

# THE CHURCHMAN

July, 1921

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Parochial  
Church  
Councils.

By the time these lines are published, the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure, 1921, will, it is believed, have been approved by both Houses of Parliament, and possibly presented to His Majesty for Royal Assent. The Archbishop of Canterbury was to move the necessary resolution in the House of Lords on June 15. The House of Commons agreed to the resolution on June 8, and it is extremely interesting to us to know that it was moved by Mr. Inskip, who, it will be remembered, rendered such splendid service when the Measure was under discussion in the National Church Assembly. The motion did not come on in the House of Commons until just after midnight, and as a result only the bare announcement that it was carried appeared in the daily newspapers, but a reference to *Hansard* shows that a very interesting, if brief, debate took place. Mr. Inskip, in a singularly felicitous speech which would have completely silenced factious criticism if any had been intended, pointed out that the Measure had received the overwhelming support of the National Assembly, "which is a popularly elected body and truly represents the democracy of the Church of England." He gave an illuminating explanation of the purposes of the Measure and stated that the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Houses of Parliament, "a body composed of impartial members of all parties representing the different points of view of the different great interests in the country," had examined the Measure, reported to the House in its favour, and considered it expedient that it should pass. Dealing with the objection that the rights of the Vestry in the election of churchwardens are diminished, he said:—

The Assembly was careful to preserve the rights of the Vestry in this matter, and members of the Vestry, that is to say, the rate-

payers, reserve their right to join in the election of churchwardens as heretofore, but they are to be reinforced by members on the electoral roll, so that there may be co-operation or reinforcement. I think that is no serious derogation to the rights of the ratepayers. It is quite obvious that in a parish where the ratepayers take a strong view as to who is the proper person to be a churchwarden they might in a well-organized parish resort to the meeting to elect the churchwardens in sufficient numbers to make their power and influence felt. That merely gives to the electorate a new interest in the election of their responsible ministers.

Before closing his speech, which greatly impressed the House, he paid a tribute to the sympathetic attitude of Nonconformists:—

Members of the Church of England—I am sure I may say this—have cause to feel grateful to the Nonconformists for the general sympathy and interest with which they have followed the proceedings of the Church Assembly. The Church Assembly, on the other hand, have been sincerely anxious to avoid doing anything in this first and important Measure which might affront the political or religious conscience of any members of Nonconformist churches.

Then in a final passage he added:—“We have been actuated by the sincere desire to give the laity of the Church that place in the councils of the Church which will enable them to exercise their many and varied gifts to the widest service of humanity, and, we hope, to the greater glory of God.” The peroration was as natural as it was simple, and Churchpeople will be thankful that in the House of Commons there should be a reference to “the greater glory of God” as the object of a Measure submitted for its approval.

In the brief discussion which followed, Sir R. The Election of Churchwardens. Adkins, disclaiming any idea of hostility to the Measure pointed out the inconvenience of the Ecclesiastical Committee having no power to refer back part of a Measure, while approving the vast bulk of the proposals, and he expressed the view that it was a great pity that questions affecting the civic rights of parishioners had been raised in the Measure. He revealed also the interesting fact that when the question was before the Ecclesiastical Committee the motion to recommend it for the Royal Assent was adopted by thirteen to four. Major Barnes, who opposed the Enabling Bill, made the significant announcement that if that Bill were introduced now he would not pursue the same course, as he had come to regard it as a most

valuable example of functional devolution. The speech of Sir R. Adkins was plainly directed against the provisions relating to the election of Churchwardens, and on this point he was effectively answered by Lord Wolmer, who said the fears were groundless. His explanation of the position was so clear that it will be useful to quote his words :—

In the Measure now before the House the Church Assembly has done nothing to interfere with the citizen's rights except in so far as is absolutely necessary for the spiritual efficiency of religion in this country. The point which my hon. and learned Friend made about the ratepayers' right to elect churchwardens simply comes to this, that, in this Measure, the Churchpeople in the parish, whether they are ratepayers or not, shall have the right to co-operate with the ratepayers in the choice of churchwarden. When it is remembered that the churchwardens must necessarily be the executive officers of the Parochial Church Council, that they constitute, with the incumbent, the executive committee of the Parochial Church Council, surely it is only reasonable that the Churchpeople of the parish should, at any rate, have some voice in their election. We do not deprive our Nonconformist or Free Church friends who are parishioners of the right of voting for the churchwardens.

Sir R. ADKINS: The point I took was not the right of Free Churchmen as such, but the right of those parishioners who do not come within the somewhat restricted franchise of the parochial councils.

