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THE MONTH.

THERE has been a lull in the controversy on the vestments during the last month, with two notable exceptions—the letters of the Archbishop of the West Indies and the Dean of St. David's, each of whom pleads for a permissive use of a distinctive vestment at Holy Communion, on the clear understanding that such use is accompanied by a declaration that no doctrinal meaning is involved and that no change of doctrine in the Church of England is intended thereby. We desire to speak with all possible respect of the opinions of so honoured a prelate as the Archbishop of the West Indies, and we echo most heartily his earnest longing for peace in our Church. But is it at all probable that his Grace's propositions would meet the need expressed by the demand for the permissive use of the vestments? The real question at issue is what is meant, not by those who do not wear them, but by those who do; not by those to whom all vestments are without doctrinal symbolism, but by those to whom they are full of significant meaning. And it surely must be evident that those who wear the vestments have said again and again that the sole reason of their use lies in their doctrinal significance. We can see this plainly in the way in which the *Church Times* has received the Archbishop's proposals for peace. We see it in the recent action of a London vicar in adopting the vestments because of the symbolic meaning. We see it also in the teaching of Mr. Vernon Staley that the chasuble is "a sacrificial vestment." This is the point which we would fain have faced by the advocates of a permissive use of the vestments. The Bishop of Winchester is no doubt historically correct when he states that there is no intrinsic connection between the vestments, considered in their origin and early history, and Roman doctrine. But the association of vestments and doctrine to-day is undoubted, and this fact surely rules the situation.

We notice that the *Guardian*, referring to our comments last month on the vestments, speaks of our attitude as "unreasonable," and says that it is an exaggeration to say that the permissive use would involve Roman doctrine. In reply we would again urge that it is not from those who presumably do not wear the vestments that we are to learn their meaning, but from those to whom the use is essential. If it were a matter merely of distinctiveness for the service of Holy Communion and a desire to give that service some special mark of importance, we can quite conceive of many Evangelical

and Moderate Churchmen being prepared to grant liberty for different uses for the sake of peace. And this, even though the principle of different uses would set aside a well-known historic declaration of the Prayer-Book, and even though a distinctive dress at Holy Communion would run counter to the spirit and letter of our formularies for the last three hundred and fifty years. But again we would point out that the chasuble has never been worn, never is worn, except at Holy Communion; that it is associated solely with a type of Eucharistic doctrine which is at least absent from the Prayer-Book; and that its use is justified by its advocates on the ground of distinctive doctrine. Why, then, should we be thought "unreasonable" in opposing a policy which would introduce into the Church of England an entirely novel situation, fraught with real dangers, and which would associate, however indirectly, with the Church of England that which has hitherto been regarded as outside her beliefs? For our part, we simply desire to identify ourselves entirely with the position laid down in the Dean of Canterbury's letter to the *Guardian* on November 15, in which he says:

"If the critical moment should arrive we should have to consider what Eucharistic vestments are, and not what the Bishops of Bristol and Chester, or other friends of compromise, would wish them to be."

In a recent review in the *Times* on Harnack's "Expansion of Christianity" the following acute and pertinent criticism of the great German Professor occurs, and it is deserving of careful consideration because of its application to several phases of modern criticism of Christianity:

"Professor Harnack is really confronted with a great difficulty. He has been trying all his life to reduce Christianity to its simplest elements, and has ascribed to external influences almost everything which we are accustomed to associate with the name. All Christian dogma and doctrine is, he holds, not only the result of development, but something inconsistent with its essence. Christianity, as we generally understand it, is really only a kind of syncretism. But he has seen, and seen clearly, that all these different elements have helped in its growth and spread. How, then, does it come to pass that Christianity grew just by the elements in it which were not divine? Surely his theory implies a very inadequate philosophy. The real fault lies, we believe, in the inadequate view of what syncretism means. At the time when Christianity first spread there was, as Professor Harnack has well brought out, a complete upset in religious thought. Old ideas were broken up; new ideas came in from all sides. An intelligent man of the time would naturally say that all these religions cannot be true, and if one is false, why may not another be false. He would then try and create a satisfactory religion by putting together elements he had selected from every source. In this way rose all the many forms of syncretistic religion which we know existed during the first and second centuries of our era. Christianity in its development was exactly the reverse of these. As a living organism

it had certain great principles derived from its Founder; and as it came in contact with every variety of human thought and speculation, new possibilities and capacities were developed which had not been realized before. The difference between the two forms of growth is fundamental, and it is because Professor Harnack has failed to see this, and because he would take away from Christianity everything which makes any strain on human faith, or might satisfy the human intelligence, that his investigations fail in the philosophy of Christianity."

