

THE CHURCHMAN

April, 1913.

The Month.

Easter. OUR present issue coincides with the season of the Easter Festival. The Easter message of life and immortality through the Risen Christ is ever present with us, but it is at this time that our thoughts turn more particularly to the Fact on which the Easter message is based, the Resurrection on the morning of the first Easter Day. Christian thought is still profoundly exercised about the proper interpretation of the fact. Most of us are familiar enough now with the cleavage between miraculous and naturalistic explanations of the empty tomb, and the subsequent appearances of the Risen Lord. Purely naturalistic explanations, involving suppositions that the body was removed by friends or by foes, are hopelessly discredited, and may well be discarded as utterly inadequate to meet the case. But we are now face to face with another hypothesis, which seems to find favour with many, and which has recently been presented with force and ability by Mr. Streeter in his essay on "The Historic Christ" in "Foundations." We have already spoken of this book as a whole, but a further word may be permitted as to its treatment of this particular topic.

A Recent Theory. It is admitted freely that our Lord triumphed over death and that His Spirit survived in the power of an endless life. It is also admitted that our Lord "appeared" to His followers, and that these "appear-

ances" were due to no mere subjective condition of the disciples, but were actual "objective" appearances of His Spirit to theirs in recognizable form. To admit all this is to go very far, but we still have left unsolved the empty grave. What happened to our Lord's crucified body? Did it remain in the grave? And if not, what happened to it? That the Apostles and the early witnesses *believed* that the grave was empty is indubitable. It was not only to a Risen Christ but to an empty grave that their testimony was borne. The point is one that cannot be evaded, and Mr. Streeter appears to leave it as a mystery at present unsolved. The truth is that either view is beset by difficulties. The traditional view is attended by difficulties of a philosophic kind. It tells of a new, a unique phenomenon, for which no analogies could be found in human experience, and it is wrapped in mystery. It makes demands on the faith of those who accept it. All this one may well admit. But the more modern view is beset by difficulties, not philosophical, but historical. It has no tenable view to proffer as to the empty grave and the fate of the crucified body. To us the whole body of evidence seems inexplicable on any other hypothesis than that the grave was empty because the body of the Lord was no longer there.

St. Luke's
Narrative.

The difficulty to many minds lies in the anti-thesis between the "spiritual body" spoken of by St. Paul, and the account in St. Luke of our Lord's claim to have a body of "flesh and bones" coupled with the incident of eating "a piece of broiled fish," followed afterwards by St. Peter's words (Acts x. 31) "us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." With regard to this even Professor Denney—than whom there is no more stalwart defender of the historical fact of the Resurrection—is prepared to admit "that Luke everywhere betrays a tendency to materialize the supernatural," and that "it is not too much to suppose that this tendency has left traces on his Resurrection narrative also" ("Jesus and the Gospel," p. 146). Would it not be safer, and indeed more philosophic, at this stage of our thought, to sus-

pend judgment and to accept St. Luke's narrative till we have more convincing grounds for rejection? We may well accept St. Paul's description of the Resurrection body that it is "spiritual." But what may be the capacities and the limitations of a "spiritual" body, we are not, in our present stage of knowledge, in a position to assert. If we believe that the Crucified Body was so "spiritualized" that it could transcend the conditions of time and space in the manner implied in the Resurrection narratives, we may well pause before making dogmatic statements as to limitations of the capacities it possessed.

Shortly after the publication of our present issue,
 Convocation at Oxford will give its decision on
 the vexed question of the Divinity Degrees.

Divinity
 Degrees
 at Oxford.

During the present month of March a constant interchange of opinion is taking place in the Press, chiefly in the columns of the *Times*. We are therefore only following the fashion in attempting once again to express our own hopes and wishes. Putting the matter broadly, we feel that the Degrees should be the mark of ability on the part of professedly Christian men to discuss points of Christian Theology. We should also agree with the wise and cautious letter of the Dean of Canterbury in the *Record* for February 21, in which he makes it clear that the bestowal of the Degrees should have a distinct relation to fitness for teaching. The B.D. or the D.D. must be a man whom the University would be prepared to commission as a "teacher" in the Faculty of Theology. In other words, the Degrees should connote, not only intellectual ability, but a certain moral responsibility. The point of reform for which we press is that membership in the Church of England should not be regarded as a final limitation. We feel that professedly Christian men of other communions should be regarded as possible candidates. Why should not Dr. Peake, Professor Bartlett, Dr. Horton—Oxford men of whom Oxford may well be proud—be enabled to proceed to the Degrees in Divinity of their own University?

