

of the Ritualists' disregard of Episcopal monitions; and they grieve over this all the more because they feel what a grand opportunity they have lost thereby of promoting the recognition by the world of a cardinal principle of the Catholic Church. The High-Church party have done much good already by raising the standard of reverence in worship; they are doing much good now by asserting the Church's right to a fuller recognition of her spiritual authority, and to larger powers of self-government; but the ultra-Ritualist section of the party are doing great harm by their unfaithfulness to the Catholic principle of Episcopal authority. For this is the very principle which needs to be kept in mind more than any other in coming legislation for the Church; all reform must proceed on the line so strongly insisted on in the recent meetings of Convocation, and in the report of the joint committee on the Ecclesiastical Courts, viz., that the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church ought to be exercised by the bishops of the Church.

Finally, having regard to the difficulty of obtaining legislation in the interests of the Church, owing to the press of secular business in Parliament, the indifference of some and the hostility of other political parties, moderate men regard the adoption of the Bishop of London's proposed Bill as the one thing immediately needful in the way of reform of the Church's relations to the State. The principle embodied in this Bill is that Convocation shall be authorized to draw up bills and canons relating to the Church, which may then be laid upon the table of each House of Parliament; and, if not vetoed, shall become law forthwith. By this plan, Parliament would be relieved of much uncongenial and unnecessary work, while it would still retain as much control as at present over Church legislation and government. If all canons and bills must first be carried in the Convocation of both Provinces, before being submitted to Parliament, any discussion that arose in Parliament would be cleared of preliminary doubts and uncertainties, and in every way facilitated by being based upon an authoritative declaration of the wishes and views of Convocation. It is utterly useless for Parliament to enter upon a discussion of any Church measure until it has a correct understanding of the mind of the Church; and, at present, this cannot be ascertained more certainly and faithfully than by the general agreement of Convocation, whether as now divided in two Provinces, or, as it may be (we hope soon), united in one body, sitting at Westminster. There is nothing in such a plan which is opposed to the constitutional principles and practices of Parliament, for it would be acting in strict accordance with precedent, if it delegated such an authority in the preparation of Church legislation to Convocation, just as much as when it appoints a standing committee of its own members on railway or municipal business, or when it constitutes a special body of commissioners to regulate charitable and educational endowments under certain conditions prescribed by itself. In fact, Convocation would only be acting as a permanent committee or commission on Church business. Such a reform, if carried, could not make the prospects of Church legislation worse than they are at present, and it might do much to relieve the strained relations and dangerous friction between Church and State, to regain for the Church a fuller measure of the power of self-reform and self-adaptation to the changing wants of the age, and also to redeem Convocation from uselessness, and restore to it its proper functions as a co-ordinate authority with Parliament in legislating for the Church. The combined statesmanship and efforts of the bishops and the leading Church laymen in Parliament ought to be sufficient to carry such a measure of reform, which would not only be valuable in itself, but also might be an open door leading to still greater reforms and advantages.

THE COMING CHANGE.

(From the Church Review.)

THERE is a reflection that often bewilders the minds of readers of ecclesiastical history and observers of passing events in the religious world—how is it that so much hubbub is made over, and such an intensity of opposition excited by, doctrines which, although it may not please men to believe them, are yet innocent enough, are at the least allowable, and involve no terrible consequences? The period of the Reformation is the most fruitful in suggestive instances under this head. What a fearful hurly burly about the doctrine of the Eucharist? Men who admitted that the appropriate result of consuming the consecrated elements was to receive the Body and Blood of Christ argued as if it were a matter of life and death to their theology to maintain that no change

took place in the bread and wine at consecration. Now, supposing transubstantiation were not the mode in which this transcendent gift were bestowed, could it or ought it to have mattered much to them, since they still professed to believe in the gift? Yet it is maintained that this was the point for which "the Protestant martyrs" went to the stake. The advocates and opponents of transubstantiation all allowed that Christ alone was the source of grace, and that His Body and Blood were spiritual, and not material food. But the result of so much being made of it at the time of the Reformation is that the Protestant and the mere Anglican at this day are alike convinced that there must be a great deal in it. So with respect to the word altar and the Eucharistic Sacrifice. What utter nonsense is the antipathy to the word Altar, and the horror occasioned by the term.

All are agreed that Christ is the only Sacrifice, and that the work of the Cross can never be repeated. How could the opponents of the old doctrine bring themselves to think that it was as much as the Gospel was worth to deny that Christ had ordained a public method by which His one perpetual sacrifice should be offered or represented, or brought before the eyes of the Father, and that the official ministrants in that public service might be appropriately called priests? That the theory of priestly absolution involves no Gospel distinction is plain from the way in which so mild an Anglican as Wheatley speaks of the public absolution of our morning and evening services, in which he contends that pardon is given to the penitent through the mouth of the priest, whilst curiously enough denying that the fuller form in the visitation of the sick office has anything but the removal of ecclesiastical censures for its objects—that is, he raises no doubt upon the crucial point which divides the Catholic and the Protestant. Yet, to hear all this nonsense about sacerdotal pretensions, we are bound to believe that the question as it presents itself to the Protestant mind is no less than this, Does man forgive sins or God? So with regard to half a score other questions, such as that one stated by that profound and learned theologian, now Bishop of Liverpool, "Regenerated by water or by the Spirit?" As the opponents of baptismal regeneration have for the most part discovered their mistakes on this point, and no longer deny that its advocates may entertain as accurate notions of grace as they do themselves, there is no doubt that a similar result will follow on other points. In short, we shall yet see a general re-ordering of religious notions in the ranks of "Orthodox" Protestantism.

