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THE CHURCHMAN

February, 1913.

The Month.

Evangelicals
in the
Church of
England.

THE author of "Types of English Piety"—one of the most interesting and suggestive books published last year—makes a prolonged and discriminating comparison between the *Sacerdotal* and the *Evangelical* types. He then goes on to remark :

"The Evangelical party in the Church of England occupy a somewhat peculiar and anomalous position in this respect. No one can question the rich contribution they have made to our national religious life. Romaine, Venn, Grimshaw, Fletcher, Newton, Cowper, Scott, and Simeon, to mention only the later examples, are great names, and they claim their rightful place in a Church which is as Evangelical in its Articles as it is Sacerdotal in its Liturgy. Many of the High Church clergy, too, are earnestly Evangelical in the wider sense of the word, and it may be said that the Sacraments themselves are steeped in Evangelical teaching. Yet the true Evangelical principle has never found itself, so to speak, within the borders of the Church of England. It has been compelled, both in the Nonconformist ejections of the seventeenth century and in the Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth, to seek its fullest and freest expression somewhere else. Evangelical clergymen may have cordially fraternized with their Free Church brethren on the Exeter Hall platform or in the tents of Keswick. But the standards of their own Church stubbornly prevent an equal and reciprocal communion. They must be institutional first of all and Evangelical afterwards."

Their Present
Task. Much in this criticism is true and would be generally admitted. But it perhaps errs a little in certain details. If by the "liturgy" the writer means the office of Holy Communion, we may demur to the proposition that it is sacerdotal in character. The work of Cranmer and of those who helped him is hardly of that description. There is not a word in the service that the most whole-hearted

Evangelical need hesitate about. And does not the history of the last hundred years show that the true Evangelical principle *has* "found itself" within the Church of England? It may not be the dominating factor at present, but it has made good its claim to be an integral and necessary part. We shall do well, however, not to take the kindly words of Mr. Coats merely as matter for criticism, but to regard them as a challenge and an inspiration. The Evangelical principle as depicted in his eloquent and sympathetic words does not and should not need a Nonconformist environment for its full fruition. It is our task and mission to show that in the Church of England, with its historic ministry, its deeply-rooted antiquity, its traditions of art and music, its ancient buildings, the true Evangelical spirit may fully flourish. As for the obstacles to equal and reciprocal communion, we must never slacken our efforts till they are abolished for ever.

The Bishop of Carlisle has contributed to a recent issue of the *Spectator* a strongly-worded and very able defence of the practice of Evening Communion. He emphasizes the bed-rock fact that the first Eucharist was celebrated in the evening and after a meal. Those who condemn evening communions are condemning the action of our Lord and His Apostles. And when abuses began to attend this custom of evening communion, as they did in the Church of Corinth, St. Paul's remedy, as the Bishop points out, is not to change the hour of holding the service, but to rouse his converts to a sense of their guilt in eating and drinking the body and blood of the Lord unworthily. As a matter of fact, the emphasis on fasting communion—which is the real nerve of the insistence on early communions—is in the last resort a materializing of the Holy Communion. Fitness for the service depends on other than temporal and physiological conditions. To lay down hard and fast rules, where our Lord has laid down none, is to place an intolerable burden on the shoulders of the Christian communicant. To thousands of devout Christians the

evening hour is not only the most convenient, but the most profitable, time for the sacred rite, and it will be a disastrous thing if ever freedom of choice in this matter is made impossible.

Religion in
Cambridge.

To all those who are concerned with the interests of Christianity in England, the state of religious belief in the Universities is a matter of profound importance. Some very reassuring words about the condition of things at Cambridge were recently addressed by Mr. Runciman, M.P., to an assembly of Young Methodists in London. "I remember," he said, "when I was at Cambridge it used to be the fashion for those of us who were about the age of twenty to regard it as the highest pinnacle of intellectual independence that we should call ourselves Agnostics. That was the Cambridge fashion of the day. I was back in Cambridge this year [1912], and I found that there was a complete change in the fashion. The young man of twenty of 1891 who would have been an Agnostic had changed into the young man of 1912, who was a simple, downright Christian, and not at all ashamed of the word." The change observed by Mr. Runciman is, we agree with him in believing, but a particular case of a more general tendency. We quote his words again: "The scientists of our younger days were men who were quite certain about their knowledge of facts, also quite certain with regard to Christianity—certain that it had no data on which to rest. I am not sure that they are not upsetting that attitude of mind, for now, if there is one thing more characteristic of scientists than another, it is that they are becoming agnostic about scientific facts, and more and more certain about theological facts."

