

# THE CHURCHMAN.

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JUNE, 1906.

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## The Month.

### The Education Bill.

SINCE we last wrote many things have happened. The strong opposition to the Bill manifested by Churchmen during the first three weeks after Easter happily gave place to quieter and more moderate counsels as the time for the Second Reading drew near. This change of tone was as marked as it was welcome. The majority of 206 on the Second Reading clearly showed the attitude of the Liberal majority, and it must be also confessed that the debate provided nothing particularly striking from the Church side. Indeed, the debate as a whole was distinctly disappointing after the strong line taken in the Press and elsewhere by Churchmen. The only noteworthy contribution was from Mr. Chamberlain, who virtually pleaded for his original policy of secular schools. We record with much satisfaction the moderate and statesmanlike tone taken in the Lower House of Canterbury Convocation. It is by such a policy that the best interests of the people and of the children will be most truly served.

### The Predominant Factor.

At the risk of weariness we must again refer to the cardinal point in the whole controversy. In the various letters and speeches against the Bill we have been struck to find the almost entire absence of any reference to the question of Rate Aid. Many of the Church arguments have somehow overlooked or else ignored this supreme fact and factor. Let us, therefore, ask again one simple question: Do Churchmen wish to continue having their

schools maintained by the rates? If so, they will have to submit to popular representation, and popular representation must include the appointment of teachers. Now it is for Churchmen to consider whether they shall oppose or accept these two fundamental positions. If they oppose, they are going against the declared will of the people, as has been admitted by nearly all the leading Unionist papers. If, however, they accept the fundamental position of the Bill, then comes the question as to which policy will best safeguard and assure the continuance of religion in Church schools. As we have already said, there are only three possible policies : (1) Denominationalism for all ; (2) Secularism for all ; (3) Bible teaching with "facilities." The Government rejected the first and second of these policies, and decided on the third as the one most in accordance with the wishes of the great majority of the people. Would it not be in every way wisest for the Church to accept this position and make the best possible use of it? We almost apologize for calling attention to such familiar facts, but we cannot help feeling that very much of the strong opposition of the last month has almost entirely ignored them. Yet it is simple truth to say that they are vital to the situation, and on this account we venture to call attention to the following words of the *Westminster Gazette* :

Churchmen do not seem to realize that the present Bill is the result of a public revolt against a system which relieved them of the charge of maintaining their schools, and yet left them in control of the school and the teacher. And yet, if we are to arrive at a concordat, that must be the starting-point, and they must tell us, in some intelligible language, how they propose to harmonize the public claim and the freedom of the lay State-paid teacher with the denominational control of the school, which is still apparently their demand.

The last point is the crux of the situation. To harmonize the public claim and the freedom of the teacher with denominational control is surely an impossibility.

Several utterances of Members of the Govern-  
**The True** ment confirmed the conviction we expressed last  
**Policy.** month that the Government is prepared to give  
careful consideration to any amendments which are in accord-

ance with the fundamental principles of the Bill. What, then, should the Church do? Following the line of the Bishop of Hereford and other leading Churchmen, we would urge the policy of amending the Bill in the following particulars: (1) All religious teaching to be within compulsory school hours. (2) Teachers to be allowed to take part in denominational teaching (where this is enacted) at the cost of the denomination. (3) Teachers to be permitted to withdraw from religious teaching in urban schools under the four-fifths provision. (4) Clause IV. to be made mandatory on the Education authorities. (5) The facilities proposed for transferred schools to be extended to all schools. We believe that if the substance of these proposals could be carried into effect Churchmen would obtain all they could rightly expect under a system of schools maintained from the rates.

The *British Weekly* and the *Spectator* have both put forward a proposal in favour of power being granted to any school to contract itself out of the Bill and to return to the state of affairs before the Rate Aid of 1902. We confess that we should regret such a step on educational grounds, but if it would meet the need of any Churchmen, we do not see any insuperable objection to the proposal. We are inclined to think, however, that comparatively few of the schools would avail themselves of the permission, since they would soon find once again the "intolerable strain" which led to the Rate Aid of 1902. Still, there could be no real harm or difficulty in including the proposal in the Bill, even though it were not taken advantage of.

