

THE CHURCHMAN

July, 1915.

The Month.

WE have felt it right to give the full text of the The Church and the War. Pastoral Letter issued by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in relation to the war, and it will be found on p. 522. It is a pronouncement of extraordinary interest and importance, and one for which Church and nation alike have reason to be thankful. It sets out, with a precision which leaves nothing to be desired, the character of the call the war is making upon the nation generally, and upon Church-people in particular. It gives what the Church has long been needing—a strong lead—and if its precepts are followed, there will be such a mobilizing of the forces of prayer and service as has rarely been seen before. The Pastoral affords good evidence that the leaders of the Church are awaking to the force and urgency of national needs. For nearly eleven months the nation has been engaged in the most desperate war in our history; the British casualty lists recently published show our losses in killed, wounded, prisoners, and missing to be considerably more than a quarter of a million men; the war is costing the nation in money more than two millions and a half per day, yet even now the nation seems to find it difficult to realize the gravity of the position. The Archbishops' Pastoral recognizes that it is the duty of the Church to stimulate national service for national needs, but its main concern, naturally, is with the spiritual side of the question, and it is in this respect that the nation has fallen most lamentably short. In the early days of the war there was

some semblance of a turning towards God. Men and women looked grave when the possibilities of invasion were discussed, and the Sunday services in church and chapel, as well as special intercessory services on week-days, drew large congregations. Then came a reaction. People grew accustomed to the war, and resumed their old habits of life, and, we fear we must add, in many cases their old sins. In these circumstances the Church could not remain silent, and the Pastoral Letter comes as a solemn call to the Church and to the nation. It now remains to be seen what heed will be paid to it. The Archbishops have done their part; will the clergy do theirs? Upon them—the parish clergy—devolves the heaviest responsibility of all. Central efforts and central services have their value, but they will never touch the masses of the people. The faithful will give heed and respond, but the ordinary people can only be reached and influenced by their own parish clergy. It is good to know that there is a movement in every diocese for following up the Pastoral Letter, but it must rest with the clergyman in his own individual sphere to bring its wholesome admonitions to bear upon his own people. Local circumstances differ so widely that it is impossible any hard-and-fast rule should be laid down; a wide discretion must be left to the parish clergyman, so that he may take the course which seems to him best for enlisting the prayers and services of his own people. But if in each parish the clergyman will do his part faithfully and well, the combined effect throughout the country will be enormous. The greatest need of the hour is for the nation to be on its knees in penitence and supplication before Almighty God. We have lost our sense of the acknowledgment of the Majesty of God, and we must get it back again.

The publication of the Pastoral Letter was the
The Bishops' Resolutions. outcome of the deliberations of all the English Bishops at their Whitsuntide meeting at Lambeth. Their lordships are so often subjected to criticism for what they do and for what they leave undone that it ought frankly

to be recognized with gratitude that in this matter they have given great attention to the claims of the national crisis and have shown a genuine desire to help the nation in its hour of need. The question was very fully discussed at Lambeth, and three resolutions of real importance were adopted as follows :

“ 1. Being convinced that the present war is a supreme struggle on behalf of righteousness and freedom, this meeting of the Diocesan Bishops of England and Wales desires to endorse heartily the substance of the letter written by the Archbishop of Canterbury on May 15 to the Prime Minister, and calls upon the nation to concentrate upon the successful prosecution of the war the full power of its spiritual, moral, and material resources.

“ 2. As a means to this end, the Bishops offer to the Government the assurance of their desire to support and forward so far as they can, and with all the influence at their command, such measures as the Government may deem necessary in order to bring the energies and resources of the men and women of the country into fullest activity and combination.

“ 3. Above all, the Bishops call upon the clergy and all faithful people continually to give themselves to penitence, prayer, and waiting upon God, in face of the crisis which in His overruling Providence has been permitted to come upon the nations.”

