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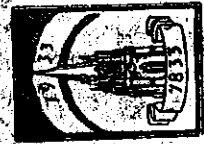
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**RECOLLECTIONS
OF MALINES**

A Contribution to the Cause
of Christian Reunion

By

THE RT. REV. WALTER FRERE, C.R.
Lately Bishop of Truro



THE CENTENARY PRESS

RECOLLECTIONS OF MALINES

THE Conversations of Malines were an astonishing adventure in Christian reunion. Fifty years ago it would have seemed impossible for a Cardinal of the Roman Church to meet and discuss the points of agreement between Rome and Canterbury with leading Anglicans. If the inauguration of the Conversations was mainly due to Cardinal Mercier and the late Lord Halifax, such agreement as was achieved was largely the work of the theologians on both sides, distinguished among whom was Dr. Frere, the Bishop of Truro. His account of the Conversations, here published, is a delightful record, containing many of those personal episodes which escape the historians and yet are often decisive. Dr. Frere has also printed in an appendix some of the most important papers relevant to the Conversations and corrects a few of the errors and misconceptions which have arisen.

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Edited by V. A. DEMANT

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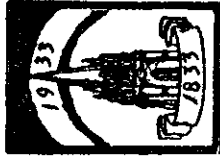
IN this book a number of the foremost thinkers in the Church of England discuss some of the problems of the world in their relation to contemporary life. The purpose of the book is to show that the independence which the world has claimed from spiritual interpretations of reality has brought about not liberty, but contradiction, confusion and servitude.

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The Essays are an important contribution to Christian Apologetics. They are not a defensive apology, but a positive claim that without religion no human interest can be true to itself. The thread of argument which runs through the book is drawn out in an Introduction by the Editor, the Rev. V. A. Demant.

RECOLLECTIONS OF
MALINES

By
WALTER FRERE, C.R.
Lately Bishop of Truro



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INTRODUCTION

FOR a great many years past now there has been a movement for reapproach on the part of Anglicans and Roman Catholics. This was begun and continued on a small scale. From time to time blows have been dealt at the movement which have reduced its activities to little or nothing; but the movement has continued and still continues.

After the Vatican Council of 1870 the prospects of the movement were not favourable, but the reverse. The spirit of the movement seemed to have abated, when quite suddenly it broke out afresh in the Appeal for the recognition by Rome of Anglican Orders. This Appeal was originated chiefly by two persons: Lord Halifax in England, and the Abbé Portal in France. They soon gathered round it a number of supporters both French and English, men of learning as well as men of heart. Then again came the day of disappointment and disillusionment, as the reply of the Pope ultimately turned out to be hostile to the claims of Angli-

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can Orders. So once more the movement for reapproach sank back. It did not, however, become inactive; for after the war when there were openings on all hands, the same two stalwarts, Lord Halifax and Abbé Portal, determined to make a fresh attempt towards reapproach.

I had kept in touch with both of them, in England and in France; we had shared hopes and dreamed dreams; and meanwhile a quiet propaganda had been carried out especially by M. Portal and his distinguished circle of friends and allies, with Paris as its centre. But I had never dreamed that such an opening would occur, as did occur. So as I go back to a great pile of letters and papers connected with the Conversations at Malines, 1921 to 1927, I am filled with thankful surprise still. From these letters and papers I have put together a few personal recollections or reminiscences which were written as articles for the *Truro Diocesan Gazette* (1934) and are now reprinted in book form. They are in no sense a history of the doings at Malines in those years, still less do they give an account of the whole movement of the reapproach. As one of the two surviving English people who took part in those Conver-

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sations—in fact the only one left who took part in them all, besides the present Cardinal of Malines (Mgr. van Roey)—I had specially good opportunities for recording, as time went on, the events of those days. So I make a small contribution to the big history that will surely some time be written authoritatively when the day has dawned, and the official archives are open and the full correspondence is available.

WALTER FRERE, C.R.

February, 1935.

THE PRELIMINARIES

A LETTER to me from Lord Halifax dated November 9, 1921, was the first intimation of what was to be. The letter made a suggestion that we should meet, but there was a significant postscript at the end: "I have been seeing and having some talk with Cardinal Mercier." Our interview followed, an invitation to Malines emerged; and we discussed at great length the possibilities of such an opportunity. If there was to be a conference with the Cardinal at Malines, who should be the people to go there and confer? It would of course be unofficial. So the choice lay with us. Then followed a month containing a good deal of correspondence, more detailed discussion, the preparing of documents and the like. Besides this, it took time to determine finally who should go; it was thought three representatives would be better than two or than four, which was the number first proposed. So we had to choose our third

colleague, and it was not an easy task. Many were discussed but deemed unsuitable for one reason or another. Finally, after some pressure from us and from other and higher quarters, Dr. Armitage Robinson, then Dean of Wells, was persuaded to complete the trio.

The time of the invitation was for the week between December 5 and 10, 1921; meanwhile there was a great deal done. Père Portal, who had been with Lord Halifax at the preliminary visit to the Cardinal at Malines, was of course in close correspondence and co-operation all the time. This good French priest, who had been closely allied with Lord Halifax in schemes of union for a long period, represented on the Roman Catholic side the same hopeful outlook and the same enthusiasm as Lord Halifax himself on the Anglican side; each devotedly loyal to his own communion and finding loyalty no hindrance, but on the contrary a continuous spur, to efforts for the healing of the breach between the two communions.

We came to see that it was advisable that there should be some document prepared for discussion, partly in order to make clear some of the points of Anglican outlook and usage with which Roman Catholics are not as a rule

familiar, and partly in order to see that the right class of topics were included, and the right class of questions were propounded, and set in the right sort of light. It was clear from the beginning that all that could be expected from such a meeting was an exploration, a preliminary inquiry, as to whether there was to be found sufficient ground common to the two communions for further discussion to be advisable.

On our side there was a clear starting-point, namely the Appeal of the Lambeth Conference of 1920 "to all Christian people." But while this provided the justification for the discussion, something else was needed to serve as the actual document to be discussed on such an occasion. It was in view of these conditions that Lord Halifax himself therefore drafted the Memorandum to serve as a basis of discussion. After much criticism and consideration this draft reached the form to which all the conferrers agreed, and which, in a French translation, went beforehand to Malines.

