is a grace given to the whole Body. And if any part of the Body had doubts would not all those who had heard the call to the ministry be ready to allay those doubts by receiving whatever recognition seemed to be lacking to complete the fellowship ?

Viewed in this way, even the most difficult passages of the Lambeth Appeal are given an interpretation not inconsistent, but in the fullest harmony, with the spirit of true Christian fellowship.

A Country  
Parson.

The Report of the Archbishops' Committee on the Church and Rural Life has given great offence to country clergy by reason of its strong criticisms upon what is judged to be the failure of the Church in country districts ; and certainly its ill-balanced statements, its unmistakable lack of special knowledge, and its conspicuous want of sympathy with the burdens the country clergy have to bear have deprived what ought to have been a peculiarly useful report of any real value. We make this reference to the Report, however, not for the purpose of criticising it, but for the purpose of introducing a delightful pen picture of what a country clergyman may be and what we believe many of them are. It is drawn by Canon S. R. James, of Worcester, and is a picture of his own father, the Rev. Herbert James :—

My father was a country parson nearly all his clerical life—ten years in Kent and forty-four years in West Suffolk. In Suffolk he had a parish, or rather a double parish, with a population which gradually diminished from about five hundred to less than four hundred. It was about four miles by two miles in size, with two villages and widely scattered cottages besides. During the whole of his time there he was in close touch with all his people, Church-folk and Nonconformist alike, and he was regarded by all, or almost all, as their dear friend. I attribute this result to the following causes :—

First, his one object in life was to bring his people to Christ.

Second, his own example was absolutely consistent ; he walked with God, and he knew it and felt it.

Third, he constantly visited every one, four or five afternoons in the week being given to this work, and his visits were timed to suit their convenience, not his own.

Fourth, he took the most amazing trouble over his sermons. He was naturally a fluent and eloquent speaker, but he invariably prepared his sermons with the utmost care—he never trusted to the inspiration of the moment ; his words and phrases were carefully chosen beforehand and his notes were full, though I think he seldom referred to them in the pulpit. At the same time, he was a learned theologian and a constant reader of what was new and good in all kinds of literature. So he was always showing forth new aspects of the Christ Whom he loved and preached.

Fifth, he never failed to spend a morning every week at the school, and to teach the children, which he did with infinite tact, patience, and sympathy.

Last, but not least, he was a man of prayer. His children and friends can never forget how, day by day, he communed with God at family worship, and in what beautiful words he laid all cares and troubles before our Father. And every day after lunch he and my mother prayed together for the forty-four years of their married life.

It is long since we have read anything more beautiful. Well may his son add : “ If all country parsons were to devote themselves as he did to knowing their people in their homes and so leading them to Christ, we should hear very much less of empty churches and disappointed clergy.”

The seaside work of the Children's Special Service Mission is emphatically Evangelical in its purpose and character. It has been carried on with unflinching success for a long number of years, and it has to its credit the warm-hearted testimony of many hundreds of young people who have received from it spiritual benefit. Now comes testimony from another quarter. The *Church Times* of September 10 published an article by "Nomad" descriptive of these services which, in spite of its surface criticisms, must be taken as a real tribute to their value. The services to which he referred were held every afternoon opposite his hotel. Ordinarily, he says, he would not have regarded these doings with particular interest. "The hymns were not lovely"; "the prayers at times were of the intimate order"; "there were crudities in abundance"; "there was undenominationalism of the most embracing kind"; and yet "there was something to learn from these meetings":—

The young men knew how to talk to children. One of them was a genius. He held their attention with rare skill. His was the artistry which conceals art. In the truest sense he carried the children with him; that is to say, he kept them thinking parallel with his thought. As he proceeded he dropped little questions, which were at once answered. He told stories which were relevant, and he was wise enough in one case to tell the story in the actual words of the master of letters who wrote it. He gripped the psychology of it, and he let the lesson tell itself. He used humour sparingly and tellingly, and himself laughed at his own little jokes. Sometimes he pulled himself up as though it were he and not his audience whose attention had to be re-directed to the line of thought. "Now—let me see—where was I?" A dozen little voices piped out a dozen suggestions—all to the point, all indicating that they knew where he was, and that they knew all the time that he knew where he was. It was an exercise in subtlety. There was no vulgar colloquialism. He did not talk down to the children. He carried them with him, and amid all the distractions of the open air, of the bathers passing, of the little restlessnesses incidental to an uncomfortable position on the sands, their attention was held closely for twenty-five minutes.

