

EDITORIAL

IN adjoining columns of *The Times* (May 12th), Dr. H. D. A. Major, Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford, and Sir William Joynson-Hicks are reported to have said some interesting things about the doctrinal position of the Church of England. Their remarks are all the more interesting because they set forth entirely contradictory opinions on a subject that must be of the deepest importance to both speakers.

Dr. Major, realising that the English Church is faced with a crisis due to the 'mediaevalising' encroachments of Anglo-Catholicism, pleads for a simpler creed that will win the ready acceptance of the modern man. Most of the official theology of the Church of England, he maintains, is out of date in a number of ways, and needs drastic reformation. He believes that great numbers of people are kept out of the Church because of the 'impossible character of the Church's theology,' which lays an 'absurd and quite un-Christian emphasis upon the importance of assent to a number of intellectual propositions.' What is wanted is a living theology that will grip the modern mind. This theological reformation, he continues, 'must be mainly carried on by Christian clergymen, but there is to-day great scope in the undertaking for educated English laymen. Historians, philosophers, scientists of mark could all be of great help to the Church in the effort to achieve theological reformation if they would not only point out where the Church's doctrines appeared to them to be in conflict with truth, but also how they thought any particular doctrine might be reformulated so as to be in agreement with modern knowledge.' In the light of the synoptic teaching of our Lord, no more ought to be required of any disciple than that he should call Him Lord and Master and strive to follow Him in

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daily life. He should not be compelled first to affirm his belief in a number of propositions mainly of a metaphysical and historical character. *Amo*, not *credo*, is the Christian creed.

While Dr. Major sees in the abolition of antiquated dogma the only possible way of getting people to come to church, Sir William Joynson-Hicks protests vehemently that there can be no possible submission to those who are openly 'determined to alter the fundamental principles of the Church of England.' The Principal of Ripon Hall wants to get rid of the old-fashioned teaching of his Church, but the Home Secretary objects 'in the strongest way' to anything that will 'alter the fundamental basis and the character of the Church of England as settled at the period of the Reformation.'

Comment on such a striking divergence of views is almost superfluous. But the position is not without its tragic note. Both men evidently realise that some last desperate effort must be made to save the sinking ship. Yet how very different are their methods. One thinks the only way of salvation is to throw everything overboard; the other is afraid that if anything else goes over the side the ship will take a bad list and certainly founder. In the meantime, the Barque of Peter stands by on an even keel.

But what does 'the man in the street' make of it all?

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By the death of Amy Lowell America has lost one of her most prominent poets. Miss Lowell was an experimentalist in verse who did more to influence the form of poetry than any other of her literary contemporaries. In this country, with our well-established traditions in literature, any attempt to devise new patterns of verse is regarded with some suspicion, but America is free to discover by experiment what is the most natural way of expressing herself in song. Alice

Meynell has said that those who have little to say clamour for much space in which to say it; but although Amy Lowell invented many spacious methods to express her inspirations, no charge of vacuity can ever be brought against her. If her expansive treatment of any thought strikes a note of surprise in our traditional minds, it is clear that she adopted this strange medium as the one most suitable to convey the varied light and shade of her original conceptions. Miss Lowell was always a keen student of the poetic form, who never tired in exploring its possibilities and amenities. She was fond of weaving patterns in her verse, with varied cadences recurring at intervals and a varying rhythm that gives due emphasis to her musical lines. Many of her poems are wonderful tapestries of closely interwoven colour and subtlety of design, reinforced with a wealth of descriptive detail and breadth of view. But, unlike many who allow themselves latitude in the form of verse, Amy Lowell had an infallible feeling for the concise expression and was able to balance with telling imagery her emotional and intellectual qualities. Her poem 'Patterns' is one of the best-known examples of her design in verse. A few lines may be quoted in illustration :

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.

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Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whalebone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.

Besides her successful experiments in verse, Miss Lowell was responsible for the introduction into our language of what is called polyphonic prose. This form of writing has many rhymes and sound echoes, and, in the hands of a master, is admirable for description and narrative. It is capable of rapid movement and intense emotional feeling. Those who are interested in poetic and prose forms will be adequately rewarded by a study of Amy Lowell's work.

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Beneath the apparent levity of Mr. Gillow's paper on the Royal Academy there are some solemn principles of art and criticism that our readers will discover and commend. His characters illustrate two not uncommon types of men: one, who 'does' the Academy because it is 'the thing,' and tries to like and say the right thing; the other, who approaches the ordeal in a light spirit, makes several *faux pas*, but instinctively knows more about pictures than his self-conscious companion.

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