

THE CHURCHMAN

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

**Prayer Book
Revision.** THE second Report of the Prayer Book Revision Committee of the National Assembly will need to be dealt with in these pages far more adequately and in greater detail than is possible in the present issue. The Report, with a schedule of the proposed alterations—a volume of more than 100 pages—only came into our hands just as we were going to press, and it is not possible to do more than refer to one or two matters of outstanding importance around which controversy has ranged during recent years. The Committee was appointed to consider and report upon the answers of the Convocations to the Royal Letters of Business on the Revision of the Prayer Book. It was appointed in November, 1920, and within less than two years it has presented two Reports—one dealing with the Revision of the Lectionary, and the present Report dealing with the Prayer Book as a whole. It is a very creditable performance in so short a time, and the Committee may well be congratulated upon an excellent piece of work. In membership the Committee was representative, and included of the clergy: the Bishops of Gloucester (Chairman), Chichester, Ripon and Truro; the Deans of Westminster and Gloucester; the Archdeacons of Surrey, Sheffield and Wisbech, and the Rev. Dr. Frere; and of the laity: Mr. G. A. Bryson, Lord Hugh Cecil, M.P., Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., Mr. H. C. Hogan, Sir Frederick Holiday, Mr. G. A. King, Mr. Albert Mitchell, Lt.-Col. H. L. Oldham, Mr. Athelstan Riley, and Dr.

Eugene Stock. The Dean of Gloucester was unable to attend, and Sir Frederick Holiday resigned.

It will be remembered that a great protest, led ^{The Prayer of} ~~Consecration.~~ by Bishop Knox, then of Manchester, was made against the proposals of Convocation for changes in the Prayer of Consecration, and eventually these were modified in important particulars. They have been still further modified by the Committee of the Assembly, and whilst still open to some objection, the most serious feature has been removed. After the Words of Institution it was proposed to add :

“ Wherefore, O Father, we Thy humble servants, having in remembrance *before Thee* the precious death of Thy dear Son, His mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, looking also for His coming again, do render unto Thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits which He hath procured unto us. *And we pray Thee of Thine almighty goodness to send upon us and upon these Thy gifts, Thy holy and blessed Spirit, Who is the Sanctifier and the Giver of life, to whom with Thee and Thy Son Jesus Christ be ascribed by every creature in earth and heaven all blessing, honour, glory and power now henceforth and for evermore. Amen.*”

Strong objection was taken to the words we have italicized. Bishop Knox pointed out that the words “ having in remembrance *before Thee* ” were “ inserted here to please and conciliate those who build up an edifice of sacrificial doctrine on our Lord’s simple command, ‘ This do in remembrance of Me.’ They suggest an interpretation of those words which is admitted by the best scholars to be a false interpretation.” The protest has not been without its effect, for in the form as revised by the Committee of the Church Assembly the words “ *before Thee* ” have been altogether omitted. Still more important is the other change. The most serious difficulty was felt in regard to the proposed invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the worshippers and upon the elements. As Bishop Knox clearly showed, it was unknown or little known as late as the second half of the fourth century, and that “ as soon as it appears it is connected with new teaching as to the effect of consecration upon the elements.” Again the protest has been successful, for in the form agreed upon by the Committee of the Assembly the whole sentence italicized above has been omitted ; and it will

be widely felt that Evangelical churchpeople are entitled to congratulate themselves upon the omission. The other change which has been made by the Assembly Committee will not be so well received. In the Convocation Report, the Lord's Prayer was placed immediately after the Prayer of Consecration, and the Prayer of Oblation was to retain its present position. The Committee of the Assembly, however, have joined the Prayer of Oblation to the Prayer of Consecration thus: ". . . for the innumerable benefits which He hath procured unto us; and we entirely desire Thy Fatherly goodness mercifully to accept," etc., down to "world without end," and this is followed by the words, "And now as our Saviour Christ hath commanded and taught us, we are bold to say, Our Father, which art in heaven," etc. It should be added that the Prayer of Consecration is now broken up into four paragraphs, viz.: (1) "Almighty God . . . His coming again"; (2) "Hear us, O merciful Father . . . in remembrance of Me"; (3) "Wherefore, O Lord and Heavenly Father, we Thy humble servants . . . other benefits of His Passion"; and (4) "And here we offer and present . . . world without end."

