

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.

DECEMBER, 1908.

The Month.

**Educational
Conference.** JUST at the moment of going to press, we hear with unfeigned satisfaction of the fairly certain prospect of an educational settlement. As our readers know, we have pleaded for peace on the basis of an honourable compromise all through the last two years of strife. We have never hesitated to express the opinion that the question was one for mutual arrangement, in view of the genuine convictions and weighty interests on both sides. To the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Southwark, and all those associated with them, Churchmen owe a deep debt of gratitude, while the spirit in which the Nonconformist leaders have faced the question is deserving of the highest praise. We shall not soon forget the noble appeal of the Bishop of Southwark, his joint letter with the President of the Wesleyan Conference, and the splendid response made by the leading Nonconformists. To oppose such a spirit is surely to do despite to the very first interests of Christian truth and love. The country is heartily sick of this controversy between Christian men and Churches. Into the details of the compromise it is impossible to enter at the moment of writing, because the new arrangements are not yet incorporated in the Bill, but we believe there need be no insuperable difficulties in the way of settlement. Meanwhile, we hope that, in the words of the *Times* leader, "those who are standing firmly behind the contracting parties will give

them loyal and consistent support." We must not only hope, but take occasion to make it clear to the Government that, to quote the *Times* article again, "the Government feel they are backed by a consensus of strong Churchmen and stout-hearted Nonconformists, who are determined not to have this chance of settlement snatched from their grasp." We hope and pray that the Christmas season may find the various denominations at peace on this subject, and ready to work together with renewed confidence and energy for the religious education of the children of our country.

In an article in the *Church Gazette* for November, the Dean of Canterbury called attention to a point of great and perpetual importance on the relation of the Word to the Sacraments :

The
Word and
Sacraments.

"He did not hesitate to say that the Word of God was paramount even over the Sacraments, because it was the one thing that gave the Sacraments their efficacy. It was the promise of Christ, in connection with the elements they received, which gave them their efficacy and their sacredness. The main question at issue was whether the Word of God was to have its old supreme influence in the Church of God and in the Church of England. He believed it was the Word of God—the reading of the Word of God, the preaching of the Word of God—together with the Sacraments, and neither the one without the other, which had made the Christianity of the Church of England; and it was in proportion as they maintained the influence of the Word of God in all its supremacy and importance that they would maintain the beneficent influence of the Church of England as it was reformed."

It is, of course, well known that ministers, while often called "ministers of the Word," are never once termed "ministers of the Sacraments," but only "ministers of the Word and Sacraments," because, as one of the Homilies says, "Sacraments are visible signs to which are annexed *promises*." It is only as our faith lays hold of the promises which are revealed in the Word that the signs assure us of their fulfilment. The Word of God is thus not merely one "means of grace," but is connected with all of them, whether public or private, as their guarantee and pledge. This is no doubt the reason why Holy Scripture finds no place among the "means of grace" mentioned in the Church

Catechism. The Word of God touches and includes all means of grace as the one assurance of God's promise to bestow grace on all those who are willing to seek Him. Let us never forget the prominence and predominance given in Scripture to the Word of God and its ministry.

Continuity. One of the most valuable subjects discussed at the Manchester Congress was "The Continuity of the Anglican Church," and the question has since been the subject of correspondence in the *Guardian*. In view of present-day controversies, there are few subjects of greater importance, and, let us add, few on which the views of many Churchmen seem so truly lacking in clearness. What do we mean by continuity? Viewing the Anglican Church as it is today, and as it was at the Reformation, and then comparing it with what obtained in this country in the Middle Ages, we cannot help asking, What is the meaning of continuity in regard to these three different periods? Does it mean continuity of Doctrine? Or of Ritual? Or of Organization? As to Organization, there has, of course, been no breach whatever. In Ritual there has been a very decided breach in more than one respect. In Doctrine, while there has been continuity so far as the subjects of the Creeds (represented by Articles I. to V.) are concerned, there has been an almost absolute breach of continuity on the subjects of Sin, Justification, the Church, the Ministry, and the Sacraments, as set forth in Articles IX. to XXXI. No one can question the simple historical fact with which Canon Hensley Henson opened his paper at Manchester: that "until the Reformation the Church of England—that is, the organized society of baptized persons living in England—was an integral part of the whole Roman Church." And who can question the truth of the quotation from Maitland's "Canon Law in the Church of England"—that "no tie of an ecclesiastical or spiritual kind bound the Bishop of Chichester to the Bishop of Carlisle, except that which bound them both French and Spanish Bishops?"