We welcome these Resolutions for their robustness of tone and for their accurate gauging of the needs of the times. The counsel they offer is eminently wise, practical, and Christian, and we are glad to see that the namby-pambyism which characterizes the utterances of many good men who set out to advise Christian people as to their right attitude towards the war, finds no place in these Resolutions. The nation is engaged in a “supreme struggle” for “righteousness and freedom”; the very fundamentals of Christianity are at stake, and as a Christian nation we are bound by every consideration to pursue the war, at whatever cost, to a successful issue. The power of German militarism, which has deluged Europe with blood and covered the very name of Germany with indelible infamy, must be crushed, and until that has been done thoroughly and effectively there can be no thought of peace.

There seems to be an impression in certain quarters that, because Evangelical and Moderate Churchmen have expressed their satisfaction with the Archbishop of Canterbury's Statement on Kikuyu, they

A Kikuyu
Re-echo.

have thereby accepted the view he pronounced on the question of Church members receiving the Holy Communion, in cases of necessity, at the hands of a non-episcopally ordained minister. Nothing could be further from the fact. The Archbishop's dealing with the point was less definite than that of the Central Consultative Body, who said that they could not regard any such arrangements as consistent with the principles of the Church of England, but His Grace made it very clear that the practice could not be sanctioned. We quote in full, which we could not do last month, the passage in his Statement relating to it :

“I turn to what someone has described as ‘the other side of what is presumably a reciprocal rule’—namely, the sanction directly or by implication given to members of our Church to receive the Holy Communion at the hands of ministers not episcopally ordained. To imagine that the occasional admission of non-episcopalians, who in special circumstances seek the Holy Communion at our hands, carries or implies a corresponding readiness to bid the members of our Church, when temporarily isolated, seek the Holy Communion at the hands of any Christian minister, though not episcopally ordained, who may be within reach, to whatsoever denomination or system he belongs, is gravely to misapprehend the position and to run the risk of creating serious confusion. I realize that the proposed Scheme of Federation as a whole may be interpreted as prescribing by inference some limitations which would qualify the phrase I have used above. But this is not enough. The perplexity, especially for simple and untutored people, would remain. And if such a principle were once laid down it would be impossible to limit its operation to British East Africa, the region covered by the proposed Federation Scheme ; and so far as I can appraise and correlate the testimony given to me from China and Manchuria, from India, from Melanesia, and from Canada, the result of giving such advice in general terms would be, not only to create perplexity in administration, but to hamper and retard such measure of co-operation as is now happily in progress. It is a satisfaction to me to point out that the question is at present of an academic rather than a practical kind, for it became apparent in our personal communications with the Bishops of Mombasa and Uganda that they are so conscious of the difficulties and perplexities which might arise that they have no wish or intention to give that advice to African Christians belonging to their dioceses.”

We cannot subscribe to this view of the question, nor do we believe that it will be generally acceptable to Churchmen. It seems to us to involve a practical denial, or—to put it another way—a non-recognition, of the validity of the Blessed Sacrament when administered by a minister not episcopally ordained.

That is a position which we feel bound to resist, and we venture to say that the Archbishop will be making a profound mistake if he allow himself to be persuaded that, because his Statement in its general terms and application has been so widely accepted, there is general concurrence in the passage we have quoted. If Episcopacy were of the *esse* of the Church, his view would be unassailable; but it is not, and we have to be on our guard against accepting any position which would imply that it is.

We are fully sensible of the difficulties in the way of a corporate body such as the Church Missionary Society's Committee giving official expression to its views on the Archbishop's Statement; but the document is one of such large importance and touches so directly interests in which the C.M.S. is so profoundly concerned that we are sure supporters of the Society throughout the country would have welcomed some declaration on the subject. It may yet come, and we hope it will. In the meantime we have the comments of the official organ of the Society, the *C.M. Review*. The "Editorials" dealing with Kikuyu do not, however, profess to give more than a "cursory examination" of the Statement with a "reflection." They are written, we are glad to see, in a sympathetic spirit, but we cannot share the writer's interpretation of the passage we have quoted in the paragraph above. Whilst showing a rather too ready desire to score off "another Evangelical paper" and the *Church Times*, he offers his own explanation, which is as follows: "The Archbishop's words make it perfectly clear that he neither vetoes non-episcopal Communion, nor forbids members of our Church to partake of them, nor censures the Bishop who takes no steps to prevent Church of England laymen in his diocese from so partaking." We can only regard this interpretation as a piece of special pleading which greatly surprises us. We recognize that the Archbishop's language was most guarded, but we find it difficult to believe that he meant to leave the

question open. We submit with every confidence that the only reasonable interpretation which can be placed upon the passage, when considered as a whole, is that the Archbishop meant his words to offer a distinct refusal of assent. We find ourselves in much happier agreement with the "reflection" of the writer in the *C.M. Review*. It is of great interest, and we quote it as follows :

