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THE CHURCHMAN

July, 1927.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

"The Composite Book" and "The Deposited Book."

ON March 29 and 30 the Bishops presented the final form of their proposals for the revision of the Prayer Book to the Houses of Convocation of Canterbury and York in the form of "the Deposited Book." The change of title from "the Composite Book" presented for consideration to the Houses of Convocation in February was due to technical changes in the method of procedure and was intended to simplify the presentation of the New Book to Parliament. Such a change at the last moment seems to indicate that the Bishops had not given that full and mature consideration to the details of the Book which the importance of the occasion and the issues depending on it demanded. One of the strongest claims put forward for the Bishops' proposals is that they are the result of twenty years' work, and represent the mature judgment of the united episcopate on the problems involved. It has been pointed out that in the end, either from undue haste or ill-considered methods, some unfortunate mistakes were made. Among these was the inclusion in the Composite Book of a form for the ordination of deaconesses which had to be removed from the Deposited Book as it had never been brought before the House of Laity. Although these may be comparatively small matters in themselves they are sufficient to minimize the confidence that may be claimed for the New Book on the ground of its being the result of long years of careful consideration.

The Probable Results of the Revision.

In spite of many forecasts as to the benefits to be gained from the revision, the truth is that no one can foretell the probable results of the acceptance of the Deposited Book. Its interpretation will give rise to many complicated legal problems. One fact is clear, that almost unlimited powers will be put into the hands of the Bishops to compel the laity to accept one or other of the many combinations of services which will become possible if the new Book becomes the Prayer Book of the Church. It has been pointed out that there are seven different ways in which the Athanasian Creed may be used, that there are four ways of using the Psalter, and that twenty-seven pages are taken up with the variants that may be adopted in Morning and Evening Prayer. "At the discretion of the

Minister of the Parish" any alternative order of Service or any paragraph may be substituted for the corresponding Order of the Book of Common Prayer. This provision is subject to the limitation that such changes should not be made arbitrarily or without the good will of the people, as represented in the Parochial Church Council. If any question arises it is to be referred to the Bishop of the Diocese and he is to "make orders thereupon, and these orders shall be final." The purpose of the passing of the Enabling Act was to secure for the laity a large share in the settlement of the affairs of the Church, but in the matter of worship recent legislation has tended to place them more than ever before under episcopal direction. In this and many other directions no one can foresee what may arise from the adoption of the new Prayer Book.

Unfortunate Elements in the Controversy.

It is regrettable that in the heat of controversy some of the supporters of the new Prayer Book should have referred to those who found themselves unable to vote in favour of it as "extreme" men. It is generally recognized that even so short a period of time as twelve years ago the Bishops would not have made the proposals for Reservation and an Alternative Communion Service contained in the present book. No one would have spoken of them as "extreme" men. They represented the teaching and practice of the Church of England since the Reformation. Those who are now maintaining the same teaching and representing the same position cannot with any fairness be described as holding extreme views, and they are justified in protesting against the attitude thus adopted by those who have supported changes which many regard as a departure from the past tradition of our Church. One of those who voted against the acceptance of the New Book says: "As long as the assertion that our Lord instituted the Eucharist to be a memorial before the Father and an invocation of the Holy Spirit on the elements remain in the Canon, I, for one, shall continue to oppose the Book on the ground that these features stand for doctrine which cannot be found in the New Testament, which in my opinion are untrue, and which, in consequence, it is the duty of every Christian man thinking as I do to witness against." That is a clear statement of a position hitherto recognized as representing the Anglican teaching contained in our Prayer Book. To describe it as an "extreme" position is to obliterate old landmarks.

The Bishops and Change in Doctrine.

In the discussion on the Bishops' Proposals we are constantly brought back to the question: Do they involve a change of doctrine? In the Preface to the Deposited Book the Bishops declare, "If the minds of any be troubled because we have allowed another Order of Holy Communion as well as the old, and have made further provision for the communion of the sick, let them not think that we mean thereby any change of doctrine or intend that the Sacrament be used otherwise than as our Lord Himself appointed. In all

things we have set before our eyes the duty of faithfulness to the teaching of Scripture and the godly and decent order of the ancient Fathers." This declaration of the intentions of the Bishops is satisfactory, but it does not relieve the rest of the Church from responsibility in considering two questions which are involved in the changes proposed. First, What is the actual teaching of the Church which the Bishops say they do not intend to change? and secondly, Can the statements introduced into the new Communion Service be regarded as in accord with the teaching of Scripture? The answer of many churchpeople to these questions is that although the Bishops may not have intended any change, yet the introduction of the epiclesis and the memorial in the new Canon involve a change that is more than a mere matter of emphasis, or of rendering explicit what was before implicit. They also maintain that there is no ground in Scripture for the statement in the new Consecration Prayer that a memorial is set before the Divine Majesty which our Lord willed us to make "with these thy holy gifts."

