

Messenger and Visitor

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A Great Conflict.

The conflict between ritualism and anti-ritualism goes on in England with undiminished vigor and the end of the strife is hardly within the range of human vision. This conflict might be quite as properly described as one between Protestantism and Romanism. For, though the great body of extreme ritualists in the Anglican church are not perhaps working, either avowedly or intentionally, for organic union with Rome, they are contending for doctrines and practices which are essentially the same as those held by Romanists, and the way upon which they are journeying seems likely to lead them to Rome, and that by no very circuitous route.

If the Church of England could ever be rightly called a Protestant church, that time has gone by. Certainly there were days when it was much more Protestant than it is today. There was a time when even men who were regarded as representing the High Church elements in the Establishment were ready to declare themselves "irreconcilable enemies to the errors, superstitions, idolatries and tyrannies of the Church of Rome," and when a High Church Anglican Archbishop could counsel his clergy "warmly and affectionately to exhort Dissenters to join with us in daily fervent prayer for a universal blessed union of all Reformed Churches, both at home and abroad, against our common enemies." It is a matter of doubt, however, whether those in the church who are called Evangelicals are willing at the present time to do as much.

The sacerdotalism and essential Romanism, which is now so rapidly leavening the Church of England, can be successfully opposed only by a united and whole-hearted effort of all the Protestant elements of the country. There are, of course, within the Establishment a large body of people, who still stand more or less firmly for Reformation principles and who are deeply grieved and indignant at the increasing influence within the Church of a party whose doctrine and practice are so flagrantly and strenuously opposed to those principles and to the creed of the Church as embodied in the Thirty-nine Articles. To the great body of people composing the membership of the Free Churches of England, the principles and practices of the Sacerdotalists are in the highest degree obnoxious. It is, however, by no means certain that there will be any effective co-operation of the evangelical Nonconformists and the evangelical Anglicans against their common enemy. The Protestant Anglicans would be very glad of course to have the assistance of the Nonconformists in the effort to secure legislation for the suppression of Sacerdotalism in the Church. But the appeal of these Protestant Anglicans for aid in this cause does not come home very powerfully to the hearts of the Nonconformists. It is hardly to be expected that the latter shall be willing to ignore their own platform of disestablishment and enter heartily into a campaign for religious reform, which the Evangelical Churchmen propose to carry on upon the platform of a religious establishment which is opposed both to the conscientious beliefs and the material interests of Nonconformists. The Protestant Anglicans are distracted between two fears. There, on the one side, is their ancient enemy, dragon like, ready to swallow up the Church, and, on the other, the deep sea of disestablishment, upon which they fear to embark. "The loss of peace," it is to be feared, is a scarcely less powerful consideration with them than it was with John

Gilpin. The Romanizing Anglicans, on the other hand, declare their determination to stick to their sacerdotalism even at the expense of disestablishment. In this they are probably sincere, and they also well understand the effect which this bold profession will have in restraining the ardor of the Evangelicals.

Much must depend for the future of the Church of England on the course which shall now be taken by that part of it which may still be called Protestant. The "British Weekly," of London, which is devoting much space to the subject, says that the eyes of the nation will be upon the evangelicals in the Anglican Church. "They hold the key to the position. They have been put on trial. They must now speak or forever hold their peace. For this is the decisive battle, and if the Bishops and the Evangelicals yield, there will never be a struggle in the Church again. The Romanizers will go on from victory to victory, and we shall have a practically Romanized Church of England. Then the battle for disestablishment and disendowment will begin, and be fought as it has never been fought before—fought until it is fairly won."

Editorial Notes.

—Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage has resigned the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C., of which he has been pastor for four years. The reason given for his resignation is that he wishes to devote himself more largely to journalism and lecturing, and, as he says in his letter of resignation, "that I may have more opportunity to meet face to face in religious assemblies those in this and in other countries to whom I have, through the kindness of the printing press, been permitted to preach week by week, and without the exception of a week, for about thirty years."

