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THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1923

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Revision Issues. ONE of the drawbacks to a quarterly publication is that in some instances its notes and comments on certain events are apt to appear out-of-date. We fear that this will seem so in regard to the observations we feel bound to make upon the recent discussions in the representative councils of the Church on Prayer Book Revision. But there is really no help for it; the question is far too important to be passed over. Moreover, those discussions were but the prelude to others of a still more important character to take place in November next; and if we are intelligently to appreciate the full significance of the coming debates, we must have a clear grasp of what has preceded them. We venture once again to emphasize what we have so frequently referred to in these pages, viz. the momentous issues which are involved in the proposals for Revision. The greatest of these issues—the one, indeed, which overshadows all others—is whether the Church of England is to retain its present Protestant and Reformed character or whether, in concession to clamour, room is to be found in the Church of England for the teaching of doctrines and the use of practices which were quite deliberately abandoned at the Reformation. The revival of mediævalism, by whatever name it may be called or under whatever pretence it may be urged, means, in practice and effect, the undoing of the work of the Reformation, and when once iconoclastic hands are laid upon that Settlement it is not difficult to see that—unless the attack is promptly stayed—it will be the beginning of the end of the Church of England as a Protestant and Reformed Church. We are convinced that the English people as a whole have not the least desire for a resuscitation of mediævalism and that they will not allow the de-Protestantizing of the English Church.

But if the danger—at present so very urgent and
Holding the so very real—is to be averted it will require the efforts
Fort. and prayers of a compact and united body of loyal
 Churchpeople and in particular of those who hold firmly to the
 Protestant and Evangelical interpretation of the present standards
 of the Church of England. If ever there was a time when Evan-
 gelicals should hold together and pull together it is now, for only
 so can the traditional position of the Church of England be pre-
 served. And yet, obvious as this truth seems to be, there are,
 strange to say, some amongst us who seem to be uncertain of their
 own position, and still more uncertain of the extent to which it
 may be possible for them to yield to the claims put forward by
 those who make no secret of the fact that they desire to go behind
 the Reformation. The proposed changes—so it is speciously
 argued—do not affect the whole Church; they will be forced upon
 no one; they will be included in an alternative book; and will
 only affect those who desire to use that book. How then, it is
 asked, can you be so intolerant and uncharitable as to deny to
 those who wish it a form of service different from that which obtains
 to-day? The answer to such a question is as clear as it is simple.
 The changes proposed in the alternative book indicate a change
 in the doctrinal position of the Church; and if they are adopted
 will give legal sanction to doctrines and practices which are at
 present illegal in the Church of England. It is perfectly true, of
 course, that those strange doctrines and still stranger practices
 are taught and used in a large number of churches to-day, but
 they have no legal status; they have crept in little by little, and
 our episcopal rulers who ought to be the very first to drive away
 strange doctrines, have not rebuked those responsible, with the
 result that members of the Anglo-Catholic party to-day boldly
 claim that they are the true interpreters of the doctrine of the
 Church of England! But their distinctive doctrines and prac-
 tices have no rightful place in the Church of England; and it is
 because of this fact that proposals are made for changes in the
 conduct of Divine Service which will have the effect of giving the
 Anglo-Catholic movement a legalized place in the Church of Eng-
 land. That is the real issue at stake, and not for three hundred
 years or more has the Church had to face a more momentous crisis.
 It is clear, then, that much—very much—depends upon the results

of the debates in the several Houses of the Church Assembly in November next, and it is in no formal or conventional sense that we commend this matter to the earnest prayers of our readers. The Evangelical and Protestant members of those bodies have a very arduous and a very difficult task to perform, and that they may be able to do their duty faithfully and fearlessly they should be upheld by the prayers of the faithful that strength, wisdom and grace may be vouchsafed to them from above.

Let us now review the position and see where we stand. As far as is known the House of Bishops has done no more at present than give "general approval" to N.A. 84, i.e. the Measure embodying the detailed proposals of the Church Assembly's Committee for the Alternative Book. The Bishops, it is assumed, will not begin their work of revision until they have before them the results of the revision of the Measure by the House of Clergy and the House of Laity respectively. In July last these Houses, sitting separately, devoted a week to the work of revision. The House of Clergy did not get very far; the House of Laity made much more rapid progress; but in neither House has the Service of Holy Communion yet come up for consideration, and it is in and around that Service, of course, that the real issue centres. Hence the importance of the forthcoming discussions. It is neither possible nor desirable to review in detail the July discussions, but a few points may be noted. First it should be observed that in both Houses determined attempts were made to secure recognition for "the Green Book," that is to say the volume that contains the scheme of revision proposed by the English Church Union as representing the Anglo-Catholic party; and for "the Grey Book" prepared by an anonymous Committee of clergy of various schools of thought, with a commendatory Foreword by the Bishop of Manchester—a less objectionable volume than the E.C.U. production, but very far from acceptable, in some at least of its doctrinal statements, to Evangelical Churchpeople. But in the main the attempt failed. In the House of Clergy and in the House of Laity motions stood upon the Agenda paper proposing in effect that "the Green Book" should form a Second Schedule of the Measure—in other words that it should become a second Alternative Book. But in both

