

# ENGLISH CHURCH UNION

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## REPORT

on the Resolutions of the

## LAMBETH CONFERENCE

by

THE THEOLOGICAL AND LITURGICAL  
COMMITTEE.

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### PART I.

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YOUR Committee has given careful attention to the "Encyclical Letter" and to the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference, and begs to present the following as the first part of its report.

#### I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

1. There is much in the work of the Lambeth Conference for which it is right to be thankful, especially the earnest desire shown for the restoration of the visible unity of the Church. It may also be pointed out, on the positive side, that the outlook of the Encyclical Letter and Resolutions is marked by a better understanding of the œcumenical meaning and grandeur of Catholicism, than that which has sometimes characterized Anglican pronouncements; and, on the negative side, that there is no acceptance of the opinion, which has been much pressed of late, that Nonconformist ministers have been validly ordained. On the other hand, both in matters of principle and in matters of detail, there is much which needs careful examination and criticism.

2. It is important to remember what the Lambeth Conference is. It is a gathering of Bishops assembled for counsel and advice. It is not a conciliar or legisla-

tive body. It has no authority to make enactments. It is a conference not a Synod. No resolution passed by it has any force in any place until it has been made an act of an authoritative Synod of the Church.

3. As a consequence of the nature of the Lambeth Conference and the character of its report your Committee has kept a practical aim in view. The practical questions which need consideration by the members of our Communion are whether the resolutions of the Conference should or should not be made effective by synodical action; and, if they are to be made effective, what, if any, alterations should be made in them before they are thus sanctioned. It is with a view to assisting Synods and the faithful in general with regard to these questions that your Committee makes the suggestions contained in this report.

4. The immediately pressing need of a statement about some of the proposals concerning reunion and the ministrations of women has led us to present by itself the part of our report which deals directly with these matters so as not to lose the time which will necessarily be required for an examination of the general position taken in the resolutions of the Conference in regard to the nature of the Church, and of the special questions relating to Swedish Christians.

## II. THE BASIS OF REUNION.

In section VI. of the "Appeal" in Resolution 9 it is said:—

"We believe that the visible unity of the Church will be found to involve the whole-hearted acceptance of—

"The Holy Scriptures, as the record of God's revelation of Himself to man, and as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith; and the Creed commonly called Nicene, as the sufficient

statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal confession of belief.

"The divinely instituted Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ.

"A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body."

Considerable additions are needed if this statement is to be made satisfactory: (1) Unless to the phrase "the Creed commonly called Nicene" there is added some such explanation as "interpreted by the dogmatic decisions and the tradition of the whole Church," a door is left open for the heresies condemned by the Third and Fourth Ecumenical Councils and for other grave errors; (2) unless some addition is made as to belief in the doctrine of the Sacraments, there would be nothing to prevent the official recognition for the first time of Zwinglian errors concerning Baptism and the Holy Communion, and there ought to be security for the acceptance of Infant Baptism, and of a fundamentally right belief concerning Holy Matrimony; (3) it is insufficient to specify only the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion—for instance, it is necessary that the place of Confirmation and Absolution in the sacramental system of the Church should be distinctly recognized, as in the Book of Common Prayer; (4) in regard to the ministry, a recognition that Ordination is the sacramental means of conferring the grace of Holy Orders, and not merely the appointment to a ministerial position is urgently needed.<sup>1</sup> The phraseology used in sections II., VI.,

<sup>1</sup> This recognition concerning Ordination was made in the report of the Committee on Reunion, page 148, but was ignored by the Conference itself.

and VII. of Resolution 9 of the Conference might be interpreted as suggesting that "the episcopate" is a mere matter of administrative convenience.

### III. DETAILS IN REGARD TO THE SCHEME OF REUNION WITH NON-EPISCOPALIAN SOCIETIES.

Resolution 12 of the Conference is as follows:—

(A) *In view of prospects and projects of reunion—*

(i.) A Bishop is justified in giving occasional authorization to ministers, not episcopally ordained, who in his judgment are working towards an ideal of union such as is described in our Appeal, to preach in churches within his Diocese, and to clergy of the Diocese to preach in the churches of such ministers ;

(ii.) The Bishops of the Anglican Communion will not question the action of any Bishop who, in the few years between the initiation and the completion of a definite scheme of union, shall countenance the irregularity of admitting to Communion the baptized but unconfirmed Communicants of the non-episcopal congregations concerned in the scheme ;

(iii.) The Conference gives its general approval to the suggestions contained in the report of the Sub-Committee on Reunion with Non-Episcopal Churches in reference to the status and work of ministers who may remain after union without episcopal ordination (see pages 142 and 143).

