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THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1915.

The Month.

“Nothing
Matters but
the War.”

IT is right that the whole attention of the country should be concentrated upon the War, for only so can we hope to win ; but it is important to be on our guard lest the idea, so often expressed, that “nothing matters but the war,” be allowed to degenerate into an excuse for neglecting duties which always demand attention, and, perhaps, never more so than in this time of war. All who appreciate the gravity of the position will rejoice that steps are being taken to awaken the country to the absolute necessity and immediate urgency for putting forth a supreme effort, and that, on the whole, these calls to service in different fields of labour are meeting with an increasing response ; but when we come to survey the outlook from the religious and ecclesiastical point of view it must be confessed that the prospect is not so encouraging. The reason most probably is that there is a failure to recognize the sore need for “a supreme effort” in this sphere, with the result that there is a danger of gradually drifting into a condition of seeming indifference to some of the most vital issues of life. It is not yet sufficiently realized that there is a direct relationship between the moral and spiritual tone of the nation and the material side of the conflict in which the nation is engaged. Just as our material forces are being

mobilized, so ought also our spiritual forces to be placed on a war basis. How can it be done? The awakening of the nation on the material side has been due mainly to the efforts of one man—Mr. Lloyd George; and until there arise in the religious sphere a “Lloyd George” who will speak to the nation in such terms of urgent appeal as to compel attention, there is reason to fear that there will be no sufficiently adequate awakening to the need for much greater efforts to be put forth to insure the spiritual well-being of the nation. Where is such a man to be found? We are not unmindful of the splendid work which has been done by our Archbishops and Bishops and other ecclesiastical leaders, nor are we insensible to the difficulties of finding a man who will be able to speak with a voice which will command universal attention. But the need exists; and it should be our daily prayer that God will raise up for us a leader or leaders who will be able to deliver the nation from the spirit of religious indifference which is so largely in possession in all parts of the country and among all sections of the community. In the meantime there is a solemn duty resting upon all who know in their own experience the supreme importance of religious character and religious life. It is for them to show that they realize the urgency of the call which the present war is making upon the nation to consider its ways, and to do their utmost for the promotion of the religious spirit. If the Church has failed to rise to its obligations in this time of opportunity, may it not be, in some degree, because individual members of the Church have not yet realized *their* responsibility? The fullest devotion to national interests is not incompatible with an extended zeal for an extension of the kingdom of God. Indeed, the two things are, or ought to be, so closely related that Christian people cannot fail in one branch without failing in the other as well. While, therefore, it is true that “nothing matters but the war,” it is also true that one of the chief obligations which the war is imposing upon Christian people is to see to it that they themselves are not failing in any duty which shall contribute to the uplifting of the nation.

The
Possibility
of a Split.

The Bishop of Oxford's Kikuyu article in his *Diocesan Magazine* makes it clear that the possibility of a "split" in the English Church is not so remote as some of us have been wont to imagine. It has been thought that so much is to be gained by "holding the Church together," that men would make great sacrifices in order to stave off disruption; but, unless we altogether misunderstand Bishop Gore's position, he and those who think with him are prepared to face disruption if the view of episcopacy for which they contend is authoritatively repudiated by the Church of England, or if any action be officially sanctioned which, in their opinion, discredits the theory upon which, apparently, they are prepared to stake all. We do not blame the Bishop, or those associated with him in this matter, for thus making their position plain. Our regret, rather, is that those whose principles forbid them adopting any such narrow or exclusive view of "the Church" as that for which Bishop Gore stands, do not state their own position with equal precision and equal definiteness. Nothing has been more disappointing in the whole of the Kikuyu controversy than the almost absolute silence, since the publication of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Statement, of those of our leaders in the Church who might reasonably be expected to agree with the Archbishop's view, and to be ready to lend the great principles for which it stands adequate support. But to return to the Bishop of Oxford's references to the possibilities of a split. In his view, the actual movements towards unity are divergent and point in opposite directions. Catholic-minded people, he says, look towards unity on a Catholic basis. "Among ourselves, they look towards reunion with Rome and the East, and their very zeal for reunion with the Catholic communions makes them shy of even the most wholesome element in Protestantism." On the other hand, "people of Evangelical or Protestant sympathies practically direct their aspirations towards an alliance of the Evangelical and Protestant communities, and leave Rome and the East out of account." We agree with the Bishop that "this is obviously true," not