cases the motion was ruled out of order, although in the House of Laity Lord Parmour did eventually allow a discussion on the question. But the House was decisively against the plan and promptly rejected it. This welcome decision was brought about by hostility to the proposals themselves quite as much as, if not even more than, by opposition to the idea of a Second Alternative Book, which undoubtedly was very strong. No such proposition as the adoption *en bloc* of "the Grey Book" was made, but in the House of Laity more than one attempt was made to incorporate by way of amendment some of its proposals into the new book, only, however, to be very substantially defeated. Further efforts will undoubtedly be made in the same direction when the Communion Office is reached, and the position will have to be watched with the greatest care, for, in the House of Clergy at any rate, "the Grey Book" has many friends. In like manner, when the time comes, the Anglo-Catholics in both Houses will bring forward the proposals of "the Green Book" as amendments to the official scheme. We have not much fear about the result of these movements in the House of Laity, where the determination to uphold the Reformation Settlement is fairly strong; but we feel less confident about the House of Clergy.

The House of Clergy consists of the Lower Houses of the two Convocations—bodies which for many long years past have been notorious for *finesse* in discussion, and it was not to be expected, therefore, that its progress would be very rapid. But we must acknowledge with becoming gratitude that the House by a vote of 106 to 71 passed the clause to be inserted at the end of the Preface "Concerning the Service of the Church," giving the laity the right to be consulted by the Minister before he makes any drastic change in the services. This is a distinct gain. Less satisfactory was the result of the proposal to divide the Measure into two parts, so that the Communion Office could be dealt with separately. It was brought forward by Canon Grose Hodge and supported by other Evangelical leaders. But the House took the not very heroic course of passing, by 156 to 70, to the next business. Much time was spent over Morning and Evening Prayer, and "the Grey book" party succeeded in carrying some small amendments. The House approved in principle an Order of

“ Prime,” and added a new rubric about the Athanasian Creed. Up till the Wednesday evening, the discussions, it must be confessed, were fearfully dull, but on Thursday interest was quickened by Canon Grose Hodge’s proposal to add a new sub-section to the Order of Evening Prayer, that “ when the Holy Communion is immediately to follow it shall be permissible for the Minister to end Evening Prayer with the Canticles after the Second Lesson,” etc. This proposal raised as a definite issue the question of Evening Communion and there was quite a flutter among Anglo-Catholic members. Dr. Frere, however, supported the proposal, saying that, while he hesitated to use the word approve in connection with Evening Communion, he asked them to give it rubrical sanction. But others of his School were less conciliatory, and in the end all that the House could be persuaded to do was to adopt words which said that where “ another service ” provided in the book follows “ it shall be permissible,” etc. The House of Laity, as we shall see, did much better, but then members of that House are in immeasurably closer touch with modern needs and the realities of life than are those of the House of Clergy. A motion to delete a Prayer for the Dead contained in the Schedule was lost, after the Prolocutor had made a powerful plea for its retention. The Calendar seemed gravely to bother the House and in the end it was postponed. The House afterwards adjourned, having very little to show for its five days’ deliberations. The absence of the Dean of Canterbury, in consequence of a serious accident, was very deeply regretted, and the House passed a resolution of sympathy with him. We are glad to know that the Dean has now recovered and hopes to be able to take part in the debates in November next—a hope in which every friend of Evangelical truth will join most earnestly.

The House of Laity also gave five days to the Revision stage of the Measure, and handled it so effectively that, except for one or two questions which were specially deferred and the Holy Communion Office, it practically finished its work. “ The Green book ” was the subject of two interesting debates, but in the end the House rejected it by 150 to 74. During the discussions it was made clear by Lord Phillimore and other representatives of the Anglo-Catholic School that if they were granted “ the Green book ” as an alternative, practically all,

