

# THE LUSITANIAN CHURCH, CATHOLIC, APOSTOLIC, EVANGELICAL.

GAIA, 8th March, 1916.

AS we have lately received a number of letters referring to our letters and notices published in THE GUARDIAN and asking for more information concerning the Liturgy, organisation, the property held, the progress and the prospects of the Lusitanian Church, we feel sure that the following information will interest many of your readers.

Catholic reform in Portugal was initiated by Don Antonio Lopes Martins, Bishop of Viseu, who had the courage to protest in the Vatican Council against the promulgation of the modern doctrines. His example was followed by eleven priests who resigned their position in the Roman Catholic Church, gave up all their temporal prospects and social position, and formed a congregation called the "Egreja Evangelica Hespanhola," now EGREJA DE S. PEDRO. It is difficult now to realise the sacrifices they made. At that time, and FOR MANY YEARS AFTERWARDS, there was no religious liberty and only very meagre toleration in Portugal, and as there was no official register of births, deaths, and marriages, except at the R.C. Churches, it is not surprising that no progress was made among the priests and but little among the laity.

In the year 1880 the Lusitanian Church, C.A.E., was organised, composed of five congregations—three in Lisbon, one at Rio do Mouro, near Cintra, and one at Gaia.

## LITURGY, OFFICES, &c.

For a number of years before and after 1880 a Committee of two ex-R.C. priests, both eminent classical scholars, a young man then a layman, and Canon Pope, D.D., a profound liturgist, worked very hard and with great care in the preparation of our Constitution, General Basis, and Prayer-book, especially the Liturgy proper and Offices. In the Preface it is distinctly stated:—"We do not desire to form a new religion, but simply to cleanse it from the corruption of ages, and to reconquer the ancient liberties of the Lusitanian Church so long subjected to the foreign yoke of Rome, and to spread throughout all this country a doctrine which shall be Catholic and Apostolic in a Church that shall be Portuguese and not Roman."

In our work we examined the Braga (ancient rite of the North of Portugal), the Mozarabic, the Roman and the Anglican Liturgies, always endeavouring to follow the ancient models. The last Lambeth Conference welcomed the fact that our Liturgy was in accord with Catholic standards. Several Old Catholic Bishops of Holland and Switzerland kindly wrote and said to us:—"It is with profound satisfaction that I have read the books (Liturgy, Constitution, General Basis, Canons, &c.) which you sent us, and I do not find in them anything which is not also taught by our Church. I much admire the excellent order established in the internal and external administration of your Church." "We hold the faith of the undivided Church, and we are as far removed as you are from any superstitious veneration of images." These Bishops have expressed their sympathy with the Lusitanian Church and their readiness to give us any Episcopal help in their power if asked to do so.

## PROPERTIES.

The congregations of the Lusitanian Church possess a considerable amount of valuable property.

In the city of Lisbon English and Irish friends kindly bought for us the extensive and spacious buildings known as the Church and Convent dos Marianos, now called the CHURCH AND SCHOOLS OF S. PAULO.

THE CHURCH OF S. PEDRO, also a spacious building in a central position, was built for and presented to the congregation by a wealthy Lisbon merchant. The plans of this church were made by the Rev. Canon Pope, D.D., who was also architect of the Anglican Church in Lisbon, which is one of the best finished Anglican churches on the Continent of Europe. A small school chapel called SANTISSIMA TRINDADE was built at Rio do Mouro, near Cintra, on ground given by Padre Costa Almeida, ex-R.C. Incumbent of the village, who was one of the first priests to join the Lusitanian Church.

In Gaia there are three commodious churches and one in project at Magdalena. THE CHURCH OF S. JUAN EVANGELISTA (the plans of which were drawn by the Rev. Canon Pope, D.D.) is a beautiful sanctuary containing three large and six smaller Gothic windows, fitted with rich stained glass, representing scenes from the life of our Saviour, and adjoining the church are a number of large schoolrooms, parsonage, parochial hall, reading-room, besides other buildings belonging to the church.

THE CHURCH OF SALVADOR DO MUNDO has a very large and handsome stained-glass window over the Altar representing Christ knocking at the door of the heart (Revelation iii. 20). Large schoolrooms, parochial hall, and parsonage are here all together in one building. These two churches are endowed with considerable property for the support of the ministry.

THE CHURCH DO BOM PASTOR has lately been enlarged and beautifully painted. Close to the church and on the same premises are large schoolrooms and two parochial halls.

AT MAGDALENA, township of Gaia, the building of a chapel is in project.

THE CHURCH DO REDEMPTOR, OPORTO, is also a commodious church with schoolrooms and a parochial hall annexed to it.

