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THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE : THE BISHOPS' TASK

IN July the Lambeth Conference meets. These conferences of bishops of the Anglican Communion were originated by Archbishop Longley in the nineteenth century and recur every ten years. This year the growth of the Church overseas will see an increase of the English episcopate to nearly four hundred representative bishops of the English Church from all over the Empire. Nor will their discussions be matters of purely technical interest on matters domestic to the Church. The English Church is an integral factor in the nation's life. And these conferences will have many repercussions.

The Church of England gains every way by having the moral authority and social prestige that goes with a national establishment. For that she pays a price. But no greater price than the Church of Rome, whose international outlook must of necessity come into conflict with the local customs of every national State. That is why Emperors in the past have always held a controlling influence on the nomination of popes and the calling of General Councils. That is why Charles V summoned the Pope to call the Council of Trent and why his son Philip II gave his *imprimatur* to its final decrees. That is why Henry VIII and his Catholic and Protestant daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, called themselves Heads of the Church in England. That is why, at the opening of the late War, the Emperor Francis Joseph vetoed the appointment of Rampolla by the Cardinals to be Pope of Rome ; so that, notwithstanding the Cardinals' choice, Giuseppe Sarto (Pius X) had to be elected in his place. That is why Mussolini, out of love for his country, refuses to the papacy the right of enrolling under its banners the Catholic Scouts movement. An international church with a temporal sovereign at its head creates in every country—as Henry VIII was the first monarch to observe—a divided allegiance. Archbishop Benson in the last year of his life reminded his hearers of what Protestantism meant :

The true faith . . . taught by the Church I saw characterised by a motto at Dublin—Catholic, Apostolic, Reformed, Protestant. . . . If ever it was necessary . . . to lay so much emphasis upon that last word I think that events which have been occurring in the last few weeks . . . are things which warn us that that word is not to be forgotten (*Abp. Benson in Ireland*, 1896: pp. 110, 111).

He referred to the papal encyclical denying the "validity" of Anglican Orders. The word, Protestant, alas, is subject to misconstruction. The Reformation was less a negative protest of the Christian Church (with the New Testament in her hand) against the claims of another Church, than a return to the sources of the Faith. *Juvat integros accedere fontes*. That, in my judgment, means:—an appeal to (1) the Bible as interpreted either (2) by the Church of the First Four General Councils, or (3) by self-evident Reason. That was the three-fold origin of Luther's "protest." Romanism once accepted part of the first and part of the second. She has today definitely discarded the documents of the original Christian revelation as being in any sense final. Hear her latest and greatest apologist:

All appeals to Scripture alone or to Scripture and Antiquity are no more than appeals FROM the divine voice of the living Church and, therefore, essentially rationalistic. . . . The master-error of the Reformation was the fallacy . . . that Christianity was to be derived from the Bible and that the dogma of the Faith is to be limited to the written records of Christianity. . . . It was the charge of the Reformers that the [Roman] Catholic doctrines were not primitive. And their pretension was to revert to Antiquity. But the appeal to Antiquity is both a treason and a heresy (Cardinal Manning, *The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, Intr. and chs. iv, v).

What this means may be seen at a glance by what is happening in the island of Malta. A friar was expelled from the island for holding certain political opinions which disagreed with the policy of his ecclesiastical superiors. Lord Strickland, the GOVERNOR of the island, personally went to Rome to explain,

but could obtain no hearing of his case. From that hour it was pronounced "a grave sin" to cast a vote either for him or any of his adherents. A brutal attempt at assassination followed. And the following Joint Memorandum was issued by the hierarchy:

The Bishops . . . forbade the casting of votes for Lord Strickland, his party and his supporters. . . . Their motives were purely inspired by the duty which they owed their flocks. . . . As to the Ministers' description of the Pastoral Letter as an attempt (*sic*) against the very foundations of constitutional government the Bishops urge that, since the tribunals . . . can deprive candidates of civil rights for misdemeanour, in the same way . . . the ecclesiastical authorities . . . safeguard the religious traditions of an eminently Catholic population (*The Times*, May 28th, 1930).

