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# THE CHURCHMAN

April, 1930.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

### Church Assembly Commission on Church and State.

**I**N spite of strong opposition to the proposal, the Church Assembly has decided to set up a Commission to inquire into the present relations of Church and State. The Archbishop of York, who introduced the motion, based it on a previous declaration of Archbishop Davidson: "It is a fundamental principle that the Church, that is, the Bishops together with the clergy and laity, must in the last resort, when its mind has been fully ascertained, retain its inalienable right, in loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ, to formulate its faith in Him and to arrange the expression of that Holy Faith in its form of worship." The appointment of the Commission at this time may be harmless, but with the Bishop of Durham determined to bring about the disestablishment of the Church, it seems inopportune to stir up an unnecessary controversy. As *The Times* and other papers have pointed out, there is no new feature in the relationship of Church and State. It is obvious that the Commission would not have been appointed if the House of Commons had not refused to sanction the Deposited Book, but that refusal was quite in accordance with the terms of the Enabling Act, which set up the Church Assembly and arranged the procedure by which legislation was to be submitted to Parliament. The proviso that the mind of the Church must have been fully ascertained seems to indicate that recent events do not indicate that the Church Assembly adequately represents the mind of the Church. Those who are endeavouring to head the Church to disestablishment cannot be fully aware of the disaster they are seeking to bring upon English religion.

### The Real Presence.

The Archbishop of York recently declared on behalf of the Bishops that "there has been no thought of calling in question the doctrine of the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine in the Eucharist as a permissible doctrine in the Church of England." He appeals to the Bennett

Judgment as having vindicated this doctrine. Articles in several of the Church papers have pointed out that a proper understanding of the Judgment does not bear out this claim, and that the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline in 1906 pointed out clearly that the judgment has frequently been misunderstood. "His language has been taken in the sense which the Court held that it narrowly avoided; and his acquittal has been treated as establishing the legality of doctrine which his language was held not to express." The whole question of the Real Presence was discussed at the Fulham Conference of 1900 when the Evangelicals were represented by able theologians, including Bishop Handley Moule, Dean Wace and the Rev. N. Dimock. Reference has been made to Bishop Moule's statement at the Conference when he repudiated any association of the Presence with the elements. He said, "I believe that if our eyes, like those of Elisha's servant at Dothan, were opened to the unseen, we should indeed behold our Lord present at our Communion. . . . Not on the Holy Table but at it would be seen Himself, in our presence, to bless the Bread and Wine for a holy use, and to distribute them to the disciples. . . . I do not believe that the Holy Scriptures give us reason to believe that this sacred procedure involves any special attachment of His Presence to the sacred Signs, albeit called His Body and His Blood by reason of their equivalence as divine Tokens." If Christ is thus present throughout the Holy Communion, there can be no other Presence under the forms of Bread and Wine. The teaching of our formularies nowhere indicates that the prayer of Consecration works a miracle. Such teaching destroys the nature of the Sacraments and opens the gate for Adoration, Reservation and other allied practices.

#### **Persecution in Russia.**

The Christian world has been deeply stirred by the accounts of the systematic persecution to which Christians as well as all other believers in God have been subjected by the Soviet Government in Russia. An Anti-God Campaign is being carried on with the avowed object of banning every form of religion from that country within five years. To effect this object religious believers have been treated with a barbarity probably never before equalled in the history of Christianity. If only a portion of the narratives of suffering that have reached us are true, they show a calculated and cold-blooded system of torture carried out especially against the Bishops and clergy of the Russian Church. Public opinion in England is thoroughly roused in protest, but it is difficult to take any effective measures to bring relief to the sufferers. The plain claims of humanity have been mixed up with political questions, with which they should never have been connected. The question of the exchange of diplomatic representatives between this country and Russia should not have been allowed to interfere with the strongest expression of the horror with which the diabolical treatment of Christians is regarded. If Russia indicates the condition

to which a country can be reduced which aims at the elevation of the human race to a higher level on the principles of equality and fraternity, then it is terrible to contemplate the future of humanity, unless the teaching of Christ prevails throughout the world. The future possibilities are a call to renewed effort on behalf of Christian work at home and abroad, and in the meantime we can only pray that God will change the hearts of the rulers of Russia, and that they will be brought to a realization of the crimes which they are committing against the most treasured and sacred rights of men.

