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THE CHURCHMAN

July, 1911.

The Month.

The
Coronation.

THE CHURCHMAN, as a rule, is ready for the printer about the twentieth of the month preceding that of publication. The Coronation Day is on the twenty-second. It therefore follows that though the event itself will be a matter of history by the time that these lines are in our readers' hands, the observations we may make upon it must needs be in the nature of forecast and anticipation. The anticipations we form are characterized by high hopes and solemn joy. We respectfully tender to our newly-enthroned monarch our loyal wishes for his welfare, our earnest hopes and heartfelt prayer that the reign on which he is entering may not only be long in the number of its happy years, but may be a time of rich and abundant blessing from God upon him, upon our Queen, and upon all the peoples over whom they are called to rule. Both King George and Queen Mary have already shown that they regard the high estate to which they are called, not only as an exalted privilege, but also as a sacred trust. We believe that their own personal influence on the peoples of their realm will be ennobling and uplifting. We hope and pray that their reign may be memorable by the passing of much that is evil and the growth and progress of many forms of good.

The hopes we are cherishing will most fitly find their expression in the prayers we offer at this momentous crisis in the nation's history. It is of good omen for the new reign that it will be heralded by combined prayer, for we know of many Christian bodies who are arranging to make the Coronation season one of combined and special intercession. In these prayers we shall doubtless make mention of the petitions that lie nearest to our hearts. It may not, therefore, be out of place to put on record here some of the objects we think greatly to be desired for the welfare of the coming reign—objects which may well have a place in the supplications we shall offer. In the forefront of all we shall surely pray for a revival of *spiritual* religion in our midst. This can only come from God, and, we believe, will only come in response to a passionate intensity of prayer. Excellence of administration, skill in organization, the attempt to express the old truths in terms of modern thought, are not without their value. But few of those who read the signs of the times and try to estimate justly our present wants will deny that our deepest need is too fundamental for such remedies as these; it is the need for "the sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" that "filled all the house where they were sitting."

It is only by such a descent, in overwhelming power, of the Divine Spirit on the Church that we may hope for one particular reform, the absence of which is causing a great decay of spiritual religion, and that is the revival of the conception of Sunday as a sacred day of rest. It cannot be denied that our Christian Sunday is becoming sadly secularized, and the secular view is not merely threatening Christendom from the outside. It has already penetrated far within our borders. There is an increasing tendency to regard Sunday as a weekly holiday rather than as a weekly holy day. It is a day for physical rest and recreation—or, rather, of attempted recreation without any rest—in which any idea of meditation upon God and combined worship at His throne is

tending rapidly to disappear. A strong plea might well be entered against all this on merely humanitarian grounds—on the ground that so many classes in the community seem likely to lose entirely any day of rest at all. This crowded, hurrying life of ceaseless strain is already working its own nemesis. "Nerves," and the many ills that flow from strained and disordered nerves are assuming gigantic proportions. We want a "rest cure," and the only one that will really meet our case is the weekly anticipation of the "rest" that "remaineth to the people of God."

Many of our reformers hold—and hold, we think, quite rightly—that one of the most ill-omened traits in the present development of our national character is the absence of the sense of discipline, the total lack—both in individual and in community—of any claim for sacrifice and self-devotion. The spirit of professionalism, which has so largely invaded our games, is spreading to our general view of life. We are content to be spectators, while the more strenuous ones—whoever they are who may be willing—may do the necessary work. Many attempts are being made to counteract an attitude of mind so pregnant with disaster to our people. Boys' brigades, Church lads' brigades, scouts, universal training, are simply so many attempts to convince our people that discipline, training, the individual's contribution to the welfare of the whole, are the best guarantee both of individual welfare and of national stability. But these attempted remedies, with all their excellence, are somewhat superficial. It is the conception that we are not our own, but are bought with a price; the conviction that we "serve the Lord Christ"; the knowledge that "our citizenship is in heaven"—in a word, the great truths which only the recurrence of a weekly day of worship and meditation can keep alive in our hearts—these are the things to correct our national slackness, and to make us "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

