

RECOIL.

upon the objects supposed to be in view for benefit under the circumstances. All worthy men, whether "canonized" or not, are disgusted and discouraged, and the whole work of the Church suffers, its energies grow lax and lose their vigour. All this shows how careful people should be in the usage of such tools as the creation of dignitaries necessitates. Better not to use them at all, than spring a fiasco upon the face of the Church's activity and usefulness. Our brothers of the Protestant Episcopal Church—who are beginning to tamper with Deans, Archdeacons, Canons, &c., would do well to

HASTEN SLOWLY.

Besides the danger of degrading such offices by pitch-forking into them men who have no qualifications or deserts to distinguish them from their fellows, there is another danger—that of confusing the use of the various titles. Surely, some respect is due to the traditionary usage of the Church, not only in regard to the prestige belonging to each of these "dignities," but to the clear and definite distinctions among them as to the specific use of each. It is possible to make a hotch-potch of Deans, Canons, Prebendaries, Vicars-Choral, Archdeacons, Precentors, Succentors, Minor-Canons—such as will make confusion worse confounded than ever. It is better to have no elevation or distinction at all, other than the natural force of public esteem, than to have such an exercise of the distinguishing function as to produce a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*, apparently proving to dissenters the vanity of our usages, and making the Church a laughing-stock in Christendom.

PUBLIC BAPTISM.

There is unfortunately among the people, especially in the country, a strange shyness or perversity—it is often hard to tell which it is—which causes them to object to bringing their children to the church to be baptized. This is frequently the cause of a great deal of trouble and embarrassment to the clergy, who are anxious to fulfil the obligations put upon them by the Rubrics, which they have at their ordination solemnly undertaken to carry into effect. Now the Rubric at the beginning of the baptismal service, besides requiring that the people be admonished of the "convenience" of bringing their children to baptism only on Sundays and holy days, enjoins that the rite shall be administered immediately after the second lesson at Morning or Evening Prayer, and the reasons given are two. First, that the congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's Church; and secondly, because in the baptism of infants, every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his baptism. These are weighty reasons which should lead the faithful laity to consider in this matter their duty to themselves, their children and the whole Church, and not allow anything but a real physical impossibility to prevent their compliance with the Rubric. The urgency of the rule is again insisted on in a Rubric before the office for Private Baptism, where the clergy are required to "warn them that without great and reasonable cause, and necessity, they procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses." Shyness from poverty or other cause (which often has its root in excessive pride), as well as perverse whims and prejudice, or a dislike to go to the necessary trouble, should all be

overcome so as to enable the clergy to fulfil their public mission in accordance with the mind of the Church, and enable the laity, and people at large, to derive the greater benefit from her sacred ministrations. The spectacle of a congregation whose members are all willing and ready at all times to assist the clergy in carrying out the strict letter of the Rubrics, is very edifying; whereas opposition to this or that provision of the Church is both demoralizing to the people and disheartening to the clergy. How good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace, all striving together to extend Christ's Kingdom, and each member doing his share to make its rules and machinery effective. Could the Church's ideal be realized, then would all appreciate the majesty, beauty and significance of her public worship, her public rites and ceremonies. To this end the laity ought to study the Rubrics, as well as the various Formularies of the Church, both with reference to their contents and history. If they desire information, it ought not to be difficult to obtain it from the clergy; and our "Notes and Queries" department is open to them. We may note here that the word "convenient" in a Rubric above quoted is not to be taken in its modern popular sense, but may be aptly interpreted by the phrase "meet, right and our bounden duty" (where possible)—that a congregation may testify, i. e., bear witness to the receiving of the newly baptized, for it is an occasion of joy and thankfulness that a brother or sister in the Faith is born into Christ's Family, and for the faithful to pray that he or she may grow in grace therein. It is for the faith, unity and love that should dwell and be manifested in Christ's Family, that many are desired to be present, and that the place of this event should be in His House, where "prayer is wont to be made," that blessings may be invoked upon the new member of Christ, child of God, and inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRIVATE BAPTISM.

PUBLIC RECEPTION IN THE CHURCH.

The prayer book provides that when there is great reasonable cause and necessity, the children may be privately baptized in houses, but also provides for their public reception and acknowledgment as members by the assembled congregation. A special service is prepared for this purpose, in which the baptism, if duly and rightly performed, is publicly attested. But should there be any doubt as to the baptism having taken place, or if it took place, whether it was rightly administered; then the Rubric requires that the baptism should then and there be administered conditionally, i. e., with the words "If thou art not already baptized, I baptize, &c. Now although heretical and lay baptism, when performed with the right matter, i. e., water, and with the required words, i. e., "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," are both accepted by the Church, she must needs therefore examine further and demand by whom, with what matter and with what words the private baptism was administered. It is the right and duty of the clergy and congregations to know and publicly ascertain this, that all may be assured that this initial rite was validly performed; and the reason given is "because some things essential to this sacrament may happen to be omitted through fear or haste, in such times of extremity. But the rubric contemplates, in such a case, the ministrations of a lawful minister only; that is to

say, a clergyman duly ordained. And although it may well enough be taken for granted that the right matter and formula were used when such has been the officiant at private baptism, order, and the principle that the congregation should have a knowledge of, and a share in, the transaction, require nevertheless that the privately baptized should afterward be publicly received with due solemnity in the church according to the Rubric; and in all cases the witnesses are to come forward with the testimony that is to be sought of them. Now we very deeply regret to say that this rite of Public Reception of the privately baptized is much neglected everywhere, and think that it would be a great advantage to the Church could its use be systematically revived. The advantage would be specially apparent in the case of lay or heretical baptism, which are accepted by the Church when performed with the right matter, i. e., water, and with the required words, i. e., "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." As a rule, when those who come to the Church from other religious bodies, become candidates for Confirmation, they are only required to state privately that they have been already baptized, before being allowed to receive the Laying on of Hands. But this ought not to be considered sufficient. They should be publicly and with due solemnity received into the congregation as privately baptized persons, and bring witnesses, or a certificate of their baptism from the custodian of the register where their baptism is recorded, with the formula of the denomination, to be read by a chosen sponsor before the congregation. This would be an appropriate preliminary step to Confirmation, and would have the effect of correcting, not only among these, but among our own people also, that widely-spread error which consists in believing that those who are baptized, especially in their infancy, are not really members of the Church until they are confirmed. It is of the first importance to know the formula of the denomination whose baptism is in question, because some baptize only in the Name of the "Lord Jesus," or, the "Lord Jesus Christ," instead of, "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The Church would require us to set aside and ignore any alleged baptism not exactly in the words of the latter Formula. We trust our suggestions will be taken in good part and duly considered by the clergy; but we have touched upon this subject for the benefit of the Church generally.

HOME REUNION NOTES.

THE UNITY OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

By the Rev. Henry J. Van Dyke, D.D. (Presbyterian), Brooklyn, N. Y.

The first and most important step toward the correction of an evil is to see and acknowledge its existence; and the second is like unto it—an earnest desire for a better state of things. The unity of Christendom—a unity that the world can see, and be convinced by it that the Father has sent His only begotten Son—is to-day a longing in the heart and a prayer on the lips of multitudes of Christians. We hail every expression of such a desire as a prophecy of its fulfilment, according to others the same sincerity we claim for ourselves. We do not sympathize with those who view with squint suspicion the proposals for reunion by the American Episcopal Church indorsed by the Lambeth Conference; and while we cannot accept the terms proposed in their present form as sufficient and practicable, we do heartily embrace and respond to their spirit. The reunion of Christendom is a sublime idea, an inspiring hope. It is not necessary to the indulgence of this hope to