

ART. V.—WEAK POINTS IN EVANGELICAL CHURCHMANSHIP.<sup>1</sup>

THE importance of my subject is only excelled by its difficulty. For its proper handling are needed a wide knowledge, a balanced judgment, a skilful touch. I can only excuse my acceptance of your invitation by saying that the subject is one often in my thoughts, and that it is the duty of each of us to make what contribution he can to its adequate discussion. Nothing should lie nearer the heart of a convinced Evangelical than the well-being of the Evangelical body as a whole.

Now, without wishing for a moment to indulge in mere panegyric, I am assured that we have done nothing of recent years to forfeit our historic position in the Church. Our work for Christ was never more honest or more blessed. Our great societies are unequalled by those of any other Church party in number, or, I believe, in quality. In a time of grave national anxiety and financial depression their funds have shown, on the whole, an elasticity which proves, if anything can, an unshaken confidence both in our distinctive principles and in the Church that we love. The mission-field reminds us that year by year we still yield our loved and best, and that in increasing numbers. At home Evangelical truth has a hold upon the masses stronger than any other, as well as upon the middle classes of the nation. It claims the services and devotion of a large number of godly and wealthy laymen. Evangelical Churchmanship asserts itself to be the truest interpreter of the Prayer-Book, and recent judgments support that claim on certain important points of ritual. It does not seek to limit the just comprehensiveness of the National Church, but it does confidently claim historical succession to the men who reformed the Church. It believes the Establishment to be a bulwark against Rome, and Evangelical Churchmen will resist to the utmost of their power the efforts of Lord Halifax on the one hand, and of the Liberation Society on the other, to give Churchmen a so-called "liberty"—a liberty which on the lips of the one spells *incense*, and on the lips of the other *nonsense*.

Now, if all this be true, the special subject of this paper might seem superfluous. He who is conscious of perfect physical vigour keeps clear of Harley Street. But the selection of such a topic as weak points in our harness for discussion to-day indicates a suspicion, at least, that all is not right—that something needs mending, or something needs ending, for the furtherance of our best interests. If that be

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<sup>1</sup> A paper read before the Carlisle Evangelical Church Union.

the feeling of those present, I believe that it is widely shared in the country. For I am bold to contend that, given the facts just stated, a great school of thought like our own, with its assured position, its high aims, and its countless activities, should exert a commanding influence both in Church and State. In the Church it should so influence the feelings and judgment of men outside its own borders that such ritualistic excesses as the *Record* has made public should die out for lack of sympathy. In the State it should be equally impossible for an eminent Cabinet Minister to say, when the claims of the party were pressed upon him: "The Evangelical party! What is that? I never heard of it." Such a sarcasm, if not true, is at least *ben trovato*, and justifies this paper. Something *is* amiss. It is easy to say that Prime Ministers and Bishops are almost always of another colour to our own; that may explain something, but one thing it does not explain—viz., why they are so seldom of our colour; and that, after all, is the main point. It is easy to complain of lack of leadership, and to lament such names as Close, McNeil, Stowell, Ryle—that is what the British public always does when our arms suffer a reverse in the field of war; but the rights and power of a great Church party do not, in the last analysis, depend upon individuals. No, there is functional weakness somewhere in the Evangelical body, and it is our concern to discover its nature. It is not in the *heart*; that, I am persuaded, beats as strongly as ever. Shall I be thought impertinent if my diagnosis leads me to say that our weakness is principally in the *head*?

1. Yes, *lack of Theological Learning and General Culture* is one of our weakest points. I speak, of course, not of individuals. The Round Table Conference at Fulham, called by the late Bishop of London, certainly did not prove individual Evangelicals inferior to their opponents in theological learning. Should such conferences be repeated, we may look forward with equanimity to their result. Our trained scholars can do more than hold their own. But that Conference merely enforces my contention, which is that we shall not exert our proper influence for God in this realm until we produce year by year a much larger number of theological scholars and men of culture. I do not for one moment forget that the fundamental points of the Evangelical position have been secured by the most ample scholarship. Who has answered Lightfoot's "Essay on the Christian Ministry"? Moberley's answer is no answer at all, nor is Sanday's book on "New Testament Conception of Priesthood." Who has controverted Goode or Mozley on the baptismal controversy, or made any adequate reply to Vogan on the Eucharist, or to Litton's "Lectures on the Church"? Such names could be