The wonderful thing is, then, that the religious world should have been so profoundly set by the ears through a series of mistakes, and that so considerable a movement as the English Reformation should be little more than a molehill exaggerated into a mountain. On the other hand, it would not be quite accurate to measure the character of the injuries inflicted upon our formularies by the flimsiness of the cause to which they are to be ascribed. The influences to which the exclusion of the word Altar, and the mutilations in the canon were due were distinctly anti-Catholic, however unnecessary on their own showing it was for any to oppose Catholic doctrine. Canon Hoare felt that the heavens were falling when Mr. Wood advocated the restoration of Edward Sixth's First Book. He could not divest himself of the impression that since certain emissaries from Geneva raised so serious a potter until that Book was altered, the most tremendous issues must be involved. He would accuse Mr. Wood of dissimulation if the latter answered that the Genevans made so many foolish mistakes, and that the integrity of the Gospel was not really involved in the differences between the First Book and the Second, serious as the defects of the latter were. Nor yet is it honest to slur over those defects or at least the remains of them, in our present Communion Service, or to boast that the result of them is the most perfect Liturgy in Christendom. This is too much like serving the cause of truth with our lies, and is sure to bring retribution. On the other hand, the mutilations in our Liturgy are not adequate to the intentions of their authors, nor are we bound to interpret every omission and alteration

in their sense. We can easily perceive the work of those who believed in a bare remembrance, and who dissociated the gift from the elements, and even made the recipient's faith the creator of it, without having our own relation to the present form at all affected. They had something to deal with which disdained their manipulation. Bread and wine consecrated by a priest become the Body and Blood of Christ, just as the water poured on the recipient in the sacred Name is a perfect sacrament.

But was the English Reformation all magnificent nonsense, or can we discern any sufficient object to justify so marked a revolution? Can we trace the marks of a divine design? Yes, we can. We trace it in the necessity of freeing one branch of the Church from the Papal system for the sake of the general interests of Christianity, which would have been far more seriously compromised had Western Christendom seen no example of non-Papalism except in the form of simple and unmitigated Protestantism. But the chances against this, unless men had been interested by doctrinal changes exaggerated beyond their real character, were invincible. For a Church to throw off the yoke of the modern Roman system, it was absolutely necessary that it should assume a quasi-Protestant complexion over its Catholic substance. But now that freedom has been won, it is the natural course of things that the slough should fall off; and under Providence this seems to be the explanation of the Tractarian Movement. It seems strange that a blatant system of controversialism around which so many antipathies, so many interests, so many sects and parties have gathered, should melt away and leave the Church where it was before; but we have instances before our eyes which are irresistible. At the onset of Tractarianism it was baptismal regeneration that was maligned as containing the virus of Popery which it was the object of the Reformation to expel from the Church of England. Now the Evangelicals admit that they mistook the meaning of the doctrine, and the alteration in their views attracts no attention. Why should it not be thus with the whole cycle of misunderstood Catholic truth? Six years ago the late Primate in Convocation solemnly announced the existence of a conspiracy, calling men like Mr. Mackonochie "conspirators," whose object was to Romanize the Church of England. Now the *Times* argues that the party Mr. Mackonochie represents have a rightful place in the Church, and are doing much good, without any harm worth mentioning. Eight years ago the late Primate having reproached the Church Association with not acting upon their convictions by bringing the Ritualists to justice, was the originator of a short and easy process for the purpose. Now on his death-bed his last public act in this world is to rob the same association of the very fruit of labours which were undertaken by his advice. He interferes, in short, to maintain and protect from assault the system which he condemned as a conspiracy, and the men whom he reprobated as conspirators. Short-sighted Church Associationists will pretend to take a logical view of this inconsistency. They will compare now and then, and ask if Ritualism was downright Romanism five years ago, how can it be a tolerable variety of Churchmanship now? But they will find the explanation to be as we have stated it. Men are heady, and fierce and awfully in earnest about particular forms of belief and the way of expressing them, and the whole world considers that the most vital issues are involved. But a change of circumstances and relations somehow awakens a true instinct in the common mind, and what was gulped at as a gnat is swallowed in the shape of a whole camel. We fancy we perceive signs of an easier future, and that peace among members of the Church is dawning. The non-success of persecution is leaving men leisure to discover its non-necessity, and the Roman nightmare having melted into space, religious persons in general will be free to estimate, calmly, the opinions and practices of Church parties.

A recent German writer says; "The lark goes up singing towards heaven; but if she stops the motion of her wings, then straightway she falls. So it is with him who prays not. Prayer is the movement of the wings of the soul; it bears one heavenward; but without prayer he sinks in the filth of the earthly impulses."