It may here be noted once for all, that two forms of report upon the Conversations have been issued. The first was the Official Report which was presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury

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at the close of the Conversations and was issued with his permission as a pamphlet dated July, 1927, under the title *Conversations at Malines* (Oxford University Press).¹

Later on, in 1930, Lord Halifax issued on his own responsibility a collection of the documents concerning the conferences which had not previously been liberated for publication. These formed a small volume, published by Philip Allan & Co. in 1930, also entitled *The Conversations at Malines*. It contains the Minutes of the four Conversations, together with an Appendix containing as "Annexes" other documents which were utilized in them. First the Lambeth Appeal for reunion was reprinted; then the Memorandum of Lord Halifax; in all a series of sixteen annexes to the Minutes. This little volume was printed in France, partly in French and partly in English. The collection however was neither exact nor complete, as will appear from time to time in these reminiscences.

This caveat must be noted here because what is printed as Annex No. 2 in that volume is

¹ The first edition was both in English and French. A second edition containing the English only was printed in 1930.

THE PRELIMINARIES

not Lord Halifax's Memorandum in its final shape; by some oversight what has been printed is one of the earlier drafts of the Memorandum, one which subsequently received a good deal of modification, before reaching the final form in which it made its appearance at Malines.

The difference is sufficiently important to justify a few correcting quotations concerning some of the matters of chief importance. In regard to the Papal Supremacy and the Decree of the Vatican Council, the passage as printed in the volume (pages 73-4) was almost entirely rewritten; eventually it was accepted and submitted, in this form.

"Perhaps also not dissimilar considerations might facilitate agreement about difficult points in regard to the Papal Supremacy and the Decrees of the Vatican Council. In regard to the first, it is well to remember, with a view to reunion, two pronouncements of Leo XIII, when, speaking of the independence of the civil society from the temporal, he said with regard to religious society (1) that the Supremacy of the Pope implies no claim to authority in temporal and civil affairs; and (2) that the powers of Bishops exist *jure divino*. In regard to the Vatican Decree a great difficulty is removed if it is admitted that

no power is claimed there by the Council for the Pope apart from the Church; and that what it claims for the Pope is simply the power, after having taken every means to ascertain what the teaching of the Church is, on any given point, to declare what that teaching is in an authoritative manner. In short the power of the Pope is not the power to declare or impose a new dogma, but only the power to declare explicitly and authoritatively what is the faith committed by our Lord Jesus Christ to the Church's guardianship. Dr. Pusey said in his preface to the late Bishop of Brechin's (Bishop Forbes) book on the Articles that there was nothing in the Council of Trent which need constitute a difficulty for the Anglican Church; and that even the Papal Supremacy was open to an interpretation which Anglicans could accept without serious difficulty."

Similarly the statement in our Memorandum about the Eucharistic Sacrifice took another form.

"That the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass is nothing else than the offering made by our Lord Jesus Christ to His Father, under the sacramental species, of His Body and His Blood, separated in a mystical manner the one from the

other by the consecration, in memory of the death and bloodshedding; which He suffered once for all upon the Cross for the sins of the whole world, past, present and future. That the Eucharist is the same sacrifice as that of the cross offered by our Saviour Jesus Christ to His Father mystically and by way of sacrament."

Once more with regard to the Immaculate Conception, the Memorandum should read very differently on page 77:

"No well instructed Anglican would deny the belief that our Lady was preserved by God's special grace from every stain of original sin from the first moment of her conception. Such a statement really differs but little from what we are told in the Bible of St. John Baptist's conception; and if the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is merely that our Lady by the grace of God from the first moment of her conception was placed in a position in relation to God which we believe is granted to every child at its baptism, there is nothing in the dogma itself which every Christian should not be ready to accept. The difficulty lies not in the doctrine itself, but in the history of the Church and the attitude of the Orthodox Church in regard to the dogma—a

Church which none can declare to be lacking in the veneration due to the Mother of God—and in the fact of the belief in question being declared an Article of Faith. No one can expect the Roman Church to go back upon what it has authoritatively said. Nor, equally, can the Orthodox Church or the Anglican Church be expected to accept formally what forms no part of their traditional faith, and was not an Article of Faith for Roman Catholics until 1854. There must obviously be accommodations made in regard to all such matters. The Assumption of our Lady is not an Article of Faith, but that does not prevent it from being observed in many Anglican churches. Is it impossible that such difficulties as that of the Immaculate Conception should be obviated by an agreement which would safeguard both sides concerned, Rome on the one side, the Orthodox and the Anglicans on the other? Is it not the fact that at the Council of Florence the decrees of the various Lateran Councils were ignored?"

The Memorandum also is incomplete. It should end with the words: "From this we may surely feel certain that any proposal that came from Rome for the holding of conferences with a view to discussing reunion, would be

welcomed by the authorities of the Anglican Church."

Before the end of the month Lord Halifax had, very prudently, had a satisfactory interview with Cardinal Bourne, and all was getting into train. It became evident that it was desirable that the trio should have some conference together in person before embarking upon their expedition, so as to clear up their own and one another's minds as to any of the questions that might arise, and to foresee the answers to inquiries that might be made. Accordingly another Memorandum was drawn up to serve as a basis for this discussion between the three conferrers. This discussion was held at Lord Halifax's house in Eaton Square in preparation for the departure of the trio: the document served its purpose, and was useful for the object for which it was drawn up. It was not produced as a document at Malines and therefore does not figure among the documents of the Conversations. At the same time as an indication of the common mind of those who went, it has a certain value and may deserve to be printed here. (See Addendum I.)

On Monday, December 5, 1921, we set out

for Malines under the care of James, Lord Halifax's admirable valet. He became quite a part, an inseparable part indeed, of the conferences, being excellent company on the journey, very capable in seeing us and our luggage into the right places: and very acceptable also when we got to Malines, for he had already friends there who had been refugees at Hickleton in the days of the war. Arriving late the same evening at Malines, we were greeted with a voice that it seemed almost impossible to believe was not an English voice; it came from Canon Dessain, the Cardinal's Chaplain and an old member of Christ Church at Oxford. From that moment his help and companionship was a very marked feature of Malines. That welcome was the first episode that I remember. The second was of a different nature. As the Dean emerged from our carriage, a grand silhouette in the dark station with his decanal hat and gaiters, a man waiting on the platform, having some suspicion of what was going on, supposed that this great figure must be the Cardinal himself, and knelt for his blessing, helped perhaps by the glint of the decanal ring upon the figure's finger. The Dean was a little puzzled at first to know exactly what was happening; but when it was ex-

plained to him, he rose to the occasion: and the good man did not go away un-blessed.