How different is this from the teaching of Him Who said: "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's"! And from that of St. Peter who exhorts his hearers to "submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as supreme or unto Governors as unto them that are sent by him" (1 Peter ii. 27), and from St. Paul who writes:

Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whoso, therefore, resisteth that power resisteth the ordinance of God (Rom. xiii. 1, 2).

With this preface let us outline some four points of ecclesiastical policy on which the Bishops might be tempted to pronounce.

I. THE REVISED PRAYER BOOK

The Bishops may be disposed to adopt this Book as expressive of the Church's wishes and to resent the House of Commons' rejection of it as an unwarrantable interference with their powers of discipline. But what are the facts of the case? The Archbishop of York in his Diocesan Gazette has recorded the fact that:

As the Revised Prayer Book still has neither statutory nor canonical sanction there is no power or authority in any bishop or in any body of bishops to sanction it.

That being so, is it not worth the Bishops' while to recognise plain facts? Disendowment would for the moment free them from the statute that binds them to a national establishment and take away from them most of their schools, some of their cathedrals, a large sum of money and all the social and national privileges they at present enjoy. Are they prepared to pay that price for a so-called freedom? And if they were what would be the gain? By approving the Book would they have many supporters in England for their action? Let us once more face the facts.

Lord Halifax from the first disliked the new Prayer Book because, as the *Modern Churchman* for April, 1927, boasted, there were no less than "sixteen points" of Modernist theology in it, which denied the historic truth of the books of the Old Testament and omitted or denied some of the essential miracles of the New. The Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Barnes) equally disliked it for the opposite reason—that the new Prayer Book included the whole of the papal service of *Corpus Christi* with the Roman *prae-ibo*. These facts the Bishop of Gloucester publicly admitted. And at the same time the new Communion Service, announced by its promoters to be more "Evangelical and Scriptural" than the old, was declared by the Jesuit Father Woodlock to have been patient of "a sacrificial and propitiatory interpretation" which quite "definitely brought it into line with the Mass"—an interpretation which "the Office of 1662 could not possibly bear" (*The Times*, June 23rd, 1927 and *Lectures*, p. 79: Sheed & Ward). The House of Commons, representing the plain man in the street, noted that, by the terms of the new Prayer Book, there need be no prayers made for the King, and that the last rubric at Holy Communion had been deleted which refuted any notion of a "Corporal Presence" of Christ in the Sacrament to be worshipped as being "idolatry," since the Body of Christ being now "in heaven" was "not here." The gracious and urbane Archbishop of Canterbury, who was (officially at least) in charge of the new Book, with courtly complaisance, removed the offending particulars and returned the amended Book to the House.

But by this time a new series of difficulties had arisen. No party in the Church wanted it! For some it went too far. For others it did not go far enough. In a brilliant article for the *Church Quarterly Review* of July, 1927, Dr. F. E. Brightman,

of liturgical fame, had smitten the Book hip and thigh with such slaughter that he allowed it neither grammar, theology nor correct quotation from the New Testament, except in about three instances! The learned Dean of Wells, another master-gunner, brought two of his heavy batteries to bear upon it in *The Times*. Professor Burkitt drew nearly every divine at Cambridge to give battle against it. "This," he argued, "is not the religion we want either for ourselves or our children!" The result of these weighty appeals by the first scholars of the Church was seen at the next session of the Church Assembly. The voting for the Book dropped to little more than one half of the full voting strength of the House. Was it wonderful, with all due submission to the Bishops, that the House of Commons, well aware that no harmony was to be found out of such a discord of voices, approved their first reluctant resolution by an increased majority of votes?

