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THE CHURCHMAN

June, 1918.

The Month.

**Awakening
to the Danger.** THERE are not wanting signs that the decision of the Canterbury Convocation to change the Order of the Holy Communion Service is arousing loyal Churchmen to a sense of the danger which besets them from recent developments in Prayer-Book Revision; and it is highly satisfactory to find that this awakening is going on not least among the laity. The speeches made by laymen at the Annual Meeting of the National Church League on May 13 afforded a substantial indication of the anxiety which is felt concerning this latest change, and the reception accorded to those addresses by the large and representative audience left one in no doubt that there is a strong and a steadily growing determination to take every legitimate step to resist the encroachments of the Romeward drift and to defend our Evangelical and Protestant heritage. Indeed, the resolution, which was unanimously adopted, pledged the meeting to meet the proposals of Convocation "with a resolute and unflinching resistance." We do not doubt that the action taken at this meeting of the National Church League will set the standard for other gatherings of a similar character which, it may be hoped, will speedily be organized in different parts of England. It is deplorable that at such a time as this Evangelical Churchmen who, of all men, are most anxious to devote themselves to the spiritual interests of the country, should be compelled to turn aside from more congenial work and take their part in this fierce controversy. But it is not their fault; they enter the lists most reluctantly; the issue has been forced upon them, and they are not prepared, even in time of war, quietly to sit still while the Book of Common Prayer is being Romanized. They protest against the service of Holy Communion being changed into what is virtually the Mass, and they will never consent to the transformation. It is the Bishops and clergy in Convocation who

must bear the blame for stirring up serious strife in the Church at this critical juncture in the nation's history. It was inevitable that the struggle should come. Soon after the war broke out it was urged in these pages and elsewhere that a truce should be called and observed in all matters of ecclesiastical controversy, just as one had been agreed upon in matters of political controversy. But it was all to no purpose. Convocation as a body—we say nothing of individual members—showed itself to be so entirely obsessed by partisanship that not even would it allow the sorrows and anxieties of the war to restrain it from pushing forward its disastrous proposals, most of which have been in a Romeward direction. It is common knowledge that the extreme party in the Church have exploited the War, just as they did the National Mission, in their own interests and for advancing their own position, but Churchmen had the right to expect that an official body, such as Convocation, would refuse to be a party to so discreditable a manœuvre. Such expectation, however, has not been fulfilled. Convocation apparently is willing to “sell the Pass,” and nothing now remains to loyal Churchmen but to offer “a resolute and unflinching resistance” to its proposals. The true nature and grave significance of the changes in the Communion office to which the Convocation of Canterbury has given its assent were explained in a singularly lucid paper by Mr. W. Guy Johnson which appeared in last month's issue of the *CHURCHMAN*, and his arguments are reinforced in this issue by an able and weighty paper by the Rev. T. J. Pulvertaft. Churchmen should avail themselves of every opportunity of studying this question in all its bearings, and they will not be long in convincing themselves of the essentially retrograde character of the proposals. The papers we have just mentioned will be found of the utmost value in the discussion.

It was announced in an evening paper the other day that Sir Frederick Holiday, a parishioner, is “deputising for the Vicar of Whitwell (Herts) during his absence in France.” If this is the gentleman who is closely associated with the English Church Union we may take this “deputising” of his as an indication of a more liberal spirit in regard to lay help than is usually associated with the E.C.U. But however that may be, the question of lay ministration has suddenly

“Lay Deputies.”

become one of the most urgent importance. There appears to be a desire on the part of several of the bishops that clergy shall voluntarily place themselves in the position they would have been in if the clause relating to clergy in the new Military Service Act had been retained ; and as a result clergy are offering themselves in large numbers for some form of military or of national service. It is not possible at present to say to what extent the ranks of the clergy will be weakened by this means, but it is quite obvious that many gaps will have to be filled unless the work of the Church in a large number of parishes is to be brought to a standstill. How are the vacant places to be filled ? The most readily accessible source of supply is to be found in the ranks of the faithful laity, and Bishop Welldon has no hesitation in advocating their employment. He writes in *The Times* of May 11 :—

