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# THE SIXTH LAMBETH CONFERENCE, 1920.

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. PULVERTAFT, M.A.

## II

THE Anglican Communion is not in communion with all Churches that are Episcopal. This interferes with the ultimate realization of the Divine Ideal of the one Holy Catholic Church, into which all the divided groups of His faithful people must bring what they have of glory and honour, and which cannot be made perfect till all its parts are drawn together in Him. The Church of Rome, the numerically largest of Episcopal Churches, stands for rigid dogmatism and stiff ecclesiasticism that impose unlawful terms of communion on those who join its ranks. The Report of the Committee, while endeavouring to discover some means of approach to Rome, and to find some clues that may give hopes of better things, concludes: "It is obvious that no forward step can yet be taken; but the facts thus referred to may help to create in the future a very different position." The Archbishop of Canterbury says the position is "hopeless," and the Conference as a whole passed no Resolution on the subject. May we not conclude that it is waste of time to consider what Rome will think, or say, when we deal with the wider question of Reunion? Rome will be much more likely to change her attitude when she recognizes that the Churches of the Reformation are drawing together into a visible unity, than she is when she contrasts their divisions with her own calm assumption that "*securus judicat orbis terrarum*"? The passing of a dream that had no foundation is recorded by the silence of the Resolutions on the Roman Church.

The position of the Orthodox Eastern Church is different. During recent years by common suffering we have been drawn closer to several of its branches. We understand one another better, although much must be done before intercommunion is established. The Lambeth Conference received in full session a Greek Deputation that sat and gave information to the Committee. The members did not sit in the Conference; they did not communicate at the Conference Communion Services—for we believe that an Orthodox Churchman is open to censure if he communicate in the

Anglican Church. Co-operation in matters of Social Reform is urged, and the Committee believes that we are steadily moving towards the goal of ultimate Reunion. The appointment by the Archbishop of Canterbury of an "Eastern Churches Committee" is welcomed, and it is hopefully expected that similar Committees appointed in Athens and Constantinople will help forward Reunion. Sympathy is expressed with the persecuted Churches lately under the rule of the Turk, and the Resolutions declare that whatever errors concerning the Incarnation may have been held by them in the past have now ceased to exist. Friendly relations should be maintained with these Churches, and opportunities be afforded for occasional intercommunion when assurances of their faith are given and the desire for closer relations is expressed.

The barrier between us and the Church of Sweden no longer exists, and intercommunion now is established. It is recommended that at the first joint consecration, by the Anglican Bishops and the Swedish Bishops, that more than one of our Bishops should take part, "as an evident token of the restoration of closer relations between the two Churches" Not unnaturally, in spite of the desire for closer relations with the Old Catholics, especially in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, the consecration of Bishop Mathew is regretted, and in the case of any of the Ministers ordained by him or other "episcopi vagantes" it is recommended that they should be conditionally re-ordained by supplying whatever may have been defective according to Anglican use. A similar resolution was passed concerning the ordination of the Ministers of the "Reformed Episcopal Church" who may wish to become Ministers in the Anglican Communion. Reunion with the Moravians—that heroic missionary Church—is postponed, until Deacons cease to celebrate Holy Communion and to administer Confirmation. It is clear from more than one passage in the Report that the Conference Committee lays great stress on Confirmation by laying on of hands, "as an outward sign of grace given in Confirmation." Careful readers of the Report will find in it occasional proofs of conflicting opinions. But, if there is to be ultimate unity in Christendom, we all must be prepared to see at first some things we dislike. We cannot attain uniformity, even if it were desirable, but the Spirit of God will guide us through our diversity to deeper and fuller truth. For our part, we are convinced that Reunion

with the vigorous non-Episcopal communions will bring to the Anglican Communion a scriptural outlook, and a spirit of freedom from mechanical traditionalism, that will greatly benefit our Church. So long as there is no conflict of fundamental principles God will give to a reunited Church the vision of Truth that will draw its members closer to Himself. After all, that is what we really need and crave to possess in a Church that fulfils His will.