except a few cranks, would come into line ; or, in other words, if they are allowed their own way they will be amenable, but if not—well, the alternative was not stated, but it appeared to be certain that the Anglo-Catholics will not accept N.A. 84 and a pretty position will be created. The House accepted the new sub-section relating to the lay voice in regard to changes in the services ; and agreed to an amendment which provided that instead of deleting verses, when a Psalm was found unsuitable, a suitable Psalm should be substituted. In regard to the Calendar, the House agreed to add the names of Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, Cosin, Butler, Andrewes, Henry Martyn, and others, but by the casting vote of the Chairman refused to add “ The Falling Asleep of the B.V.M.” The proposal to include “ The Commemoration of the Holy Sacrament on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday ” was also lost. The House by 109 to 77 gave recognition to Evening Communion by adopting the proposal that when the Order of Holy Communion follows Evening Prayer it shall be permissible for the Minister to end Evening Prayer with the Canticles after the Second Lesson, and it will be observed with satisfaction that the House of Laity dealt fairly and squarely with the question, whereas the House of Clergy was most ungenerous. These were great gains from the Evangelical point of view ; yet, strangely enough, on the following day, the House, by 104 to 60, accepted “ the Green book ” proposals for the use of “ the holy Chrism ” and other symbols at baptism, but this was practically the only occasion when the E.C.U. secured a triumph, and even then it was due to a generous, if mistaken, appeal from the Evangelical side. For the rest, whilst the discussions were animated, interesting and useful, they do not call for special notice, except to say that “ the Grey book ” Service for Holy Baptism, after a debate in which many of the leading laity showed that they were well instructed in doctrinal questions, was rejected by a large majority. The Burial Service in “ the Grey book ” was also rejected. Reviewing the proceedings as a whole, it must be said that for doctrinal soundness, and for the thoroughness of its grasp of the points at issue, the debates in the House of Laity were vastly superior to those in the House of Clergy, and it is this fact which inspires us with hope that when the Communion Service is under revision in November next the House of Laity may so uphold the existing Order that it will save the Church from the disaster which threatens it.

The increase in these "coloured books" is becoming somewhat confusing, but "the Orange book" does

not profess to contain a new scheme of revision, but sets out to co-ordinate the official proposals, "the Green book" proposals, and also those of "the Grey book." Viewed as a piece of literary work it is possible to admire the skill with which it is compiled, but viewed as a contribution to the solution of the Revision problem it is open to serious objection, for the reason that it has virtually combined "the Green book" and "the Grey book" services, with the result that what, from our point of view, are the faults of both, are sought to be perpetuated. Therein lies the danger: if "Green" and "Grey" join forces, as their proposals are joined in this book, it will be a sorry look out for the Church of England. In the face of this danger we are glad to know that several clergy, more especially in the North of England, are exploring the possibilities of championing, more fully than has yet been done, the cause of the Communion Service as it is in our present book. We believe that in Prayer-Book Revision the way of safety is to leave the Communion Service absolutely untouched; let "the Green book" and "the Grey book" both be scrapped; let the official proposals be withdrawn, and let all loyal Churchmen unite in support of our present Communion Service, without alteration or addition or any such thing.

**Assembly
Activities.**

Although the Church Assembly meets only three times a year, its activities, by means of its Committees, are continuous all the year through. At the last session two very important Committees were appointed whose reports may have very important effects upon the future of the Church of England. The appointment of committees to consider the Reform of Church Courts is a very sharp reminder of the appalling condition of indiscipline into which the Church of England has been allowed to drift. We do not desire to apportion the blame for this lamentable state of things; it is enough to note the fact. If the Courts of the Church are unsatisfactory either in their constitution or in their procedure, by all means let them be reformed in any matter where reform is shown to be needed. But it is important that too much attention should not be paid to the clamour of those who do not hesitate to declare that the only authority they

will recognize is the authority of the whole Catholic Church—whatever that may mean. Moreover, the rights of the laity must be faithfully conserved, and, above all, the right of final appeal to the King in Council must be adequately safeguarded. The other Committee appointed by the Assembly is to consider the appointment of Bishops. The present method of appointment may be open to objection on theoretical grounds, but in practice it works well, and certain it is that no other system has yet been devised which would work out better. The reforming zeal of some of the younger politicians who figure largely in the Assembly needs to be tempered with the wisdom and discretion of men of riper experience ; it is really necessary that the Church should be on its guard against the hustling methods of young men in a hurry, or grave disaster may overtake us. Evangelicals have little to gain from some of the “ reforms ” which are being so persistently pressed.