merely "on the whole," but altogether. He thinks, therefore, that, "if these movements towards reunion were to take effect to-day, they might result in a rearrangement of the forces of Christendom into what we may broadly call Catholic and Protestant camps, but in the process our own communion would have been split in twain." We are not prepared to canvass the Bishop's statement, but we venture to ask, first, whether such a "rearrangement" might not be advantageous to the cause of spiritual religion? and, second, would it be altogether disadvantageous to the well-being of the Church if those went out whose aspirations are wholly Romeward? However much we may try to hide from ourselves the direction of present ecclesiastical tendencies, we submit that such questions as we have raised come very near to the realities of the position. The cohesion which exists within the Church of England is due undoubtedly, as the Bishop of Oxford points out, to the "almost infinite gradation of opinions." But in the mission-field this position does not so readily obtain. The two parties are more clearly defined. "We have 'monochrome' dioceses," the Bishop of Oxford says, "consisting more or less entirely of missionaries from one or other of the extremes with those whom they have converted and instructed. Mombasa and Zanzibar are only examples of what is to be found elsewhere; and such startlingly contrariant dioceses are to be found in juxtaposition. Schism between two such dioceses is very easily imaginable; and were it to occur, or even seriously to threaten, we at home, according to our sympathies, might find ourselves forced to adhere to one or the other of the divergent dioceses, and a schism which began in a remote part of the world might affect our whole communion and rend in twain our Lambeth Conference. This is the possibility," he adds, "which has confronted us in connection with the Kikuyu Conference." We cannot dispute the accuracy of the Bishop of Oxford's diagnosis; and if—as we hope and believe—the Bishops of Mombasa and Uganda take advantage of the ruling of their Metropolitan to foster closer relations with non-episcopal missions, and if—as

we should not be surprised to find—the Bishop of Zanzibar declares their two dioceses to be in a state of excommunication, it is evident that the possibility hinted at by the Bishop of Oxford may easily become a reality. Whether Bishop Gore would regret such a result, or whether he would use his great influence to prevent such a disruption, we have at present no means of knowing. We shall be in a better position to determine this interesting question when we have before us the promised article in which he will discuss “whether the Anglican Communion on its present basis of comprehension is really worth maintaining.” For the moment it is enough to know that the question of disruption has now been definitely raised by the extreme Anglican party; and it behoves all who love the Church of England not only to keep it in mind but to stand together, that they may force and overcome whatever difficulties the future may have in store. One thing is certain, that they are right who say that the Church has never had a more important question raised for its consideration than that involved in the Kikuyu controversy. Our regret is that, so far, Evangelical and Moderate Churchmen seem so inadequately to realize the gravity of the issues involved.

A Valid Ministry. The Bishop of Oxford objects to the Archbishop of Canterbury's Statement because it is “a compromise based on no intelligible principle, and tending far beyond what is, at present, contemplated.” But the Bishop's own “intelligible principle” would rule a Nonconformist ministry out of court altogether. He holds that “in the long run there is no justification for refusing full recognition of Nonconformist ministers, in view of the spiritual fruits of their labours, except the belief (1) that the Episcopate is of the essence of a valid ministry, and (2) that an episcopally ordained priest is necessary for a valid Eucharist.” We do not ourselves understand how “spiritual fruits” can come from an “invalid” ministry, but the Bishop does not seem to be conscious of the

impossibility of such a position. He is, however, oppressed by its difficulty, for in proceeding to contend that the Episcopate is of the essence of a valid ministry, he says: "I hate the argument, because I love Nonconformists and admire them, and acknowledge the abundant fruits of their ministry." Nevertheless :

"The conclusion seems to me quite irresistible that the whole idea of the visible Catholic Church has been from the beginning bound up with the institution of the ministerial succession which took shape universally and solely in the succession of Bishops: that, if in any respect the Church Catholic has exercised the authority of binding and loosing, it has exercised this authority so as to make episcopal ordination strictly necessary for ministry in the Church—of the *asse*, not of the *bene esse* of 'valid' or recognizable ministry. The Episcopate as the necessary mark of the Church holds exactly the same position of Catholic authority as the Creed or the Canon of Scripture. To accept a non-episcopal ministry is an act of explicit rebellion against the authority of the ancient and undivided Church than which there can be no rebellion more complete. Then, when I go back to the origin of our religion, I am convinced that the institution of the visible Church and its ministry belongs to its original essence and bears the authority of the Lord Himself."

"An act of explicit rebellion," "no rebellion more complete"—these are strong words, used, we venture to say, without the least shadow of authority or justification.

Has the Church "said"? The Bishop of Oxford admits that the Church of England "does not require its members to accept any particular theory of the episcopal succession, or the theory of the non-validity of Eucharists celebrated by those who are not priests," but he contends that "it does require the acceptance of the practical results of these theories." We are tempted to ask when the Church made such a requirement and where shall we find it? The Bishop notices the Archbishop's deprecation of the words "valid" and "invalid," and his preference for the words "regular" and "irregular," and declares it to be "only a refusal to face the question."

"Valid" and "invalid" expresses a different and more fundamental idea than 'regular' and 'irregular.' If there is a visible Church having authority to bind and loose in the administration of sacraments, it must say, 'Sacraments administered under such and such conditions are not sacraments which we can recognize—they carry no longer with them the guarantee of the Church.'

The Church has not said that Baptisms celebrated by those who are not priests are not valid: it has not even said universally or in all cases that Confirmations not administered by a Bishop are invalid; it has not as a whole said that schism invalidates sacraments: but it has said that ordinations to holy orders not celebrated by a Bishop are invalid, and that Eucharists not celebrated by an episcopally ordained priest are invalid. Let us be thankful that the Church cannot and does not claim to restrict the free action of God. But it does claim, and the claim seems to me irresistible, that the new covenant was with the Church, and the Church was endowed with authority to bind and loose, and has done so with an unmistakable emphasis and constancy and universality in respect of Creed and Episcopate alike. If this be so, and the Anglican Church accepts the results of this determination of the Church, and interprets in the light of this determination great passages or principles of Holy Scripture, then it seems to me that we must, in the mission-field as at home, give plain notice of our platform; and I feel quite convinced that if it is once understood where we intend to stand—where we must stand if the Anglican communion is to hold together—one result is certain to follow: we must be left out of any general Protestant federation."

