

THE CHURCHMAN

November, 1911.

The Month.

Church
Congress,

THE Church Congress of 1911 has come and gone. There are those who regarded the choice of subjects as uninteresting, and the place in which the Congress was held as unattractive, and the Congress in consequence was a small one. It is to be regretted, for both place and subjects present problems to the Church which it must face or fail. Subject after subject in the programme suggested the social and economic problems which modern England has to meet. Outside in the streets, hurrying to and fro from their work, were the multitudes of industrial workers which the Church has to win and help. In this England of ours the problems of the Church are the problems of the nation, and the problems of the nation are almost equally the problems of the Church. The Congress met in the Potteries. As in all great industrial centres, Lazarus, in need, but hardly knowing it, lay at the gate. In the Congress Hall we discussed his condition and his fate, not in the spirit of the Rich Man of old, but in real and cordial desire to help. The Congress considered industrial employments and their dangers, the feeble-minded, vagrancy, and unemployment, the training of youth for the work of life, and similar things. It only talked; it does not pass resolutions, and it has no power to act. Is it therefore worthless? Surely we may answer no. The Congress of 1911 compels us to ask the question which the Bishop of London put in his opening sermon: Why has not the Church more influence? And if we learn the lesson of the Congress aright we shall not only

endeavour to repair the harm which is wrought by class prejudice, by ecclesiastical controversy and by absence of sympathy, but we shall exert the spiritual power of the Church not only in the direction of social reform, but in the direction of that even more fundamental thing, individual conversion. The Church must be in the van of a social reform of to-day, but it must not forget its spiritual office.

In the Bishop of London's sermon he referred to the fact that in the 800 pages of the history of the Church of England in the Nineteenth Century, by the Vice-Provost of Eton, some 400 are devoted to the wearisome history of controversy. It is easy to exaggerate the significance of that proportion. The story of controversy takes much longer to tell than that of quiet, constructive, progressive work. But we are in entire agreement with the Bishop that controversy has hindered the progress of the Church. We are not anxious to apportion the blame, or, when the Bishop refers to controversies about vestments and incense and stoles, we might be inclined to ask who began them. We are anxious, however, to bring controversies to an end. The Bishop of London in his recent charge, and the Bishop of Southwell in his speech at the Congress, both appear to think that controversy will end with the permission granted to every man, within extraordinarily wide limits, to do that which is right in his own eyes. We venture to make two suggestions. We are not mere legalists, but we do think that somehow the recognition of authority should be restored in the Church, and we do think the rights of the laity should be properly safeguarded. Surely there is a line of cleavage between us and Rome; surely loyal Churchmen should keep well within it; and surely the clergy should not be allowed to carry their people right up to it, or even over it, without the exercise of discipline. If the Church is to perform the task which is before her, we must set our house in order, and neither anarchy nor an extravagant comprehensiveness will really help us in the task.

**Church
Finance.**

The Report of the Archbishop's Committee has been published, and will provide us with food for thought for some time to come. Probably the great controversy will range round the question whether the system of apportionment shall be adopted or not. Undoubtedly the problem is a difficult one. If we adopt the system, who is to settle the basis? There are arguments against almost every conceivable form. The communicant is the obvious unit; but fifty in one parish can give, and ought to give, as much as 500 in another. If we ask for a percentage of all collections in church, how are we to deal with the parish that has a big subscription list or a sale of work? If a percentage of all the contributions from a parish, how are we to deal with the parish which is so poor that most of its income comes from outside? And so we might go on. In the Diocese of Manchester the Bishop has evolved an excellent scheme, but he and the diocese are still weighing the pros and cons of apportionment as against a system of voluntary contributions. If we are only dealing with small sums, it will be easier; but we all hope we are going to deal with large. Perhaps the solution will lie in the direction of using apportionment over large areas, such as rural deaneries, and then, with the aid of a wise committee, arranging a voluntary apportionment for parish and individual.