### "God's Call to Union."

The Committee of the Conference of Evangelical Churchmen which is to meet at St. Peter's Hall, Oxford, on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, April 7, 8 and 9, in continuation of the Conference formerly held at Cheltenham, has chosen as the subject for its meeting "God's Call to Union." The Committee explain in their letter of invitation that "in view of the practical importance of the schemes for reunion in South India, China, Persia and other parts of the world, and of the prominent place which principles underlying unity will have in the discussions of the Bishops at Lambeth next July, the Committee regarded reunion as the most appropriate subject for this year's meeting. The Committee felt, however, that it should be considered primarily from the point of view of God's will and His purpose. They therefore adopted as the general title of the programme of the Conference, 'God's Call to Union.' This is the essential feature in all the movements, and the Committee came to this decision in order that the spiritual realities may be adequately presented to the Churches." The speakers are well-known Evangelical Churchmen whose words will inspire confidence. They will focus the results of modern scholarship and spiritual insight upon the great issues involved. They will pass under review such aspects of the subject as: The Nature of the Church, Scripture and the Creeds, the Ministry and the Sacraments, Rome and the East, the Churches of the Reformation and the South India Scheme. It is anticipated that there will be more than usually large attendances. We hope to print the chief papers read at the Conference in the next issue of THE CHURCHMAN.

### The Founding of "The Churchman."

The Rev. W. A. Purton recently contributed to *The Record* an interesting article giving an account of his father's work in the founding of this magazine. The Rev. W. O. Purton resigned the editorship of *The Record* owing to ill-health and very soon after conceived the idea of a magazine on Evangelical lines. The first number appeared in October, 1879, and the contributors were Edward Garbett, Edward Hoare, J. M. Holt, J. C. Ryle, H. B. Tristram, Cunningham Geikie, Eugene Stock, E. H. Bickersteth and the Rev. W. O. Purton. The Rev. J. C. Ryle, afterwards Bishop of Liverpool, wrote an article for the first number on the position of Evangelicals under the title "Where are We?" Mr.

Purton quotes at length from this article, the closing words of which have reference to those who are carrying on the work to-day:—

Finally, he writes: "I am no prophet, and in a changing world I dare not conjecture where the Evangelical party will be when another fifty years have passed over the Church of England. It may be that sifting, trying times are before us. It may be that our numbers may be thinned, and many may desert our cause under the pressure of incessant official frowns, persecution, ridicule, and unpopularity. But, come what may, I trust the Evangelical cause will always have a representative body in the Church of England. Things were in a better condition in 1879 than they were in 1829. Then let us stand firm and fight on."

#### Editorial Note.

Dr. J. D. Mullins has kindly acceded to our request to contribute "Some Reminiscences of Oxford Fifty Years Ago," and we believe our readers will enjoy this insight into the University life of half a century ago. Canon Kennett, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University, permits us to print his sermon on "The Christian Priesthood," in which he explains the true position of the Christian Presbyter in the light of Jewish worship. Canon Lancelot's fresh and illuminating study of St. Peter will be found helpful both for exegetical and devotional purposes. The principles underlying the Movements for Union are at present demanding special attention. We have therefore two articles dealing with important aspects of them. One by the Rev. G. Freeman Irwin on "Unity—the Ministry and the Sacraments," and the other by Dr. A. C. Whately on "Reunion. The Ideas behind the Ideal." Recent discussions on the Flood and the account in Genesis lend topical interest to the views put forward by Lieut.-Colonel F. A. Molony on "The Probable Connection of Lake Van with Noah's Flood." The writer's technical knowledge enables him to bring forward a number of points not readily perceived by the general reader. The Rev. J. B. McGovern gives a new study in historical values in dealing with "The First Four Bishops of Rome." He discusses afresh several disputed claims. The number of new books issued each quarter seems to increase, and it is difficult to do justice to them all. We hope the selection which our reviewers have made will give some help in appreciating at least a few of the most interesting new books on religious and kindred subjects.

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