

THE CHURCHMAN.

NOVEMBER, 1907.

The Month.

The
Church
Congress.

THE meeting of the Church Congress at Great Yarmouth was a genuine success, not only in point of numbers, but also in interest and value. The subjects were well chosen, and the papers on the whole were on a high level of excellence. The subject which naturally aroused the greatest interest was "The Prayer Book and Modern Needs," especially as it was discussed in the light of the Royal Commission. We print the Dean of Canterbury's valuable paper in the present number, and we need hardly call attention to its significance from the standpoint of the ecclesiastical policy of the immediate future. The position of Evangelical Churchmen was plainly put before the Congress without hesitation or uncertainty, and it is a great satisfaction to realize that the body of Evangelical Churchmen are alive to the seriousness of the situation. It is vain for Canon Beeching to plead (in the current number of the *Church Quarterly Review*) for the permissive use of the vestments on the ground that they do not symbolize Roman doctrine, because they were in existence centuries before that was promulgated. Yet the *Church Times* plainly states that the sole reason for using these vestments is to preserve continuity with the Medieval Church.

"The one thing symbolized by the use of such a vestment is the fact that the Church of England now existing is the Church which existed in England from the sixth to the sixteenth century, having the same laws of teaching and of worship, except so far as they have been varied by a proper spiritual authority."

We have already urged more than once that the true meaning of the vestments is to be sought from those who wear them, and not from those who do not. And nothing could be clearer than the definite statement just quoted. This plain speaking is particularly welcome because it enables those who oppose the vestments to join issue on simple matters of fact, and we do not hesitate to say that the centuries mentioned by the *Church Times* constitute the very period with which the great body of moderate Churchmen have no desire for essential continuity. To allow the use of the vestments which are now, and have been for centuries used, in connexion with the Roman Mass would be to change the entire character of the Church of England service of Holy Communion. It is this change that Evangelical Churchmen intend to resist to the very last.

The question of Disestablishment has been forced to the front during the last month in several ways, but particularly by the presidential address of the Bishop of Norwich at the Church Congress. After arguing against Disestablishment by showing what he considered would be its disastrous results, Dr. Sheepshanks summed up his position by saying that the Establishment could not be continued if it were shown to be against the express will of the majority of the nation, and if it were proved to be no longer conducive to the highest interests of the State. We believe this is the true position to take on this momentous subject. When the question becomes one of practical politics, it will have to be faced by Churchmen, not from the standpoint of any ideal relationship between Church and State, but from the point of view of moral and social advantage, and in view of the will of the country as expressed through its representatives in Parliament. Whenever the battle comes to be fought, it will be fought solely on these lines. Churchmen should therefore concentrate attention on this aspect of affairs, and so set their house in order that the nation may be able to see that it is to its own advantage to maintain the position of an Established Church. If this is not

soon done, we must not be surprised if the State should decide to sever the bonds.

Socialism. The discussion at the Church Congress and a good deal of newspaper correspondence have combined to make Socialism a prominent topic of thought and discussion for several weeks past. Into the political aspects we do not enter, but would earnestly commend the addresses given at the Congress by Mr. Frederick Rogers and the Rev. J. E. Watts Ditchfield to the attention of Churchmen. Mr. Hill, the Secretary of the E.C.U., quite gratuitously (and, as it proved, very unwisely for himself) said that our social difficulties are due to the Reformation. Mr. Watts Ditchfield's reply, that there was no Reformation in France, but that there was a French Revolution, was as crushing as it was deserved, and it roused the Congress to a high pitch of feeling. These questions of the present social order must be discussed quite apart from political and ecclesiastical prepossessions, and with an earnest desire and determination to solve the problem of the unemployed, the housing question, the drink question, and other social sores in the light of the New Testament. It is sometimes said that there is an antithesis between Christianity and Socialism in the fact that one stands for giving and the other for taking; but, as a writer in the *Spectator* recently said, this is neither true nor fair, for there is a formula which overlaps both sides—namely, "distribute fairly." It is the great principle of equality of opportunity for every one for which Christians should plead, for it is only then that our social sorrows and evils will be in any way mitigated.

