

THE CHURCHMAN

February, 1912.

The Month.

The Royal
Visit to
India.

THE visit of the King and Queen to India has a message for us, both as citizens of the Empire and as Christian believers. In the former capacity it brings home to us afresh the sense of the grave responsibility which the trusteeship for that great country involves. It is inhabited by many nations, of different faith, of different temperament and different speech. If the strong hand of England were removed, there is little doubt that a scene of wildest anarchy and bloodshed would ensue, in which the strong Mohammedan tribes from the North-West would probably emerge as triumphant conquerors. It is in the interest of peace and justice that England must continue to maintain her sway. And when we think of the matter as Christian men, the conviction impresses itself with renewed force, that the only thing which can act as an ultimate bond of union in all this great diversity is the Christian faith. The task of implanting it may be long and very difficult. Mohammedanism and Hinduism are firmly entrenched. It may be that the administrator for many days to come will be called on to rule the peoples of these faiths. But the missionary in the field and his supporters at home must both feel that England's truest and highest work will not be fulfilled till India is won for Jesus Christ.

It was an inspiration to be there: to see the serried ranks of clergy, old and young, and as many young as old, which filled the great hall, produced of

itself a sense of strength, of unity, and of purpose. To hear the old truths stated and applied in positive and practical form gave a sense of security and of responsibility. There was little of controversy at this year's Islington; perhaps here and there one or another of the hearers would have put a thought a little differently, would have varied the emphasis in a particular phrase; but in the main the presentation of the two great subjects of Holiness and of Service was such that neither Evangelicalism nor the Church at large need wish to vary it or be afraid of it. The papers reached an exceptionally high standard, and each speaker was eminently successful in putting that aspect of the subject with which he was entrusted. The *Record* does excellent service each year in issuing a verbatim report of the addresses in pamphlet form, and we hope that our readers will make use of the pamphlets for themselves and for others. The pamphlet is a clarion note calling us to higher ideals and clearer duty. Evangelicalism is not decadent, it is not really divided. Islington is proof to the contrary, but it is for us to carry the spirit of Islington into every diocese and parish in the country.

Our readers will have noticed with interest that
Evening Communion. Canon Paige Cox and Rev. W. S. Hooton have discussed in our pages the question of Evening Communion. Canon Paige Cox is a moderate Churchman with a strong resentment against the Romanizing tendencies of a section of the Church; but he does not like Evening Communion. We do not intend to deal with his reasons, as they are dealt with elsewhere in this number, in which another article on the same subject also appears. But we do desire to say two things: We regret and deprecate the painful fact that Evening Communion has tended to become a dividing line and a test, with the result that a certain amount of bitterness has crept into the discussion, not, we are thankful to say, into the discussion in our pages. We must not allow it to be a badge of partisanship. Secondly, despite Canon Paige Cox's courteous

and careful article, we see no reason for departure from our own position. Christ instituted the Holy Communion in the evening. Men need it and flock to it in the evening still. These two statements form an argument which to us seems irrefragable. Evening Communion is in no need of apology. The *onus probandi* is not with us, but with others. The example of Christ is the warrant for the practice. In view of that, to restrict a means of grace to a particular hour of the day is surely uncatholic, unapostolic, unprimitive, we had almost said, were it not for the obvious sincerity of such writers as Canon Paige Cox, immoral.

It is not our custom to discuss in these Monthly Notes questions that are at issue only in the field of party politics. Sometimes, however, it happens that the points debated by the politicians have interest for a wider circle. The recently translated Papal decree, *Motu Proprio*, is a case in point. To the politicians who are fighting to win Home Rule in Ireland, it cannot be other than a staggering blow. However profusely the explanations may be poured forth that this is nothing but a piece of internal legislation reaffirming an existing law, and only intended to prevent un-Christian litigation between members of the same Christian community, a grave suspicion has been aroused in the minds of the general public as to the fetters by which the future administration of justice in Ireland, under a Home Rule régime, may be hampered. To the detached observer the interesting question is suggested: "What is the policy of the Vatican towards Home Rule?" Is the promulgation of this decree an unfortunate accident, or is it the first step in a deeply laid and insidious scheme of opposition to the whole project? It needs a subtle mind to follow the workings of Papal diplomacy. The whole episode reveals something of the fixity of Papal policy. The shade of Becket might well exult to think that the cause for which he contended so fiercely with Henry II. is a living force in politics to-day.

