THE CHURCHMAN

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The Month.

The Athanasian Creed.

THE recent Proctorial Elections to the new Convocations have turned very largely on the subject of Prayer-Book revision, with special reference to the Athanasian Creed. We are particularly glad to observe that the London Diocese has elected two Proctors who are in favour of a policy of liberty and progress in the form of wise and careful revision, particularly in regard to the use of the Athanasian Creed. There are many indications throughout the country that this issue has been the dominant one almost everywhere, and in not a few places the successful one also. We are convinced that those who plead for a modification of the present rubric before the Creed represent not only the vast majority of Churchmen, but all that is truest and most enlightened in the Church. The way in which the extreme Anglicans are opposing this change is deplorable, and when one of their representative men can write to the *Spectator* and say that the agitation is "in the interests of those who do not believe," we realize at once that this is the very recklessness of narrow and bitter controversy. Imagine the Bishops of Oxford and Chester, and Canon Johnston of Cuddesdon, to name no others, working "in the interests of those who do not believe"! If it were for a moment to be supposed that the extreme party were the true representatives of the Church, it would be ominous for the best interests of our communion. But it is not so, and we can rightly go on pleading and working for some relaxation of the rubric

which, while conserving the time-honoured document and its doctrine, will not require its popular use as a Creed, when the use is liable to such grave misconception.

Prayer-book Revision.

The new Convocations will soon be faced with the subject of Prayer-Book revision, and especially with the proposals of the Canterbury Convocation which have been before the Church for several months. On the general question we are in hearty sympathy with those who plead that the time has more than arrived for some changes to be made in the direction of greater elasticity and variety. It is surely impossible to go on as we are with any regard for the best interests of the Church, while using a book which, however, precious, was intended primarily for conditions of life 250 years ago. Here, again, the extreme Anglican party is opposed to all change, and says that it is content with things as they are, though it is not so very long ago that leading men of that section pleaded urgently for the alternative use of the Prayer-Book of 1549. The fear is lest any other Churchmen may be led to unite with the extremists. Canon Cowley-Brown, in an admirable letter to the *Spectator*, puts this with great force :

"The danger is that these extremists may work upon the fears of the more timid among what is called the Evangelical Party, and induce them to join in an unholy alliance. Those who, on whatever grounds, are for keeping things as they are, might remind themselves of Mr. Gladstone's reply when he was charged with wielding his axe too freely in the woods at Hawarden. 'In forestry,' he said, 'judicious thinning is true conservatism.' What is true in forestry is true also in Church government and theology. There is no doubt that numbers of the more thoughtful laity have been alienated from the Church by the conduct of extremists like those who are objecting to any revision. And more will be alienated by this *non possumus* attitude of those who, for one reason or another, resist all change."

Of course, the advocacy of revision does not in any way mean that the present proposals are to be accepted *en bloc*. Evangelical Churchmen will certainly oppose with all their power the legalization of the Vestments and the suggested change in the Ordinal. But these apart, there are many of the proposals which are quite admirable and deserve all possible

attention, and if we cannot obtain sanction for these, or something similar, the outlook for our Church is as serious as it is sad.

The Problem of Unity.

It seems impossible for anyone to keep away very long from the great question of Christian reunion. Canon Wilson, in his fine sermon at Cambridge last month, gave renewed expression to what many are thinking, and his treatment of the subject was in every way worthy of the preacher and of the place in which he spoke. After reviewing the situation, and dealing with several great principles, Canon Wilson said:

"Finally, we need a deep and earnest study of our Lord's mind and will, so far as it can be gathered from His recorded words and deeds, and from the impression that He left on the Apostles and the first generation of the Church. This must be to all Christians the ultimate standard of reference—the mind of Christ. To me it seems summed up in the phrase: 'Forbid them not.' We may think the doctrinal systems of some of our brethren less perfect than our own, and think their security for continuity in the Faith less than ours; but if we faintly realize the vast gulf that divides an imperfect Christianity from entire disbelief, with which the Church of the twentieth, no less than the Church of the first, century is surrounded, we cannot, I think, help acknowledging non-episcopalians as brothers and allies in the great battle, and welcome them, as they would welcome us, to the one Divinely-appointed sacrament of unity."

If the problem were only faced in this spirit, it would not long be regarded, as it is now by so many, as an insoluble one.