The Ultimate Good of the Church.

A number of churchpeople are willing to accept the Bishops' proposals in spite of the fact that they do not regard the teaching contained in them as in harmony with our present Prayer Book, partly out of regard to loyalty for the episcopal office and partly from a desire to give the Bishops the opportunity, which they say this book will provide them, of securing peace and order in the Church. We are told that it is the only means of preventing "the indefinite prolongation of anarchy," although it would seem strange in any other organization than the Church to prevent anarchy by yielding to the demands of those who produce it. We are told that those who voted for the proposals "put the good of the whole Church first." It remains to be seen whether the acceptance of the Bishops' proposals will be for the ultimate good of the Church. If the changes give opportunity for the development of our Communion Service on the lines of the Roman Mass, as we are assured it will, and as the acceptance of it by a large section of Anglo-Catholics seems to imply, there can be no doubt that serious injury will have been done not only to the Church but to the Anglican Communion throughout the world. There are some matters on which, as Sir William Joynson-Hicks said at the Annual Meeting of the National Church League, compromise is impossible. The whole scheme of revision seems at present to be based on the idea that two mutually exclusive conceptions of Christianity can be comprised in our Church. One or other of them must prevail and oust its rival, and that is the issue which has to be faced, but which some seem anxious to ignore.

Indications of Future Episcopal Action.

Meanwhile there are indications that the limitations on Anglo-Catholic advance provided in the Deposited Book will not be effective. It is significant of future developments that while these

proposals were under consideration one of the Suffragan Bishops in the Diocese of London—the Bishop of Kensington—at the ordination of a priest in St. Matthew's, Westminster, on March 13, introduced an unwarranted ceremony by presenting to the candidate the Eucharistic vessels. This is the *porrectio instrumentorum* to be found in the ordinal of the Roman Catholic Church, but not in ours. The Bishop of Truro has introduced the use of incense at the Communion Service in the Cathedral of his diocese. In the dioceses of Liverpool and Lichfield recent decisions show that it will be possible to have a light burning before the aumbry containing the reserved elements. In addition to these indications of more or less official developments, there are the pronouncements of Anglo-Catholic organizations and individual clergy that they will not accept the book. One of these organizations pronounces the book "heretical in tendency, subversive of catholic constitutional principles, and liturgical proprieties, and mischievous in the highest degree, and advises Priests without hesitation or qualification to refuse acceptance of it." Several parochial clergy of the Anglo-Catholic School have declared that they cannot accept the Revised Prayer Book owing to the restrictions that it would impose upon them. In view of these actions of some of the Bishops, which we have pointed out, churchpeople are anxious to know how the episcopate will deal with the conditions indicated in these pronouncements.

The Free Churches and the Revised Prayer Book.

The Free Churches in England have obviously an interest in the teaching of the National Church. The Baptists and the Presbyterians have recently expressed their views on the new Prayer Book. The Baptist Union passed a resolution declaring that many of the changes in the Revised Prayer Book were definitely anti-Protestant. Dr. Rushbrooke, in moving the resolution, said that "the *via media* between Catholicism and Protestantism, which it was the old boast of the Church to represent, would, if the Revised Prayer Book were adopted, be removed to a new position—half-way between the old middle course and the Roman Catholic margin. There was not the slightest guarantee against the shifting of the line still nearer to the Roman line. Who would have the audacity to assert that the authority of the Bishops could hold in check the agitation of the Anglo-Catholics? That authority was defied whenever it suited the Anglo-Catholic party to challenge it." The Bishops had surrendered position after position, and had not set up a single effective safeguard against final, absolute, unconditional surrender. If the Anglican Church trod the Rome-ward path, others could not incur the guilt of acquiescence by a feeble silence.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England passed a long reasoned resolution in which it disclaimed any wish to interfere in the domestic concern of another Church, but as issues were involved in which the nation and the Churches, especially those which value the maintenance of evangelical and reformed truth in the land, have a legitimate and responsible interest, the Assembly,

while not called on to express approval of the Book, declined to join in seeking its rejection in Parliament on the ground, among other reasons, that "it would not check, but would rather perpetuate, practices within that Church which are inimical to the principles of the Evangelical and reformed faith." The Assembly added that it was due to the nation that the episcopate should give unambiguous and adequate guarantee that the Book "will be administered in what it inhibits as well as in what it sanctions, and will set a limit as to what is permitted within the Church of England as by law established." This cautiously worded resolution contains sufficient indications of the anxiety of English Presbyterians regarding the existence in our Church of practices inimical to the Evangelical and reformed faith.