Everything that exists and grows as Christianity has done must have an adequate cause. The one and fatal weakness of Harnack's position is that his explanation of Christianity is entirely inadequate.

It seems worthy of the careful attention of Churchmen that within a comparatively small area of London, reaching from Westminster to the City and Tottenham Court Road, there are six Nonconformist preachers who attract Sunday by Sunday an aggregate of at least 12,000 people. We refer to the City Temple; the Baptist Central Mission in Bloomsbury; the Congregational Mission at Whitefield's Tabernacle; the West London Methodist Mission at Exeter Hall; the Congregationalist Westminster Chapel; and the Wesleyan Church in Great Queen Street. Is it not a fair inference that if a man has a message, and can deliver it, he will never lack hearers, be the building large or small? And does not all this constitute a call to make our Church of England preaching as strong, spiritual, evangelistic, and sympathetic as possible?

In connection with preaching, the Bishop of Birmingham, at his Diocesan Conference the other day, gave expression to some important words in the course of a discussion on recent attacks on the faith:

"They did not want less intellectuality, but more. They must not from the pulpit do the damage they did do when they suffered themselves to get up and let sensitive, intelligent souls, men of average intellectual sensitiveness, feel that they were trifling with them, that they were really insulting their intelligence by saying things in a way that indicated that they had not given study, prayer, and preparation to such a message."

Dr. Gore here points out a blot on very much of our preaching. It does not bear the marks of "study, prayer, and preparation." The clergy, both senior and junior, are most of them so overwhelmed with the multiplicity of parochial organizations that they are unable to leave the "serving of tables" to give themselves fully to the ministry of the Word and prayer. The result is a state of affairs which will more and more tend to alienate thoughtful men and women from our churches. It is not too much to say that if the ordinary organizations of many a large parish were halved, and all

possible spiritual power put into the remaining half, the spiritual results would be more than doubled. It is in the attempt to cope with huge populations and their varied needs that the clergy find themselves unable to give that time to study and prayer which is absolutely essential to all true preaching and feeding of the flock.

The Bishop of London's Primary Visitation was an occasion of unusual interest on several grounds, both personal and diocesan; and Dr. Ingram had much to say that was worthy of the occasion, betokening once again his intense personal interest, sympathy, and enthusiasm in regard to all that concerns the highest welfare of the great diocese over which he presides. With reference to Church parties and controversies, the Bishop bestowed his praise and blame pretty impartially on both sides. His optimism as to the state of his diocese was once more in evidence, though we could wish he had better grounds for his somewhat roseate picture of the state of ecclesiastical affairs. On the questions of the sanctity of marriage and the diminishing birth-rate, the Bishop's words were true, forceful, and pertinent to the occasion; and, in particular, we would commend the following words to clergy and laity all over the country:

"Let teaching be given in suitable ways and at suitable times on the responsibility which married life entails, on the glory of motherhood, on the growing selfishness which thinks first of creature comforts or social pleasures, and then of the primary duties and joys of life. It is all part of this miserable gospel of comfort which is the curse of the present day, and we must learn ourselves and teach ourselves to live the simpler, harder life our forefathers lived when they made Britain what it is to-day, and handed down the glorious heritage, which must surely slip, unless we amend our ways, from our nerveless fingers to-day."

An important memorial has recently been laid before the Committee of the Colonial and Continental Church Society by the four Evangelical clergymen who went out last year to South Africa in connection with the Mission of Help. They urge the imperative necessity of calling the attention of the Evangelical Church public to the great openings in South Africa for Evangelical clergymen, and also the danger of the Church out there becoming more and more a Church of one party if Evangelical Churchmanship is not at once strengthened and extended. They therefore suggest that there should be special funds set apart for particular needs, and every effort made to interest Evangelical Churchmen in the great opportunities now awaiting them in South Africa. This memorial indicates the true line of policy. In the past, as most people know, there have been difficulties in the way of Evangelical

clergymen settling in South Africa, but those difficulties no longer exist, for there are openings and a hearty welcome in many places to-day. Unless we pour into South Africa the pure Gospel of Christ as we have received it, we shall find our colonists becoming more and more estranged from the Church of England, and even from Christianity itself. We hope this memorial will receive the immediate and earnest attention it deserves.