Losses. It is not our rule in these pages to refer to personal questions, but we cannot refrain from placing our garland of affectionate regret upon the respective tombs of the two good and great men who have lately been taken from us. Dr. Watts-Ditchfield, first Bishop of Chelmsford, was a very remarkable man, with a wide outlook upon life both in the Church and in the State. He was, all his life through, a convinced and attached Evangelical Churchman, loyal-hearted, courageous, fearless and true, and although it was not always easy to appreciate the wisdom of some aspects of his episcopal policy, every one recognized that it was dictated by the one desire to promote the glory of God and the good of the Church. Those who knew him most intimately know well that he was a man of intense spirituality of mind and heart, and his death at the comparatively early age of sixty-one is a grievous loss to the Church, indeed a High Church Bishop of distinction remarked to a friend of the writer that there was no bishop on the bench who would be more greatly missed. Prebendary Webb-Peploe, honoured and beloved by Evangelicals everywhere, has also been called home at the age of eighty-five years, after a life of unstinted devotion to the service of God and man. His long ministry at St. Paul's, Onslow Square, will not soon be forgotten, and for the many years of work and advocacy he gave to the National Church League its members are profoundly grateful. “ God buries

His workmen and carries on His work." May He raise up many such loyal and faithful men as those whose loss we deplore, but for whose ministry we humbly and devoutly give thanks.

Many have desired to possess a clear, succinct and "Ministerial Commission," scholarly statement of the teaching of Holy Scripture and the Church of England on "Ministerial Commission." The material for such a statement is known to all who have followed the Reunion Movement, but we know of no handbook on the subject that gives accurately, comprehensively and in historical perspective the development of the doctrine of the ministry from the earliest times to the present day. For Churchmen the subject is one of primary importance. The barrier between them and orthodox Free Churchmen is built on the character ascribed to the "Commission of Christ" by the protagonists of the Anglo-Catholic movement. In Principal Lindsay's great work on the Reformation, he sees the essential difference between the Roman and the Reformed Churches in their opposing conceptions of the Ministry, and all Conferences on Reunion are brought sooner or later face to face with the conflict of ideals and the consequent disunion in Church life due to the persistence of the sacerdotal and pastoral conceptions of the Ministry of Grace. The Rev. C. Sydney Carter has just published through Messrs. Longmans a half-crown volume *Ministerial Commission* that will be equally valued by scholars and devout Christians for its lucid exposition of Holy Scripture and Primitive Church History on the development of the Ministry and the clear proofs it gives of the unhistoricity of Roman and Anglo-Catholic doctrine on the subject. Its review of the relations of our Church with the Non-Episcopal Churches after the Reformation is especially valuable. His evidence is logically arranged and its cumulative force is convincing. We know of no book that covers the ground with equal concentration on the main points at issue and the documents are quoted fairly—a great matter in a treatise on so controversial a subject. It is the work of an historical student who has given us in an excellent form precisely those facts we wish to know. In the past we had to glean them for ourselves from many sources. The new Bishop of Chelmsford warmly commends the book, and says that in his opinion the conclusions reached are "broadly speaking justified."

The sympathy of the whole nation has gone out to the people of Japan in the disaster which has overtaken them, and it needs no words of ours to commend to the generosity of our readers the Lord Mayor's Fund and every other effort being made to relieve the distress. Happily, the missionaries are safe, but the loss in property is considerable, and C.M.S. has opened a fund to meet the need. The Society had an interesting work in Tokyo, the following account of which is taken from the Annual Report (1921-2) :—

“Of the four Churches in Tokyo connected with the C.M.S., three made advance in 1921 with respect to self-support, while the fourth, St. Paul's Church, has for some years met all its expenses. St. Saviour's Church, at Fukagawa, a poor suburb of the city with a population of 100,000, resolved during the year to take no more money from the Mission; in this district a free dispensary brought relief to many sufferers and opened a number of homes to visits from the Bible women, and the baptisms were more numerous than in any previous year. Emmanuel Church, too, gave notice that it would require no further financial help; work among young people in its neighbourhood was specially encouraging, and several young men who attended a class for university students expressed their desire to embrace Christianity. Zion Church, which has a lay pastor, while unable entirely to meet his salary, increased its contributions materially. Seven young men were baptized who had been brought to a decision and taught at the Whidborne Hall, where during the last twenty-five years about 20,000 people have signified their wish to take Christ as their Saviour. Towards the end of the year there was some revival at Choshi, where the congregation has declined of late years. The Work among Chinese Students was interfered with by the unsettlement caused by the decision of the Chinese Government no longer to provide scholarships for students in Japan, as it had done for fourteen years. A church committee was formed, which, with the pastor, took full charge of the Church and its work, but it is still aided by money grants. The Rev. W. H. Elwin speaks of the year as having been marked by conviction of sin among the men, and mentions one student who was led to repentance by the life of his brother, a member of the church committee. The hostel for girl students was full, with sixteen inmates, but efforts to win them were rather disappointing.”