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THE CHURCHMAN.

JULY, 1907.

The Month.

The
Education
Question.

THE withdrawal of Mr. McKenna's Passive Resistance Bill, and the announcement that the Government intend to deal with the entire subject of Education next year, constitute a twofold reason for satisfaction. Persistence with Mr. McKenna's Bill would only have led to fresh controversy, more heated than ever, while the promise that the whole subject is to be reconsidered will enable all parties to take counsel during the next few months with a view to a genuine settlement. The Archbishop of Canterbury in his address to his Diocesan Conference last month struck the right keynote when he said that he believed in the possibility of a solution of our difficulties which would retain for our elementary education its religious character, while admitting in every reasonable way the principles of popular control and the exemption of a professional teacher from anything that could rightly be called a denominational test. These are frank admissions, and ought to go very far to remove difficulties on the opposite side. It only remains for the whole body of Churchmen to adopt the same wise and broad attitude here laid down by the Archbishop. The one question for Churchmen is that they should be united in their Education policy. It is impossible to deny the truth of the Premier's complaint that hitherto it has not been easy for the Government to know what the Church really desired, since the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Balfour, and Lord Halifax seem to represent different, and in some respects differing, policies. We sincerely trust that counsels of wisdom and peace will prevail,

and that the Archbishop's confidence will be thoroughly justified, that "the apparently conflicting elements are capable of reconciliation if there be wise and reasonable guidance on each side."

**An Appeal
for Peace.** No one can fail to be touched by the earnest and powerful plea for peace in the Church made by the Bishop of London at the Cuddesdon Festival, for it is assuredly true that the witness and progress of the Church are hindered by "our unhappy divisions." We wish, however, that we could take the same roseate view the Bishop takes of the present conditions of Church life. To us the facts point in an entirely different direction. Witness the way in which the recommendations of the Royal Commission about Roman practices have been received by those who are guilty of breaches of the law. Witness the apparent impotency of the Bishops to cause that breaches be "promptly made to cease." Witness the way in which the Bishop of Bombay's effort to bring his clergy within the law have been opposed by the extreme party at home. Witness the churches in the Diocese of London itself where the diocesan's monitions are unheeded. In view of these facts, and many more that could be adduced, is there not a great fear of crying "Peace, peace, where there is no peace"? They are not the enemies of peace, or of our Church, who call attention to these matters, for it is only by taking cognizance of all the facts of the situation that we shall arrive at a true view of our condition and be enabled to act in the light of it.

**The
Question of
Ideals.** Amid the controversies of the day it is only too possible to overlook the great principles that underlie the questions at issue. Thus, it is sometimes made out that the differences between Evangelicalism and Ritualism are matters of secondary moment, and that the agreement is much more fundamental than the differences. It is well, therefore, to see how the case really stands, and it has been well put by the Dean of Canterbury in a recent speech on behalf of the National Church League :

“The Roman Church had a certain ideal of spiritual life, which was that the spiritual life of a man or woman should be under the control and direction of the priesthood. As a consequence of that ideal, the practice of Confession formed an essential part of the Roman system. The effect of the practice of Confession was that every man, woman, and child had to submit their spiritual lives to the judgment and guidance, as far as possible, of the priest. That, he thought, was a very momentous, a very far-reaching, and a very serious thing indeed. What the Reformation did was to break that principle, and to tell Christian men and women that they might and ought to live their spiritual life in the main with God alone in the secrecy of their own consciences, and only to go to the priest for guidance if they found their consciences overburdened, and if they could not in their private and secret intercourse with God quiet their own consciences. Those two ideals, the Roman and the Protestant, they would see, were absolutely distinct.”

This shows the vital issue at stake. The positions of sacerdotalism on the one hand, and of the ministry of the New Testament and the Church of England on the other, are absolutely opposed to each other. They cannot both be true, and they certainly refuse to be blended.

The columns of the *Record* and the *Layman* during the last month seem to show that Evangelical Churchmen are becoming alive to the necessity of providing fuller opportunities for entering the ministry. The controversy about Mirfield has called attention to the way in which the extreme party are pushing forward this work, and making it possible for young men to enter the ministry who, though possessed of gifts, are unable to obtain a University degree and theological training in the usual way. Canon Denton Thompson, with characteristic clearness and frankness, strikes the right note when he says that

Provision
of Clergy.

“Spiritual and intellectual fitness for the ministry ought surely to be the sole qualification for ordination, and no one ought to be debarred from Holy Orders simply because he is not possessed with the means required for training. If as Evangelicals we are to be found faithful, we must seize the opportunities ere they pass—and pass for ever.”

