

EARL NELSON'S HOME REUNION NOTES.

No. X.—THE ARTICULUS CLERI.

SIR,—I give this week the following extract from the *Christian World*, which is evidently very angry with the action of the Lower House of the Province of Canterbury:—

'A great scandal in the eyes of many devout Church people, and detrimental to the spread of true religion, is the manner in which an *articulus cleri*, adopted after a long discussion in Convocation, describes the offence of clergymen preaching in Nonconformist pulpits. Wherefore the Bishops are "respectfully to take such steps as may be in their power to prohibit and to suppress this innovation." More justly this very *articulus cleri*, breathing as it does the spirit of intolerance and of an arrogant ecclesiastical self-sufficiency, may be described as "a great scandal, and detrimental to the spread of true religion." It practically puts Nonconformists out of the pale of Christianity altogether, for, unless it is assumed that all true religion is exclusively locked up within the Established Church, a deliverance so offensively worded cannot possibly be justified. If Nonconformists are Christians, they are brethren of all who accept as the Captain of their salvation, the one Head of the universal Church. But this *articulus cleri* seems to put Nonconformists on a level with "Jews, Turks, heretics, idolaters, and atheists," as people to be avoided as religious pariahs.'

This shows where the shoe pinches; but, I would ask—

(1.) Can it be considered an act of intolerance?

(2.) Does it in any way tend to unchristianise our Nonconformist brethren, putting them on a line with Jews, Turks, infidels and heretics?

(3.) Is it an hindrance to the advance of true religion or of the reunion of Christendom?

I shall venture to answer all these questions with a direct negative.

(1.) It can not be an act of intolerance to state an historical fact. The identity and uninterrupted connexion of the Church of England with the anti-Reformation Church of this land (*pace* the Nag's Head story, which has long been relegated to the region of historical myths) is a clearly proved fact; the revolt against Rome's increasing usurpations having been a long and continuous action of the English Church. We believe the Church of England to be the *Ecclesia Docens* to this nation, holding the true ministry, the Creeds, and the Sacraments of the Church Catholic from the beginning. The record of the secession of the sects in due order from this Church is also historical. So also is the fact that through our teaching the Protestant sects among us have been preserved from falling away into unbelief, as many of the Protestant Churches on the Continent have unhappily done. Our opponents among Roman Catholic and Protestant Nonconformists may deny this position on various grounds, but we who believe it are bound to hold fast to the trusts committed to us; and this we cannot do if we acknowledge the corporate position of the sects as Churches on the same level as our own, when they do not pretend to have or to require the priesthood or the succession, and boldly set forth their three hundred, or in some cases less than one hundred, years of existence against the united witness of the Church for eighteen centuries. Because we cannot so stultify our belief and forfeit thereby the trusts committed to our keeping, we surely cannot be accused of intolerance.

(2.) Neither does the refusal to recognise the corporate position of the sects as separate branches of the Church Catholic in any wise of

necessity unchristianise them or their individual members, or put them on a level with Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics. The best proof of this is a reference to our two special prayers: one on Good Friday, when we pray that 'the religious pariahs' may be freed from all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of God's word, and may be fetched home to Christ's flock. But in our daily prayer for all who 'profess and call themselves Christians,' we pray 'that they may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in the unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life,' which acknowledges them as members. The distinct denial of their corporate position as separate branches of the Church Catholic in no way hinders us from acknowledging them as fellow-Christians; or from acknowledging the fruit of the labours in the advancement of our common Christianity; or from acknowledging even the call of their ministers to minister to their own people in their own way, though we do consider that these things would be more effectually carried out in unity than by division, and though we cannot acknowledge in their ministers that position in the Church which they themselves, one and all, distinctly disavow.