#### MISSIONARY PROBLEMS.

The Conference, as it was bound to do, declared that it is the paramount duty of the Christian Church to present the Redeemer to mankind, and earnestly appealed to men and women to volunteer for Foreign Service. As it was to be expected also, it had before it the two methods in which the Anglican Communion works in the Mission Field. Churches as such through their duly organized Synods undertake the duty of maintaining Missions. Societies, representing schools of thought or specially devoted to one particular phase of work, do for the Church what in the opinion of many it ought to do for itself. The Conference desired to see both systems maintained, but it is plain that the prevailing will of the Bishops is to bring Missionary Societies into closer relation with the governing Authorities of the Church. The supreme Synodical authority in some form or another should have control, but the Societies should act in such degrees of independence as the conditions of their efficiency demands. We may expect in the coming years an effort made to subordinate the Societies to the National Church Assembly, but it is hard to see how the organizations that have done so much for the Church can become in any sense departments of a central body. Due praise is given to the Societies for their co-operation in the establishment of "self-governing, self-supporting and self-extending Churches," but the better way is to centre their work in the Church, rather than in the Boards and Societies. A series of suggestions is made by which the Diocesan organization should be the authoritative body. Locally, a real share in financial control and general direction should be given, and the local indigenous workers should be granted widest freedom in developing their work on lines in accordance with their national character. This implies that national characteristics should be permitted to have a greater part in the growth of Churches

whose members will naturally be drawn from their territorial areas. The co-existence of racial Episcopates in the same territory is admitted to be a concession to the exigencies of facts, and the settlement of this problem is to be in the hands of the Province.

The Marriage law of the Church should be administered consistently, as far as possible, in all parts of the Anglican Communion, and the Report of the Committee deals in detail with perplexing problems that have arisen, and cannot fail to arise when Christianity makes itself a power in non-Christian lands. Governments are bound, in the opinion of the Conference, to refrain from imposing permanent obstacles in the way of the propagation of the faith, and freedom of opportunity should be given to all Christian men and women of all nationalities to fulfil the obligation of spreading Christianity. The Church cannot fail to rejoice in the increased sense of their dignity in converts as human beings, of their rights, as well as of their duties, and Governments should be glad of this even "though in civil life it raises new problems to be solved." Missionaries are exhorted to consider the responsibilities of the Government. They should adapt their methods as far as they consistently can to the Government policy. Governments should not show any discrimination against the Christian faith. Their officials should take care lest they may be betrayed into actions or sayings that may be construed into anything that dishonours our Lord. Christian sentiment deserves as much consideration as the sentiments centring in other faiths. Missionaries should refrain from being propagandists of commercial and political aims of their nations, as this lies outside their proper functions. The valuable work done by British and American Missionary Conferences is gratefully acknowledged. Such Conferences are destined to have important functions by fostering mutual good will, and by serving as a practical medium of communication between Missions and Governments in matters of General Missionary Concern.

Few will be found to question the wisdom of the Resolutions and Report on the Relation between Governments and Missions, but a very grave division of opinion will arise on the place the Prayer Book, as we know it, will occupy in the future. It is true that the Prayer Book in all details is not an ideal Service Book, under all conditions, and in all climates. As long as its doctrinal authority

is maintained there is no need for rigid uniformity, and the vision of a reunited Church forbids this being the ideal of the National Churches that will spring into being. The inherent Liturgical right of a Diocesan Bishop is subject to such limitations as may be imposed by higher Synodical authority. For our part, we are not so sure that any such inherent individual right exists, and are convinced that the Bishops are bound just as much as the Clergy by the Rubrics and laws of the Church's Service Book. The Conference believes that the higher Synodical authority "should not be too rigidly exercised as long as those features are retained which are essential to the safeguarding of the unity of the Anglican Communion" What are these features? Are they mere matters of non-significant customs, or are they matters of the first importance?

