

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE CHURCHMAN.

MAY, 1906.

The Month.

The Education Bill. WE are now in possession of the proposals of the Government for the amendment of the Education Act of 1902. Writing as we do, during the Easter recess, it is already abundantly evident that the Bill will be met by strong and even fierce opposition from several quarters. So far as the leaders of the Church of England are concerned, the note of "unhesitating opposition" has been struck by the Archbishop of Canterbury, while there are signs of equally strong opposition from the Roman Catholics. What, then, does the Bill propose? The key to the situation is in the first clause, which reads as follows: "On and after January 1, 1908, a school shall not be recognised as a public elementary school unless it is a school provided by the local education authority." In other words, the principle of popular representation is asserted, and all schools maintained by the rates are to be put under one authority. With this is naturally associated the abolition of all religious tests for teachers who are paid by the State. These two principles—(1) popular representation and (2) abolition of tests—are the very root and foundation of the Bill. Now, we as Churchmen may object—and, as a matter of fact, many Churchmen do object—to these two principles; but it is hardly open to doubt that they are the necessary and logical outcome of the recent Liberal victory at the polls. No one can fairly question that the present Government was pledged to amend the Act of 1902 in these

two particulars. The entire Liberal party and the Labour party are united on the point, and even some members of the Opposition frankly admit it. There could scarcely be anything more significant than the language of the *Times* on this point when it said on the eve of the introduction of the Bill that "it is useless to quarrel" with the establishment of "one uniform national system"; that it was "probably inevitable"; and that Mr. Birrell was "perhaps right in intimating that so long as the dual system remained we could have neither peace nor progress." Equally plain admissions have been made by such Unionist organs as the *Morning Post*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the *Standard*. Now, what we wish to suggest to our readers is that Church opposition to the Bill should be based on the presupposition of these two points as assured facts. Any attempt to get behind this principle of "one uniform national system" will meet with nothing but utter and overwhelming defeat. It will be well for Churchmen to face this simple significant and controlling fact, for it certainly rules the situation. It is the logical and essential outcome of the acceptance of rate-aid in 1902 for Church of England schools. That fatal and irretrievable blunder is the parent of our present difficulties. It is simply impossible for any Churchman to command support for the policy of a return to the position as it was before 1902. If once we recognise facts as they are, it will enable us to frame our policy accordingly.

The Religious Problem. For one thing in the Government Bill we may all, as the *Spectator* rightly says, be devoutly thankful, and that is, that the Government has decided against secularism and in favour of religious teaching as part of school instruction. Following what is evidently the will of the vast majority of the English people, the new Bill enacts that in all schools provided by public money the fundamental truths of Christianity as set forth in the Bible may be taught daily. This is a supreme and decisive point, and one to be borne in mind in all discussions of the Bill. Whether or not the proposals are adequately safeguarded, or whether they can be

added to in certain directions, are matters for serious consideration ; but in the meantime let it be clearly understood that the Government has rejected the proposals of some of its High Church and Labour supporters, and has decided on the principle of Bible teaching. Again we say we are thankful for this indication of a clear, decisive, and welcome policy. The supreme question for Churchmen to decide is whether, granting the inevitableness of Clause 1, the religious problem could have been better or otherwise dealt with than by this Bill. This is the point on which to concentrate attention. Let us once more remind ourselves that Clause 1 is the necessary outcome of the rate-aid policy of 1902, and Churchmen must therefore deal with the new Bill on this clear assumption. As one of the leading Unionist papers says, " It is only like beating the wind to protest " against the general principle enunciated by that clause.

