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THE CHURCHMAN

June, 1909.

The Month.

Prayer-Book Revision. WE make no apology for reproducing in full the following paragraph from the *Guardian* :

“It is very much to be regretted that an alliance of the two extremities of opinion in the Church should have resulted in the London Diocesan Conference passing, by a large majority, a resolution deprecating any alteration in the Book of Common Prayer ‘in the present circumstances of the Church of England.’ We are not impressed by the plea that the time is unripe for a change which is long overdue. As the Primate declares in the letter on the subject which was read to the Canterbury Lower House yesterday, ‘there seems to be a lack both of faith and prudence in waiting for a quiet time which never comes.’ It is impossible for a living Church to go on century after century using a Book of Common Prayer which, however beautiful, however hallowed by saintly associations, is clearly insufficient for the needs of to-day. The precise form which enlargement and modification shall take must necessarily be a subject for long and anxious debate and mutual accommodation ; but to seek to prevent any action at all does not strike us as either an enlightened or a business-like way of dealing with the situation.”

We are in entire agreement with this view. As we have said more than once, it is deplorable that disagreement over doctrinal questions should prevent us from taking any steps at all in the direction of Prayer-Book revision. There are many valuable points on which it would be possible to obtain entire agreement, but simply because of other points of disagreement we are urged to do nothing. The position is really unworthy of our Church, and almost intolerable, for it creates an *impasse* which is depressing in the extreme, as we realize how greatly we need elasticity and variety in our forms

of service. Meanwhile, with every other Church free to adapt itself to modern needs, we are hopelessly tied and bound with the chain of sixteenth-century rubrics, simply because we are afraid to alter a single word lest we should thereby reveal and accentuate "our unhappy divisions." It would be better to accentuate our differences, and bring about some practical, even if drastic, result, than continue in the present hopeless condition. We want our Church to be in the forefront of everything that makes for vitality, reality, and spirituality, and yet we are powerless because of our divisions and our craven fears. It is a sad picture, and as unworthy as it is sad.

The
Vestments.

The decision of the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation last month was a curious one, and with all respect, it hardly reflects credit on that body. The resolution, as accepted, first of all urges the undesirability of altering the Ornaments Rubric, and then goes on to declare its opinion that "neither of the two existing usages as regards the vesture of the minister at Holy Communion ought to be prohibited." As the Dean of Canterbury, whose strenuous and persistent action in Convocation is worthy of the highest and fullest acknowledgment, very rightly said, this is tantamount to saying that "it is undesirable that any alteration should be made in the law, but that the law should be altered." He may well call this decision, in his letter to the *Times* "nonsensical." Whatever may be the interpretation of the Ornaments Rubric, it permits only one use, and to legalize two usages is only possible in absolute defiance of the Rubric. The one redeeming feature of the present position is that the decision of Convocation is purely academic, and binds no one, though we have no doubt that the resolution will be used to influence the other Houses of Convocation of Canterbury and York. If this should prove to be true, we can only say with the *Record* that it means "not peace, but war." Evangelical Churchmen are perfectly certain of their position in the light of the history of over three hundred years, and they are absolutely

determined to resist to the very end the legalization of the Mass Vestments. It would be well for our Bishops, and, indeed, all in authority, to realize this simple but dominating fact.

Vestments
and
Doctrine.

The *Guardian* has frequently refused to allow that there is any doctrinal significance in the Vestments, and in a recent article it again adduces the fact that the chasuble is still worn by Lutherans, and therefore cannot necessarily connote Roman doctrine. The best answer to this will be found in the speech delivered the other day by the Dean of Canterbury at the Annual Meeting of the National Church League, one of the ablest of the many able utterances of Dr. Wace on this subject. He rightly calls the argument from Lutheranism "perfectly irrelevant," and in proof he adduces the following illustration :

"A white flag has no particular inherent significance anywhere in itself, and I suppose a white flag might be adopted as the flag of a nation or an army in nearly all the countries of the world without having any particular meaning ; but when it was proposed to reintroduce the white flag into France thirty years ago a monarchy was lost and won over it, because, although the white flag might mean nothing in England or in Hungary, it meant everything in France, because it was the recognized symbol of a particular cause in that country. No one who knows the origin of the Vestments supposes that there is any inherent significance in the Vestments themselves ; but when you are told, as we are told, that these Vestments are being introduced in England for the express purpose of symbolizing a particular cause, they mean that cause here, whatever else they mean elsewhere, and you never can divest them in England of that meaning any more than you can divest the white flag of France of its significance as the emblem of the Bourbon monarchy."