Viscount WOLMER: Those parishioners who are neither Free Churchmen nor members of the Church of Eng'and can have a very small interest in the religious affairs of the parish, but they are not disfranchised by this Measure. They still have the same rights as before, except that the plural vote they had is abolished and all ratepayers have one vote, and one vote only. All that is done of importance in this instance is that Churchpeople who are not ratepayers and who would not otherwise have the franchise are allowed to join with the ratepayers in the choice of churchwardens. I submit that that is not a serious infringement of the rights of the citizens of this country. Surely, that is a legitimate right which Churchpeople may claim, and it does come within the scope of what was claimed for the Enabling Act, and give to the Church of England the chance of managing its own affairs.

A new Renaissance and Reformation. There is a striking parallel between the present outlook and that of the Renaissance. The world has become smaller and its inter-relation much more perplexing. Mankind has become one in a fresh sense, and by so doing we find life so complex, that the imagination is baffled by any attempt to influence wisely the whole, as principles seem to

come into conflict. The unification of mankind has presented us with as great an intellectual problem as was brought before our forefathers by the Copernican system and the discovery of America. The world is at once smaller and greater, and we think with different measures of value than we did before the war. Then the awful perplexities that come before the mind when the application is made of moral and Christian principles to present-day conditions, lead men to wonder where they are. The influence of the individual never seemed smaller and the importance of personality was never greater. In the sixteenth century there was a return of men to the teaching of Holy Scripture from the dogmas and practices of the Church. To-day there are welcome signs that the chaotic results of New Testament criticism have become less confused, and that there is a return to traditional views on the authenticity and trustworthiness of the New Testament documents. *The New Testament Background* (1s. 6d.), by Dr. Sanday and Mr. C. W. Emmett, gives the opinions of two men considered to be advanced scholars, and they are much more conservative than would have been anticipated, although we strongly disagree with some of their conclusions. An excellent and well-balanced volume by the Rev. Maurice Jones on *The Four Gospels* (6s.) will do much to reassure minds that have been disturbed, and we believe that its sober and well-founded conclusions will prove to be nearer the truth than the views so confidently held by a number of critics. Dr. Jones writes with full knowledge of Continental and American criticism, and his opinions are the fruit of deep study. We do not, however, think that his late date of the Lucan writings will stand, as no satisfactory reply has been made to Harnack's notable works on this question. But the most remarkable of recent developments is the return to the teaching of St. Paul. Dr. A. H. McNeile's *St. Paul* (10s.) is an excellent summary of the best thought on his doctrine and influence which are once more exerting themselves in the study and, we hope, in the pulpit. His great exposition of Christian faith is being tested and has been proved true. To quote the latest commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (Dr. Burton, 35s.): "Faith is, for Paul, in its distinctively Christian expression, a committal of one's self to Christ, issuing in a vital fellowship with Him, by which Christ becomes the controlling force in the moral life of the believer." In spite of much that discourages there is

ground for hope that we are on the eve of a return to New Testament Christianity.

The Church is faced by a crisis in man-power that **Candidates for the Ministry.** will have very serious influences on its future efficiency.

The supply of war candidates has ceased, and it has failed to reach the numbers anticipated. While every profession has more than the pre-war numbers flocking for opportunity of entering its ranks, the ministry not only in our Church but in all the Churches has an insufficient supply of recruits. The outlook is more than serious, and there must be a cause or causes for the alarming deficiency. Economic conditions are partly to blame, and until the ministry ceases to be a sweated industry we cannot expect men to devote their lives to meeting financial anxieties, which hamper the usefulness of their work. But there are other causes. Many openings for public service are brought to the notice of young men in the Universities. The teaching profession has an improved status and better pay. There is also intellectual unrest which presses severely upon many of our more thoughtful young men, who believe they can serve God and their generation best as Christian laymen. It has always seemed strange to us that at a time when it is loudly proclaimed that Christian influences are stronger than they have ever been in our seats of learning, there should be such a decline in candidates for the ministry. The popular teaching that Christianity is an adventure, that the Church is not an ambulance wagon but an advance guard, and that life, not belief, is all-important, has failed to win men to the side of those who put forward these contentions, as fellow-ministers of the Gospel. We wish that the authorities would appoint a sympathetic commission to inquire into the causes that operate at present in keeping men from volunteering for Holy Orders. The Commission should not consist of Theological College authorities or prominent ecclesiastics. Three or four earnest laymen in touch with University life, and a similar number of the Clergy whose sons have turned away from the vocation of their fathers, will do far more to ascertain facts than a professional commission that sets to work with fixed ideals and finds in the facts grounds for the confirmation of their views. Something must be radically wrong when the highest privilege open to high-spirited and conse-

crated manhood fails to attract our best men. Never was the need of consecrated culture more evident, never was the claim on the best of our man-power for Christian service more imperative, and precisely at this time there is a general holding back that is most disquieting.