In the present growing dearth of clergy, when not only the parochial ministries are impaired, but many churches may soon be partially or wholly closed, is it not worth while to associate the laity in a much larger degree with the offices of religion ? The Church at home, despite the recognition of lay readers, makes far less use of laymen than the Church in the Empire abroad. In India, for example, there are, or have been, stations at which the regular performance of Divine Service has for years depended mainly upon devout laymen, with no more than occasional visits from the chaplains of the Establishment or of the Additional Clergy Society. Bishop Milman went so far in Calcutta as to allow a layman the privilege of administering the chalice at Holy Communion. It does not lie within my province to define the proper extension of lay ministry within the churches ; but I venture to think that the greater the part which laymen can take, under due authority, in the Divine Service, so long as they do not usurp the function which belongs to Holy Orders, the greater will be the strength of the Church in the national life.

It has been one of the weaknesses of the Church of England that so little use, comparatively, has been made of the ministrations of laymen, and we are now feeling the loss. The Lay Readers of the various dioceses or those of them who are above military age are available, and will doubtless be given the opportunity of exercising their ministry to a greater degree than ever before. But how different it would be if, in times past, the Church had shown a strong desire to make real and effective use of Christian laymen in spiritual work ; there would now be a strong body of experienced men ready and able to " carry on " throughout this time of national emergency. The position which has arisen will need to be dealt with carefully and wisely and we suppose the Bishops are giving it attention. Unfortunately, however, the Church is suffering just now from a

lamentable want of statesmanlike leadership, and until some official pronouncement is made it is impossible to say what really will be done. But we believe our readers will agree with us when we say that it will be nothing short of a scandal if for lack of clergy any churches are closed and people are denied the comfort and help of religious ministrations, when there are laymen in the parish or neighbourhood of proved experience and of recognized Christian character who would be ready and willing to conduct services and preach simple, helpful and edifying sermons if they were authorized to do so. The laity have no wish to intrude upon the special functions of the clergy, but it needs to be remembered that the blessed privilege of making known the glorious truths of the Gospel belongs not to clergy only but is shared by all true and faithful disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are two passages in the Report of the **The Laity and Evangelisation.** Archbishops' National Mission Committee of Inquiry on "The Evangelistic Work of the Church" — an important document to which we shall return in a future number—bearing directly upon the question of Lay Ministrations. "It is a delusion to imagine that upon the clergy alone lies the responsibility for the evangelistic work of the Church. To lose sight of Christ's intention that every member of the priestly body should share directly in its evangelistic responsibilities is to minimize the privilege and obligation of discipleship. The necessity for an evangelistic clergy is indisputable: not less so an evangelistic laity." We need not stop to inquire who is responsible for the state of things which has grown up, but in common fairness to the laity it should be stated that they have not always met with the encouragement they had a right to expect when they have offered their services for Church work. The Report of the Archbishops' Committee, indeed, practically recognizes the fact and deplures it, calling for "more venture on both sides." The following passage is interesting:—"It is useless to contemplate any movement of extension unless the Church can command the entire strength and service of the laity. They must not be ashamed to confess Christ crucified with their lips as well as in their lives. The ordinary man, speaking in an unconventional manner of his religious experience, may have a power that is denied

to the preacher, all the greater if the effort of speech be costly. The clergy have often very impoverished ideas of the ministry which may be expected from the laity. More venture on both sides would make a profound difference to the whole work and influence of the Church." The Report has in view the ordinary work of the Church under more settled conditions—and from this point of view represents a long step forward—but the present emergency is one of great urgency and we hope that full advantage will be taken of lay ministrations to fill the gap.