Very much has been made in the Education controversy of the danger of having religious teaching given by teachers who do not believe in it. On the one hand, Rate Aid carries with it the abolition of denominational tests, though not, be it remembered, inquiry into the moral character of the teacher; on the other hand, Clause IV. of the present Bill requires teachers to give religious education

The Status quo  
ante 1902.

Tests for  
Teachers.

under specified conditions in urban schools. It is essential that teachers should only teach religion if they believe in it; and for this purpose a conscience clause should be inserted, giving the teachers power to withdraw from religious instruction. On the other hand, Mr. Birrell has distinctly stated that there is no intention of curtailing the liberty of local authorities in making sure that the teachers are qualified to teach religion. Such being the case, we believe that the Church will obtain all that is really necessary by means of a conscience clause and this inquiry into qualification. It is a simple fact that the present tests in Church schools have not always insured the right kind of teachers or kept out the wrong kind, and we believe that there will be no insuperable difficulty in the future if the points above referred to are insisted on. Meanwhile, the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, spoken when he was Bishop of Rochester in 1894, with reference to London School Board teachers, are worthy of note in this connection :

For example, the members of the Board admit their obvious duty to take care that no one be called upon to teach what he does not conscientiously believe. They are not likely to find this a very formidable task. An idea has somehow gained currency among those who have no personal knowledge of the subject that there are hundreds of Board School teachers to whose consciences the teaching of definite Scriptural Christianity is an unfair burden. I have conversed on every side with the Board School teachers of South London, to whose voluntary labours as Church workers we owe so much in the Sunday-schools and Bible classes of our poorest parishes, and from any information they can give me I have no evidence whatever to justify such fears.

We see no reason to doubt the application of these words to the present year, whether as to London or to other Council schools.

**The Rights of Parents.** We have also heard much of late of the right of parents to have their children taught their own religion, and much of the Church opposition to the Bill has been based on this ground. We have the fullest possible sympathy with the contention, although we cannot help pointing out that it introduces an entirely new factor into the situation so far as local government is concerned. People send

their children to school as citizens, and pay their rates as citizens ; yet to give them additional power because they are parents is certainly novel, and might easily be very far-reaching in its results, more particularly as in so personal a matter as religion the rights of *every* parent, and not merely those of the majority, would have to be secured. However, we are quite prepared to allow the principle, so far as it is consistent with the conditions of our system of compulsory elementary education. At the same time we cannot help saying that this zeal for parental rights comes somewhat strangely from those, whether Roman or Anglican, who have had sole and full control in at least 6,000 one-school areas without, so far as we know, paying any particular regard to the wishes and convictions of the Nonconformist parents whose children were compelled to attend the Church or Roman Catholic school. We never heard of any leading Churchman pleading the cause of the Nonconformist parent in connection with the Act of 1902. We mention these things in the interests of truth and justice, since they are apt to be forgotten in the stress of the present controversy. As Churchmen, we do well in insisting upon Church people having their rights ; but if the Church, which in 1902 had the upper hand, had taken this line of parental rights for everybody, it would have made our position much stronger to-day.

Another question that has been much to the fore **Trust Deeds.** in connection with the Education controversy is the relation of the Bill to the Trust Deeds of Church schools. It will doubtless be remembered that the inviolability of Trust Deeds was urged by Lord Hugh Cecil in 1902 against the Kenyon Slaney Clause, and he was met by Mr. Balfour's contention that from the moment that Church schools were maintained almost entirely by public funds some interference with Trust Deeds was inevitable. As a consequence one modification of these Trust Deeds has been in force for the last four years in many, if not in most, Church schools. While the Trust Deeds enact that the incumbent of the parish is solely

responsible for the religious instruction in the school, the Act of 1902 actually gives power to the local managers to keep out this very clergyman from his own school. This is surely overriding a Trust Deed to some effect, and we confess we cannot understand how that which was done by a Unionist Government can necessarily be wrong for a Liberal Government. And thus, again, we find ourselves coming back to the question of Rate Aid as the key to all our present difficulties. Churchmen are now reaping what they allowed to be sown for them in 1902, and the anticipations at that time of a very small minority of Churchmen that trouble was ahead in connection with the schools have only been too clearly borne out. He is the true friend of the Church who endeavours to find a way out of the present *impasse*.

