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THE CHURCHMAN.

MARCH, 1906.

The Month.

Church
Schools.

THE discussion of the Education question has occupied a great deal of attention during the past month, more particularly in the columns of the *Times* under the heading of "The Clergy and Schools." This correspondence has included some very useful and informing contributions. Mr. Russell Wakefield made a strong plea for compromise on the basis of the retention of Bible teaching in the schools; and the Dean of Carlisle's testimony, as the result of his experience on the London School Board, was valuable evidence of the possibility of this line of action. The letters of Lord Halifax and Lord Hugh Cecil are just what might have been expected, and, together with an article by Mr. Lathbury in the *Westminster Gazette*, show that unless the extreme High Churchmen can get full denominational instruction they are prepared to accept the alternative of secular schools. Lord Halifax's words are characteristically frank on this point: "The choice lies between the support of the religious teaching of all denominations or none." A curious but not surprising instance of extremes meeting is found in the fact that a well-known Congregationalist, Dr. Guinness Rogers, favours the same view, so that if we were to listen to extremists on both sides, the Bible would very soon be no longer taught in the elementary schools of this country. We refuse to believe that this result is inevitable, and we heartily endorse the view of the *Westminster Gazette* when it says:

"It would be lamentable if a minority of Churchmen, aided possibly by a minority of Nonconformists, should shut us in to the vetoing of all religious teaching in the schools. An entirely secular system can, as we have often

pointed out, be easily demonstrated to be the most logical; but the broad fact remains that it is not what the bulk of public opinion desires to see."

In this connection we cannot refrain from expressing our profound regret that a Bishop of such great influence, and on many current questions with so true an insight, as the Bishop of Birmingham, should be committed to the impossible position of concurrent endowment as the only policy for Church schools. Dr. Gore actually urges that the parents shall determine the kind of religious teaching and the kind of teachers to give it, and "that the State shall impartially facilitate the teaching of the religion chosen by the parents." Such a policy is utterly impracticable, and if pressed would lead directly and immediately to a system of secular education.

It is curious to note the almost entire forgetfulness on the part of Lord Halifax and his followers of the one fact which rules the situation: we mean the fact of the Church schools being now on the rates. It is obviously impossible that these schools can continue to be exactly as they were before rate-aid came in. Archdeacon Sinclair, in the *Layman*, shows this very clearly by once again calling attention to Archbishop Temple's wise words on the point. Concurrent endowment for all denominations is an impossible policy, especially from the educational and practical standpoint, and it is useless for Churchmen to advocate it with any hope of success. Those Churchmen, therefore, who will be content with nothing short of full denominational teaching and an entirely Church atmosphere, must be prepared to pay for it and maintain their schools apart from the rates. Those, on the other hand, who value most of all the presence and influence of the Bible and its teaching in our elementary schools, will be prepared to consider any fair and just plan by which this inestimable benefit may be preserved to our children. The letters in the *Times* from such representative men as Bishop Welldon, the Deans of Carlisle and Ripon, Canon Wilson, Mr. Russell Wakefield, and, above all, the Bishop of Carlisle, together with communications to the *Record* from several leading Evangelical

A Fact
Overlooked.

Churchmen, plainly show that such a policy is commending itself to the great central body of Churchmen, and we believe that it will win for itself more and more support, and become one of the main principles of the new arrangements.

In nearly all of the letters from Churchmen on the Education question, attention has been almost entirely concentrated on Church schools, to the practical forgetfulness of the fact that a very large number of Church children receive their education in Provided schools. Any policy of religious education should surely take account of these, and yet this phase of the question is constantly overlooked. To insist on denominational instruction in Church schools is likely to lead not only to the virtual loss of these schools to the Church, but also to a still greater catastrophe—the loss of religion in Council schools. On the other hand, a policy of Bible-teaching for all schools alike would ensure a religious education for all the children of the land, subject, of course, to the conscience clause for non-Christian parents. Is not this worth securing? There must be a large proportion of Church of England children among the millions now being educated in Provided schools; and to feel that all these, as well as those in Church schools, are being taught the Bible day by day would be a profound satisfaction to all who love their country and desire to see the children growing up in the fear of God.

