

## Indiscriminate Baptism.

An interesting correspondence under this head has been going on recently in Church Times. One correspondent (Rev. Wm. C. Tuting) gave a number of important Episcopal pronouncements concerning sponsors, chief among them being that of the late Archbishop Temple. Temple treated the rubric (i.e., the second rubric for public baptism) as a rubric for parents, which the priest might, or might not, enforce against the parents as he thought best. He should exercise, thought Temple, a wise discretion, and proceed with the baptism without sponsors if it were, under all the circumstances, best for the child. Bishop Thorold asked his clergy not to seek his formal advice, but to use a wise discretion. This treatment of this rubric is interesting for its own sake, but its effect does not stop there. If the principle of applying a particular rubric to certain individuals is conceded in this case, it is quite likely to be applied in other cases to other rubrics.

## God's Shilling.

The Lord Primate of Ireland, Dr. Alexander, at his diocesan synod in October last, pleaded with pathetic earnestness for his flock to give on an average a shilling each for every man, woman and child in the Diocese of Armagh, some 55,000 in all. He described it as "a tax, but a tax of love." The crisis facing the Irish Church, owing to recent land legislation, is, indeed, urgent, and steps must be taken to meet it. The venerable Primate referred to the splendid example of the new Bishop of Manchester, Dr. Knox, who had raised a million of shillings for Church work. Quoting the familiar words, "Your old men shall dream dreams," he asked for God's shilling in Armagh as an old man's dream. Certainly our Church can do more by combined efforts of this sort than she has yet done. If the A.Y.P.A. spreads far and wide, as it promises to do, it may supply the nucleus for organizing such a movement through the whole Church of Canada. The twentieth century has seen the unification of our missionary activities. Shall it see a forward movement on the lines suggested by the Irish Primate?

## Summer Lightning.

The lightning which we admire on a summer evening showing white sheets of noiseless light has generally been considered to be the reflection of a distant storm. Recent observers have concluded that it is really a present electrical discharge analogous to the brush or glow discharge of an electrical machine. Prof. Geikie, the geologist, a nephew of the eminent Dean Geikie of the Trinity Medical School, now, alas, no more, wrote from Murren in Switzerland an excellent account of a storm which he witnessed, and giving the result as it appeared to his trained eye: "Late in the afternoon wisps of white mist began to gather round the summit of the Jungfrau, and streaks of this cloud took shape in the higher air above the great mountain ridge that extends from the Silberhorn to the Breithorn. About 8 p.m. I noticed a faint quivering of light overhead, supplemented by occasional flashes of greater brilliance and different colour. These manifestations rapidly increased in distinctness, and continued to play only along the opposite mountain-ridge, not extending into the regions beyond, so far as these could be seen from here, though I have since learned that an independent series of flashes was seen around the Schilthorn on this side of the valley. Not a single peal of thunder was, at any time audible. A long bank of cloud formed at a higher level than the summits of the mountain-ridge, and at some distance on the farther side of it, so that the stars, elsewhere brilliant, were hidden along the strip of sky above the crest." After describing in great detail the discharge, the professor continued: "But the most singular feature of the more brilliant white discharges was to

be seen when one of the great couloirs of snow or a portion of a glacier remained for a minute or two continuously luminous with a faint bluish-white light. After an interval the same or another portion, perhaps several miles distant, would gleam out in the same way. My first impression was that this radiance could only be a reflection from some illuminated part of the cloud. But I could not satisfy myself of the existence of any continuously bright portions of the cloud. Moreover, the luminosity of the snow and ice remained local and sporadic, as if the beam of a searchlight had been directed to one special part of the mountain declivity, and then after a while to another. . . . The whole display afforded an admirably complete demonstration of the erroneousness of the notion formerly prevalent that summer lightning is only the reflection of distant ordinary lightning, and of the truth of the more recent views as to the nature of the phenomenon."