Episcopacy and Unity.

There is no doubt that at the basis of the problem of reunion lies the question of episcopacy, and until this is fully realized no genuine progress will be made. Our contemporary, the *New York Churchman*, has recently called attention to the fact that by reason of certain claims made for episcopacy, which are by no means part of the true idea, the episcopate is often "a stumbling-block to the unity it was created to conserve." In support of this the writer remarks:

"More than three-fourths of the Christian world believes in Episcopacy, and rightly insists upon it as a part of the historic ministry. But has it

proved a unifying power in those Churches that accept it and insist upon it? No more seemingly hopeless divisions exist than those that separate the Roman, Eastern, and Anglican Churches. Yet all have the Episcopate; all have the three orders of the ministry. Their divisions are high and deep, just because each claims an exclusive and excluding principle based on human definitions which give this part of the Church's order authority not only over the rest of the Church's order, but over the Church itself."

As long, therefore, as these purely human claims are made, all ideas of Christian unity are impossible. The fatal mistake lies in regarding the ministry rather than the Church as the supreme factor and condition of unity. It is the Church as the whole body of Christians and not the ministry within it that must really settle this question, and any attempt to exalt the ministry above the community will only end in emphasizing our divisions still more acutely. The Church existed before the ministry, and to place the ministry above the Church as a whole is the very worst service that can be rendered to the cause of truth and peace. Until this is realized all plans of unity are perfectly vain.

A Testimony to Union.

During the January Week of Prayer appointed by the Evangelical Alliance, the Rev. A. P. Cox, Vicar of Christ Church, Cheltenham, suggested that an occasion might be arranged for the coming together of Christians of various denominations by organizing an Annual United Missionary Meeting, when two missionaries from the Church of England, and two from the Evangelical Free Churches should speak from the same platform in the largest hall of the town. The suggestion was received with the greatest possible heartiness on the part of the audience, and the Chairman, a leading Nonconformist minister, assured the meeting of the hearty co-operation of those whom he represented. This seems to us a fine opportunity for carrying out the true spirit of the suggestions of the Lambeth Conference. There is already not a little comity in the mission field. The World Missionary Conference is soon to meet in Edinburgh. And there is not a little united missionary work done in con-

nection with the Bible Society and the Religious Tract Society. There is therefore no valid reason why those who unite on all these occasions should not also unite in the way now suggested and bear testimony to the essential oneness of the Church in all Evangelical missionary enterprise. At any rate, we commend Mr. Cox's admirable suggestion to our readers in various parts of the country. Even if no practical result accrues it is well that such a proposal should have been made. It indicates the true spirit, and if the idea were carried out it would do much amid present strain and stress to bring together the people of God.

Bishop Dowden.

The death of the Bishop of Edinburgh is a very great loss to the whole Church. His profound knowledge and practical use of it were the heritage of us all, and his writings will long abide for our guidance and profit. It is worth while recalling one fact in his notable career. In 1900 the English Church Union issued a Declaration on the subject of the Holy Communion, and had the temerity to quote Ridley as well as a number of Caroline Divines in support of its peculiar views. This was too much for the Bishop of Edinburgh, and in his remarkable series of letters to the *Guardian* he showed that he had no mercy for men who tried to support their position by an unfair use of quotations. Subsequently, in his address to his Diocesan Synod, afterwards published under the title of "Define your Terms," he gave a number of counsels to his clergy in the study of the Eucharistic controversy, and made the following allusion to the English Church Union Declaration:

"My experience has made me familiar with the fact that there are ecclesiastics (and some of them in high station) who talk of the doctrine of the Church as taught by the Fathers, but who labour under the decided disadvantage of not being competent to construe ten consecutive lines of those Fathers whose authority they profess to esteem so highly. It was sought, in notes appended to the Declaration, to support its language by a series of quotations from the Fathers, and also from Anglican writers—and some of them were really eminent, and others wholly insignificant and obscure. It was indiscreet, to say the least, to attempt to claim, in support of the

Declaration, such well-known and easily accessible writings as those of Bishop Andrewes, Bishop Jeremy Taylor, Bishop Bull, Bishop Thomas Wilson, and Bishop Horsley. It was only the very ignorant and ill-read among the clergy and laity—forming, it is to be feared, a sufficiently numerous class—who could be long deceived by such scraps, torn from their context, and perverted from their original purport."

