

GOOD FRIDAY.

THE MIND OF CHRIST.

BACK to the depths beyond the birth of days,
 Ere the world was, and earth's created things,
 Faith flies on reverent Fancy's eager wings;
 And marks heaven's glassy sea with mirrored rays
 (Where the great throne of God in glory stays),
 Stirred as by warning breeze or bursting springs,
 When turned to man, with sympathy's far gaze,
 The loving mind of the blest King of kings.
 From that eternal moment, ever near
 And nearer drew that strange entrancing fear;
 The lowly birth, life's emptying, glory's loss,
 Gethsemane, the Passion, and the Cross!
 To-day He reached, touched, passed the solemn goal.
 And He shall see the travail of His soul!

A. E. M.



The Month.

THE question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister has again been forced upon the attention of Church people. The passage of the Bill through Parliament, if facilities could be obtained for it, is perhaps certain; but that should not keep Churchmen from using all fair methods of opposition as in times past. Recent circumstances have very gravely increased the danger of it being carried into law. The fact that such unions are permitted in some of the Colonies will be increasingly employed as an argument for legalizing them here at home. It is the kind of argument likely just now to weigh heavily with many persons who have no very deep convictions upon the subject. Yet it scarcely seems possible that a change so grave as that of altering our law of marriage should be made in the partial and fragmentary manner contemplated by the present Bill. If Parliament is to attack the question, it should do so at the bidding of responsible ministers, fully, comprehensively, and without regard to personal aspirations or individual anxiety. It is too grave a matter to rest with a private Member, or merely to be tinkered at. Nothing is so likely to inform the people of the country of the true aspects of this controversy as an attempt wholly to reconstruct the marriage laws. The consideration of the subject in the York Convocation Upper House was marked by a discussion which showed that the Bishops are not quite at one in their way of looking at the question.

The session of Canterbury and York Convocations passed over without much work of real importance being done. The Convocations—so far at least as their public proceedings showed—were without any definite information as to the Education proposals of the Government, although it is probable that their members had, like other people, heard some disturbing statements foreshadowing a measure of disappointment. The Southern House of Laymen again usefully considered the question of the lay franchise. No doubt the attainment of the conditions which would create the necessity for a lay franchise is some way ahead, but the time spent on the discussion of the subject is by no means wasted. Some day the franchise will be a reality, and its conditions are surrounded by so many difficulties that it would be the height of folly to defer the consideration of the subject until the day of privilege (or of need) actually arrives. The general tendency of all discussion of the subject is already far more useful than was at first the case.

The objections raised by the Church Association and other Protestant organizations to the confirmation of the Bishop-elect of Worcester (Dr. Gore) resulted in clearing up the doubt which had so long hung over the ceremony. Once more these agencies have rendered real service to the Church by obtaining definite statements of the law. As a matter of fact, few persons who had read the Statute of King Henry VIII. which rules the subject had much doubt as to which way the decision of the Court would go. The case for the objectors was very learnedly and ably put, but in the face of the Statute it was hardly to be expected that the objectors would succeed. It will probably be agreed, however, that so long as there was any doubt as to the right of objectors to appear and be heard, it was just and fitting that they should appear and make their claims. So far as evangelical and moderate Churchmen are concerned, the constitutional principle laid down by the Court is not one to which they gravely object. Some aspects of the position created are discussed by a contributor in the present number of the CHURCHMAN; but there is, on the whole, a disposition to think that the force of public opinion will always be strong enough to avert anything like grave public scandal in the exercise of the Crown's authority. In regard to this it may be useful to cite the reference of the Lord Chief Justice, in his judgment, to this plea. He said: "We have nothing to do in this application with any question of the refusal or unwillingness on the part of an Archbishop executing his high office to refuse to confirm or consecrate; the Archbishop would do so upon his own responsibility, and incurring the risk of *præmunire* contemplated by the statute. No question was or could be raised before us upon the argument of these rules as to the consequences of such an act. I mention this because, both in the argument in Bishop Hampden's case and in the argument before us, what appeared to me to be extravagant suggestions were made of the Archbishop being compelled to confirm as Bishop a man who was not a priest in Holy Orders, a person under the age of thirty, a Jew or Turk, a pronounced infidel, or one having some other obvious disqualifications; and there is a strong passage in the judgment of Mr. Justice Coleridge, page 604 in 11 Queen's Bench, and page 405 in Jebb to the same effect. We are not dealing with any such case, and, in my opinion, these considerations do not assist us. We have only to read the history of the last hundred and fifty years, or of our own time, to know that the choice of persons to fill the high office of a Bishop is a matter of most anxious consideration by the Crown, and that advice is given by those who are most competent to guide in the election of fit persons."

After devoting two afternoons to a full discussion of the subject, the Council of the Church Association decided not to appeal against the judgment of the Court. This decision had been very widely anticipated, and will approve itself to the Church at large.