## PAN-AMERICAN EPISCOPATE CONFERENCE.

Nearly forty years ago, amid some opposition and not a little curiosity, the Pan-American Conference assembled at Lambeth in answer to a general demand at the call of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The necessity for it was real, as great dioceses of the Church had grown up in all parts of the English-speaking world, and there was a danger that isolation and separation might tend to divide them from one another as well as from the Mother Church. In the eighteenth century the Church of England was insular, in the nineteenth she was missionary, and as a result spread to all continents; and there was great need to demonstrate the Church's essential unity, and for its leaders to come together to promote a closer union by counsel and organization. Now, we have had recently assembled at Washington a meeting of the Bishops of North America, representing three ecclesiastical provinces, containing 120 dioceses and the same number or more of Bishops. Exactly one-half this number were present at the Conference, which was purely voluntary, eleven being from the Church of England in Canada and the West Indies and forty-nine from the United States. The discussions covered a wide range of subjects, which were academic only, and most of them had already been more or less a subject of consideration at the larger meeting of Bishops at the several Pan-Anglican Conferences at Lambeth. As to what was discussed behind closed doors we have, of course, no means of knowing, as only that portion of the proceedings is published which was given out for publication. It goes without saying that a body of men of the position, ability and experience of the Bishops of the Church in America could not assemble and discuss matters of transcendent importance to the Church and society generally without making an important contribution to our knowledge and thought on questions of great public interest. The same thing might be said, however, of sixty experienced clergymen or the same number of laymen, and, while the meeting was interesting, as it could not help being, we do not see any particular urgency for its assembling, or any special consequences that are to result from it. There may have been some administrative matters pertaining to the Bishops, such as the transfer of clergy from one church to another that were adjusted by the Conference, but which could, no doubt, also have been arranged without it. The subjects discussed were varied, and on some of them resolutions were passed indicative of the mind of those assembled. The opening sermon was by Bishop Doane, of Albany, and was a vigorous utterance as to present day conditions in the Church and in the world. He pleaded for unity, which seemed to him more attainable with Protestant nonconformity than with Rome. Most people will agree with the Bishop's statement that "we were belittling ourselves with too much

dwelling upon little things. While there was grave need to restrain the lawlessness of false teaching, and to set some boundary line to the individual willfulness of ritual, yet the strength and time given to those things were disproportionate." The Bishops of Massachusetts and Quebec discussed "the relation of the several branches of the Anglican Communion in America to one another." So far as appears no definite conclusion was reached, but the Bishop of Massachusetts contended that their attitude to each other should be that of intelligent sympathy. The attitude of the Church to the Roman Catholic and Protestant Communions was considered, and an important contribution to the subject was made by the Coadjutor Bishop of Montreal in a paper showing the points of unity existing between Anglicans and Presbyterians and Methodists. This paper was ordered to be transmitted to representatives of those bodies with a view to the promotion of inter-communion, and ultimately, if possible, to a closer union. As to the Roman Catholics, the Conference resolved that our "contention for the faith once delivered to the saints should be with unlimited charity to the Roman Catholic clergy and people rather in the spirit of maintenance, defence and proof than of controversy and attack." The Conference also resolved, "That we most earnestly urge that in the case of marriage between members of our own Church and those of the Roman Church, our own members should be warned by no means to promise, as they will be asked to do, that their children shall be brought up in the faith and worship of the Roman Church." The Conference then considered the "Obligation of the Church to Maintain the Christian Family in its Integrity," which, as it involved the burning question of divorce and re-marriage, naturally awakened the most earnest discussion. Papers were read by Bishop Doane and the Bishop of Toronto. Bishop Doane is quoted as saying that the increase of divorce in the United States had become "a serious threat to morality, decency and social stability." The marriage relation, he said, was the fundamental principle of all civilized and national life. The canons of our Church set a higher standard than that of the civil law, or of "the law and practice of any religious body except the Church of England." Yet he did not think it stringent enough. There was still an instance in which divorce with re-marriage could be allowed. The Scripture authority for this exception was uncertain. The whole spirit of the marriage service presupposed an indissoluble bond. To call this a hardship did not prove that it was not right. He contended that marriage was unlawful for any divorced man or woman while the former husband or wife was still alive. Similar ground was taken by the Bishop of Montreal, and, indeed, is the position of the great majority of Bishops at the Conference. Objection was made to the passage of a resolution without fuller discussion that would commit all the Bishops of this continent to a more rigid rule, and this objection was supported even by some who personally approved stringent legislation, among them Bishop Doane, with the feeling that it would be magnanimous not to press for immediate action. The Conference determined, therefore, that no resolutions embodying its sentiments on these subjects should be adopted at this time, but that a verbatim report of the proceedings at the Conference should be printed for private circulation among the Bishops, leaving each speaker at liberty to do with his own paper what he would. Bishops Potter and Vincent dealt with the consideration of "Ideals of Political and Social Morality." The following resolution was unanimously adopted: "Resolved, That it be commended to all Bishops and other clergy first to familiarize themselves with those great political and economic questions which to-day in all lands are dividing men; and then to point out how their solution can be found, not so much in organization or legislation as in the application to daily life of the principles and the example of Jesus Christ." Other

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