Nor need the Bishops take this to be a flouting of their authority. No two men have lived who swayed this nation with the authority of Archbishop Tillotson and Bishop Burnet of Salisbury. In 1689 they produced a revised Prayer Book on Platonist—or, as it was then called—Latitudinarian lines. It was rejected. And the most fervent admirer of these two masters of all sacred and profane learning will never regret the decision of the Commons in that instance also. Canada has a revised Prayer Book. So have America and the Churches, we believe, of Wales and Ireland. A really good revision, such as would contain good additional prayers or prune (as Cranmer pruned) the Elizabethan luxuriance of some phrases in the Psalter or remove some archæological curiosities from parts of the Articles of Religion, the Marriage and Communion Services and other places, would be a boon to the whole nation. Why should one retain, in the Nicene Creed, a Latinised version of "one substance with" for the Greek original which runs: "of the same nature as"? And why do such mythological monsters as "unicorns" and "dragons" still usurp the force of the plain meaning of the Hebrew confirmed by the Assyrian? If only scholarship on the bishops' bench could give us reasonable changes in the non-controversial parts of the old Prayer Book they would make it better understood of the people. But their opportunity has passed. There is still a more excellent way and one that has in advance commended itself to the late Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Bishops might well consider, without prejudice to the results of recent debate on the Prayer Book,—

II. AN IMPROVED VERSION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

The music of the Authorised Version no art could hope to improve. Cardinal Newman felt its enchantment when he forsook it reluctantly for the Douay version. Father Faber asserted that our Saxon Bible was the stronghold of the Protestant heresy. What Shakespeare says of Cleopatra might without the changing of a single word be said of our present version :

Age cannot wither her nor custom stale
Her infinite variety. Other [writings] cloy
The appetite they feed ; but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies. For vilest things in her
Become themselves in her.

SHAKESPEARE, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, II, ii, 242.

The Authorised Version (as it has come by the popular voice to be called) was published the very year that Shakespeare ceased writing. And it had the wide compass of his varied learning and copious vocabulary for selection. But, like Shakespeare, the English of the Authorised Version has largely changed its meaning and needs a glossary for its use. Artillery is no longer, as at 1 Sam. xx. 40, used for archery, nor carriages, as at 1 Sam. xvii. 22 and at Acts xxi. 15, for things that are carried ! In the Epistle to the Romans alone we have in chapter xii the same word in the course of two or three verses translated “diligence” and “business” (for “busy-ness”); while at chapter xvi. 2 the word “business” is the right translation of quite a different word in Greek. A devout and cautious but scientific window-cleaning of the whole house is necessary if the modern man is to read with the spirit and with the understanding also. And unless a poet’s ear as well as a sympathetic spirit be brought to the task, along with a mastery of old English prose, the result will be as inaccurate as Dr. Moffatt’s mistranslation or as tuneless as the Revised Version or at best as artificial as Dryden’s attempts, vigorous though they be, to re-write the plays of Shakespeare.

The present writer laid this very scheme before the late Primate and the reader may be glad to see his wise and well judged reply :

10, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W.3.

December 28th, 1929.

I am much interested to read your letter about the need for a new version of the English Bible. I do not think the Prayer Book and the Bible go together in this respect. And perhaps there has been enough handling of the Prayer Book for the present. But *a new version of the Bible is well worth thinking about*. It would take a very long time if it is to be done properly. . . . My own belief is that the A.V. [authorised version], with its three centuries of universal use, will hold its own in spite of everything. When the Bishops are in England in the coming year for the Lambeth Conference there may be opportunities for eliciting opinions both from America and from the Mission fields and, perhaps above all, from Australia. I thank you for writing to me about it. . . .