easily multiplied, but you will find that among the ablest defenders of Evangelical truth quite a number would decline to call themselves Evangelicals. Of course, we welcome the work of such men, but why is it that so few, comparatively, are identified with our own position? One reason, I take it, is this—our characteristic neglect as a school of theological learning and culture; and one inevitable consequence is that it is not easy to find men of high University distinction to fill this post or that when vacancies occur. In an intellectual age no party in the Church that desires to be heard, or, indeed, to exist, can afford to neglect the highest theological culture. Theoretically, of course, we do not; practically, I fear we do. The High Churchmen have set us an admirable example: they have covered the country with a network of inexpensive schools and colleges. They saw long ago the importance of Oxford; for if Cambridge produces men, Oxford produces movements, and at a cost of £150,000 they have entrenched themselves in that University. All honour, I say, to their prescience and self-sacrifice! They have been amply rewarded. We, too, have made an effort. Thankfully we recall "those twins of learning," Wycliffe and Ridley Halls, at the two Universities; nor do we forget that other Hall at Highbury, linked so long with the names of Drs. Boulton and Waller; but I maintain that we need as a party a general movement in favour of higher theological training, and if we do not make it, History, that unfailing mentor, tells us that our work and influence must surely die. I had written these words when I noticed the following utterance by Dr. Moule, Bishop of Durham: "I cannot conceal from myself the unwelcome fear that just at present Evangelical Churchmen are not by any means adequately remembering the call, for their own and their Church's sake, to study. Have we at present much reason to anticipate that the next few years will see as much production as we urgently need of the sort of literature, books, and articles which can only spring from a generation of Evangelical men at once spiritually minded and accurately studious? We need greatly the multiplications of well-equipped students and writers—not setting, but rising, sons. We need young men of thought and reading, who shall undertake, from many sides, the hopeful, fruitful, elevating task of restating for our present day, and so as to catch the modern ear, the true history of our Reformed Church position, and the mighty spiritual principles, unalterable as truth itself, without which the Reformation could not have been."

I think I may claim this weighty utterance by the late Norrisian Professor as an ample vindication of the position taken in this paper. But such a movement cannot be in-

augurated by the foundation of a theological hall here or there. It must begin higher up the stream ; it must begin where the Roman Church has taught us—nay, where Scripture itself insists all such movements are inaugurated—with the young. We need more systematic training of our boys and girls. Let them be early taught the great foundation truths of the Person and work of Christ. The elements of dogmatic theology may be imparted simply, and should be instilled before school-life begins. Again and again I have been scandalized by the ignorance of Confirmation candidates coming from Christian homes of good degree. Candidates for the mission-field are often deplorably ignorant ; their zeal and love are burning bright, but the theological light in them is too often darkness. The list of books that they claim to have read is often pitiable in its scant and ill-balanced proportions. This happens too often to be accidental ; it points to an almost systematic neglect on the part of the Evangelical clergy in the proper training of their young people. Let them be taught early the great distinctive doctrines of our Church—I say distinctive, for if she has none, her separation from Rome is simply schism. Let these be taught in positive form. Has not a vast amount of our teaching been simply a series of negations ? Yet all experience teaches that the surest way to make a child a Romanist is constantly to deny in his presence the doctrines of Rome. Protestantism is not a negation of error so much as a proclamation of truth. We who teach shall do well to remember this. What God is not, what Christ is not, what the Church is not, what the Sacraments are not—these are the matters on which we have dilated far too much. The loss to Evangelical religion has been, I believe, incalculable. Negation in the presence of error is doubtless a duty, but let us see to it that (as Liddon puts it) our negations do not stand alone, but are only the inevitable corollary of a greater affirmation.

Lady Wimborne's High School for Girls at Parkstone is a step in the right direction, but it is only a step. There are many excellent private schools up and down the country where the Church teaching is thoroughly sound, but they are linked by no common system or aim ; their names are not generally known, and they are not half the power for good they might be with a little organization. The best of them should be affiliated ; some method of common examination might then be devised, a higher standard of religious teaching attained, and the continuity of their Evangelical tone secured. The material at our disposal is sufficient to alter the balance of Church parties, if we do but wisely and comprehensively avail ourselves of it.

