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THE CHURCHMAN

April, 1911.

The Month.

**Evangelical
Unity.** WE had not intended to make any further reference to the correspondence on the attitude of Evangelicals towards the "Higher Criticism" of the Old Testament which still proceeds in the columns of the *Record*. Two points, however, have emerged—one in the course of the correspondence, the other apart from it—which we cannot allow to pass without remark. One of the correspondents, writing on March 3, asks :

"Would one of your correspondents who has found refuge in the Higher Critical views tell us why he wishes to be called an 'Evangelical' and not a 'Broad Churchman'?"

The hint conveyed by this question is that Evangelicals who hold "Higher Critical" views have really no right to the name, and should, in common honesty, cease to bear it. The only possible answer to any such suggestion is a most emphatic and decided refusal. The men who, while holding to the traditions of the Evangelical school of thought, not only on the pre-eminent place of the doctrine of the Atonement in Christian theology, but also on the Church, the Ministry, and the Sacraments, have still "found refuge in Higher Critical views," will neither depart nor will they submit to expulsion. They claim to be loyal and faithful representatives of the name they have inherited, and to which they still maintain the fullest claim.

Dr. Eugene Stock's Contribution. The other matter connected with this topic to which we gladly invite attention is the appearance of an article by Dr. Eugene Stock in two successive numbers of the *Record* (March 3 and March 10) entitled "A Plain Man's Thoughts on Biblical Criticism." It is difficult to say which is the most attractive of the many admirable features in this paper. No more excellent example could be adduced of the tone and temper in which the discussion of the subject should be approached. It is quite clear on the one hand that Dr. Stock's own attitude is of careful and cautious conservatism. On the other hand, it is obvious, on his own admission, that his earlier views on the Old Testament have been modified by further reading and reflection. On many points he is content to suspend his judgment till the production of further and more conclusive evidence. He suspends judgment, for example, as to the literary analysis of Genesis. "That, however," he adds, "is no reason why I should condemn my brother who thinks Dr. Driver has proved his case." This frank and brotherly spirit towards those who may hold an opposite view pervades the whole article. He adds, too, the significant words: "I deprecate the grievous unfairness with which the 'Higher Critics' are too often treated." It would be a pleasure to give many longer quotations, but as the essay is easily accessible to our readers, we must content ourselves with a warm expression of gratitude for its appearance, and of hearty accordance with its sentiments.

A Retiring Age for Clergy. At the recent session of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, an interesting discussion took place on the compulsory retirement of the clergy at the age of seventy. As a result of the debate, reference to the particular age of seventy was dropped, and a modified resolution, declaring that "A clergyman should retire from any benefice without delay, when from age or other cause, it may appear, after due inquiry, that he has become incapable of discharging to the full its obligations," was carried. A

further clause of the resolution declared "that the whole question of pensions, by which alone, in the case of the parochial clergy, such retirement can be secured, should be pressed forward in every way." It is clear that the problem of the retiring age needs most careful handling. Some men who have toiled laboriously in adverse circumstances may well be worn out at sixty. Others, at seventy, are in robust health, capable of rendering most efficient service. But the question of pensions is all-important, and it ought not to be beyond the wit of our ecclesiastical leaders to formulate a scheme that shall be universally applicable. For the crux of the present situation is that there are so many men who *cannot* retire; they have been able to make no provision for old age, and retirement would mean abject penury, if not absolute starvation. Hence they are compelled by sheer necessity to cling for livelihood to posts involving duties they are quite unable to perform. This state of things is a scandal to the Church, and a cruel hardship to many of her most faithful ministers.

The Method
of the
Wesleyan
Church.

