

THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1935.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Reunion Movement.

THERE can be little doubt that the movement for the reunion of the Churches has lost much of the impetus which it received from the Lambeth Conferences and from the various meetings of the representatives of the non-Episcopal Churches and of our own Church, at one time so full of promise of definite action. Even the South India Scheme has been assailed with criticism on all sides when it seemed as if general agreement had been reached. The cause of this failure to advance to some satisfactory conclusion is largely due to the rigid theory of episcopacy which has all along been the chief obstacle to unity. Some of the non-Episcopal Churches have gone a long way in accepting the historic episcopate while stipulating that no theory of episcopacy should be laid down. This is apparently not sufficient for those members of our Church who follow the lead of the Tractarians and require an almost mechanical theory of the transmission of grace by the laying on of hands. This theory has never been accepted by Evangelical Churchmen, and never will be accepted, as it is contrary to all experience as well as to the well-recognised fact that the Apostolic Succession in the early days of the Church was mainly a guarantee of sound doctrine which had been passed down from the Apostles' time through the succession of bishops. The only hope of any measure of reunion lies in the rejection of both Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic theories of the ministry and of the rigid institutionalism and static system of organisation which are derived from them.

In View of the Lausanne Conference in 1937.

In a recent number of the *Contemporary Review*, Dr. A. E. Garvie, the well-known Congregationalist leader, examined the present position of the Reunion Movement and gave a strong statement of the case in favour of it. Writing as a theologian he said: "To me the unity of the Church visible to the world is essential, because it is rooted in the reality of God Himself as revealed in Christ." The manifestation of this unity is necessary to the full effectiveness of the Church in its witness and work. But at the present time the vision

of unity is not influencing the purpose and prospect of the Churches as it ought. There is an assumption that the legitimacy and even the necessity of the divisions and their continuance needs no defence. But unity does not mean uniformity and the helps of the past may be hindrances in the present. As long as what may be described as the Catholic view prevails this obstacle will appear insuperable. Unless it can be shown that by divine command a fixed organisation belongs to the permanence and the efficiency of the Christian Church the refusal to contemplate the possibility of change must be challenged. What is the minimum of uniformity and the maximum of liberty which is consistent with the manifestation of the unity of the Church? In his opinion there must be a commonly preached Gospel, a commonly recognised ministry and commonly accepted sacraments, and these could be secured without any of the rigidity of the organisation of the past. In view of the Lausanne Conference of 1937, of which Dr. Garvie is one of the leading members, these sane expressions of opinion should be a help to the achievement of some practical results.

Our Communion Service.

If any of our readers are under the impression that our present Communion Service is safe from further attack and from efforts to secure drastic alterations, we warn them that they are grievously mistaken. There are many signs that a vigorous attempt is in preparation to restore some of the features of the Communion Service of the Prayer Book of 1549 and even to go beyond that, as some are desirous to adopt portions of the Roman Mass. Propaganda to secure these ends is being sedulously promoted. There is the endeavour of some of the extreme men to draw up a form according to their own fancy, and to secure its use in as many churches as possible so as to present it to the bishops as an ultimatum which must be accepted. Less extreme men are fostering the idea that there is "a very long history of dissatisfaction with the book of 1662." Those who pose as our liturgical experts are endeavouring to prove that some structural alterations are required in order to bring our present service into line with liturgical requirements. Most of the alterations suggested are in what is called a "Catholic" direction and aim at bringing in prayers for the dead and some form of epiclesis. A more extreme demand has recently been formulated which says that our 1662 service has no ecclesiastical authorisation whatever, and that the pre-Reformation service must be restored in its entirety. This means the adoption of the Roman Mass. We venture to think that the great majority of Churchpeople are content with the service as it is at present, and would resent the proposed changes. If, however, that service is to be preserved, strong resistance will be necessary in face of the determined effort to secure changes.

The European Situation.

It would be very difficult to prophesy what the position will be in regard to the Italian-Abyssinian Dispute at the time when these

Notes appear in print. At the time of writing all appearances seem to indicate that nothing will stop Italy from its determination to launch a fierce attack upon Abyssinia. What the outcome of this will be no one can say, or what complications may arise to involve other nations in armed contests. In spite of the Compact of the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact it seems that methods of arbitration have proved futile in the prevention of war. This is a sad comment upon the fickleness of nations and upon the determination to use any means that may enable them to obtain their objects.

