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THE CHURCHMAN

May, 1913.

The Month.

Church
Finance.

THERE are two topics before us at the present time, of pressing and vital interest, to which Evangelical Churchmen will do well to give careful attention. One is Church Finance, and the other is Education. The real point of importance in the proposals of the Archbishop's Finance Committee was indicated in Bishop Ingham's letter to the *Record* of April 4, and was emphasized at length by the Dean of Canterbury in his special article contributed to the *Record* of April 11. It is, in brief, that the great voluntary Missionary Societies of the Church of England should cease to exist, and that their work should be done by the Church as a whole acting through the Central Board of Missions. We believe Bishop Ingham is right in his contention that under any such arrangement enthusiasm will be cooled and support diminished, so that good work now being done in many parts of the world will be increasingly paralyzed. To bring about such a possibility, just at the time when doors are opening to missionary enterprise in the East and in Africa to a far greater extent than ever before, and the need for support at the home base is being so urgently demonstrated, is the very last scheme in which any whole-hearted supporter of Missions can willingly acquiesce.

Voluntary
Societies.

The Dean of Canterbury rightly contends that the whole area of Church History, both Medieval and Reformed, shows how high has been the value and how effective the work of great voluntary organizations.

And it is in England, of all places in the world, where the voluntary principle has been most vital—witness the present horror of the very word “conscription.” An Englishman will do much if he is asked for his help. He will do nothing if he is told that he must. There may be a great lack of logic in all this, but logic is not supposed to be the strong point in our national composition. It is from this point of view that the “*general obligation* to contribute a voluntary Church due of not less than one halfpenny per week” would probably prove a very poor substitute for the money now contributed to the various great voluntary societies of the Church. Representative Churchmen have already expressed strong hostility to this. There is no getting away from the fact that the Church of England as a National Church embraces various schools of thought, expressive in each case of principles for the maintenance of which their respective upholders will spend both work and money. Any arrangement which deliberately ignores this state of things is bound in the long-run to be heavily penalized. We must see to it that our great Evangelical Societies do not pass out of existence.

Of the manifold aspects of the educational
 National Education. problem two in particular are coming into increasing prominence. One is that of national, the other is that of clerical education. With regard to the former, the recent speeches of Mr. Pease and Lord Haldane have disclosed no details of the Government’s plans ; they have been rather announcements of a general and preparatory kind, designed to produce a sympathetic attitude on the part of the general public. On one point Lord Haldane is emphatic. The various elements in our national education—primary, secondary, and University—are crippled and enfeebled through lack of co-ordination. With regard to the religious question, he frankly declares that education must come first if a national system is to be built up. Mr. Pease declares that the denominational difficulty appears to him insoluble, but he is quite clear that the proposals of the

Government will involve increased expenditure. This is the bed-rock fact to which we come down. Our national system of education needs to be improved, and the improvement will mean heavy outlay. Are we so thoroughly convinced of the need for reform that we are ready to pay the necessary cost?

The Training
of the
Clergy.

The factors in the problem of the supply and training of clergy are of a somewhat similar kind. There is need for other methods, and the other methods will cost much money. In a recent "Open Letter" to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Headlam has emphasized the fact that the supply of men for Orders comes now from many other sources than the older Universities. This is a fact that needs no demonstration, and we are not concerned here to discuss the particular type of education that Dr. Headlam would advocate for these ordinands. But what we do say most emphatically is that training and discipline they *must* have, whether it be by academic graduation or by alternative methods. In many cases they are too poor to pay for a three or four years' course of training. They are conscious of the vocation, and they are willing to work hard, but they lack the necessary means. For the Church as well as for the nation, education means expenditure. That school of thought will, in future days, be most influential in the Church of England which is willing now to contribute most generously to the education of the future clergy.

Divinity
Degrees
at Oxford.

The question of the Divinity Degrees at Oxford will be settled, for the time being at any rate, in a few days from now. We venture to prophesy that the proposed new Statutes will be rejected. The opposition has been excellently organized, and there is a powerful force of opinion behind it. It seems to us that a great mistake has been made on the part of the advocates of reform, in the absolute and wholesale throwing open of the Degrees to which they are committed. If a serious attempt had been made to frame a

Statute which should open the Degrees to professed Christian students other than those of the Anglican priesthood, they would have secured the votes of many members of Convocation who, as it is, will journey to Oxford to oppose them. The position that, if Nonconformists are to be eligible at all, it must only be in company with men of any or no faith, is utterly indefensible, and so far as it has influenced the framing of the present Statutes, it is to be strenuously resisted. A letter to the *Times* of April 11 by the Vicar of Leeds so exactly expresses our own attitude that we venture to reproduce it here. It is from the same standpoint as that of the Headmaster of Shrewsbury, which we printed last month, and we believe it is representative of a widely spread body of opinion.