Names and Things. The Bishop of Bristol, at Manchester, said that the Church of England has never been anything else but a National Church, and that in its *title* there never has been any admixture of the name or of the idea of Rome. But what does this absence of the name or idea of Rome in the title really mean and involve? What are we to say to the frequent communications on ecclesiastical matters between this country and Rome, together with the foreign Archbishops of Canterbury and the English Archbishops, who were appointed and often made Cardinals by the Pope? It is, of course, true that the Pope was resisted, but the resistance was in things temporal, not in things spiritual. Can any instance be brought forward of the Papal jurisdiction being questioned before the Reformation? As a correspondent in the *Guardian* points out, while Englishmen might allege that the Pope had overstepped the limits of his prerogative, they never for a moment questioned the reality or justice of the prerogative itself. Even supposing, therefore, that we allow the non-Roman *title* of the Church of England, it is surely a fact that the members of the Church of England during the Middle Ages all regarded themselves as "devout sons of the Roman Church." We can see from all this the great need of clearness of thought on the subject of continuity. It involves a fallacy of a very definite kind when instances of protest against the unfairness of the Papacy in things temporal are made to appear virtually identical with denial of the Papal rule in things spiritual. As Canon Hensley Henson rightly said, speaking of the present day: "The legal and ecclesiastical continuity [*i.e.*, with the Middle Ages] belongs to the Church of England; the continuity of doctrine, Church worship, and discipline belongs to the Church of Rome." There is only too great reason to fear that insistence on the continuity of the National Church in many quarters tends to minimize the Reformation and to repudiate the definite and, as we believe, irrevocable break with the past that was made in the sixteenth century. We would commend to our readers Canon Henson's paper, which we are glad to see is in pamphlet

form, for it contains a good deal of salutary truth, and very necessary for these times, on a subject of the utmost importance.

**Homer and
the Higher
Criticism.** The recent welcome appointment of Professor Gilbert Murray to the Regius Professorship of Greek at Oxford has naturally called fresh attention to his brilliant work, "The Rise of the Greek Epic," published a year or so ago. It is well known that Professor Murray believes that the Homeric poems are an evolution, the result of centuries of growth and change. He adduces the Penta-teuch in illustration of this position, and we are interested to observe that in objecting to his main theory, both the *Times* and the *Westminster Gazette* question this use of the Old Testament to support his case. The *Westminster Gazette* actually asks whether Professor Murray is justified in saying that J and E were originally pagan and polytheistic. "To use such language where he knows nothing—language so certain to give the most grievous offence—is surely a mistake." This is indeed plain speaking—"where he knows nothing." And in the same way the *Times*, while questioning whether Mr. Murray has done his case any good by his use of the Old Testament, adds the following :

"But is one entitled to assume the positions of Biblical criticism? Certainly no Biblical scholar can be invited to utilize the results of the advanced critics of Homer. When the intellectual history of the nineteenth century is written, these parallel tendencies of erudition will call for notice. The coincidence is symptomatic of something in the human mind of the period. A further inference falls under the remark of a master in this subject: 'Analogy is very well when we argue from the known to the unknown or less known, but the resemblance of one hypothesis to another does not prove both.'"

Could anything better illustrate the way in which great scholars are seen to reveal their limitations when they travel outside their own sphere? Professor Murray has apparently accepted wholesale the modern critical theory of the Old Testament, and, as it would seem, without very much personal examination. But the words of the *Times* show how precarious is his own theory as well as that of the Old Testa-

ment, as alleged by him. Let us carefully observe the quotation made in the above extract: "Analogy is very well when we argue from the known to the unknown or less known, but the resemblance of one hypothesis to another does not prove both." The critical position of the Old Testament is even now nothing more than a hypothesis, and a hypothesis which is being seriously questioned by the new school of German eschatologists represented by Winckler, Gunkel, and others. What the *Westminster Gazette* says of Professor Murray, we make bold to say concerning the Old Testament criticism, which he uses as an illustration :

"It fails to approve itself to minds not obsessed by the particularizing critical spirit. It asserts as a fact something that stands alone in literary history. In every other country, in every other age, each great book has been the work of one great mind. We refuse to believe in these 'schools of poets.'"

When the intellectual history of the nineteenth century comes to be written, these tendencies of erudition will indeed call for notice, but it is a pretty safe prophecy that they will have only a mere historical interest. There is no permanence in them. As Dr. Orr puts it on the title-page of his valuable book, "*Nubecula est, quæ cito evanescet.*"

Three years ago the CHURCHMAN was enlarged
 About
 Ourselves. in size and in the number of its pages. We are glad to be able to announce a further enlargement of sixteen pages, commencing with the January number. There will also be added several new features, which we believe will commend themselves to our readers. We are particularly desirous of making the Magazine appeal more and more widely to the great central body of English Churchmen, clerical and lay, and to this end we venture once again to solicit the practical and hearty co-operation of our readers. A prospectus, giving particulars of the new plans, will be gladly forwarded by the publisher.