It is to be regretted that no alteration has been
Reservation. made by the Committee of the Assembly in the proposals of Convocation for the Reservation of the elements for the communion of the sick except to provide that the Ordinary shall "direct" instead of "approve" the place and manner of keeping the elements and taking them to the sick person. The Committee has, indeed, added a new rubric to the effect that when the provision made is not sufficient to secure that a communicant at his last hour shall be able to receive the Holy Communion, the Curate, with the permission of the Ordinary, "given in accordance with Canon, or such rules as may be from time to time made by the Archbishops and Bishops in their Convocations," may make further provision. It must be pointed out, however—and we do so with great thankfulness—that five of the lay members of the Committee—a majority of their number if Sir F. Holiday, who resigned, be left out—have attached a "Note" to the Report expressing their dissent from the proposals. These five members are Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. H. C. Hogan, Mr. G. A. King, Mr. Albert Mitchell, and Dr. Eugene Stock, and their Note is as follows:

“ We regret that we are unable to concur with the majority of the Committee in approving of the proposed new rubrics to the Order for the Communion of the Sick (numbered 145 in the Schedule to the Report), which contemplate reservation of a part of the consecrated bread and wine and (in the event indicated) ‘ further provision to meet the needs of the sick and dying.’ Notwithstanding the care with which these rubrics have been settled, we do not think that it is possible adequately to safeguard the practice from abuse. We do not admit that the practice of reservation is either primitive or catholic ; and we believe that the teaching associated with it is not conformable to Holy Scripture.”

This is a weighty protest, and the fact that it emanates from laymen is of high significance. It should certainly raise the issue of Reservation in an acute form when the Report comes to be discussed in the various Houses of the Church Assembly and in the Assembly itself.

It is too early yet to suggest what should be our **The Question of Policy.** attitude as Evangelical Churchmen towards these revised proposals for Prayer Book Revision. It must be candidly admitted that in many respects the proposals, if carried into effect, would greatly enrich the Book of Common Prayer. Particularly is this the case in regard to the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, and some other instances where new and very beautiful services have been introduced. On the other hand we cannot help thinking that the changes in the Communion Office will seriously disturb large numbers of loyal Churchpeople without any corresponding advantage ; and the provision made for the Reservation of the elements in Holy Communion for the use of the sick—even though it is provided that they are to be used for no other purpose whatsoever—is frankly objectionable. But we shall discuss the proposals in detail in later issues. There does not seem to be any immediate hurry in the matter. The Report will be presented at the Summer Session of the Church Assembly, but it is hardly likely that it will come before that body in the form of a Measure until February next. In the meantime the proposals should be most carefully studied, and it should be remembered that the changes will not, in any case, be embodied in the existing Prayer Book, but will be issued as a separate volume or schedule, to which it is proposed that permissive use should be accorded for a term of years.

Christian Unity. The Joint Conference of leading representatives of the Church of England and the Free Churches has resulted in an agreement on some of the outstanding points of difference on Christian unity, which has been described (to quote the words of one of the Bishops) as simply amazing. "Stalwarts" on both sides were present, yet conclusions were reached which a year ago would have been thought to be impossible within so short a time. If some of us are apt to be impatient and to complain of the slow progress made towards Christian unity, we cannot do better than obtain a copy of the Report of the Conference (now published as a pamphlet by the S.P.C.K. at one penny) and study it in the light of the Lambeth Appeal. We shall then thank God for what has been achieved and take fresh courage for the future. There are still many stiles to cross before we come to the open road which leads to the realization of the vision of the United Church, but this Report clearly shows that the representatives of both sides are marching together with the honest determination to overcome, if possible, all obstacles; and we think that each one would be prepared to say that, "Best of all God is with us." We hear from more than one source that during the Conference members felt that they were being moved and guided by a power not their own; and we shall all recognize that in our strivings after Christian Unity, as in every other Christian aspiration, it is emphatically true: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." We ought, therefore, to pray ever more earnestly that God the Holy Spirit will guide, direct and control this movement till the goal be won to which He is assuredly leading us.

Resolutions on the Ministry. The *crux* of the Unity problem has always been the different views which have prevailed on the question of ordination. Bearing well in mind past controversies on the subject, it is important to place on record some of the principal resolutions now agreed upon by members of the Joint Conference:—

7. Within the many Christian Communion into which in the course of history Christendom has been divided, various forms of ministry have grown up according to the circumstances of these several Communion and their beliefs as to the Mind of Christ and the guidance of the New Testament. These various ministries of Word and Sacrament have been, in God's providence, manifestly

and abundantly used by the Holy Spirit in His work of "enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints." But the differences which have arisen with regard to the authority and functions of these various forms of ministry have been and are the occasion of manifold doubts, questions, and misunderstandings. For the allaying of doubts and scruples in the future, and for the more perfect realization of the truth that the ministry is a ministry of the Church, and not merely of any part thereof, means should be provided for the United Church which we desire, whereby its ministry may be acknowledged by every part thereof as possessing the authority of the whole body.

8. In view of the fact that the Episcopate was from early times and for many centuries accepted, and by the greater part of Christendom is still accepted, as the means whereby this authority of the whole body is given, we agree that it ought to be accepted as such for the United Church of the future.