It may be of interest in this connection to refer to the way in which this problem of "superannuation" is solved by our brethren of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. When a minister, through either ill-health or advancing age, becomes incapable of full ministerial work, he, by consent of the Conference, becomes "supernumerary," and begins to draw the allotted amount per annum from the superannuation fund to which he has been contributing during his active ministerial life. But to be "supernumerary," or, as the colloquial expression is, "to sit down," does not mean absolute retirement from ministerial work. The minister in question is attached to the "circuit" of the particular district in which he settles down. To the work of this circuit he gives such assistance as he can—more or less, as health and age permit. In other words, he has the joy of continued work, coupled with freedom from responsibility. He is not expected to do more than he can; what he does do is

welcomed and appreciated. It seems to us that this is the position at which many of our parochial clergy would like to arrive—the opportunity of rendering further service without the heavy pressure of parochial responsibility. What one Christian communion has effected in the matter is sufficient to show that for ourselves the problem is not past solving.

As these notes are going to press we shall be
 The
 “Authorized
 Version.” occupied throughout England in celebrating the Tercentenary of the “Authorized Version” of our English Bible. The occasion is charged to the full with possibilities of suggestive thought. On the one hand are matters of historical and antiquarian interest; the revival of interest in those gallant pioneers in the task of translation—above all Tindale, on whose good work the translators of 1611 simply tried to improve. On the other hand there is the literary question; the place which “this incomparable possession, with its vast simplicity and moving eloquence,” holds in the formation of English thought and of English speech.

“It is marvellous,” says the *Spectator*, “to think with how few words it accomplishes its effect. Professor Cook points out that the ‘New English Dictionary’ reckons the words of the English language from A to L as 160,803. Shakespeare uses about 21,000 words; Milton 13,000; but the whole Authorized Version uses only about 6,000. Truly eloquence, as Goldsmith says, is not in the words but in the subject.”

The Tercentenary has also brought before us
 A New
 Revision. the question of the respective merits—especially in the New Testament, where the contrast between the two is greatest—of the Authorized and Revised Versions. Without attempting either to minimize or to underrate the work done by the revisers, we agree with those who hold that the changes they introduced were in certain respects too sweeping, and we heartily sympathize with the view that this is the appropriate time to attempt a revision of the Authorized Version in which any serious mistranslations—those mistranslations which actually change the meaning of the original—should be altered,

while the general style and language should remain as far as possible unaltered. It is, however, the matter of the Bible rather than its literary form that is the point of primary importance. The significance of this has been well expressed by the *Times'* leading article of March 9 :

“ Thus the present effort to organize the observance of this Tercentenary is due to a number of earnest men who desire to assert for the Holy Scriptures their ancient and rightful place in national and individual life. They are not concerned with the progress of a particular society or with the fortunes of any one branch of the Christian Church. They are not antiquaries, with a passion for what is old, but men of their time, who wish the best for their time. They believe that they can find that best in the message which it is the function of the Bible to convey, in whatever institutional modes that message may find expression. They recognize the growing interest that is felt about the Bible, but they want also a corresponding growth of interest in the revelation which it unfolds.”

Those who are hoping and praying for the
Reunion, reunion of Christendom may well be thankful for the sentiments voiced at the Free Church Council held at Portsmouth during March. “ Religious reunion ” was the subject of a special debate, to which Canon Hensley Henson contributed an interesting speech. Dr. Scott Lidgett, we think, was on sure ground when he said that every denomination should hold its denominationalism in trust, to be surrendered or held fast, as the interests of the whole Church demanded. We agree, too, with the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, that little communities, engrossed in their local and denominational affairs, have to be convinced that there is a Holy Catholic Church, and that the Free Churches cannot very well speak with the Anglican Communion till they have ended their own divisions. Canon Hensley Henson's significant points were: (1) That if the Church of England is “ sacerdotal,” then there is no prospect of reunion; (2) that mutual recognition of Churches should precede exchange of pulpits; (3) that the Christian Church, while obsessed by these unhappy rivalries, is quite unable to perform the great task that lies to her hand—of standing between the modern world and the encroaching tide of materialism. The

fact that Christians are speaking so earnestly of the need of unity augurs well for possible progress in that direction.