Evangelicals are generally behind in tackling pressing problems, as witness their general apathy on the social question, and if they do not rouse themselves in the matter of the provision of

clergy they will only have themselves to blame for allowing a magnificent opportunity to slip past them. This does not mean that we must provide an Evangelical Mirfield, for we want men, not machines—men who know the vigour and spiritual liberty of New Testament Christianity. Evangelicals cannot, and will not, train men on Mirfield lines. The great need among Evangelicals is not so much men as money. There are ways and means already in existence for training, and there are many young men of the right stamp available if only money were forthcoming. In connexion with our present Theological Colleges at Oxford, Cambridge, London, and Birkenhead, there are good, if not ample, opportunities for providing the right sort of men with the right sort of training. Will not some Evangelical Churchmen realize their responsibility in this matter? There are not a few who could spare large gifts for this purpose.

When the *Guardian* announced two articles by
 Old Testament Criticism. the Dean of Ely on "Some Results of Old Testament Criticism," we were full of hope that at last we should have some definite idea as to what are the "assured results" of Old Testament criticism. It was not very encouraging to be told at the outset that "it lies in the very nature of the subject that it should be difficult, and indeed impossible, to come to a definite and dogmatic answer to the question, What are the assured results of modern criticism of the Old Testament?" For there have been so many definite and dogmatic statements on the subject, that those who have not yet been able to accept the new view of the Bible have a right to demand a clear proof of the position. This is a case in which evidence, not assertion, must decide; and yet the Dean offers us practically no proof at all. He quotes from the Bishop of Gibraltar to the effect that the Prophets, not the Law, must be taken as the starting-point in Hebrew history, and then proceeds to say that the Bishop's statement "needs some qualification"; and the article towards the end allows that "many of the results of criticism may seem disappointingly negative.

We find only probability where we looked for certainty." The main point of the Dean's position is that the theory of evolution enables us to appreciate as never before the progressive revelation of the Old Testament ; but we should like to know what is really involved in this theory of evolution as applied to the Old Testament. It is impossible to evolve what is not already there : evolution presupposes involution. Thus, to take one typical case, Was monotheism part of God's revelation to Abraham and Moses, or was it only of later date ? Or, again, is there any warrant in the Old Testament, as we now have it, for the modern distinction between monolatry and monotheism in Israel ? These and other similar questions must be settled on unmistakable evidence before we can be satisfied that the position of the Higher Criticism is based on "assured results."

**Clergy
Pensions.** The Report of the Committee appointed in February last has now been issued, and all Churchmen must rejoice that the first step has been taken towards the removal of one of the most serious blots on our Church. Every one admits that it is the bounden duty of the Church to provide for its agents when they are no longer able to provide for themselves. It is perfectly true that the present scheme does not carry us very far, and must necessarily be looked on as a mere beginning ; but it is something that a start has been made, for it will pave the way to a fuller and much more comprehensive scheme in the future. According to this plan an incumbent becomes eligible for a retiring allowance at the age of sixty-five, though at present the maximum pension is only £50. Not the least advantage of the scheme is that, by providing a pension for the outgoing incumbent, his successor is to be protected from having his stipend reduced. The scheme will, no doubt, be subjected to very careful consideration and criticism, and it cannot fail to be noticed that no provision is made for the unbeneficed clergy ; but we are profoundly thankful that such a promising beginning has been made towards removing

one of the most serious reproaches that has rested upon our Church for years.

Union of
Benefices.

The recent debate in the Lower House of Canterbury Convocation was very encouraging. The Archdeacon of Dorset, in moving resolutions of the Committee on the subject, brought forward some remarkable figures to prove the need of a grouping of parishes. Instancing his own experience, he urged that men could not be expected to put forward their best exertions in miserably small parishes with such miserably poor resources. He considered that the two most difficult problems were the people and the patron. The strength of parochialism was a great stumbling-block ; and, as to the patron, it was intolerable that his interests should prevail over the interests of the Church. There can be little doubt that the best interests of our Church demand that a considerable number of benefices should be grouped together, and we rejoice that a resolution to this effect was carried in Convocation. Other resolutions pointed to the necessity of bringing the question before patrons, and of taking steps to amend the law in the direction of union of parishes. It will be in this way that some of our most pressing problems will be solved, more particularly in regard to the dearth of clergy. It is intolerable that our Church should be expected to go on working under the same conditions that obtained three centuries and more ago. If we cannot show some powers of adaptation to existing circumstances, it is surely a grave reflection upon us as an organization.

