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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE CHURCHMAN

December, 1920.

THE MONTH.

An Urgent Appeal. WE desire to give prominence to and warmly to commend the following appeal by Sir William Joynson-Hicks, M.P., Treasurer of the National Church League, which appeared in the *Record* of November 18:—

Notwithstanding the policy which the Bishop of Chelmsford advocated at the Church Congress and defends in your columns this week, I still venture to ask that you will let me invite the prompt and generous help of your readers for the work of the National Church League.

Owing to circumstances entirely arising from the war, the League finds itself in a very serious financial position, and if its work is not to be crippled and impaired at the present time, when the setting up of the new Church Assembly urgently calls for organization and constructive effort on the part of Evangelical Churchmen, immediate and substantial assistance is required. A sum of £3,000 is needed before the end of the year.

But in view of what the Bishop writes, though I do not now wish to enter upon a discussion of his proposals, I should perhaps draw attention to the main objects for which the National Church League was founded. They are stated in the Annual Report as follows:—

“ 1. To unite in the maintenance of the faith and practice of the Church all members of the Church of England who desire to be true to the principles of the Primitive Church as reasserted at the Reformation.

“ 2. To maintain the doctrine of the Church as set forth, subject to the supreme authority of Holy Scripture, in the Book of Common Prayer and the Articles of Religion.

“ 3. To maintain in a spirit of charity the order and discipline of the Church of England as by law established.

“ 4. To maintain the principles of the National Establishment of a pure and Apostolic Branch of Christ's Church, and to defend all schools in which children are brought up in the true faith and fear of God.

“ 5. To advocate and promote such reforms as may be necessary for the due efficiency of the Church in the fulfilment of its mission in the present day.

“ 6. To promote the application of the principles of the Gospel to the social amelioration of the people.”

The means by which it is sought to attain these objects are, first of all, education. An extensive series of books, pamphlets, and leaflets on doctrinal, historical, and practical subjects, by such writers as Bishop Moule of Durham, the Bishop of Manchester, the Bishop of Truro, Bishop Drury, Canon Meyrick, Canon Girdlestone, the Rev. N. Dimock, Dr. Griffith Thomas, and many others, have been published through the agency of the League.

We have taken a large part in the work of making known and stimulating interest in the Church Assembly by issuing pamphlets, leaflets, roll-books, declaration forms, etc. For the parochial clergy confirmation lectures, confirmation and baptism cards, books for candidates are provided, Sunday-school prizes, and other presentation books selected. I will not enlarge on this side of our work.

The other principal method is organization, and here it is not necessary to say much. By attending to matters concerning the elections to diocesan and other bodies, and to the National Church Assembly, we endeavour to secure a fair representation of Evangelical opinion upon those bodies, and our efforts have not been unsuccessful. Two years ago, when nine diocesan Bishops promoted a Memorial addressed to the Archbishops on the subject of the Communion service, the circulation of the Memorial and the general organization necessary for its success was undertaken and carried through by the League. The result was that the proposals objected to were abandoned.

We seek thus to unite Churchmen who are loyal to the Reformed and Scriptural principles of the Church of England, and to focus their efforts for the promotion and maintenance of these principles. We have other equally necessary branches of work of which space forbids mention. But I should not omit the Church Sisters' Home, where ladies are trained for parochial work. In view of the Lambeth Resolutions, there are few matters of greater urgency at the present time than this whole question of woman's work in the Church, and the provision of suitable training for it.

It is not, I think, necessary to press upon your readers the great importance of such effort to maintain the teaching and practice of the Church of England, when practically the whole mediæval system from which the Church freed itself at the Reformation is being reintroduced on a rapidly extending scale. In any case it is the clear duty of all Evangelical Churchmen to make their contribution to the life and thought of the Church: to witness to the power of the Gospel of Christ to save and sanctify men and women whenever and wherever they come to Him; and to resist, as St. Paul did, all that would obscure the truth of the Gospel as revealed in the Scriptures.

It is in order to help in the making of this contribution that the League exists, and that I ask your readers' support for it.

