

4. Efficiency of religious as well as of secular teaching is guaranteed (1) by the service of qualified teachers, and (2) by an annual examination.

5. At present all religious teaching is given the place of honour in the school curriculum, and is the favourite lesson of both teachers and scholars.

4. No provision is made for any religious examination, while no proofs or tests of the teachers' qualifications to give religious instruction will be allowed [Clause VII. (2)].

5. Under the clause giving "facilities," the religious instruction is dragged from its place of honour and put, like a punishment lesson, during play-time [Clause VI.]. The clause is likely, under the circumstances, to become a dead letter, and the last trace of Christian teaching in our schools is likely soon to be wiped out.

A Nonconformist, at his own request, visited our school last month at the time of religious instruction. He heard the teachers give lessons from the Old Testament, New Testament, and Catechism, and as he left declared it would be a thousand pities to expel such teaching from our elementary schools.

It seems clear to me that the Evangelical party would be false to its traditions if we accepted a Bill which relegated to an outside and inferior position the Word of God in the education of the children of the nation.

## II.—In Favour of the Bill, with Amendments.

By THE REV. A. P. COX, M.A.

THE dispute about religious education is so hot that it is only possible to consider the question satisfactorily and hopefully by insisting on the fact that those who are opposed to it, as well as those who in part or entirely support it, must be credited with honourable intentions. Probably most of us agree on one point—we want the Bible properly taught in the elementary schools of the land.

Now, I venture to believe, though it is an opinion widely discredited by many in all schools of thought in the Church of England, that the Education Bill provides a possible basis of agreement, provided that certain amendments are accepted.

Religious teaching, whether the fundamental Christianity proposed in the Bill or the denominational teaching provided

for in the facilities clauses, ought surely to be part of the compulsory school curriculum.

In the next place, the regular teachers must not be precluded by statute from giving any of the religious instruction, if they are so minded. Religion is the chief part in education. To make it an accessory, to relegate it to a subordinate place, to make little of it compared to other subjects, is to defeat the first purpose for which alone the Church can ever have had any share in education. At the same time, I think it should be recognised that if education is henceforth to be under local authority, the position of the Church in relation to it cannot be what it has been in the past. We must be content to exert our authority and influence in a no less potent way, even if not on the same lines as hitherto.

We may be thankful that the House of Commons has declared against secular education. I do not believe that secularism *plus* equal facilities for all denominations would satisfy the teachers or the taught. Such a course would prove an object-lesson in our religious differences from infancy upwards. I am one of those who cannot look askance at inter-denominational Christian teaching. But for that the Bible Society would never have been brought into existence. Do we not rejoice to hear at Bible Society meetings of the power of God's Word by itself to change, not only men and women, but whole villages, without even the intervention of any human agent? The colporteur, perhaps, left a copy of the Bible years ago. It has done its work. The missionary arrives to find a Christian community in existence. Such an illustration does not, perhaps, cover the whole ground, but it acts as a corrective to a dictum which, I think, is too often taken for granted when it ought not to be, "The Church to teach, the Bible to prove." The Bible has a greater inherent spiritual power even than that.

Then, too, we must recognise the need of affording the teachers a conscience clause, as well as the taught. If we do, I very much doubt if we should ever find an avowed non-

Christian presuming to teach the Bible. Could we not trust our fellow-men to be too honourable for that?

Then, if fundamental interdenominational Bible teaching be the recognised religion for the schools of our nation, though we may not all have what we might wish for, we shall have at least a foundation on which to build in our Sunday-schools and at other times. The "religion of the parents" in an average English parish is, I am inclined to think, not very different to what we commonly understand by interdenominational Christianity, and the "four-fifths" clause, if extended and made compulsory, would certainly remove all possible sense of injustice.

For these reasons I have found myself unable to give an adhesion to those efforts, now so common, to offer relentless opposition to the Bill. I fear that some of the opposition (not all, of course) may reasonably be considered to bear some elements of an influence more political than religious, and more alien to the spirit of the Reformation than Evangelical Churchmen can watch without alarm. At the same time, the fact remains—all parties and all schools of thought have among them numberless objectors.

Those of us who desire to employ the term "Protestant" wisely and well may be permitted to express our concern at what seems to us the unnecessarily open alliance between the English Church Union leaders and prominent Evangelical Churchmen. We must give all alike credit for the best intentions. But the main question in this connection is, Have Evangelical Churchmen the same theory of "the Church" to maintain as the followers of the Tractarian School? Surely they know they have not.

At such a time I note a valuable unintentional testimony. The distinguished editor of *The Commonwealth* for June laments over the character of the debate in the House of Commons. He despairs of the definite Churchmanship even of the entire Opposition. He laments that, with the exception of about six of them, none seem to have "a notion of what we mean by a

Church and a Creed"—that they are "*all in mind undenominational*." Personally I am thankful for that testimony, and I believe it is true.

Let us not cease to pray that for Christians in the Church of England, at any rate, there may be an agreement which shall find its realization in this—that the Bible shall be regarded as the bed-rock of our nation's school system (and this is how I understand the Bill), and be taught by teachers in a spirit that is, or ought to be, common to all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. If this were done, I cannot think that the spirit of our trust deeds would be so very far from being carried into effect. Let us trust God and one another.

### III. The Outcome.

BY THE REV. I. GREGORY SMITH, M.A., HON. LL.D.

"I AM sick," said Mr. John Morley lately, "of these endless squabbles between Church and Chapel." The words are hardly an adequate description of the Education Question. But they suggest a momentous thought. Is it, must it be, endless, this conflict? At any rate, must the present tension last, this violent antagonism, which all who care for religion must deplore? Is there reasonable hope that, without any compromise of principle, both sides may find themselves drawn nearer to one another by that subtle alchemy which is for ever extracting ultimate good from what seems at the moment most unpromising?

Anyone who will look below the surface may find an encouraging answer to this question, even in what seems to the outsider so repellent. For beneath what is temporary and transient in the struggle there is *au fond* on both sides, even when due discount is allowed for political partisanship and other disturbing forces, the moral earnestness which English people are very slow to betray any sign of, unless deeply moved. And another hopeful thought is this: The vital question at issue is not "between Church and Chapel," but whether or not our