

## THE MONTH.

THE Charge of the Bishop of Exeter is so important a pronouncement that we make no apology for returning to the subject. Dr. Robertson discussed the burning question of vestments, and even though it will be impossible for either party in the Church to feel satisfied with the Bishop's position, the remarks of so clear a thinker and so practical a Prelate are worthy of most careful consideration. In spite of Canons 24, 25, and 58, and the unbroken usage of nearly three hundred years, Bishop Robertson's judgment is as follows :

In spite of the fact that the highest court of the empire had twice decided that Queen Elizabeth took such "further order" as not directly to forbid, but, by implication, to supersede the vestments ordered by the First Prayer-Book to be used at Holy Communion, he must frankly say that his own view of the matter was *non liquet*. One thing emerged clearly—that the Canon obliged the priest or deacon in a parish church in all public prayer or administration of the Sacraments to wear a decant and comely surplice with sleeves, and, if a graduate, a hood. Whether that precluded the wearing of other vestments in addition was a point upon which he did not feel competent to form an opinion. But the parish was obliged to provide the surplice, and there was no obligation to provide any other vestment. The *gravamen* sometimes raised against the clergy at large for disobeying the plain directions of the Ornaments Rubric could not be taken seriously, the rubric itself being far from plain.

Notwithstanding the indecisive character of the Bishop's remarks, it is at least something to know (1) that the Canons are on the side of those who hold that the surplice and scarf only are the legal vestments ; (2) that unbroken usage points in the same direction ; (3) that the highest courts of law have decided in the same way ; (4) that the parish is obliged to provide a surplice, and is under no obligation to provide any other vestments ; (5) that the charge made by extreme ritualists that all but themselves are disloyal to the plain teaching of the Rubric is really absurd. These are facts and considerations of the weightiest import, and one of the most significant things about the whole matter is that there is practically nothing to set against these on the other side. Surely this should count for a great deal.

The Bishop of Exeter's conclusion as to the present policy about the Rubric is :

He suggested that Churchmen of all schools might unite in some *modus vivendi*. First, by common consent, extravagant interpretations of the Rubric might be quietly dropped ; on the one hand, the claim that it covered the whole of the mediæval ornaments and ceremonial, on the other hand, the recent theory that the rubric was only meant to impound all mediæval ornaments pending some other order for their disposal. Secondly, pending some new regulation of the matter, it might be agreed

that in churches where the vestments had been revived for a certain length of time, they should be left unchallenged, but that their use should not be revived in other places. This would mean an honest recognition on both sides of the strong points of the other and to an abandonment of the provocative and factious refusal to see more than one side."

We do not suppose that this advice is likely to be followed by either side in view of the serious issues involved. It is a great thing, however, to have Dr. Robertson's common-sense view in reference to the oft-made assertion that the Ornaments Rubric covers the whole of mediæval ornaments. It is always a puzzle to us that men who plead for the chasuble as expressive of the doctrine of the Mass should not be able to see that the Prayer-Book as a whole, and the Articles in particular, are clearly opposed to the doctrine thus symbolized. To make the Prayer-Book order a vestment which teaches Roman doctrine, and then for that same book to call the doctrine itself "blasphemous fables and pernicious impostures" is surely a height of absurdity that not even extreme ritualists, we should think, would charge against the compilers of the Prayer-Book in the sixteenth century. The Bishop of Exeter's Charge is now published in pamphlet form, and notwithstanding our inability to follow him on all points, we welcome the Charge as worthy of the study of all who have at heart the best interests of our Church.

The question of the Ornaments Rubric came up in a very acute form in the recent session of the Joint Houses of Laymen, when Mr. de Winton moved a resolution, "That, subject to the consent of the Bishop and the desire of the congregation, there should be a permissive use of a distinctive dress for the minister at Holy Communion." Whether this resolution was *un ballon d'essai* in view of the forthcoming report of the Royal Commission, we cannot say; but Mr. Athelstan Riley moved the previous question, which was carried, and so the matter was not debated to a clear issue. However, the question thus raised has not been unproductive of good, for by the action of the Dean of Canterbury and Prebendary Webb Peploe a large number of signatures was obtained to a memorial against the use of a distinctive vestment at Holy Communion. This gave a fine opportunity of testing the opinions of a large body of Church people on this question, and within forty-eight hours several thousand signatures were obtained. As the numbers have since increased still further, the memorial is to be presented to the Royal Commission. Its wording is very unambiguous and significant:

We solemnly declare our conviction that the authorization of any such vesture, other than is now allowed by law in Cathedral and Collegiate

Churches, being inconsistent with the practice of the Church of England for three hundred years after the Reformation, would be significant of the authorization of erroneous doctrine, and would be inconsistent with the Catholic, Evangelical and Protestant character of our Reformed Church, and we should resist to the last any such authorization.

