

THE CHURCHMAN.

FEBRUARY, 1906.

The Month.

WRITING at the close of the first week of the **The General Election.** Election, it is abundantly evident that the Liberals will go to Parliament with a very large majority, and one entirely independent of the Irish members. This latter fact will doubtless be welcomed by both parties alike, for it has always proved eminently unsatisfactory for either Conservatives or Liberals to be in any sense dependent on the Irish party. We have had instances of this dangerous combination in the late Parliament, as well as in the days of Gladstonian Home Rule. Into the general questions involved in this remarkable change, or rather revulsion, of political opinion it is not our intention or our province to enter. In these columns we are concerned only with the effect of the General Election on questions connected with the Church. And first of all it will probably be admitted by all that the constituencies have given no mandate for Disestablishment, whether of the Welsh dioceses or of the Church of England as a whole, and while Welsh members will doubtless press their claims and endeavour to sever the four Welsh dioceses from the English Church, we have no fear so far as this Parliament is concerned. Even if a measure for Welsh Disestablishment should pass the House of Commons, there is no doubt that the House of Lords would reject a Bill sent up under such circumstances, and then the country would be called upon to decide the issue. We see no signs at present that the question of Welsh Disestablishment will be allowed consideration apart from the larger and infinitely greater issue of the Disestablishment of the English Church.

The four Welsh dioceses are so essentially an integral part of the Church of England that we question whether the country will ever consent to so impossible and intolerable a measure. We say this in full recollection of Mr. Gladstone's Suspensory Bill, and we do not believe that even the boldest Liberal Government will attempt the dismemberment of the Church in this piecemeal fashion. If, however, they should do so, the whole of England will come to the rescue and prevent the realization of so flagrant and cowardly a proposal. Let the issue of Disestablishment, if it is to come, be placed squarely before the whole people, and then we shall know where we are.

If, however, the Liberals have received no
The Education mandate from the country on the question of
Question. Disestablishment, it is perfectly certain that the
 Education Act has had a very considerable effect on the results of the Election. There seems to be abundant proof that all over the country Education has been one of the main issues, and in some places scarcely second to that of Free Trade. And now, paradoxical though it may seem, it remains with Churchmen to say what the settlement is to be. We have given careful attention to every Episcopal and other prominent utterance of the past month in order to discover some clear guidance for Churchmen. The Archbishops do not seem to have made any pronouncement, but a number of the Bishops have spoken, though with decidedly different and even differing voices. What, then, are Churchmen to do? From one quarter we are urged to fight for the retention of full control over Church Schools and for full denominational instruction; from another direction we receive advice to contend for simple Bible-teaching; and from yet another source we are threatened with the danger of a complete severance of the religious and secular in education. Those who advise the first course appear to us to ignore the fundamental change brought about by the Act of 1902—namely, Rate Aid for Church Schools. With a wise prescience, Archbishop Temple spoke of “the slippery slope of Rate Aid,” and

it did not require much foresight when Rate Aid became law to anticipate the beginning of the end of full Church control of Church Schools. It is of no use suggesting any change now, but it may be permitted us to emphasize once again the superiority of State Aid over Rate Aid as a policy for Churchmen. Any counsel, therefore, which urges us to fight for full control in forgetfulness of this revolutionary change is all unconsciously advising an impossibility, and really playing into the hands of the secularists. Yet some of the voices heard from Churchmen last month seem entirely to ignore the principle of Rate Aid and all that it is already involving for Church Schools.

The True
Policy.

We absolutely decline to follow those Churchmen and statesmen who would shut us up to the alternatives of denominationalism and secularism in Education, and we make bold to say that if the day ever comes when there are secular schools in this country the blame will be at the doors of those who clamoured for all and obtained—nothing. We believe the *Spectator* and Canon Beeching have been showing the true way out of the present *impasse* in their advocacy of an agreement between Christian people as to the tenets of fundamental Christianity to be taught in Elementary Schools, each denomination being left to give its own characteristic instruction apart from the State. This solution seems to be also that of Mr. Birrell, the new Minister of Education, and Mr. Lloyd George, who, it must be frankly admitted, have signalized their accession to power and responsibility by utterances of real moderation and true statesmanship on this question. We are glad to note, on the other hand, a very great difference of tone in the *Guardian* since the results of the Election have been made known. For our part, we heartily endorse the words of the late Prebendary Allen Whitworth when he said that “if Churchmen and Dissenters cannot make up their differences the only logical solution of the difficulty will be found in a purely secular system of education.”

