

daily. If we depend upon the Holy Spirit daily, we shall daily get closer to God and nearer to heaven.

In my next letter I shall tell you what a witness is.

Girls and boys, if there are any questions you would like to ask, or if there are any stories you would like to have, please do write and tell me. I want this to be your corner, and I should like to hear some of your ideas about it.

Your friend,

D. M. BEATTIE.

MARRIAGE PROBLEMS.

(From the Archbishop's Address.)

Many Church people who are puzzled by the moral and ethical questions which confront them at the present day naturally look to this Synod, as representing the voice of the Church, for some guidance or authoritative statement. I have sometimes wondered whether the General Synod, the Parliament of the Church, is quite fulfilling all that it might fulfil in connection with the many difficult social and moral questions which confront the community generally and the rank and file of Church people particularly at the present time. Our triennial meeting of Synod is so absorbed with improving the machinery of the Church and with much necessary and important routine business that little time can be spared for the consideration of questions which are vitally important to the welfare of the community and which touch the consciences of earnest Christians very deeply. If the Church is to furnish guidance to the consciences of men and women, and if the community looks to the Church for a considered judgment upon such matters—are we really attempting to face our responsibility? Congresses, conferences and pastorals emanating from the Bench of Bishops cannot speak with the same authority as can this General Synod. The pronouncements of Diocesan Bishops and Diocesan Synods make some attempt to deal with social and ethical problems, but what could be more important than the authoritative voice of the Church as expressed in this Synod on questions which concern the conscience of the people? It is just because the General Synod is not a conference that it can and also

does speak with authority to members of the Church.

Another question closely allied with the foregoing is that of publicity. The decisions of the Synod are, of course, recorded in the Proceedings of the Synod and to some extent in the daily Press and the Diocesan Magazines, but are these latter means of publicity regarded as official declarations for the guidance of the members of the Church? Take, for example, the Synod's pronouncements upon the important questions concerning marriage and divorce. Judging by the experience of every Bishop and Parish Priest, it would seem as if the Church's pronouncements upon these questions were absolutely unknown to the great majority of our people. Even with regard to important matters which come under quite a different category, how many of our Church people are acquainted with the valuable introduction to the report on the history and boundaries of the several Diocese included in the Province which is recorded in the Proceedings of the last General Synod? It is quite true that the whole report can be obtained for the sum of one shilling, but so far no applications for this important document have been received. Is it quite impossible for the General Synod to print and broadcast free of charge some of its more important pronouncements—important, I mean, so far as the education of Church people generally is concerned?

Previous Pronouncements on Marriage.

Many of our Church people seem to be hopelessly confused owing to the fact that Ecclesiastical law and civil law on the question of divorce and re-marriage express different and divergent points of view—and whereas the sanctions of the civil law are fairly generally known, how many people are acquainted with the real reason for the Church's attitude to divorce and re-marriage and the principles on which that attitude is based?

The Encyclical Letter of the Bishops at the 1930 Lambeth Conference says truly: "What many Church people need to recognise is that Christ's Community has been commissioned to set a standard of life which is not that of this world. Too often has the standard of Christians

been assimilated to that of the surrounding society or of the spirit of the age?"

In 1899 the Bishops of the Province issued the following "Declaration on Divorce and Re-Marriage":—"We, Bishop of the Church of the Province of New Zealand, commonly called the Church of England, being assembled in conference, and having regard to recent legislation on divorce, and to the uncertainty which prevails in the minds of men touching the law of the Church in this Province as it concerns the re-marriage of divorced persons, do hereby declare:

- (1) That the Church of this Province received its Constitution on the 13th day of June, 1857.
- (2) That the rule which prevailed at that time in the Church of England became the rule of the Province, and must continue to be so until such time as it shall be altered by Act of the General Synod.

We wish it to be known that the re-marriage of a divorced persons, during the lifetime of the other party is therefore contrary to the law of the Church of this Province, and that no Bishop or Priest of the Church is at liberty to celebrate such a marriage."

I am not aware that the Synod has ever definitely confirmed that Declaration by the Bishops. I would that it had done so.

Lambeth, 1920.

The Lambeth Conference, 1920, resolved that: "The Conference affirms as our Lord's principle and standard of marriage a lifelong and indissoluble union for better for worse, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others or either side, and calls on all Christian people to maintain and bear witness to this standard. Nevertheless, the Conference admits the right of a national or regional Church within our Communion to deal with cases which fall within the exception mentioned in the record of our Lord's words in St. Matthew's Gospel, **under provisions which such Church may lay down.**"

General Synod, 1922.

The General Synod of 1922 associated itself with the first part of the Lambeth pronouncement and respectfully requested the Primate to