The annual attack on the Church in Wales was made in the House of Commons this year under circumstances which enabled it to escape with defeat by only a modest majority. But the figures were of no real significance. Mr. Asquith resumed his connection with the subject, but neither he nor any of the speakers had any novelty to urge. It is still true that the proposal to disestablish the four Welsh dioceses is wholly illogical, without support in history, and without excuse in the face of the industry and zeal of the Church to-day. It is usefully pointed out by the *National Church* for February that modern progress in the four Welsh dioceses has been of a very distinct character: "The provision for public worship increased from 423,000 sittings in 1895 to 456,000 in 1900. Communicants rose from 129,000 to 137,000 in the same period, whilst in the five years ending 1900 the Church in Wales raised over £1,290,000 for religious purposes, exclusive of a large amount for hospitals and other philanthropic objects, and in addition to a very considerable aggregate sum composed of individual contributions sent direct by Welsh Churchmen to Central Church Funds, and therefore not included in parochial or diocesan accounts." The organ of the Church Committee for Church Defence and Church Instruction is, however, amply justified in reminding us that the debate and division should severely discourage the complacency into which some Churchmen seem disposed again to fall: "As the leaders of the Imperialist Radicals, no less than those of the Irish Nationalists, together with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and his supporters, all voted in favour of the Disestablishment resolution, it would appear that an attack on the Church unites all sections of the present Opposition. A leading Churchman, speaking at a recent Church Extension meeting in the Diocese of Lichfield, concluded his remarks by saying: 'They used to hear a great deal about the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, but now it was dormant, and they might even hope it was extinguished for ever.' The resolution and division in the House of Commons last week must have given a shock to the easy optimism of this gentleman and that of so many other Churchmen and women all over the country. We trust that this feeling has now been shaken, and will soon be entirely dispelled."

The first set of statistics from the forthcoming Year-Book of the Church—those dealing with the voluntary contributions of the Church—reach us too late for adequate discussion in this number. The net result is a gain of about £8,000 on a total reaching nearly £8,000,000. This time the items showing a loss exceed those in which there is a gain. We shall return to the subject when the other tables of statistics are available. In the meantime there is already ground for the protest of the *Record* against the loose way in which the figures of this and other Year-Book returns are used by some Church authorities:—"We honestly believe that in many cases it is because people have not the figures of previous years at hand; but, whatever the cause, the result is the same. People are led to believe that the condition of their Church is very much better than it is, and they act accordingly. It is to be hoped that we shall use our knowledge with more candour, and wrench ourselves free from the tendency to self-deception. The returns give an infinity of trouble to hard-worked clergy, and the cost of the Year-Book must be a heavy strain on the S.P.C.K. If the facts are worth gathering, worth all the labour of

digesting and arranging, and worth the money spent upon them, surely they are also worth the care necessary to their intelligent comprehension and their fair presentation to the minds of others."

There have been no striking developments of the Ritual Controversy of late. It is said with some show of authority that the Bishop of London has personally visited all the churches in his diocese in which reservation is practised, and has "regulated" the custom. It is also understood that the Bishop of Rochester has had some success in dealing with those of his clergy who used extreme practices, and that only one incumbent has wholly refused obedience. At the same time it must be confessed that the position is still so bad as to be almost intolerable. A book compiled for the use of Members of Parliament, and privately printed by the Rev. the Hon. W. E. Bowen, shows by a mass of fresh evidence that within a few miles of the Palace of Westminster the most painful irregularities still prevail, whilst a selection of passages from Ritualistic manuals is equally eloquent as to the doctrines taught at such churches. In some quarters there is a growing conviction that the little band of irreconcilables must before long either join the Church of Rome in a body or found a little schism of their own. One of the Bishops most likely to know something of their temper thinks that the latter alternative is the more likely to be accepted by them. In the interests of the English Church the crisis and its solution cannot come too soon.

The month of February is one in which there is always much talk as to the finances of the great societies. Those which complete their year with December can then say how they stand, and those which end it with March 31 are getting more or less anxious as to the result. There is too much reason to fear that we are face to face all around us with lowered incomes. The C.P.A.S. has received a gift of £10,000 for special work, and the A.C.S. is raising a second Quinquennial Fund of £10,000; but both Societies want a larger annual income. It is always dangerous to forecast the income of the C.M.S., but at least it is safe to say that the Society has so jealously guarded its expenditure that something will be gained that way. The societies which more especially minister to the needs of London have suffered a good deal, and denominational agencies have their sorrows no less than those of the Church. In the meantime the work of raising some large sums of money—such as that for the Peache Memorial in connection with St. John's Hill, Highbury, and the fund for the new premises of the Home and Colonial Training College—goes steadily on.

Reviews.

DEAN SPENCE ON EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM.

Early Christianity and Paganism. By the Very Rev. H. D. M. SPENCE, D.D., Dean of Gloucester. London: Cassell and Co., 21s.

Dean Spence is one of those writers whose happy task it is to popularize historical records which might otherwise obtain but little recognition from the general reader. It is a task for which his method and his picturesque style are well adapted, and it is a task which he appears to discharge with real enjoyment. His new book is just the kind of work which men and women, who revolt from Church history, as