Several significant pronouncements have been made during the last month on the question of Suffragan Bishoprics. The Bishop of Lichfield, in accepting the resignation of the Bishop of Shrewsbury, announced that he did not intend to appoint another Suffragan, and the Bishop of Worcester has been speaking very pointedly against the attempt to solve the problem of the proper provision of Bishops in England by the appointment of new Suffragans. These utterances are all in the right direction—namely, that of increasing the number of Diocesan Bishops, and reducing to a minimum, if not altogether discontinuing, the suffraganate. The Bishop of Manchester's statesmanlike proposals for the subdivision of his great and unwieldy diocese into three is another indication of how Church feeling is moving; while the proposals of the Bishop of St. Albans for the subdivision of his diocese with that of Ely are yet another testimony to the true policy for our Church. Episcopacy can only justify itself in the last resort by its practical power as the leading factor in Church life, and we are at present a long way from the realization of the true advantages and benefits of Episcopal government in the Church.

The Birmingham Diocesan Conference showed itself fully alive to the grave and pressing question of indiscriminate baptism. The original proposal was that it was "contrary to Christian principles to baptize infants unless there is a reasonable prospect that they will be brought up to understand the meaning of their Christian vocation"; and although the resolution did not pass in this very definite form, the Conference decided that it is "of much importance that in all cases the clergyman should take all possible care to see that provision is made for the Christian training of the child." On more than one occasion during the last few years the Bishop of Birmingham has deprecated indiscriminate baptism of infants, and thereby showed that he is fully alive to one of the most serious difficulties in parochial life, as well as one of the gravest problems affecting the Christianity of our land. Infant baptism in the view of our Church is always and

inextricably associated with direct Christian influence and instruction, while it is well understood that our Church is opposed to the *opus operatum* theory of sacramental efficacy. We hope this resolution of the Conference will have very great weight in the country.

Notices of Books.

The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel. By WILLIAM SANDAY, D.D.
Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

A book by Dr. Sanday always raises great expectations, and these hitherto have never been disappointed. Nor are they likely to be with this work, for it is one of the very first order and importance. Those who possess or have read his earlier work on the Fourth Gospel will be particularly glad to have his latest views on the same profoundly important theme. This book represents eight lectures delivered in New York and Oxford in the autumn of last year. The first lecture surveys recent literature and reviews the situation in regard to the Fourth Gospel as it was just two years ago. The five different schools of critical thought are vividly and even fascinatingly brought before the reader, and the discussion will be of special service to those who through ignorance of German are not able to keep in touch with the various and varying theories of German criticism, and to understand their precise relations to one another. The second lecture treats of critical methods, and it is not too much to say that it is an education itself in the methods and errors of modern criticism. Its characterizations of German methods, its keen analysis, its unsparing yet always courteous criticism, are perfectly admirable. Dr. Sanday insists upon a firm footing on the ground of history as the only true way of solving the problem of the Fourth Gospel. Succeeding lectures discuss respectively "The Standpoint of the Author"; "The Pragmatism of the Gospel"; "The Character of the Narrative"; "The Doctrine of the Logos"; "The Christology of the Gospel"; and its "Early History." It is impossible for us to notice a number of points that arise out of these lectures. Suffice it to say that no one can afford to overlook this newest aid to the study of the great problems connected with St. John's Gospel. The book is full of delightful self-revelations and *obiter dicta*, while the author's conspicuous fairness, and possible over-anxiety to allow the very best to his opponents, are manifest on almost every page. The last lecture contains a suggestive and valuable "Epilogue on the Principles of Criticism," which should be studied by all who wish to know the lines and limits of true criticism, whether of the New or Old Testaments, for Dr. Sanday's words seem to be as applicable to modern Old Testament criticism as to the special subject of the Fourth Gospel.