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THE CHURCHMAN.

JANUARY, 1908.

The Month.

The New Year. It does not require the gift of prophecy to foretell that 1908 will be marked by great events in the life of the Church and Nation. It will be the year of the Pan-Anglican Congress and the Lambeth Conference, which will have a real and far-reaching if not immediate effect on the entire Anglican Communion. In a short time we shall be in the thick of three great controversies—Education, Temperance, and Ritual—which must necessarily have a definite and important bearing on the life and work of the Church. It is clear, too, that the question of Socialism will become more urgent almost month by month. All this constitutes a call to Churchmen to face the future with confidence, open-mindedness, large-heartedness, and fearlessness. These problems, great though they are, are not insoluble if met in the Spirit of Christ. Christianity has in it the secret of dealing with all the ills that flesh and spirit are heir to. As the Bishop of Carlisle finely said at Barrow :

“One of the surest notes of a living religion is that as it grows older it also grows younger. Always the same at its foundations, it is ever changing in its superstructure. This quality of changelessness and change makes the Christian religion to differ from all other world religions—Christianity is essentially an historic religion. It is built on the rocks of the historic Incarnation, the historic life, the historic death, the historic Resurrection of the First Paraclete, and the historic descent of the Second Paraclete.”

It is the union of the Christ of History and the Christ of Experience in the power of the Holy Spirit that gives the Christian his confident and courageous outlook on life. He knows Whom he believes, and is persuaded that God's never-failing providence ordereth all things in heaven and earth. Let

us but meet the future in this spirit, and the New Year will bring with it abundant blessing.

The
Education
Question.

Signs are not wanting that the main plank of Church policy, in view of the forthcoming Government legislation, will be the claim that "in every elementary school the character of the religious education to be given is to be determined by the parents of the children." The novelty of this claim on the part of Churchmen is patent to all. It is due entirely to the pressure and logical outcome of the policy of Rate Aid introduced by Mr. Balfour's Act of 1902, and accepted at the time by Churchmen. We never heard of the claim on behalf of parental rights before that time, and it is pretty certain we should not be hearing it now if Church Schools had continued to be supported by State Aid instead of Rate Aid. It is very interesting, and not a little significant, to observe this newly found zeal to consult the wishes of parents, very many of whom care nothing about the matter, while very many more have no definite ideas beyond the maintenance of Bible teaching for their children. As Mr. Austin Taylor and Major Seely remark in their letter to the *Times*, the Church of England at the present knows nothing whatever of "parents' rights," all her schools being ruled by trust-deeds. It is impossible for Churchmen not to admit the truth of the contention put forth by the *Westminster Gazette* as to this new claim of the inalienable right of every person to have his child educated in his own religion at the public expense.

"How have these 'rights' been respected in Wales? There we find the Church insisting on a system which compels parents, an immense majority of whom are Nonconformists, to send their children to Church schools, where they must either have Church religious instruction or plead the conscience clause and have none at all. The result is that not one Conservative member is left in Wales, and that the Welsh people are in a state of revolt against the system, which is only held in suspense while there is a hope of getting an effective remedy from Parliament."

We commend these words to the careful consideration of Churchmen. It ought to be clearly understood that whatever may be

the Church policy of the future, "parents' rights" have not been its policy in the past.

Will It Work?

Assuming, however, that such a change in Church policy is to be adopted, the question at once arises how the principle is to be applied. Mr. Austin Taylor and Major Seely very pertinently ask whether the principle is to be extended to every elementary school, and whether for the future the religious instruction given and the teacher appointed to give it are to depend upon nothing else but a ballot of the parents whose children attend the schools. The Bishop of Manchester and Mr. F. E. Smith reply that they do not propose to apply the principle to any but single school areas, believing that the difficulty is not acute in large towns and cities which are supplied with both classes of school. And yet, earlier in their letter, the Bishop and Mr. Smith speak of the reasonableness of the claim as applied to *every* elementary school. Is it likely that such a principle will be adopted in one class of schools only? Besides, it is well known that there are many cases in towns where the parents have very little choice beyond Church of England schools. It is curious, too, that the advocates of this principle do not see how utterly impossible it is for such a partial arrangement alone to solve the problem. The question of the appointment of teachers and the conditions of their engagement still remain untouched, and yet herein lies the great crux of the situation. It is obvious that some more thinking must be done before the principle of parents' rights can be regarded as a settlement of the question, for, as the *Westminster Gazette* very truly says, "This is a case in which the formula must fit the facts instead of the facts being evaded by the use of the formula."