All the above churches, schools, halls and parsonages were built by local efforts, excepting the first-mentioned church and Convent dos Marianos. There are a number of country parishes in different parts of Portugal which have formed "Sociétés de Culte," are asking for a vernacular Liturgy, and a married clergy independent of Rome, and if we were able to supply them with priests we know that many other parishes would follow their example and join the

Lusitanian Church, as Article 18 of the Law of Separation of the Churches from the State gives liberty to the parishioners to belong to any denomination they may prefer, and to remain in possession of the parish churches, so long as they are kept in repair.

All the churches belonging to the congregations of the Lusitanian Church were built before 1911, and, according to Article 31 of the Law of Separation, all churches used by congregations of any denomination may IN PERPETUITY be used as churches, and never be sold or mortgaged unless the Minister of Public Works should require their expropriation, but they must be kept in repair by their respective congregations; otherwise the State claims possession of the buildings.

## PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS.

During the last ten years or more of the Monarchy we were allowed a considerable amount of liberty.

Our ministers and congregations were often invited to speak or to take part in public meetings, also at civic and educational festivals. Some of our clergy walked in the streets at funerals robed in cassock and surplice, no man hindering them.

The singing of hymns and the carrying of crosses and banners with Christian mottoes and emblems were allowed without impediment.

When Portugal adopted a Republican form of Government in 1910, full religious liberty was declared in theory, but in reality impediments were placed on the exercise of the Christian religion, although FREETHINKERS are allowed publicity to carry on their anti-religious propaganda and to brandish their blasphemous banners with the words "No God, no Religion" at civic processions in the streets of the cities. Hymn-singing and the carrying of any Christian emblems or banners in the streets is now entirely prohibited! The ringing of church bells, or Divine worship after sunset is also prohibited, unless especially authorised. The management of the temporal affairs of the Churches by the SOCIÉTÉ DE CULTE or the Church Guilds is greatly embarrassed by many impediments and conflicting rules, and, worse than all, the clergy of all denominations are prohibited from taking any active part in Church affairs except ritual observances, which are left entirely in their hands!

At the CHURCH OF ESPIRITO SANTO, Setúbal, there is a very active minister, who also acts as schoolmaster, and although he works under difficulties, as Divine worship is celebrated in a large room, yet there is a good congregation with seventy-seven registered communicants. In the CHURCHES OF S. JUAN EVANGELISTA and SALVADOR DO MUNDO, Gaia, there are 207 registered communicants besides several hundreds of adherents.

In the CHURCH OF O BOM PASTOR and the MISSION CHURCH AT MAGDALENA, Gaia, there are nearly the same number of communicants and more adherents. The three churches in Gaia are self-supporting. There is also a small Mission and a flourishing school in the parish of Oliveira, Gaia.

We regret that the THREE LISBON CHURCHES and the CHURCH DO REDEMPTOR, OPORTO, have not published statistics with the number of communicants for several years, so we are unable to say what advance there has been made in these congregations. The assistant-priest at O Redemptor has done excellent work as a Missioner.

The Lusitanian Church is small, numbering ten congregations, at least 750 registered communicants, nearly two thousand adherents, and about one thousand children and adults in our schools; but we ought to advance and extend our borders with God's blessing.

Some of the doors open to us have already been closed, and if we fail to avail ourselves of the present opportunity of extension the occasion may be lost altogether.

Several parishes have sent invitations to the Reformers to conduct Old Catholic services in their parish churches. Some of the parochial clergy, several of whom were married in the Lusitanian Church, have made inquiries as to the possibility of their joining us with all their parishioners, Parish Councils, and church buildings, and have expressed a desire to use our Liturgy and formulæ, but they will not accept any foreign "OVERSIGHT" or "CONTROL," which in a country like Portugal, so jealous of any foreign jurisdiction or interference, is far more prejudicial to our extension than the removal of grants in aid.

The weak part of the Reform Movement is that it has not been joined, and is not likely to be joined, by any Bishop, and without Episcopal jurisdiction there is fear of its relapsing again into Roman hands, or sliding into disconnected congregations. We are thankful to see the increased activity in the R.C. Church in Portugal, especially since the persecution she has suffered.

We know that the Spirit of God is not bound, and that irregular means and foreign agents have been and are blessed by God to bring comfort to individual souls, but the Lusitanian is a truly Catholic, sincerely Evangelical, and essentially a National Church, and according to her Liturgy and Constitution independent of Rome, or of any other foreign authority, but her Apostolic organisation needs to be completed by the consecration of a native-born Bishop, which, with God's blessing, is indispensable for the development and enlargement of a Church essentially Catholic and National.

When we have a Bishop familiar with the needs of our country, the Church will be consolidated and become a nursing mother to tens of thousands of our countrymen, and then all the isolated Catholic congregations free from the yoke of Rome will join us.

DIOGO CASSELS, Priest-in-Charge of the Church of S. Juan Evangelista, also of the Church of Salvador do Mundo.