Possible
Dangers.

We note gladly that the Dean of Canterbury is well aware of the fairness of this demand. He says : " Members of Presbyterian and other confessions, and laymen in the Church of England, may be as fully qualified by belief in the fundamental truths of Christianity to be admitted to a Divinity degree as clergymen ; and many who are opposed to the statute now at issue *would gladly consider reasonable amendments in the present system which would recognize this fact.*" We emphasize these last words because they embody the point for which we ourselves wish to contend. It has been admitted by the defenders of the statute that in *theory* it will be *possible* for a Hindu or Mohammedan to submit a thesis attacking some point of Christian teaching, and that an agnostic *may* offer a thesis attacking the Divinity of our Lord. But to suppose all this, the Regius Professor of Divinity says, is simply " to let the imagination run riot." He thinks that no such person will ever present himself, and, if he were to, " the Board of the Faculty will be completely in command of the subject which he offers for his thesis." For ourselves, we still think that something more definite in the way of safeguard should be provided, and we now give *in extenso* a letter from the Headmaster of Shrewsbury, published in the *Times* of March 10, which seems to put our own position with great force and clearness :

The Head-
master of
Shrewsbury's
View.

" SIR,—Will you allow me to state the difficulty which presents itself, I think, to many members of the University of Oxford with regard to the question of Divinity degrees ?

" On the one hand, we desire to claim no privilege for the Established Church which could be thought unfair to any religious body. It may be said that this attitude is adopted somewhat late, but it is at any rate sincere. Again, we have the strongest dislike to endeavouring to override the expressed opinion of the resident members of the University. We do not relish our position as backwoodsmen, and we are cordially out of sympathy with many of our allies. Thirdly, and in an imper-

fect world this is perhaps the most important consideration, we are honestly afraid of the outcry which may be aroused against Oxford by what would seem an illiberal and reactionary vote.

“On the other hand, the statute which we are asked to support seems to us fundamentally absurd. That a man should be able to earn the title of Doctor of Divinity by a reasoned disproof of the Divinity of Christ seems to introduce needless confusion into a term which is at present well understood; and the absurdity is heightened by the fact that an equally learned treatise on Buddhism or Hinduism could not be similarly honoured. The objection that an anti-Christian treatise would not, as a matter of fact, be submitted may at the present moment be well founded, but legislators are surely bound to consider the future, and wise drafting of the present statute might prevent difficult personal questions from arising in the future.

“Surely there is nothing illiberal or absurd in suggesting that the degree of Doctor of Divinity should only be awarded to those who feel able to sign a statement that they profess and call themselves Christians, while a new degree, with a new title not open to misconception, might be offered to other students of theology in the widest sense of the term.

“I hope, sir, that in the interests of clear thinking you will use your influence to prevent the University from being driven into a contest in which the success or failure of either side might well prove disastrous.”

The last two months have produced some interesting contributions to the discussion of the Vestments question. In the *Nineteenth Century* for February, Dr. Wickham Legg has written an article maintaining that the surplice as much as the chasuble is a “Mass vestment,” and that in the earliest days the chasuble “did not connote sacrifice” at all. And he maintains that the judges in the Ridsdale Judgment in taking the line that the chasuble and the surplice are two mutually exclusive things, were committing themselves to an erroneous and indefensible proposition. We

The Vestments
Controversy.

have no space here to indicate and comment on his facts and arguments in detail ; and it is the less necessary to attempt the task, because it has been carried out by Mr. Tomlinson with abundant learning and incisive, not to say mordant, style, in the March number of the *Church Intelligencer*. Mr. Tomlinson traverses Dr. Legg's instances and maintains that when the surplice was worn at the Medieval Mass it was not one of the distinctive Mass vestments, but was simply worn as a sort of intervening garment to separate the Mass vestments from the ordinary clothes. He also points out that, whatever may have been the case in the earliest days, for nearly a thousand years in the Western Church the chasuble has been regarded as the peculiar badge of the offerer of the sacrifice of the Mass.

The Bishop
of
Manchester's
Letter.