In expressing the hope that there will be a large response to Sir William's appeal (contributions being sent to him at the offices of the National Church League, 6 Grosvenor Mansions, 82 Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.1), we may venture to point out that the N.C.L. fills a position of unique importance in the life of the Church. Without any flourish of trumpets it pursues its work quietly and unobtrusively, and it has an enormous influence in promoting, particularly among the younger clergy, sound views on doctrinal questions and in upholding the principles of the Reformation. Its propaganda work is considerable, and if it were more adequately supported such activity could be very largely increased. We could wish there was a deeper

**The Work of
the N.C.L.**

appreciation among Evangelical Churchpeople of the value of propaganda. It is well understood by those of other schools of thought, but somehow or other our own friends have not sufficiently realized the great power they have ready to hand if only they would use it. It would be a disaster if the National Church League were compelled to curtail its work or limit its usefulness. It is one of the greatest assets of Reformation Churchmanship, and we venture to urge that it is the bounden duty, as well as the highest wisdom, of Evangelical Churchmen to rally to its support and to supply it with such funds as may be necessary to put its work on a firm financial basis.

**Parochial
Church
Councils.**

The Autumn Session of the National Assembly of the Church of England was held on Monday, November 15, and the four following days. The chief legislative business was concerned with the Reform of Convocation and the powers to be conferred upon Parochial Church Councils. The first of these measures was quickly disposed of, but the second needed and received much more detailed treatment, and the passing of the final stages was reserved until the February session. Two matters were very keenly debated and, undoubtedly, they go to the very heart of the problem of what "powers" shall be conferred upon the Councils—one relating to the voice of the Council in the appointment of the Incumbent, and the other to the powers of consultation and representation in regard to the services. The clause (8) dealing with the voidance of a benefice is as follows :—

8.—(1) Every Council shall have power to make representations to the patron of the benefice within 21 days of the voidance of such benefice with regard to the exercise of his power of presentation thereto, and the patron shall not exercise his power of presentation thereto until such a period has elapsed.

(2) The notice required to be served on the churchwardens of a parish by Section 2 (2) of the Benefices Act, 1898, shall be served also on the Secretary of the Council, and within fourteen days from the service of any such notice the Council shall have power to petition the Bishop to refuse to collate, institute or admit any person proposed to be collated, instituted or admitted by him. Upon receiving any such petition the Bishop shall be entitled, after consulting a permanent Board of Assessors to be constituted for that purpose by the Diocesan Conference, to refuse to collate, institute or admit such person if he thinks fit, irrespective of any other power of refusal which he may possess by statute or otherwise.

It was objected that section (2) of this clause places far too much power in the hands of the Bishop, and it was claimed that a clergyman refused institution under it ought to have at least the right of appeal. But if the right of appeal is conceded to one party it ought also to be granted to the other, viz., the Parochial Church Council, and this view was pressed upon the Assembly. How far the Committee will adopt these suggestions the February session will show. More difficult still was the clause (14) relating to Church services :—

14. Nothing in this Measure shall affect the rights, liabilities or duties of the Incumbent in respect of the church or the services or public worship therein or of the churchyard or of any property belonging to the benefice. Provided that the Incumbent shall from time to time consult with the Council concerning the services of the church, and particularly concerning any important changes which he may propose to make in such services. And if, after such consultation, the Council shall be opposed to any such change, they shall have the right to make representations to the Bishop in respect thereof.

Considerable difference of opinion was manifested in the Assembly over this clause, but it emerged plainly enough that the laity, at any rate, are confident that some such power of representation must be provided for. Every effort will be made to pass the measure in its final form at the February session in the hope of getting it through Parliament and on to the Statute Book before Easter.

What has come to be known as the Chelmsford Eirenicon is being fully discussed. We gave in our The Chelmsford Eirenicon. last number an outline of the Bishop of Chelmsford's proposal at the Southend Church Congress, in which he favoured a policy of "whole-hearted inclusion" towards the Anglo-Catholics. Viewed in relation to current controversies it is difficult to find in it a working basis, and the Dean of Canterbury, in a singularly clear and weighty argument in the *Record*, has had no difficulty in pointing out that it ignores the facts of the present situation and is in reality "a counsel of despair." To this the Bishop responds that it is the only policy which has in it any hope. But while the policy itself is being discussed, we must not lose sight of the important duty, upon which both parties to the controversy agree, the duty of proclaiming positive truth. The world is waiting for a message, the message which Evangelical Churchmen are so well fitted to proclaim, the message of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.