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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Editorial

IT is said that "some have greatness thrust upon them". It appears that I have fallen into this category, for I am told that people have associated my name with the Editorial which appeared in the last issue of *The Churchman*. Humility and modesty compel me, however, to decline the greatness that others would thrust upon me. I neither wrote the Editorial nor had any knowledge of it beforehand.

PRAYER BOOK REVISION

The last two Papers which were given at the Oxford Evangelical Conference in September now appear in this issue of *The Churchman*. The Conference revealed that Evangelicals were fully aware that certain aspects of Revision could be of real and lasting benefit to the Church as a whole. This is clearly stated in the Findings, which are given in this issue, and in the Papers which were read (three having already appeared in the *Church Gazette*). It is, however, very evident that Evangelicals are not prepared to accept the 1549 as the basis of Revision nor are they willing to go back to the 1549 Service of Holy Communion.

A revision of the Book of Common Prayer at any time is bound to run into difficulties, but to seek to revise it in the midst of the confusion created by Canon Law Revision would be most unwise. There is a right time for everything, but one hardly feels that to-day is a time for any kind of revision. For the present problems of revision should be left on one side and the whole Church of England should unite to deal with the tragic collapse of moral standards and the appalling increase of crime.

The Lambeth Bishops could not be expected to deal with this domestic matter, but the Church of England must deal with it. Our Lord said that the Church is "the salt of the earth", and the first thing necessary is for the Church to act in unity so that a definite impact may be made upon the social problems in our country. Then the "pulling of strings" for preferment should be discouraged and more room in this matter should be left to the Spirit of God. It is time that the best men be chosen rather than those who will fit into a peculiar pattern which may be quite contrary to a "forward movement" of the Church of God in the lives of men and women in our parishes to-day. Again, has the time not come for us to cease talking about evangelism, and to evangelize? It is true that a few people have been keen on evangelism, but the Church as a whole has not been engaged in it. It may be argued that the best person to do this is the vicar in the parish. We acknowledge the truth of this, but unfortunately—and it would be remarkable if it were otherwise—many vicars are not evangelists, but they are nevertheless anxious to have evangelistic missions, but where are the evangelists? It would be a good thing, therefore, if the Church had a number of full-time evangelists fully trained to do the work for which God had called them. Someone should be appointed with the full authority of the Church, to organize such a team, and the Church should be willing to give full financial aid

to such a project. It is the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, and which changes the lives of men and women. It has done so in the past—it can do so at the present. We must, of course, not stop at Evangelism. Our people must be taught once again the doctrines of our Faith, that they may be able to give a “reason of the hope which lies within them”. They should be taught not only to “live” Christ—that is most necessary—but to tell others why they do this and why they believe in Jesus Christ.

THOMAS HEWITT.

FINDINGS OF THE OXFORD CONFERENCE

(1) The worship of the living God must be by the living Church, and this worship can only be rightly offered when it is in full harmony with the revelation given by God in the Holy Scriptures as declared in Article XX.

(2) The Conference agrees with the Liturgical Commission that the Revision in the Church of England should be Conservative and maintains that the 1662 Book of Common Prayer should remain the basic pattern.

(3) The Conference recognizes the need for duly authorized additional Prayers and Services (such as are contained in the 1926 Prayer Book of the Church of Ireland) but in the meantime reminds the Church of the immense resources already available in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

(4) The Conference is aware that the Baptism Service is often misunderstood and thus is in need of revision. It is anxious that any revised service shall continue to maintain the full teaching of Scripture.

(5) The statement in the Lambeth Conference Report claiming that “controversies about the Eucharistic Sacrifice can be laid aside” is prematurely optimistic. The opinion of the Report that Christ’s Sacrifice can be presented to God again and again is inconsistent with the fundamental doctrine of Justification by Faith, which expresses the completion of God’s work in man’s salvation.

(6) The Conference commends to the sympathetic consideration of any future revising committee those features of the liturgy of the Church of South India which are particularly welcome, namely, its simplicity, its emphasis on the Word of God, the riches of its praise and the fullness of its congregational participation.
