

THE CHURCHMAN

January, 1934.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

"The Churchman."

WITH the present number we commence another year of THE CHURCHMAN and we take this opportunity of thanking our readers for the generous support which they have given us in the past. For many years now THE CHURCHMAN has represented Evangelical opinion, and has taken its place among the quarterly Reviews as a means of setting forth the distinctive lines of thought of the Evangelical School in the Church. We are grateful for the measure of recognition which our endeavours have received, and we may say that this recognition has come from some who would not be ranked among the Evangelical School as well as from some prominent dignitaries who have expressed their satisfaction with the way in which we have been able to present the Evangelical side of our Church life.

We remind our readers that our continued success must depend upon their support. There is more need than ever to-day for the presentation of the Evangelical position. The valiant endeavours that are being made by medievalists and Romanists to represent their case as supported by modern scholarship make it more necessary for Evangelical Churchpeople to make clear that the latest researches of scholarship in New Testament and early Church History are on their side. The appeal that is being made to medieval philosophy by some Anglo-Catholic teachers is significant, but it can only at best bolster up theories of Christian teaching that have no foundation in the New Testament. We therefore ask our readers to give us their further support by securing new subscribers and thus enabling us to increase the usefulness of our Evangelical Quarterly.

Church and State.

The subject of the relationship of Church and State has been raised during the past quarter by a manifesto which appeared as a supplement of *The Record*. In this document, which was entitled "A Solemn Warning and Challenge to all who love the Established

Church," Dr. Hale Amos drew attention to the serious position which may be created in the Church when the Archbishops' Commission on Church and State issues its report. It is not known when the report will appear, and it is not known what its contents will be, but from suggestions that have been made in influential quarters it is surmised that some drastic alterations will be suggested in regard to the present procedure in the dealing of Parliament with the legislative measures sent up by the Church Assembly for ratification. At present every measure has to be approved by a positive motion in each House of Parliament. Parliament cannot amend or alter in any way the measures presented to them, but they have the power of veto. This power was exercised in the case of the measures for the revision of the Prayer Book in the years 1927 and 1928, and since then a body of Churchpeople appear to have made up their minds that this power of veto must at all cost be removed. When the Archbishops' Commission was appointed care seems to have been taken that no representative of those who opposed the revision should be placed upon it. This has given rise to the suspicion that the views of such members of the Church would be unacceptable, and that therefore they should not be allowed any opportunity of expressing their views as members of the Commission. This is obviously a shortsighted policy on the part of those who manipulate the inner workings of our Church politics. It has at any rate given rise to a feeling of anxiety on the part of many as to the decisions which will be reached by the Commission and vigorous expression has been given to this feeling in the manifesto.

Threatened Dangers.

Further grounds for suspicion have been given by the arrangements that were made for the recent celebration of the Centenary of the Oxford Movement. Whether rightly or wrongly some Churchpeople feel that there lay behind some portions of the celebration an attempt to conceal intended action in the future or at least to cover an intention to prepare the way for the favourable acceptance of proposals for a change in the relationship of Church and State. This idea has been expressed in the phrase "Behind the Anglican Smoke-Screen: The Coming Battle," and it is believed that the celebration of the Centenary served as a "Smoke-Screen" for those who had the ulterior motive of securing the removal of the Parliamentary veto on the measures of the Church Assembly; and as that veto is regarded as "the lynch-pin of the Reformation Settlement" it is felt that Churchpeople should be alive to the danger that may arise of such a radical change being made before they are aware of it and that a strong effort should be made to secure a united body of opinion that will definitely resist any attempt to do away with the present guarantees and seek by some new method that may have the effect of changing the doctrinal emphasis of our Prayer Book to open the flood-gates of medievalism.

Many regard these surmises as amply justified, but even if they are not there is sufficient ground for all Churchmen who hold fast to the principles of the Reformation to be on their guard against possible future developments of a character calculated to destroy the true type of Anglicanism which has done so much for the welfare of our Empire and of mankind in general during the last three centuries. No true Churchman can desire to return to the sub-Christian conceptions which prevailed in the medieval ages.

The Value of Establishment.

The Church of England is so intimately intertwined with the State that a break between them would mean a real disaster in our national life. The Church has failed to attain the ideal, set forth by Hooker, of representing the nation fully on its religious side. This failure of the Church must be recognised as one of the chief causes of many of our difficulties to-day. Theories of Churchmanship have been put forward which have been unacceptable to some sections of the people. These theories were not regarded as being in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament and it was said that they laid unlawful terms of communion on many consciences. Yet the influence of the Church on national life and character has been so great that only those who have lived outside England realise the full extent and value of that influence. The different conditions that prevail to-day in some of our dominions is evidence of the value of the Establishment. Many anomalies have undoubtedly arisen in the course of the centuries and these have given rise to much of the impatience felt by some Churchmen who are eager for change. It may be well to consider how some of these may be removed, but at the same time it may be wise to bear some of the ills we know than to fly to others that may prove the precursors of disaster. A time may come when some iconoclastic spirits in the heat of revolutionary zeal may seek to make the anomalies in the relationship of Church and State an excuse for not only disestablishing and disendowing the Church but also of reducing it to a state of impotence as an influence in the affairs of the State. Some reforms may be necessary to provide against such a possible disaster, but Churchmen ought not to be the first to suggest that the Church should be deprived of the opportunity of exercising the great moral influence which it possesses through the fact of its establishment. Our aim should rather be to make the Church more comprehensive so as to include those elements of religious life in the nation that are represented by the great body of Evangelical Christians who are called Nonconformists. After all, Nonconformists are Christians who for the time being are not conforming to the methods of worship of the Established Church. There may be some hope of winning their allegiance if the Church maintains the Protestant character which it has had since the days of the Reformation, but there is little hope of such a consummation if the wishes of those who desire a return to medie-

valism should be achieved. The desire expressed by some for reunion with the unreformed Church of Rome indicates a line of policy that must prove disastrous to English religion and the future of Christianity throughout the world.

The Future of Christianity.

The attention of Churchpeople should be given to a theory set out in a book recently published by Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, the General Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation. The title of the book is *Anglo-Catholicism and Orthodoxy: A Protestant View*. The author's purpose is to explain the position of the Church of England to the members of the Protestant Communion on the Continent. They regard our Church as like themselves loyal to the Reformation, but he points out that the Anglo-Catholic Movement is altering the character of our Church and introducing a new element which is described as "Non-Roman Catholicism." He says that the Church of England to-day "is no longer as a hundred years ago a Protestant Church in which some reminiscences of Catholicism have survived, but rather a Catholic Church which retains certain emphases of the Reformation." He asserts that "Protestantism as a positive conviction seems to have lost most of its previous influence on the life of the Church as a whole" and he puts forward the view that the future of Christendom will lie in the formation of "a third main form of Christianity, perhaps even a definite confession which will be distinct from Roman Catholicism as well as from Protestantism." This "Non-Roman Catholicism"—he apologises for the negative form of the title—will form the strategical position in the movement of Christian unity. It will in fact hold the key to the development of the future. As this theory is put forth by a writer well acquainted with Protestantism on the Continent, it ought to be carefully considered by English Churchpeople in all its implications.