We wish we could print *in extenso* the admirable and weighty letter by the Bishop of Carlisle which appeared in the *Times* of February 12. It was in every way a wise, forceful, and statesmanlike utterance. Bishop Diggle had no difficulty in disposing of Lord Hugh Cecil's reference to baptism by showing that baptism introduces not to a denomination, but to a Church government. He then pointed out what the State can and cannot do, and we commend the following words to all our readers:

“Obviously the duty of the State is with fundamental, not denominational, religion. No State can wisely discard the immeasurable value of the religious

training of its children. There is no foundation of noble morals so sure and stable as religion; nor any foundation for good citizenship so strong and firm as noble morals. There are not many steps in the descent from a non-religious to a non-moral nation, and from a non-moral nation to a nation in ruins. A wise State, therefore, will show itself very solicitous in the matter of religious education. But religious education of what sort? Surely of the sort common to next to all of the denominations and the overwhelming majority of parents, the minority of Unitarians and others being so small that no difficulty would be found in making ample provisions for their just requirements. The experience of the London School Board and of other great boards and education authorities throughout the land has proved that no practical difficulty is found in framing such a syllabus of common Catholic Christianity, and that the results of the teaching given under this syllabus are not only mentally in the way of knowledge, but spiritually in the way of character, very good. This non-denominational teaching is not sectarian, but Church teaching in the same sense as baptism is not a sectarian but a Church sacrament."

With another extract from the Bishop of
 Carlisle's letter, we leave the subject for the
 present :

**The Real
 Issue at Stake.**

"The dread spectre of sectarian education has arisen above the horizon. The rescue both of the children of the State and the State itself from the deadly poisons attending this spectre is the great trumpet of our battle-cry. We believe denominational education in our elementary schools on voluntary lines to be impossible, because of the magnitude of the number of teachers required; and on State-paid lines impracticable in the existing temper of the nation. We cannot, for the sake of the children, afford to wait for Lord Hugh Cecil's centuries and millenniums. Two possible courses lie straight before us—secularism and non-denominational education as part of the school curriculum, supplemented, we earnestly hope, on one or more mornings of every week by facilities for denominational instruction; and for the sake of countless multitudes of children, especially amongst the poor, whose best, if not only, opportunity of learning of Christ is in the day-school, I most eagerly accept the latter alternative."

Possibly before Easter we shall have the Government Bill before us, and we hope it will be framed along the lines of Mr. Birrell's recent utterances, and will prove such a national and permanent settlement of the question as will insure the greatest good of the greatest number.

The Bishop of Birmingham, in a sermon at
 Oxford last month, said that the Church of
 England is just waking up to the consciousness
 of how little a hold she has of the working classes. We

**The Church
 and Labour.**

welcome this frank confession of what has been felt by many for a long time, but which has been proved beyond doubt and brought into special prominence by the results of the recent Election. Bishop Gore rightly said that the real strength of the Church of England lay in her influence over the poor rather than over the rich, and the Election will prove a great blessing to the Church of England if this fact is brought home definitely to us all. Two things in particular need attention. There must be much more sympathy with social problems on the part of Churchmen of all schools, and it must be proved to demonstration that the Church is directly concerned in the land, housing, unemployed, and other social questions. The Church of England has been regarded far too exclusively as a Church of the rich and middle classes, and while we must never forget the claims of these sections of the community, or limit the Church to any one section, it remains pre-eminently true that she must make a special appeal to the vast body of the population. Another point of consideration often brought up and as often shelved is the question of our Church services. As things are at present they do not appeal to the average working man. The thought and language of the Prayer-Book are often remote from the interests of the people, while the structure of the services is undoubtedly difficult to follow. Nothing has been more striking from time to time through the ages than the power of adaptation in the Church of Christ. This is inherent in the fact of the indwelling of the Divine Spirit. If the Church of England would display this necessary power, we should soon see what a strong appeal she could make to the people of our land. As it is, we are tied and bound by the chain of our traditions, and the result is that the masses go past our doors uninfluenced for Christ and His Gospel. The Bishop of Stepney's words, in a sermon at St. Paul's last month, put our duty very clearly before us :