We are thankful for this plain Declaration, for it brings matters to a very definite issue. When memorialists assert their determination to "resist to the last" any change in the law there is scarcely a doubt of what lies hid in the words. "To the last" would mean a disaster for the English Church from which we may well pray to be spared.

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We are glad to see that the *Guardian* endorses our suggestion that Canon Driver should give a list of those results of the Higher Criticism which he and other critics say are assured and put beyond all question. Meanwhile a great deal of interest has been elicited by some lectures by Dr. Emil Reich on "The Failure of the Higher Criticism," in which he took the Higher Critics to task for the fundamental error of their method in making philology the basis of their critical researches. Dr. Reich urged that problems of history are not to be solved in this way, and that as history is the grammar of action, we must judge the Old Testament narratives by means of some surer criterion than that of language. In a series of brilliant arguments Dr. Reich pleaded for the historicity and monotheism of Abraham, for the historicity of Moses and the Exodus, and for the ethical monotheism which became articulate under Moses. He pointed out that not a single trace appears in any other national records of an exodus, or *trek*, and by various considerations he came to the conclusion that the stories recorded in Genesis and Exodus are essentially historical in character. Dr. Reich is to publish a book on the subject in a few weeks' time, when we shall see still more clearly the standpoint he assumed in his articles in the *Contemporary Review* and in his recent articles. We feel sure that when historical criticism is thus brought to bear on merely philological criticism the weakness and unsatisfactoriness of the latter as a method for determining the date, character, and trustworthiness of the Old Testament will be evident.

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Meanwhile, we have had yet another illustration of the subjective character of modern criticism, and the length to which it will go. In the new volume of the "International Critical Commentary on Amos and Hosea," written by

Principal Harper of Chicago University, we are told, without the faintest shadow of hesitation, that

We may safely deny the ascription to Moses of literary work of any kind. . . . But without much question we may hold him responsible for the institution of the Tent of Meeting . . . the Ark, and the beginning of a priesthood, and this is the germ of much of the institutional element that follows in later years.

The calm way in which all this is assumed to be absolutely certain and beyond all possibility of doubt is very noteworthy. Time was when conservative critics like Dr. Robertson, in his "Early Religion of Israel," could assume, for argument's sake, the modern critical opinion about the Books of Amos and Hosea as the earliest written Books of the New Testament, and then work back thence to inquire as to their testimony to the earlier religion of Israel. Now, however, it would seem that when this argument is used, as it can be used with force against the modern critical position, we are told of later interpolations which have got into our Books of Amos and Hosea, and so the ground changes, and the subjectivity of much of Old Testament criticism shows itself more and more plainly to its own condemnation. A position that has to fall back on a theory of interpolations or textual emendations when anything appears which conflicts with it is surely neither scientific nor trustworthy.

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On the subject of Old Testament criticism, the editor of the *Expositor*, Dr. Robertson W. Nicoll, made a noteworthy pronouncement the other day. In the course of a lecture on "Mysticism in Theology and Practice," delivered at the Aberdeen Summer School of Theology, he spoke as follows :

It is not possible that the ordinary mind should be able to follow the patient and intricate processes of historical criticism—these processes which, when understood, cast so strong a light on the progressiveness of Divine revelation. These have a place of their own, and are full of precious instruction. But in speaking to the people the preacher must take the Old Testament as it stands or leave it alone.

These last words strike us as a very significant confession. Do they not convey the clear implication that it is only the Old Testament as it is that can be preached, that the reconstructed Old Testament of the critics cannot be made intelligible, or at any rate spiritually profitable to ordinary congregations? If this is a fair inference from Dr. Nicoll's words, then we have one of the strongest proofs of the essential falsity of the modern critical position. An Old Testament that cannot be preached is practically worthless, while an Old Testament that can be preached is fraught with the most precious spiritual instruction to the soul. We seem, then, to have to make a choice, for we must take and preach

the Old Testament as it is, or limit our preaching entirely to the New Testament. Can there be any hesitation as to what we should do?