It set the writer of the article wondering. "What if this had been a Church gathering! What if the spirit of adventure could lay hold of us and we went forth with *our* message! Have we not laymen in abundance who would be ready for the work? Are not these children, listening to carefully modified half-truths, the children to whom the Church's full heritage of truth is their due?" His wonder increased when he met one of the most brilliant writers of our day. "I like that man," he said, "I come every day to hear him. It doesn't matter about what he says, but the atmosphere

of hopeful trust which he spreads." "The sudden truth had come home," the writer concludes, "that in conveying the Church's message to the yearning people we were not using all the powers we possess. . . . The young man in the green blazer used all his skill and his zeal for a cause which was only half a cause. Have we the like skill and zeal for the full truth?" But "skill and zeal" are not everything; indeed apart from the message they are of little value. It is the message which tells, and we think that "Nomad" would find that the message *his* young men would proclaim would fail in its appeal if it did not possess spiritual power. The success of the seaside services is to be found in the fact that they tell of a living Christ with nothing between.

**The Fall of Man.** A great flutter has been caused by the sermon preached by Canon E. W. Barnes before the British Association at Cardiff. It is not the first time that the historical accuracy of the early chapters of Genesis has been challenged, nor is it likely to be the last. But the critics are no nearer proving their contentions than they were fifty years ago; and until these are proved the faithful will continue to rest upon the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture, which for them remains unshaken and unshakable. Nevertheless, we greatly deplore the publication of such sermons in the popular press, which is not the place where such deep questions as those raised by Canon Barnes can adequately be discussed. The comments of ignorant and disaffected writers, whether in the news, the correspondence or the editorial columns, are often most painful to read, and are sometimes positively offensive; and the result of it all is to give "the man in the street" the impression that the Bible is an untrustworthy book and that its believing exponents are untrustworthy guides. Can this make for righteousness or faith? Canon Barnes has denied a fact—the Fall of Man—which is confirmed by human experience; and when he goes on to tell us that we must abandon "the arguments deduced from it by theologians from St. Paul onward," we are left wondering how much, or how little, of the Gospel story, as received by the Church for the last nineteen hundred years, is to be left to us. If St. Paul were not accurate in his presentation of the Gospel, where shall we look for its correct interpretation? It is this aspect of the question raised by Canon Barnes which is so serious and so dis-

quieting ; and it has not received the attention it deserves. It is to be regretted that in the discussion which ensued in the secular press upon the publication of the sermon, no leading Churchman of position entered the lists on the orthodox side ; it was left to General Booth, the Head of the Salvation Army, to champion the cause, and right well he did it. Such views as those propounded by Canon Barnes must, he said, " seem positively revolting " to large sections in the Church of England as well as in other Churches. The denunciation is strongly worded, but the occasion was one which demanded vigorous treatment.

The death of Dr. William Sanday, in his seventy-eight year, removes from us a distinguished Biblical scholar and critic whose works, it must be recognized, whether we agreed with his conclusions or not, were always marked by reverence as well as by candour. With advancing years, unfortunately, he moved farther and farther away in some respects from the old position, and in his last book he distinctly abandoned his neutral attitude on miracles and championed the view that the abnormal element in miracle could be explained without being taken as literal fact.

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It cannot be too strongly urged that the Parochial Rolls of the various parishes should be kept up to date, and that new parishioners should be enrolled as soon as they are qualified. Every parish should, therefore, be fully equipped with literature on this subject, and we mention again the papers issued by the Church Book Room. First, the Declaration as to Qualification, with form for non-resident electors, which is supplied at 2s. per 100, the same without the form for non-resident electors 1s. 6d. per 100, or cards simply arranged for the card index system at 2s. 6d. or 3s. per 100 respectively. Then there are the Electoral Roll Sheets at 3s. per 100, Electoral Roll Books, arranged alphabetically or specially ruled and headed, with particulars as to qualification, etc., which are supplied from 6s. upwards. For general distribution the papers *The Ladder of Lay Representation in the Councils of the Church of England*, and *The New Constitution of the Church of England*, which are supplied at 2s. per 100, and the paper on *Parochial Church Councils* at 1d. each are recommended. Further, all members of the Parochial Church Councils will find it necessary to refer from time to time to the Constitution of the New Assembly and the Councils which have been called into being by the Enabling Act. The sixpenny pamphlet by Mr. Albert Mitchell, which contains the text of the Act and Constitution, with an introduction and numerous explanatory notes, will be found of service.