Mr. Arthur S. May, M.A., has written a most  
A Book  
 on Marriage. valuable book on Marriage: to give it its full title,

*Marriage in Church, Chapel and Register Office* (Longmans, 2s. 6d.). We congratulate him on having found a subject of great practical importance to a very large number of people on which there is not already a book available. The most recent was published many years ago and was, moreover, written rather from the point of view of the Register Office. Mr. May not only has a very creditable academic record, but is a practising barrister with large experience, especially in the matters with which this book is concerned, for he is Surrogate to the Ecclesiastical Courts in Doctors Commons and during the war had to deal with a large number of cases where every possible question was involved. His book, therefore, should have a large circulation, as it is the only compendious statement of the actual facts which relate to the process of getting married in the present day. Such questions as Consent of the Parties, Prohibited Degrees, Minors, Aliens, Banns, Licences, Informalities, and the innumerable pitfalls which beset the minister who has to perform the marriage ceremony are all lucidly and interestingly treated. It is, indeed, remarkable that so much solid information can be got into so small a space. The subject does not afford many openings for the personality of the author to manifest itself; but the preface shows that he has a vein of quiet sardonic humour, and here and there in the book, as for instance in the references to marriages in Register Offices, which are not recommended, there are indications of both gravity and human sympathy which must greatly add to the author's qualifications for an office whose responsibility is increased by the opportunities it frequently affords of giving personal counsel and advice. A copy of Mr. May's book should be in every Church Vestry for reference, and if the Incumbent does not provide it, the Churchwardens or Parish Council should make it their duty to do so.

The Bishop of Exeter, who possesses many excellent qualities, of which, however, moderation of statement does not happen to be one, made a violent attack on the patronage system of the Church at his Diocesan Conference last month. The patronage system is open to many objections, and the manner in which episcopal patronage is administered is not the least of them. Moreover, it was hardly wise for a prelate who was appointed by his father to the only living he ever held, Bishops Hatfield, at the age of twenty-five, to fulminate against the purchase of livings by people who wished to appoint their relatives. But the Bishop went on to attack with particular virulence the purchase of livings by party Trusts, the Secretaries of which he described as persons in whom " fanaticism had destroyed all sense of justice." The description is simply ludicrous to those who are acquainted with the Secretaries of Patronage Trusts, and destroys all respect for the judgment or fairness of any one who could give it. A Cecil, at least, might remember the maxim *Noblesse oblige*. Of course, in raising an outcry against the purchase of livings the Bishop could count upon the applause of his hearers, for no reasonable person defends in principle the practice ; but we would remind him that there are many Bishops who have either made or encouraged such purchases to add to their own patronage. The Bishop of Exeter, moreover, conveniently left out of sight the fact that when livings are once purchased by a Trust they are removed for ever from the prospect of being re-sold. Trustees do not sell the living placed in their hands, and in most cases there is a provision in the Conveyance which definitely prohibits any future sale of the advowson. It is very easy, again, to get applause by denouncing parties or party spirit, and, with curious inconsistency, Bishops are very fond of raising cheers in this way, for there are few more flagrant examples of partisan administration than the records of episcopal patronage reveal ; but Evangelical Churchmen, at any rate, can invite with confidence an inspection of the methods and results of the patronage of their various Trusts. Some of the best men and the hardest and most capable workers are to be found among the clergy who have been appointed by these Trusts, and few of them would ever have had any chance of an adequate sphere for their gifts if they had waited for preferment from their Bishops. If we may say so without disrespect,

the Bishop of Exeter's speech seems to us to show how easy it is for fanaticism to destroy the sense of justice.

The Cheltenham Conference promises to be of exceptional interest. The date at which it is being held this year—June 27-29—precludes any report of the proceedings being given in this number, but in our next issue we hope to present a summary of the speeches and an "impression" of the Conference. A bold and striking experiment has been resolved upon, which is thus referred to in the Letter of Invitation:—  
 "Recent efforts to secure the harmonious co-operation of different types of Churchmanship have attracted much attention, and it is our duty as Evāngelicals to face the issues involved. We have to explore the possibilities, if any, of working with other schools, and for this purpose the Committee have invited two Liberal Churchmen and two Anglo-Catholics to put before the Conference their respective positions. The exposition of their aims will afford the opportunity of debating this question at a subsequent session." Thus the subject of "Relations between Evangelical Churchmen and High and Broad Churchmen" will be discussed. From the High Church side, the speakers will be the Rev. M. E. Atlay (Vicar of St. Matthew's, Westminster) and the Rev. G. H. Clayton (Vicar of St. Mary-the-Less, Cambridge); and, from the Broad Church side, the Rev. Canon Glazebrook (Canon of Ely) and the Rev. C. W. Emmet (Fellow and Chaplain University College, Oxford). The case from the Evangelical side will be undertaken by Canon Boughton (Vicar of Calverley), the Rev. T. W. Gilbert (Rector of Bradfield), the Rev. H. B. Gooding (Principal of Wycliffe Hall) and the Rev. G. F. Irwin (Vicar of Wallington). Whatever may be the ultimate outcome of the discussion, such a full, frank and free interchange of views as is here contemplated cannot be otherwise than useful and good. We shall get to know each other's position from first-hand information.