(Signed) DAVIDSON of Lambeth, *Abp.*

That is a policy that may be worth thinking about. It was a bishop (Samuel Wilberforce) that inaugurated the suggestion of a revised version of the Bible published in 1881 and 1885. What could be more suitable than a similar suggestion from the assembled bishops at the Lambeth Conference? Nor could there be a greater opportunity than that of publicly protesting against the atheist Soviet's State and its—

III. PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH IN RUSSIA.

M. Aulard has in his recent *Christianity and the French Revolution* (Benn, 1927) shown us the diabolical cruelties of a former atheist Government. Mr. F. A. Mackenzie has this very year done the same for the Church in Russia by his timely and sober *Russian Crucifixion* (Jarrod). The movement, initiated by the *Morning Post* newspaper and under the chairmanship of Prebendary Gough, has found an echo in every Christian and non-Christian heart from the Pope of Rome to the synagogue of the Chief Rabbi of the Jews.

IV. THE CHURCHES OF S. INDIA REUNION SCHEME.

In 1919 some thirty native Christians met at Tranquebar, the landing place of the first Protestant missionaries to India,

to plan a united Church for S. India at present divided into the three groups of the United Church, and that of India, Burma and Ceylon, as well as the Wesleyan Church. They held that the Church was "one body" as well as one in the Spirit and that there ought to be "conserved the three Scriptural elements of the Congregational, the Presbyterian and Episcopal forms" of service. They took as their basis, strangely enough, the very platform which the Bishops of the Lambeth Conference of the following year (1920) chose for their call to the Reunion of all the Churches—namely, (1) Holy Scripture; (2) the two Sacraments; (3) the Creeds and (4) the historic *Episcopate*.

It is on this last point that all the difficulty has arisen. The joint committees of all the Indian bodies concerned have accepted the full programme, even to accepting the ruling of Lambeth. What has occasioned the difficulty is the very natural fact that they ask for a thirty years' *interim*, in which the proposed arrangement of mutual recognition of orders is to be tested in practice. It will hardly be believed that there is a party in the Church actually proposing to "secede" if the thirty years' interval be conceded! For this party holds that the spiritual link will somehow be broken which from the time of the Apostles by a direct "succession" safeguards the "validity" of their ministry. We propose to prove that such an idea of the meaning of the Apostolic Succession is totally unfounded, that no early Father had ever heard of it in that sense, that the Middle Ages overlooked it till the times of the Council of Trent and that the highest High Churchmen among the bishops of the English Church since the Reformation acted in complete contradiction to it. It was in fact an invention of the Jesuits who captured the Church of Rome at Trent. And it was re-discovered by the Tractarians of the Oxford Movement in the nineteenth century. Modern learning and historical research has today shattered it beyond recovery in that sense of the term.

It was the pressure of the political situation . . .
 as a breakwater against Liberal subjectivism . . .
 which made them catch at the principle of Apostolic
 Succession. . . . So it was strategic rather than
 religious reasons which gave the idea of Apostolic Suce-
 sion its dominant place in the static Church conception
 of Neo-Anglicanism. . . . Even after the untenableness

of the construction of history on which it rests had been displayed Apostolic Succession has remained the *shibboleth* of Neo-Anglicanism. . . . That it is untenable needs scarcely to be pointed out. . . . The neo-Anglican doctrine on Succession definitely diverges from the primitive one. In the primitive Church it was the chain of holders of the same Bishop's throne . . . which formed the guarantee of the apostolicity of the traditional doctrine; while Neo-Anglicanism seeks the connection between consecrators and consecrated (Yngwe Briioth, *The Anglican Revival*, with preface by the Bishop of Gloucester, pp. 183-6: Longmans, 1925).

The writer quotes Newman's candid admission that he took refuge in Apostolic Succession "not only because these things were true and right but in order to shake off the State" (*Lectures on Difficulties of Anglicanism*, vol. i, 102). Keble, too, had held that the theory was an expedient and if "not absolutely certain" yet it was "safest" to accept (Lock's *John Keble*, 84, 85: Methuen, 1885). That may explain the outrageous language with which the Oxford Movement started off in the year 1833 with a sermon of Keble's as a challenge to our "national apostasy"!

