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Discussions.

“THE SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE.”

(The Churchman, August, p. 588.)

IN this thoughtful and thought-exacting article Dr. Whately contrasts the “Sacramental principle with the abstract spirituality that would dispense with sensuous presentation.” “The sense of the need of objectivity,” he says, “is deeply rooted in the heart of man. And without the Sacraments we should miss just that objective presentation of the object of faith which meets that peculiar need.”

On the other hand, there are passages in which he seems fully to recognize that the objectivity which is the common desire of man is not necessarily a sensuous presentation, but that spiritual objects, which are not mere “abstractions,” are directly grasped by our spiritual faculties, and, further, that it is to the “spiritual man” alone that the Sacraments of Christ are in any way related.

Even among the heathen, though the desire for objectivity is wont to express itself in various forms of idolatry, we find that it can be met without any external presentation. The Zulu gives a distinct objectivity to his conscience. He believes that there is a “bad man within him” who speaks in a loud, blustering voice, telling him he would be a fool not to indulge his appetites whenever he can. And there is also a “good man,” who in a quiet little voice would check this indulgence with the reminder: “You know you ought not to do this.” A mere psychologist might say this is only an instance of subjective suggestion, but we would rather recognize in it the voice of God still remaining in the Zulu, though he has lost the knowledge and even the name of any supreme Being.

At a higher level we find this yearning for an objectivity, which only a person can satisfy, in the cry of St. Philip: “Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” But the answer given him points to no mere visual representation of his Master. His Person, at that time veiled in the flesh, supplied no “visible focus” to his disciple. Not till that veil was removed, and the Comforter came and took up His abode within him—the “inborn Word”—did he receive fully the grace and truth now revealed in the transfigured “memory-image” of the whole life and work of his Master—not till then did he see the Father and was satisfied. It is such a comprehensive and spiritual memory-image of Christ and His grace which the participation of the Lord’s Supper continually revives to the strengthening and refreshing of our souls. And we teach our children to shut their eyes when they pray, in order that they may not be hindered, by the sight of external objects, from realizing the presence of the invisible Father.

“Choose to believe, not see: sight tempts the heart
From sober walking in true Gospel ways.”

Unhappily, the name of "Sacrament" given to the Lord's Supper has been narrowed down to denote that which is only a part of the original institution—the outward sign of an inward spiritual gift to the individual. Then the principle of this is called the Sacramental principle, and finally taken as the basic principle of the whole institution. The result of this has been to put almost out of sight the primary and essential characteristic of our Lord's Sacraments—viz., that they are social rites, forming, as Dr. Whately says, "the main pillar of corporate Christian life."

It is that Christ is our Passover which is the ground of our Feast. At that Feast of the Jews He took two of its elements—the same that Melchisedek, His nearest type, had used in his priestly ministrations—and transferred them from the memorial of the redemption of the Jews from their bondage in Egypt to the memorial of our Redemption by Himself from the bondage of sin. The one loaf broken into fragments, and distributed to the company of His disciples, and the cup of blessing shared by all. These represent the *nexus* of the New Covenant, which Christ substituted for the old: That as we partake in common of the life which He laid down for us, so must we lay down our lives for the brethren. As God loves us, we must love one another.

F. A. LE MESURIER.

(*"The Churchman," August, p. 622.*)

As G., in "Missionary World," on p. 622, notes with approval Bishop Montgomery's article on "China" in *The East and the West* for July, it might be well to draw your readers' attention to the way in which he states statistics of the missionary forces working in that Empire.

"Rome leads; the Anglican Church is last." "And what is the inference for us Anglicans? First, to be united among ourselves; next, to be quite sure about our own principles, and not to be ashamed of them or to minimize them," etc. "Small as is our body anywhere, we can never resign our Catholic foundation and order; to us they are vital," etc.

Now, as Bishop Montgomery is Secretary of the S.P.G., his calm assumption to speak for the whole Anglican communion in China ought not to pass without mention—that whilst, as the S.P.G. Report for 1910 shows, it supports, in North China and Shantung together, 15 European and 7 native clergy, 20 lady-workers, and 21 school-masters, or a total of 63 agents, the C.M.S. Report, 1909-10, shows 1,080 agents at work in various parts of the Empire, with an expenditure of £50,719.

Doubtless the forces working under the two Bishops of the

Protestant Episcopal Church of America form an addition to the "High" Anglican body in China; but surely it is hardly fair that the only mention of C.M.S. in a long article is this: "I understand that the great C.M.S. Missions in South China have done excellent educational work."

Of the S.P.G. work, the Bishop says: "It is not easy to deepen Christian life and to give full attention to solemn and frequent services, and at the same time to be fully aggressive. But both duties are imperative." Here we get an insight into the kind of effort in which all Anglicans are exhorted to be united and of one mind with the Bishop and his Society.

Perhaps C.M.S. supporters may be allowed a mild protest!

CHARLES RAY.



Notices of Books.

THE RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF DISESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT. By J. E. C. Welldon, D.D., Dean of Manchester. London: *Smith, Elder and Co.* Price 3s. 6d. net.

In this book we have three lectures which Bishop Welldon recently delivered in Manchester Cathedral. They attempt, he tells us in the preface, to deal with their subject in as impartial a spirit as possible; but in this it cannot be said that they have succeeded, although we are grateful for the emphasis on some points which are not always remembered. It is good, for instance, to be reminded that it is by present conditions, and not by past history, that the Establishment will be judged. "However ancient and honourable may be the history of the Church, she will not survive, nor will she be worthy to survive, as a national institution unless she subserves, and is recognized by the nation at large as subserving, a valuable national purpose in the present day" (p. 8).

The first lecture is entitled "Considerations affecting the Existence of a National Church," and the conclusion reached (p. 19) is, "that the right or wrong of an established and endowed Church depends upon circumstances; there is no absolute right or wrong." This view is opposed, on the one hand, to the early opinion of Mr. Gladstone in "The State in its Relations with the Church," and, on the other, to the doctrine of the Liberation Society. It is in dealing with the latter that Bishop Welldon's first defect from impartiality is noticeable. What are we to say of a lecturer who interprets that doctrine of "the entire independence of the Church of Christ" to mean that it is "wrong that a Christian citizen should carry the principles which govern his life into the affairs of State" (p. 26), and that sometimes a citizen "must act independently of creed or Church" (p. 26)? It is not surprising that he finds it easy to refute such a caricature of the Liberationist view; but something more than this is needed to prove the desirability of a National Church. The rest of the lecture criticizes the freedom of the self-styled