Passing from schools to the Universities, it is true that we

have built halls, and have founded the Oxford and Cambridge Pastorates, which are both doing invaluable work for God, but we need to see to it that promising young men, better furnished in head than in pocket, can avail themselves of what we offer. Such men almost necessarily go where they can get equipped for the ministry at the least cost. It will be our wisdom to provide Exhibitions and Bursaries in more generous fashion—in a word, we must use every legitimate means to secure a superior Evangelical ministry and laity; our future depends upon it. My space forbids me to touch upon more than sacred learning, but I do not forget the wider culture of *literæ humaniores*, and its importance in this twentieth century. It too often happens that if a man has taken a poor degree, or none at all, he thinks it is useless for him to read, forgetting that his powers of thought may mature with later years, and that it is possible for him so to spend his spare time, or so to make time if he has none to spare, as to become recognised for his wide reading, and possibly for his scholarship, before he is old. I will merely add that in the case of us clergy, such study is part of our ordination vow, and that it brings its own reward. Theology is the greatest of all sciences, for it is the science of God.

2. I pass to another weak place in our harness—viz., *lack of Diocesan interest and action*. As a party we stand aloof from matters diocesan, and there is some excuse for our aloofness. The genius of the Evangelicals has never cared for the trammels of diocesan organization; nor is it unfair to say that seven out of ten of our Diocesan Bishops are surrounded by an impenetrable phalanx of High Churchmen. Their sympathies are with these men; their best appointments are for them. The diocesan societies are placed in their hands, and the average Evangelical stands aside, and denounces the unfairness of episcopal patronage. Now before doing so, would he not do well—at any rate in some dioceses—to ask whether the fault is not largely his own? So far as such abstention is a policy, I hold it to be in the highest degree impolitic. “Out of sight, out of mind,” is as true in things diocesan as in any other. Bishops have a good deal of human nature still left in them, and if one of the two great parties is uniformly absent from their counsels and the other uniformly present, it is not difficult to forecast the future. We greatly need to remember that while individualism is our strength, its exaggeration is our weakness. And we do exaggerate it. The result is distrust; sometimes distrust of each other, almost always distrust of diocesan organization; and this is to our own loss, and the loss of the diocese also. What have we got to be ashamed of? Our principles are Church principles. We say, and we mean it, that we will

gladly be tested in doctrine and practice by the Prayer-Book and Articles, we hold that it is vital to our Church that our principles should be widely propagated, and yet from matters diocesan we shrink back and leave everything in other hands! I am sure that this must be changed. We need a forward movement, a constructive policy, more of a give-and-take spirit in all questions that are not vital, and to make it felt that we are prepared to take our due share in the work of the diocese. I am asked for remedies. Well, the Diocesan Conference is open to us and the Ruridecanal Chapter. Let us use them. Let us beware of simply controversial speeches. Why in the world should Evangelicalism, the most positive position possible, be identified in men's minds as the mere negation of all that is not Evangelical? Organization is needed: what a little organization of late years has undoubtedly achieved at the Church Congress may well show us how to be better represented in our respective diocesan gatherings. The diocesan societies should not be boycotted as they too often are. We have a duty towards them. I know very well the difficulty that many of my brethren feel in supporting funds that are shared by churches and parishes where illegalities are flagrant; it is a question of conscience with them. I, too, feel the difficulty; but I have, I believe, discharged my duty in respectfully remonstrating with my own diocesan on the subject. If the committees of these societies fail in their administration, I conceive that my duty to the societies themselves continues so long as I am beneficed in the diocese, and year by year I ask my congregation to help them. The response is small. This is, after all, a layman's question; the laity will not support such societies largely. That is their matter, but it is mine to invite their support. If I did not do so, I confess that I should not have the face to ask such societies for aid if I needed it. I know of Evangelical parishes that are kept afloat by diocesan societies of the kind I indicate, and yet the Evangelicals in the neighbourhood almost to a man refuse to contribute a penny. There is something amiss here. To put the matter on the lowest ground, it is only those who support these organizations who can expect a voice in their management. A policy of mere abstention is, I believe, wrong in itself and hurtful in its results. The subject is one that will, I hope, be amply discussed. My own limits compel me now to pass to a third and last defect, and that is in our teaching.