The Conference, recognizing the many problems that will be raised, recommends "the appointment of a Committee of students of liturgical questions, which would be ready to advise any Diocese or Province on the Form and Matter of services proposed for adoption, and requests the Archbishop of Canterbury to take such steps as he deems best to give early effect to this Resolution." This means that we shall shortly have a Congregation of Rites, that will decide ritual and liturgical questions for the Anglican Communion—not with the ultimate authority possessed by its Roman prototype, but with an authority that may have very serious influence in determining the character of the worship of native Churches. It is a choice between the power of Provinces that may contain no liturgiologists to develop eccentricities and the controlling influence of a central body that may be looked upon as better informed, and less liable to be led astray by prevailing party views. If such a Committee be set up, it will of necessity have a very great influence on all Ritual Doctrinal questions—for the *Lex Orandi* is the *Lex Credendi*, and we hope that before any definite steps are taken the whole subject will be most carefully discussed. Its real character is not evident at first sight, and for our part we cannot imagine anything more likely to promote disunion instead of union than a conflict between the advice of the Committee and local wishes. If the Committee be a strong one—and we cannot conceive of its being anything else—it will be a kind of *Imperium in Imperio*—acting as a regulative influence throughout the entire Communion at home as well as abroad.

With new types of Prayer Books, we may find ourselves at any moment in the presence of a controversy concerning the orthodoxy or otherwise of a distant Church, and the pressure thus brought to bear on Home Revision would be very great if the Committee came to decisions which form the liturgical ideals of a party in our own Church. It is not strange that the Preface of the Ordinal should be considered of such primary importance that it must be maintained at all costs, and that the Book of Common Prayer—framed, as it is, on the devotional treasures of the past—should be scrapped? Are we somewhat suspicious when we see lurking in this proposal real dangers of the institution of non-communicating attendance as the customary worship at the central service of the Church? The sneers, all too familiar, at “glorified Matins,” may bear fruit in their abolition, and through this Committee we may have a type of central service which is foreign to the character of the Prayer Book and fits in with the propaganda of a party in our own Church.

Studying the Resolutions and the Report on Missions we are thankful for the recognition of the place they have in the Church, for the advocacy of their claims by the Conference as a whole, and for the weighty language used concerning Missions and Governments. We see, however, in the attitude to Societies a danger to their continued existence, and in the provision for local Liturgies something more than adaptation of the Prayer Book to local needs. A step fraught with grave peril to the unity of the Anglican Communion may very easily be taken, if the proposals are not most cautiously developed, and the very reunion we wish to establish may be wrecked by the action of Provinces and the advice of experts. When we know the ecclesiastical complexion of some of the future Provinces, we cannot avoid seeing that the forces which in these Provinces have so largely contributed to the growth of non-Episcopacy may very easily find themselves made permanent in their orientation by new Prayer models that are not in accord with Anglican standards.

It is right that there should be greater freedom in the development of Anglican organization, even if such development may infringe on the traditional influence of Missionary Societies working in the Dioceses. The Conference recommends the formation of new provinces, consisting of four Dioceses at least; Houses of Bishops

are to be established with authority to consecrate Bishops, the *sedes* of the Metropolitan may vary according to local needs, and the Province shall have some voice in the choice of its Metropolitan. "Until a Missionary Diocese becomes largely self-supporting, and is self-governed by a Synod, the appointment of its Bishop should rest with the Province to which it is attached, after consultation with the Diocese, and in such a way as the province may decide." This is a new departure that may be the parent of great changes, for it removes from the Archbishop of Canterbury the right of appointment to many Missionary Sees. It is a venture of faith inspired by the right of "self-determination." "Each national and regional Church will determine its own constitutional canonical enactments." This naturally follows from the traditional Provincial authority of the Anglican Communion—founded upon the models of the early Church.