So we drove away to the Archbishop's house—a large and rather gaunt building erected round three sides of a quadrangle with a garden in the middle, and the garden extending out on the fourth side. A rather prohibitive-looking door and porter's lodge opened before us, and we came into the Archevêché itself. A very spacious staircase of an official kind faced us, leading to official rooms on the one side and to the more domestic rooms and the guest rooms on the other, all on the upper floor.

We tumble out of the darkness and see in the light the tall dominating figure of the Cardinal bending down to welcome his guests with that singular charm which was his; with him is Père Portal, who had already arrived from Paris, and the third figure, unknown to us then but very well known to us later, Mgr. Van Roey, the Archbishop's Vicar-General, who was to be the third member of the trio on that side. Supper gave us our first opportunity of common intercourse, and then followed a little polite talk and bed. The first discussion is to begin the morning following; and what will come of it?

THE FIRST CONVERSATION

The first subject was the nature of the Church : in the discussion of Lord Halifax's section on this subject, the Cardinal raised the question of the Church Visible, and the Church Invisible ; we each set aside any idea of regarding the Church merely as an invisible body, maintaining that baptism in itself was sufficient to constitute membership of the Visible Church. But to us a reply was given that the larger view was nevertheless worth bearing in mind ; the Invisible Church as well as the Visible should be taken into account, as including, in some sense, the membership of some of those who are formally outside. In the end, however, two propositions were agreed upon (as set out in the Minutes), emphasizing the point that persons baptized become incorporated into an organized social life : and that an apostolic hierarchy, apostolic in history and character, together with the divine sacraments are characteristic and necessary features of the same, being established for the Church by divine order.

Discussion then passed to consider the Anglican attitude towards the Council of Trent, and the Council of the Vatican. The Anglicans were not altogether agreed as to the possibility of reconciling Trent with Anglican doctrine.

II

THE FIRST CONVERSATION

ON December 6 we attended the Chapel of the Palace on our side of the building. The Cardinal had his private oratory on the other side, and according to Belgian custom its ways were a good bit earlier than ours. At ten o'clock we met in a large and rather formal and cold *salon* ; the Cardinal joined us from the other side, and opened the Session. The Minutes which are given in Lord Halifax's little volume give an authentic account of the first proceedings, and indeed of all the later ones also. The opening address, after the Cardinal's greeting, was made by Lord Halifax, who utilized to the best purpose for us throughout the Conversations his command of the French language and knowledge of Roman Catholic thought. It was agreed to take his Memorandum as the basis for discussion. The Cardinal read the opening part of it and Lord Halifax commented at considerable length on the subject. (See Annex No. 2 in the volume.)

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The Dean was doubtful whether such reconciliation was possible, and expressed himself as not satisfied with Tract 90. At the same time he explained carefully what was the nature of the Assent to the Thirty-nine Articles required in the English Church. He had taken pains to discuss this matter with the Archbishop of Canterbury previous to coming, and was enabled therefore authoritatively to expound what the Assent to the Articles, as at present made, really implied. He agreed, however, that they need form no obstacle to further discussion, in the sense in which they were now taken or imposed.

Passing on then to the Papacy and the relations between the Pope and the Council, the question was asked in what way a doctrine could become a matter of faith in the view of the Roman Catholics. To this question Mgr. Von Roey gave in reply the definition quoted in the Minutes; and the Anglican criticisms there recorded then followed. The Cardinal then explained that the Pope is not apart from the Episcopate or the Church; and does not act as an individual, but on behalf of all. What is called a new doctrine is not really new, but implanted already in the Christian tradition, and emerging, in a sense, in the same sort of way

THE FIRST CONVERSATION

as in the human mind an idea is conceived and then only later on finds expression. Our own conference will illustrate that; for we began with half-expressed opinions and ideas in our several minds, which only in the course of discussion became growing convictions and ultimately present our corporate mind.

In conclusion it was felt that no agreement could be said to have been reached upon this point, but that the explanation given by Mgr. Van Roey would be very valuable for future discussion.

In the afternoon's meeting the Cardinal read the rest of the Memorandum, and it was then discussed section by section. The section of the Memorandum concerning the Holy Eucharist, basing itself upon the Catechism and Anglican formularies, was accepted as a statement of Catholic fact, but the Anglicans were unable to accept the formulated scholastic doctrine of Transubstantiation as a satisfactory explanation of the Real Presence. In this connexion Article XXVIII was explained and discussed. Mgr. Van Roey was anxious to argue that Transubstantiation was the only reasonable explanation; it was thought best therefore to drop this side of the matter and the use of the term, and to keep

RECOLLECTIONS OF MALINES

to the fact that it was meant to guard. As to the practices quoted in that Article, it was said of them that the Anglicans did not condemn the practices themselves, but only insisted that they were not necessary. The discussion of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist which followed is fully recorded in the published Minutes of the day. On the question of the chalice the Cardinal explained that it was withheld for practical reasons, and the withdrawal had no dogmatic significance. He thought it would not make a difficulty; there were signs in the Roman Church of a desire for the restoration of communion in both kinds, which was not treated as impossible in itself; indeed the Uniat discipline on the point had to be taken into account as expressing the wider view.

On the question of imposing any doctrines as "Articles of Faith" it was agreed that in principle it is right: and also that there was agreement between us on most of the doctrines recognized as such; but not on all. The Anglicans desired that those that could not be treated as universally agreed upon should be left optional.

The Dean raised the question of jurisdiction by saying that any National Church ought

THE FIRST CONVERSATION

to have a measure of Home Rule; and, while bound by loyalty to the whole Church, should not be tied in lesser matters. Thus the Bishops should be free to govern their dioceses and not be subjected to a series of orders from outside. The Cardinal replied that Bishops exercised their authority *jure divino* in their own dioceses; that is to say, their jurisdiction is not derived only through the Pope; and that in fact in the Roman system they have much more liberty of individual action than the Anglicans seem to recognize, quoting instances to illustrate this statement. His own practice was to ascertain the views of Rome for prudence sake; but he would have felt bound to resist the Germans even if the Pope had disapproved. The session closed with a discussion of the other points indicated in the Minutes.

