

# THE CHURCHMAN

March, 1919.

## THE MONTH.

It is with genuine regret that we have been compelled "The Churchman." to increase the price of THE CHURCHMAN from and after the present issue. During the last twelve months the cost of production has been steadily rising owing to the great increase in the price of paper and the steady advance in printing charges, until now the burden has become greater than the magazine can bear. It is possible that there may soon be some slight relief in the matter of paper, but in the present state of unrest in the industrial world, the tendency will be for the cost of printing to increase rather than decrease. We are fully assured that our friends and readers would not like to feel that their copy of THE CHURCHMAN—which, we have reason to know, is coming to be more and more valued—is supplied to them at a loss which has to be made good by others, and we have no doubt we are fully justified in believing that they will loyally and heartily co-operate with us in the endeavour to make both ends meet in a fair, reasonable, and business-like way. It is not proposed to make any alteration this year in cases where the yearly subscription for THE CHURCHMAN is already paid, but in every other case the subscription from and after this date will be 10s. per year; and from January 1, 1920, the subscription will be 10s. a year to *all* subscribers. The price of single copies will be 1s. We greatly regret the change, but the circumstances of the time leave us no alternative. We have been greatly encouraged by the steady rise in the circulation of THE CHURCHMAN during the last few months, and we appeal confidently to all friends of Evangelical truth to lend us their aid in extending its influence. This they can do first by subscribing annually themselves and then by introducing the magazine to other friends and persuading them also to subscribe.

It is a circumstance of wide and remarkable significance that this year the annual conference known as the London Meeting of Lay Churchmen devoted its two sessions to the consideration of the Second Advent; and, what is equally noteworthy, the attendances both in the morning and the afternoon were larger—so, at least, it seemed to the present writer—than on any previous occasion. Such an experience seems fully to justify the belief that now the subject is appealing more deeply to the mind and heart of Christian people than it has done for at least a generation. Not that they have ever wholly lost their hold upon “that Blessed Hope,” but with the pressure of other questions, believed to be of a more “practical” character, it has gradually receded into the background, and the Lord’s distinct command to “Watch” has been neglected by all but a small number of His people. And yet, if we only viewed the question aright, is there, can there ever be anything more “practical” in its bearing upon the Christian’s daily life and walk, than the expectancy of the Lord’s personal return? The revival of interest—if so we may express it—in the doctrine of the Second Advent is due, no doubt, to the extraordinary happenings in the world during the last four and a half years. Even the most casual of persons, men and women of no fixed religious beliefs, have been compelled to recognize that something has been and is taking place that they cannot explain or even understand. It has been literally and entirely true that men’s hearts have been and are still “failing them for fear,” and again and again the question is asked, “How will it all end?” It is in these circumstances that the Christian believer has turned again to the infallible guide—the Holy Scriptures—and there he has rediscovered the almost forgotten truth that the Lord is coming again. “This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven,” and the promise has come to them in a new light, with fresh strength, and with added beauty. The Lord is coming again, and there are many who think they discern in the signs of the times the nearness of His return. But however that may be—it is not a matter for dogmatic statement, as we cannot forget the warnings against fixing times and seasons—it is not of such supreme importance as the revival of faith and hope in the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we cannot but feel

that the calm, clear and wise discussion of the question by the London Meeting of Lay Churchmen will do much to fix attention upon that central fact. The Chairman, Professor Beresford Pite, struck the right note in his opening address that it was the return of a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, for which they were watching and waiting, and that no solution of the world's problems could be effective which left that fact out of sight. Upon this lofty theme the Meeting concentrated: it was the burden of every paper read; it found its expression in every prayer offered and every hymn sung; and the result must be a quickening of desire on the part of all who come under the influence of the Meeting to live and work more truly in the light of the certain truth that the Lord is coming again. All the papers reached a very high level of thought and knowledge and power; each showed a wonderfully close acquaintance with the Scriptures bearing upon the question, and a real capacity for applying the prophecies and promises to the world-conditions of to-day.

After a discussion ranging over a period of twelve years there has been reached on Prayer Book Revision what the Archbishop calls "a remarkable measure of agreement," and it would seem at last that we are nearing the end of the matter so far, at least, as the Convocations are concerned, although even there it is possible, judging from the reports of the February session, that one or two points may yet be reopened. But how was this "remarkable measure of agreement" arrived at? Ordinary minds were in a state of confusion concerning what the Convocations had actually done, and what relation, if any, the various decisions of the four different Houses had to one another. In these circumstances the Archbishops of Canterbury and York convened a Conference, of a semi-formal character, consisting of members of all four Houses, "to make a systematic review of the whole of the work already done by the two Convocations in preparation of an Answer to the Royal Letters of Business, to bring out the measure of agreement that exists, and to make recommendations which could be submitted to the Conference by the Presidents." The Conference met early in October last, and the sittings lasted eight days. The Report of the Conference is now available (published by the S.P.C.K., *Royal Letters of Business*, 1919, No. 517),

and it was presented to and practically accepted by the Convocations at their February session. It is this report which presents "a remarkable measure of agreement," although, for ourselves, we cannot see anything "remarkable" about it when we examine the names of the fifty members of the Conference. The definitely Evangelical members numbered about one-sixth of the whole body. It is not pretended that the Conference was unanimous and we feel confident that the votes of Evangelical members were certainly hostile to some at least of the proposals that appear in this "agreed" report.