A new turn has been given to the discussion by the publication of the Bishop of Manchester's "Open Letter" to the Archbishop of Canterbury, putting the question whether the Ornaments Rubric necessarily refers to the Eucharistic vestments at all. The position put forward by the Bishop is briefly this: The rubric is the very words of the Act of Uniformity of 1559. The words form part of a proviso, and a proviso must be interpreted consistently with the whole Act, and therefore should be taken as indicating such ornaments as can be used consistently with the Act. The surplice is an ornament of the minister worn at the time of Communion even under the First Prayer-Book of Edward VI., and the use of it is prescribed by the Second Prayer-Book of Edward VI. The Bishop holds that the rubric of 1552, *taken along with* the concluding notes at the end of the 1549 Prayer-Book, make it reasonably clear that the surplice is the garment intended by the Act of Uniformity. And if asked why a reference to 1552 would not have sufficed without any reference to 1549, he thinks that the reason is that the 1552 Book limited the Bishop's dress to a rochet only, and that Queen Elizabeth was anxious to leave a loophole by which the Bishop's robes as prescribed in the 1549 Prayer-Book might be

retained. Hence the apparent ambiguity and much of our subsequent discussions. The Bishop's argument and the detailed reasons for it are worthy of most careful study.

With its wonted tenacity and courage the *Spectator* is continuing to wage uncompromising warfare against the condition of slavery which exists in Portuguese West Africa. There are still some forty thousand slaves at work on the cocoa plantations of San Thomé and Príncipe, and we have the British Foreign Office practically apologizing for, and hence, in effect, supporting the existence of the system. One part of the defence appears to be that the condition of these workers is not to be described as "slavery," but "contract labour." Unfortunately a change of name does not alter the grim reality of the thing indicated. The *Spectator* does not take up a merely furious and aggressive line. It simply asks that the correspondence on the subject in the recently issued White Book be impartially studied, and that readers should ask themselves whether the reply of the Foreign Office to the efforts of the Anti-Slavery Society is really an adequate one. It also presses home the further question: "Ought England to continue her protective alliance with Portugal, when by continuing that alliance she makes herself virtually not merely the apologist for, but the actual upholder of, a system which, stripped of all misleading descriptions, is simply one of slavery?"

In the lectures on "Four Stages of Greek Religion," recently delivered by Professor Gilbert Murray, there is a great amount of truth expressed, we need hardly say, with extraordinary felicity and grace. One passage, however, seems to call for a word of criticism. The words in question are these:

"It always appears to me that, historically speaking, the character of Christianity in these early centuries is to be sought not so much in the doctrines which it professed, nearly all of which had their roots and their

close parallels in older Hellenistic or Hebrew thought, but in the organization on which it rested. For my own part, when I try to understand Christianity as a mass of doctrines, Gnostic, Trinitarian, Monophysite, Arian, and the rest, I get no further. When I try to realize it as a sort of semi-secret society for mutual help with a mystical religious basis, resting first on the proletariates of Antioch and the great commercial and manufacturing towns of the Levant, then spreading by instinctive sympathy to similar classes in Rome and the West, and rising in influence, like certain other mystical cults, by the special appeal it made to women, the various historical puzzles begin to fall into place."

An
Inadequate
Presentment.

To the Christian reader the view expressed in these words can hardly fail to appear as an external and therefore very inadequate one. What it appears to leave out is the central figure of Christ. Surely He supplied much that was other than either "older Hellenistic or Hebrew thought." A sympathetic appreciation of the efforts of great theologians and teachers to understand and formulate the teaching of the Bible about God and Christ might supply one with a clue to the great controversies, whether Trinitarian or Monophysite. And surely to find the secret of Christianity in its organization as a semi-secret society, akin to other mystical cults in its appeal to women, is to do less than justice to the whole content of Christian experience, the new moral life made possible by the indwelling Christ. To an external and disinterested spectator much theological controversy may seem to have been very barren, and Christianity itself to have been one mystical cult among others. But the view which regards Christianity either as a philosophy or an organization, and forgets that it was primarily a "power" and a "life," can hardly be said to have made any approach to a true understanding of its secret and its real essence.

Central
Churchman-
ship.

We learn with satisfaction that a third issue of the Bishop of Sodor and Man's book on "Central Churchmanship" is being prepared, and that it is to be published, not only in its original form, but in a cheap edition as well. We welcomed the book when it first came out, because it removed many misapprehensions. It defined the position of

the Evangelical school of thought as that position is understood by the Bishop and by many others who think with him. It showed, in a way not always formerly made clear, how it is possible to be both a convinced Evangelical and a strong Churchman. It displayed the loyalty of Evangelicals at once to the fundamental truths of the faith and to the distinctive positions of the Church of England. With regard to matters of history and criticism it indicated, wisely, as we think, the limits within which variety of opinion may well be permitted. The loyalty to the authority of Scripture was firm and unwavering. It set forth, too, the message which Churchmanship, so construed, has for the difficulties, speculative and practical, of the present age. We trust that the good work it has already accomplished may, by this reissue, be extended to ever-enlarging circles.