**Undenominationalism.** This word has been much in evidence lately as descriptive of the religious teaching in Council schools. Undenominationalism in religious education represents an attempt to find the common denominator in religion, and to use it for the instruction and influence of the children. It is the endeavour to discover what may be called the essence of religious instruction as distinct from its particular ecclesiastical emphasis and forms. This attempt has been made with no little success since 1870, and by means of it millions of children have been taught for thirty-six years. Men will doubtless differ as to the precise content and limitations of this religious common denominator, but it is impossible to go very far wrong if under it the salient features of the New Testament are taught. The Bishop of Manchester, when he was Bishop of Coventry, bore witness to the possibilities of undenominational teaching, as the following utterance of only six years ago clearly shows :

The cry of the impossibility of undenominational teaching amazed him. . . . There was no book in the world which was so near to every point of the heart's compass as the Bible. Men who read that book differently, but read it sensibly, still found that was the effect it produced upon them, and that was the effect he desired to see produced on the children ; and whatever

a teacher could do to enhance that effect without sectarian bias they would give him liberty to do.

And that the children in such schools have been taught religion the Archbishop of Canterbury bears hearty testimony in his speech in 1894, already referred to :

To declare it to be impossible profitably to convey to the mind of a little child the sacred lessons which Holy Scripture gives in story and precept, and psalm and parable, and, above all, in the life and works of our Blessed Lord, unaccompanied for the moment by Church doctrines of a distinctive sort—to declare this is, it seems to me, to contradict the simple experience of a thousand Christian homes.

If all the children of our national and Council schools could have what the Archbishop and Dr. Knox here describe we should have very real grounds for thankfulness.

**A Plea for  
Peace.** Before these lines are in print the Education Bill will have reached the Committee stage in the

Commons, and it will soon be seen what lines the Government and the Church party will take. If the Government is met in the right way, we believe they and their Nonconformist supporters will be prepared to effect a compromise which will satisfy the large majority of Churchmen. And until we see it we will not believe that the Government and their majority are going to imitate the example of the Unionists in 1902 and ride rough-shod over their opponents on so vital a matter. If they do, or if the Government grants any special privileges to the Roman Catholics which they do not grant to others, they will, doubtless, and rightly, be met by strenuous and determined resistance. But we will only regard this as possible when it comes to pass, and in the meantime we would echo the earnest words of the Bishop of Ripon in his letter to the *Times*, and plead for a settlement on a national basis which will put an end to the present deplorable controversy. We believe that Churchmen have now the opportunity of bringing about a settlement of the Education Question which will last for many years. If they reject this opportunity, they will be mainly responsible for a system of secular education which will bring little else than

harm to our country. Let the following words of the Bishop of Ripon be ever kept in mind :

It would help much toward peace if each side could recognise that the other was struggling, not for mere victory, but for the maintenance of principles which it would be unwise for either side to ignore.

As Lord Goschen has said, the alternative to the present Bill is not the present *status quo*, but secularism, and it behoves Churchmen and Nonconformist to unite against this foe.