Other Blessings for the Reign. We may only mention now more briefly some of the blessings which many of us think are already waiting for us in the hand of God, the bestowal of which blessings, in answer to our prayer, would go far to make King George's reign the most glorious in all our annals. One is the establishment of universal peace. The late King was emphatically a peacemaker, and now America and England seem willing absolutely to repudiate bloodshed as the only arbitrament of possible difference. May other Christian nations during this reign see clearly that followers of Christ should not engage in mutual war! Another blessing that seems to come within the range of vision is that of Christian unity, leading on to Christian union. The separated Churches of Scotland are slowly but surely drawing together. The Edinburgh Conference has made it clear that a divided Christendom is powerless to evangelize the world for Christ, that disunion is the barrier to obedience to His command, and that union must no longer be a pious aspiration, but an object of practical endeavour. May it be King George's privilege to rule over subjects whose Churches, once severed, have joined in brotherhood at the feet of Christ! Finally, may there be a reconsecration of home and family life! It is no courtly flattery, but a well-known fact, that in this matter King George and Queen Mary set before their subjects a worthy and inspiring ideal. God grant that their examples may be followed, and that their realm may increasingly be established on the only sure foundation of the Christian home!

Canon Beeching and Mr. Lathbury. A little while ago there was in our pages a courteous interchange of views between Canon Beeching and some of our Evangelical friends on the subject of the Permissive Use of the Eucharistic Vestments. Since then Canon Beeching has had the opportunity of discussing the same topic in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century* with that most able and eloquent exponent of High Church opinion, Mr. C. D. Lathbury. On reading Mr. Lathbury's con-

tribution in the *Nineteenth Century* for May, we can hardly resist the temptation to address Canon Beeching with the hackneyed phrase: "I told you so." Much of Canon Beeching's argument depended on the premise that the vestments are non-significant of doctrine. On this point we ventured to reply to him that "any such contention is quite beside the point. They are in the present crisis charged with significance. It is for what they signify that their legalization is sought." Now hear Mr. Lathbury: "High Churchmen have not been contending for them all these years because there has been 'no question as to any special significance' attaching to them. The special significance does not, it is true, reside in themselves; it has come to them from circumstances. But, being there, it has grown to be of very real importance, and the universal adoption of vestments, on the score of their meaning nothing, would be a poor exchange for their gradual adoption on the score of their meaning much."

Mr. Lathbury
on the
Rubric.

What is the "much" which, according to Mr. Lathbury, the Vestments mean? Again, let him speak for himself. "That to which they do bear witness is the identity of the English Church of to-day with the English Church before the Reformation, and with the rest of the Catholic Church alike in the West and in the East." He goes on to quote the words of the Royal Commission: "The Eucharistic vestments were originally the dress of ordinary civil life, and for four or five centuries the civil and ministerial dress of the clergy was identical." "But," says Mr. Lathbury, commenting on this, "they are not identical now. . . . English congregations are not well informed upon points of ceremonial, but they are quite able to notice the resemblance of one priest to another, and in this way the Eucharistic vestments become a testimony to *the identity as regards Eucharistic worship* [the italics are ours] of the several portions—in other respects so much divided—of the Catholic Church." Perhaps these words of Mr. Lathbury may convince Canon Beeching, more than any of

ours have been able to do, that in opposing the legalization of the vestments we are not guilty of illiberal narrowness. We are fighting to maintain, not the accidents or details, but the very essence, of what is most distinctive and most valuable in our Reformation heritage.

Canon Beeching has spoken, in words for which **Mr. Lathbury and the Law.** we honour him, of the present "intolerable condition of lawlessness." Mr. Lathbury will have none of this. "Lawlessness" there may be, but it is not "intolerable." Apparently it is very admirable. It is a curious perversity—for it cannot be ignorance—that prevents Mr. Lathbury from seeing that so long as the Prayer-Book remains as the schedule of an Act of Parliament, the Privy Council is the only final authority for the interpretation of its rubrics. Those who dislike this may seek relief by constitutional means. The proper method of relief is by alteration of the law, not by disobedience to its requirements. Mr. Lathbury says: "The decisions of the Judicial Committee are no longer law, except to one English bishop and one colonial archbishop." Two points are sufficient to disprove this little piece of flippant malice. The fact that the Bishop of Manchester has recently received a memorial from over 4,000 laymen in his own diocese, thanking him for the firmness of his recent stand, shows that a disposition to obey the existing law, as constitutionally interpreted, is more deeply rooted and more widely spread than Mr. Lathbury had ever dreamed. The other point is to be found in the significant speeches of the Bishops of Durham, Liverpool and Manchester in the Upper House of the Northern Convocation. We believe that these prelates have been realizing more clearly than before the strength and the true direction of the forces they have been trying to placate.