At the conclusion it was agreed that Minutes should be drawn up, utilizing very largely the notes that I had attempted to make of the progress of the discussion, as it went on, though these were necessarily disconnected and incomplete, owing to the necessity of taking my part in the discussion. The duty was laid upon Portal and me of drawing up the Minutes in French and English; and we spent a long

evening at this task, being very anxious to set out the matter while it was all fresh in our memories.

The next day was devoted to the Lambeth Appeal (Annex No. 1). The Cardinal read this sometimes in Latin, sometimes in French, and sometimes in English. Chapter VI was important. Explanation was made by Mgr. Van Roey with regard to the relation of the Bible to the definition of "doctrine." The word "ultimate" in the Appeal¹ was much criticized and proved unacceptable to the Roman Catholics; they equally disliked the word "supreme." The Anglicans explained that in their view the demand for an explicit biblical authority applied only to those matters which are "of faith"; this view, it seems, was not unacceptable to some Roman Catholic authorities, though it was not accepted by all; but many were anxious to maintain that in fact there was such immediate biblical authority for whatever they demanded as "of faith." The discussion on Chapter VII is very fully recorded in the Minutes and they at this point are particularly authoritative; because

¹ . . . "acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the record of God's revelation of Himself to men, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith." See Lambeth Conference of 1920, Report, p. 134.

after they had been drawn up and submitted for verification, they were a good deal amplified and amended in the subsequent session; in particular the Cardinal made himself responsible for the exact form of the words attributed to him.

In the afternoon session a great deal of time was given to the revision of the Minutes submitted, and to an explanation of the concrete proposal about Anglican Orders made in Chapter VIII of the Lambeth Appeal. The Cardinal was naturally very reticent about this, but expressed the opinion that Ordination *sub conditione* might be required and might be found satisfactory, but some sort of supplement also might be a conceivable plan of regularization.

The morning of Thursday was given to framing and polishing of Minutes which were again considered in the afternoon session, amended and approved.

So ended the first conference. It covered an enormous piece of ground and we ended with great hopes and much reassurance as to the value of continuing the work of the Conversations at some subsequent time and convenient place. On Friday, December 9, 1921, we returned to England, the Dean to Lambeth where he reported to the Archbishop: and all seemed well.

THE SECOND CONVERSATION

saying that he had reason to believe that the Conversations were being followed with approval in Rome, and that their continuance would be well regarded. This led to the same question being more distinctly raised on the English side, and some little skirmishing as to the amount of authority and responsibility that either party would take. In the end, a happy solution was reached. The same people were to go to the Conferences as before; they would go with the approval of their Authorities; but they would make their own programme, would be responsible for their own statements, and would not be in any sense official representatives of either side.

As to the subject of the next Conference, it was thought by us that, having had a preliminary survey of matters of doctrine, we should next have something of a preliminary survey concerning matters of discipline and jurisdiction, conducted on the same lines. So preparation was made for a Conversation on these lines. The English representatives adopted a brief Memorandum setting out the questions which they wished to have discussed; and this was submitted to the Cardinal to form a basis for the next gathering, which was fixed for March 14-15, 1923.

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III

THE SECOND CONVERSATION

A YEAR passed; this was full of discussion as to future continuance of the Conversations thus begun: filled by correspondence with the Authorities, here in England, by mutual visits between Hickleton and Mirfield, and by correspondence with the Cardinal, in which, besides Lord Halifax, the Archbishop of Canterbury took some part. Meanwhile Lord Halifax was also busy with the publication in English of a Pastoral Letter of the Cardinal's, to which he wrote an Introduction.¹ Soon the question arose as to the members who should take part in any future continuance, their number, and the amount of authority that they should have; it was felt on both sides that there should be more recognition of what was going on, though still not any authoritative approval.

Before the year was out, the Cardinal wrote

¹ *A Call to Remission . . . Arising out of Discussions with Cardinal Merrier.* Mowbray, 1922.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MALINES

This is the brief document which is printed in the Malines volume as Annex No. 3. It had been hoped that some similar summary of suggestions or questions would have come from the Roman Catholic side, but this did not eventuate; so this second set of Conferences centred also round an English draft.

In this set of Conversations there was a much further approach made to the hot points of controversy; the previous set had aimed at establishing the points where agreement between each could fairly easily be found. This one raised some of the thorniest questions, those on which any sort of agreement was much more unlikely. It would not have been possible to have carried it on with the frankness and good temper which prevailed, unless already the group that was gathered round the table had achieved a very close friendship, mutual respect and unity of heart.

The printed Minutes represent faithfully the progress of the debate. The consideration of the Anglican Memorandum occupied the first two sessions; after that it was thought well that each side should draw up a brief Memorandum of its own on the points at issue, making it as pacific as possible, but stating clearly and frankly

THE SECOND CONVERSATION

where differences lay. On the second day these two Memoranda were produced, criticized and amended; it was decided to forward each, after signature by the members who produced it, for submission to each of the Authorities concerned. Before separating, the documents in their final form were produced, signed and attested. Each trio signed its own Memorandum, and this was countersigned by the trio of the other party, attesting it as the actual counter-statement.

It is important to emphasize what was involved in these two sets of signatures, because they have been much misunderstood. Neither party signed the other's Memorandum, as approving it, but only authenticating it as being the opposite document. These form Annex No. 4 in the Malines volume; but the names subscribed should be placed differently and in double column, those signing their own document on the right hand side, and those attesting it on the left hand side.

It was not unnatural that on our return the result of these discussions should cause more questioning in the minds of those who knew about them than the previous Conversations had done. Some mistake, that arose about the signatures and their significance, made matters worse. And the breathing of the word *pallium*

caused shudders in Lambeth and elsewhere. But those who were at the Conference itself felt that, having taken their courage in both hands, they had been guided through many difficult places and maintained their loyalty, whilst at the same time appreciating more fully than before the opposite position. A preliminary survey had been made which justified the hope that even the most difficult things could be profitably discussed; and all this was much to the good.

