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# THE CHURCHMAN

*A Monthly Magazine and Review*

CONDUCTED BY

CLERGYMEN AND LAYMEN OF THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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# THE CHURCHMAN

September, 1917.

## The Month.

The Pope  
and Peace.

“WHAT hast thou to do with peace?” It is an old question, yet many will be tempted to apply it to the Pope of Rome in connection with his extraordinary peace proposals. It is not merely that, as history shows, the meddlesomeness of the Vatican in international politics has generally been disastrous, but in particular the action of the Pope during the course of the present war has not been such as to inspire the Allied nations with the least degree of confidence. It will never be forgotten that when Belgium was being devastated by Germany, and the Belgian people were suffering the cruellest treatment at the hands of a brutalized and relentless enemy, the Pope, who could then have spoken to some effect, remained silent. Indeed, at no period during the war has he condemned with the vigour demanded from one in his position, and laying claim to such exalted powers, the unspeakable infamies of which Germany has been guilty. He may have had his own reasons for inaction, but it is difficult to understand on what grounds it can be justified. The Vatican authorities can hardly be unaware of the painful impression the Pope’s attitude has created not in Protestant countries alone but also, it is believed, among large sections of the Roman Catholic population of the world. And now, after three years of war, and just when Germany is coming to realize that the ultimate triumph of the Allies is assured, the Pope suggests terms of peace! And what terms! Terms which differ so little from those of the Kaiser and his Ministers, as to suggest that they were really made in Germany. The Allies can make only one answer to the Pope’s appeal: It must be, and we are assured it will be, a very decided negative. The whole world longs for peace quite as ardently as the Pope of

Rome professes to do, but it must be a peace that will endure, and not a peace which will leave Germany free to resume her onslaught upon humanity as soon as she has recovered her strength. The only terms upon which the Allies can make peace are well known. There must be full reparation and restoration, and the power of German militarism must be so broken that never again shall it be possible for it to become a menace to the peace of the world. In the meantime, therefore, we must fight on in the sure and certain hope that in His own good time and way God will give victory to the cause for which we are contending—the cause of righteousness, justice and freedom.

The rumours current for many months past that  
**Wesleyans and  
 the Church.** there was a large and influential section of Wesleyan

Methodist ministers favourable to some sort of *rapprochement* with the Church of England received a certain measure of support from the proceedings of the Wesleyan Conference, but it is also clear that while ideas of reunion may have gripped a few, the great majority of the Connexion do not desire to go much beyond the exchange of a few conventional courtesies with the Church, and the occasional co-operation in matters of social reform. We cannot say we are much surprised at this attitude, much as we regret it, for there is no evidence that we can see of any real desire, on the part of Nonconformity generally, for reunion with the Church of England. What of the Church? Undoubtedly there are large sections of Churchmen of all schools who bemoan the loss to the cause of Christianity of our unhappy divisions, and would be thankful indeed if it were possible to bridge the gulf which separates Church from Chapel and Chapel from Church. But there is one thing that blocks the way—episcopal ordination. It is the one real difficulty reunionists find themselves up against. Neither side will give way, and until some solution of the problem is discovered all ideas of reunion must seem visionary and unreal. Can a solution be found? In the present temper of the parties we doubt it. But that is no reason why we should not strive after unity, and pray for unity. If a conference, or series of conferences, could be held, with the definite purpose in view of finding a way out of the ordination difficulty, and relying humbly and honestly upon the guidance and grace of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to

believe that great results would not follow. But that is just where our brethren of the Wesleyan Church have failed us—they have deliberately and definitely refused to confer. It is a heavy responsibility, but the Wesleyan Conference seemed to accept it quite readily, and, we fear we must add, quite gladly.

**The Bishops' Visit.** Two leading Bishops—their lordships of London and Chelmsford—waited upon the Conference in its Pastoral

Session, with a message of goodwill from the English Episcopate. But in their speeches they went much farther than that. The Bishop of London, speaking “on his own,” as he said, told the Conference of his “Episcopal dream.”

He asked himself whether in this great day of God, when they were looking at things as they would see them at the Judgment Day, it was the law of the Medes and Persians that the Church of England and the Wesleyan Church should always be separated. He looked back upon the past and he thought that no doubt the Church of England had made great mistakes in the past. But he also thought they would see if they had studied the matter that Wesleyans, too, were not always wise in the days of Archbishop Secker. Was it not possible for them to see if they could not bury the hatchet and make a fresh start? In his dream he pictured the possibility of the Wesleyans appointing a committee to meet a committee of Bishops whom he expected he could get together. He pictured a conference, or a series of conferences, in which they might meet together in order that they might get into closer touch with each other, and obtain a clearer understanding of the sin of acting apart when they might act together. An enormous work would lay before the Churches in the reconstruction of the world after the war, and the more they could think and act together, the better it would be. His dream was of the Wesleyan Church and the Church of England carrying on their work in far closer accord than they had ever done before.

The Bishop of Chelmsford frankly admitted there were difficulties, and suggested a way out. With characteristic felicity he referred to the Parable of the Prodigal Son, but instead of one prodigal there were two :—

He believed the Church of England should approach the question as a prodigal. He wanted them as Wesleyans to approach it as a prodigal. We had both made mistakes in past days and left each other, but we wanted to try to come step by step back again to the Father's house. There would be two elder brothers to deal with, not one. We had the elder brother attitude in the Church of England. They had the elder brother attitude in their Church. The elder brother was to be found on all sides. But we had to remember that it was not the elder brother who determined the way the prodigal should come back to the Father's house ; it was the Father Himself. He (the Bishop) was prepared to shake off the elder brother in the Church of England. He wanted to ask them to shake off the elder brother in their Church. We ought to kneel and see what it was the Father wished. Was it the Father's good pleasure that they should for ever be separated ?

