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THE CHURCHMAN

January, 1920.

THE MONTH.

Changes in the Communion Service. It is only necessary to set out in parallel columns the original proposals of the Convocation of Canterbury in regard to changes in the Order of Holy Communion and the conclusions arrived at by the Conference to which those proposals were referred by the Archbishops to see at once how great is the difference between the two:—

CONVOCAION PROPOSALS.

The Prayer of Consecration shall be said immediately after the Sanctus, the Amen at the end being omitted.

The Prayer of Oblation shall follow at once in this form, the words in italics being new:—
[“Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me], *Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of Thy dearly beloved Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, we Thy humble servants do celebrate and make here before Thy Divine Majesty, with these Thy Holy gifts, the memorial which Thy Son hath willed us to make, having in remembrance His blessed passion, mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, rendering unto Thee most hearty*

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS.

That the Prayer of Humble Access be moved so as to follow immediately after the Comfortable Words.

That the Prayer of Oblation be not moved from its present position.

That the Words of Institution be followed by—(a) An Act of Remembrance; (b) An Act of Thanksgiving; (c) A Prayer for the Holy Spirit as follows:—

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.

thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same, entirely desiring Thy Fatherly goodness," etc., to the end of the Prayer.

Then shall be said :—

The Lord's Prayer, and

The Prayer of Humble Access,
followed by

The Communion of Priest and
People.

After the Communion, shall follow the Thanksgiving, the Gloria and the Blessing.

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.*

As our Saviour Christ hath commanded and taught us, we are bold to say, Our Father ["The Lord's Prayer"].

The Communion then follows.

It does not need to be a particularly learned person to see that the changes effected by the Conference are of a most important character, and of great significance, for whereas the proposals of Convocation, if they had been carried through, would have assimilated the Communion Service to the Roman Mass, the conclusions of the Conference leave the essentially Reformed character of the service unimpaired. We do not say that those conclusions are wholly free from objection; indeed we ourselves would infinitely have preferred that in the work of Prayer Book Revision the Office of Holy Communion had been left alone, but if changes there must be then we have every reason to be thankful that the result of the Conference has been such as to allay, to a very large extent, the anxieties which the original proposals called forth. Moreover it should be remembered that the use of the new Order, even if ultimately it should become authorized, will be permissive only and not compulsory.

What made the
Difference? The difference between the original proposals and the conclusions of the Conference are so marked that it will be interesting to see if we can trace any of the influences at work which helped to bring it about. We desire to

avoid saying anything in a partisan spirit, but we may be permitted to recall certain facts which are common knowledge. It will be remembered that when first it was seen how dangerous were the tendencies of the proposals of Convocation the Bishop of Manchester and others called a Conference to consider the whole position. As a result of that Conference it was decided to present to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York a Memorial against the adoption of the changes proposed. That Memorial was duly circulated. In the meantime, however, a Joint Conference of the two Convocations had been held in private to co-ordinate the various changes which had been proposed in the course of the ten years' debates on Prayer Book Revision, and agreement was reached on every point except in regard to these changes in the Communion Office. The Memorial was presented to the Archbishops on Thursday, February 27, it having been signed by ten diocesan bishops, 3,128 clergy and 102,548 laymen. The Archbishop of Canterbury made a long reply, but the only passage in it material to our present purpose was the following :—

All that we have been doing is simply to bring proposals together towards something which has ultimately got to be faced in its entirety, and then we have to see what the desire of the Church is, as far as we can ascertain it, for adopting, or not adopting, the changes which are suggested. When we found how strong the feeling was to which you have given expression to-day, we at once stopped going forward with regard to it. The whole thing has been stopped ; we have said we must wait until we can confer face to face with those men of strong Evangelical opinions who can best help us, with devout spirit and with prayerful co-operation with ourselves, to try to reach a solution in this matter. No formulating of any proposal on this subject can be adopted by Convocation until a Conference, or conversation, of that kind, to endeavour to ascertain the position all round, has been deliberately, quietly, and prayerfully attempted. We have tried our level best to consider the Evangelical, as well as the High Church, feeling ; and at that stage it is no doubt useful to have such a Memorial as you have put into our hands provided we take care that we do not seem to regard the proposals which have been made as something which are in themselves obviously and indisputably wrong and bad, such as would dismay our brethren in America, not to say anything of our brethren in Scotland, and a great section of our own perfectly moderate and reasonable Churchmen in England.

We may be pardoned if we emphasize some of the words in this passage of the Archbishop's address : " When we found how strong the feeling was to which you have given expression to-day, we at once stopped going forward in regard to it " : " We must wait until we can confer face to face with those men of strong Evangelical convictions who can best help us " : " At that stage it is no doubt

useful to have such a Memorial as you have put into our hands." The result has shown that the Archbishop spoke as a true prophet. The Memorial did its work ; the changes against which, it protested have been laid aside in favour of changes which it is held by many Evangelical theologians—though not by all—can safely be accepted as not in any way upsetting that " careful balance of doctrine which is characteristic of our Communion Office." For that result we are profoundly thankful, and we feel that those who promoted the Memorial are to be congratulated upon the attainment of so large a measure of success.