IV

THE THIRD CONVERSATION

THE English party returned from Malines (March 1923) looking forward to a speedy resumption of the Conversations, probably in the autumn. But for a considerable time this prospect was overcast. Correspondence between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Cardinal showed that the Archbishop, though sympathetic and friendly, was inclined to write in a dry style and with great caution. The Cardinal on his side reported to Rome on the subject of the Conferences and received back a very encouraging reply. It seemed therefore for some time that England might be compelled to withdraw itself from any further hope of Conversations.

The circumstances at the time made the anxieties all the more acute. Lord Halifax issued a fresh pamphlet¹ and presented his views (but not in a form to be endorsed by the others). So the authorities were further

¹ *Further Considerations on behalf of Reunion.* Mowbray, 1923.

alarmed; and the alarm was made more acute later on in the summer by the action taken at the Anglo-Catholic Congress and especially the telegram sent from there to the Pope. However, as time went on, the way began to open again for a resumption of the Conversations. It became clear all round that the crucial question of the Papal Supremacy must be fully faced and discussed. The Cardinal was explicit about that; he had been a little disappointed, I think, that more had not been done on that line at the previous preliminary Conversations. The Archbishop of Canterbury was of the same opinion, because he thought that the Conferences ought not to have dealt with details, as they had done in the second set of Conferences, until they had faced the main problem. A sharp little controversy between Bishop Gore and Mgr. Batiffol added some fuel to the fire; but at the same time in the long run it lighted the way to the future.

It had always been hoped that the number of persons on each side might be increased; names had been discussed at various stages; and steadily the opinion grew that the future Conferences would be of more value if there were a couple of representatives added to each side.

The little controversy above mentioned seemed to indicate that Bishop Gore and Mgr. Batiffol had better argue out their case round the Cardinal's table in Conference. So that would form at any rate one part of any programme that might be drawn up.

At the same time it also became clear that, previous to any discussion of the light thrown upon the problem of the Papacy by the later part of Early Church history, the biblical question must be tackled first. With some difficulty the Dean of Wells was induced to set out in a Memorandum a view of the position of St. Peter as it emerged from the New Testament. This he did with admirable brevity and clearness, as a true disciple of Lightfoot and Hort.

It was arranged at the same time that memoranda should be prepared for the discussion between Bishop Gore and Mgr. Batiffol. Simultaneously it was decided that the additional representative from the English side should be Dr. Kidd, the Warden of Keble; and he prepared two Memoranda dealing with the later stages of Church History. To the other side there was added by the Cardinal a very distinguished scholar in the person of Père Hippolyte Hemmer, a well-known French church-historian,

formerly a professor, and subsequently the parish priest of the very important parish of the Holy Trinity in Paris. So the plans began to take definite shape, dates were discussed and a settlement was made for a renewal of the Conversations in November.

Thus we begin the second phase of the Conversations, which, while retaining the ground won at the exploratory conferences in the way of friendly and mutual understanding, was able to go on more into details and use more formal kind of discussion. The increase in the numbers necessarily made the discussions a little more formal; but also a great deal more was done this time in the way of preparation of papers and of replies to papers. One result is that the printed documents in the Malines volume represent much more fully the course of the discussion as it took place in this later phase than was the case in the earlier phase.

Besides the memoranda thus prepared, there was in the background a statement made by the Cardinal in regard to the crucial question of the Papacy. The Archbishop of Canterbury had put questions to him shortly after the second conference, on the subject of the papal claims, to which the Cardinal gave a short and clear

reply. The statement excerpted from this letter will show how the Cardinal handled the matter. It is printed at the end of this book as Addendum II.

Side by side with the official negotiations, which gradually steadied themselves and made the prospect of future Conversations more clear, there was a good deal going on unofficially. Much notice was taken of a reply made in the form of an Open Letter by Miss Petre, the well-known friend and biographer of Father Tyrrell, to the Tract which Lord Halifax had issued the previous autumn. The *Guardian* in July printed Miss Petre's letter in full, and devoted a leading article to the subject. It printed also Lord Halifax's reply to Miss Petre's letter. The *Guardian* took a friendly line, though without endorsing a good deal of what Lord Halifax had said; and it commended the whole matter to the attention and interest of its readers. This was all to the good. Another and less happy form of commentary arose out of a communication in the Press from Father Woodlock, S.J., on the subject of Reunion. The Anglo-Catholic Congress in July 1923 also had a good bit of bearing on the case, not only on account of the incident already related, which was brief

and transient, but also on account of a very solid paper concerning the relations between Anglicans and Romans, which was contributed to the Congress by Dr. Hall, the well-known American theologian.

As the time drew nearer for the next visit to Malines a long-desired plan for a larger consultation to be held by leading members of the English Church among themselves was carried out; and a Colloquy took place at Lambeth on October 2. To this representatives of many different phases of English church life were invited. In view of this gathering the Five prepared a Memorandum, in order to be ready to answer questions which might there be put to them as to what they had in mind and what their intention and outlook were. This Colloquy did a good deal of good; it brought all sorts of people into touch with the real facts, allayed many suspicions, and revealed a far larger measure of agreement than had been expected.

It was introduced by an important speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury, expressing his view of the situation, explaining what had been done already, and what was in contemplation. He put the matter before the whole body assembled, and the discussion that arose upon

it was important and helpful. The big questions were discussed on the basis of what the Archbishop had said; this debate filled up the time available, and there was no necessity to bring forward the Memorandum which the Five had prepared for the Colloquy.

It seems advisable now, however, to print not only the Archbishop's speech, which itself became subsequently something of the nature of Instructions for the Anglican representatives in regard to their new Conversations; but also the outline Memorandum which the Five had prepared for themselves, and, if it had been needed, for submission at the Colloquy. These two documents therefore are also here included at the end of this volume. (Addenda III and IV.)

The third group of Conversations began on November 7, 1923. After the Cardinal's welcome, the Dean of Wells was called upon to expound his Memorandum entitled "The position of Saint Peter in the Primitive Church. A summary of the New Testament evidence." It is printed in full as Annex 5 of the Malines volume.