What has  
been Done.

The Report is a very full one and occupies fifty-nine pages. The various changes agreed upon are set out in full detail and need to be very carefully considered. In the main they follow the conclusions of the Convocations, but in some instances the Conference has improved upon what Convocation proposed, e.g., in the Holy Communion this report would allow the use of either the first or the second half of the Words of Administration, or with the consent of the Ordinary the whole form of words may be said "once to each row of Communicants instead of saying them to each Communicant severally." Convocation, it will be remembered, decided in favour of the permissive use of the first half of the Words only. This is a great gain. The proposals for Reservation are retained, and on the question of Vestments the change made by the Conference is distinctly for the worse. The question of the Vestments, as the Dean of Canterbury reminds us, was treated in the proposals of the Canterbury Convocation by a Resolution respecting the Ornaments Rubric which avoided proposing any alteration in the law, but which would have recognized, "under specified conditions and with due safeguards, a diversity of use." In other words, the question of the legality of the Vestments was evaded, but they were to be tolerated with some undefined safeguards. But the proposals of the Conference take no notice of the Ornaments Rubric, but propose a "Note to be prefixed to the Order of Holy Communion," to the following effect: "Notwithstanding anything that is elsewhere enjoined in any Rubric or Canon, the Priest in celebrating the Holy Communion may wear either a surplice with stole, or with scarf and hood, or a white alb plain with a vestment or cope." It

is to be presumed that the word "vestment," as here distinguished from "cope," would include the chasuble. If so, the effect of this Note is to override the existing law, and to give formal legal sanction to the use of Vestments—supposing, of course, that it receive the sanction of Parliament. This, it is evident, would give legal concession to the whole claim of the Ritualistic party, and would formally declare that the use of Vestments is in accordance with the law of this Church and Realm. Thus a very difficult and delicate situation has been created, and this is rendered still more difficult and delicate by the *Nota Bene* added by the Conference, viz. : "This Note is subject to the conditions and safeguards which the Convocations shall hereafter determine, and which shall be here specified. The Conference did not consider these conditions and safeguards, inasmuch as they may be affected by action taken on the Report of the Committee on the Relations between Church and State, and the possible establishment of Parochial Church Councils." When the question was before Convocation, great stress was laid upon the value of "safeguards," but the Conference did not think it worth while to "consider" them, because, forsooth, action taken on the Church and State Report may affect them. The Conference evidently has a firmer faith in the probability of such "action" being taken than is shared by Churchmen generally.

When the Report of the Conference was presented  
 The Report  
 Adopted. to the Convocations at the February session the

Lower House of the Southern Province adopted it practically in its entirety. In the Upper House, however, some difficulty was raised over the Vestments proposals, and decision on that point was deferred until the May session, but with this exception the Bishops adopted the Report. In the Northern Province the Report of the Conference seems to have been discussed in private, but from a report furnished officially in the press we are glad to learn that the Bishop of Manchester made a strong protest. "He said he grieved more than he could tell over two changes in particular affecting the use of eucharistic vestments and reservation of the sacrament. They seriously affected the doctrinal position of the Church of England, and would lead to great and serious trouble. There would be great danger of a serious

falling away of many of their members. They would part company, for instance, with the Church of Canada, which had refused to make these alterations, and the controversy would be carried into the mission field and into every parish, where it would have to be debated whether the new or the old Prayer Book was to be used." The result of the discussion seems to have been, in the words of the official report, that "the House gave its assent to the recommendations in the report except so far as some of its members retained the objections they had consistently offered to some of the proposals which had commended themselves to the majority." The Lower House "eventually adopted" the Report. But what we are anxious to know is when an opportunity is to be afforded to the Houses of Laymen to discuss this Report in detail? We imagine they will have something to say about Vestments, Reservation, and kindred questions, and what they will say may not be very pleasant hearing for Convocation.

**An Unsettled Question.** On one point, however, the Conference did not come to any agreement, viz., in regard to the proposed changes in the structure of the Communion Service.

Whether they tried and failed, or whether they purposely left it on one side, does not appear. All we are told is that "the Conference agreed *nem. con.* to the following Resolution: 'That their Graces the Archbishops be respectfully asked to call together a conference of clergy belonging to different schools of thought, in which younger men and liturgical scholars should have full representation, to discuss (after Communion and prayers) the question of permissive alterations in the structure of Holy Communion, in order to forward an agreed settlement of the matter.'" It is to be hoped that before the Archbishops call such a conference they will have received the great Memorial, signed by more than 3,000 clergy and upwards of 102,000 laity, protesting against such changes. This will enable the Archbishops to form some estimate of the strength of the opposition which will not be affected one way or another by any decision such a conference might come to. An "agreed settlement" is out of the question.