We have often said that the people who ought to know best what the Vestments mean are those who wear them and advocate their use. A new pamphlet, "The Use of Vestments in the English Church," by Mr. Sparrow Simpson (Longmans and Co., 6d. net), has just appeared, and in the plainest terms the writer says that it appears "useless to say in face of the existing conditions that Vestments cannot rightly be regarded as expressive of doctrine." This position is maintained in view of the recent Report of the Five Bishops, and Mr. Sparrow

Simpson proceeds to argue for the use of the Vestments because they have "come to be associated and identified with certain conceptions of Eucharistic worship," and whatever their historical derivation may be, "the contemporary religious mind puts certain dogmatic constructions upon them, associates a school of religion with them. Indeed, it should be said at once, this is the reason why some desire them; this is the reason why some dislike them." To the same effect is a letter in the *Record* of May 21 from a clergyman who wears the Vestments because they are "symbolic of the doctrine taught by the Church of the Venerable Bede and St. Anselm, and taught to-day by Pope Pius X. and the Eastern Churches. The Vestments are valueless to us as evidence of outward continuity, apart from continuity of doctrine." We hope the *Guardian* and those who urge the non-doctrinal significance of the Vestments will ponder the views expressed in these statements. Evangelical Churchmen cannot be blamed in the face of them for continuing to believe that it is impossible to dissociate Vestments from a particular doctrine of Holy Communion.

If Vestments are not expressive of doctrine, then

Vestments
and
Continuity.

they are expressive of some form of continuity. What this is Mr. Athelstan Riley explained at the London Diocesan Conference :

"The issue before them was much broader than that of the Eucharistic Vestments, but he would add a word as to why High Churchmen valued them. They were not distinctive of any doctrine of Holy Communion. They were not purely Eucharistic even, and not exclusively sacerdotal. But they attached importance to them because they linked them in the most solemn act of Christian worship with the whole of historical Christendom, both East and West. Secondly, they were a standing witness to the claim of the Church of England to be the ancient Church of this land, with a substantial continuity of doctrine. Without that continuity the Church would have only a Parliamentary title to her endowments, to her jurisdiction over the faithful."

This is plain enough, and ought to be sufficient for anyone to discover the real meaning of the Vestments. We need hardly say that to this view of continuity (which is clearly doctrinal)

“ But whence, then, did the community originate which the Apostles found already in existence after Pentecost? This question is just as important as the passage in St. Matthew’s Gospel which recites the commission to St. Peter, in which Bishop Gore, with somewhat uncertain reasoning, discovers a legislative prerogative belonging to the ministry alone. This existing community was in no sense the creation of the apostolate. It, too, had come into being through contact with the living Christ, and as His work was never in any sense confined to the company of the Twelve Apostles, these had, after Pentecost, no thought of separating themselves from those others who had been disciples while their Master was on earth.”

And so, the writer well says, when the matter is properly considered in the light of the New Testament, the question whether the ministry of the Church is a creation from above or below “ seems to be outside the sphere of Christian ideas,” for the words “ below ” or “ above,” as used by Bishop Gore, cannot be applied to Church administration. This is a timely word on the essential place and importance of the whole Church. To exalt the ministry at the expense of the Church, as the terms “ above ” and “ below ” virtually do, is to be untrue to the deepest and most vital principles of the New Testament concerning the Church.

The true relations of the Church and the
 Church and ministry need to be ever kept in view if we are to
 the Ministry. remain true to essential Christianity, for there is no
 doubt that a real difference exists between two current concep-
 tions. One of these, which we believe to be untrue to the New
 Testament, was stated not long ago in a sermon to candidates
 for ordination, by the Rector of an Episcopal Church in New
 York. He said : “ The ministry makes the Church. The
 ministry antedates the Church.” This means that if the
 Church were to perish, the ministry could reconstitute it ; but
 that if the ministry perished, the Church must perish with it.
 It need hardly be said that there is not a vestige of warrant for
 this in the New Testament, for as the above quotation from the
 New York *Churchman* rightly says, the community on the Day of
 Pentecost was in no sense the creation of the apostolate. As
 it came into being through contact with the living Christ, it

would remain in being by the same contact, even though the ministry proper were to disappear. And to quote our contemporary once again :

“There is practically nothing in the New Testament, whether in the Gospel of the Lord, or the writings of the Apostles, which would lead one to suppose that the unity of the Church could be broken, either on behalf of an Episcopal or on behalf of a Presbyterian system of Church government.”

For those who regard Scripture as containing all essential truth for the individual and the community there is no real difficulty in discovering the true relations of the Church and ministry.

*The
Secular
Spirit.*

One of the most valuable points in the recent Charge of the Bishop of Liverpool was his reference to current methods of raising money for Church work. Here are his words :

“He earnestly asked them to exercise the utmost care in the means they employed to raise money for religious purposes. A sale of work, properly managed, might be a real blessing not only to the parish, which needed funds, but to those who worked for it. But lotteries and raffles ought to be entirely forbidden. They were illegal, and they helped to foster that growing spirit of gambling which was one of the greatest curses of the people. Whatever view they might take individually of dancing, theatricals, and of whist-drives, their employment to raise funds for Church purposes wounded the consciences of a large number of the best Church-people, and gave a handle to the adversary to find fault. How far such means raised or lowered the spiritual tone of a congregation and brought the kingdom of heaven nearer to it they themselves were judges.”