The Letter
of the Vicar
of Leeds. “I have been daily hoping that the eight signatories to the Oxford circular would have sent some reply to the Dean of Canterbury’s main point that the Oxford D.D. need not be, and ought not to be, robbed of its Christian significance. To me there seems a contradiction between the statement of their circular, defining the proposed Statutes, which claims that ‘there are safeguards secured in that each candidate must have shown his acquaintance with Christian theology,’ and their querulous complaint that ‘the method of throwing the Degrees open only to the professing Christian would have confronted the University with the difficult problem of defining a Christian.’ If the problem of definition is given up as incapable of solution, how can the thing not defined remain in any shape as a safeguard ?

“It is this negative result of the proposed change which I know to be distressing to many thoughtful men outside Oxford, both laymen as well as clergy, almost all of whom would wish to see the Degree open to all students who profess and call themselves Christians. During the past twelve months Dr. George Adam Smith, of Aberdeen, and Dr. A. S. Peake, of Manchester, have been my guests when lecturing in Leeds to the clergy and ministers of all denominations, and it is im-

possible not to regret that the Oxford Degree of Divinity should not gain added lustre by being conferred on such distinguished Christian teachers.

“In effect, however, the proposed Statutes, as interpreted by the Oxford Professors’ circular, undoubtedly lay an axe at the root of the very tree under the stately branches of which we had desired to see Churchmen and Nonconformists alike sitting, and they will leave it a mere stump, capable of affording shelter neither to Churchmen nor to Nonconformists.

“At all events those who, like myself, feel bound to journey to Oxford to oppose the new Statutes, although supported by the names of scholars and personal friends for whom we have a profound regard, must not be understood as in any way opposed to the widening, while we object to the weakening, of the Christian significance of the Oxford D.D. Degree.”

The Church
of the Future.

The principal article in the *Christian Commonwealth* for April 2 was written by the Rev. J. M. Thompson, and its title is “The National Church of the Future.” Mr. Thompson is the writer of the much-canvassed book on “Miracles,” and the *Christian Commonwealth* is, we presume rightly, to be regarded as the organ of the Rev. J. R. Campbell’s so-called New Theology. The article, therefore, for two reasons attracts our attention. There is much that is wise and something that is not. It recognizes the difficulty of a really National Church amidst the war of sects. The Church of the future will be no one of the Churches of the present; it will be a federation of them, and it will take account of the masses that stand outside the Churches. Mr. Thompson then goes on to describe its characteristics. Concerning most of them we shall not seriously quarrel with him: it is to be a real society, not a vague ideal; it is to be definitely religious; it is to be national; and, above all, it is to be democratic. So far so good, but this is not all. Another characteristic is added, and lest we cause misunderstanding, we quote it in full:

“Thirdly, the National Church will be Christian. *But its basis will not be dogmatic.* The Church of the future cannot require subscription to any creed.

It will be an association of all who share the experience of the Divine value of the life and teaching of Christ, and who wish to express it in a life of love and service towards their fellow-men. It will not question the right to membership on the part of any 'who profess and call themselves Christians.' The separate denominations may still set up what tests they wish; but a man may belong to the Church if he will without belonging to any of the Churches."

It is the sentence which we have thrown into italics that we cannot accept. It is conceivably true that it is possible for "a man to belong to the Church if he will without belonging to any of the Churches," but we regard it as impossible for an organized society—and the Church of the future, in that it is to be national, must be an organized and visible society—to exist without a dogmatic basis. Undenominationalism tends to eliminate the dogmatic, and sometimes our sense of charity and of fellowship has tempted us to jeopardize some of the cardinal doctrines of the Faith. There is no need to multiply essentials, no need to convert our prejudices into principles, or our opinions into convictions, but we must not attempt to purchase unity at the cost of fact. Christianity is a revealed religion, and upon the basis of that revelation it must stand. There is room for give and take in the interpretation of that revelation, but we must no more dispense with it than add to it. For us the basis of the National Church is and must be dogmatic. It is as well that the fact should be stated, lest the readers of the *Christian Commonwealth* imagine that Mr. Thompson is speaking for the Church of England. We dare venture to believe that in this matter at least we have the general assent not only of the Church of England, but of the large majority of Christians outside it with us.

The Theology
of the
Plain Man.