—Dr. Alvah Hovey is about completing the fiftieth year of his connection as professor with the Newton Theological Seminary. During all those years his large powers of mind and heart have been given unceasingly and unsiftedly to promote the interests of the institution and of the denomination, and to serve the cause of Christ in the world. It will therefore be felt to be most fitting that, at this time, some formal and public recognition should be made of Dr. Hovey's long period of eminently valuable service. Accordingly it has been arranged to hold a Hovey Jubilee in connection with the approaching anniversary of the Seminary. June 7th, and the evening of the preceding day, will be devoted entirely to the Jubilee exercises. The occasion will doubtless be one of very great interest, both to the large body of Newton's Alumni, who will be glad to acknowledge their great debt to President Hovey, and to many others who have been associated with it in one way or another, and to that larger number who, without knowing Dr. Hovey personally, have been strengthened and helped by his strong faith and the fruits of his profound and reverent study of divine truth. Among those who are to deliver addresses in connection with the Jubilee services are W. A. Munroe, Esq., of Boston, who will speak for the trustees of the Seminary; Dr. G. D. Boardman, of Philadelphia, who will speak for the Alumni; Dr. Kerfoot, of the Southern Baptist Seminary, who will speak for the Theological Seminaries; Acting President Clarke, of Brown, for the Colleges; Dr. Wood, of Boston, for the Churches. Dr. H. M. King, of Providence, is to speak on Newton Theological Institution in the last Fifty Years; President Harper, of Chicago, on Theological Seminaries and our Civil Institutions; Dr. Hartranft, of Hartford, on Theological Seminary of the Future. Other speakers are Dr. Keirstead, of Acadia, who is to speak of Dr. Hovey as Professor; Dr. Pepper, of Colby, who is to speak of him as President; Dr. Weston, of Crozer, who is to speak of him as Exegete and Translator, and Dr. W. N. Clarke, of Hamilton, who is to speak of him as Author.

—Elsewhere in this issue we publish an article "Concerning Ordinations," by Rev. J. D. Freeman, of Fredericton. As the mover of the resolution which has given rise to a good deal of discussion upon this subject, Mr. Freeman fairly claims the right to be heard, and his article is certainly an interesting contribution to the discussion. The distinction which is made between the election or appointment of a minister and the ceremony by which such election or appointment may be accom-

panied, is important. It is quite correct, we think, to say that the word *ordain*, as used in the New Testament in this connection, signifies the election or appointment of the minister, rather than any ceremony or service connected therewith. But is it quite correct to say that "ordination," as we use the word, "signifies the public ceremony in which a candidate is set apart for sacred service by the laying on of hands"? It is true that the public ceremony is signified, but is not appointment also signified, in the term "ordination" as we use it? The church elects its candidate for ordination, but subject to the advice of a council representing the sister churches, and if that advice is not favorable, there is no appointment—no ordination. The essential thing to ordination is that the voice of the council coincide with the voice of the church. There is one other point to which it seems worth while to call attention. To the question, Who is competent to elect the minister—that is, to ordain in the New Testament sense—Mr. Freeman replies, "That is unquestionably the inalienable right of the individual, local church." This is good Baptist doctrine certainly, but the question will naturally occur to some readers—and certainly cannot have escaped the keen mind of our correspondent—How then is it that in all the passages cited from the New Testament concerning the ordination of ministers in the church, it is not the church which ordains? No doubt Mr. Freeman is able to throw light upon this question, and we feel sure that the readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR would be glad to have him do so in another article.

—On the third page of our present issue will be found a catechism prepared by a committee representing the different Evangelical denominations, or Free Churches, of England. The committee which had been two years engaged in the preparation of the catechism consists of 20 members, representing the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, four Methodist bodies and the Bible Christians. The catechism has attracted a good deal of attention and has been published by a large number of denominational papers. It is said to have been adopted unanimously by the committee concerned in its preparation. While it does not, of course, fully express the peculiar tenets of the different denominations, we suppose that little exception will be taken by any of the Evangelical bodies to the catechism so far as it goes. It must be confessed too that, on the whole, it is a remarkably comprehensive statement of doctrine showing that, while the Evangelical churches differ on some points of more or less importance, there is a great body of most precious religious truth in respect to which they have full and vital fellowship. There is no intention, so far as we are aware, to make the catechism a basis of organic union among the churches, but it is very evident, not only from this catechism but from the conflict that is going on within the Church of England, that there is much more of real fellowship between the different Free Church bodies of England than between the hostile parties within the Establishment.

—We are not in receipt of any direct information in respect to the business transacted at the special meeting of the Board of Governors of Acadia last week, but learn from items published in the daily press that Miss True, the highly esteemed Principal of the Seminary, has felt it necessary, on account of the failure of her health, to tender her resignation, to take effect at the end of the present school year, and that a committee has been appointed to nominate a gentleman as Miss True's successor. The Board having adopted the policy of having a male principal for the Seminary.

Kansas Letter.

Dr. Bradshaw has recently favored your readers with a description of the severe winter through which this land of sunshine has just passed. But balmy spring is once more with us, and we now turn from the sad contemplation of our enormous coal bills to listen to the mournful intelligence that the peach crop must be an utter failure after such intense cold. Kansas without peaches loses half her charm. However crop prospects generally are excellent, and there is reason to believe that Kansas will, this year at least, lead all the states of the union in her yield of wheat.

Our temperance work has lately taken on somewhat of a new phase. In the early days of prohibition a