St. Paul names a Ministry of the SPIRIT: "Apostles, Prophets, Teachers" (1 Cor. xii. 28 and Eph. iv. 11) *alongside* another Ministry of AUTHORITY consisting of "Bishops, Presbyters (Priests for short) and Deacons" (1 Tim. iii. 1, 12; Tit. i. 5, 7). It was the same after the death of the Apostles. We have the *Didaché* and the *Shepherd* representing a survival of "prophetism" from New Testament days alongside the Letters of Ignatius insisting on the claims of the episcopate as the one centre of each local church. We find the same a little later in Tertullian. He admits that "the list (*ordo*) of bishops, if traced back (*recensus*) finds its source in St. John" the Apostle (*adv. Marc.*, iv). But the same author, both in his orthodox and less orthodox writings, maintains the old "prophetic" theory of the ministry that "two" or "three" laymen constitute a Church and, where clergy cannot be had, laymen may administer baptism or the Eucharist with the validity of a priest. Thus: "ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consessus et offers et tinguis et sacerdos es sibi solus. Sed ubi tres ecclesia est, licet laici" (*de exhort, cast.*,

c. vii). "In uno et altero ecclesia est, ecclesia vero Christus (*de Poen.*, c. x). A president at a love-feast, says Dr. Bigg in his *Origins of Christianity* (p. 273), might be clerical or lay. A confessor, who stood firm in a persecution—so Bishop Frere of Truro tells us—automatically became a priest "in virtue of his confession" and "without any laying on of hands" "In the third century the line between the clergy and laity was only beginning to be defined." (Swete, *Early H. of Ch. and Min.*, 289, 304). This does not mean, however, that there was no difference between a layman and a priest or between a priest and a bishop. Each kept their proper functions. Thus ordination for bishops only was the rule. But where clergy were wanting the sacredness of the whole Church gave her members or ministers a power of consecration which they had not in themselves. Hence we may now understand how Bishop John Wordsworth can say :

The fundamental institutions of the Church . . . may be traced to the old general Charismatic Ministry [the Ministry of the Spirit]. . . . The practical conclusion must surely be that, while some form of Regular Ministry [the Ministry of Authority] is always necessary, it need not exclude a Charismatic Ministry (Wordsworth, *Ministry of Grace*, pp. vi, vii).

We thus come to the meaning of the "successions." They are not doctrinal nor sacramental. "They are primarily historical," as they are in Eusebius. That is the only succession Eusebius knows (C. H. Turner, *ap. Swete, loc. cit.*, 131-4). And how are these successions kept up? Of this history tells a curious tale.

Pope Fabianus in 236 started a long line of popes and archbishops who were appointed to their high office as *unbaptised laymen!* Such was Pope Constantine II in 767, although he was one of the few who rectified the defects afterwards. Pope Gregory the Great was on the day of his consecration only a deacon, Pope Silvanus only a sub-deacon. Pope John VIII was a deacon, Athanasius only an arch-deacon. Photius at Constantinople, Tarasius, Nicephorus, Ambrose of Milan (though he afterwards corrected this), Gregory, the father of Nazianzen, and Thalassius of Cæsarea were all *unbaptised laymen* at the time of their consecration! Says Bishop Wordsworth :

Gregory Thaumaturgus was probably a *layman*. . . .
 Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzus, was probably a *layman*.
 . . . Eusebius, who was made Bishop of Cæsarea [in
 Cappadocia] in 362, was certainly *unbaptised*. . . .
 At Constantinople itself, when Gregory proved too feeble
 for the post, Theodosius the Great chose a high officer of
 state . . . still *unbaptised*, named Nectarius, to fill
 his place . . . His successor, John Chrysostom, was
 perhaps the only one of the great fourth century Fathers
 who approached the episcopate in . . . a thoroughly
 regular manner (Wordsworth, *Ordination Problems*, pp.
 66-72 : S.P.C.K., 1910).