The first section concerning the Epistle to the Ephesians was read first (pages 89 and 90), and a long discussion followed upon this. It was

the principal feature of the morning session, and revealed the width of the chasm. After it the rest of the paper was read without halting at any of its individual sections, except that there was a brief discussion of the same sort after the evidence of the Epistles had been taken, and before passing on to the section concerning the Gospel evidence (pages 93-102). At the head of this section was prefixed an important statement by the Dean supported by Dr. Kidd, to the effect that allowance must be made for development in early doctrine and practice, and therefore the interpretation of the Gospels on the point was more tentative than that of the later documents. The discussion occupied all the rest of the morning. The new members took a very prominent part in it; Lord Halifax less than before, for he found increasing difficulty in hearing what went on since we had enlarged numbers and the table round which we sat.

In the afternoon the paper that had been prepared by Mgr. Batiffol in detailed reply to the Dean of Wells was read and discussed. Batiffol soon showed himself a very able and sympathetic disputant. He had not, to begin with, the intimate knowledge of the Anglican outlook which M. Portal brought with him; but

he seemed quickly to grasp a great deal of it, and to understand it much more readily than either the Cardinal or Mgr. Van Roey; perhaps because he had a more historical and a less scholastical mind and training. The discussion that followed Batiffol's paper, stage by stage, was of the same quick, frank and learned kind as the morning discussion had been. It is impossible to summarize it, but the two documents are printed as Annex 5 and Annex 6 in the Malines volume. It must be left to the reader of them now to judge how far the reply on the biblical question was effective. This can practically be judged from the printed papers. My own impression at the time was that our biblical argument had not been really faced; apparently one or two texts concerning St. Peter had hypnotized the Roman Catholics in their outlook, to the exclusion of the scriptural description of the Church itself; and a re-reading of the documents confirms me in this. Anyhow the documents are there, and anyone can judge for himself.

The differences revealed were wide; but it was resolved at the end of the afternoon session that each side should set down a brief statement of its own which should emphasize the points

of agreement rather than the differences. These two statements are printed in the pamphlet containing the official report of *The Conversations at Malines*, and reference must be made there for them (pp. 17-19).

At the third session, on the morning of November 8, the two Statements which had been drawn up in the interval were read and further discussed. After the reading, and before the discussion, the subjects assigned to that session were taken, namely, the two Memoranda which had been prepared by Dr. Kidd, the first dealing with a review of "The Petrine texts, as employed up to A.D. 461," with Batiffol's reply to it. The second, dealing with the Reformation period and the repudiation of Papal authority, was then read; and it formed the main subject for discussion at the afternoon conference. These three papers are included in the Malines volume as Annexes 7-9.

In the morning the chief critic on the subject of the patristic outlook had been Batiffol; in the afternoon the main criticism came from P. Hemmer. Dr. Kidd's first paper had ended with five conclusions for which he thought there would be general agreement. The wording of these was modified in view of the discussion that had

taken place; and the five points appear in their amended form in the official report of *The Conversations at Malines* (page 20). P. Hemmer had drafted very skilfully another summary of dogmatic points of agreement; and there was a considerable discussion as to whether this could be signed by all the parties there. It was felt however that, even after all this discussion, the real examination of the dogmatic position of the Papacy as held by Roman Catholics had not been carried out to the full; and that, pending this, signatures to a document of this sort might be misleading. All therefore finally agreed that it yet remained to go into the doctrine more deeply: and that meanwhile it would be wisest to conclude this group of Conversations with a set of minutes which would incorporate the two historical Statements which had been made, and the five points of Dr. Kidd's first Memorandum, as amended. These minutes were drawn up, and an evening meeting was held at which the minutes were accepted. These minutes are given in the official report (pages 16-20). The net result then was that the Conferences were adjourned to some later date, which ultimately proved to be May 20, 1925.

It was agreed that very encouraging results

had come from the present series of Conversations: but that the doctrine underlying the papal claim needed fuller examination later on.

The printed papers as given in full in the Malines volume, Annexes 5-9, therefore represent in the fullest form what took place: and they must be read in conjunction with the minutes and the official report in *The Conversations at Malines*.

V

THE INTERVAL

AFTER the third set of Conversations a wider publicity was given to the events that had taken place. Shortly after the return of the party the Archbishop of Canterbury determined to issue a circular letter to the Archbishops and Metropolitans of the Anglican communion in the form of a Report upon the response that had been received to the Letter on Reunion of the Lambeth Conference sent out in 1920. He took this opportunity at Christmas, 1923, of speaking not only of what had been going on along well-known lines and upon well-worn ground, but also of giving an account of what had been happening at Malines. This was desirable for the information of our people at home, and also it enlisted the interest of those in the Anglican communion generally. The Archbishop put the whole proceedings in their proper light, and explained his own share in the matter.

Practically the whole of the second part of the Letter was given up to the question of Malines. (See Addendum V.) The move was a wise one; it was found desirable that there should be an authentic statement of what had been going on, and what it involved and what it did not involve. The immediate effect of the Letter, as might be supposed, was to cause a somewhat violent reaction in two opposite camps; the English Roman Catholics were greatly upset to know what had been going on, and there was a considerable agitation caused in Protestant circles in England, both inside and outside the Church, accompanied by something like protest and dismay. Two points may however be noted as an indication that the latter form of reaction was not nearly so violent as might have been expected. First, it was natural enough that the nonconformist delegates who were meeting in conference with the Anglicans from time to time at Lambeth should have raised the question and asked for explanations. It is noteworthy that the explanations given were acceptable, and that even in some quarters a measure of approbation was given. Secondly, the matter came up in the Convocations, not by way of any resolution, but by way of a statement made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his speech

delivered in the Upper House on February 6, 1924.¹ No formal cognizance thereupon was taken of the information given. In both Convocations the statement made was accepted by nearly all with confidence in what had been done. In one Convocation a single Bishop stood out in protest, and in the other there was no difference of opinion of such a character as to indicate disapproval of what had been done.

Meanwhile similar action had been taken by the Cardinal in Belgium. There too criticism had been busy, the Cardinal's action had been hotly attacked, and strong blasts of disapproval had come across the Channel from England. To these the Cardinal replied in a letter to his clergy of January 18, 1924, which was devoted to an explanation and a justification of the Conversations at Malines. (See Addendum VI.)