“He did not ask that the Church should in the slightest degree identify itself with popular movements for the sake of winning popularity, for its duty was to comprehend every class. It must learn to approach the people, not in any spirit of condescension, but in a spirit of brotherly sympathy. It was impossible for them to reach the people if they were to be bound by the

services of the Prayer-Book, noble and beautiful as those services were, for that presupposed a certain trained intelligence; the Church must learn to be elastic in its methods of reaching and speaking to the mass of the people. They must come out from behind the entrenchments of their separate parishes, and let the mass of the people see that the Church of England was still capable of acting as one body with a common enthusiasm for the common call which God addressed to men."

Another utterance of the Bishop of Birmingham last month is worthy of careful attention. He addressed a meeting of the Christian Social Union in London, and while the entire address is valuable and inspiring, we desire now to call special attention to one point. Here are the Bishop's words :

Parochial
Relief.

"There is one thing that I do passionately desire. I am quite certain that in all these matters, in our whole attitude towards the great social problems, and towards the great labour cause, we Churchmen are prejudiced because we have got into quite a wrong relation towards the relief of suffering and poverty and pain. I am as sure as I can be that what is best in the labour of England is in part alienated from the Church, because it has so largely got into the habit of thinking that the people go to church for what they can get. I am certain that a primary part of the policy of the Church is by all the means in its power to labour for the secularization of all matters of relief. Let them be as far as possible made part of the work of the municipality; the work of the body of citizens, the work of the State, without respect to religious differences."

No truer or wiser deliverance has been made on this subject for some time, and, lest anyone should be afraid that if Bishop Gore's proposal were carried out the Church would have no scope and outlet for charity, it may be pointed out that we should still have at least the care of "the household of faith," as well as opportunities for individual Christian beneficence. If the relief of the poor, many of whom have no connection whatever with their parish church, could be separated from the spiritual work of the clergy and their helpers, it would be an incalculable boon. Who does not know and deplore the strong competition between religious bodies by means of doles and other similar inducements? And who is not aware that endowments for charity from pious founders of former ages are not an unmixed blessing in a parish?

Lady
Wimborne.

We have observed with great regret the announcement of the resignation of Lady Wimborne of the presidency of the Church of England League. The loss to the League will be immense, for Lady Wimborne has been the very soul of its life and work from the commencement. She will, however, have the great satisfaction of knowing that during the years of its existence the League has brought the true position of our Church before many who had not before realized the perils surrounding us, and the duty to maintain unimpaired our reformed heritage. We hope and believe that the members of the League, under the able guidance of the Dean of Canterbury, will prosecute the work with greater vigour than ever. Certainly the need of testimony to the true nature and position of the Church of England is as great as ever, and in this work we do not doubt that the Church of England League will continue to bear an honourable and prominent part.

The Christian
Priesthood.

In the course of a recent article on "Christian Mysticism," Dr. T. M. Lindsay, of Glasgow, gave expression to the following suggestive point :

"The doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers is only a special restatement of the mystical assertion of union between God and man. For the Roman and advanced Anglican idea of a special mediatorial priesthood is simply a survival of the old Pagan, Gnostic, and Arian conception that God and man are so thoroughly apart and distinct that a *plastic medium* is necessary to bridge the chasm between them—a conception which, banished from the creeds, took refuge in the institutions of the medieval Church."

This association of mediatorial priesthood with ancient heresies is well worth studying and following out in detail. Christianity has been well described as a religion which *is*, rather than which *has*, a priesthood. Luther's dictum that Justification by Faith is the "article of a standing or falling Church," is sometimes severely criticised as at least inadequate, if not erroneous, but in reality the words are a proof of his keen, true, spiritual insight. Justification by Faith is the means whereby the soul comes into direct communion with God, and this is the very heart of Christianity.