

The Month.

THE health of the King, to the profound satisfaction of his subjects appears to be completely re-established. Immediately after the Coronation His Majesty was able to perform some important public functions, gratifying the Indian and Colonial forces who had been brought to this country for the occasion by personally reviewing them and distributing decorations among them. Since then he has consolidated his recovery by sailing in his yacht round the western shores of England and Scotland, and has given great gratification in various places, particularly in the Isle of Man, by landing and visiting the people. We may now have the happiness of regarding the life of the nation and the Empire as having resumed its regular course, with enhanced affection and confidence towards the King, whose suffering and recovery have been followed by all his subjects with deep sympathy and thankfulness. If, as is stated in some quarters, the King and Queen intend, after a procession through London, to attend a solemn service of thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey, they will unite their people with them once more by the strongest of all bonds—that of religious devotion. There is nothing so calculated to unite Sovereign and people as the sympathy in prayer and thanksgiving evoked by such solemn services.

The discussion on the Education Bill seems, unhappily, to become more embittered as it proceeds. The Nonconformists as a body, though there seem to be some honourable exceptions, are making it the occasion for a great rally of the Liberal party, and are denouncing it in language of extraordinary, if not absurd, exaggeration. When a man like Sir Joseph Pease can describe it as an attempt to revive the system of Archbishop Laud, one can only say that the opponents of the Bill must have lost their heads. As the Bishop of Rochester observed, this is “a strange description of a Bill which, dealing with schools that have hitherto been in numbers of cases conducted by clergy only, provides that henceforth they shall be managed by boards on which the clergyman’s rule must be qualified by the votes of three of his laity . . . and invigilated, to use the mildest word, by two representatives of public authority, one of whom may very possibly be the Nonconformist minister.” If the matter rested only with Parliament, these exaggerations would do the Nonconformist cause no good. But there are some indications that the constituencies may be inflamed by them, as in the recent election in the Sevenoaks Division of Kent, where the majority of a member of the Government who had to seek re-election was very ominously reduced. Dr. Joseph Parker, with characteristic violence of phrase, has declared in the *Daily News* that “the Bill is bad from beginning to end; its spirit is malicious and its aims are unpatriotic. Liberals now see this; hence their sane madness and their determination not to rest until this

priests' Bill has been handed over to the common hangman." In the face of an opposition of this character, the Government would be inconceivably weak if it did not stand firm on all the essential points of the Bill, and Churchmen would be extremely unwise and shortsighted not to suppress their minor differences of opinion and give the Ministry their cordial support. The Nonconformists have made it plain that their opposition is not based on questions of education alone, or even in the first instance. How they can be sincere in supposing that the Bill will strengthen the power of the Clergy, it is very difficult to understand. There are clergymen who doubt whether it will be worth while to retain their schools when the Bill has become law. But, at all events, it is clear that the Nonconformists are using the Bill as an opportunity for an assault on the position which the Church at present holds in national education, and it is announced that the Liberation Society will make this assault the starting-point of a new campaign. Against such a temper concessions are not likely to be of much avail, and the withdrawal or defeat of the Bill in such circumstances could not but be most injurious to the influence of the Church. Meanwhile, the Bishop of Worcester has done good service by directing the attention of Churchmen to two points—first, that these disputes would not arise, or would be over-ridden, if the heart of the people were really set on education for its own sake, if its importance were generally and adequately recognised; and, secondly, that the one thing on which the Church must insist is that it shall have the opportunity of training the children of the Church in accordance with the Church's methods and principles. It is for the Government, as the Bishop observed, to say how this is to be done; but "in one way or another, in a better way or a less efficient way, but in all circumstances, in each generation and time, there was the primary and indestructible duty of the Church to see to it that the children belonging to it were brought up to understand the meaning of the Christian religion in that ancient form in which the rudiments of the Christian faith had been fixed for all time." He added that, "desiring freedom for themselves, they further desired precisely the same freedom and liberty for all other religious bodies; and they further desired that inasmuch as the religious bodies were not all of them able, nor any of them fully able, to do this, the State should step in and supply the deficiency of religious education in a manner that could not be logical or satisfactory, but which was better than nothing." In other words, the Cowper-Temple clause is the only alternative where the religious bodies cannot themselves give the religious instruction. But no legislation can be acquiesced in by Churchmen which would impose anything like that clause as a sort of general Act of Uniformity. Dr. Guinness Rogers has repudiated any such intention on the part of Nonconformists, and the Bishop of Rochester has opportunely replied that if in that repudiation Dr. Rogers really speaks for the Nonconformists generally, the way is open for a compromise. But it cannot be said that at present there is any hope of such a result.

The Church Congress which is to be held next month promises some very interesting discussions; but deep sympathy will be felt with the Bishop of Peterborough in his enforced absence, and it will be a great disappointment to the members that his voice cannot be heard among them. The position of the Church is at the present moment a critical one in several respects. Questions of the greatest gravity in doctrine, in Biblical criticism, in discipline, and in education, have assumed a very urgent character, and will require the greatest wisdom and patience. All can pray, and ought to pray very earnestly, that this wisdom and patience may be granted to those who have to deal with such questions; and if they are approached in a spirit of charity, we may be sure that none of them are incapable of peaceful solution.

Reviews.

Dictionary of the Bible. Vol. iv. (completing the work). Edited by the Rev. J. HASTINGS, D.D. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

Encyclopædia Biblica: A Critical Dictionary, etc., of the Bible. Vol. iii. (L-P). Edited by the Rev. T. K. CHEYNE, D.D., and J. S. BLACK, LL.D. Adam and Charles Black: 1902.

OUR first duty is to congratulate the editor and publishers of the "Dictionary of the Bible" on bringing a noteworthy piece of work to a successful conclusion. The first volume of Dr. Hastings' "Dictionary" made its appearance in the spring of 1898, and the concluding volume has only recently been published. That a work comprising nearly 4,000 closely-printed pages, and contributed to by a number of divines, both English and foreign, should have taken but four years to see through the press is a tribute in itself to the laborious care that has been expended over it by editors, publishers, printers, and contributors alike. For it is to be remembered that the sheets of the work have not been allowed to be printed off and then lie by for months or years, as the case might be; in the majority of instances it will be found that the various articles have been so scrupulously edited as to be, in the best sense, "up-to-date"; the bibliographies—a sure test of the accuracy of a work of this kind—are, as a rule, thorough and complete, and the latest and best editions of the works of reference named in the articles are always, or nearly always, those utilized.

We have already, on three separate occasions, spoken of the methods adopted by the editor-in-chief in rendering the "Dictionary" an indispensable work of reference for all those interested in Biblical studies. There is, therefore, no need here to enter into particulars. The merits of Dr. Hastings' work are widely recognised; and, in general, the sobriety of the