(B) *Believing, however, that certain lines of action might imperil both the attainment of its ideal and the unity of its own Communion, the Conference declares that—*

(i.) It cannot approve of general schemes of intercommunion or exchange of pulpits :

(ii.) In accordance with the principle of Church order set forth in the Preface to the Ordinal attached to the Book of Common Prayer, it cannot approve the celebration in Anglican churches of the Holy Communion for members of the Anglican church by ministers who have not been episcopally ordained ; and that it should be regarded as the general rule of the Church that Anglican communicants should receive Holy Communion only at the hands of ministers of their own Church, or of Churches in communion therewith.

(C) *In view of doubts and varieties of practice which have caused difficulties in the past, the Conference declares that—*

(i.) Nothing in these Resolutions is intended to indicate that the rule of Confirmation as conditioning admission to the Holy Communion must necessarily apply to the case of baptized persons who seek Communion under conditions which in the Bishop's judgment justify their admission thereto.

(ii.) In cases in which it is impossible for the Bishop's judgment to be obtained beforehand, the priest should remember that he has no canonical authority to refuse Communion to any baptized person kneeling before the Lord's Table (unless he be excommunicate by name, or, in the canonical sense of the term, a cause of scandal to the faithful) ; and that, if a question may properly be raised as to the future admission of any such person to Holy Communion, either because he has not been confirmed or for other reasons, the priest should refer the matter to the Bishop for counsel or direction.

This resolution forms part of the scheme for gradually transforming the Nonconformist societies into societies in communion with Canterbury, and it deals

with the state of affairs during the transitional period. There are important points in this scheme which need attention before it would be right for it to receive synodical approval.

1. Section (A) paragraph (i.) of this resolution permits in certain circumstances the exchange of pulpits with Nonconformists. It has been suggested that this exchange of pulpits is only contemplated during the "transitional period." But the prefatory phrase,

"in view of prospects and projects of reunion,"  
and the description,

"ministers not episcopally ordained who" in the judgment of the Bishop "are working towards an ideal of union such as is described in our Appeal"

are not nearly stringent enough to connect the proposals with any definite scheme of corporate reunion; and there can be little doubt that the resolution if unamended will be used to cover the admission to our pulpits of men who neither accept the Catholic Faith nor intend to receive episcopal Ordination. It would be in the highest degree improper to entrust such ministers with the ministry of the Word in our churches. The proposal is also definitely both uncanonical and illegal so far as England is concerned, inasmuch as such ministers have not made, and cannot make, the Declaration of Assent which is required by the Canons as well as by the law from all who are to be licensed to preach in the Church of England. The following amendments of these two phrases would have the effect of making "A (i.)" of Resolution 12 tolerable—

(1) the omission of the words,

"in view of prospects and projects of reunion"

and the substitution for them of the following:—

"in the event of a definite arrangement being concluded with a non-episcopal society on the basis

of an *ex animo* acceptance by such society of the Catholic Faith and Sacraments and an undertaking given by it to secure a ministry of validly-ordained bishops, priests, and deacons";

and (2) the omission of the words

"not episcopally ordained, who in his judgment are working towards an ideal of union such as is described in our Appeal,"

and the substitution for them of the following:—

"of such a society who are candidates for Holy Orders."

This part of the resolution would then run as follows:—

(A) In the event of a definite arrangement being concluded with a non-episcopal society on the basis of an *ex animo* acceptance by such society of the Catholic Faith and Sacraments and an undertaking given by it to secure a ministry of validly-ordained bishops, priests, and deacons

(i.) A Bishop would be justified in giving occasional authorization to ministers of such a society who were, or were qualified to become, candidates for Holy Orders to preach in churches within his diocese and to clergy of the diocese to preach in the churches of such ministers—

and would then be made unobjectionable from a Catholic point of view.

2. Amendment is needed in order to protect the proper position of Confirmation, which either should be the act of admitting those who have been in separation into the Church or should shortly follow their admission.

3. In regard to "(B)" in Resolution 12 and the statement in section VIII. of Resolution 9—

"We who send forth this appeal would say that, if the authorities of other Communion should so desire, we are persuaded that, terms of union having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted,

bishops and clergy of our Communion would willingly accept from these authorities a form of commission or recognition which would commend our ministry to their congregations as having its place in the one family life,"

it should be secured that

(1) Any "commission or recognition" accepted by our bishops from the societies so admitted to the Church should merely be a permission to enter and officiate in their buildings, and should not be or resemble Ordination; and

(2) Ministers of the societies so admitted who will not accept episcopal Ordination should be required to abstain as well in their own chapels as in our churches from purporting to perform the functions of bishops, priests, and deacons.