The Bishop of Gibraltar has just been presented with a cope and mitre by chaplains and other friends within his jurisdiction. The Bishop, in returning thanks to the donors, said he accepted their gift the more gladly,

because it was now getting to be recognised generally that the wearing of the full episcopal dress was in no sense of the nature of a partisan manifesto, but simply the natural thing to do in distinguished places and on great occasions. And nowhere was it so fitting and right that it should be worn as by the English Bishop having charge of our congregations in Southern Europe, where it was desirable that we should both show our fellowship as far as possible with the Churches of the countries in which we were living, and also make it clear to them that we claim for our Bishops the very same episcopal character that we have always claimed, as well now as in the days when there was no breach of Communion between the Continental Churches and our own.

It strikes us as a somewhat curious attitude of mind that fails to see in the mitre nothing "of the nature of a partisan manifesto." We have often wished to be told the legal authority for the mitre in the English Church. Even the much-used Ornaments Rubric can hardly be made to include this article of attire. We have sought, and so far have sought in vain, for any legal authority for the use of the mitre. Under these circumstances, and in view of the present confusions in our Church, it would hardly seem to be asking too much of our Bishops to avoid the use of an article of attire which cannot help being regarded as in some senses a party manifesto. As to the Bishop of Gibraltar's arguments that the use of cope and mitre is nowhere so fitting and right as in the Roman Catholic countries of South Europe in order to show fellowship, and to claim for our Bishops episcopal rights, we would only say that recent events at Barcelona do not look much like the possibility of any fellowship with Rome, and in view of the present relations between our Church and the Roman, and the "great gulf fixed" in our Articles, it would seem better to avoid marks of outward similarity in the face of such profound spiritual and ecclesiastical differences. The characteristic English episcopal dress is one of the landmarks of our history, and we are always sorry when anything so un-English as the mitre is used by the Episcopate. We can be strong, definite, and pronounced Churchmen without "fingering the trinkets of Rome."

When religious societies copy the methods of one another, we may be pretty certain that these methods are sound.

Eighteen years ago the Church Missionary Society inaugurated what has become known as the Policy of Faith, that is, the policy of refusing on financial grounds no candidate who was otherwise fitted and eligible for missionary work. All these years this policy has been adhered to, with perhaps one or two short periods of hesitation, but not sufficiently long or acute to alter the general principle. Every one knows how the C.M.S. has progressed by leaps and bounds since 1887, both as to finance and the number of missionaries in the field. Now the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel seems to be embarking on a Policy of Faith which may well lead to far-reaching results in the history of that venerable Society. The S.P.G. has recently decided to undertake the training of candidates for the mission-field, and no longer to depend entirely upon offers of service from those who are already ordained and in a measure trained. This is how the *Quarterly Paper of Intercession*, issued by the S.P.G. Junior Clergy Federation speaks of the new venture :

Think what splendid possibilities lie within our reach ! We shall be able to accept for training at once a large company of men and women now anxiously waiting. We shall be able to provide missionary scholarships enabling promising boys and girls to go from primary to secondary schools, and missionary exhibitions at our Universities for public school boys. We shall be able to provide the S.P.G. Committee of Women's Work with ample means for their training home, and to supplement the incomes of the Diocesan Studentship Associations. Indeed, the whole missionary work of the Church, both at home and abroad, will go forward with a new life and power if we successfully establish this fund.

This is the true spirit of missionary enterprise, and cannot but be fraught with spiritual blessing to the Society and to the whole Church.

The utterances of Lord Halifax always command attention, owing to his position and influence in the councils of the English Church Union. His recent annual address was marked by all his evident earnestness and persistent boldness in advocating the cause which he believes to be the only true position and policy for the English Church. In his own characteristic, unequivocal language he claims for his interpretation of the Ornaments Rubric that it bears witness to the fact

that this Church of England of to-day is the same Church, not merely by a legal continuity, but in all essentials of doctrine and practice, as the Church of St. Gregory and of St. Augustine, of St. Wilfrid, St. Anselm, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and the long line of Bishops and saints that adorn the English Calendar.