3. *The doctrine of God the Holy Spirit needs a larger place in many of our pulpits.* Such a statement may well seem to savour of presumption, but it is made in no presumptuous spirit. My recollection of sermons as a young man does not induce me to modify it. Nowadays I less often

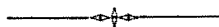
have the good fortune to be a listener to sermons, but as I go about I often listen to Christian men and women in conversation upon spiritual things, and the complaint is constant: "Our vicar seldom preaches on the subject." The great Convention movement that takes its name from Keswick is a witness to this lack. Every year thousands of our keenest Church-folk migrate to Keswick and other centres, simply to hear how the Spirit of God can meet their deepest needs of sin and temper, enable them to cast off old habits of sin, and to walk so as to please God. They ought to hear more of this at home. There is no special blessing connected with Keswick, no blessing that any incumbent here may not have in his own parish. Some may dislike what they term "Keswick teaching"; they can do no greater service to the leaders of that movement than by pointing out where it is unscriptural. But my business here is not to defend Keswick, but simply to point to the fact that there is a widespread hunger after some deeper teaching than we usually give our people. And this, mark you, is coincident with an increasing worldliness in other quarters. The Bishop of Rochester said the other day that he feared religion in this country was on an ebb-tide. From two sides, then, we have an urgent call for more teaching on the Person and offices of the Holy Spirit. I might add to this and say that, from quite another side, comes the call—I mean from the High Churchmen themselves. Their sacramental system has for its supreme object the conveyance of spiritual blessing from God to man; it is the expression of a devout longing for a life that conquers sin and glorifies God, yet it brings to their most thoughtful and earnest men a keen disappointment which they sometimes confess. They maintain strongly their theory of Baptismal Regeneration, and yet, in spite of the inexhaustible fertility of the font, they have to mourn over multitudes sunk in sin, on whose brows glistens the sign of the Cross. They teach the doctrine of the Real Presence, but their churches are too often worldly and of little spiritual influence, and they feel it and mourn over it. Now without for a moment claiming that the Evangelical body has any monopoly whatever of God's truth (though we sometimes talk as if we had!), it is impossible but that our influence is felt by High Churchmen, as theirs is undoubtedly by us. I believe that we have been largely instrumental in upholding the doctrine of God the Son, especially in His work of Atonement; the effect of that doctrine has been felt far beyond our own borders—numbers of High Churchmen would frankly allow the source of their illumination. But then they overlay their teaching. Their sacramental doctrine nullifies in many cases their preaching of the Cross, and it does seem to me that first for our own

sakes and then for the sake of the Church generally, we should do well to preach far more urgently the Person, the offices and the work of the Holy Spirit of God. As I laid down my pen at this point for a moment, I lighted on words by the late Dr. Westcott much to the purpose. Speaking at Cambridge some time ago, he said: "What we need for the fullness of our spiritual life—and the need is urgent and growing—is that the apostolic idea of discipleship should be restored. We cannot find rest until all Christians can be addressed as saints—men wholly consecrated to God—and till all alike who confess the faith are recognised as charged with spiritual duties towards the whole body to which they belong." "Thirty years ago," he added, "Bishop Thirlwell, a man far removed from any false sentiment or mysticism, said in his last sermon before the University of Cambridge (Whitsunday, 1869): 'The great intellectual and religious struggle of our day turns mainly on the question whether there is a Holy Ghost.'"

Yet we are living in the dispensation of the Spirit, of Him whom Tertullian calls the Vicar of Christ. Can any topic be more worthy of our pulpits, any subject more important for our private study? Our strength lies not in a poor imitation of others' ritual, nor even in a more elaborate organization, but in a closer personal and practical knowledge of the free Spirit of God. For this we need deeper study of our New Testament, greater application in prayer, fuller obedience to His Divine motions, richer experience of the riches of His grace.

Then the old Scriptures will burn in our hearts, and the old message will be in new power in pulpit and pew. Then there will be an atmosphere about our lives that men will recognise as the breath of the kingdom of God. Our beloved Church will share its gracious influence, Church Defence Societies will become of less account, for will not men say of her, "Destroy her not, for a blessing is in her"?

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#### ART. VI.—THE CURE FOR ANARCHISM.

THE familiar reading of St. John's great words in the Authorized Version, "Sin is the transgression of the law," does not convey his full meaning. The term *lawlessness* is almost an exact reproduction of the thought contained in the word which he uses. Lawlessness is the disposition towards God's appointed order of which actual transgression of the law is the result. Sin consists, says the Apostle, not only, or first, in deeds which violate the law, but in a spirit and attitude of