"How much the whole Church owes to Bishops Peel and Willis, and to the late Bishop Tucker and the Rev. Dr. Henry E. Scott, of the Established Kirk of Scotland, for the catholicity of spirit and the conscientious care to safeguard the deep and paramount principles of ecclesiastical order in the scheme which they all had a share in preparing! That scheme has passed through the severest tests both in Scotland and England which could be applied, and we venture to say that the modifications called for to bring it into harmony with the criticisms of the best qualified and most authoritative judges both south and north of the Tweed are marvellously slight. Could such a thing touching questions which have kept Christians apart in the home-lands for centuries, and in which men feel intensely, have been accomplished anywhere except in the mission-field? We doubt it. The pressure of impact with the formidable forces of paganism and of Islam seems essential to bring Christian brothers together, to make them realize how much they are one in all essential things, and how deep and real is their mutual love, and to enforce the paramount duty of discovering some plan of present co-operation, and of preparing for the future unity of the local Churches which they are being privileged to found. Kikuyu has made history. The points which have been at issue in the controversies of last year may be called 'details,' but they have a strategic importance. They concern vitally the progress of the movement towards closer fellowship between the Protestant branches of Christ's Church, and any agreement reached concerning them will probably do more to foster that movement than any number of meetings to discuss the problems of unity and Church order, because it affects our Church's frontier at a spot where a strong mutual desire to fraternize exists. Incidentally, Kikuyu also illustrates the immense importance of missionaries studying and mastering Church problems, not only in books of Church history and ecclesiastical law, but as manifested in the current of contemporaneous opinion. Bishop Willis's *apologia* for Kikuyu was, we venture to say, a document of consummate wisdom and ability both in matter and tone."

Among the more recent indications of a growth
 of the spirit of unity among Christian men of varying
 degrees of faith and practice, the great meeting held
 at Queen's Hall on June 7 for the promotion of Family Prayers
 stands out as a most striking and happy example. The meeting

Growth of
 Unity.

was initiated and carried out under the immediate auspices of the World's Evangelical Alliance, and it drew together on the same platform some of the most representative men of all shades of opinion in the Church and Nonconformity. The Archbishop of Canterbury presided, and the other speakers were Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell, the Bishop of Winchester, Sir J. Compton Rickett, M.P., Lord Kinnaird, and Bishop Taylor Smith, whilst special prayers were offered by Prebendary Webb-Peploe, Dr. Scott Lidgett, Prebendary Webster, Dr. A. C. Dixon, and Canon Bickersteth. Among these names there stands out one of special significance—that of the Bishop of Winchester. By tradition and association Bishop Talbot has hitherto been more closely connected with the High Church School, and his presence, therefore, on an Evangelical Alliance platform is as welcome as it is expressive. Of course, he abates none of his professions, but his action is an altogether happy indication of a narrowing of the gap which so often keeps men apart, and of a growing desire for closer co-operation in good works among men of widely different views. It is a most refreshing illustration of progress in the cause of Christian unity, and we note it with exceeding great pleasure.