In the same way the Archbishop of York, speaking last month at Doncaster, laid the strongest possible emphasis on the need of spirituality, and warned his hearers against the danger of Church work becoming unspiritual :

“In the endeavour to be interesting and attractive he was afraid that much Christian effort was on the down-grade. The other day he was passing through a northern town, and he bought a local newspaper. Looking through a long list of advertisements of the services of the churches and chapels, he came across the following subjects : ‘The Two Dogs : a Social Contrast’ ; ‘Why I Left the Italian Opera’ ; ‘The Call of the Off-shore Wind’ ; ‘Palace P.S.A. : First Appearance of the Border Soprano’ ; and ‘Lonely Womankind : a Growing Danger.’ It was a positive relief to come to one at the end of the list which seemed to sum up the whole lot— ‘Humbugs : Spiritual and Religious.’ ”

Yet again the Bishop of Wakefield's words against whist-drives are much to the point :

"I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion that it is most undesirable that religious movements should be supported by such methods. They appear to entail no sacrifice, which is the essential condition of a charitable offering. They hold out a fair expectation of winning money on a game as much of chance as of skill. Even if you do not win a prize, the feeling is induced of having helped forward religion, while as a fact you have only enjoyed a pleasant evening. There is an all too prevalent idea among a certain section of Churchmen of getting back as much as you can out of your charitable gifts. . . The further fact that they cause scandal to some devout minds and scruple and doubtfulness to many, though not in itself decisive of a moral question, at least forms a plea which no Christian can afford to disregard."

Such methods not only lower the tone of those who adopt them, but, what is even worse, they produce a low idea of religion in the mind of those whom it is sought to win. Spiritual work by spiritual men, through spiritual methods, is the one guarantee of spiritual blessing. In the light of New Testament Christianity all these unspiritual methods are not only futile, but fatal.

An article in the current *Church Quarterly* **Modernism.** *Review*, together with the appointment of M. Loisy to a Professorship in the College of France, has called fresh attention to the Modernist Movement in the Roman Church. We cannot be altogether surprised at the sympathy shown to Modernism by a good many Churchmen, and yet it is becoming more and more clear that the movement is not going to render any essential service to the cause of a genuine, orthodox, spiritual Christianity. A well-known and able writer in the *Church Family Newspaper* went to the heart of the matter in the following words :

"There were many Churchmen who hoped at first that Modernism was a way to reconciliation. They believed the Roman Catholic Modernists meant to sweep away all that separates their Church from the Church of England, and thus make for unity. As a matter of fact, it does precisely the reverse. The Modernists sweep away all the historical faith of the Church, and desire at the same time to preserve the ceremonies which presuppose and enshrine

the faith. They think that without superstition the masses cannot be held and influenced, and they propose to retain the superstitious forms, rejecting everything that is supernatural in the Church."

And not long ago, in a review of a book of lectures on Modernism, by M. Paul Sabatier, the *Guardian* rightly said that :

"To insist, as M. Sabatier does, on the Catholicism of the Modernists is to play with words. Religious, devout, profoundly Christian, all this they are ; but Catholic—well, if those who accept the positions of M. Loisy's famous 'Synoptiques' can be so called, words have lost their meaning."

While we deprecate and oppose to the utmost all such attempts to crush thought and criticism as have been shown by the Papal Encyclical, we are compelled to say that Modernism stands for almost anything except full New Testament Christianity. The real problem is as to the Person and place of Jesus Christ, and, judging from M. Sabatier's lectures, it is not too much to say that his view is another form of "Christianity without Christ." As an able Scottish writer recently said : "It is enough to think of a Modernist priest as he celebrates Mass. He does not believe that Jesus instituted any sacrament ; he believes only that the ceremonial is the symbolical and poetical language of his own aspirations, yet he stands before the Table solemnly repeating, as if they expressed his own unclouded faith, the awful and ambiguous words of the Liturgy." Well may it be further said that this is "to act a lie," and "to palter with holy things in an unpardonable and impossible degree." No Church worthy of the name of Christian can ever live and work without a confident and persistent belief in the Deity, Atonement, and Resurrection of the Lord.

NOTE.—If any of our readers have copies of the number of the CHURCHMAN for January last which they are willing to spare, we shall be glad to pay the full price for all that may be sent.

The Editor would be grateful to hear of any reader willing to post his copy of the CHURCHMAN each month to workers at home and abroad, who might otherwise be unable to read the magazine.