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THE CHURCHMAN

January, 1922

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Unity and the Evangelical Message. FOR a long time past the minds of many have been moved to consider whether it is not possible for Evangelical Churchpeople to come more closely together in the bonds of fellowship and service, but the difficulties in the way have been great. Not that there has been any real reluctance to join forces, but rather that it has seemed to be necessary in some cases to preserve independence of thought and action. Now, however, the matter has been lifted to a higher plane by the action of the Council of the National Church League, who have agreed upon the terms of a Manifesto, and this is in course of circulation. It deals with the question of "Unity and the Evangelical Message," and in a few brief pointed sentences emphasizes the need for unity among Evangelical Churchmen. "We have been reminded again and again," it says, "since the Lambeth Conference met last year, that one great hindrance to the spread of the Christian message is division in the Christian ranks, and many efforts from the most opposite directions have been made to promote a spirit of unity. The present moment, therefore, makes an appeal to Evangelical Churchmen to seek for a closer union among themselves, in order that they may more effectively contribute their part to the life and thought and work of the Church. Other bodies have definite aims, and a definite policy for attaining them, and Evangelicals are called upon for a similar unity of aim and policy. Such union and united action should not be difficult to attain, for there is a real agreement upon fundamental principles among

Evangelicals." It is important that the significance of this last sentence should be realized. Emphasis is too often laid upon the divisions among Evangelicals, but these are never really as serious as they are often represented to be. They are serious enough, no doubt, but below the surface there is a greater amount of unity than even the disputants themselves always realize. "There is real agreement upon fundamental principles"; exactly, and it is eminently desirable that this fact should be brought to the front and insisted upon. It is the agreement upon positive truth which needs to be emphasized, for as the Manifesto points out, "Union will not be reached by any policy of mere negation or opposition. Diverse elements may combine against a common antagonist, but their agreement is only temporary, and breaks up when the occasion for it has passed. It is the truths, we believe, not the errors we oppose, that unite us, and it is only on the basis of positive affirmation that we shall find the strength that comes from fellowship in a common purpose and work." This is well said, and it represents a fact which Evangelicals ought always to have in mind. In order, therefore, to help to a realization of the large measure of doctrinal unity which exists among Evangelicals, the Manifesto sets out in a series of nine paragraphs "the truths which specially call for emphasis at the present time"; or in other words, the truths which are most assuredly believed amongst us. They are so important that we have quoted them in full on p. 18 of this number, and we commend them to the careful study of our readers. We cannot imagine that there is anyone, with the least claim to be called an Evangelical, who would find any difficulty in subscribing to them; and, if that is so, they constitute a bond of union which should be of the greatest service in drawing together all sections of Evangelical Churchpeople, whatever may be their own individual views upon matters which lie outside what may be called these terms of reference. The matters which divide Evangelicals are mostly of secondary importance. Upon those, of course, a large liberty must be recognized, but they ought not to be allowed any longer to keep apart those who on fundamentals are in real agreement. It is upon the fundamentals that the Manifesto insists. "These [truths,]" says the Manifesto, "are not mere doctrinal formulas, but living and germinating principles, the ground work of all true spiritual life and of all effective preaching

of the Gospel. They represent God's provision for man's fallen and sinful state, and contain the promise of his redemption. If Evangelical Churchmen will, in dependence upon God, unite in a concerted effort to promote a knowledge and understanding of them, they will go far to remove the difficulties which retard so much of our religious and social work."