This is an interesting reading of history. We have somewhere heard of an event known as the Reformation, which

is believed to have occurred in the sixteenth century, but this does not appear to be included in the Church histories read by Lord Halifax. And yet there are certain awkward facts evidently unwelcome to Lord Halifax, which we fear he will have to face one of these days. Rightly or wrongly, the Church of England is committed to the Reformation, and the absurdity of Lord Halifax's position can best be seen by asking one simple question of any Roman Catholic to-day: Would any member of your Church accept the Church of England as "the same Church . . . in all essentials of doctrine" as the Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury? Facts are stubborn things as Lord Halifax will discover soon.

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One more point of Lord Halifax's speech we must notice :

I desire to say nothing which may irritate. I wish to go every possible length in the way of conciliation. I would even venture to go so far as to say, in regard to our ritual disputes, that if such matters as the Eucharistic vestments, lights, the mixed chalice, wafer bread, the use of incense, the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for the use of the sick were recognised as part of the acknowledged heritage of the Church of England, it would be easy to make concessions which at present are so difficult as to be practically impossible.

It is a little difficult to know what concession could be made, or would be of use if made, were all these essential Roman Catholic doctrines recognised as part of the heritage of the Church of England. The fact that they are not now recognised, nor have been for three hundred years, ought to open Lord Halifax's eyes to the essential absurdity of his position. The leading article in the *Guardian* on Lord Halifax's pronouncement closes with these words :

Lord Halifax believes that we are in danger of sacrificing principle within our own branch of the Church; but does he realize fully that there are equally serious dangers in the same direction in our relations towards those who see in the Church of England little more than a contumacious body of schismatics without Orders and without Sacraments?

Anything more impossible than Lord Halifax's position in the English Church is inconceivable, and it is to be hoped he may ere long be led to see this.

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The enthronement of the Bishop of Southwark, and the visit of their Majesties to the South London Cathedral, bring to a fitting close the arrangements for the division of South London from Rochester, and its constitution as a separate diocese. We have no doubt whatever that the new order of things will speedily be justified by its results in the life and work of the Church in South London. We all remember the noteworthy phrase of the *Record* in 1885, subsequently en-

dorsed by the highest authority, that "Christianity is not in possession in South London," and though matters have undoubtedly improved during the last twenty years, it is the simplest truth to say that the Church and all other Christian bodies combined are only touching the fringe of things. The great lesson of the consecration of St. Saviour's, Southwark, to its new work as the centre of a South London diocese was aptly taught by the leading article in the *Times* :

St. Saviour's may stand for a thousand years of ecclesiastical history. It may count its stages in nuns and priests and chaplains and canons. It may point to its memorials of the noblest names in theology and in letters. But the thousands who pass it daily in the train as they leave the City stations know it as the first prominent building seen on a journey that leads them by miles of unlovely streets and overcrowded tenements. They can only endure the contrast between St. Saviour's and the rest if they see proof that the activities of the Church and the efforts to improve the conditions of life go hand in hand.

This witness is true. Cathedrals only justify their existence when they are the centre of definite, practical, spiritual influence upon the lives of those around. All the elaborate services will but make the contrast more intense if the condition of the people in the neighbourhood is not morally and spiritually improved and uplifted.

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### Notices of Books.

*Christian and Catholic.* By Right Rev. CHARLES C. GRAFTON, S.T.D.  
London: Longmans, Green and Co.

The first words of the Preface are, "This book is not controversial." This statement disarms us at once, and yet, to our surprise, we have soon to buckle on our armour again, for indeed the book is highly controversial. The first part, dealing with the purely Christian aspect of things, is mainly evidential, and contains much that is useful and suggestive, though it is startling to be told that the only way to secure union with Christ is by the Sacraments (p. 96). The author's view of the future of the English Church is that she can only "recover her Catholic heritage by a revival of the spirit of the martyrs, the confessors, the religious"; and we are further informed that "Christ and the Spirit are working, the blessed angels are with intense interest co-operating, the blessed saints and England's confessors are pleading for it" (p. 123). We cannot forbear inquiring for the grounds of these novel statements. Parts II. and III. deal respectively with the thought of Christianity as "Catholic," and "Catholic not Roman," and in the course of the author's discussion we are brought face to face with some of the most remarkable incidents of special pleading it has ever been our province to read. The Rule of Faith, we are told, is