THE CHURCHMAN

April, 1909.

The Month.

The Vestments.

It is well that the discussion of this question is postponed until the May session of Convocation, for it gives time for that thought and consultation which will enable us to see and define more clearly the issues at stake. Attention, meanwhile, is being called to the obvious differences between the proposals of the two Convocations. The Report of the Canterbury Convocation recommends the permissive use of the Vestments without any qualification, while that of the York Convocation recommends the permissive use of the white chasuble, accompanied by certain safeguards. It is the latter proposal which is being chiefly discussed at present, especially because it is supported by three such well-known and honoured prelates as the Bishops of Durham, Liverpool, and Sodor and Man. Evangelical Churchmen are not prepared to give much heed to the Canterbury Report, because its acceptance would mean entire capitulation and the introduction of a state of affairs as novel as it would be dangerous. But the York proposals, backed as they are by such names as those of Bishops Moule, Chavasse, and Drury, are on an entirely different footing, and call for the most careful and respectful consideration from all Evangelical and central Churchmen. To this Report, then, we address ourselves, and ask attention to some facts that seem to be pertinent to the situation. First of all, we have looked in vain for any response to this "olive

branch" from those who wear the Vestments. The York suggestions have now been before the country for months, and have lately been reinforced by weighty speeches from the three Bishops just mentioned. The Bishop of Durham in particular expressed the hope that what he called for convenience the medievalizing school in our Church may come to a frank wish to meet the pressure of other opinions, and abandon the policy of inviting concession without giving any in return. But is there any hint of the acceptance of these proposals even as a basis of discussion? Is there, at any rate up to the present, the smallest prospect of their being adopted? Surely we ought to have heard by now of some steps being taken to arrange a compromise on this basis. Yet so far not a word has been spoken. Does this seem hopeful for a permanent settlement?

Are the York Proposals Feasible?

The Bishop of Durham, in his fine-spirited speech in the York Convocation, also expressed the hope that, by means of these proposals, the "centrally minded" members of the Church of England would be drawn together. We assume that by "centrally minded" he had in view Moderate High Churchmen, who either do not wear the Vestments, or, if wearing them, do not attach to them a distinctive doctrinal meaning, and also Liberal Evangelicals, who, while not wishing to wear the Vestments themselves, are ready to allow the permissive use to others. We take it for granted that the Bishop's description of "centrally minded" men cannot refer to what he called "the medievalizing school" in our Church. But here comes our difficulty. The Archbishop of York in the same debate called attention to the utter impossibility of putting down the use of Vestments in so large a number of churches, and said that the attempt would certainly embitter and exacerbate religious strife more than anything else—in fact, that "it was not really within practical politics." If, then, the Archbishop's words truly gauge the situation, how could the drawing together of "centrally minded" Churchmen do anything to influence those who now

use the Vestments without restriction? Will men who believe that they are legally justified in wearing the Vestments alter their usage to suit the restricted position recommended by the York Convocation? Surely we may borrow the words of the Archbishop of York, and say, "It is not really within practical politics."

The York Proposals and Anglican Tradition.

It is essential to put ourselves in the position of men like the Bishops of Durham and Liverpool, and endeavour to understand their attitude. Bishop Chavasse advocates the permissive use of a white Vestment on three grounds: (1) The spirit of Christian equity, because of the ambiguity of the Ornaments Rubric; (2) the spirit of the Anglican tradition in its use of the cope as a distinctive Vestment; (3) the spirit of Christian love and charity, for the sake of peace. While we are in hearty sympathy and agreement with the spirit that prompts these reasons, we are compelled to point out that the application made by the Bishop seems to overlook almost entirely the doctrinal aspects of the case. Even supposing that the Ornaments Rubric is as ambiguous as the Bishop suggests, is it not a fact that most of those who wear the Vestments on the ground of the Ornaments Rubric do so because of their doctrinal meaning? As to the argument for a distinctive Vestment by reason of the use of the cope, is it quite accurate to use this as a parallel case? The cope, though distinctive, is not doctrinal. Nor is the cope even permitted as a distinctive Vestment for Holy Communion in parish churches. As to Christian love and charity, may we not venture to ask whether purity of doctrine is not as important as reality of love. Let us apply these three considerations to some definite instances, and see how far they really settle the matter. Let us, for example, consider the ritual at two churches in the Liverpool Diocese—St. John's, Tue Brook, and St. Luke's, Bold Street. How far would the Bishop's reasons carry us towards the removal of our difficulties? Would his first point, the spirit of Christian equity, cover the ritual uses of both