"If this be so." But is it so? We dispute the Bishop of Oxford's contention absolutely and altogether. The Bishop owes it to himself and to the Church at large to point out definitely and unmistakably when and where the Church "has said that ordinations to holy orders not celebrated by a Bishop are invalid, and that Eucharists not celebrated by an episcopally ordained priest are invalid." At the most all that the Bishop can claim is that these principles apply *within* the Church of England, although even here we much prefer the Archbishop's word "irregular," but when applied to non-episcopal Churches they are without foundation. But we now understand the Bishop of Oxford's position, and it is quite easy to see that, holding the views he does, he finds no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that "we must be left out of any general Protestant federation." It should be the business of Churchmen with larger and more accurate views to see that the Bishop of Oxford's influence is not allowed to prevail.

The Churchmen's Union held its Annual Conference at Rugby, and sought to advance the Modernist position. Among the subjects discussed were "The Teaching of the Old Testament and of the New in

Professor
Gardner and
Criticism.

Church and School," "Kikuyu Problems," "Church Reforms," and "The Teaching of the Creeds." The general attitude of the Conference on Biblical questions may be gathered from the following passages from the address of the President, Professor Percy Gardner :

"The reformers of the sixteenth century, being compelled to find some authority to set up in place of the infallibility of the Church, which they were obliged to call in question, found their only possible resource in attributing infallibility, or something hardly to be distinguished from it, to sacred Scriptures. That belief could scarcely be said to have died out among less instructed Christians, though, of course, it could not be maintained in anything like its original form by anyone who had had a theological training. Of the two kinds of criticism of the Bible, textual and higher, the textual came in first, the beginnings of it being found in the writings of Erasmus, and textual criticism by itself is sufficient to destroy any belief in Biblical infallibility.

"A great deal of nonsense is talked about the higher criticism, as if it were a thing destructive of Christian faith. It is spoken of as a wicked device of the wicked Germans and an insult to sacred documents. Even the word 'higher' is misunderstood as implying a special kind of criticism, full of intellectual arrogance. Of course, it only means historic as contrasted with textual criticism. And far from being something apart, it is really only the application to Christian literature and history of the methods which have been evolved in the process of historic study, and the validity of which is universally recognized in all Universities and academies from Japan to Peru. There are no competing methods : it is a question whether we will accept the documents of Christianity as above criticism, or whether we will throw them into historic relief as we throw the writings of Herodotus and Tacitus. This does not in the least imply that they are not more valuable to religion than the writings of Greek and Roman historians, but only that we must measure them with the same instruments and throw them into the same perspective.

"The recent history of Biblical criticism abundantly shows that in all schools, orthodox and radical, the methods of historic science are steadily making way. And there can be no question of their abandonment unless Europe goes back to the obscurity of the Dark Ages. Our society here is moving with a flowing tide which is irresistible, only it especially belongs to us, as a Church Society, to insist that criticism shall be combined with a constant sense of spiritual values."

The proceedings of the British Association are always of great interest and often of great value, and it is to be regretted that the paramount claims of the war have prevented their receiving as much public attention as usual. In recent years there has been a deeper

recognition on the part of scientists of the limit that is imposed upon their labours : there comes a point beyond which research cannot go ; but upon the path which science cannot tread revelation sheds its illuminating light. Canon Bonney, one of the foremost geologists of our time, brought out this fact very clearly in the sermon he preached in Manchester Cathedral before the British Association on Sunday, September 12. Speaking of biological science, he said that "each step in advance, each searchlight thrown into the enviring darkness, while it adds to the realm of the known, shows how vast is that of the unknown, how fathomless the ocean of mystery." He asked, too, what answer can be made to the question, "What is to be the result of this ceaseless alternation of life and death, of all the marvellous products of energy and ether, of the human drama, with its efforts and its pathos, its intellectual gains and moral advancement, of man who has pressed the powers of Nature into his service and ruled among its living creatures? Men," he added, "are daily dying, and our race might at last be forced to give up the struggle for existence. And then? Science must reply, 'I do not know.' But there is light elsewhere. Here revelation takes up her parable, and assures us that death is not the 'end of life,' but only the close to a single phase, and the beginning of a new one, wherein the anomalies of the former will be rectified and its sorrows give place to joy. It shows how men throughout long centuries were searching after God ; how, though too often led astray by blind guides, and wandering in the wilderness of this world, they yet kept drawing nearer, though by devious paths, to the Celestial City. It tells us how, in the fulness of time, Christ came to make God and man, for so long seemingly parted, again at one ; to assure us that no tyrannies, whether on earth or beyond it, can separate us from the love of God or the many mansions of the eternal home." For this truly noble passage Canon Bonney is sincerely to be thanked.