**The Church
in Wales.**

The great gathering at Shrewsbury, and the debate at the Congress, breathed a spirit of real determination to repel the attack on the Welsh Church. We cannot help feeling that from the human point of view we are running a race with time. The Welsh Church has made such excellent progress during the last few years that every year makes it stronger to resist attack. At the moment there are two things to do—we have to convince the nation that the policy of complete disendowment is a policy of dishonesty; we have to convert our friend—and he really exists—the Liberal Churchman. We are hopeful because we believe that England is honest. We are a little afraid because there are grave possi-

bilities of bargains between political parties, and there may be an attempt to sell the Welsh Church to the highest bidder. We believe frankly that the Establishment is good for the nation, and we believe that an act of dishonesty is always bad for the dishonest. Hence, although maintaining our political independence, we are against the Government in this matter, and are glad to see the signs of effective opposition around us. We are particularly glad to see such definitely Liberal Churchmen as Dean Barker and Canon Hensley Henson speaking out, and most glad to see the latter appealing to the Nonconformist sense of fairness for support.

We have received, by the courtesy of Mr. Harold M. Wiener, a booklet with the title, "The Higher Critical Quandary." It contains a correspondence between Mr. Wiener and the general editors of the O.T. portion of the *International Critical Commentary*, Dr. Driver and Dr. Briggs. The correspondence refers to the treatment of certain critical matters in the volume on "Genesis," by Dr. Skinner, to whose editorship this particular book was entrusted. The main point at issue appears to be this: Mr. Wiener states that, in discussing the Divine appellations in Genesis, Dr. Skinner only records 50 cases of divergences from the Massoretic Text and bases his argument on them, whereas he knew all the time that the actual number of divergences was 189. The gist of the replies made by Dr. Driver and Dr. Briggs is: (1) That in the treatment of specific critical problems they are accustomed to rely largely on the judgment of their contributors; and (2) that in this particular case they are quite satisfied that Dr. Skinner was justified in omitting any prolonged discussion of these remaining 139 variants, on the ground that they are not of sufficient critical importance.

In the course of the correspondence, Mr. Wiener charges Dr. Skinner with both *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*; he implies that this particular volume of the Commentary is one "intended to deceive." In reply to

Grave
Charges.

this the editors say : “ There appears to us to be absolutely no evidence showing that Dr. Skinner wrote with any intention to deceive ; and we most emphatically deny that he did deceive, in that he wrote untruthfully, or that he omitted to mention any facts which were of any importance for the question at issue.” In a further letter, Mr. Wiener speaks of Dr. Skinner’s “ deliberately arguing on a false issue after his attention had twice been publicly drawn to the true issue ” ; and a little later on the same letter says : “ Here again it seems to me indubitable that Dr. Skinner wrote untruthfully.” In the reply to this, Dr. Briggs and Dr. Driver say : “ It is not easy for scholars to meet the charge of untruthfulness patiently. We have endeavoured to do so, assuming that the charge was based on a misapprehension on your part. But we do not think we should go farther. We, of course, accept your major premise, that untruthfulness is reprehensible, but this seems to be almost the entire extent of our common ground. We deny absolutely your minor premise, that untruthfulness is shown in Dr. Skinner’s book.”

**Our Own
View.**

Into the subject-matter of this controversy we have no desire to enter. Those who wish to do so can read the correspondence for themselves. But of one thing we are absolutely sure—that neither in this Commentary nor anywhere else has Dr. Skinner ever intended to deceive anyone at all. Dr. Skinner is not only an Old Testament scholar of established repute, but he is a gentleman and a Christian. To imply that he, in this or in any other case, is attempting deliberately to mislead his readers is an indefensible and utterly unworthy thing. Unless we have entirely misread the whole correspondence, it is not error with which Dr. Skinner is charged, but wilful deception. We do not ourselves stand committed to the particular views on the Old Testament with which Dr. Skinner’s name is identified. But we would assure him that we thoroughly deprecate and entirely disown such methods of controversy. We believe that Dr. Skinner is

animated by the sole desire—as earnest and reverent as that of any more conservative scholar—to understand and to teach the absolute truth, so far as he can learn it, about the Sacred Scriptures. Mr. Wiener may be right or he may be wrong on the point of scholarship. In either case it is greatly to be regretted that he has seen fit to accuse a distinguished Christian scholar of wilful deception.

