

But all enquiry is attended with a danger on the other side unless it be protected by the guard of reverence, confidence, and patience. It is quite true that there have been instances where enquiry has led to doubt and ultimately to infidelity. But the best safeguard against such a peril lies in that deep reverence which never fails to accompany real faith. The central object of Christian faith must always be the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The test which St. Paul gives of the possession of the Holy Spirit is the being able to say that Jesus is the Lord. If a man can say with his whole heart and soul that Jesus is the Lord, he stands on a rock which nothing can shake. Read in the light of this conviction, the Bible, beginning with man made in the image of God, and rising with ever-increasing clearness of revelation to God taking on Him the form of man, and throughout it all showing in every page the sense of the Divine Presence inspiring what is said, will not fail to exert its power over the souls of men till the Lord comes again. This power will never really be affected by any critical study whatever. The report of the committee deals, in our judgment, temperately and wisely with the subject, and we think all Christian people will find it worthy of careful consideration.

**The Book of Common Prayer.**—The Book of Common Prayer, next to the Bible itself, is the authoritative standard of the doctrine of the Anglican Communion. The great doctrines of the faith are there clearly set forth in their true relative proportion. And we hold that it would be most dangerous to tamper with its teaching, either by narrowing the breadth of its comprehension or by disturbing the balance of its doctrine. We do not speak of any omission or modification which might have the effect of practically denying an article in one of the creeds, for that would be not only dangerous, but a direct betrayal of the faith. Nevertheless, it is true that no book can supply every possible need of worshippers in every variation of local circumstances. We therefore think it our duty to affirm the right of every Bishop, within the jurisdiction assigned to him by the Church, to set forth or to sanction additional services and prayers when he believes that God's work may be thereby furthered or the spiritual needs of the worshippers more fully met, and to adapt the prayers already in the book to the special requirements of his own people. But we hold that this power must always be subject to any limitations imposed by the provincial or other lawful authority, and the utmost care must be taken that all such additions or adaptations must be in thorough harmony with the spirit and tenor of the whole book. We find that many of the clergy, especially in the large towns of England, are troubled by doubts whether, in the present circumstances of life, especially where population is perpetually moving, infants ought to be baptized when there seems so little security for their due instruction. We desire to impress upon the clergy the need of taking all possible care to see that provision is made for the Christian training of the child, but that, unless in cases of grave and exceptional difficulty, the baptism should not be deferred. We consider, further, that the baptismal promises of repentance, faith, and obedience should be made either privately or publicly by those who, having been baptized without those promises, are brought by our clergy to Confirmation by the Bishop. Difficulties having arisen in some quarters with regard to the administration of Holy Communion to the sick, we recommend that such difficulties should be left to be dealt with by the Bishop of each diocese, in accordance with the direction contained in the preface to the Book of Common Prayer, "Concerning the Service of the Church."

**Readers Used in Schools.**—We think it necessary to call attention to the misleading character of many of the statements to be found in those school "Readers" which touch on the history of the Church, and we recommend those on whom responsibility rests to take such steps as they can to secure a truer handling of this important subject.

**Encouragement of Theological Study.**—There is a general complaint that the facilities provided for theological study in many of the colonies and dependencies of Great Britain are not sufficient, and that there is very little recognition of proficiency in

theological knowledge. It is a serious defect in the working of the Church if it fails to produce men who can deal rightly with theological questions. The wrong handling of such questions may easily lead, and has often led, to serious errors both in doctrine and practice, and ignorance of the subject leaves the Church defenceless against many attacks. The Church cannot fulfil all her duties without having men of learning among her divines, and this especially applies to such a Church as ours, which founds all her teaching on Scripture and antiquity. The great means provided by God for instructing the conscience of the human race is the Bible, and for interpreting the Bible, next after the Bible itself, the study of the writings and practices of the primitive Church is of paramount importance. We cannot use these instruments with effect unless we have a thorough knowledge of both. We, therefore, earnestly commend to all Christian people, and especially to those who are connected by commercial or other relations with the colonies, the duty of aiding and establishing colleges and scholarships for the instruction of colonial students in theology, and we commend to the careful consideration of the Church the question how best to encourage men to give themselves to that study by arranging that some accredited authority shall grant degrees to those who have attained a high standard of proficiency.

