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# THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1933.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

### *The Duty of Evangelical Churchpeople.*

**A**LTHOUGH the celebration of the Centenary of the Oxford Movement has naturally received the largest share of attention in many religious circles during recent months, other interests have not been altogether ignored. As the Centenary Celebration is now over there is every hope that the attention of Churchpeople will return to those matters that really concern the future welfare of the Church of England as the chief representative of the Reformed Faith in the world. One writer has stated that there is need, after the exaggerations which characterised so much of the literature put forth in connection with the Centenary Celebration, of a "fresh study of history and a due sense of proportion." To judge from some recent accounts of the Church life of the nineteenth century the impression would be gained that there was nothing of importance accomplished except by the Tractarians and their successors. It is well that any such wrong impressions should be corrected, and it is the duty of Evangelical Churchpeople to see, as far as lies in their power, that due credit is given to the work of their predecessors both at home and in the Mission field. It is true, as has been pointed out more than once, that a great deal of Evangelical effort was expended in endeavours to save the Church from the errors and excesses resulting from Tractarianism. This deflection from their true work and their main interest was unfortunate, but the blame is not to be laid upon them. It must be placed upon those whose efforts to change the character of our Church had to be resisted. Had there been no Oxford Movement the Evangelical School would have developed normally and they would no doubt have continued, as they had begun, to introduce those changes in ritual and teaching which would have proved suitable and necessary to meet the needs of each successive generation.

### *Justice to the Older Evangelicals.*

One result of Tractarianism was that an atmosphere of suspicion was developed and anything that seemed to savour of Rome led to

protest. Many beneficial changes which might otherwise have been easily introduced were resisted because the tendencies of the Oxford Movement were suspect. It is hardly to be expected that the historians of the Oxford Movement will give a favourable account of those who felt it their duty to oppose suspicious innovations. It must be evident to all that less than justice has been done to the great Evangelicals of the nineteenth century. There were many among them who were scholars of considerable ability, although it is true that the Evangelicals excelled most in the practical work of parochial life and in the development of Oversea missions. Their zeal was for the conversion of the world and they allowed nothing to interfere with the carrying out of that purpose. One reason for the neglect of the writings of these older Evangelicals is that they are regarded as old-fashioned, and that our new age has passed away from their point of view. This may be in large measure true, but one fact that has been made quite clear in the literature of the Oxford Movement Centenary is that its leaders were in many respects as old-fashioned as their Evangelical contemporaries. On many fundamental questions they shared the same prejudices and were unable to escape the mental environment of their age. The Tractarians had the additional disadvantage that in their regard for antiquity, their outlook was painfully limited and their knowledge inadequate, with the result that they accepted theories that more recent historical research has shown to be untenable. Their views, for example, on Apostolical Succession are not now accepted even by many who profess to sympathise with their general position.

#### Recalling Past Leaders.

Evangelicals have been unfortunate in not having historians to tell the story of their work during this period. The Rev. Charles Hole, a historian of no mean ability, began the History of the Church Missionary Society, but on too large a scale, and Dr. Eugene Stock took up the task and completed the history of the Society. This was practically the only record of Evangelical work until the Rev. G. R. Balleine wrote his *History of the Evangelical Party* some twenty-five years ago. This has been the chief source of information of the doings of the Evangelical School. His work was well done, but there is need now for other works to give a fuller account of the success of such men as Close of Cheltenham, Champneys of Whitechapel, McNeile of Liverpool, Stowell of Manchester, and others whose work ought to be as familiar to Evangelical Churchpeople as are the names of those who were associated with either the Oxford or the Broad Church Movement. There is also need of a writer with historical gifts who will write the history of the Evangelicals during the first thirty years of the present century. There are a host of names which Evangelical Churchpeople are allowing to fall into neglect from the lack of some record of their work. We need only mention the names of Dimock, Wace, Griffith Thomas, Watts-Ditchfield, Madden, Lefroy, Webb-Peploe and Aitken to show what rich material there is for an adequate account of the activities of

those who were proud to be known as members of the Evangelical School. Whatever divisions may have arisen in recent years among the Evangelicals of the Church they can surely unite, as heartily as the Anglo-Catholics have recently done in regard to their predecessors, in paying tribute to the memories of those who maintained their cause in the past.