Is such Union Possible? Is union possible on these lines? We unhesitatingly answer that it is. Everything, however, will depend upon the way the question is examined, but with the will to unity, which we are persuaded exists, there should be in the very near future a closer drawing together among Evangelicals than has been witnessed at any time during the present generation. The closing words of the Manifesto contain their own appeal:—"The Council of the National Church League earnestly desire to bring Evangelical Churchmen together in a forward movement on these lines, and they cordially invite your co-operation and effective support." That will, we hope, be forthcoming in rich abundance, for, the National Church League having given this strong lead, Evangelical Churchpeople will naturally look to it for the development and extension of the movement. The Manifesto is but a first step; it will need to be carefully and wisely followed up until the principles it represents are not merely accepted but acted upon throughout the whole country. A definite effort must, of course, be made to stimulate a better knowledge of the whole Reformation movement. Modern scholarship has cleared it from most of the misrepresentations of Jesuit and Tractarian opponents, but, unfortunately, too many are quite unaware of the fact, and the lectures and literature of the N.C.L. will be needed to provide that healthy stimulus to study which is so imperatively required at the present time. But it is not for us to sketch a programme; it will be for the Council of the N.C.L. to decide what steps may best be taken to give effect to their Manifesto. Our task is the simple one of thanking them for giving Evangelical Churchmen so strong and so clear a lead in this matter, and in the name of our readers to bid them a hearty God-speed in their work. We are convinced that when once unity—real unity of heart and mind and spirit—is established among Evangelicals we shall witness an enormous development in their work, their witness and influence.

C.M.S. and the Scriptures. It is no part of our purpose to comment in any way upon the controversy which has arisen over a certain lecture delivered at the C.M.S. Summer School and we refer to it here only in order to record the happy termination of the discussion regarding it which took place in the very largely attended meeting of the General Committee on Wednesday, December 14. To the original resolution several amendments were moved, and the one ultimately adopted owed its origin to the wisdom and foresight of the Dean of Canterbury. He proposed, and Canon Guy Rogers seconded it; and it was seen at once that it so exactly fitted the circumstances of the time that Mr. S. H. Gladstone, the Treasurer of the Society, who moved the original resolution, accepted the amendment and it was carried by a large majority. It ran as follows: "The attention of the Committee having been drawn to the report of a certain lecture given at the recent Summer School, it was resolved that, as the lecture is not within the full cognizance of the Committee, they cannot pass judgment upon it; but for the assurance of those whose minds have been disturbed by rumours on the subject, and in view of the anxieties felt in the country, they reaffirm their resolutions of February, 1918, on the Holy Scriptures, as set out below." It is, however, the closing paragraph of the resolution which will excite the widest interest. There never was, we believe, any real danger of what was done in 1918 being upset, although rumours to that effect were current; but all doubts are set at rest now that the position has been so definitely reaffirmed. We quote in full the resolutions of 1918 dealing with the Society's attitude to the Holy Scriptures as they will be useful for reference:—

(a) We assume the acceptance by members of the C.M.S. of the views with regard to revelation and inspiration which are expressed in the formularies of the Church of England. But since these formularies have been variously interpreted, we think it right to state that to all of us these views involve a recognition of Holy Scripture as the revelation of God mediated by inspired writers, and as holding a unique position as the supreme authority in matters of faith.

(b) At the same time, since it is impossible to define the mode of inspiration, we deprecate any attempt to lay down a formulated definition. It is, however, clear that in Articles vi. and xx., inspiration, in whatever way defined, is attributed to Holy Scripture as a whole.

(c) Convinced as we are that no knowledge of Holy Scripture is adequate which does not lead to a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, we recognize that our use and treatment of the Bible should be in harmony with His.

(d) It is the duty of the student of Holy Scripture, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to employ every faculty in its study, and to take into the fullest consideration every light that scholarship and saintliness can furnish.

(e) The grave responsibilities of the Candidates Committee, as well as their high privileges, have long been recognized by the Society, and we have no reason to believe that the present Committee have failed to maintain the high level of loyalty and devotion to the Society exhibited by their predecessors. Having regard to the special difficulties of students and young people at the present time, we suggest in their case :

(1) That every student should be interviewed by some who know and understand the life of students to-day.

(2) That personal devotion to Christ as Lord and Saviour should be a primary condition for acceptance, and that such doctrinal definitions as are more appropriate to maturer years should not be required.

(3) It is desirable that among the officers of the Society there should always be one or more attached to the Candidates Committee who possess a personality attractive to students as well as to other candidates, so as to carry on a work in the student world calculated to show that the Society is neither out of date nor impervious to new ideas or new methods in working.