Old Testament Criticism. The discussion at the Church Congress on "How to Teach the Old Testament" was, on the whole, very encouraging to those who believe in the truth of the traditional view. The papers on both sides were able and informing; but we hope it is not from any bias in favour of our own view that we express the conviction, shared

by very many at the Congress and afterwards, that the paper by the Rev. G. T. Manley was by far the most noteworthy feature of the discussion, if not the outstanding contribution of the Congress. It was perfectly clear that the majority of the audience was in sympathy with the old view, and the tone of the meeting was full of hope for those who believe that the truth about the Old Testament is not to be found in the position of Wellhausen and his English followers. We hope very shortly to publish two papers by Mr. H. M. Wiener, Barrister-at-law, whose writings are already welcome and familiar to our readers, in reply to the Bishop of Ely's article in the *Guardian* on "Some Recent Results of Old Testament Criticism." It was plain from the discussion at the Congress that the majority of the clergy present have already felt the truth expressed some time ago by Dr. Robertson Nicoll, that ordinary congregations cannot understand the processes of historical criticism, and that preachers must, therefore, preach the Old Testament as it is or leave it alone. There are not a few signs of further reaction from the extreme positions of modern criticism, and of a return towards those old paths which have been the safety of the Church for centuries, and which have made the Old Testament the spiritual sustenance of the people of God.

It was, of course, to be expected that the plain speaking of Bishop Diggle, as recorded in our last issue, would meet with strong disapproval, but we confess we were hardly prepared for the onslaught made on him in certain quarters, especially in the leading columns of the *Guardian*. Yet scarcely any of the Bishop's most forcible charges against Tractarianism for denationalizing the Church have been met by those who oppose his view. It was time some one in authority spoke out on the losses that have occurred to the Church and nation through Tractarianism, for we have heard far too much of the supposed gains, many of which, however, simply illustrate the difference between *post hoc* and *propter hoc*, or between occasion and cause, for they had but little to do

Bishop of
Carlisle.

with Tractarianism alone. There is much that goes to prove the words of Sir Samuel Hall in his "Short History of the Oxford Movement," that "the Movement was merely the expression of the reaction which followed the somewhat rapid, if not violent, realization and development of Liberalism in the early part of last century, and might never have occurred if such realization and development had begun earlier and moved with less friction." Be this as it may, the fact that the Tractarian Movement, on the *Guardian's* own admission, had for its definite and avowed object the reunion of England with the Roman Church, shows that it introduced something so novel into the English Church, and so alien from its genius and growth, that it could never have realized its purpose without untold harm to the national life.

Discussion has been continued during the last two months on the possibility of obtaining a settlement of the Education Question by the Bill of next year. The *Tribune* put forth a scheme which has created a great deal of interest, and contains in it several elements which make for peace. The Bishop of Manchester has also contributed to the discussion by his paper at the Church Congress; while still more recently Mr. McKenna, the Minister of Education, has foreshadowed some of the principles of his new Bill. For the moment we content ourselves by referring to a letter which appeared a month or so ago in the *Times* from the Bishop of North Queensland, in which the following passage occurs:

"And why should it be thought a thing impossible to find a Scripture lesson-book which would be acceptable in the bulk of both provided and voluntary schools? Personally, I have no confidence in so-called 'undenominational teaching' as a sufficient exposition of the Christian faith, nor am I able to see how any religious teaching can be so far desiccated of debatable matter as to be rightly denominated 'undogmatic.' But the fact remains that in all primary schools Scripture lessons are largely identical; and it has yet to be shown that it is impossible to frame a text-book which will satisfy, so far as it goes, the needs of the vast majority of parents of all denominations. . . . I firmly believe . . . that a 'round table' attempt to edit a book of simple Scripture lessons in England would meet with success; and, if successful, it would do much to lessen an irrational bitterness upon

the subject of religious teaching which is the despair of all friends of toleration and liberty."

