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THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1927.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Church with Two Voices.

IN July the Church Assembly adopted the new Prayer Book drawn up by the Bishops. This has been described as the most momentous decision in the Church of England since the Reformation. It may well be so. We doubt if the full significance of the decision will be realized for a considerable time to come. Whatever action Parliament may take the Book has been adopted by the Church Assembly, the representative body of the Church. The primary result is that our Church becomes a Church with two voices. There are two great outstanding conceptions of Christianity. They are poles apart in character. Each contains elements contradictory of the other. Any weekly issue of such organs of religious opinion as *The Christian World* on the one hand, and *The Tablet* on the other, reveals the lines of deep cleavage between the two. The Sunday services in Brooklyn Tabernacle or St. Peter's at Rome, or to come nearer home, the differences in the worship in the City Temple and Westminster Cathedral show the practical working of these two conceptions in their approach to God. The one may be an extreme type of the Reformed Church, and the other an equally extreme type of the unreformed Church. But here is no possibility of mistaking the fact that they are distinct types with irreconcilable features. The attempt of the Bishops which has received the sanction of the Church Assembly is, to put it bluntly, to combine these two types in the Anglican Communion. In the past it has proved impossible to combine them and there is little reason to believe that the future will belie the experience of the past.

The Conflicting Types of Christianity.

In a sermon at Westminster Abbey the Bishop of Birmingham emphasized the nature and origin of "the two conflicting types of Christianity now struggling for mastery." He pointed out that "Catholicism, as we see it in its full development in the Roman Church, is a Christianized mystery religion. Evangelical Protestantism represents a repudiation of accretions from paganism and a return to the faith taught by Jesus in the Gospels." The foundation of Evangelical faith, he pointed out, was belief in God with a resultant personal relationship to Him through Jesus Christ. Therefore "we need no priest to bring us to His presence. . . . Our worship is that of men free and equal before God; we are

joined by Sacraments which express our unity, one with another, in dependence upon God alone." The "Catholic" system grew up "in a period when the progressive deterioration of human thought was painfully rapid." The Evangelical system of the Reformers, on the other hand, "re-created the Sacrament of Christian unity, the fellowship meal in which Christ's followers are joined in a unity of service to their Lord. The belief that at consecration a change took place in the substance of the bread and wine was emphatically rejected. It belongs to a lower stage of religious culture than we get in pure Christianity." We require to keep the distinction between these two conceptions of Christianity before our minds, for to this lower type of Christianity our Church has been steadily tending. "It has been revived in our Church in recent years, and to it the new Prayer Book makes dangerous concessions."

The Position of the Bishops.

As many have supported the new Prayer Book solely on the understanding that the Bishops are determined to act unitedly and to assert the necessity of obedience to its requirements it will be a matter of importance to observe the statements and actions of various members of the Episcopate. Many are already expressing doubts as to the possibility of the united action of the Bishops. Past experience does not afford much ground for expecting it. The diocese of London has always been the outstanding example of what we may describe mildly as independent action. It is said that the Bishop of Chichester has already expressed his determination to govern his diocese in his own way. We may be sure that other bishops will assert their right to interpret the new rubrics according to their own views. The Archbishop of Canterbury has promised that the Bishops will issue a statement as to their policy in the treatment of the new Book. It is a somewhat ironical position that the revision which was to remove all such difficulties of interpretation is already seen to open up possibilities of diversity to which the old Book could only by the exercise of considerable ingenuity be considered liable. If the chief reason for the production of the new Book is the restoration of order and the maintenance of some measure of uniformity its main purpose seems already to a great extent to be stultified. The Bishop of Worcester has indicated some of the difficulties awaiting individual bishops, if they are bound to act in accordance with any decision of the majority which they cannot conscientiously accept.

The Appeal to Parliament.

Many objections have been raised against churchpeople opposed to the revised Prayer Book taking steps to inform Parliament of the grounds of their opposition. It is thought by supporters of the Book that the consent of Parliament is merely a formality. This is not the view taken by the Ecclesiastical Committee. That body has determined to give serious consideration to any statements submitted to them regarding the character of the new forms of

service. The worship of an Established Church is a matter of importance to the whole nation. It cannot be claimed that it is only the concern of the members of that Church, especially in view of the fact that many who regard themselves as potential if not actual members have been alienated from its worship by the introduction of teaching as well as rites and ceremonies definitely prohibited by the present Prayer Book. The legalizing of some of these practices and doctrines in a new Book is a matter of the utmost concern to them, and to the nation as a whole. National character in the past has largely been the outcome of the teaching and worship of the National Church. Those who desire to maintain that character, which has won for the English people in all parts of the world a unique reputation for truth and honesty, are justified in making every effort to secure the national interests in the Houses of Parliament. There are other grounds on which an appeal to Parliament may be justified, but the future character of the nation warrants careful consideration of the future character of the Church.

The Lausanne Conference.