Parents and
the Bible.

In the months of December and January many groups of educationalists meet in annual conference. The records of their proceedings are too often regarded as being merely of interest to experts. As a matter of fact the debates are frequently concerned with questions of the deepest interest both to parents and to all who care for the training of the rising generation. For example, the Headmasters' Conference in December had an interesting discussion on Bible teaching in schools. The Headmaster of Harrow, in moving certain resolutions, spoke of it as a subject

“in which the efforts and the enthusiasm of individuals were largely hampered by congested time-tables and curricula tending to crowd Scripture out or give it an inferior position, and a subject to which, he feared, the British parent and British homes were lending a constantly decreasing support.”

This is a grave indictment for the head of a great public school to bring against the general body of parents. While we are contending warmly with one another as to the precise method in which religious instruction is to be given in the elementary schools of the country, shall we not do well to set another department of the British house in order, and see to it, so far as parental influence and pressure can help, that Bible teaching be not “crowded out” of the preparatory and public schools of the land?

The Whole
Bible.

In spite of this lack of parental interest, the Conference is making a strenuous attempt to secure a proper place for the study of the Bible in Preparatory Schools. On one point in the proposed methods there was a difference of opinion. This was the proposal to use a “Schools' Bible,” to be issued by the Clarendon Press and consisting of certain selections from the Old and New Testaments. The principle of selection seems to be that the narrative portion of both Testaments, should, with certain excisions, be retained, but that such matter as the Prophetic writings in the Old and the Epistles in the New Testament should be excluded, as being

more suitable for a later age. Strong opinions were expressed in the debate against this "bowdlerizing" of the Bible. We sympathize warmly with these opinions, and are glad that the note recommending this treatment of the Bible was eventually dropped. There is the greatest need in these days of literary analysis and *Quellenkritik* to recall to the minds of all, both young and old, the idea of the Bible as a whole. We have heard much in late years of the "Divine Library"; it is time now to insist on the idea of a Divine Book. Nor can we think that to take the Bible as a whole, including all the passages only suited to more mature study and appreciation, has ever done appreciable harm to boy or girl. The teaching of the whole Bible, under the direction of believing and reverent instructors, is what the present rising generation needs.

On the second Sunday after Epiphany a sermon

An Unwise Sermon. was preached (we do not say where or by whom, for we want to deal with principles, not persons) on the Miracle at Cana. It was long, and the latter half was a good sermon on Christ and the family. That latter half could have stood alone, and we should have listened and been edified. But to it was prefixed a lengthy introduction, of which the main thesis was this: This incident is not to be regarded as historical fact. The proof ran somewhat thus: modern scholars agree that St. John's Gospel is a spiritual and symbolical Gospel. Therefore it is not historical. But, we venture to ask, are symbolical and historical mutually exclusive terms? Then we were told for our comfort—comfort forsooth!—that Origen and Clement of Alexandria said the same thing. What the majority of scholars, ancient and modern, do say is this: St. John, writing later than the other Evangelists, selected the incidents which he records for a spiritual purpose. It does not in the least follow that they were unhistorical. The sermon therefore tended to mislead the congregation. It tended also to shock; and shocks of this kind discredit true scholarship and criticism and can do no possible good. The spiritual lesson of the marriage at Cana gains

nothing—nay, loses much—if we discredit the historicity of the incident. We venture to assert that there is no evidence against the historicity. The details, the unnecessary details of the story, are strong corroboration of that historicity. Who, if he were writing a symbolic parable, would introduce his *dramatis personæ* thus: The mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also and His disciples were called. If it is historical, obviously we gather that the invitation came through Mary, and hence the order. If it is merely symbolical, it is extraordinarily bad art. We make our protest and remind ourselves of two phrases used at Islington: “the spirit of modernism which evaporates the historical Christ”; and again, “a non-miraculous Christianity is no Christianity at all.”