The
Temperance
Question.

All who are interested in the spread of temperance will have read with profound regret the Bishop of Croydon's report on the position and work of the Church of England Temperance Society. From 1895 until

last year there has been "an absolutely steady, regular, and sure decline," amounting to a loss in eleven years of 679 branches. Into the causes of this sad state of affairs we need not inquire; it must suffice to record the deplorable fact, and commend it to the earnest attention of Churchmen. In view of the expected legislation this year, it is truly disheartening to find such indifference on a question of vital importance. We anticipate with great hopes the passing of a measure of reform this session. The only real danger lies in the demands of the extreme section of temperance reformers who, we fear, are not inclined to believe in the truth of the proverb that "half a loaf is better than no bread." There seems to be no doubt, as Mr. Lloyd George told the United Kingdom Alliance, that the new Bill will be one aimed only at excessive drinking, and must be of such a character that its promoters can carry the country with them. It is sometimes said by the advocates of the *laissez faire* policy that we should trust to moral and social forces only, and not resort to legislation, but such a contention raises an utterly false issue. The drink traffic is already the subject of legislative restriction, and it is essential that it should be still further restricted. To use the fact of improvement in drinking habits during the last forty years as a reason for avoiding legislation is to beg the entire question in view of the economic, social, and moral evils of the traffic. This is no question of party politics, and it certainly must not be dominated by vested interests. It is a matter that affects the very life of the nation; and, as Lord Rosebery once said, "If England does not throttle the drink traffic, the drink traffic will throttle England." If the Christian people of our land will only unite on a definite programme of moderate reform, we believe that before the year is out there will be a substantial measure on our Statute Book, and one that will carry untold blessing to our country. In the recent revelations in the *Tribune* by Mr. G. R. Sims, in the series of articles entitled "The Black Stain," dealing with child neglect and cruelty, it was shown beyond question that most of the troubles arise from drink. What do such mothers

care about moral suasion? They must be dealt with in a very different way, and one way is to reduce the number of public-houses and prevent as far as possible the possibility of such evils.

The Newcastle Controversy. The trouble in Newcastle has developed several significant features during the past month, not the least being the way in which the opponents of Church law and order have revealed the true inwardness of their position. As we remarked last month, the controversy is very much more than a question of vestments. The matters in dispute include the use of wafer bread, the stations of the cross, the introduction of a crucifix, and a tabernacle for reservation, and it is simply impossible for anyone to say that these questions come within the purview of the reference of the Royal Commission to the Ornaments Rubric. The Newcastle clergyman's position may be seen in his letter, which states: "I believe the bread and wine in the Sacrament of Holy Communion to be after consecration and the invocation of the Holy Spirit what our Lord calls them—His body and His blood; and I can never consent to any action which appears to contradict that belief." To say nothing of the entire absence from our Prayer Book of any invocation of the Holy Spirit, it is quite obvious that these words do not represent the teaching of our Prayer Book and Articles. The Bishop very rightly calls for obedience to the law, and it is astonishing that men like Canon Gough and the other incumbents who have protested can take up the position they do. There is abundant proof, however, that the laity of the diocese are heartily with the Bishop, and we cannot help expressing our satisfaction that the controversy is bringing to a definite issue some of the questions raised by the Royal Commission. The principles on the two sides are incompatible and irreconcilable. It is impossible for both to be right, and since this is so, there cannot be room for both in the Church of England. The sooner this is seen the better. As the *Nation* very aptly remarks, "it is impossible to defend the action of clergy who enjoy the benefits of the Establishment but who refuse its obligations."

In his article on "The Church and Nation" in the *National Review*, the Bishop of Carlisle, elaborating his recent address, refers to the relation of the Church and Nonconformity in the following terms :

"The relation of the English Church to English Nonconformity is another instance of the poisonous effects of clericalism. The whole history of Nonconformity should fill Churchmen with crimson shame, and compel them on their knees to shed tears of humble penitence. Nonconformity was largely the Church's own creation; and having by the wedlock of her pride with her negligence begotten this offspring, the Church forthwith proceeded to pile civil disabilities on it, with vulgar contumely to treat it as vulgar, in extreme instances to dub it as the sin of schism, and till quite lately to give it universally the cold shoulder and the ecclesiastical shrug, although God the Holy Ghost was all the while manifestly bestowing His blessing on it. It is sometimes asserted that Nonconformists are politicians first and Christians afterwards. I know a large number of them, and believe the assertion in the overwhelming majority of instances to be utterly false. But suppose it true. Who set them the example? Nowadays, happily, Churchmen are by no means always of one party; but there was a time, and that not long since, when Churchmen were almost wholly of one political party, and that, as then constituted, not the party of civic equality and religious freedom; and if Church-people are now suffering from political anti-Churchmanship, they are only reaping the harvest of their own seed of political anti-Nonconformity."