churches? Would the distinctiveness of the white Vestment, if accepted at St Luke's, meet the case of St. John's? Would the spirit of love and charity really solve the problem of the two different aspects of teaching on the Holy Communion at these two churches? With every desire for peace, we cannot discover a solution in these three grounds for advocating the use of a white Vestment. The proposals fail at the very point of application, for nothing short of some measure of that compulsion which the Archbishop of York regards as outside the realm of practical politics will bring about a change from the coloured to the white Vestment.

Is Compromise Possible?

We cannot help feeling that the speeches of the Bishops of Manchester, Carlisle, and Newcastle had the virtue of keeping most closely to the actual facts of the situation. Bishop Knox pertinently asked to whom the motion proposing this compromise was addressed. It could not be to those who were content with the use of the surplice, but must be to those who were not content with it, who were asked for an assurance that they were prepared to give up certain practices and also the use of coloured Vestments. Well might the Bishop say he was not particularly hopeful as to their reply. The Bishop of Carlisle forcibly urged the impossibility of dissociating the revival of Vestments from a return to the erroneous teaching from which our Reformers strove to free the Church; and the Bishop of Newcastle aptly inquired what practical steps they proposed to take to assure themselves that the safeguards insisted on by the Report would be forthcoming. The full report of the Bishop of Newcastle's speech can be seen in the *Church Gazette* for March, and deserves the closest study of all those who wish to see how these proposals look from the standpoint of practical politics. We would also advise our readers to study a new pamphlet by Canon Nunn, "The Ornaments of the Minister" (National Church League, 2d.). It is a careful examination of the Report of the York Committee, and we shall not be surprised if it leads readers to the same

conclusion as that of the author himself—that the safeguards now proposed are not only not feasible, but even futile. Meanwhile we would call fresh attention to the following words, spoken some years ago by the present Bishop of Durham :

"For peace I long—God knoweth from my inmost heart—but not for peace at any price; not at the price of reconsidering the ground principles of the Reformation, which the leaders of the revolution must practically ask us to do. They have been avowing for a long time, but never more loudly than of late, aims and ideals which to the sons of the Reformation are absolutely repugnant. It is not our principles that have disturbed the Church; it is those of a school whose essential teachings are, in the Church as reformed, novel within this century, as different in vital points from the old High Anglicans as from the Evangelicals. We are the sufferers from a great and formidable inroad. It is not quite our wisdom to confer with its leaders. Let charity to persons be unbroken in the Master's name. But, unless the Reformers died literally for nothing, we are in face of principles which are, by inexorable fact, mortal antagonists to each other."

The real question is whether the events of recent months or years have affected the truth of these contentions. Is it not true to say that these words literally represent our position to-day?

Prayer-Book Revision.

If only it were possible to eliminate the controversial aspects of this question, it ought not to be difficult to agree on certain main outlines of revision which would be of incalculable value to Church life. It is certainly a great drawback to spiritual progress that our services to-day should be stereotyped according to a pattern over three hundred years old, and it is still more serious that the Church should be powerless to effect any change, either because of cumbrous machinery or else because of the fear of internal differences. If we allow ourselves to think of what the New Testament calls the liberty of the Spirit, it is surprising that we have endured our present position so long. The proposals of the Canterbury Committee contain much that is helpful on points that command universal agreement, but we fear that the controversial element will complicate matters, and prevent us from obtaining those changes that we so greatly need. If only we could agree to discuss the subject by omitting the questions

that give rise to differences of opinion, an opportunity would be afforded of doing fine service to the Church and Christianity. Thus, after omitting the proposals about the Athanasian Creed, Prayers for the Dead, the Words of Administration at Holy Communion, and the change in the Ordinal, there would still be ample scope for adequate and welcome revision. The general proposals of the Report do not err on the side of boldness, and we wish that the Committee had gone much farther in the direction of the Irish and American Prayer-Books. We hope to have an article in our next issue calling attention to the subject from the standpoint of the American Prayer-Book, and offering some suggestions based upon that in many ways admirable manual. Is it not possible to get Convocation to eliminate the proposals that give rise to controversy, and then to concentrate on those which have to do solely with the elasticity and variety of our services? It would be a great point gained if the revision could go forward on these lines.