Roman Catholics and the Revision.

The Roman Catholic Church is also interested in the probable issues of the acceptance of the Bishops' proposals. A representative writer of that Church in giving his impressions of the situation, says that the main body of the Church of England will accept—though many of them with reluctance—the guidance of the Bishops in order to procure peace. This peace depends on the acceptance of the measure by the Anglo-Catholics. The recent declaration of Lord Halifax against the new Canon, and the pronouncements of other Anglo-Catholic leaders do not "seem to open out a very cheerful prospect for the Church of England." The "extreme Low Church party" professed readiness to accept the new Prayer Book, much as they disliked it, if the Archbishop of Canterbury would guarantee the suppression of all extravagances. This pledge the Archbishop was not in a position to give. These considerations, with the holding of an Anglo-Catholic Congress in London "which is to be as far as possible an imitation of our Eucharistic Congresses with many 'High Masses' and other demonstrations of what the Congressists will call their Catholic principles" may endanger the passing of the Book. The writer thinks that the acceptance of the Book will result in a "Low Church schism" as soon as it is seen that "the violently Protestant character of the Church of England will be lost, as it certainly will be." Those who leave the Church may join the Wesleyans and thus "form a really strong and eminently respectable Protestant body." It is harder to prophesy about the "Anglos." They will not follow the example of the Non-jurors and form a new schism, but they are hopelessly divided, and the extremists must speedily find their home in the Catholic Church. They must see that there is no alternative. "So far there has been excitement and constant progress towards true Catholicism. In their hearts they have realized what Cardinal Newman wrote long ago, that 'the goal of the Movement is Rome.' Now progress will be impossible. The Movement will become static, no longer dynamic. . . . I am therefore convinced that the work of the Movement, *as a movement*, has run its course. Catholics may hopefully watch and pray as they see the harvest slowly gathered

in." Rome has always anticipated being the residuary legatee of the Oxford Movement, and Revision has apparently increased its hopes.

Editorial Note.

We are grateful to the Archbishop of Armagh for allowing us to print the summary of the lecture in which he gives an interesting and valuable interpretation of Primitive Christian worship as illustrated in the Ancient Churches of Italy. Dr. G. G. Coulton's statement on the present condition of Religion in France is the outcome of a recent visit to that country. Bishop Knox puts forward the view that the Epistle of the Hebrews was addressed to the Samaritans and states a number of interesting arguments in support of his opinion. The Rev. Thos. J. Pulvertaft's article on Prayer Book Revision is a strong statement of the case against the acceptance of the Deposited Book. Bernardino Ochino of Siena was a preacher of note in his day who favoured the views of the Reformation. Mr. John Knipe has given an account of his life which will help to stimulate the attention due to his work. The account of Puritanism: Its History, Spirit and Influence, is from the pen of the Rev. Sydney Carter, whose historical writings are well known to readers of THE CHURCHMAN. Dr. Downer's Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews in his article on The Session of our Lord at the Right Hand of God is a contribution from a writer on Biblical subjects who is also well known to our readers. The Editorial Comments deal mainly with various aspects of Prayer Book revision, as the subject of most pressing interest at the present time. We have been obliged to hold over reviews of many interesting books, but we have made a selection which we hope will prove a guide to our readers on some subjects of special current interest.

We live in an age when health concerns interest all classes. It is our duty to be healthy, but we think that a great many are unhealthy through fussiness about their health. Mr. J. Ellis Barker has formed an alliance with the distinguished surgeon, Sir Arbuthnot Lane, and has published books that are full of knowledge. We read and we sometimes think that wisdom may linger. There is much good advice in *Good Health and Happiness* (John Murray, 7s. 6d.), but we also believe that it contains a good deal of speculative uncertainty. The ideas may be sound and unchallengeable, but all ideas are not universally applicable. And what do we really know about vitamins? The road to good health does not lie in food fads but in good living, moderate eating and healthy exercise. And most of us keep well by avoiding what we know disagrees with us and living plainly. Mr. Barker knows how to write with interest and the bibliography at the end of the book proves his industry.