Central Church Finance. The question of central Church finance is a very difficult one and the discussions [regarding it at the November session of the National Church Assembly were not particularly helpful. Too much attention was given to destructive criticism, which is always an easy line of approach, and too little was heard of constructive proposals. The plain fact seems to be that the system of central finance has not "caught on," and the dioceses have not responded to their "quotas." It was reported that in one case—and by no means an exceptional one—a diocese was credited with £62 whereas its quota was £7,600. It is true that another £800 has since been received from the diocese in question, but even so it is a long way behind the sum expected from it. It would seem that the Budgets have been prepared without any sort of relation to the amount of money it is possible to raise, and the experience of the last year proves conclusively that unless future Budgets are moderated there will still be this alarming discrepancy between the amount asked for and the amount

received. The position on December 14 was that the amount contributed to the Central Fund by the Diocesan Boards of Finance was £57,000, but this fell short of their apportionment by no less than £169,000! The total receipts of the Fund were £86,000. It will be remembered that the Budget included £120,000 for the poorer clergy, but, as one of the speakers pointed out at the Assembly, "there is not a sixpence to give them." No doubt the Assembly will give its attention to the matter in time, but the matter is really urgent, for it does not enhance the reputation of the Assembly for business efficiency to have the central funds of the Church in such a chaotic condition.

The "Further Powers" Measure, 1921, finally passed the Assembly at its November session, although a brave attempt was made to defeat it. It does not give to the Councils all that was provided for them in the original Measure in relation to consultation regarding changes in Church services; and in the opinion of many it gives them—or rather the Bishop who is the final arbiter—too much power in connection with the appointment to a vacant Benefice. In these connections we call special attention to the very able and illuminating paper by Mr. Needham on Church Government which we are able to print in this number. It was prepared before the November session, but its comments still hold good as no alterations were made at that session in the Further Powers Measure. If the Measure should be presented to Parliament and should receive the Royal Assent—and it is important to note that until then it has no legal effect—it will place in the hands of Parochial Church Councils very large powers in relation to the appointment of Incumbents which will need to be very carefully handled. But on the whole we hope that, given that care and consideration, the new system may work well; there are however some obvious dangers, and Parochial Church Councillors will do well to equip themselves adequately for the faithful discharge of the new duties imposed upon them.

The Church Congress held at Birmingham in the middle of October had for its general subject "The Church in the New Age." We do not desire to be captious in our criticism but we do feel that there was some justi-

fication for the comment which was made in more than one *secular* newspaper that the discussions were not sufficiently spiritual in tone or outlook or purpose. The general scheme of the programme was good as far as it went, but the omissions were remarkable. It was passing strange, for instance, that this great gathering of Churchpeople from all parts of the country should be held without any session being assigned for the consideration of either Home or Foreign Missions. Yet evangelization is the great work of the Church and it is not being adequately carried out. The industrial life of the nation and the recreations of the people are, of course, important, and the Church should have something to say about them, but not to the exclusion of its primary work. There is great need in the Church to-day for spiritual leadership, and the Birmingham Church Congress had a great opportunity which was missed. One other point: the discussion on sex-relationships was very much too prominent, and we gravely doubt whether frank and free expositions such as were given at Birmingham do any real good or are quite healthy for those who listen to them. The Congress meets this year at Sheffield and we trust that those responsible for the programme will learn from Birmingham what to avoid. It has been suggested that "The Mission of the Church" would be a good subject. It would certainly do much to focus attention upon the real work of the Church, and that is very much needed at the present time.

CHURCH BOOK ROOM NOTES.

82 VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1.

Baptism.—The Church Book Room has purchased and issued at 6*d.* net, *Infant Baptism* by Canon Barnes Lawrence. This little book was published some little time ago, and has passed through three editions. Its design is to assist those who feel serious difficulty on the question of the Baptism of young children. As the author states in his preface, the case either for or against Infant Baptism is a matter of inference and argument, and he has given us an interesting and important little manual which is well worth study. An appendix on "Believers' Baptism" is added, as is also a valuable note on the testimony of the Fathers.