Like the Bishop, we cannot see why it is impossible "to frame a text-book which will satisfy, so far as it goes, the needs of the vast majority of parents of all denominations." The only people who find it impossible are those Churchmen who think simple Bible teaching "corrosive poison." We have lately been deeply impressed with the strenuous efforts now being made by the Secularist Party, represented by the Rationalist Press Association, to exclude the Bible from the schools on the alleged basis of fairness all round. They will then trumpet forth the result as a victory for Secularism as against Christianity. We sincerely hope that all Christians, and especially all Churchmen, will become alive to the situation and prevent the irreparable disaster of secular schools.

The True Policy. As we listened to the Bishop of Manchester at the Church Congress we could not help feeling that he was pleading for the impossible, and that his suggestions were mainly counsels of perfection. We are fully confirmed in this impression by the editorial comments of the *Church Times*, and an article from a correspondent which was given a prominent place in the *Guardian*. The latter significantly says :

"The Bishop certainly surrenders nothing. His scheme, indeed, goes far beyond the maintenance of the *status quo*, and the strongest Unionist Government would hardly venture to attempt legislation such as he desires. In public affairs what is practicable should be the aim, in preference to what is in the abstract desirable. To minimize difficulties is folly, and the lions that stand in the Bishop's pathway are many."

We venture to express the hope that Churchmen will not be like the Bourbons, learning nothing and forgetting nothing from the events of 1902 and 1907. As the article in the *Guardian* goes on to say that great truth :

"No durable peace is possible except upon the principles of *do ut des*. . . . We cannot retain denominational schools as they are, and at the same time claim to teach our doctrines in schools provided by the local authorities. After all, the essential thing to strive for is that every child in every school should have an opportunity of being taught the faith of its parents, and the

maintenance of the dual system seems to be incompatible with this. That system was really doomed by the acceptance of rate-aid, and by the introduction into Mr. Balfour's Bill of the Kenyon-Slaney amendment, which destroyed the foundation upon which the relationship of the Church to her schools rested. . . . No conceivable settlement can satisfy the extremists on either side—their differences are irreconcilable; but the treatment of all denominations upon terms of exact equality would appeal to the public sense of justice."

Along some such lines we shall find the solution of our difficulties. Meanwhile Mr. McKenna has told us that next year's Bill will be governed by two principles—the public control of all schools, and the abolition of all denominational and religious tests. As the Archbishop of Canterbury has already practically accepted these two positions, it remains for Churchmen to see that they are carried out in practice, so that the question may be settled on terms acceptable and honourable to all.

As others
see us. In the Church Notes in the *Standard*, in the week
after the Church Congress, the following appeared :

"The Bishop of Norwich, whose presidential address has been generally praised for its fearless, candid, and judicial summing-up of the Disestablishment question, created a mild sensation by appearing in a purple cassock and 'mozetta,' or cape. May it be said, with the utmost respect, that Churchmen would prefer to see their 'right reverend fathers in God' robed, not as Italian prelates, but in the authentic attire of Anglican Bishops? Both before the Reformation and since the Bishops' official outdoor dress—to this day retained in its proper use when they appear in the House of Lords—is a rochet, black satin chimere, scarf, and square cap. In Convocation the chimere is of scarlet cloth. It is extremely desirable at the present time that the clergy should cleave to English rather than to foreign ornaments and customs. Till late years it has been wholly unknown, at any period of our Church history, that an English clergyman should presume to appear in God's house wearing a hat. And the matter is not mended by the fact that the hat chances to be Italian. But it will be difficult to root out Italian 'birettas,' Italian 'zucchettos,' and Italian 'cottas,' if those in authority insist on adopting Italian 'mozettas.'"

