

ENGLISH-SPEAKING DISSENT.

SIR, In the issue of the 15th July, I have been very much interested in the sermon preached before the Synod of Toronto by Rev. Herbert Symonds, and published in your issue of the 15th July. As, however, I believe this discourse is calculated to produce a very dangerous impression on the minds of many of our people, kindly allow me to say that I do not for one moment believe that the *modus vivendi* proposed by Mr. Symonds is the true one at all. I cannot accept the position of the late Bishop Phillips Brooks and that of Rev. H. Symonds, that "there would appear to be nothing in the New Testament that conflicts with the statement that * * * Christ did not order the details of the Church's government, or appoint the grades or functions of its ministers, etc." How can we dare so say this in face of (1) Matt. xvi. 18; (2) The appointment of the seventy; (3) The having the twelve only at the celebration of the supper; (4) John xxi. 21; (5) Acts ii.; and (6) the Epistles of St. Paul. It is beyond question that in the New Testament the Church and only the Church is God's accredited agency for the evangelization of the world. The secret of our success is not to lie in Romanism or English-speaking dissent, but in national Churches. (vide St. Matt. xxviii. 19). I have seen not a little of the English-speaking world (parts of England, Ireland, Scotland, Canada, U.S.A.), and the more I travel and observe, the more fully am I persuaded that the amount of mischief done by Rome and dissent, (1) socially, (2) nationally, (3) spiritually, to the nations (for we are not one nation), is incalculable. Has not Ireland been blasted for centuries? Has not Scotland been simply dragged alongside the chariot wheels of England since the days of James I.? Is it not a fact that to-day, after 400 years, there is no such thing as a native Canadian or American religion, outside of paganism, or a few forms of low sectarianism? Where are the Churches of Canada and America? Never thought of. Why? Because "dissent" has the lead, and it is propped up on all occasions by a false sympathy that is as anti-national as that of those who can only see union through Roman spectacles. No patent medicine whatsoever, consisting of a certain amount of Anglicanism, Romanism, and dissent, even though bottled and held by an episcopal rubber cork (orders) can cure the spiritual ills of the English-speaking world. We must go back to the sovereign remedy given us by Christ—national churches, yes, and independent national churches, too, or let us forever give up all hope of converting humanity. Patent medicines are popular, no doubt, but hardly reliable as a substitute for a proper training of men, and, is the body of less account than the soul?

C. A. FRENCH.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

SIR, The Rev. Herbert Symonds, M.A., in his sermon, preached before the Toronto Synod, commends the following to the consideration of the Church: "The Anglican Church throughout the world, if she is ever to be the Church of the English-speaking peoples, must combine the conservative and the liberal elements in religion which have since the Reformation been sundered." Another preacher, Bishop Newman (Methodist), speaking to the Epworth League delegates, gave it as his opinion that "one characteristic of this age was preciseness of thought and of accurate definition." Now, may I venture in the same spirit of humility with which the Synod preacher approached the great subject, "Christ and the Church," to ask for some further light from the talented rector of Ashburnham? There is, for me at all events, very little evidence of "preciseness of thought," whatever there may be of "accurate definition," in the terms "conservative and liberal elements in religion." In Hebrews vi. 1 and 2, certain elements in religion are called the principles or foundation doctrines of Christ. Are we at liberty to treat these as part conservative and part liberal elements? It is true they have been "sundered since the Reformation," not by the

