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THE CHURCHMAN

November, 1919.

THE MONTH.

The Church Congress. It was a bold thing to revive the Church Congress before the country has at all settled down after the upheaval of the Great War, but it must at once be admitted that the venture has been fully justified. The members attending the Congress, held at Leicester, October 14-17, were smaller than those which usually foregathered in pre-war days for what was then an annual event, but not for many years has there been a deeper realization of the spirit of fellowship and brotherhood than was manifested at Leicester. It is easy, of course, to exaggerate the indications; the personality of the President, the enthusiasm of members and the uniqueness of the occasion, all combined to stimulate and sustain ideals of unity; but, when every allowance is made for these adventitious circumstances, there remains the fact, solid and unmistakable, that not only was there no jarring note heard throughout the whole Congress, but that there was a most obvious desire to recognize in the fullest degree the "one-ness" of the assembly.

The New Spirit. What does it all mean? It is, we believe, a sign of the times. It shows that with the new age is coming a new spirit of which it will be necessary to take serious count in all future discussions of Church questions. It does *not* mean that the old lines of demarcation are being blotted out, or that the old differences have ceased to be, but it does involve in the consideration of those questions which divide Churchmen a greater readiness to understand each other's point of view, to lay

emphasis upon points of unity rather than upon points of disagreement. Now, if this be a true analysis of the position, it is a very important change for the Church Congress to have effected, and it is one for which we cannot be sufficiently thankful if so be it may result in drawing more closely together all who are sincerely loyal to the principles and practice of the Church of England. But the development of this new spirit which has just began to show itself, will not be without its difficulties and it must be watched with care. It would, of course, be idle to suppose that the differences among Churchmen are any less real than they were, and to move forward as if they had ceased to exist or were not as important as they were would be to court disaster. Nothing is gained by a policy of "make-believe" in regard to the relationships which exist between Churchmen and Churchmen, any more than in regard to those between the Church and Nonconformity. The differences are fundamental and vital, and it is still as necessary as it ever was to bear witness to the Truth and to uphold in their full integrity the principles of the Church of England—Catholic, Apostolic, Reformed, Protestant. But in our witness and in our controversies there must ever be the recognition that the things we contend for are the things of Christ and that, therefore, we must be controlled by the Christ-like spirit. It will be said that this is no new principle; of course, it is not; but it has not always been acted upon. There have too often been grave breaches of charity on all sides, but we can at least endeavour to mend our ways in this matter, and we may well be thankful that the Church Congress has so markedly laid emphasis upon the need for a deeper recognition and acceptance of the Spirit of Christian unity.

Many subjects of outstanding importance were discussed at Leicester, and we may recur to some of these in future issues; for the moment we must confine our attention to two. One relates to "Christian Ideals in World Politics." Interesting papers on "The League of Nations and Imperial Politics" were contributed by men so dissimilar in their views as Lord Eustace Percy and Mr. George Lansbury; and Bishop King outlined "The Present Need and Opportunities of the Mission Field." But in this section the paper which made the strongest appeal to the meeting and also interests us most was that of the

**The Present
Call.**

Rev. W. E. S. Holland, who gave a most powerful presentation of "The Present Call to the Church." That call is nothing less than the winning of the world for Christ. Most eloquently and impressively did Mr. Holland make his plea:—

We need (he said) a challenge that shall require that every family lives the simple life, and trains its sons and daughters for world-service. At present we are living as though winning the world for Christ were a task that the Church could take casually in its stride.

"Business as usual" will never see the world won for Christ. It will mean extraordinary measures; a radical change in the everyday living of each family, such as the war demanded. Have we yet reached the level when our missionary giving means actual privations in our family life? It cost Christ the Cross. What has it actually cost you in sacrifice? Brother clergy, can you go on any longer with glib phrases about the supreme duty of Foreign Missions, when you spend more on quite alienable additions to Church worship, which yet judged by world-needs are luxuries, than you send abroad? Is not such talking sheer hypocrisy?

Is the whole of our Church life at home definitely co-ordinated to the one objective—the winning of all life everywhere for God. Do you see how the Church's failure to make the missionary purposes the great unselfish end which everything subserves has paralysed all our parochial life? The whole thing at present appears selfish. Folk go to church to get good. That is the universal impression we have created. How we have betrayed the ideal Jesus taught and lived! And there is no way out of the vicious circle until each parish priest sees himself as a company officer, whose supreme business it is to make his congregation efficient as a unit in world-service. There is the great unselfish end that will redeem and ennoble everything. Are we going to make the needed changes? Fathers in God, brothers and sisters, are we going to *do* this thing? It means that we organize the Church at home on a war footing. The whole of Africa and Asia and Europe has to be won for Christ. The supreme business of the Church is to keep its overseas battalions at full strength. Each Bishop will call on his ordinands and younger clergy for the needed drafts. Is it to be, or are we just going to go on as before, with a few more ringing phrases in our ears? It is you who settle. . . .

What is the task to which we are called? The saving of a whole world from ruin; the saving of the world for human life and brotherhood and God. It is to Saviourhood we are called, to share in the Saviourhood of God. What honour, what a challenge! What will you respond? Saviourhood costs. It cuts right down to the raw quick. It means wounds, blood, suffering, death. The cross always means agony. Are we going to pay the price? A world's fate depends upon your answer. Christ waits to know if we are going to see Calvary through!

Is there anything within us that responds to this appeal? It takes us to the very heart of the problem before the Church. We may busy ourselves with many things here and there, but this is the supreme test of our spiritual vitality. Unless we are prepared to deny ourselves and lay our all upon the altar that God may take and use it and us for the extension of His Kingdom we are not realizing the fulness of the privilege of our high calling.

The other matter to which we refer was the remarkable discussion on Reunion. The papers read on Reunion at Home. Relations with the Roman and the Eastern Church do not interest us much, but Canon Temple's paper on the Protestant Churches at Home proved a most valuable contribution to the Reunion question. He has a scheme of his own which may thus be outlined:—

They ought from the Anglican side to make it quite clear that unity need not and should not mean uniformity.

The historic episcopate must be preserved in the united Church, and all ordinations to the ministry of that Church must be episcopal. For this some at least of the Free Church leaders were prepared; some even desired it; it was a point on which there could be no wavering on their side. The Church of England should corporately and officially acknowledge that, as the separated bodies could not be charged with the whole guilt of schism, so they were not entirely cut off from the benefits of membership in Christ's Church. He would desire to recognize their Sacraments as operative and efficacious, although he believed the commission by which they were administered was defective. Their Sacraments were guaranteed, it seemed to him, by the very character of God.

If the episcopate must be preserved, it was necessary that in the matter of order there should be more movement on the Free Church side towards them than on their side towards the Free Churches. But he wanted to make an advance to meet the members of the Free Churches in the matter of definite Church order if possible. If the Church of England had already recognized explicitly that their Sacraments were real and effective Sacraments, then he proposed that the Archbishop who was to confer the priesthood and episcopate on chosen representatives of those bodies should, before doing so, be formally received into their fellowship and receive the Holy Communion as a member of such body from the minister commissioned to administer it in that body.

This scheme represents a piece of constructive work which far outbalances the Canon's rather strange objection to the interchange of pulpits. How far it will appeal to Nonconformists on the one hand and Churchmen on the other, remains to be seen. It might be thought to be an ominous sign that the scheme was barely referred to in the discussion which followed, but impromptu criticism would have been a mistake. Full and careful consideration is needed, but we can at least be thankful that so clear an issue has been so definitely raised.