This comment speaks for itself, and we hope its lessons will be heeded. Neither continuity nor identity with Rome is the best policy for English Churchmen. For over three hundred years the Anglican Church has maintained a distinctive position, which is expressed not only in her doctrinal articles but in the

ceremonial of her worship and even the dress of her clergy. To alter any of these things in the direction of Rome would be not merely unwise but disastrous.

The Reformation. Much of the present controversy over vestments turns on the attitude taken by Churchmen to the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Our views of the Church of England will largely depend upon the opinion we hold as to the necessity, character, and results of the Reformation; and that there are two very different, or, rather, two opposite, views of it among English Churchmen is patent to all. We have only to remind ourselves of Lord Halifax's words a year ago about repenting of the Reformation "with tears and in ashes," and then to read a recent speech by the Dean of Canterbury referred to in our September number. Quite recently we have had a very interesting opportunity of comparing these two views of the Reformation by means of two reviews of Dr. Lindsay's great book, "A History of the Reformation," of which the *Times* truly said that "at last the English public possesses an adequate history of the Reformation." We put in parallel columns the two views:

The "Times," September 20,
1907.

"It is pitiful to find these great master-spirits [Luther and Calvin] treated by modern English ecclesiastics as if they were merely the leaders of more or less 'heretical' schools of thought. Each of them appealed to the deepest elementary forces of the human spirit, and, in combination, they reconstructed Europe."

"Journal of Theological Studies,"
July, 1907.

"That century from whose toils British Christianity seems still so incapable of extricating itself."

As the *Times'* article clearly shows, the great body of British Christianity has no wish whatever to extricate itself from the great movement in the sixteenth century which "reconstructed Europe," for the simple reason that it is in connexion with the Reformation that we find practically every one of the best elements of our English religious national life.

Short
Sermons.

Among the topics of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Visitation Charge which are worthy of careful consideration by all Churchmen, we single out one of no little importance—that of present-day preaching. Here are His Grace's words about the prevalent practice of short sermons :

“ I wonder whether, in the reaction against the old exaggeration of sermons and preaching, the pendulum has now swung much too far? or, rather, I do not wonder, for I am sure that it has. We hear clergy rejoicing in the fact that the brevity of sermons now enables a man to say what he has to say in ten minutes. By all means infinitely to the good, if it is really a pithy-pointed, brief bit of message and teaching which you have been able to comprise in that time; but it needs an infinite amount of time in preparation to produce a sermon which will last ten minutes only. It requires three times as much preparation for a thoughtful man to prepare one ten-minutes' sermon as would be needed for one lasting twenty to thirty minutes. If it be that we are enabled by painstaking study and elaborate preparation and care to produce that which will be pointed and pithy, and make itself felt as a direct message from God to the human soul in ten minutes, then be it so, and thank God. But if it be merely that we think people are pleased and satisfied now with the ten minutes rather than with the little longer time which used to be more customary; if God's people so like it that therefore we can do with it, and say a few words, as it is called, leaving the big thought of the responsibility of the teacher to God and his fellow-men to be discharged in a lighter way than before, then surely we are missing some of the very largest part of the trust which God has laid upon us in a day when education is wider, and our own reading ought to be more deep and thorough.

We remember the late Dean Howell once saying that no one who can preach ever decries preaching, and we believe there is no more imperative need in the English Church to-day than that of strong, spiritual sermons. In spite of all the papers, magazines, and books, the living voice is still powerful and will ever remain so, and the census taken by the *Daily News* some years ago proved incontrovertibly that preaching attracts, that people will come to hear a man who knows what he is talking about, who has convictions, who possesses spiritual sincerity, and who can put his points intelligently. We would venture to appeal to the younger clergy to put all their available strength into their preaching, even if this means dropping some parochial organizations. Pastoral work will never really suffer from due attention being given to preaching.