In spite of the clear undertaking that no final
 “Mass Vestments,” decision will be taken on the question of Prayer-
 Book Revision until the Houses of Laymen have
 been consulted, and that they are not to be asked to consider it
 until after the war, a large number of the laity are still pro-
 foundly concerned about the proposal to authorize, or not to
 forbid, the use of the Vestments. Sir Edward Clarke's
 “Laymen's Committee” met on June 8 to discuss the question,
 and unanimously passed the following resolution: “That any
 declaration by the Houses of Convocation that the use of the
 Mass Vestments ought to be permitted would encourage the
 ‘Romanizing tendency’ which the Bishop of Oxford has lately
 admitted ‘is prevalent and acute, and extremely strong in the
 Church of England’; would alienate the laity; would set up an

impassable barrier against co-operation with the Protestant Nonconformist bodies, and would destroy all hope of ultimate reunion with them; and would be a serious step towards the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church." It will be noticed that this resolution has been drawn with considerable care, and is clearly meant to meet any contingency that may arise. As we pointed out last month, it would be quite possible, under the terms of the "truce," for the Convocations to complete their work, and afterwards to go to the Houses of Laymen for their assent, which would be little more than formal. The resolution, therefore, is aimed at "any declaration by the Houses of Convocation," and we are sure it will carry weight. It will be a sorry day for the Church when the use of these Vestments is authorized, and we believe that the laity see more clearly than the clergy the extreme gravity of the position which would thus be created.

Dr. Sanday
and the
Virgin Birth.

Professor Sanday read a paper at the Annual Meeting of the Churchmen's Union entitled "On Continuity of Thought and Relativity of Expression," which appears in full in the issue for June 15 of "The Modern Churchman." Its chief interest centres in the startling exposition it gives of his views on the clause in the Creed regarding the Virgin Birth. Dr. Sanday admitted that he was suspect on the question. He had once said that he would not be a party to putting "nots" into the Creed, and some people had thought that he had changed his mind. But he has not. "I will not," he continued, "affirm everything in the Creeds—but that is different. That is precisely where I draw the line, and believe myself to be right in drawing the line." He believes that "truth lies in a *nuance*; and this—the difference between not affirming and denying—is the precise *nuance* in which I think it lies." Proceeding to explain "the real function" of the clause in the Creed about the Virgin Birth, he said:

"One of the greatest mistakes which men have made, and are still making, about God is in attributing to Him, in the ages of the past as well as in the

present, what I may venture to call a punctilious determination of the will towards securing the prevalence throughout the world of what we call 'literal' truth. All through the early ages of mankind 'poetical' truth has been the rule, and 'literal' the exception. This may be different from what we should expect. But anyhow it is plain matter of fact, and we must not shut our eyes to it. It is not for us to know the reasons for this particular characteristic of the workings of Divine Providence; they are beyond us, and belong to those vast rangings through time and space by which these workings are governed. It may well be that 'the times of this ignorance,' or of this latitude, are coming to an end. We are not concerned with the future, but only with the past; and in regard to the past we must resign ourselves not to know, or to know very imperfectly. Even we men, dull-sighted and fallible as we are, can see a multitude of reasons, short of its literal truth, for the prevalence of the belief in the Virgin Birth; it has been of immense and prolonged benefit to mankind. Even at this day it goes hard to let it drop out of our range of vision; and only (what some of us think) imperious necessity compels us to loosen our hold upon it. I should on all grounds, and in particular out of piety towards the past, refuse to deny the Virgin Birth. Those who will may think that I am splitting a hair in doing so. But I find myself able to *subsume the idea of the Virgin Birth under the yet larger and more important idea of Supernatural Birth*. I will venture to express my meaning in a phrase: it all seems to me to stand (*sit venia verbo*) for the *direct influx of Deity into manhood*.

"We are prepared for such a conception by our belief in Divine Immanence; it is no strain upon us to conceive of a supreme and unique act and form of this Immanence. And, with all possible deference for my revered friend, Dr. Swete, if we can conceive of it under a form that is in accordance with nature, that is far easier for some of us than to think of it under conditions that we should call *contra naturam*."

We have given this passage at length, as it is important to know exactly where Dr. Sanday stands. Whatever distinctions he may draw between refusal to deny and refusal to affirm, it is surely a fair inference from this passage that he does not accept the words of the Creed "Born of the Virgin Mary" in their literal sense. Between this and an outspoken denial of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth we see no practical difference. And yet Canon Sanday regards his own position within the Church of England "as absolutely loyal and absolutely inextinguishable"!