The Conference strengthened the Consultative Committee by the appointment of additional members, and by reorganizing its representation. A Bishop is appointed to this Committee for six years, and as he need not be a Bishop of the Body that appoints him, it is probable that more than the two English Bishops who will sit will be nominated. The Committee is purely advisory, and gives advice only when it is sought. Its first work will be the consideration of the provisions of the Colonial Clergy Act with a view to their modification. It is hoped that the American Bishops will see their way to act on the Committee, for their absence makes the advice offered not nearly so weighty as it should be. There is no appearance in the Report or Resolutions of the creation of a Patriarchate of Canterbury. The whole tone of the Conference, judging by the character of all the utterances, is opposed to any such departure. The Anglican Communion must consist, unless its ethos is revolutionized, of a number of independent Churches subject to their own Synodical Authority—free to develop their life in accordance with local circumstances. They are free, and yet their freedom is limited by the *nexus* that binds them together, and prevents extravagant developments that would alienate them from one another. The Papacy is the centre of discipline—it is not the centre of a system that combines the freedom of the gospel with a passion for Truth revealed in Holy Scriptures as the ultimate standard. Its history demonstrates the dangers of central-



ization, and it is the genius of the English race to combine unity of spirit with local power of self-determination.

#### THE POSITION OF WOMEN.

No subject gave the Conference more anxiety than the "position of Women in the Councils and Ministrations of the Church" It came again and again before the Conference as a whole, the Resolutions in this section contain the only figures of a Division, and already one of the Bishops has announced that in his Diocese the Resolution referred to will not be followed. The Conference was faced by facts that could not be avoided. Women have since 1908 leaped into publicity, and have shown their fitness for office in a way unanticipated twelve years ago. They have won practically the right to occupy every position open to men in public and private life, and the Church could not remain outside the movement of emancipation. More than any other institution the Church is woman's sphere. Whatever may be the case in other lands, in England at least three-fourth of our communicants are women, and an even larger proportion of our workers are drawn from the ranks of women communicants. The National Church Assembly has women sitting on it, and every Council in the Church can have women members. The Conference determined that all Councils and Assemblies of the Church to which laymen are admitted should be open to women on equal terms with men. In its opinion the time has come for the formal and canonical restoration of the Diaconate of women, which is the only order of the Ministry which has apostolic approval as far as women are concerned; and, in the opinion of the Conference, it is the only order the Church should recognize. Deaconesses are primarily intended to be a ministry of succour especially to women, and they are to be set apart for lifelong service without any vow or promise of celibacy, although individual deaconesses may pledge themselves "either as members of a Community or as individuals to a celibate life." Set apart by prayer and the laying-on of the hands of the Bishop, with a formula giving them authority to execute the office of a Deaconess in the Church of God, and by the delivery of a New Testament, they are practically analagous to male Deacons, but they are not to be allowed to assist the Priest in the administration of the Holy Communion. They can baptize

in virtue of their office "in case of necessity," a different thing from the irregularity but validity of Infant Baptism by women as we know it, and they are permitted with Episcopal and local approval to officiate at the reading desk and occupy the pulpit as a male Deacon is accustomed to do. Women who are not Deaconesses may on similar terms with laymen speak and lead in prayer in consecrated buildings "at other than the regular and appointed services of the Church."

The report of the Committee is a vindication of the Resolutions, and an exposition of the force and application of St. Paul's well-known restrictions on women preaching and teaching. "Our firm conviction is that the precise form which St. Paul's disciplinary directions took was relative to the time and to the place which he had actually in mind, but that these directions embody an abiding principle. To transfer with slavish literalness the Apostle's injunctions to our own time, and to all parts of our own world, would be to renounce alike our inalienable responsibility of judgment and the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." The Committee has spoken with a deliberateness that is to its credit, and the Resolutions will not automatically come into operation. They will require in England the approval of the National Church Assembly, but they constitute a form of recommendation that cannot easily be disregarded.

One passage of the Report deserves special notice: "An analogy is bound to grow up between the lay readers who are men and the women who are entrusted with similar duties. In this context, therefore, we venture to put on record our opinion that the time has come when the regulations as to lay readers (whose devoted work we gracefully acknowledge) should everywhere be made more definite and precise; and in particular that it is urgently needful that everywhere the standard of men who are admitted to the office of lay readers should be raised." We do not quarrel with the recommendation which comes oddly in a Report on the Position of Women, but it may be due to a fear that if this be not done the male readers will be so inferior to the female that comparisons of an unfortunate character may be made. We are thankful to notice that the Conference did not overlook the duty of giving proper remuneration to women-workers of all classes.

THOS. J. PULVERTAFT.

*(To be concluded.)*