The Bishop of Ely's letter to Canon Glazebrook **Historical facts of the Creed.** raises an issue of great importance. It has been referred to in the public Press and we give its text for convenience of reference hereafter :—

THE PALACE, ELY, *April, 26 1918.*

MY DEAR CANON GLAZEBROOK,—I feel that it is my duty as Bishop of the Diocese formally to write to you and to tell you that I am unable to admit the "claim" which, as I understand you, you put forward in your recently published book *The Faith of a Modern Churchman* (p. 78) that the two clauses of the Apostles' Creed—"Born of the Virgin Mary" and "The third day he rose again from the dead"—can legitimately be "interpreted symbolically." That this position of mine, to which I have thus given expression, is not simply that of an individual Bishop is clear from the following facts. The Bishops of the whole Anglican Communion assembled at the Lambeth Conference of 1908 passed the following Resolution: "This Conference, in view of tendencies widely shown in the writings of the present day, hereby places on record its conviction that the historical facts stated in the Creeds are an essential part of the Faith of the Church." Again, on April 30, 1914, the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury passed a Resolution in which they "solemnly re-affirmed" the Resolution of the Lambeth Conference just quoted.

I am bound also to call attention to a later paragraph in your book (p. 79), in which you use these words: "Similar questions arise about the corresponding clauses in the Nicene Creed. And there are others concerning the more elaborate Christology of that Creed, which involve more issues than can be raised in these pages." What further "claim" may be covered by the last sentence I do not know.

When I had read your book, of which you kindly sent to me a copy on February 18, I made up my mind that it would be my duty, however painful to me, publicly as Bishop to state my opinion about the claim which I understand you to make as to the interpretation of the clauses of the Apostles' Creed. It was very distasteful to me as a student publicly to challenge your conclusions without at the same time publicly challenging the arguments by which you endeavour to justify your conclusions, including your statements and your exegesis of passages in the New Testament. I have however found hitherto impossible by reason of the pressure of necessary work to give proper attention to this task; and I now realize that in the immediate future I shall be unable to devote sufficient time to it. Since continued silence on my part in regard to the "claim" advanced in your book as to the interpreta-

tion of the Apostles' Creed is liable to be misunderstood by many, I have decided that my right course is without further delay to address to you this letter and to make it public in the *Diocesan Gazette*. I am, Yours very sincerely, F. H. ELY.

We said the Bishop's letter raises an issue of great importance; we hope we may believe it is significant of the adoption of a policy of greater watchfulness on the part of the Bishops over the pronouncements of individual clergy on matters concerning the Christian faith. We have no love for mere heresy hunting, but where the historical accuracy of certain articles of the Creed is impugned it does seem to us to be of the very first importance that the Bishops should take notice of the fact. So much license has been allowed to University Professors and Cathedral dignitaries that it is difficult for the ordinary man in the street to know what is really and assuredly believed among us, with the result that an infinity of mischief has been done, and the simple faith of many has been wrecked. Is it not possible that the Bishops should do more than they have done to mark their disapproval of these things and to vindicate the historical facts of the Christian faith? Resolutions of Convocation are all very well as far as they go—not, however, that that is very far—but something more is called for. Each case should be dealt with as it arises and the Bishop of Ely's letter is a welcome indication that statements such as those put forth by Canon Glazebrook are not to be allowed to pass unchallenged.

But the danger is not confined to the writings "Modernism" of University Professors and Cathedral dignitaries. **in the Parish.**

It threatens the parish, and if "Modernism" obtain a hold in our parish pulpits the mischief will be incalculable. We are no alarmists, but facts must be faced, and it is a fact of some importance that a new organization has lately come into being with the avowed object of claiming, among other things, "the right and duty of the Church to restate her faith from time to time in accordance with the intellectual needs of the age." This organization known as "The Liberal Catholic Union" aims at a large membership, and, by fixing the minimum subscription at one shilling hopes not to exclude the poorest supporter. The manifesto is signed by nine clergymen, all of whom, with one exception, are engaged in parochial work.