St. Jerome never acted as a priest. His *lay* brother was forcibly seized—according to the manner of those times (Bingham, *Ant.*, IV, ii, 8)—and made a Bishop. After this what constitutes “validity”? Popes and archbishops alternately validated and invalidated the acts of their predecessors without the slightest regard for consequences. In vain the councils of Arles and Sardica and the Canons of Hippolytus (so called) were invoked. In 853 the Council of Soissons decided to recognise the facts of the case.

In the tenth century the candle of the Roman see all but went out [says Bishop Robertson, the leading canonist of the English Church]. From the reign of Formosus (891) to that of Sergius II the papacy is the prize of bloody faction fights. Each Pope exhumes and insults the body of his predecessor and *re-ordains* all clergy upon whom he had laid his sacrilegious hands. . . . [Cardinal] Hergenröther allows that ordinations were treated as null and repeated (Bishop Robertson, *Regnum Dei*, p. 240).

Howbeit, whatever the practice at Rome there is no doubt what has always been the practice of the English Church since the Reformation. Bishop Andrewes tells the Calvinist Du Moulin that lack of episcopacy in the Huguenot conventicles was “no fault” of theirs but due to “the hardship of the times” (*injuria temporum*). “Nor even if episcopacy was of right divine does it follow that salvation cannot be had without it.” “He must be blind who does not see churches standing without it. We are

not so hard-hearted (*ferrei*)." Andrewes, adds Canon Mason, was not prepared to make episcopacy absolutely indispensable. In 1610 he went so far as to assist Archbishop Bancroft of Canterbury to consecrate as Bishops three Scottish deacons! To Andrewes' demurrer Bancroft replied that

Where bishops cannot be had the Ordinations given by presbyters must be esteemed lawful. Otherwise it might be doubted if there were any lawful vocation in most of the Reformed Churches (A. J. Mason, *G. of E. and Episcopacy*, 70-72 : Cambridge, 1914).

Bishop Cosin of the same Laudian school, in his *Religio Catholica*, held with St. Jerome that "ordination was restrained to bishops rather by . . . the perpetual custom of the Church than by any absolute precept which either Christ or His Apostles gave." He himself frequented and exchanged rites with the Huguenots, especially at Charenton, adding :

If at any time a minister . . . ordained in these French churches came to incorporate himself in ours . . . our Bishops did not re-ordain him. . . . If . . . we renounce the French [Huguenots] we must for the very same reason renounce all the ministers of Germany besides. And then what will become of the Protestant party ? (Letter to M. Cordel : Mason, 224-6).

Hooker had said the same thing before, that "we are not simply without exception to urge a lineal descent of power from the Apostles by continual succession in every effectual ordination" (*E. P.*, VII, xiv, 11). And in our own day Bishop Wordsworth asserts that "the historic Presbyterian Church of Scotland . . . agrees with our own and with the Catholic Church of primitive times as to the matter, form and intention of holy orders" (*Ordination Problems*, 36). And that was actually the opinion of the Lambeth Conference of 1920 :

It is not that we call in question for a moment the spiritual reality of the ministries of those communions which do not possess the episcopate. Quite the contrary. (Lambeth Conference : *Report* for 1920, pp. 134, 135).

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P.S.—As this goes to press the very able young Archdeacon of Coventry (Mr. Hunkin, Rector of Rugby) has produced his book on *Episcopal Ordination . . . in relation to Inter-Communion and Reunion* (Heffer, Cambridge, 2s. 6d.). While incidentally confirming the above references he adds the unexpected names of Bishop Stubbs and Bishop Frank Weston of Zanzibar and Bishop Philpotts of Exeter as favouring the same conclusions. He also quotes Laud to the effect that

“ I do not find one of the ancient Fathers that makes . . . continued succession a necessary . . . mark of the true Church. . . . The succession is not tied to place or person but . . . to the verity of doctrine ” (p. 45).

Also he cites Pope Nicholas' retort to Photius, Archbishop of Constantinople, that it was a Greek “ custom ” to “ promote a *layman* to be a Patriarch ” ! (p. 116).

A.H.T.C.