The World
Conference.

America has long been known as the land of vigorous enterprise, and she is giving further evidence of this in the scheme for a World Conference on Faith and Order. All Christian communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as

God and Saviour are to be asked to unite in the Conference. The two Archbishops have appointed an English Committee to help in preparing for and arranging the Conference, which in all probability will be held in the United States. The English Committee is a thoroughly representative one, and may be trusted to deal with the matter in a practical way. We commend this great project to the sympathy and to the prayers of our readers. Christian reunion will never be reached if we are content to dream of it, with folded hands, as a beautiful but remote ideal. It is a matter that must be kept constantly before the mind of all the Churches. This can only be done by the constant reiteration of its claims in the pulpit, the press, and in great conferences such as this projected one, on the part of all those who not only join in our Lord's prayer "that they all may be one," but feel that they must do their part in securing the answer to it.

We have long been wont to confess in Wordsworth's language that "the world is too much with us." But at the present time the dictum is becoming true in a manner more real and stupendous than ever before. So far as the saying was true of our forefathers, it was a comparatively limited and local world—a world, too, in which they took an active part, that was present with them. But to-day, by means of telegraph, telephone, frequent editions of cheap newspapers, and now, lastly, by the animated pictures of the cinematograph, it is literally the whole world that is immediately and continuously present with us. And the result is to beget in us the spectator's attitude of mind, which in the long run diminishes the sense of personal responsibility. This, as the Archbishop of Canterbury has pointed out in a recent sermon, is a great and pressing danger. If our forefathers had a little world, it was at any rate a world in which they took a personal part; they felt some responsibility for the making and shaping of it. The new conditions have introduced dangers against which we should all be on our guard; especially the danger

*The Presence
of the World.*

of regarding the whole world process, so copiously revealed to us as a great drama of which we are merely the onlookers, rather than as a great struggle for righteousness, in which we must play an active part.

Seven young Oxford men have published a "Foundations." volume of essays, and they have called it "Foundations."¹ It is an attempt to restate in terms of modern thought the fundamental beliefs of Christianity. Unless we are mistaken, it will not create the stir that was made by "Lux Mundi," certainly not that made by "Essays and Reviews," but it is as interesting and probably quite as valuable as either. It is interesting because its authors are young, because they are able, and because they all of them hold positions of prominence. It is valuable because it enables the reader to gauge the influence which the critical spirit of the age has had upon the faiths of seven brilliant young Oxford men, the influence which it seems likely to have upon thoughtful minds during the next few years. The book is called "Foundations," and the name at once suggests a danger. You cannot restate foundations, you can only tamper with them at your peril. You can explain foundation truths, but you must beware lest, in the explanation, you remove either the fundamental element in them or the truths themselves from the category of the fundamental. The tone of the book is entirely reverent; it is clearly intended to be helpful, and there is an obviously sincere desire to arrive at the truth; but the authors are too much the victims of the academic atmosphere in which they live. We should like to bring the thought of the book into the practical arena. How are these newly-adjusted foundations to be made the basis of the Christian life of a Tyneside docker, a Lancashire cotton-operative, or a Birkenhead shipwright? The sons of labour are beginning to think, and the Christian faith is the same for them as for Oxford. They will express it differently, but it will be the same faith. We are far from asking Oxford to water down the truth in the interests of

¹ Edited by R. H. Streeter. London: Macmillan. Price 10s. 6d. net.

the acceptance of the faith by the masses, but we do ask them to refrain from pressing mere theories, and to take care neither to overstate nor to understate the truth in the interests of a broad liberalism, or of the freedom of academic atmosphere. At least one essay in this book seems to have forgotten that the Oxford of to-day influences the whole country to-morrow.

