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THE CHURCHMAN

April, 1927.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Composite Book.

THE Prayer Book revision proposals of the Bishops were presented to the Lower Houses of the Convocations of Canterbury and York on February 7, in the form of a "Composite Book." Its reception has illustrated the wide variety of views held by the clergy and laity of the Church of England—*quot homines, tot sententia*. The majority of the Bishops declare that the Book makes no change in the doctrine of our Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking on this point, said: "I wish to say emphatically that in my deliberate judgment nothing that we have suggested makes any change in the doctrinal position of the Church of England"; but he adds, "the balance of emphasis may here and there be somewhat altered." Other Bishops, supporting the Archbishop, have added some further points. One of them says that the effect of the changes is to give a more frank and full recognition of the rightful position of what he might term the Catholic element than was given in the old book. "That which was implicit had been made explicit, but there had been no change in the doctrinal position of the Church." We have no doubt of the sincerity of these claims, but questions have been raised as to the accuracy of the statements. There is considerable doubt in the minds of many on the view that everything which has been made explicit in the new book was implicit in the old. The opinion has also been expressed that a balance of emphasis may be so altered as to imply a change in the actual doctrine.

The Future Form of our Services.

We take for granted that a large number of the changes will be welcomed by members of all schools of thought. The book provides in many respects much needed variety, elasticity, enrichment and freedom. It is calculated in many ways to give fuller expression to our worship. The use of shorter forms on various occasions will be an advantage. At the same time, as has been pointed out, there is a danger of a complete revolution in the traditional worship of our Church for the last 380 years if the new and abbreviated forms for Morning and Evening Prayer are adopted to the exclusion of the forms in the old book. This danger will be increased where

the desire to make the Communion Service the principal service on Sunday morning leads to the cutting down of the form for Mattins. Objection has also been raised to the new book on the grounds of its complexity. The old book has proved sufficiently difficult for worshippers not intimately acquainted with its contents. In the new book these difficulties are greatly increased. It must be, in any form, a cumbersome book to handle, and it will not be easy to find the particular part of the service which is being used. These are not, however, the points on which the chief discussion turns. The attention of Churchpeople is directed to the alternative forms for Holy Communion, the permission to reserve the elements for the sick, the observance of All Souls' Day, and the legalization of the chasuble as the vestment to be worn at the Communion Service.

The Bishop of Birmingham's Views.

Two of the Bishops do not share the view that there is no doctrinal change in the new book. The Bishop of Birmingham was the first to criticize its contents. He fears that by its adoption uniformity will have vanished, and that by the appointment of a Service for Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion the *cultus* associated with Corpus Christi day in the Roman Church may be encouraged. He regards the new form of Consecration Prayer as unnecessary unless the old was defective. It brings our Communion Office nearer to the Roman Mass, and gives colour to the belief that a particular form of words effects a miraculous change in the bread and wine over which they are said. Although it may be maintained that it does not change the doctrine of the Church of England, yet "by the dexterity of theological casuists innocent formulæ can be misinterpreted." He is strongly opposed to the permission of perpetual reservation and the proposal to leave it to the Church to frame from time to time rules governing the mode of reservation. The whole *cultus* of transubstantiation can be set going with the apparent consent of the Church. "The Church of England will thereby seem committed to a belief that spiritual properties can be given to material objects." It is unthinkable that even thirty years ago the Bishops would have allowed perpetual reservation. The present proposals are an attempt at compromise. They open the way for "the crude religious instincts of the Mediterranean peoples" which have found a place in "Catholicism."

The Bishop of Norwich on the Proposals.

The Bishop of Norwich has also expressed his strong disapproval of some of the proposals. Although approving of revision, he condemns its present form. The schools of thought in the Church are not complementary to one another: that is the ideal of the existing book. They are contrary. One school—tending rather to exclude than to include, looking backward rather than forward—speaks more loudly than any other. The present revision tends in this one direction. He condemns any alternative form of the

Prayer of Consecration. Those who uphold the new service tell us there is nothing in it but what is already to be found in the old. What reason can there be then for an alternative form? And an alternative is no true alternative, but a travesty, if it leaves out essential conceptions in the original. Even stronger is his condemnation of perpetual reservation. There would be much less talk about the necessity of reservation, he says, if the clergy for the sake of the sick would give up their rigid fast. It is clear, he adds, that if reservation is allowed, worship will be given to the Blessed Elements. One who believes either that the consecrated Bread and Wine are Christ Himself, or that in or under them He is presented, is by his very reverence for Christ bound to adore the Blessed Sacrament, however reserved. The new Prayer Book reintroduces into the Church of England something which all past experience shows must widely diffuse this cardinal error. He is therefore convinced that the doctrine of the Church of England is being altered, and he questions the statement of those who say that the new book does not change its teaching.