These words carry their own plain and significant message. Bishop Dowden's works on the Prayer-Book are also a mine of wealth to students, and some of the papers in his later book "Further Studies in the Prayer Book," are especially illuminating and informing. Nothing could be clearer or more satisfying than his treatment of the Athanasian Creed, and his discussion of such points as "Alms and Oblations," "Into their Hands," and the Prayer of Humble Access. We shall treasure his books and other writings as among our most valuable guides to truth on the subjects of which they treat. Would that our Church had more men of his massive scholarship and balanced judgment!

Gambling. Wherein lies the sin of gambling? Mr. Arthur C. Benson, in an interesting article in the *Church Family Newspaper*, criticized the utterance of a preacher on this subject, who said that one of the reasons against betting is that it is not honest to take money that has not been earned. Mr. Benson does not think this plea can be sustained for an instant, since it would do away with the possibility of accepting gifts, or legacies, or the increment of investments, to say nothing of life assurance. He urges that if a man who can afford it bets, and does not bet beyond his means, on the ground that it amuses him, it is very difficult to say where the moral guilt comes in. Nor will Mr. Benson admit the truth of the preacher's remark that all gambling vitiated and weakened the moral fibre, for "many worthy men have been known to play cards for small sums during the greater part of their lives without showing any traces of moral deterioration." Mr. Benson thinks that there is one perfectly real argument against the practice, and this is the enormous waste involved. But the one

strong and absolute argument, in his judgment, against the whole thing is that betting and gambling are undoubtedly responsible for a great amount of wretchedness and privation, and even of crime. Under these circumstances it is a practice which "all sensible and conscientious people should set their faces against and give no encouragement to, lest they cause their brethren to offend." We all know that it is particularly difficult to fix precisely the moral guilt of gambling in itself, though, as Mr. Benson rightly says, there is no doubt whatever about the terrible results of betting and gambling in many instances. From all this it would seem clear that the only adequate safeguard is to observe the principle, "Resist beginnings." There is scarcely anything in modern life which so fully and sadly illustrates the truth that "By their fruits ye shall know them," and even Mr. Benson admits that "in any case gambling is not a practice which can be included among normal, natural, and innocent pleasures." Such being the case, it is our bounden duty to strive in every way in our power to prevent people from commencing that which is only too likely to lead to social and moral disaster.

Psychical Research.

The recent book by Sir Oliver Lodge, advocating the practice of psychical research, has called fresh attention to the question of Spiritualism, and there is no doubt that it is exciting interest among many people. And yet it is a study attended with not a few serious perils. Two recent publications by eminent authorities tend to suggest some mysterious connection of cause and effect between spiritualism and insanity. Dr. G. H. Savage, in the Harveian Oration on "Experimental Psychology and Hypnotism," and Dr. C. Williams in a book on "Spiritualism and Insanity," both call earnest attention to the dangers involved in the popular practice of spiritualism. This is what Dr. Williams says from personal experience :

"I get a very large number of cases of mental and nervous diseases coming under my care in the course of a year, and in going into the history

of the cases I nearly always ask the patients or their friends if they have recently, or at any time, had anything to do with Spiritualism."

Sometimes, he goes on to say, the reply is in the affirmative, and then the first condition he demands is that all such pursuits be given up at once and altogether. Dr. Williams also gives other illustrations from his own professional experience of the connection between spiritualism and insanity. His explanation of the phenomenon is a very simple one, and it certainly seems natural and scientific. As a condition of success at spiritualistic séances, those who take part are urged to force the will into a condition of perfect passivity, and this habit of thus annihilating personality of will for the time being not only weakens the power of will, but in due course injures the whole mental organism. Not even the deservedly weighty authority of Sir Oliver Lodge can set aside the awful perils of spiritualistic inquiry, and those who have read that striking book "The Dangers of Spiritualism," by Mr. Raupert, will readily recognize what we mean. Apart from all else, what practical value has hitherto accrued from such researches? Nothing really scientific, and certainly nothing ethical, has been given to the world as the outcome. Added to all this, there is the undoubted fact that the practice of spiritualism inevitably tends to weaken, and often to destroy, belief in the Gospel of Christ. Nothing is more certain than that the acceptance of spiritualism undermines and destroys belief in the Deity and the Atoning Sacrifice of our Lord.