Nothing more truly wise or statesmanlike from the Church side of the Education Question appeared last month than the letter by Mr. C. W. Bourne, Headmaster of King's College School, in the *Guardian* of January 3, written just on the eve of the Election. We call special attention to the following extract :

A Notable
Appeal.

"The conclusions that I want to force home are, therefore, these—that there is a great body of religious teaching which can justly be described as co-denominational ; that Churchmen and Nonconformists can agree to accept this teaching in our day-schools without surrendering anything to which they justly attach importance ; that in this way we may attain to harmonious working from both sides to secure such a measure of religious teaching as shall meet the needs of all who in addition attend Sunday-schools ; that this week-day teaching will be sufficient even in the case of those who do not go to any Sunday-school to prevent their growing up as heathen ; that unless an end is put to the present quarrel between Church and Dissent the country will experience the awful calamity of secular education ; and, lastly, that unless we on our part endeavour to end the quarrel a portion at least of the responsibility for bringing about this secular education will rest on our shoulders."

This sums up the entire situation, and we venture to plead with Churchmen to unite on the policy of Bible-teaching being retained in all our Elementary Schools, subject, of course, to a conscience clause for teachers and scholars. With this granted and secured, we believe that Churchmen could agree to that financial control of the schools which is the logical and inevitable outcome of Rate Aid, while, of course, retaining possession of the school buildings. This would tend to peace and goodwill in the national life, which have been so set at nought the last three years, and would at the same time bring about the best results to the children, and in the main would be perfectly satisfactory to parents. The question of characteristic denominational as distinct from simple Christian teaching is not a real one in the schools, nor has there been any proof of a widespread demand for it on the part of the parents. Those who are most conversant with the conditions of Elementary Schools are only too well aware that parents, for the most part, are deplorably indifferent to the precise character of the religious education given to their children. It would, therefore, be a thousand

pities that for the sake of pressing an unreal and impossible demand we should imperil the Bible-teaching in the schools of the nation. So we once again ask Churchmen to face the fact brought home by this Election, and then to frame their Education policy in the light of it.

The Real
Difficulty.

It ought not to be forgotten that the main stress of Nonconformist objections to the payment of rates for Church Schools is due to their fear of Ritualism in the English Church and their abhorrence of anything approaching the characteristic teaching of Rome. We do not hesitate to say that if all the Church Schools had been Evangelical much, if not most, of the clamour of the last three years would not have been raised. Ever since the ill-starred adventures of Mr. Athelstan Riley in connection with the London School Board the Nonconformists have been on the alert. Nor is this to be wondered at, especially in one-school areas where the teaching and practices of the parish church are of an extreme type. The schools of Evangelical and Moderate Churchmen are not opposed as such by Nonconformists, but simply because they are a necessary part of the Church system. The result is that this kind of school is in danger of being dragged at the heels of extremists who will be satisfied with nothing short of complete Church control and full denominational instruction, which, as we have already pointed out, is an impossible position so long as Church Schools continue on the rates. If full control is required let such schools follow the example of St. Peter's, London Docks, and one or two others, and maintain their own affairs free from the control of the County Councils. Do not let us endanger the presence and teaching of the Bible in Elementary Schools by impossible demands. Personally, we are not afraid of any injustice being done to Church Schools if Churchmen will meet the Liberal Government in a fair spirit. The cardinal mistake of the Unionists three years ago was to initiate legislation involving the whole nation without consulting practically one-half of those

concerned. If the Liberal Government should follow this bad example, and fail to consult the Church side, or if special concessions are made to Roman Catholics, we do not hesitate to say there will be trouble, but we will only believe this when we see it. It is decidedly encouraging to notice that the *Examiner*, the organ of the Congregationalists, discusses the subject in a broad and liberal spirit, and pleads for genuine concessions with a view to peace. Meanwhile we repeat our conviction that the solution of this question virtually rests with Churchmen.