A new volume of essays has just been issued by The Date of the Gospels. the Oxford University Press, under the editorship of Professor Sanday, dealing in the most careful, scholarly, and yet most modest manner, with some of the vexed questions of New Testament Criticism concerning the Synoptic problem. For some years a few friends have been meeting at Professor Sanday's house and studying these problems together. The result is a book which we shall hope in due course to notice more fully in our pages. Suffice it to say now that the Oxford essayists accept the two-document theory (St. Mark and Q.) of the origin of our three Gospels. The essayists do not entirely agree with each other, but this is the general conclusion of the book. Almost contemporary with its publication we get an article in a German magazine by Professor Harnack, in which he reviews some of his own past work in the same field, and he reaches the conclusion that there is no real ground for believing that any one of our three Synoptic Gospels was written later than *circa* A.D. 68. He believes that St. Luke—which he is inclined to regard as the latest of the three—must be dated by the concluding verses of the Acts. He believes that the abrupt termination of the Acts is due to the fact that there was nothing more to record, because nothing more had happened.

The Oxford Essays and Professor Harnack's article are the last words, for the moment, of the Higher Criticism of the New Testament. The greatest scholars in England and in Germany have subjected the Synoptic problem to the most searching examination; they have used methods which were entirely unknown a generation or two ago—methods which would have shocked the Christian conscience of past generations. Now the greatest scholars of them all, travelling by this new and strange road, have practically reached the old conclusion. We venture to think that the conclusion is all the

surer for the investigation. We realize that there are still many differences of view, but we cannot help but express our gratitude to painstaking and careful scholarship for its honest and reverent conduct to the investigation; and we trust that Professor Harnack's conclusion will reassure many concerning similar investigations which at present have not arrived at a final conclusion, and which, so far as they have gone, seem to some minds subversive of truth.

Keswick. The greatest need of our religious life to-day—
as, indeed, of every day—is that it should be spiritual. Amongst the many things that help to the attainment of that end Keswick deserves honourable mention. In the early days of the Convention mistakes were made; but what great movement has ever sprung to vigorous life without mistakes? Mistakes are still sometimes made, but more often by camp-followers than by Keswick itself; and, indeed, Keswick makes no claim to infallibility. Keswick has stood and stands for the fundamental truth which ought to be the common heritage of all Christianity—that spiritual life and spiritual work must be maintained by spiritual means. We have just received the “Key to Keswick” for this year, and we venture to refer to it at once, because we feel that Evangelical Churchmanship can make a contribution to Keswick, and receive a contribution from it. In these days of difficulty and controversy, and yet days of splendid opportunity, this annual Convention may well become a means under God by which we may rid ourselves of the defilements of earth, and bring ourselves into closer communion with our Master.

Social Questions. The Church of Christ has always believed and taught that something more than mere environment is needed for the formation or reclamation of character. The Evangelical school of thought in the Church of England has from the very beginning insisted upon this fact; but equally from the very beginning Evangelicals have

borne their part in the solution of the social problems of the day. Wilberforce and the Clapham sect were responsible for the abolition of the slave trade, and Lord Shaftesbury for the first Factory Acts. We remind our readers of these facts because it seems especially incumbent upon the Christian Church to take the lead in similar directions to-day. The political parties of the country are engaged in high constitutional problems, the solution of which may be fraught with serious consequences to the Church. We may be compelled to defend ourselves, but we cannot be content with self-defence alone. The best Church defence is the doing of our daily work with real effectiveness, and the teaching of the lessons of our Master to the Church and the nation alike. Lazarus is lying at the door ; it is the business of the Church to see that he is cared for. The State for the moment is too busy to do much, but the time for new legislation must come, and it is the Church's business to see that it comes soon. It will come the sooner if she makes her voice heard. The Report of the Poor Law Commission must not be forgotten, and for the moment it seems that the Church has the best opportunity of keeping its memory green, until its claim to attention shall become so insistent that it may eventuate in wise and reasonable legislation.



Easter Eve.

NO! not the body that shall be,
 But this that suffered on the tree
 Lay we within the tyrant grave,
 Dead Saviour, strong to save !

Life's sorrows and familiar grief,
 The Garden's agony in chief,
 The demon battlings of Life's storm
 Have rent Thy sacred form.