It is impossible yet to estimate the value of the World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lausanne in August. That such a representative gathering of every section of the Christian world with one or two exceptions was in itself a remarkable achievement. The credit for this must be given to American inspiration and perseverance. Many obstacles had to be overcome and long and careful preparations had to be made. The discussions revealed the old lines of divisions with which we are familiar from the Conferences held in this country since the Lambeth Conference of 1920. At Lausanne the same divergences were evident in regard to Creeds, the Church, the Ministry and the Sacraments. The same problem also arose in reference to the use of words with widely differing interpretations of their meaning. The same claim was put forward that actions might be performed, such as ordination or celebration of the Holy Communion, without any definite interpretation being put upon them. Pleas were made for the widest freedom and toleration by some, while others put forward exclusive theories which must result in narrowness and intolerance. We can only say that while we do not despair of some ultimate unity of Christendom, if not in actual organization, yet in spirit and co-operation, we feel that there can be little advance towards a complete solution as long as a theory of the Church is maintained which requires a ministry of one particular type depending upon a particular theory of transmission of grace. Such views are really medieval in character and border more upon magical and superstitious conceptions than upon the spiritual ideals of Christ.

The Province of East Africa.

A practical example of the problems of unity even within our own Communion is presented in the proposals to form an East African Province of our Church. The proposals were considered

at a Conference held at Nairobi last July. The Bishop of Uganda gave an account of them in the *East African Standard*. He described the problem which the Conference was called to face as "not only difficult and complicated, but actually unique in the history of Christian missions." This is due to the development of the Anglican Church in Uganda and Kenya under the Evangelical influence of the Church Missionary Society and in Zanzibar under the Anglo-Catholic influence of the Universities Mission to Central Africa. "The question to be faced was whether, given the acknowledged differences of ecclesiastical tradition and practice, it would yet be possible for the different dioceses to come together, and work happily and harmoniously, under one leader." A further complication arises from the existence of the Kikuyu Alliance to which one of the dioceses is committed. The proposals are to be carried through with safeguards for the independence of each diocese in its own internal arrangements. As long as the unfettered development of the Evangelical dioceses is fully maintained, and the natural affinity of Evangelical Churchmen with their non-Episcopal brethren can be pressed forward to its full expression in the realization of the early hopes of the Kikuyu Movement, there can be no objection to the progress indicated in the formation of the Province. If it should prove to be a means of asserting Anglo-Catholic exclusiveness and the claims of that School to dominate, the freedom of Evangelicals must be strongly asserted and maintained.

The Pastoral of the Wesleyan Conference.

The Pastoral recently issued by the Annual Conference of the Wesleyan Church contains matter that is of interest to all sections of the Church. It refers to the rush of life to-day and to the increase of Christian effort to keep pace with this modern rush. Yet greater organization, improved methods of work in Sunday Schools and elsewhere are not meeting the need. They frequently only produce a sense of strain. There is vision and organization but not power. "The chief cause of the Church's failure to accomplish more is that it is not drawing upon its reserves of spiritual power. Hence its outstanding need at the present time is to wait more upon God. . . . The Church's sense of powerlessness is due, at least in part, to its forgetfulness of the very God whom it serves." This may well be taken as a message to all the Churches. "The sense of God is the secret of power." Little will be accomplished by the development of organization and Church machinery until there is a deeper spiritual experience and a more intense realization of God and of fellowship with Him through Jesus Christ. The Church has great and pressing problems to face. A great work for God is waiting to be accomplished in this generation. We are all eager that the power to accomplish this work should be ours. We welcome the message of this Wesleyan Pastoral which bids Christian people to seek this power from God, to find it in a fresh realization of the Holy Spirit at work in our midst. "The Church must betake itself afresh to God."

Editorial Note.

We present to our readers this quarter a number of articles bearing upon important current problems. When a bishop can describe the Evangelical opponents of the new Prayer Book as an army of illiterates, it is well to show that scholarship has its representatives on this side as able and well equipped as on any other. The article on "Which Communion Service?" by the Rev. A. R. Whately, D.D., shows the grounds of objection to the new Prayer of Consecration from one aspect. The article on "The Greek Sources of the New Consecration Prayer," by the Rev. F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock, D.D., shows the objections from another aspect. The Rev. A. J. Macdonald, B.D., writes on a kindred topic in dealing with recent theological and philosophical views in his article on "Recent Theories of the Incarnation." Canon A. Lukyn Williams, D.D., gives an interesting account of the several phases of the modern Jewish communities in "The More Spiritual Side of Modern Judaism." The concluding portion of Mr. John Knipe's account of "Bernardino Ochino of Siena" shows the closing stages in the career of that great preacher whose sympathies were with the Reformation Movement. The account of the Church in Finland by the Rev. G. W. Kerr, LL.B., enables us to realize the present religious situation in that country as seen by one who has had recently been in touch with it. We have endeavoured as usual to give an account of some of the most important recent books as far as space permits. We venture to ask those who find *THE CHURCHMAN* useful and instructive to assist us in our efforts to secure for it a still larger circulation.

