

THE CHURCHMAN.

JANUARY, 1906.

The Month.

WITH this number the CHURCHMAN opens a new and enlarged series, and we venture to appeal to our old friends, and all others into whose hands this number may come, to give us the benefit of their hearty cooperation in extending its circulation, and thereby widening the influence of the teaching for which the CHURCHMAN stands. We make our appeal to that great central body of Church people who hold firmly by the fundamental Divine realities of Christianity which are enshrined in our Prayer-Book. Our Churchmanship is that set forth in the Prayer-Book and Articles and interpreted in the light of the Reformation Settlement. It is our desire to discuss everything that can in any true sense be regarded as affecting the interests of the Church of England, and it is our determination to make these pages as representative as possible of "all sober, peaceful, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England." We need not repeat what has already been said in our circular of announcements for 1906, but will simply content ourselves by again appealing to all our readers to do their best to make this year the most successful in the history of this magazine.

At the opening of the year the inevitable question recurs, What will it bring to ourselves and the Church? The change of Government may mean very much. We do not consider there is any likelihood of Disestablishment coming up for discussion in any shape or form, though, if it should arise, we have the adequate safeguard of the House of Lords, which can be trusted to prevent any action being taken until the country has declared its will and given its mandate.

on the other hand, very different Churchmen, of whom Mr. Llewelyn Davies is a noteworthy example, regard the Council as a mere debating society with no power. Mr. Llewelyn Davies fears that it will be used as "a stalking horse for those who desire to retain anarchy in the Church, and refuse obedience to the only existing coercive laws." There is much truth in his contention, and yet in our judgment it is no reason for not forming such a Council. The day must come, and it may come soon, when the Church will be called to the onerous task of self-government, and it will be a great point gained if it already has some body which will form the nucleus of a thoroughly Representative Council. It is perfectly true that at present it is not, and cannot be, strictly representative, but it is at least a step in the direction of a much-needed Church reform. We do not suppose for a moment that Parliament will surrender any of its powers over the Church while the Church remains established; but in view of possible, some would say probable, events, it will be of immense service to have this Representative Church Council, by means of which the great questions of reform in Church government and greater elasticity in the working of the Church can be brought to a successful issue. It is no doubt possible to criticise the new body on various grounds, but with all its weaknesses and limitations we welcome it in the best interests of our Church.

The
Athanasian
Creed.

A few weeks ago a protest of 1,300 lay communicants in the diocese of Birmingham was made against any kind of change in regard to the use of the Athanasian Creed in the public services of the Church. The Bishop of Birmingham has now replied to the memorial, and has summed up his own position and that of many others by saying that

our present use of the Athanasian Creed in place of the Apostles' Creed at Matins on great festivals, irritates so many good people, and causes so much misunderstanding, that it does, as a matter of fact, more harm than good to the cause of doctrinal truth which it is intended to serve.

In these words Dr. Gore aptly puts the case of those who, while firmly adhering to the doctrinal position of the Creed, desire some change in its public use. There is no difference whatever, as the Bishop rightly urges, as to "the real nature of our moral responsibility for receiving the faith. The controversy is only about the mode of expressing this responsibility." Very many Churchmen would welcome some proposal by which this question could be settled to the satisfaction of all, and it seems to us that the Bishop of Liverpool in again urging the method of the Irish Church points the way in the right direction.

We extend a hearty welcome to the new weekly "The Layman," paper, the *Layman*, which has just appeared. As the names of the Hon. and Rev. W. E. Bowen and Mr. H. C. Hogan, a well-known Church journalist, have been associated with the venture, the general position of the paper can be readily understood. It will seek to express the views of the laity on all questions affecting the Church of England, and, judging by its first two numbers, it will do so in a very fresh and vigorous way. For an answer to the question, "What are the Laity?" the new paper adopts Dr. Arnold's view, "The Church minus the Clergy." On questions of Church Reform the *Layman* will "trust to Crown rather than to Bishops, Parliament rather than Convocation and Houses of Laymen." Undeterred by recent failures, the *Layman* comes out as a threepenny weekly, and we wish it God-speed in its endeavour to give voice to those lay opinions which, after all, will go far to decide the true policy of the Church of England.

Are Churchmen Book-buyers? In the course of a recent address at Cambridge, Dr. Robertson Nicoll gave expression to the opinion that the "book-buying public is the Nonconformist public, and a book published by a Nonconformist has a far better chance of sale than a book published by a Churchman." The important position occupied by Dr. Nicoll in the world of books gives great weight to any opinion of his, and we call attention to it for the purpose of inquiring whether Churchmen

consider it to be true. It carries with it the obvious inference that the Nonconformist public rather than the Church public is the book-reading as well as the book-buying public, and, if this be true, it bodes evil and not good for the Church. Whether Dr. Nicoll's words are true or not, the question of reading is one of the greatest importance both to clergy and laity. If a clergyman does not go on reading, his own intellectual and spiritual life will soon suffer, and his personal and pastoral influence will become seriously weakened. In the same way, the layman who gives himself entirely to matters of business and does not foster his intellectual life will find himself impoverished as the years go on. Books are an absolute necessity to every growing life, and that man is to be pitied who does not continually feed his intellectual and moral nature by means of the best books, both ancient and modern.

Conventional Criticism. In Dr. Sanday's new book on the Fourth Gospel the following comment occurs :

The truth is that criticism of the Fourth Gospel on the liberal side has become largely conventional; one writer after another repeats certain stereotyped formulæ without testing them. It is high time that they were really tested and confronted with the facts.

These words seem to us to permit of a much wider application than to the Fourth Gospel. May we not use them with reference to very much criticism of the Old Testament? We are often met with an apparently formidable array of critics of the Old Testament, and are urged to their conclusions by being told that all critics are agreed on the main results of the discussion. We believe that much of this criticism also is "largely conventional; one writer after another repeats certain stereotyped formulæ without testing them." We heartily endorse, with reference to the Old Testament, Dr. Sanday's words that "it is high time that they were really tested and confronted with facts." We believe that "facts" are all against the supposed "assured results" of modern Old Testament criticism.