The Islington Clerical Meeting. This well-known annual gathering of Evangelical clergymen met again on January 16, with every indication of vigorous life, and with a large attendance, in spite of the exigencies of the General Election. The subject for the day was "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit," and this fundamentally important topic was ably and effectively treated from several points of view. There was no uncertain sound on the Virgin Birth of our Lord, and Mr. Hubert Brooke's fine paper on "The Relation of the Holy Spirit to the Bible" was received with every token of heartiest approval. The speakers to whom the practical side was entrusted showed themselves fully alive to the needs of the present moment, and their utterances were in the true sense "up-to-date." There was no trace of obscurantism in theology or practical affairs, but a wise conservatism of teaching was blended with an insistence on adaptability of methods. The gathering seemed to be full of promise, and it is becoming more and more a rallying-point for Evangelical Churchmen. We commend to the earnest attention of all our readers the verbatim reports which appeared in the *Record* of January 19 and 26. They will find ample food for thought and abundant suggestion for work.

Candidates for Holy Orders. To the problem of the dearth of candidates for Holy Orders it would seem there must be added that of the character and quality of many of those who are now coming forward. At two or

three extreme Anglican seminaries where it is possible for a man to receive training at a very low cost there appears every likelihood of a new and very narrow type of candidate being prepared and sent forth. Such a result cannot be healthy either for the individual or the congregation, still less for the Church at large, and we are therefore not surprised that attention is being called to this very important matter. In the *Church of England League Gazette* for January the Principals of St. John's Hall, Highbury, and St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead, urge the paramount necessity of very much more financial aid being rendered by moderate Church-people for the purpose of preparing likely candidates. Dr. Greenup and Mr. Tait put forth suggestions which call for very earnest consideration. There are already several Clerical Education Aid Societies, but their rules often limit them to particular cases, and their funds cannot be made available for the needs now contemplated. We should much like to see the National Protestant Church Union and the Church of England League take up this branch of service for the Church as a necessary and important part of their educational work. It is hardly too much to say that if Evangelical and Moderate Church-people who possess means would entrust these two societies with funds they would be used to the best possible advantage in increasing the ranks of our Church of England clergy with men of the right kind, properly trained and equipped for the work of the ministry.

The recent death of a well-known author, **Subjective Criticism.** Mr. William Sharp, has revealed the fact, guessed long ago by a few, that he was the author of the books of prose and poetry published under the name of Fiona Macleod. We notice that Dr. Robertson Nicoll is still sceptical on this point, in spite of the definite and authoritative announcement made on the subject at the time of Mr. Sharp's death. We only refer to it now in order to call attention to the following comment by Dr. Nicoll :

“ If William Sharp wrote all the books published under the name of Fiona Macleod, then the underlying principles of the Higher Criticism are more than

ever in doubt. I have always been very sceptical as to the assignment of authorship from internal evidence, and I should, if this case goes against me, be more sceptical than ever."

This pronouncement is both interesting and significant as coming from such a source. Is it not a simple fact that "the underlying principles of the Higher Criticism" are mainly based on "the assignment of authorship from internal evidence"? And is it not another fact that there is no objective standard by which to test and verify these arguments from internal evidence? The difficulty and uncertainty of this method of criticism is becoming more and more evident. As the late Dr. A. B. Davidson, himself a critic, says: "A door is opened to subjective and individual judgment, and the operation is necessarily a precarious one. . . . The effect of the criticism referred to is to cut up the writings, particularly the prophecies, into a multitude of fragments, and to introduce the greatest uncertainty into the exegesis. . . . This kind of criticism has gone to extremes in recent times, and has had the effect of discrediting the criticism which is legitimate." This testimony, from one of the leading Biblical critics of the present generation, is worth heeding.