The Bishop of Exeter on the Fundamental Mistake.

The fundamental mistake underlying the revision has been a wrong aim. The Bishop of Exeter, who also disapproves of the proposed alternatives, points this out. He mentions the complex character of the book and the difficulties it will present to the members of an ordinary congregation. He then deals with the line of cleavage indicated. It was intended that the two services should appeal to two different parties in the Church, and this seems to him disastrous. It is a policy opposed to the purest ideals of Christianity. He says: "I felt that we were approaching the question from the wrong standpoint. We were considering too much the tastes and desires of this or that body of Churchpeople and were forgetting that there is only one consideration that is worthy to be entertained, namely, whether our worship is pleasing to our Saviour." "The new form," he adds, "brings us no nearer to peace with our Catholic brethren, while it digs deeper the trench which separates us from the Protestant Churches." Beside this striking statement may be placed the Bishop of Birmingham's equally emphatic declaration: "Not vague comprehensiveness, but loyalty to truth is the paramount necessity of sound religious progress." These statements of the Bishops indicate that even among themselves there are wide differences of opinion, and if the Bishop of Worcester's suggestion in *The Times*, that the account of the discussions on the various points should be published were adopted, we should probably find that much was accepted by the Bishops, not because it was regarded as sound doctrine, but for the sake of peace.

Will the Revision bring Peace?

The revision is intended to bring peace to the Church, but one of the chief questions is: Will it do so? From these statements of

the Bishops it is clear that the revision is intended to satisfy the claim of the Anglo-Catholic party for a more adequate expression of their views on the Real Presence of our Lord in or under the bread and wine of the Communion Service. This doctrine leads some of the extreme Anglo-Catholics on to demand the Reservation of the elements in order that they may pay adoration to Christ as present in them. This demand the Bishops have not met. They limit reservation to one purpose—communicating sick people who are unable to be present at the Communion Service. Will this limitation of the purpose of reservation satisfy those for whom the concession is made? There has been no evidence so far that they will be content with this. On several occasions a number of them have declared that they will be satisfied with nothing less than complete freedom to use the elements for purposes of devotion. There is no sign that they have abated this demand. We cannot see that if they hold this view of Christ's presence in the elements they can be expected to refrain from adoration, and from the imitation of the Romanists in their service of Benediction. It is apparent that there is no hope of peace in the Church if this doctrine, which was unacceptable even to the great Caroline divines, is held by any large section of the Church.

Eastern and Western Theories of Consecration.

Some discussion on the alternative form of the Prayer of Consecration has turned on the question whether it favours a Western or an Eastern theory of consecration. According to the Western theory the actual moment of consecration is when our Lord's words, "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood," are pronounced. The Eastern theory is that consecration takes place when the Holy Spirit is called down upon the elements. It is urged that one of the merits of the alternative form is that it is based on the Eastern theory, and that therefore is further removed from the view of the Church of Rome than our present form. The value of this discussion is based on the view that at some point in the prayer a change occurs in the elements, that at some point there is a Presence attached to them which was not there before. The best method of meeting these theories would be to go further back behind either Eastern or Western theory, and to ask with all reverence what was our Lord's theory on the evening of the original institution. It will then be seen that no importance attaches to either of the two conflicting theories, for the presence of our Lord on that occasion was not in any way attached to the elements. Above all, His risen, ascended and glorified humanity was not then connected with the elements. His presence was there in his capacity as President of His own Feast, and that is the sense in which we believe He is really present at every Communion Service, communicating Himself, i.e. the benefits of His death and passion, His fellowship through the Holy Spirit to those who in obedience to His command receive the appointed elements, with faith. There can be no greater gift in the Sacrament.

The Primitive Form of Consecration.