**The Duty of the Church to the Colonies.**—We have just spoken of one of the duties which the Church owes to the colonies, but there are others of no small importance. It is a duty to the colonies to encourage the freest and fullest communion of spiritual life between the Churchmen at home and the Churchmen abroad, and especially between the clergy. Clergymen well fitted for colonial service are not always well fitted for home service, and clergymen well fitted for home service are not always well fitted for colonial. And this must, to a certain extent, put a restraint on free exchange of clergy between the two services. But subject to this necessary caution it is good for the Church that men should go from the one service to the other, and under proper regulations this ought not to be difficult. To this claim of the colonies must be added the claim on behalf of some of them for continued, and, if possible, increased pecuniary aid. Many of the colonial churches cannot yet stand alone. The provision of colleges and schools, and of endowments for bishoprics and the like, though we are bound to contemplate its withdrawal in course of time, yet must be maintained for the present if we do not wish the work already done to be undone for want of funds. The colonists are our own kin, and we cannot leave them to drift away from the Church of their fathers. And the demands on us will inevitably increase. God is opening to us every day new gates of access to the heathen world, and we must enter those gates, and yet what we are already doing will still need to be done if we are to be true to the call which the Lord is making. Again, it is our duty, and must continue for some time to be our duty, to do what we can for the Christian care of emigrants on their way, as well as to supply them with letters of commendation addressed to those who will take an interest in their spiritual welfare. And, finally, it is an imperative duty to give all possible assistance to the Bishops and clergy of the colonies in their endeavours to protect the native races from the introduction among them of demoralizing influences, especially the mischief of the trade in intoxicating liquors and noxious drugs. Our duties to the colonies in all spiritual matters are undeniably heavy. But the great task of evangelizing the human race is largely put upon us, and we cannot shrink from bearing the burden. We pass from what is internal concerning the Anglican Communion to what is external.

**The Unity of the Church.**—On the unity of the Church our committee has not been able to propose any resolutions which would bind us to immediate further action. A committee has been appointed to open correspondence with a view to establishing a clearer understanding and closer relations with the Churches of the East. The Archbishop of Canterbury has been requested to appoint committees to look into the position of the Unitas Fratrum and the Scandinavian Church, with both of which we

desire to cultivate the most friendly possible relations. We recommend also that every opportunity be taken to emphasize the Divine purpose of visible unity amongst Christians as a fact of revelation. We recommend that committees of Bishops be appointed everywhere to watch for and originate opportunities of united prayer and mutual conference between representatives of different Christian bodies, and to give counsel where counsel may be asked—these committees to report to the next Lambeth Conference what has been accomplished in this matter. Above all, we urge the duty of special intercession for the unity of the Church in accordance with the Lord's Own Prayer, as recorded in the Gospel of St. John.

**Reformation Movements Outside Our Communion.**—We recognize with warm sympathy the endeavours that are being made to escape from the usurped authority of the See of Rome as we ourselves regained our freedom three centuries ago. We are well aware that such movements may sometimes end in quitting not merely the Roman obedience, but the Catholic Church itself, and surrendering the doctrine of the sacraments, or even some of the great verities of the creeds. But we must not anticipate that men will go wrong until they have begun to do so, and we feel some confidence in expressing our warm desire for friendly relations with the Old Catholic Community in Germany, with the Christian Catholic Church in Switzerland, and with the Old Catholics in Austria; our attitude of hopeful interest in the endeavour to form an autonomous Church in Mexico, and in the work now being done in Brazil, and our sympathy with the brave and earnest men (if we may use the words of the Conference of 1888) of France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, who have been driven to free themselves from the burden of unlawful terms of communion imposed by the Church of Rome.

**Foreign Missions.**—Lastly, we come to the subject of foreign missions, the work that at the present time stands in the first rank of all the tasks we have to fulfil. We have especial reasons to be thankful to God for the awakened and increasing zeal of our whole communion for this primary work of the Church, the work for which the Church was commissioned by our Lord. For some centuries it may be said we have slumbered. The duty has not been quite forgotten, but it has been remembered only by individuals and societies; the body as a whole has taken no part. The Book of Common Prayer contains very few prayers for missionary work. It hardly seems to have been present to the minds of our great authorities and leaders in compiling that book, that the matter should be in the thoughts of every one who calls himself a Christian, and that no ordinary service should be considered complete which did not plead, amongst other things, for the spread of the Gospel. We are beginning, though only beginning, to see what the Lord would have us do. He is opening the whole world to our easy access, and as He opens the way He is opening our eyes to see it, and to see His beckoning hand. In preaching His Gospel to the world we have to deal with one great religious body, which holds the truth in part but not in its fulness—the Jews; with another which holds fragments of the truth embedded in a mass of falsehood—the Mahomedans; and with various races which hold inherited beliefs ranging down to the merest fetishism. In dealing with all these it is certainly right to recognize whatsoever good they may contain. But it is necessary to be cautious lest that good, such as it is, be so exaggerated as to lead us to allow that any purified form of any one of them can ever be in any sense a substitute for the Gospel. The Gospel is not merely the revelation of the highest morality; it reveals also the wonderful love of God in Christ, and contains the promise of that grace given by Him by which alone the highest moral life is possible to man. And without the promise of that grace it would not be the Gospel at all. The Jews seem to deserve from us more attention than they have hitherto received. The difficulties of the work of converting the Jews are very great, but the greatest of all difficulties springs from the indifference of Christians to the duty of bringing them to Christ. They are the Lord's own kin, and He commanded that the Gospel should first be preached to them.