The state of religious affairs in Germany at the time of writing seems also to indicate greater difficulties, and that there will soon be more determined action. The Government seems to be bringing increased pressure to bear upon the Confessional Church, and no doubt intends to suppress it if possible by the application of measures of financial deprivation. The Roman Catholic Church is also being subjected to increased pressure, and there is every prospect of a keener conflict in the near future. The claims of a totalitarian state allow of no compromise with the aims and ideals of religion when the exclusiveness of racial ideals are incompatible with the universalism of Christianity. We need not remind our readers that all these conditions demand earnest prayer that God will overrule the wilfulness of men and bring the nations into subjection to His rule of Love.

Church Pastoral-Aid Society.

It is generally accepted at the present time that centennial commemorations of past events and of institutions of proved worth should be appropriately celebrated. We remind our readers that arrangements are being made for the celebration of the fourth centenary of the Reformation, and we hope that all will do their part to make the commemoration as representative and adequate as the occasion demands. There will also be a centennial celebration next year which should be of great interest to all Evangelical Church-people. For a hundred years the Church Pastoral-Aid Society has been at work, and has been one of the most valuable agencies in assisting the Church to perform its mission. There are hundreds of the poorest parishes throughout the country where the ministrations of the Church would have been altogether inadequate but for the assistance which has been so generously given by the Society. Large grants have been made to such parishes to enable them to secure the services of both clerical and lay workers, and the reports of the Society and its monthly magazine show what it has been enabled to accomplish. Many of the clergy bear willing testimony to the help which the Society has given them in difficult spheres of work, where it would have been impossible to carry on in any way adequately to the needs but for the grants given for the support of workers. A forward movement is being arranged by the Society in connection with its Centenary, and we are sure that it will be supported generously by all who wish the Church to bring the Gospel home to the masses.

Our Contributors.

Most of the contributors to this number of *THE CHURCHMAN* are well known to our readers. Bishop Knox in the opening article considers the position of the celebrant at Holy Communion, and puts some important facts in a light that will probably be new to many of our readers. Canon Lancelot employs a somewhat novel method in his treatment of the Sermon on the Mount, but it will be seen that he gives a number of helpful suggestions. Dr. Sydney Carter makes good use of his wide and accurate historical knowledge in his account of "The Pre-Reformation Catholic Church."

Dr. Montgomery Hitchcock presents a number of important points in regard to the prospect of the "Reunion of the Protestant Churches." Principal Dodgson Sykes' paper on "Christ as Saviour" was read at the Oxford Evangelical Conference but was not ready in time to appear in our July number. Principal Cameron Waller, of Huron College, Canada, treats of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians as an appeal to Gentile Christendom. We welcome contributions from across the seas where *THE CHURCHMAN* has many readers. The Rev. Alfred Thomas gives an account of one side of the work of the Church Pastoral-Aid Society which will be read with interest in connection with the Centenary of that Society. Mr. E. H. Blakeney's brief note on "This Liberty" represents a point of view peculiarly appropriate at the present time.

INDIA'S WOMANHOOD. By Christine I. Tinling. With a Foreword by Mildred Cable. *Lutterworth Press.* 1s. 6d.

Miss Tinling has written a most inspiring description of the Ludhiana Women's Christian Medical College, founded just forty years ago by Dr. Edith Brown, who on going out as a pioneer medical missionary felt the urgent need of competent Indian colleagues and immediately set herself to the task of providing means of training them. The result of her efforts is the marvellous work of this great college, known far and wide, still guided by Dr. Brown, now a Dame of the British Empire, who, in the course of years, has trained doctors and nurses for most of the missionary societies. It is a most interesting story and should be read by all who are concerned in the welfare of Indian Women.

Messrs. Longmans Green & Co. issue a fourth impression of *The Life of Grace*, by the Right Rev. Walter J. Carey, formerly Bishop of Bloemfontein (2s. 6d. net).