The only alternative (apart from secularism) to fundamental Bible teaching in the schools is equal facilities to be given for all creeds to teach their own children. Mr. Birrell regards this policy as utterly impossible, and he is by no means alone in the opinion. It is perfectly certain that the great body of teachers would resent and oppose it, and though this alone would not be decisive, it must not be overlooked as a factor in the case. Moreover, we question whether the Church of England has a staff available (Nonconformity certainly has not) for such work. There are comparatively few clergy who have an adequate knowledge of teaching and discipline. Above all, it is open to serious question whether the right of entry to all creeds would not be prejudicial to the tone and real power of the schools. The Bishop of Manchester is quoted in the new *Twentieth Century Quarterly* (to which, by the way, we give a hearty welcome), as opposed to the "right of entry" policy, and we heartily endorse the Bishop's view :

If he were a schoolmaster, he would on no sort of terms allow such a "right of entry." The great thing to do was to maintain the unity, the true

tone and spirit which belonged to a school, and that depended largely upon the influence of the head-teacher. There was no weapon so potent for keeping up the right tone in a school as religious instruction, and he could not believe that any teacher of experience would so part with that which was his most important instrument, and allow it to become a means of dissension and quarrelling within the school buildings.

It would seem, therefore, that Mr. Birrell's view as to the impossibility of universal facilities, endorsed as it is by so great an authority as the Bishop of Manchester, is the right one. There remains, consequently, the policy promulgated by Mr. Birrell—that of providing for the teaching of fundamental Christianity in the schools. It is for Churchmen to consider which of the three possible policies is wisest and best: (1) Secularism; (2) denominationalism for all; (3) Bible instruction. The field of discussion is narrowed to these limits.

At the risk of repetition we wish to call attention
A Forgotten to the fact that in all the criticisms of the new Bill
Factor. which have emanated from Church circles there has been an utter forgetfulness of the one factor that rules the situation—we mean the question of rate-aid, and the fact that Church schools are now almost entirely supported by the rates. Surely we must not forget this, and argue as though the Government were engaged in wholesale spoliation and robbery in proposing to bring all schools under one uniform law of popular control. Now that Churchmen are practically relieved of all expenses of maintenance, and since under the new Bill they are to be further relieved in some essential respects, is it not very difficult to understand the justice of the term "confiscation"? As Mr. A. J. Butler, in a letter to the *Times*, truly says, confiscation is a rather "florid" term to apply to such a transaction. If Churchmen oppose the Bill without keeping their eyes open to the revolution created in their favour by the Act of 1902, they will be incurring very serious risks, and will do the cause of truth and the cause of the Church the gravest harm.

Up to the present we have scarcely heard a word from Churchmen about the Church children in Council schools. The Bill proposes to continue the present conditions in these schools, which means that, for the most part, the children will still have that fundamental Christianity which has been the rule in these schools since 1870. When we remember that not far short of half the children of the country are in Provided schools, and that very many of these are Church children, it is a little strange that Churchmen have made no protest against the (alleged) "undenominationalism" of these schools. Yet surely these children are as much ours as those attending Church schools. Why, then, is nothing to be done to give them Church teaching? The answer will doubtless be that we are powerless in the matter. This is true so long as we are content to insist upon impossibilities in Church schools; but if we had been ready with a statesmanlike policy for all schools, we could have obtained a system which, while safeguarding Church schools, would have secured religious teaching in Provided schools also. It is not too late to do this now if Churchmen could unite on it.

In spite of all the severe criticism passed on it, we venture to believe that the new Bill affords the basis of an equitable compromise, which ought to satisfy the main body of Churchmen; and we deprecate in the best interests of the Church itself any opposition to the fundamental position indicated in Clause 1. What we should insist on is that religion shall be taught only by those who believe it, and that there shall be a conscience-clause for teachers; that the provisions of the Bill relating to urban schools shall be safeguarded from abuse; that the same principles shall apply when required to single-school areas; and that teachers who wish to give denominational teaching on the two days allowed shall not be debarred from doing so. To any criticism that is prepared to accept the principles of popular control and the abolition of tests, the Government will be compelled to give,

The Provided
Schools.

The True
Policy.

may, we are assured, is ready to give the fullest consideration, and several clauses will undoubtedly be altered. But when we consider the opportunities afforded by the Bill of securing a similar system of Bible teaching as has admittedly proved satisfactory in Provided schools for thirty-five years past, and, in addition to this, definite Church teaching on two days a week (quite as much as most of the children get now), we feel that Churchmen will not be wise or right in committing themselves to a policy of "unhesitating opposition." When, moreover, we remember the proposals as to rent for Church schools, and the payment by the Government for the upkeep of the buildings—at present a very serious item for Churchmen—we hope, on the grounds of self-interest only, to say nothing of wider and higher claims, that the Church will pause long before committing herself to an uncompromising opposition to the new Bill.