(3.) Is this *articulus cleri* in any way a hindrance to true unity? I trow not, and for once rejoice that the specious unity recommended by Archdeacons Farrar and Wilberforce is likely to be put aside as utterly fallacious and unreal. The more earnest-minded among the Nonconformists view with great distrust the interchange of pulpits as destructive of all distinctive teaching, and if the sure foundations of the faith are undermined by *specious courtesies* there is an end of any *Ecclesia Docens* and of any basis of truth to reunite upon. Again, our historical position between the Protestant sects on the one hand and the old orthodox Churches on the other is likely, notwithstanding our many shortcomings as a Church, to be an important one in any attempt to reunite all Christians in One Visible Body. Therefore, so far from being a hindrance, this warning against all specious attempts 'to cry Peace where there is no peace,' or to 'daub our walls with untempered mortar,' must tend directly to advance a true union on the sure foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone.—*Church Bells*.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

We notice with extreme regret the apparent increase in the number of what might be called Church socials held during the Lenten season. From this and that parish (chiefly, we are bound to say, in the cities and larger centres) come reports of Concerts, Sales, *pink* and other socials, held either in the basement of the church or parochial hall, and in which certainly no special penitential feature prevails. Is there not in this respect too much of the spirit characterising the "worldly" observance of Lent, and is it not entirely inconsistent with the spirit and the teaching of the Church? Is it not inconsistent, for example, to sing at the Wednesday evening service:

"Shall we not Thy sorrows share
And from earthly joys abstain;
Fasting with unceasing prayer
Glad with Thee to suffer pain."

and on the next evening in the same room perhaps, to find Priest and people engaged in a *pink* or *blue* social? There must be loyalty and consistency in the observance of the seasons of the Church if any real good effect is to be produced on the world at large, and we cannot

help feeling that all these, otherwise perhaps harmless entertainments, are entirely out of place and time during this penitential season; and that, moreover, the example set in this particular in our cities is injurious to the work of the Church in the weaker country parishes and missions.

ANENT this subject of Lenten (!) entertainments (is there not an incongruity in the very connection?) a subscriber in the country writes us:—"It is embarrassing to see the several Lenten concerts advertised and reported in secular and church papers as taking place in city parishes. It cripples our endeavors and nullifies the effect of parochial work in numberless parishes. Is there any distinct teaching of the Church of England accepted with any unanimity by her members?"

We earnestly hope that an effort will be made in every Parish and Mission in Canada to make the observance of the whole of HOLY WEEK more perfect and thorough than in any past year. Is there not need in many and many a place for a radical change and improvement in this respect? Open then the Churches and keep them open not only for an increased number of services, but for meditation and private prayer; let the addresses at the services be practical and searching—turning the thoughts of the people in upon the sins and failings of the individual life, and out towards the one sacrifice for the sins of the whole world,—contemplating it in all its mystery, and endeavoring to realize the fathomless depth of love which suggested it. Make the WEEK HOLY—a fitting conclusion to the previous Lenten discipline, and a necessary prelude to any true realization of Easter joy. If this were done in every Parish and Mission in this Dominion who can measure the blessing—the rich outpouring of the Spirit—which would follow! We doubt not that at least the full meaning of such words as these would be realized by priest and people:

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the Cross I spend;
Life, and health, and peace possessing,
From the sinners dying Friend.
Lord, in ceaseless contemplation,
Fix, my thankful heart on Thee:
Till I taste Thy full Salvation,
And Thine unveiled glory See!"

SUCH an observance of Holy Week in its entirety would also aid in preparing for the right fulfilment of the duty which the Church expects every faithful son and daughter to perform on Easter Day. She prescribes that as one of the three occasions on which "every parishioner shall communicate." This holy feast is prepared for penitent sinners who, feeling need of a Saviour, for love of Him and through faith in Him, obey His command, "This do in remembrance of Me;" and when would the prerequisites to a right reception (referred to in the INVITATION) of repentance, love and faith, be more likely to exist than after a week spent in "ceaseless contemplation" of this wondrous and all-sufficient sacrifice.

We are obliged to hold over some interesting items of Home Field news and a number of letters. As to the latter, we must ask Correspondents to make their letters short and to the point as our space is limited,