Parochial Church Councils.—A second edition of *The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure, 1921, with Introduction and Notes*, by Mr. Albert Mitchell (1*s.* net), has been called for. This edition varies very little from the first, but an appendix on Church Collections, and one or two other notes have been added.

It will be remembered that in every parish the roll of electors must be revised not less than twenty-eight days before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, and that notice of such revision must be given fourteen days at least before the revision takes place. Forms of such notice can be obtained from the Book Room, price 1*d.* each, or 9*d.* a dozen.

In response to many requests, a notice for Church doors under Rule 3, Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure, summoning a meeting of the Parochial Church Council, and a notice under Rule 4 of the Measure to be sent to the individual members of the Council, have been published by the Book Room. Copies can be obtained at 2*s.* 6*d.* per 100, and *pro rata*.

Confirmation.—In view of approaching Confirmation Classes, a sample packet of leaflets and manuals, published by the Church Book Room, has been prepared and will be sent for 1*s.* 9*d.* post free. It contains five courses of instruction for the use of candidates attending Confirmation classes: (1) *Class Notes*, by the Rev. Henry Edwards, Vicar of Gorleston, now in its fifth edition; (2) *A Soldier in Christ's Army*, and (3) *The Christian Disciple*, both by the Rev. Canon E. R. Price Devereux, Vicar of Christ Church, Woking; (4) *Strength for Life's Battle*, taken from addresses given by the late Canon Hoare, of Tunbridge Wells, and (5) *The Faith of a Churchman*, by the Rev. C. H. K. Boughton. These courses are issued at 2*d.* each, or 1*4s.* per 100, net. A useful manual (2*d.*) by the Archbishop of Sydney, giving in a clear manner the meaning of Confirmation, and a number of leaflets suitable for distribution to the congregation before classes commence, to candidates when they come forward, and to the newly confirmed are also added. These include *About Confirmation*, and "Be Strong—Be Glad," a message to girls who have been confirmed, by Canon Grose Hodge; *Confirmation: a Letter to Candidates before Classes commence* and *What keeps you back?* by the Rev. C. C. B. Bardsley, at ½*d.* each, or 3*s.* per 100, net; *Will you join the Senior Division?* and *The Race of Life*, by the Rev. C. H. K. Boughton, and "The Life Beautiful," by Canon Grose Hodge, at 9*d.* a dozen, or 4*s.* per 100, net; *Three Questions for Young Men who have been Confirmed*, by Canon Grose Hodge, at 1*d.* each, or 5*s.* per 100, net, and a card entitled *Your Confirmation* (1*d.*), being a letter to candidates, and three prayers to be used during the time of preparation; a sample set of Confirmation Hymns; a Confirmation Anniversary Letter, and Confirmation cards and labels.

Sunday School Prizes.—A list of books, which can be recommended as Sunday School Prizes, has been carefully compiled as a guide to those who are unable to call at the Book Room and select books from the shelves. The books in this list have been selected with a view to recommending to clergy and others, books which have merit and which avoid sacerdotal teaching on the one hand, and an anti-Church bias on the other. Every help will be given in the choice of books, and, if a list of the number of books required be sent, together with the age of the scholars and the prices to be paid, suitable books will be suggested or sent as desired.

Bargains in Books.—The following books, some of which are offered at very considerably reduced prices, will be found very acceptable as presents to clergymen and others: Sir Edward Clarke's three books, *The New Testament, the Authorised Version Corrected*; *The Psalms, the Prayer Book Version Corrected*; and *The National Church*; the three books bound in cloth, 4*s.* 6*d.* net, or in paper cover, 3*s.* net; Canon Meyrick's books, *The Doctrine of the Holy Communion, Scriptural and Catholic Truth and Worship*, and *Old Anglicanism and Modern Ritualism*, the set of three for 4*s.* 6*d.*