### The Vitality of Evangelicalism.

There is special reason at the present time for such an effort. The last Oxford Conference of Evangelical Churchmen which dealt with the whole subject of "Evangelicalism, Yesterday and To-Day," showed the inherent vitality of the Evangelical Cause, and the grounds for regarding the Evangelical interpretation of Christianity as the best and nearest to the teaching of Christ and of the early Church. It is because Evangelical Churchmen are convinced that their conceptions of Christian doctrine and of the organisation of the Church and its Ministry are more nearly in accord with truth, with the teaching of history and experience, that they are convinced of the ultimate acceptance of their claim, however much they may fail in this generation to make it good. There are always reactions, and the reaction to Medievalism must spend itself, and then once again the plain truths of the Gospel Message will be cleared from all the subtleties of sophistry, and we may add without any desire to give offence, of superstition in which it has become involved through the departure from the high spiritual standard set up by Christ against the spirit of Jewish legalism and its representatives in modern life and thought. Such retrogression as has been witnessed in the nineteenth century constantly tends to recur and fresh Reformations are needed to restore the purity of faith. Every institution carries within it the elements of decay, and it is only by the renewal of the spiritual vitality that brought it into existence that its usefulness can be maintained. It is not too much to say that the Church is subject to this tendency and that the Evangelical School may be the means in God's hands in these coming years of a needed reformative movement.

### Books Recommended for Study.

We have pleasure in welcoming and in recommending to our readers two recent books which we have no doubt will help to a better understanding of the Evangelical position and will help also to convey something of the inspiration which was the source of the achievements of our predecessors. When Evangelicals are accused of not giving due prominence to the Sacraments it is well to be able to show that their attitude towards Holy Communion is in harmony with the best teaching of the Church in all ages. This was done some time ago in the volume, *The Evangelical Doctrine of the Holy Communion*. Canon MacKean, who was one of the contributors to that volume, has recently written *The Eucharistic Doctrine of the Oxford Movement*, in which he shows how the leaders of the Movement departed from the standards of English Church teaching which

are to-day represented in the Evangelical position. A review of Canon MacKean's book is given in this number of *THE CHURCHMAN*. A review is also given of the Bishop of Barking's most useful account of *Evangelical Influence in English Life*. These two books will do much to counteract any false impressions that may have been given as to the all-prevailing power of the Oxford Movement in the Church, and will enable readers to arrive at that due sense of proportion which is one of the chief needs of Churchpeople to-day. The herd instinct seems to be specially strong in Church circles, and an opportunity for the exercise of a little independent thought and judgment in the study of these volumes ought to have a beneficial effect.

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### An Unnecessary Controversy.

Dr. Jarvis, the Provost of Sheffield Cathedral, recently invited a number of those who were attending a meeting of the Oxford Group Movement in Sheffield to attend a Holy Communion service in the Cathedral. For this kindly and Christian action he has been subjected to a violent attack on the part of some of the extreme members of the Anglo-Catholic party, and a lively controversy was maintained for some time in the columns of the Sheffield Press. Dr. Jarvis was easily able to defend his action and it was clear to any impartial person that the controversy was quite unnecessary. The occasion was a special one. The Group had met together and spent some time in conferring on the things of the soul and of the Kingdom of God. A desire was expressed that they might partake of the Lord's Supper before they separated and went their ways to Canada, Russia, Germany, the United States, South Africa and other parts of the world. Dr. Jarvis adopted the obvious Christian course. He says: "I therefore offered sacramental fellowship to these baptised Christians at the end of what had been to all of us a memorable occasion of spiritual fellowship. It seemed a natural sequence and the only Christian thing to do." Dr. Jarvis may rest assured that he has acted in the true Christian spirit and that all who value expressions of Christian fellowship will welcome his action. The grounds of the opposition were mainly that unconfirmed Christians were invited to the Holy Communion in an English Church. It is scarcely necessary to argue the case. It has frequently been shown that the Rubric regarding Confirmation does not apply to present-day conditions, and was only intended for those who are members of our Church. We may refer our readers to the useful discussion of the point in Archdeacon Hunkin's *Episcopal Ordination and Confirmation in relation to Inter-Communion and Reunion*. He confirms the arguments so clearly stated in Professor Gwatkin's *The Confirmation Rubric: Whom does it bind?* and he gives a number of authoritative statements made in recent days by several bishops, and supported by the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference and the Convocations of both Provinces.