In a recent number of the *Educational Supplement* to the *Times* there is an interesting letter on the subject of the teaching of classics at Oxford. The writer maintains that far too many men are occupied in this and far too much money is spent on it. In the course of this arraignment he runs a tilt against the general and widely-spread practice of giving each man at least an hour a week of private work with his tutor. The writer maintains that while this method of tuition may be appropriate to the hard-working Honours man, it is entirely thrown away on the average Pass man, and that, in either case, the hour is useless if spent in discussing the prospects of the College boat in the latest phrase of College politics. It may of course be admitted that any good system is capable of abuse, and when so abused becomes futile and ineffective. But we should be sorry to see this excellent practice fall into disuse. The private hour spent with the tutor has, in the experience of innumerable Oxford men, been infinitely more inspiring, infinitely more productive of lasting good, than many hours of formal lectures. It is the time when, in the individual contact of mind with mind, personal faults can be detected, personal difficulties can be discussed, as the sympathetic tutor realizes the distinctive character of the pupil with whom he is dealing.

We have referred to this letter and the topic it discusses partly for its own interest and partly because it suggests a far wider application of the principle. We venture to urge upon the clergy and upon all Christian workers the paramount need for *personal* and *individual* work—for dealing separately with particular

"The
Private Hour."
The same
in Christian
Work.

individuals. We hear much to-day of the Church as a Body, and the tendency is to view men in the mass, and to deal with them in corporate fashion, in the way of Guilds, Societies, and Brotherhoods. We are much obsessed by the idea of the Church as a social organism. So much is this aspect of the matter present to our imaginations that we are apt to forget the claims and the excellences of the other one-by-one method—the method of seeking and winning individual souls. It was largely the method of our Lord. Seven of His Apostles, we know, were called one by one. The records of His dealing with individual souls form one of the most precious parts of the Gospel narrative. Many of the great saints and leaders of the Church have done their most effective work in this way. We have said that we believe this to be one of the soundest features in the intellectual discipline of the older Universities. We believe, too, that in the winning of souls for Christ and in the edifying of those who are His, it is the secret—at present a somewhat neglected secret—of fruitful and effective work.

Some little time ago a number of Churchmen, **Evangelicals and Liberals,** who, for purposes of distinctive classification, would be called "Broad," or "Liberal," combined to form the Churchmen's Union. The Union has now its organ, the *Modern Churchman*, edited by the Rev. H. D. A. Major. In the August issue of this magazine an earnest plea is made by the Rev. A. W. Cunningham Craig for friendship and co-operation between Liberal Churchmen and Evangelicals. He instances three matters in which the two groups of Churchmen are at one : (1) Opposition to the sacerdotal conception of the Christian Ministry ; (2) obedience to the law at present regulating public worship in the Church ; (3) the attitude towards other Christian bodies, especially the Free Churches. On the other hand, he does not close his eyes to the points on which difference of opinion exists between the two groups. These he summarizes as (1) the attitude towards Biblical criticism ; (2) the policy to be followed in Prayer-Book revision ; (3) the education question.

In the September number of the *Modern Churchman* there is a reply—somewhat critical, but on the whole cordial—from the Evangelical side, written by the Rev. W. J. Sommerville, and in the *Church Gazette* for October there is an article on the topic written in terms that are both sympathetic and friendly. As this article is unsigned, we presume that it may be taken as expressing the “official” attitude of the National Church League.

Possibility of
Co-operation.

We wish for our own part to express the warmest sympathy with the suggestions that have been so frankly made and so cordially received for a closer association. For the present we feel that it must rather be in the way of co-operation than of identification. We do not, as a matter of fact, think that on some of the points of “difference” younger Evangelical men are so far apart from the Liberals as Mr. Craig thinks they are. They are not, for instance, at all opposed to Prayer-Book revision in principle. They are only opposed to revision that is reactionary in character and subversive of truths asserted in the Reformation era. With regard to “Biblical criticism,” they welcome gladly all the light that reverent investigation can bring, and they would preclude nothing in the way of critical examination. What they dislike is that cool, detached attitude of merciless dissection—the spirit of ruthless analysis, mainly, at this stage, of a destructive character, which seems to them to characterize so much of the critical writing of the day. Evangelicals look upon the Bible as the Divinely inspired word of God. As such, they approach even the critical investigation of it in a spirit of awe and reverence. They do not accuse their Liberal brethren of a deficiency in this, but they think that the “Liberals” in a spirit of chivalry advocate the cause of extremers critics whose views they do not actually share. Once again, we welcome this movement towards co-operation, and we sincerely hope that the suggestions already made will not be allowed to sink fruitlessly for want of energetic action.