That the religion of Christ must have a dogmatic basis was most helpfully urged by the Bishop of Wakefield in the Spital Sermon the other day. According to the *Times'* report, which we venture to quote, the Bishop insisted that at the very centre of Christianity, viewed both religiously and theologically, there

stands the Cross of Christ. His words are wise for all times, and, in the light of Mr. Thompson's article, particularly apt at this time :

“Many of us had relatives and friends who were caught in one or other of the cross-currents of belief that were about, and, he believed, never before was the appeal of Christ so urgent to His humblest followers to search and see what truths we really had, and bring them out in actual life to help our fellow-men. He wished to speak of the theology, not so much of the head, but of the heart and life. It was a common mistake to confuse theology with religion. The highest forms of theology stood behind religion, as scientific formulas stood behind the working of the machine, or the laws of music behind the symphony, or the canons of art behind the painting. All true theology was the result of experience, as well as revelation. The Christian society had never faltered in the central message of the Cross. They could argue as they would about the difficulties of theology, but the fact remained that the doctrine of the Cross was the hope of all mankind.”

Yes, the Church of the future will have a dogmatic basis, or it will not be a Church, and it will have no future.

The open letter of the Bishop of Manchester has
Vestments. drawn a reply from the Primate, to whom it was addressed. The Bishop makes two new points of the gravest importance: he shows that the rubric is in the nature of a proviso, and therefore is intended to ordain nothing beyond the enactments and requirements of the Prayer-Book itself; he points out that the rubric applies to the ornaments, both of the Church and of the minister. That the revisions of the Prayer-Book have ruled out certain ornaments of the Church we all agree; the Bishop contends that they have ruled out the vestments. The Archbishop recognizes the importance of his open letter, and, in the main, suspends judgment. He does, however, suggest that the question of the Ornaments Rubric is one rather of archæological than of practical importance. In itself this is true. The historical and practically important fact is that for three hundred years, and for good reasons, the Church of England absolutely declined the wearing of vestments. The real reason why was that they represented and symbolized Roman doctrine; the legal reason may be found in the injunc-

tions or the advertisements, or in the rubric itself—that is a matter for the archæologists. The question to-day is, Do we want to go back to ornaments which both at the time of the English Reformation and now, both by those who use them and those who do not, are recognized as symbolical of doctrine which the Church of England rejects? Our answer to that question is an emphatic no! Archæology may tell us that originally the vestments meant nothing; it may squabble as to the meaning of the rubric. Three hundred years of intentional and significant disuse represent a practical and indisputable act, and provides an argument which has never been rebutted. The Bishop of Manchester has given us a new explanation of the origin of the fact, and it may be that it is the right one.

To those who are engaged in a particular
 controversy, and who, while fighting with courage
 and conviction, are apt to be troubled by misgivings
 as to the ultimate issue of the fray, it is occasionally helpful and
 refreshing to hear the opinion of some external observer who
 surveys the whole area from a wider and more general point of
 view. In a recent letter to the *Times* Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
 gives some personal recollections of the late Lord Wolseley.
 The following is one of them: "The conversation having
 turned to the religious future of Great Britain, he said, 'That
 question was definitely and finally settled three hundred years
 ago. There is no example in history of a nation going back on
 a decision of that sort.'" Lord Wolseley was not speaking as a
 theologian or an antiquary, but as a trained man of affairs. And
 we believe his opinion will prove to be true. Whatever may be
 the issue of the particular controversy on vestments in the
 Anglican Church, we do not believe that the nation as a whole
 (for here we have to reckon with the great non-Episcopalian
 bodies) will ever go back on the decision it made three hundred
 years ago.

Lord
 Wolseley's
 Opinion.

Sir Edward
 Clarke on
 Dr. Legg.

We called attention last month to Dr. Wickham Legg's article on Vestments in the March number of the *Nineteenth Century*. Those who read it should continue their studies by reading the replies given in the April number by Sir Edward Clarke and Mr. Alison Phillips, the writer of the article on Vestments in the "Encyclopædia Britannica." Sir Edward Clarke, after noting the vituperative and "tempestuous" character of Dr. Legg's article, which was in effect not only an attack on the Ridsdale Judgment, but a personal assault on Sir Edward himself, sets out afresh to show that the judgment was perfectly sound in the particular point criticized by Dr. Legg. We have no space to summarize or discuss his article, which should be read as a whole, but we note that in certain important points of historical detail he agrees with the contentions of the Bishop of Manchester's letter to the Primate, and we further note his words in commenting on the total disuse of chasubles from the death of Mary onward: "If contemporary interpretation is of any value as evidence, the fact that Bishops, priests, and people immediately and universally accepted this as the meaning of the memorandum, and acted upon it for three hundred years, appears to me to be conclusive." This argument is an impregnable position which no assault can touch.