We are thus provided with a valuable summary of the situation as it was seen by the two chief parties concerned; it is interesting to observe the difference of outlook. Our Archbishop was proceeding, slowly but steadily and with a certain amount of increased faith, in forwarding the Conferences. The Cardinal, on

¹ It is printed in the official pamphlet, *The Conversations at Malines*, as Appendix II to the Anglican Report.

the other hand, was eager from the first, but was finding it rather difficult to be faced with the delays, and never really understanding the Anglican position, as his letter shows. The largeness of his heart embraced us all, but his head did not seem to take in our position. He had clearly established a logical argument for the Papacy, and a position that satisfied him: a great deal of the discussions on the subject must have seemed to him very irrelevant; historical considerations, even the history of doctrine, did not seem to appeal to him, and naturally therefore ideas of theological development were in the same case. Naughty children we were, obstinate and stupid as well, but we must be treated with the utmost patience and generosity. So the heart triumphed over the head, and the ensuing story will show how far the Cardinal was prepared to venture and to go, for our sakes, however stupid and recalcitrant we might be.

After this balancing up on each side it was hoped that we should be able to look forward to the next Conference, and May was the time appointed; but delays occurred, and though they were for the most part merely due to such obstacles as the pressure of engagements, the

difficulty of finding a time that was convenient to everybody, and, in the case of the Dean of Wells, the need of recovery from an accident, it was regrettable that a continued series of postponements went on. The interval was not without its interviews between individual members, both on this side of the Channel, and also across the Channel. Lord Halifax paid a personal visit to the Cardinal, and Bishop Gore met some of the members of the group in Paris; these gatherings were quite unofficial. In fact the main business that was going on in the latter half of the year was the preparation of memoranda for the next Conference. It was hoped that then the Roman Catholics would take the lead and bring forward their points for our criticism; and it was specially desired that Mgr. Van Roey, the present Cardinal, would contribute a paper on the dogmatic claims of the Papacy. All this took place as planned, and the results of it were seen in the ensuing Conference. On our side of the water there was a gathering at Bishop Gore's house in Margaret Street, which helped much in the preparation of our contributions to the coming discussion; and served to clear up a good many points on our side.

It was a nice change to be at Malines in the

spring instead of the winter. We were kept too hard at work to profit very much by anything else but the work itself, but the journey and the sojourn itself were the more pleasant because of the better season of the year. And in the Cardinal's house too there was the added warmth of pure friendship. I remember several details of the conversation round his table of a very friendly character, with plenty of chaff and fun between the meetings. The Frenchmen generally led the way in this, Portal with a rich but very quiet humour, Batiffol very sparkling and brilliant. I remember going out with Bishop Gore for a short walk before our morning meeting; as we got outside we found a Rogationtide procession on its way through the parish, so we joined in and followed for some time until it was time to get back to our gathering.

At *déjeuner* subsequently Batiffol said to the Cardinal, "Eminence, do you know that there were two Anglican Bishops following in the Rogationtide procession this morning?"

The Cardinal in his grave way said, "Then indeed we are coming nearer to unity."

"Yes," said Batiffol, "but does your Eminence know that they didn't follow the procession the whole way?"

"Ah?" said the Cardinal.

"No, they left just before the prayer for the Pope." This scandalous misstatement was drowned in roars of laughter; in fact we had left in the middle of the invocations of Virgin Martyrs.

But the serious business of the Conferences grew and deepened in the middle of the increasing friendliness and perhaps partly because of it. The topics that had been carefully prepared beforehand, thesis and antithesis, are shown pretty completely in Lord Halifax's book on Malines. But something must be added about the course of the discussion, and about one unexpected and surprising contribution to it.

THE FOURTH CONVERSATION

paper on the Relations of the Pope and the Bishops (see Annex No. 12). This long paper proved to be an able and comprehensive summary of an historical kind. The general praise and gratitude with which the Memorandum was greeted did not prevent a good deal of criticism from being offered. In the evening of the same day the Anglican representatives discussed among themselves the position that had been reached, with a view to producing some sort of memorandum to serve as a sort of review of what had taken place so far.

At the third session came the surprise of the gathering. The Cardinal himself opened the meeting.

A question which was put to him, at a venture, seemed to lead directly to the topic on which he wished to speak. The question was in essence, "Could not your outlook be enlarged sufficiently to take us in?" The Cardinal said that he was profoundly moved by this consideration. He had long since come to the conclusion that the Roman Church could not hope to absorb the Anglicans into its own Latin and Western church organization. At the same time it could not give up its own ways and tenets. Therefore some middle term seemed to be needed, if possible, which would bring an end

VI

THE FOURTH CONVERSATION

AT this fourth Conference the opening was made by the other side. Mgr. Van Roey read his paper on the Papacy viewed from the theological point of view. This was an excellently framed statement, scholastic and lucid, of the position as held officially in the most exacting form. It was not for us to make replies to this, only to ask questions designed to elucidate points where they were doubtful. Some similar questions were asked by some of the Roman Catholic representatives; and in consequence the writer reconsidered some of the statements that he had made, and produced a revised form of certain passages to meet the criticisms. Dr. Kidd's reply followed very closely upon the lines of the argument of Mgr. Van Roey. The discussion which took place was friendly as well as frank. The printed collection of the Malines documents gives the papers in full (Annexes 10 and 11), and a description of the morning session.

In the afternoon session Père Hemmer read his

to the separation of Anglicanism from Rome, whilst at the same time not absorbing it. He had therefore put the question to a Canonist, "Is it possible that the English Church could be re-united without being absorbed in the Roman Church?" and he had elicited from him a paper, which he submitted to us for our consideration. At the same time he said that on his side he would report upon this move to Rome, acting on his own private responsibility. He then read the Memorandum of the Canonist (which is Annex No. 13 in the Malines volume).

The document consists of an introduction, an historical consideration, a description of the existing Uniat plans, and finally an application of considerations of this sort to the case of England, before leading up to practical conclusions.

All this took our breath away, especially as it seemed to lead up to a proposal for a Canterbury patriarchate.

Without then having the document before us, it was not easy, or even suitable, to deal with matters of so great importance without previous consideration. A short discussion therefore followed which is fairly fully described in the printed Minutes of the meeting.