We are grateful to the *Spectator* for calling
 The Bible and the Church. attention to one of the gravest issues at stake in
 the present Education controversy :

It is the risk that in their denunciations of "undenominationalism," "fundamental Christianity," or "Bible Christianity," the extremists may produce the impression that the Church of England is secretly, if not openly, opposed to Bible Christianity and Bible teaching. The English people know that the Roman Church is now, as always, conscientiously opposed to the free, or, as she would say, indiscriminate and injudicious, use of the Bible—to its use, that is, by laymen without what she regards as the proper safeguards and limitations provided by authority.

The writer goes on to point out that extreme Anglicans hold the same view, and that this general attitude to the Bible really lies behind the agitation against "undenominational religion." It involves opposition to the Bible unless the Bible can be interpreted by the Church. Yet, as the Bishop of Sodor and Man has recently said, everything depends on what is meant by "Church teaching." What Church? Is it the Roman, or Extreme Anglican, or Evangelical, or Broad? We can easily see the danger of moderate Churchmen being led to cast in their lot with teaching which their position leads them to

abhor; yet, as the *Spectator* says, such a result would be disastrous to the true interests of our Church and nation. The conclusion of the article is worthy of the most serious consideration :

Our fear is that the Church, owing to the false leading of certain extremists, may be made to appear to take up an attitude in regard to Bible teaching and the Bible generally which is not in any true sense hers. Churchmen, like other men, are apt to follow the fashion without any very clear understanding of where they are going, and just now it is unfortunately the fashion in the clerical world to denounce undenominational religious teaching, not because men in their hearts object to it, but because an impression has been produced that it is the right and proper thing for good Churchmen to do, and that by doing so they prove their loyalty to their Church. This process of following the fashion has been further stimulated by the groundless belief that the teaching of fundamental Christianity is only supported by Nonconformists, and is, indeed, a distinctively Nonconformist tenet. If the Church of England had really ceased to be a Bible Church, we should say by all means let the fact be known, and the consequences accepted. Since, however, the attitude of the Church of England towards the Bible and Bible teaching remains, in fact, what it always has been, we feel it our duty to warn Churchmen against the dangers which must accrue if any misconception of the position is allowed to be current at a time like the present.

**Episcopal
Missions.**

The Bishop of London's Mission in North London this Lent was a great success in point of deep interest and crowded attendances. The sermons were all on the subject of the Holy Spirit of God; and in spite of some teaching which was not in accord with Holy Scripture or the Prayer-Book, it is impossible not to rejoice that such prominence was given to the need and power of the Blessed Spirit. We notice, too, that the Bishop of Worcester's Village Mission has stirred up great interest in rural parts of his diocese, where a Bishop's visit under such circumstances is quite a novelty. We hear with unfeigned thankfulness of preparations for a Seaside Mission at Margate in August under the Archbishop of Canterbury, and for another Mission at Blackpool and Morecambe by the Bishop of Manchester. The advantage to the Church and nation in being enabled to see that our Bishops are far other than mere

administrative machines, and that they are taking the lead in the most important matters that can concern the people of our land, is too obvious to need emphasis. We hope we may be permitted to record still more of these episcopal evangelistic efforts. When we remember the vast numbers of our unsaved fellow-countrymen, and the magnificent opportunities for reaching them afforded by our Church system, we cannot but pray that all our Bishops may be led to attack this great problem of home evangelization, and put themselves at the head of a mighty effort to bring Christ before the people.