We wanted to get to know the mind of our blessed Lord. If it were true that "where two or three are gathered together there am I in the midst of them," our Lord was there that day saying for us the same prayer that He prayed of old, "That they all may be one, even as I am one with the Father." The Bishop of London and himself had no proposals to make to them that day. But he wanted them for the nation's sake, for the Church's sake, for Christ's sake, to approach that question, first and foremost, not along the lines of theological discussion or of ecclesiastical polity, but upon their knees, simply saying "Speak, Lord, for Thy servants hear," "Whatsoever Thou dost wish, that only will we do."

These addresses were cordially received, and the President spoke some hearty words in reply, but, obviously, he could not commit the Conference. The official decision came later—and it shattered whatever hopes had been raised.

**The Betrayal  
of Unity.** Two days after the Bishop's visit there was a discussion on the proposals. The Rev. H. Arnaud Scott proposed a resolution to the effect that "the Conference should declare its readiness to confer as to the best way to promote more efficient co-operation between the Church of England and the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the furtherance of the Kingdom of Christ"—a harmless resolution which, if it had been carried, would have done something to establish a closer relationship between the Church and the Wesleyans. But even this modest proposal was too much for Sir Robert Perks who, scenting danger, moved an amendment to the effect that they were ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Bishops on "any great moral questions." The good sense and the Christian spirit of the Conference, however, could not be content with such a barren result, and ultimately the following resolution was agreed to :—"The Conference, in response to the addresses of the Bishops of London and Chelmsford, assures the Bishops that they will be ready at all times to co-operate with the Church of England, and all other Evangelical Churches of the country, in every endeavour for the furtherance of the Kingdom of Christ." There it was thought the matter had ended, but a day or two afterwards at the Representative Session the Rev. Ernest Rattenbury moved, and the Rev Henry Carter seconded the following resolution : "That the Pastoral Session of the Conference, to the members of which the Bishops of London and Chelmsford specially addressed their appeal last week for closer ministerial co-operation, desires to assure the Bishops of its appre-

ciation of the appeal, and of its willingness to further closer fellowship between the two Churches." A storm of opposition was manifested, and in spite of Dr. Lidgett's appeal to the Conference not to betray the cause of union, it was found necessary to withdraw the resolution; and when the President asked if the Conference wished to pass any resolution at all on the subject, a loud cry of "No" went up, followed by a very decisive vote to take no action whatever. A lamentable decision truly!

It is obvious that the Bishop of London went a little farther than the facts justify in minimizing the differences which exist between the two Churches. *The Two Prayer Books.* "When," he said, "they turned to the Church of England Prayer Book, or rather he might say their Prayer Book, they would be puzzled to find out the difference. He had examined it the other day with the greatest care, and he had said to himself, 'Do you take it from us, or do we take it from you?' At any rate, it was impossible to say those beautiful prayers without feeling that they were very close together in spirit." But are the two books so thoroughly identical? Surely the differences are neither slight nor non-significant. The Rev. T. J. Pulvertaft, in a letter to the *Guardian* commenting upon that paper's statement that "the Methodist Service Book is almost identical with the Book of Common Prayer," writes:—

I have before me this volume and observe that it has no Ornaments Rubric, that the Rubric before the Absolution in Morning Prayer reads, "A Declaration as to the Forgiveness of Sins to be made by the Minister," and that the Declaration reads—"And hath given commandment to his ministers to declare unto all men being penitent the remission of their sins through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." In the Communion Office the Rubric before the Absolution reads, "Then shall the minister say," and the Declaration proceeds, "Have mercy upon us," etc., preserving the first person throughout. In the Prayer of Consecration the manual acts are omitted and our second post-Communion Prayer is not inserted. In the Ordination Service the President says:—"Mayest thou receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Christian minister and pastor, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God and of His Holy Sacraments; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In the Baptismal Service the declaration of, and thanksgiving for, regeneration is omitted, the sign of the Cross is not made, and the Declaration after Baptism reads—"We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, that he may be instructed and trained in the doctrines, privileges, and duties of the Christian religion; and trust that he will be Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end." I have quoted sufficient to show the doctrinal orientation of the Service Book,

and the question arises, " Will not many proposals made by Convocation for the Revision of the Prayer Book create a feeling of distrust in the Wesleyan Church and place obstacles in the path of Reunion ? "

Religious  
Education.

The Bishop of Ripon, preaching in his Cathedral on the Sunday following the introduction by Mr. Fisher of his new Education Bill, said that " in a Christian land we have a right to claim that religious training is of the very essence of education, and not a mere accident ; a part of the main nourishment of the mind and spirit ; not a mere supplement, or one of the extras as compared with more important subjects." This reference was called forth by an examination of some of Mr. Fisher's statements, and it will be admitted that the Bishop's words go to the heart of the question. Religious education cannot be treated as a matter of detail : it is a matter of fundamental principle ; and it is the failure of Mr. Fisher to recognize, or rather to act upon, this distinction that is one of the weaknesses of his position. It is only right, however, to add, as the Bishop was careful to point out, that Mr. Fisher was anxious that the opinion should not get abroad that the Government ignore the spiritual aspects of education, or are indifferent to the strongly-held views of those who are not satisfied with the existing system. But if the Government desire to give proof of their convictions, they ought to make it quite clear that at the earliest moment possible they will make provision for a scheme of religious education which, by its strict regard for the rights of parents, shall be equitable and just all round. Whatever may be the fate of the new Education Bill, there is every reason why Churchmen should determine to support more vigorously than ever their own Church schools. They are the one sure guarantee for sound and solid instruction in the principles of the Christian faith. " Hold fast by your schools ! " may well be the watchword for Churchmen at the present time. Never has the work been better done ; never was it more needed.