All these amendments should be taken together as parts of a coherent scheme representing the minimum of alteration required if the proposals of the Lambeth Conference are to be made tolerable.

#### IV. THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE COUNCILS AND MINISTRATIONS OF THE CHURCH.

Credit is due to the Conference because in Resolutions 46 to 53 the phrase "Holy Orders" used by the Committee on this subject with reference to Deaconesses was discarded, and the phrase "Order of Deaconesses," employed without the word "Holy"; but the resolutions as passed by the Conference contain most regrettable provisions, and, if they are to be retained at all, they need the most drastic revision before they are sanctioned by any Synod. The statement in Resolution 46—

"Women should be admitted to those Councils of the Church to which laymen are admitted and on equal terms,"

should be expressed in such a way as to make clear that the word "Councils" means only those informal gatherings, such as Diocesan Conferences, the constitution of which is not of any ecclesiastical importance, and which are not properly constituted Synods of the Church.

In other respects, many alterations are needed.

While in Resolution 49 it is said that

"The office of a Deaconess is primarily a ministry of succour, bodily and spiritual, especially to women, and should follow the lines of the primitive rather than of the modern Diaconate of men,"

The natural result of the apparent attempt in Resolution 50 to assimilate the proposed "Form and Manner of Making of Deaconesses" to the English "Form and Manner of Making of Deacons" would be to suggest that the Deaconesses are to be regarded as the Deacons of the present time.

In Resolution 52 the phrase "ordinary duties" seems to recall the principle affirmed in the part of Resolution 49 quoted above, but the statement of "functions" "which may be entrusted to the Deaconesses in addition to" these "ordinary duties" could by no possibility rightly be approved by a Synod unless—

(1) some such words as

"under the supervision of the priest"

were added to

"(a) To prepare candidates for Baptism and Confirmation";

(2) the words

"at private Baptisms"

were substituted for

"in virtue of her office"

in

“(b) To assist at the administration of Holy Baptism; and to be the ministrant in cases of necessity in virtue of her office”

and the words,

“to women”

inserted after the words

“Holy Baptism”;

and (3) the provision in “(d)” for a Deaconess to be allowed

“(i.) in church to read Morning and Evening Prayer and the Litany, except such portions as are assigned to the Priest only; (ii.) in church also to lead in prayer and, under the licence of the Bishop, to instruct and exhort the congregation”

were wholly omitted.<sup>2</sup> Resolution 52 would then be as follows:—

The following functions may be entrusted to the Deaconess, in addition to the ordinary duties which would naturally fall to her: (a) To prepare Candidates for Baptism and Confirmation under the supervision of the priest; (b) to assist at the administration of Holy Baptism to women, and to be the ministrant in cases of necessity at private Baptisms; (c) to pray with and to give counsel to such women as desire help in difficulties and perplexities.

In Resolution 53, concerning the speaking and leading in prayer on the part of women other than Deaconesses, further safeguards are needed against the assumption of definite ministerial office.

<sup>2</sup> It is satisfactory to notice that clause d (ii.) of Resolution 52 was passed by a minority only of the Bishops attending the Conference. The whole number was 252. Of these 117 voted for the Resolution, 81 voted against it, and 54 did not vote.

It is desirable that the whole idea of women instructing and exhorting the general congregation should be decisively repudiated as (1) based upon an unwarranted assumption of what the office of a Deaconess in the Primitive Church involved; (2) a breach of Catholic order and custom; (3) inevitably tending to widen the gulf between the English Church and the rest of Historic Christendom; (4) *ultra vires* for a provincial or local Church; (5) likely to lead to increasing division among ourselves.

In presenting this first part of the report the Committee begs the Council promptly to take such steps as may be appropriate to secure that before the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference are submitted for the consideration of any Synod of the Church these suggestions for amendments are brought before the members of the Synod.

ISSUED BY AUTHORITY OF THE  
PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL OF  
THE ENGLISH CHURCH UNION.

(Nov. 24, 1920.)

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It is desirable that the whole idea of a  
historical and explanatory general conference  
should be habitually recommended (1) based upon an  
agreed assumption of what the scope of a  
conference in the Primitive Church may be; (2) a  
branch of Catholic order and action; (3) inevitable;  
leading to wider the full between the English Church  
and the rest of Historic Christendom; (4) when ever  
for a provincial or local Church; (5) likely to lead to  
restoring division among ourselves.

In preceding this part of the report the  
Council should be promptly to take such steps as  
may be necessary to secure that before the  
Council the Council Conference be submitted to the  
consideration of any part of the Council those sug-  
gestions for amendments are brought before the members  
of the Council.

ISSUED BY AUTHORITY OF THE  
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