9. Similarly, in view of the place which the Council of Presbyters and the Congregation of the faithful had in the constitution of the early Church, and the preservation of these elements of presbyterial and congregational order in large sections of Christendom, we agree that they should be maintained with a representative and constitutional Episcopate as permanent elements in the order and life of the United Church.

10. The acceptance of Episcopal Ordination for the future would not imply the acceptance of any particular theory as to its origin or character, or the disowning of past ministries of Word and Sacrament otherwise received, which have, together with those received by Episcopal Ordination, been used and blessed by the Spirit of God.

We are persuaded there will be a very general feeling of thankfulness that the Conference of **The Coleshill Conference.** Evangelical Clergy, held at Coleshill on June 12-16, was so eminently successful that the statement agreed upon was carried with only two abstentions. It should be remembered that the Conference was not called for the purpose of defining what is or what is not the Evangelical position. It was called rather that earnest men of both the Conservative and Liberal wings of the Evangelical School might speak together as in the presence of God, seek to understand each other better, and, if possible, discover some way by which all might work together in the spirit of Christ without mutual distrust and suspicion. The proceedings were private, but those who were present are unanimous in their testimony that the working of the Holy Spirit was very clearly felt by all. It was a most solemn occasion; misunderstandings were removed and regret was expressed by both sides for any harsh, unkind or un-

charitable words that may have been used in the past towards each other. This was, in itself, a great gain, and it will give a new tone and a new temper to discussions in the future. And all this was carried through most happily without any compromise of principle on either side. The Conference has demonstrated how very much can be accomplished when men pray together with the sincere desire that they may be guided by the Spirit of God. It should prove an immense help to the Committee of the Church Missionary Society when it meets on July 12 to discuss and, if possible, come to some agreement upon, the grave issues that are awaiting settlement. It is much to be desired that every member and friend of the C.M.S. will pray earnestly and continuously that the gracious guidance of God the Holy Spirit may be given to the Committee in its deliberations, that unity may be reached, and that the work of God may go steadily forward both at home and abroad. The Coleshill Conference was attended by about seventy Evangelical Clergy, including ten Bishops. For convenience of reference we quote the full statement agreed upon as follows :—

“ After prayer, and long and anxious conference, and with an ever-growing consciousness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst, we have been drawn closer together in a deeper understanding of the movements, intellectual and spiritual, which have been influencing the minds of many of us.

“ We desire to put it on record that we have found in the course of our discussions a real and profound unity of spirit as Evangelical Churchmen, realizing with complete unanimity the absolute supremacy of Jesus Christ our Lord, the Divine Saviour of Mankind, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

“ We believe that we shall work together more cordially, especially in discharging the fundamental task of preaching the gospel both at home and abroad.

“ We realize that there are important differences among us, and in accordance with the terms of the invitation issued to us, we have deliberately refrained from attempting to formulate any definition of Evangelical principles. We have learnt, however, to understand and respect the convictions of one another, and we believe that time and prayer and patience will bring us yet closer together.

“ The Conference has produced a general conviction among us that the co-operation of the various sections of Evangelicals in the work of the Church Missionary Society can be maintained, and we venture to suggest to the Committee of that Society that some method could and should be devised to make the co-operation happier and more effective.

“ We have come to see afresh the desperate need of the world and of our own land to-day, and we are resolved courageously to go forward to make Christ known to the utmost of our power. To this enterprise of witness and corporate action we make bold to summon all our brethren.”

It was further resolved that a Continuation Committee should be formed for the purpose of considering whether such a Conference should be held at some future time, and also as to whether the time had arrived for a great spiritual and evangelical movement to be launched.

An instructive article from the ever facile pen of **Lessons from the Past.** Dr. Eugene Stock appears in the current issue of the *Church Missionary Review*, in which he draws “ Some Lessons from Past Times,” in their application to present-day controversies. These “ lessons ” are, indeed, a cordial for drooping spirits. He agrees that problems of Biblical inspiration loom largest on the present horizon, but he submits that it is utterly contrary to the long-standing tradition of the C.M.S. to class them with the great fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith. “ So long,” he concludes, “ as Evangelical Churchmen stand firm in their allegiance to these truths, it will be impossible for any Committee of the C.M.S. to swerve from them ; and the real test for C.M.S. missionaries is that these should not merely be held intellectually as true dogmas, but that they should be the foundation and the secret of their spiritual life.”

Evangelical Churchmen will do well to be prepared **Attack on Trusts.** to meet a very definite attack upon Ecclesiastical Trusts. The “ Life and Liberty ” scheme of Church patronage reform proposes the abolition of these Trusts and the transfer of livings in their gift to a Central Patronage Board. These proposals will need the most careful watching ; at present they are in the pamphlet stage only, but they may mature very quickly.