**Candidates for Holy Orders.** The Bishop of Birmingham's speech in Convocation on the subject of the training of candidates for the ministry deserves, and will receive, careful attention. The proposal to insist more and more on an Arts Course as an essential part of the preparation is undoubtedly wise as a general policy, though it must never be pressed to such an extent as to exclude non-graduates from the ministry. Some of the most effective clergy of the present day are those who, through no fault of their own, have never had the opportunity of a University degree, and it is, perhaps, not going too far to say that in many cases the real weakness of the ministry lies with those who, although graduates, have had no definite theological training and preparation. Bishop Gore's account of the work at Mirfield should give rise to many serious thoughts in the minds of Evangelical and Moderate Churchmen. While the success of the work does infinite credit to its promoters, there can be no doubt that it is putting into the ministry clergy of a type of thought and training which bodes no good for a healthy, broad-minded, large-hearted, spiritual, and Biblical Churchmanship. We hope, however, that the testimony of the Bishop of Birmingham to Mirfield will lead Evangelical and Moderate Churchmen to consider much more seriously and definitely than they have hitherto done the question of providing a very different means of training for the ministry. There are many young men quite fitted to become clergymen and to do genuine service who are prevented by lack of means, and if only wealthy Churchmen would provide the funds, a work like this



could be put in hand at once. The question has already been before our readers, and also before the members of the Church of England League, and we sincerely trust that Bishop Gore's account of Mirfield will impel moderate Churchmen to action before any more time is lost.

Whatever our political proclivities may be, it is hardly possible for Christian men to remain unmoved by the weighty, dignified, and even solemn appeal made by Mr. John Morley to the Churches to compose their differences. He said that the present controversy is "lowering religion" in the eyes of men, and there are not a few testimonies to the truth of this statement. We are not now attempting to apportion blame to one side or the other, but will only say that Mr. Morley's rebuke is as deserved as it is dignified. "Sirs, ye are brethren," recurs to us again and again, and when Christian men disagree and oppose each other, with whatever conscientious convictions, it certainly gives occasion to the indifferent and hostile to point the finger of scorn and to say with telling sarcasm, "See how these Christians love one another!" For ourselves, we desire to receive Mr. Morley's rebuke in the spirit in which we believe it was given, and to seek by prayer and effort to allay bitterness, to promote peace, and to bring harmony to the Churches of Christ in our land.

The appeal for prayer at Whitsuntide on behalf of Christian unity, which has been put forth by the two Archbishops and most of the leaders of Non-conformist Churches in England and Scotland, comes at a time when Christian unity is apparently farthest from men's minds, and yet this very fact may prove the opportuneness of the appeal. The weighty words of the letter deserve careful attention :

We agree in deprecating at present any large schemes of corporate reunion, which seem to us premature, or any attempts to treat our existing religious divergences as unimportant; but we agree, also, in believing profoundly that our Lord Jesus Christ meant us to be one in visible fellowship; we feel

profoundly the paralyzing effect upon the moral forces of Christianity which our divisions inevitably produce, and we recognise, with the fullest conviction, that it is the duty of all Christians who desire in this respect the fulfilment of the Divine purpose to give themselves to penitence and prayer—to penitence, because we have all, in various ways, as bodies and as individuals, contributed to produce and perpetuate differences; and to prayer because what we all alike need is that God should open our minds and hearts to receive without prejudice the gradual revelation of His will as to the ways by which we are to be drawn together.

Our Whit Sunday could not be more appropriately spent than in waiting upon God on the lines of this appeal. The answer seems far away at present, but it may well be nearer than we dream.



### Author and "Writer"—Thoughts on a Problem of New Testament Authorship.

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

I AM myself a stay-at-home as regards Christian labour; my nearly thirty-nine years of ministry have been spent altogether in this country. But I have two brothers and many younger relatives engaged in missionary service in China. Of my brothers, one is the veteran Archdeacon at Ningpo; the other, after prolonged previous service, has been for now twenty-five years Bishop in charge of our Church missions in Mid-China—that is to say, upon the coast and far into the Hinterland midway along the Chinese seaboard. In many and various respects I have been thus, for now very many years, brought into contact with Chinese missionary work in a close and personal way. Amongst other things, my brothers' methods of communication with their scattered missions, and the ways in which the ever-present problem of the language is dealt with—that language which in its *literary* form makes, I should suppose, one of the most trying difficulties in missionary enterprise anywhere, so recondite are the rules of style, so elaborate the vocabulary—have been constantly kept before my mind.