

There is a growing sense that there should be an increase of missionary intercession in the ordinary services of the Church, and not merely on special missionary occasions. Such an enrichment of public worship would be fruitful in results. Prayers suitable for use have been provided, and episcopal sanction is not lacking. Clergy who desire to see their congregations imbued with missionary spirit have perhaps their greatest opportunity here. In India the use of Bishop Cotton's Prayer for Missions is very general in the ordinary services of the Church. G.



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 12th of the month.]

A DEFENCE OF EVENING COMMUNION.

(The "Churchman," October, 1913, p. 764.)

MANY besides myself will have read with much thankfulness the scholarly, lucid and, I would add, conclusive article in the October number of THE CHURCHMAN on Evening Communion. May I follow it up by urging two or three practical considerations which forcibly confirm the view of the anonymous writer of the article in question?

1. I would point out that insistence upon an Early Communion clashes with the very genius and spirit of Christianity, in that it makes participation in the highest means of grace and the holiest act of worship a perfectly easy matter for the well-to-do, and one of the greatest difficulty (if not impossibility) for the poor. What can be easier, where there is a well-ordered household with its staff of servants, than for master and mistress and servants (in their turn) to attend an eight o'clock celebration? But what is so easy in their case is difficult, if not impossible, to the poor woman with a young family to be dressed, fed, and got off to Sunday-school. And what shall we say of the milkman, the groom, the ostler, the maid-of-all-work with an unsympathetic, perhaps irreligious, mistress?

"To the poor the Gospel shall be preached"; and anything that raises a barrier in the way of the poor that does not exist in the case of the well-to-do is contrary to the very genius of Christianity. To

insist on *this* hour and to forbid *that* for the Holy Communion, raises little or no barrier between my well-to-do neighbour and the Holy Table; it does place a very real barrier between many of my poorer neighbours and the feast of life. The same argument holds good as between the strong and healthy on the one hand, and the aged and feeble on the other. What is so easy for the one may be very difficult for the other.

2. A second point I would urge is this: That cannot be contrary to the essence and inwardness of a thing which would be required by its ideal. What, in this case, is the ideal? It is that every baptized adult should not only be a communicant, but a regular communicant—perhaps a weekly communicant; for, going back to primitive times, we find that weekly communion was the practice. Now, suppose that the ideal were attained. I do not say that it ever will be, but suppose it were. What would be our position? Would it be possible to insist on everyone communicating at an early hour? Should we not, in order to meet the necessities of the case, be obliged to have the Holy Communion administered at different times in the day? And my contention here is, that what would be required by the ideal cannot, in the nature of things, be unjustifiable. If the ideal towards which we strive were reached, we should, as it seems to me, witness the *reductio ad impossibile* of early, fasting communion as a matter of *necessity*, instead of *choice*, which of course it can quite legitimately be.

3. But I leave the ideal and pass to the real. It is one thing to preach the necessity of attending an eight o'clock celebration in a town church where all the worshippers live within ten minutes of the church door; but what of country parishes where the worshipper may have to walk two or three miles, sometimes much more, to church? This aspect of the case was brought home to my mind very forcibly when exploring the Roman wall in Northumberland and Cumberland. From that ridge, that sort of backbone, along which the Roman wall runs across the moorland you look down upon parishes of vast extent. I know parishes respectively of 36,000, 32,000, 23,000 acres; I have been told (though for this I cannot vouch) that there is a parish consisting of 60,000 acres. These vast parishes are dotted over with small farm-houses and labourers' cottages. For by far the greater part of the population the parish church is many miles distant. In such conditions—conditions found in many of the wilder parts of England and Wales—is insistence on early fasting communion a reasonable thing? It appeared to me that the only way of ministering to the wants of the people in such a district would be for the clergyman to perambulate his parish, holding services at different hours in different quarters of the area under his charge, with the Holy Communion as an essential part of every service. The only alternative, it seemed to me, would be to have at least half-a-dozen priests for a population of 1,200 or 1,500 at the most, which is another form of the *reductio ad impossibile*.

I will only add that the present habit of reception at rare intervals and non-communicating attendance as a regular practice (how near is the approach here to Roman use!) is the unscriptural and unprimitive corollary of insistence upon early fasting reception.

G. S. STREATFEILD.



Notices of Books.

SKETCHES IN WESTERN CANADA. By the Rt. Rev. Bishop Ingham, D.D., and the Rev. C. L. Burrows, M.A. *Hodder and Stoughton*. Price 2s. 6d.

It was a foregone conclusion that some members of the recent Mission of Help would give us some account of the places visited and the work done, as well as their impressions of Canadian Church life. None could have done it more pleasantly or effectively than the authors of this attractively got up little volume. There are graphic accounts of work at Lloydminster, Strathcona, Edmonton, and Stonewall, and verbal snapshots of prominent Canadian Churchmen. The impressions are arresting. The exclusion of religious instruction from the public schools is shown to be a drawback, and the loss to the rising generation very real and evident. The Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. are said to be prominent institutions in the West, doing valuable work, and the Scout movement, which has "caught on" in Canada, comes in for unqualified praise. Not the least interesting chapter is one contributed by a Canadian clergyman, in which he points out some of the weaknesses and perils by which the Canadian Church is beset. These pages constitute a trumpet-call to both clergy and laity, and, indeed, there is much that English Churchmen would do well to take to heart. In the closing chapter we have the picture of an old friend and his home—Dr. Griffith Thomas, who is spoken of as "lent to Canada for a time."

HINDUISM ANCIENT AND MODERN. By the Rev. J. A. Sharrock, M.A. *S.P.G.* Price 2s. 6d.

The author, who was for many years a missionary in South India, and is now Principal of St. Boniface College, Warminster, expresses in his preface regret that the study of comparative religion is "almost entirely ignored" in the training of missionaries who have to be prepared for the "usual theological examinations." His work is an attempt to bring ancient and modern Hinduism within the purview of "that large body of men and women who are now interested in Missions," and it is written in the consciousness that "Christianity is face to face, and in deadly conflict, with the great religions of the world—to conquer or be conquered." He has given us a volume which should appeal to Hindus seeking the light, as well as to English Christians who want to understand a religion professed by so many of their fellow-subjects.

AN HEROIC BISHOP. The Life Story of French of Lahore. By Dr. Eugene Stock. *Hodder and Stoughton*. Price 2s. net.

In these pages Dr. Stock has given us a delightful sketch of one who is in the front rank of modern missionaries, but whose work is not so well known