This is well and truly said, and it needed saying by some one in position and authority. Recent education controversies have done much to alienate and embitter the sympathies of Nonconformists with Churchmen, and he is not a true friend to his Church or country who does anything to intensify these feelings. The right policy of Christian statesmanship will be to do all that is in our power to foster a good understanding and prepare the way for reunion with those with whom we have so much in common, instead of vainly endeavouring to obtain recognition from and reunion with those who will not look at us except on terms of submission and absorption. Reunion with Nonconformity may seem at present to have been banished to the Greek Kalends, but the subject is certain to come to the front again when present temporary controversies are overpast. No one can doubt that the attitude of the Nonconformists in regard to education has been actuated by fear of the clericalism of the

English Church against which the Bishop of Carlisle has spoken so bravely, and it is for all loyal Churchmen to show to Nonconformists and to every one else that clericalism is no true part of the English Church or of Christianity.

The resignation of the Rev. Roland Allen, Vicar of Chalfont St. Peter's, Bucks, has called renewed attention to the well-known words of the Communion Service, in which the restoration of Church discipline is described as "much to be wished." Mr. Allen has resigned because he finds it impossible to continue accepting as sponsors for baptism those who profess to renounce evil, to have faith in God, and to obey His will, while they and every one else know that they have no intention whatever of doing these things. He also feels the utter impossibility of reading the burial prayers over the body of one who while he was alive utterly scorned the claim of Christ and set at nought the law of God. Mr. Allen's courageous action will elicit the sympathy of a large body of Churchmen of all opinions. There is scarcely any subject which presses more heavily upon earnest, true-hearted young men as they enter the ministry and during their earlier years than the indiscriminate baptisms and burials in our large cities. It is nothing short of deplorable that our profoundly spiritual services are so often used in connexion with people who are utterly godless and careless. This important subject has been exercising the minds of many during recent years, and some very practical results have accrued in several parishes where the difficulty has been felt and faced. Mr. Allen's action will serve to call renewed attention to what is truly a "scandal." Meanwhile, we would emphasize afresh the weighty words of the Bishop of Birmingham in his preface to the Bishop of Manchester's "Pastors and Teachers":

"The Church does not baptize infants indiscriminately. She requires sponsors for their religious education; and the sponsors represent the responsibility of the Church for the infants who are being baptized. It is not too much to say that to baptize infants without real provision for their being

brought up to know what their religious profession means tends to degrade a Sacrament into a charm. On this point we need the most serious reflection."

We would venture to add that we need not only serious reflection, but definite action, if we are not to continue to do violence to conscience by the present state of affairs.

**Objective versus
Subjective
Criticism.** In the December number of the *Expositor* that great scholar, Sir William Ramsay of Aberdeen, has a very suggestive comment on the question of the relative value of literary and historical criticism. He does not estimate very highly the possibilities of discovery which purely literary criticism offers, and the following words are deserving of very special attention :

"The great and epoch-making steps in advance come from non-literary, external, objective discovery, and the literary critics adopt these with admirable and praiseworthy facility as soon as the facts are established, and quickly forget that they themselves (or their predecessors) used to think otherwise, and would still be thinking otherwise, if new facts had not been supplied to them. Nothing gives me such interest, and so illustrates human nature, as to observe how principles of literary criticism of the Old Testament, which were accepted as self-evident when I was studying under Robertson Smith's guidance about 1878, are now scorned and set aside as quite absurd and outworn by the modern literary critics. But it was not literary criticism that made the advance ; it was hard external facts that turned the literary critics from their old path, and they have utterly forgotten how the change came about."

It was not very long ago that opposition to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was based on the assumption that writing was unknown in the time of Moses, but of course we never hear that statement now. Indeed, those who made it (or their predecessors) have doubtless forgotten that it was ever made. The discovery of the Code of Hammurabi is another illustration of Sir William Ramsay's point, and there are many more that could be given, both as to the Old Testament and to the New. Our truest knowledge of the Bible can never come from mere literary criticism. It must be associated with "hard external facts."