Thereupon there followed naturally and suit-

ably the paper of Bishop Gore, which put briefly and very temperately the question, "How far there could be room found for differences of opinion on minor points, provided that there was agreement on the major and vital points?" This paper has not been printed hitherto; it should appear with the others between Annex 13 and Annex 14; but it is not included in the volume. It displayed great qualities, as might be made out from the reply made by Mgr. Batiffol, which is printed as Annex 14; and still more from the paper itself which is now printed, as Addendum VII, herewith. The discussion waxed hot at times without ceasing to be quite friendly, and in fact it carried us beyond the time for adjournment. So after a couple of hours interval we returned to the fourth session, when Mgr. Batiffol continued his paper. The warm discussion was not taken up again. Bishop Gore as protagonist (and others as well) felt that he had said at last, with an explicitness which would have been previously impossible, what he felt bound to say. Indeed this friendly duel had brought out in the form of question and answer a part of the most crucial topic which, from the first, it had been most necessary to elucidate. The rest of the Anglicans had drawn up a schedule of positive statements

with regard to the Relation of the Pope to the Bishops (Annex No. 15), which had been hampered out with some difficulty after considering a number of different propositions brought up among our representatives.

After the Canonist's statement had been digested, the next business planned was to attempt to draw up some corresponding schedule about the Pope and the Bishops on the negative side, indicating the criticisms and apprehensions which would have to be taken into account. But, after discussion, it was thought wisest to leave out all this negative side of the question, and to state merely what we could say on the positive side, thus leaving over for the present any attempt to formulate the differences or disagreements that had emerged in the course of the discussion, unless we were pressed to do so. Obviously it was more advisable, as the Cardinal urged, to emphasize at this stage our points of agreement, than to magnify those differences, which now had been clearly stated, but had not been finally argued out in the course of the Conversations.

In the evening the Minutes were submitted, carefully scrutinized and finally adopted. So ended the fifth session of the Fourth Conference.

THE FINAL CONVERSATIONS

THIS meeting proved to be the last of the set of Conversations held under the presidency of the Cardinal. It was hoped by us all that there would be a speedy resumption of the conferences, either for taking up some subjects afresh, or, at any rate, with the object of bringing out some Report for publication, which would summarize what had been done. Much correspondence ensued on all sides, as well as a considerable amount of conference between the English representatives. All was arranged ultimately for a resumption of the Conversations on January 25, 1926; but, with the New Year, came the news of the Cardinal's illness; and the meeting was necessarily postponed.

Then came, as all will know, the touching end of the Cardinal. This has been described by Lord Halifax himself,¹ writing with special insight and intimacy in regard to their own in-

¹ See his *Catholic Revivion, a paper . . . with an account of the last days of Cardinal Mercier. . . .* Mowbray, 1926.

timate relations. The closing scenes have been related also in the Press and in biography with reference to their more public aspect. In all this I had no part; nor was I able to go over to Belgium for the funeral with Lord Halifax and Dr. Kidd.

In the end it was not till October 11, 1926, that we Conferrers took again the road to Malines. Our members were reduced, Mgr. Van Roey, who had now become Archbishop, and was soon to be Cardinal, presided in place of Cardinal Mercier; MM. Batiffol and Hemmer both were there: three on their side; and similarly three on our side: Halifax the indefatigable, Dr. Kidd, who had taken a prominent part latterly in all the correspondence as well as in the conferences, and myself. It was an added grief and loss that Portal's place was vacant as well as the Cardinal's. On our side we were without the Dean of Wells and Bishop Gore. It was obvious that what it was possible to do at this gathering would not be the taking up of any new line, or the making of any fresh attempt or further development; but it was hoped that progress on the lines of the Conversations would be continued later on. What was feasible at the moment was the plan, that had already been formulated, of producing a publication designed to serve as an

Interim Report of what had been done so far.

The Dean had drafted a description on our behalf. Père Hemmer had made a more general account, which he meant to serve for both sides.

It was thought better, however, to have two summaries, one from each point of view. Some modification was made in each of the accounts in order to meet the suggestions offered by the other party in scanning the drafts.

This close and careful work occupied two days; and there was further an agreement reached about questions of publication and the like.

The result was the issue of the pamphlet called *The Conversations at Malines*.¹

The first half of the pamphlet contains the Anglican account of the Conversations presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury in July, 1927; the second half contains three Appendixes—I, a list of documents, II, the Convocation speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury, February 6, 1924, and, III, a very characteristic Letter of the Cardinal to the Archbishop, October 25, 1925, sketching out the programme for the next stage of conference which it was then expected to hold in the ensuing January.

¹ Oxford University Press, July, 1927, in English and French: reprinted in English only, 1930.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MALINES

After presentation to the Archbishop the publication of the Official Report thus prepared was, however, delayed on various grounds of a practical kind. Lord Halifax, still indefatigable, in spite of his advanced years visited both Rome and Malines to forward the cause to which he had so long devoted himself: and ill tolerating the delays, he published in 1928 some *Notes on the Conversations at Malines* (Mowbray, January 6, 1928), and subsequently in 1930 the set of confidential documents concerning the Conversations to which, with the annexes, frequent reference has been made here.

It was still hoped that the Conversations would continue; and this hope was encouraged by the appointment of Mgr. Van Roey to succeed the Cardinal as Archbishop of Malines, as well as by his having so graciously presided over the Fifth Gathering. But this was not to be. Owing apparently to various causes, the policy of Rome altered; and what had once been encouraged was now to be discouraged. The day has not come for the door to open again either at Malines or elsewhere. Nevertheless, the necessity and the demand for a reorganization of the Christian Front grows steadily. *E par si muove.*

APPENDIX

ADDENDUM I

OUTLINE OF POINTS

(See P. 19.)

The starting-point is the Lambeth Appeal.

The present objective is to make out a preliminary case for the holding of conferences between Roman Catholics and Anglicans, with some real, though at first informal, encouragement from the highest authorities on both sides.

Detailed discussion about points of difference had better be deferred to later conferences: but some must take place now, in order to pave the way for them.

1. The Lambeth Appeal opens a new chapter: its opportunity is great. See the trend towards unity prevalent in civil as well as ecclesiastical world.

Two features—one general and one special.