The Conference. The Conference called by the Archbishops to consider the matter held two sittings, viz., on May 2 and on November 27. It is useful to put on record the names of those who attended. They were the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishops of Bristol, Chelmsford, Chichester, Ely, Gloucester, Manchester, Ripon, Truro and Warrington ; the Deans of Westminster and Christchurch ; Archdeacons Lisle Carr, A. G. Robinson and J. H. Srawley ; Canons E. R. Bernard, Brightman, Burroughs, Headlam, Grose, Hodge, Barnes-Lawrence, A. W. Robinson and Sparrow-Simpson, and the Revs. L. G. Buchanan, W. H. Draper, Dr. Frere, W. Lockton, J. G. McCormick, F. B. Macnutt, R. H. Malden, E. M. Milner-White, T. W. Pym, T. Guy Rogers, N. S. Talbot, F. Underhill, H. A. Wilson and E. S. Woods. The value of such a Conference is shown to be very great. It is true the decisions arrived at were not unanimous—the proposals being carried " by a large majority "—but the frank and free interchange of opinion has paved the way for what may be hoped will be a final settlement of a very difficult question. It must be remembered that the " conclusions " of the Conference are not themselves absolute ; they take the form of " recommendations " to Convocation, but we find it difficult to believe that any substantial alterations will be made in them by that body. It is impossible to resist the reflection that if there had been similar Conferences at different stages of the Prayer Book Revision discussions it might have been possible to find a way out of our difficulties and much of the bitterness of controversy would have been avoided.

Every one will be asking what view is taken of the results of the Conference by those Bishops who signed the Memorial. The *Record* has published letters from several of them and it is clear that they are by no means of one mind on the subject. The Bishop of Manchester is strongly and unalterably opposed to what has been done, and on every point he gives his reasons for dissenting. In regard to the change proposed in the Prayer of Consecration he writes :—

The proposed addition, both by its form and by its place in the Prayer of Consecration, leans to the *sacrificial* sense. The words "having in remembrance *before Thee*" are to be specially noted. It is no answer to say that all our acts are *before God*. The statement is true, but we do not repeat the thought in every prayer. This is not the real reason why the words are inserted here. They are 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. They will certainly be quoted as a sanction by our Church of this false interpretation. No one who knows the history of the controversy will treat them as non-controversial.

The Bishop of Durham does not "decline general concurrence," but he expresses his "deep regret that these changes should, by a representative body, be deemed pressingly desirable," and he affirms that it will be "a very grave difficulty" in his own case whether he can ever personally use the proposed new order. Nor is the Bishop of Llandaff quite happy about the proposals. He does not see any really urgent need for them, and he would be very sorry to see the additions to the Prayer of Consecration adopted. On the other hand the Bishop of Liverpool is ready to accept the conclusions of the Conference. So also is the Bishop of Chelmsford. He agrees that there may be phrases in the compromise which may be capable of a double interpretation, but this, he says, is not uncommon in our Prayer Book. He adds : "The proposals as they stand are free from the grave objections which the former proposals contained, and they do not in themselves contain any doctrine contrary to, or inconsistent with, that held by the Primitive Church or by the Reformers generally." The Bishop of Truro holds that the new proposals do not in any way alter the doctrinal balance of the service. He is thankful that they proved acceptable to the Conference and he trusts that they will be accepted by all sober sons and daughters of the Church of England. The Bishop of Sodor and Man has no doubt that the changes now proposed are liturgically correct.

He adds, "One, all must agree, is intentionally ambiguous. Two are to me practically needless. Others, I think, devotionally helpful, while none, in my opinion, is doctrinally unsound." The proposals will continue to be discussed for some time to come, and the letters of the Bishops should prove helpful in guidance.

The letter written by Sir W. Joynson-Hicks, **The National Church League.** Bart, M.P., on behalf of the National Church League, will, we hope, receive widespread attention. He makes a point which is apt to be overlooked, yet it is of supreme importance. It is hardly realized that the Church of England is on the eve of a momentous change in its administration. Before these lines appear, the Enabling Bill will in all probability have received the Royal Assent, and then, as Sir William Joynson-Hicks points out, the National Church Assembly will have real powers, and the elections to this body will be as important for the Church as elections to Parliament are for the nation. What then is our duty? He states the position quite clearly. "The ritualist Societies," he says, "are keenly organizing in order to secure control of this great assembly, and I know no other body which can so well put before moderate Churchpeople the desires which we have, and our endeavour to keep the Church pure from ritualist and Romish propaganda, as our National Church League." It is obvious, therefore, if the League is to do its work efficiently, it must receive adequate support. We trust that there will be a considerable response to the present appeal and that when Sir W. Joynson-Hicks returns from India in, as we sincerely hope, greatly improved health, he will find the welcome news awaiting him that the whole of the sum needed has been supplied.