The prayer in the Scottish Communion Office has been brought forward as an example for our imitation. It has, however, been pointed out that when the proposal was made during the revision of the Canadian Prayer Book to introduce the Scottish form, it was rejected on the ground that "our own is better, because more scriptural, more primitive, more apostolic, more in keeping with the practice of the Early Church in its purest stage." We may add to this a statement of Dean Wace when this point was under consideration. He said: "Recent discoveries have tended to show that our present canon of consecration of Holy Communion is more primitive than the Roman, or than the primitive canons which were adopted by the Scottish and American Churches. In point of fact, the English reformers, with their extraordinary learning—far more learning than people supposed—really penetrated through the mists of ancient history, and have put into our present Prayer Book perhaps the most primitive form of consecration that ever existed. . . . Our present canon is perhaps the most primitive liturgy that exists." It is obvious that if we could get rid of the obsession of liturgiologists that some peculiar merit or scientific value attaches to the productions of the ages from about the fourth century onward, lovers of truth should be content to maintain the simpler and scriptural forms to which the great majority of Church-people are attached.

The Epiklesis and the Memorial.

The Committee of the Anglican Movement for the Maintenance of the Doctrine of the Church of England as Catholic and Reformed has issued a brief statement touching upon two points in the alternative consecration prayer—the Memorial before God the Father and the Epiklesis on "the gifts." They point out that neither of these has scriptural warrant. The wording of the memorial, they say, seems to give either an erroneous meaning to our Lord's word or to be equivocal. The Epiklesis for the first two centuries consisted solely of prayers for a descent of the Holy Spirit on the worshippers. "We have already such a prayer in the opening collect of the Service. In this position it is not only devotionally in the right place, but also cannot be associated with dubious teaching concerning the elements." It is difficult to form any intellectual conception of the significance of the Holy Spirit being called down upon the bread and wine. We have heard it urged as an analogy that the Holy Spirit is called down upon those who are presented for Confirmation. There is all the difference between bringing personality into contact with personality, and of bringing it into contact with inorganic matter. The same objection holds against the view that the presence of Christ in the elements is analogous to the Divine presence with humanity in the Incarnation. If our Lord had used any form of Epiklesis at the institution of the Sacrament, there is doubt that it would have found a place in the earliest liturgies.

The Best Course of Action.

The chief aim of the proposals is clearly to bring the Anglo-Catholics into line and to give the Bishops power to enforce obedience. It is said that they will be able to require the observance of regulations made in the twentieth century. They cannot demand it for those of the seventeenth century. We are inclined to agree with the Bishop of Norwich that obedience will only be the outcome of a new spirit among the clergy, and there is no sign of its appearance yet among those whom the Bishops desire to conciliate. In view of these facts the opinion of many is that in order to secure for the Church the useful elements of the revision, the book should be divided. Large portions of it are uncontroversial and these would be gladly accepted by all sections of the Church. The alternative Communion Service and the permission of Reservation are the chief matters of controversy. It does not seem impracticable to secure the omission of these and the adoption of a large portion of the Composite Book. Evangelical Churchpeople would probably be compelled to strain conscience to the utmost limit to accept some of the proposals that remain, but we believe that they would be prepared to do so if in this way the objection could be removed that the rejection of the new book means the loss of the work of twenty years on revision and the continuance of the present lawlessness unchecked. We may add that we are not impressed by the frequent statement that the new forms are merely permissive and not compulsory. Once they are accepted, experience shows that the old will be largely ignored in favour of the new, and the tendency will be to secure the return to a single form, which will mean the complete rejection of the old.

The Centenary of the Islington Clerical Meeting.

The celebration of the centenary of the Islington Clerical Meeting was an event of importance in the history of the Evangelical School. It cannot be allowed to pass without special notice. It marks a stage in the course of a movement in the Church which has left its mark for good on the life of the nation. We have no desire to occupy the place of a mere *laudator temporis acti*, but Evangelical Churchpeople are apt to do an injustice both to their predecessors and to themselves in not recognizing fully the strength of their position as true interpreters of the teaching and practice of the Church of England, and in neglecting to pay due tribute to the memory of those who have in the past stood for the great and undying principles of Evangelicalism. It is easy to point out the faults and failures of the past. Many of them are attributed to the Evangelicals when fuller knowledge would show that they were shared by all sections of the Church. It is therefore with special pleasure that we are able to offer our readers in this number of THE CHURCHMAN Archdeacon Buckland's admirable vindication of the character and influence of the Evangelical Churchmen of the past. Let us not forget Lord Macaulay's classical utterance: "A

people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered with pride by remote descendants."

The Larger View.