The Education Question.

The letter addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, signed by the Bishop of Beverley, the Deans of York and Chester, and a large number of representative clergy and laity of the northern provinces, protesting against compromise on the basis of Mr. Runciman's Bill, might seem to be the slaying of the slain, since that Bill is evidently dead beyond recall. But it was worth while publishing the letter, if only for the Archbishop's reply. As he rightly said, the signatories of the letter are of opinion that "a settlement of the present education controversy cannot be brought about by any process of mutual concession, or, as it is commonly called, compromise." He added that he had received similar resolutions from the extreme wing of the Nonconformist bodies. Then once again the Archbishop urged that settlement is only possible on lines of mutual accommodation. The following words go straight to the point:

"I do not find in the circular letter, a copy of which you kindly send to me, any indication of a wish on the part of those who sign it to endeavour to

meet Nonconformist difficulties or grievances such as they are; and a corresponding attitude upon the opposite side is taken in certain Nonconformist documents like those to which I have referred."

In the accompanying letter to the *Times* the Dean of Chester said that, in approaching the Archbishop, the signatories "of set purpose refrained from dealing with any construction policy," though it is difficult to understand so curious a standpoint. Are Churchmen to learn nothing from the controversies of the past six years? Can they expect to retain their schools as though Mr. Balfour's ill-starred Act had never been passed? Is it worth while, from any common-sense point of view, to persist in a negative attitude of protest? To ask such questions is to see at once the impossibility of the extreme position taken up by the signatories to this letter. We are profoundly thankful to the Archbishop of Canterbury for the firmness with which he contends for his position, and for the frank assertion of his belief that the cause he has been championing would promote effectively the best interests of our schools. Like him, we believe that some day this true position will become apparent, but, like him also, we fear that, through the extremists on both sides, who will learn nothing, forget nothing, yield nothing, "it may become apparent too late."

Swansea. Another event in the educational world has been much to the fore during the past month—the Swansea Church Schools Dispute, which has been going on between the Managers and the Local Education Authority of Swansea since 1904. Owing to pressure from the Authority, the Managers have been compelled to expend about £20,000, and in addition to this they have been faced with great difficulties in regard to the question of the teachers' salaries. The Local Authority contended that it was justified in paying lower salaries to teachers in Church schools than those paid to teachers of equal qualifications in Council schools. This contention the Managers have rightly opposed, and after much delay the whole question was gone into at a public inquiry held by the Board of Education.

The Commissioner decided quite definitely in favour of the Managers, but the report of the Commissioner (now Mr. Justice Hamilton) was overruled by Mr. Runciman. Whatever may be the technical justification for this action, there is every moral reason against it, for it seems to be based entirely upon political grounds. Anything weaker or more unworthy than the defence of the Government we have never read, and the comments of such supporters of the Government as the *Westminster Gazette*, together with some significant speeches in the House of Commons, show what is felt by Liberals themselves. The fact is that the Government weakly capitulated to its Welsh political supporters, instead of impartially and courageously doing what justice and equity demanded. Archbishop Temple's words about Mr. Balfour's late Government seem to be eminently true of the present in respect to Swansea—"It is not a very brave Government." Still more deplorable and ominous, in our judgment, is the attitude of the Swansea Education Authority, which consists largely of Nonconformists. It reveals a bitter animosity to Church schools, and shows that the higher interests of the young can be sacrificed to political rancour; while the letter of the Vicar of Swansea, in the *Times* of March 15, proves that even religion is not regarded as of much importance in the Provided schools of Swansea. Thus far will ecclesiastical hatred go. We can imagine what would have been said by Nonconformist leaders if such action had been taken by Churchmen. We should have had loud cries against ecclesiastical tyranny; and yet Nonconformist leaders remain silent in the face of injustice perpetrated by their brethren in Swansea. It is another instance of what we have all along urged—that education is suffering from extremists on both sides, and that unless the matter is dealt with by the central body of Christian men of all Churches, the outcome must necessarily be secular education.