

Discussions.

[The contributions contained under this heading are comments on articles in the previous number of the CHURCHMAN. The writer of the article criticized may reply in the next issue of the magazine; then the discussion in each case terminates. Contributions to the "Discussions" must reach the Editors before the 15th of the month.]

"A PRAGMATIST VIEW OF PRAYER-BOOK REVISION."

(*"The Churchman,"* November, p. 838.)

MR. EMMET'S axiom that "the best (Prayer-Book) is simply that which works best" is one to which most will agree. It affords a most useful basis for discussion, and some chance of arriving at agreement.

He proposes of vestments that they should be optional, "care being taken to secure that the congregation in which they are used is one which is actually helped by them." Surely this proposition carries the corollary that the congregation must at least be able to formulate its opinion, and make it known?

Having been brought up in England, and now for five years quartered in Scotland, I wish I could impress upon the Church of England what a great strength democratic control is to its sister Churches of Scotland. The people here in Scotland seem to feel that the Church is their own. The plan of electing ministers to vacant charges has many drawbacks, but it makes the people feel bound to support the man chosen. A man may not have voted for the minister himself, but probably his father did, and he feels bound to support his father's choice.

It is to this I attribute the crowds hurrying to the churches on Sunday morning in the Scotch towns.

In Presbyterian churches the minister chooses the Lessons, and he generally chooses those which will illustrate or help his sermon. The congregation then, on hearing the Lesson, naturally wonder what the minister is going to say about it, and this quickens their interest. The whole plan greatly assists the minister in teaching his people from the Word of God.

In the Church of England, on the other hand, the First Lesson is generally one the hearers already know almost by heart; it is the merest coincidence if the two Lessons bear on the same subject, and many clergymen apparently regard the matter as so hopeless that they will take a text from the Epistle or Gospel when these are not going to be read at the service.

In the Church of England many chapters of the Old Testament are never read, though almost as beautiful as those read every year.

One minister told me that he had drawn out a three-year scheme. This would probably be very useful, especially if it were only regarded

as obligatory to read one Lesson from it, the other being chosen by the preacher to suit his subject.

No one who has attended Presbyterian churches can fail to be struck by the appeal which prayers appropriate to the season and the affairs of the day make to the reverent attention of the people, and also to the extra burden of preparation which they lay upon the minister.

But is it not recognized in the Church of England that the clergyman may pray as he pleases in the pulpit after the sermon? If so, this seems to meet the need of an opportunity to offer prayers suitable to the time. And if no special event has to be prayed about, surely the preacher should gather up the thoughts of his sermon in a short prayer. For, if he succeeds in making the people join with him in such petitions, his sermon has certainly not been in vain. And if his sermon has been an effective appeal, the people will certainly join in such a prayer.

The Anglican and Presbyterian Churches have very much to learn from each other; and the Presbyterian ministers are aiming at that which works best, and have no prejudice against Episcopacy. Anglicans would do well to study Scotch methods in many matters; and this may bring reunion, for the Scotch are not only studying, but adopting such Anglican methods as they find helpful.

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Notices of Books.

The Reader's Commentary: ROMANS. By Principal Grey. London: Robert Scott. Price 3s. 6d. net.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PENTATEUCH. By A. T. Chapman. Price 3s. 6d. net. EXODUS. By S. R. Driver, D.D. Price 3s. 6d. net. NUMBERS. By A. H. McNeile, D.D. Price 2s. 6d. net. Cambridge: *University Press*.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. By Rev. Charles Brown, D.D. Price 2s. EXODUS. By Rev. F. B. Meyer. Price 2s. London: *R.T.S.*

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA. Edited by Rev. P. J. Boyer. Price 1s. 6d. net. JAMES AND HEBREWS. By Arthur Carr. Price 1s. 6d. net. Cambridge: *University Press*.

It is not an unhopeful sign of the times that scarcely a month goes by without our receiving one or more Commentaries on various books of the Bible, intended, and in most cases excellently adapted, for various classes of readers. We have a batch of them before us now.

First, comes Mr. Grey's Commentary on the Romans, the initial volume of a new series for which the editors and publisher of this magazine are responsible. We may venture to describe it, though in the main we must leave it to others to review. It is intended for English readers, and it is based upon the revised version. The English text is printed at the top of