At the meeting of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches held recently in Birmingham, Professor Carnegie Simpson, of Westminster College, Cambridge, gave a striking confirmation of the claim that "the 'Evangelical' as distinct from the so-called 'Catholic' view is the larger and more comprehensive view of Christianity." He claimed that "Evangelicalism," so far from being narrow in its range and limited in its outlook, presents a more adequate and Christ-like system of salvation for the souls of men than the "Catholic system" does; that it has a less limited view of the Universal Church; and that it has a wider and better idea of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He illustrated this last point by a reference to the demand of the Anglo-Catholics for the "Reservation of the Sacrament." They desire Reservation because they say our Lord is present in the consecrated elements, which can be reserved, and under which He can be adored. Without entering into controversial points as to the error and danger of this view, he said "their view is not large enough; Christ is present, as I hope we all believe, in His own ordinance. Yes, but that is in the Sacrament. Now the elements are not the Sacrament. They are but a bit of it. The part is not the whole. The very expression, 'the Reservation of the Sacrament,' is not correct. The Bishops should not have used it as they do, at least in a rubric, because it is simply not accurate. You do not reserve the Sacrament. You cannot."

The Evangelical Teaching on the True Presence.

He goes on to point out that "the Sacrament in any right and reasonable view of the term is the whole action, and is a company of faithful people in the Church celebrating in a duly authorized manner the whole act which the Lord instituted. The elements are not the Sacrament, but a part of it. As Evangelicals we stand for the larger view—the view of Christ, not in the part, but in the whole. I would let a man hold almost as "High" a view as he likes about Christ's presence in the Sacrament, but a man stands for the smaller view when he says that the presence is to be located in this material part of the Sacrament." He described those who held this view as "quite literally and simply Elementarians." The Evangelical is the larger view. These are truths that require to be emphasized by Evangelical Churchpeople. They have too long appeared to acquiesce in the well-fostered opinion that there is something superior in the Catholicism which finds its model in Rome. It is important, in view of the conflict that is inevitable between the two conceptions of Christianity, that the Evangelical view should be given its full significance and its proper place as a complete and adequate inter-

pretation of the teaching of our Lord and of any legitimate developments that can be drawn from it. The history of the Christian Church shows the constant tendency that there is to fall away from the highest and most spiritual interpretation and to fall back upon what has rightly been described as the sub-Christian.

Editorial Note.

The attention of Churchpeople is mainly occupied at the present time with the Bishops' proposals for the revision of the Prayer Book. We have therefore devoted considerable space in this issue of *THE CHURCHMAN* to some of the chief points in the Composite Book. The article on "Three Prayer-Book Revisions" is a brief survey and comparison of some points in the recent Irish and Canadian revisions. It is by a writer well qualified to deal with the balance of doctrine as illustrated in past and present revisions. We hope that the information brought together by him will be found useful in forming a judgment on the features of the new book. We have already referred to the appropriateness of Archdeacon Buckland's historical review of the Evangelical school of thought in connection with the centenary of the Islington Clerical Meeting. The recent decision in the Marlborough case gives point to the discussion of "The Roman Church and the Annulment of Marriage," by the Rev. Alfred Fawkes. He deals with some of the claims made by the Roman Church, and their effect on national and social life. Canon J. B. Lancelot's study of "St. Paul at Athens" will interest Bible students in a subject which has given rise to a wide variety of opinions. An article on the true significance of the Reformation is specially useful at the present time when questions are raised as to the value to be given to the great movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and its influence upon the Church life and thought of today. A layman's view is of special value. Mr. L. H. Booth's careful estimate of "Some Aspects of the Reformation" will be found a fresh and accurate study. The movements in Australia, which have culminated in the recent decisions of the General Synod of the Australian Church, ought to be of interest to English Churchpeople. The Rev. W. H. Irwin, of St. Peter's College, Adelaide, writes of them with intimate personal knowledge and gives an explanation of the attitude of Evangelical Churchmen in Australia towards the Nexus. We have endeavoured to give our readers an account of some of the most important books recently published.

"Friendly Talks with Thinking Young People" is a series of penny booklets issued by the Church Association to supply teaching on the Bible, Prayer Book and the Reformation. The latest numbers are on *Our English Bible: How We Got It*; *Two Brave Englishmen (Bishops Ridley and Latimer)*; *A Simple Talk about Holy Communion*; *Pray to the Virgin Mary? Surely Not*. The writer is the Rev. F. G. Llewellyn, M.A., B.D., Vicar of Kidgrove.