Mr. Streeter writes on the historic Christ, and of course discusses the Resurrection. Somewhat hesitatingly, and admittedly without the approval of all his colleagues, he explains the Resurrection appearances by a theory of visions. We are not here concerned to discuss the relative merits of such theories, whether subjective or objective, but we are clear that Mr. Streeter ought not to throw over the historically based tradition of the centuries without the best of reasons. What is his main reason? He objects to the empty tomb because if Christ really rose from the grave, then His risen body must have ascended, and as the risen body was material, its ascension involves the localizing and materializing of heaven. But the Evangelists take care to emphasize the changed character of the risen body. Some at least of the old limitations have gone, and it is in some mysterious way a spiritual body. St. Paul proceeds on the same lines. We do not understand what is meant by a spiritual body, but because we do not understand, we must not force a theory and base upon it an argument which denies the faith of centuries and the accuracy of statement both of the Evangelists and of St. Paul as well. Some few years ago the Bishop of London commended a novel to the reading public. It was somewhat silly and very sensational, and the centre of the plot was a denial of the empty tomb. But the Bishop knew the Victoria Park of his earlier days, and the concrete facts of the empty tomb meant much then, and we could understand his commendation. In Oxford it may do little harm (we are not so sure about it) to broach such a theory as Mr. Streeter's : if it is true it must be broached ; but we want to say to Mr. Streeter and to Oxford that a theory

of this kind tends to damage the faith of thousands and to make more difficult the Evangelistic labour of hundreds of his fellow clergy, and this being so, we do not feel that he had the right to send it forth on such slender evidence even if it does, as it doubtless does, help the "reduced" Christianity of those who, against Huxley and the huge majority of Christian men, believe that miracles are *a priori* possible.

Mr. Moberly
on the
Atonement.

We turn with interest to the work of the one layman amongst the seven. It is by Mr. Moberly, son of Professor Moberly of "Atonement and Personality," and Mr. Moberly writes on his father's subject, the Atonement, and he writes with filial piety along the lines of his father's view. Mr. Moberly differentiates the Catholic or Evangelical view of the Atonement from the Liberal and Rationalistic, and he works his way by a process of elimination to what he seems to consider a comprehensive position. It is the theory of vicarious penitence. With slight variations he follows in the footsteps of his father and of McLeod Campbell. Christ's perfect penitence gave, as Campbell put it, "a perfect answer in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man." Frankly, we believe this theory to be absolutely unsound. It is unscriptural, not only because there is no sign of it in Scripture, but because it is ruled out by Scripture teaching, and specially by the teaching that centres round the word "propitiation." And it is contrary to reason. Mr. Temple, in another essay, claims for a position that he lays down, that "it makes sense." Moberly and McLeod Campbell both admit that Christ's perfect penitence is, as of course in His case it must be, without sin. But surely consciousness of sin is at the root of penitence, and the theory breaks down. For ourselves, as we must choose between modern theories, we will follow Canon J. G. Simpson, in his so-called old-fashioned theory of the Atonement in preference to the modern thought of "Foundations." Modern thought is not always nor necessarily right.

Of the rest of the book we must say little. **The other Essays.** Mr. Rawlinson and Mr. Temple present perhaps the most attractive reading, although much that they say is open to criticism. Mr. Brook writes on the Bible and does not shock us seriously, mainly because he seems to leave problems unsolved. Much of the book seems to approach the territory sacred to such criticisms as that of Professor Kirsopp Lake and Herr Schweitzer, and now and again we get little seizures of such territory. The book is called "Foundations," but those that it presents are so inchoate, so shifting, so doubtful, that we are not enamoured of them. We may be old-fashioned, but the *J'y suis, J'y reste* attitude has attractions for us in matters fundamental, and though we are grateful for an attempt to help the modern mind to understand fundamental truths, we fear this book has gone a little too far to appease the changing tastes of a restless age in its presentation of the great facts of the Christian revelation.