Examinations. The Consultative Committee on Examinations in Secondary Schools has recently issued a report which is of the greatest interest to parents as well as to professional teachers. One point emerges with the greatest clearness: The examination system in its present form is doomed. The variety of external examinations for which the pupils of an ordinary secondary school have to be prepared is so great and so manifold that the conditions both for teachers and pupils are rapidly becoming intolerable. “The number of these examinations,” say the Commissioners, “should be reduced. Their pressure upon the early years of school life should be relieved.” The report rightly suggests that examination should be accompanied, to a far greater extent than has hitherto been the case, with inspection. How far the teacher should have, not merely a share in the examining, but a determining voice in the success or failure of the pupil, is perhaps a more debatable point. It is the appearance of the report as a whole that is a most hopeful portent. Parents who have witnessed and deplored the strain to which their children have been subjected in their efforts to pass the various “locals” and “certificates” will welcome the possibility of change. Schoolmasters, distracted in the effort to prepare pupils for various external examinations, will gladly

welcome any scheme that tends to the unification and simplification of the present chaotic state of things.

Our contemporary, the *Modern Churchman*, has in the December number an appreciative note on "The Modern Churchman," that section of Canon Denton Thompson's "Central Churchmanship" which deals with Biblical criticism. The words quoted go, we think, as far as any Liberal Churchman of reverent mind could wish. They claim the right to use for the understanding of Scripture "reliable evidence from whatever source it comes," unhindered by "theological prejudice" and "religious prepossession." To do this is one thing. It is quite another thing, in obedience to a passing phase of thought, or to principles imported from some entirely different branch of investigation, lightly to discard the views that have appeared to the Christian consciousness of many generations. It is one thing to give *due* weight to all available evidence. It is a totally different thing to give *undue* weight to the most recent thing that offers itself as evidence. In claiming the right to free inquiry, we are at one with our friends of the *Modern Churchman*. We venture to think, however, that in their brave and chivalrous defence of men and books which have gone beyond the limits which they themselves would probably lay down, they have laid themselves open to some misunderstanding, and they can hardly grumble if general public opinion tends to identify them with those on whose behalf they have spoken. Is there not room here for the Apostolic precept: "Let not then your good be evil spoken of"?

The Secretary of the English Church Union has recently issued his Annual Letter to the members of that body. Things are not going entirely as they wish. What, according to Mr. Hill, the ultra-High Churchmen lack, is leadership. To quote his own words:

"There are opportunities of knowing by intimate association with one's fellows in various branches of Church work how zeal and devotion to the

Church are growing among men. Nothing seems to damp their ardour, not even the aberrations of certain Bishops in the Northern Province. If our rulers only knew what an army they could command they would have few anxieties touching the present, or, indeed, respecting the future. There is no Government or political party in England which would dare to affront the Church in regard to her rights, her liberties, her orders, her discipline, and her ceremonial, if she were properly led."

It is a good thing that the firm stand which the Bishops of the Northern Province are making for Catholic Churchmanship is recognized as a real factor in the situation by those who take sectarian views. In speaking of the proposals for Prayer-Book revision, Mr. Hill falls foul of our excellent contemporary, the *Spectator*. His words, again, may best tell their own tale :

"One thing is becoming clearer every day, and that is that the vast majority of Church-people are sick of these proposals and will have none of them. The world will never cease in its opposition ; but the distressing feature is the number of Church-people, and among them from time to time rulers in the Church, who do not seem to grasp this fact, and who appear to think that everything will go well if the *Spectator* type of layman is appeased. Laymen who spend their lives in the work of the Church are not often able to discover the *Spectator* type engaged in that ceaseless war against the world, the flesh, and the devil, in which the so-called 'ecclesiastically-minded' layman bears his daily part."

It is quite true that the *Spectator* does not approach the consideration of ecclesiastical topics from the point of view of the English Church Union. But the *Spectator* always takes a frank and bold stand for the supremacy of religion in our national life. The *Spectator* type of layman is one who is striving earnestly that the educational problem may be so solved that the influence of the Bible and of Christianity may be maintained intact. The last sentence in the passage quoted is very much beside the mark. Whatever the "*Spectator* type" may do, the *Spectator* itself has earned the undying gratitude of all Christians by the zeal and ability with which it has exposed and castigated the more unclean and demoralizing elements that have appeared of late years in modern fiction. The *Spectator* may be somewhat cool and judicious, but its existence is a great asset for Christianity and righteousness in our land.