Prayer-Book Revision. We have more than once expressed ourselves as on the side of revision. We believe that a book which dates from the sixteenth century needs adaptation for the twentieth. We are willing to agree to some

things which are somewhat distasteful to ourselves, in the interests of the common unity and comprehensiveness of the Church. But we are not prepared to admit any disturbance of the doctrinal balance of the book ; nor are we prepared, in our willingness to give and take, that all the giving shall be on our side and all the taking on the other. We believe we speak for many, possibly for most, of those members of the Evangelical school who are in favour of revision, and the events of the past few weeks have made a frank statement of our position a matter of importance. If our co-operation in the work of revision is to be continued, we must receive proper consideration. It is much to be desired that all Churchmen who are interested in the endeavour to make the Prayer-Book the best aid to worship in our modern Church should be able to work together in that endeavour. We have not yet lost hope that it may be so. But more than once the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation has rudely shaken our hopes. We have already indicated the grounds upon which we cannot agree to the permissive use of vestments. Two other matters have since arisen—the resolutions of the House anent Reservation and the Words of Administration at Holy Communion, in both of which scant heed has been paid to our position and our feelings.

There was a primitive custom, in accordance
Reservation. with which the consecrated elements were carried straight from the church at the time of the Communion Service to sick members of the congregation. The idea was that all might communicate together. In no true sense was this reservation. In itself it was certainly a harmless, and indeed a beautiful, custom. If we could be assured that all the practices which too frequently accompany reservation to-day would be forthwith given up, we would gladly welcome the renewal of this primitive custom. But we should live in a fool's paradise if we believed any such thing. There are some good, or at least harmless, things which become spoiled, and even pernicious, through improper usage. The razor which has been used to chop fire-

wood is a dangerous implement to shave with. It is useless to shut our eyes to the fact that the primitive custom differs *toto cælo* from the medieval and modern, and that reservation to-day is in too many cases a means of materializing our doctrine of Holy Communion. If the primitive custom is needed to-day, and we are disposed to doubt it, let us first be rid of all the medieval accretions to it, and then, and not till then, we shall be prepared to consider the question of its re-enactment.

This may seem a smaller matter, and perhaps in itself it is so. But the way in which it was handled in Convocation is discreditable—we are sorry to be compelled to use the word—to a fair-minded assembly. It has been decided, after strong protest, that the whole of the words of administration should be used once for each group of communicants, and then that the first half shall be said to each individual communicant. Let us recall the history of the words. In the Prayer-Book of 1549 the first half stood alone; in 1552 the second alone. It was felt that the first half was capable of a materialistic interpretation, hence the change. Under Elizabeth the two halves were combined by way of compromise. If we are now only to have one half, the second half, which is an invitation to receive, is, on the whole, rather more appropriate than the first. But we are prepared to recognize divergence of view. We shall be amply satisfied if the choice of either half be left open. Some will then use one, some the other, many at different times both. But we feel very strongly that the action of the Lower House was an unwarrantable exercise of the power of a majority, an act of ecclesiastical tyranny, which we regret very deeply indeed. Evangelicalism is sometimes twitted with being narrow and ungenerous; those who voted for this obnoxious resolution must look nearer home ere they use those words again. Let there be no misunderstanding. We are not going to be driven into the camp of the anti-revisionists, but we believe that no act of revision will reach consummation unless the Evangelical school consent, and, with

all the goodwill in the world, we cannot consent to partisan revision. We are revisionists, but once again we would make it clear—we will not be a party to the disturbance through a revised service-book of the Reformation settlement.

We refrained from saying anything last month about the controversy which has arisen about the Coronation Form and Order of Service to be used in parish churches. It has had the sad effect of dividing us on Coronation Day, for at least three forms of service will be used. The question of the words “altar” and “holy table” is not the only one involved. The very significant words of the King’s oath to maintain the Protestant Reformed religion were omitted from the Archbishops’ form. The Bishop of Manchester writes in his diocesan magazine :

“The omission of these words from the form commended by the Archbishops, adhering as that form does so closely to the wording of the rest of the Coronation Service and Rubrics, is an omission which will be noted with very great regret by most, if not by all, Churchmen.”

We venture to agree, and to express a hope that forms of service for special occasions will in future come under the particular personal notice of the Archbishops, and will not, as has been the case more than once, hurt the feelings of any school of thought in the Church.