Church, but by Non-conformists, who have dropped at least one of these elements entirely from their systems of faith and practice. But the Church cannot, in any case, combine for Non-conformists those principles which the latter have, by their departure from primitive Catholicity, sundered. This may serve, by way of sample, to show the impossibility of the task which Mr. Symonds would impose upon us. The elements of religion, whether regarded as conservative or liberal, were, I take it, committed to the Apostolic Church when as an undivided whole she received from the mouth and from the pen of inspired teachers the faith once delivered to the saints. And must we not conclude that the Acts of the Apostles afford the best and only reliable commentary upon the statement made by St. Luke regarding the instructions given to them by the Lord during the great forty days—instructions which had to do exclusively with the things concerning His Kingdom or Church which He was to build upon themselves as its foundation stones and pillars? That which the apostles did they did in strict accordance with those instructions, or when anything occurred to them as necessary or useful to be taught, but which was not found in that code, they were careful to inform their hearers that now "I speak and not the Lord." And whilst St. Paul, it is true, did in a measure declare his own independence of apostolic aid in the formation and formulating of his system, he did so not as implying a better inspiration on his part than the apostles were able to claim, but only as having received his instructions independently of theirs, though from the self same source as that from which theirs had come. Is it not the duty of the Church rather to conserve than to liberalize the truth? Will it not serve our turn better than anything else to-day if we make up our minds to treat with rigid illiberality every species of eclecticism with the presumptuous liberalism which thinks to do God service under the term "Broad Church," but which is in reality Latitudinarianism, making ultimately for the baldest secularism, and whilst we so treat this spurious charity, let us never forget to treat with the very widest liberality every soul which under its influence is hoodwinked by its plausibilities and wheedled into a use of its diet of milk and water. What we all need to-day is the strong meat of sound uncompromising adherence to that which in the preciseness of thought and accuracy of definition can only be styled Catholic truth and Apostolic order. The "Elements in Religion" are things of God, and it is ours not to emasculate them, but to conserve their strength, that all who name the great strong name of Jesus Christ may grow strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. We see too much as it is of present day efforts to liberalize and caricature the elements of religion. As given at the first they stand out for our guidance like bold points of light in a clear sky, and nothing but fear of man, as well as a blindness to present triumphs, and forgetfulness of those gained in the past, as the result of consistent conservatism on the part of godly and devoted men in Home and Foreign Mission fields, are leading so many to flounder amidst the waves of easier method—more popular delivery—greater elasticity and other subtleties which go to make up the new Gospel of so-called liberal religion. Is it then too much if we should ask that the talented preacher of the Synod sermon be called upon to give us what the Non-conformist Bishop calls preciseness of thought and accuracy of definition, in this matter of the conserve and liberal elements in religion? Define them for us, and then perhaps we shall be in a better condition than we are to-day, to lend our humble aid towards the task of combining these, since the Reformation, sundered elements. In the meantime we of the Anglican communion belong to a Church, One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic—a Church bearing all the marks of the Saviour's ideal kingdom, and needing nothing but increase of His Holy Spirit—grace to carry out the ideal in all the fulness which He alone can grant. The Church is working as she never worked before, strictly on the lines of the great Divine ideal. What we need is not so much a combination of any sundered elements, as a waking up all along the line

of builders of that spirit of loyalty and devotion to the ideal which characterizes to-day the best and purest of her workmen. Let all strive to emulate the example of the best and busiest builders, and no matter how many things which God had joined together, the Reformation or any other period of stress may have sundered, honest work will tell, for to it ample grace will be vouchsafed. Let the Church's life be lived, the Church's language spoken, the Church's creeds believed, and every blessed privilege which is ours in her be valued at its fullest worth, and all which is not built true to these divinely given lines must fade and fail, whilst she, great by reason of the truth which is in her, must live, as she is destined to live that glorious life of strength and majesty against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

P. P.

Diocese of Niagara, July 17th, 1897.

WHY TERM THEM CONVERSATIONS?

DEAR CHURCHMAN, A kind friend has drawn my attention to a sermon preached before the Synod lately assembled in Toronto, a sermon printed in *The Churchman* of the 15th July. It will be readily conceded, I suppose, that when discourses preached upon such important occasions appear in Church publications, it is not amiss to take exception to, or call in question, any hasty statements or unwarrantable assumptions with which one may meet as he reads. In the first and second paragraphs of the Synod sermon there is plenty of time honoured and widely accepted truth. In the third section and in the conclusion, questionable, if not mischievous matter, is on hand in abundance. Take an instance: "The narrative of the Acts (we suppose the preacher meant the Acts of the holy apostles) leads no support to the hypothesis that these conversations related to organization." Indeed, Mr. Preacher, then why not suggest or state what they did relate to, or else to what subject they were likely to relate. In addition, why term them conversations? Were they not rather instructions or commands? The written history, the sacred records as we have them, and also such perceptions as we have of the becoming, the fitting, the reverent, all together lead us to infer, rightly as we think, that the apostles had not a great deal to say to their risen Lord. Knowing, as He certainly did know, what was passing in their minds, the great need was to learn. Take as an instance the silence imposed upon the so far impulsive St. Peter. He asks the needless question: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" He is answered and silenced by the searching question: "What is that to thee?" Further still, he hears the command, "Follow thou me." The most wholesome clue, the surest guide to the will of the Master, what is it? What is it, indeed, save the course upon which the apostles entered to a man. When you see a body of men—there being no doubt that each one has a will of his own—unite in act or acts as one man, you justly settle it in your mind that they have a commander, that they are acting in obedience to his commands, that they are not each one doing as he pleases, that each one is obeying, that is to say, submitting their several wills to that of the one in authority. In all that the apostles and the Church did during the days and years and centuries immediately succeeding the Ascension, we have the most trustworthy, the most reliable indication regarding the will of the Lord, of which no record has come down to us. We picture to ourselves the far-famed charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean war. Did each soldier like it? Certainly not—they had no word, no will in the matter. They were obeying the commands of a superior officer. During the great forty days the general attitude of the Apostolic College was one of waiting, sitting still. One thing they did. A simple member of the original body had followed his own sweet will, had done as he liked. He became the first irreclaimable schismatic. He is sent to his own place. The eleven waited. They sought the Divine guidance. Their act was as the act of one. They chose Matthias to fill the