Dr. R. F. Horton has recently published a book entitled "The Reunion of English Christendom," in which, among other things, he deals with what he calls the debt the Established Church owes to Nonconformity. He makes a very bold challenge, and one that, in our judgment, cannot stand for a moment. He calls upon Churchmen to see whether "about half of the best workers in any parish throughout the country are not Dissenters by origin." He goes on to say that "in the free and strenuous life of the non-Episcopal Churches they have acquired the grit and developed the powers which they now devote to the service of the Established Church." Dr. Horton's sweeping statement is a ludicrous instance of generalizing from particulars, and one of which we should scarcely have expected him to be guilty. He does not seem to see that even if it were true, and also so far as it is true, it might be regarded from his

point of view, not in the light of a boast, but as a reflection. Why did these people leave "the free and strenuous life" of Nonconformity? Why were they not satisfied to utilize the "grit" and "powers" in the Churches of their birth? The reference, therefore, cuts both ways. It is impossible to draw safe, still less general, conclusions from ecclesiastical changes from Dissent to the Church of England and from the Church to Dissent. Each case must be considered in the light of its circumstances. This is especially true of names such as Dr. Horton mentions—Archbishop Tait and Bishops Creighton and Hannington. There are in the Church of England to-day clergy of the most extreme type who were formerly Nonconformists. Indeed, it is a frequent experience that the strongest Dissenters often make the most pronounced Anglicans. What does Dr. Horton argue from this fact? Is it to the credit or discredit of Nonconformity? Then, on the other hand, there are Nonconformists to-day who were formerly Churchmen, many of them originally driven out of their parish by Ritualism, and these also, we suppose, Dr. Horton would claim as proofs of the advantages of Dissent. It is, however, quite impossible for him to claim advantages both ways. All this goes to show that the question of the reunion of English Christendom is likely to be hindered rather than furthered by arguments of this sort. The great problem must be faced in a very different spirit, and solved by very different means.

It is not infrequently argued by a certain school of Churchmen that their Ritual is not

Sincerity and
Truth.

Roman but Sarum, and therefore English, and on this supposed difference they base their claim to be Catholics as distinct from Roman Catholics. In the January number of the *Church Union Gazette*, the organ of the English Church Union, Provost Ball, in arguing against the slavish following of all merely medieval ceremonial, tells the following story with reference to the Sarum use:

"A friend, who was somewhat inclined in its favour, said, in answer to the reasons I urged against it: 'All very true; but then it affords such an

excellent means of potting the Protestants. In A. (naming a town) there is St. B., where they use Roman ritual, and St. C., where they have the old English use. D., the Vicar of St. C., says to Protestant objectors: "I don't wonder you object to the ritual at St. B.—it's Roman; I object to it as much as you do. Come to us; we have nothing but genuine English usages." And he gets them to High Mass.'"

Provost Ball may well ask whether this was quite candid, and what would have happened if the Protestant objector had been told the whole truth. It is a curious fact, explain it how we will, that extreme Anglican views are not infrequently associated with an attitude that is, to put it mildly, somewhat disingenuous. Is there anything in the so-called Catholic system that ministers to this spirit? We have read of casuistry in the Roman Church. Is this an essential feature of certain types of Anglo-Catholicism as well as of Roman Catholicism? Provost Ball's remarks and protests would almost lead us to think so.



Christianity and the Supernatural.—II.

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF CLOGHER.

WE have seen that Christianity is essentially a supernatural religion—that it is the most supernatural of all religions. We have also seen that there is no contradiction between the natural and the supernatural. It is not necessary to suppose that the existence or occurrence of the supernatural involves in any case the breach of natural law.

But it is not our purpose to pursue further this well-trodden path, nor to examine any of the intricate philosophical questions to which it leads. Far more important is it to view the actual contents of the Christian religion in relation to the needs of humanity. While earnest efforts are being made to commend these contents to the modern mind by rationalizing them, it is surely worth while asking the question, What will their value be when the process is complete? A serious examination will show that it is just because the Christian creed leads us beyond