This is how the *Guardian* speaks of our controversy with Rome, and it is well that we should be reminded of the fact from a quarter that cannot be charged with narrow Protestantism. We have recently had some very special reminders of the essential attitude of Rome, of which the "conversion" of Princess Ena has been not the least significant. Another proof of Rome's relentless opposition has been seen in the story of Dr. Abraham of Hull as to the way in which his two daughters were inveigled into the Roman Church. How far their minds may have been prepared for this step by previous Anglican teaching we cannot say, though the positions laid down in a new book by Dr. Abraham (recently reviewed in these columns) went far beyond those of the Reformation Settlement. But the fact remains in any case that every effort is now being made, by means of cheap middle-class education and other attractions, to win over our young people to the Roman Communion. It behoves clergy and parents to be ever on their guard against these attempts, and by teaching and influence to protect our children against the insidious wiles of Romanism. There can be no doubt that much of the extreme Anglicanism so fashionable to-day is preparing people for Rome in a most direct and definite way. *Facilis descensus* when once the position of the extremists has been adopted. There is no possibility of meeting Rome with the weapons of the Oxford Movement or of its present-day successor—Ritualism. They are

An Unsleeping
Controversy.

not only powerless against the adversary, but, what is more, they actually play into her hands. The only effective way of fighting Rome is by adopting and maintaining the Reformation position laid down in our Articles. Rome is powerless against Holy Scripture.

The Liverpool Reredos. There is very much more than appears at first sight in the objection of the Liverpool Cathedral Committee to the offer by Mr. Horsfall of a sculptured design of the Crucifixion as the central part of a reredos. It is no mere question of this or that type of Churchmanship, but involves the very centre and core of essential Christianity. We say nothing here of the impossibility of reconciling the Churchmen of Liverpool to the view of so pronounced and aggressive a High Churchman as Mr. Horsfall. What we are concerned with is the fundamental principle involved. We make bold to say, even at the risk of being misunderstood, that the choice of the Crucifixion as the central and prominent part of the reredos would have involved an erroneous idea of vital Christianity. As the Bishop of Liverpool rightly said, "The very heart of Christianity is not a dead, but a living Christ," and it is of the very essence of genuine Christianity to lay stress on Christ as living and ascended. It is just here that Romanism and Ritualism really fail. The Christ of Rome is predominantly the Christ of the cradle and of the cross, the child Christ and the dead Christ. Ritualism shows the same general attitude and emphasis, even though they are not so pronounced as in the Roman Church. But the Christ of the New Testament is the Christ of the throne, and it is only as He is viewed from this perspective that Christianity can be rightly understood and experienced. It follows, therefore, that to concentrate attention on the dead Christ is virtually to rob the soul of the joy and power that come from the living Lord, and to fix its attention on the gloom of a dead, instead of the gladness of a living, Saviour. The crucifix is the symbol of the dead, not of the living, and it is significant that it was never

used in the symbolism of the early Church. The earliest symbol was that of the living Christ, and to this day the prevalent representation of the Greek Church is the symbol of the living Lord reigning from the tree. Several weighty testimonies to these facts appear in Archbishop Benson's "Life." The whole truth, with its proper balance and perspective, is summed up in the word of the Apocalypse: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."



Christianity and the Supernatural.—V.

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF CLOGHER.

ALL that we have been led to think as to the supernaturalness, or transcendence, which marks the Christian solution of the great theological problems applies to that supreme doctrine which has always been regarded as the essence of the catholic faith. In modern times it has been too little considered that the doctrine of the Trinity must be organically related to all that is essential in the Christian creed. For many this great doctrine is either a thesis to be proved by texts from Holy Scripture or a tradition which must be preserved at all costs. For others, more reflective, it is discerned to be essential as a safeguard of the Divinity of our Lord. With but few does it take its rightful place as the supreme principle, the highest truth, in the light of which all lower truths become clearer, being exhibited in their mutual relationship. Yet, if the doctrine be true, this must be its character; for knowledge about God must be the highest knowledge. If we could know God perfectly, we could know everything perfectly; we should be able to see, as it were, the plan of the universe lying, like a map, before us. This is the end towards which most philosophies have struggled. Believing that there must be some universal plan or system in things, men have sought for the principles which give that system its unity, and when they have convinced themselves that