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THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1909.

The Month.

Church Finance.

THE announcement that the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have appointed a Committee to consider the Report on Methods of Church Finance is very welcome, though, as the *Times* truly said, "the general public can only express their wonder that some such step was not taken years ago." The Committee will consider the position, administration, and mutual relation of the various funds, whether raised by voluntary subscription or the result of endowment. It will therefore be one of the first duties of the Committee to correlate these various funds, and then to show to the Church as a whole its financial responsibility. The *Times* very wisely favours one Financial Board for the whole of England and Wales, and expresses the hope that "our ecclesiastics can be brought so far to disregard the Gregorian division of our country into two different Provinces." One instance is given in the same article to show the need of action in regard to Church finance :

"There are in this country about one hundred and fifty societies for the relief of poor clergy, their widows, and their children. Most of these societies come—quite independently—to the benevolent public for financial support. It sometimes happens that half a dozen of them at once are—still quite independently—assisting a 'deserving case.' Clerical charity, like Church finance, of which it is a branch, has neither centre nor unity."

We shall wait with keen and confident interest the outcome of the appointment of this Committee.

The
Wounds of
a Friend.

In the New York *Churchman* the editor, Mr. Silas McBee, in the course of a striking article on the recent Lambeth Conference, calls attention to some facts which are of the utmost importance to English Churchmen :

“The English Church baptizes annually nearly 600,000 children, and about 13,000 adults. It confirms about 227,000 annually. If the religious system of education in England were Christianizing in its effect, some fair proportion of the baptized and the confirmed would be added to the communicant list of the English Church. But out of over 600,000 baptisms and nearly 250,000 confirmations annually, the English Church for the past eight years has shown an average annual increase of only 16,000 communicants.”

We are not at all surprised that Mr. McBee speaks of this as a damaging record, for it certainly is, and shows that, in spite of all we have done in connection with religious education, the leakage is very terrible. At the opening of another autumn and winter season of parochial work this problem ought to be considered.

Anglican
Isolation.

Mr. McBee, in the same article, goes on to call attention to the relation of the Anglican Communion to other bodies of English-speaking Christians, in the following words :

“Out of the 500,000,000 adherents of Christianity in the world there are over 100,000,000 English-speaking Christians, and only 30,000,000 Anglicans. It is impossible to escape responsibility for our isolation from these millions of followers of Christ in our own lands on both sides of the water. I know of nothing that we possess that can excuse, much less justify, the continuation of that isolation. I am constrained to believe that the Historic Churches especially insist upon following the mistaken disciples in demanding *a following with us* and refusing to obey the incarnate Christ, whose test was that everyone who worked in His name was on His side; who with equal clearness applied the other test when the choice was between Beelzebub and Christ—he that is not with us is against us. Just because we insist upon unity with the past and authority from Christ it devolves upon us to follow Him in His positive tests of discipleship.”

Could anything be more patent than the lesson to be drawn from these facts? Our present isolation is at once harmful to ourselves and to the wider interests of the kingdom of God. If only those who are clamouring for reunion on the basis of

a strict episcopacy would heed these facts to which Mr. McBee calls attention, and which were confirmed very significantly by Dr. Stalker's article in our last month's number, we should be nearer the goal of Christian unity than we are at present. "Facts are stubborn things," and will not be ignored.

For three months the columns of the *Guardian* have been very largely taken up by a correspondence on the subject of Fasting Communion; and while Evangelical Churchmen have quite naturally not taken any special part in the controversy, it has been a real interest to Moderate Churchmen to observe the line of cleavage between the two sections of the High Churchmen on this subject. The rigorists have insisted upon Fasting Communion as of universal and perpetual obligation, which will not admit of any exception or dispensation. The other side argues for the practice on the ground of expediency, but allows liberty to the individual communicant. The *Guardian*, in a leader summing up the correspondence, rightly says that it is impossible to regard the proofs of Apostolic origin of the practice as very satisfactory. This is to put it with excessive mildness, for everything we know about Apostolic practice points in the other direction. The *Guardian* thinks that the reason for the universal adoption of the custom of Fasting Communion was the desire to secure reverence, and to safeguard the Eucharist against profanation from gluttony and drunkenness. This may have been so at the outset, but, unless we are greatly mistaken, the practice very soon became associated with a peculiar (and really materialistic) theory of the presence of the Lord in the elements, which it was considered irreverent to receive after other food. But the real question to-day is as to the obligation upon English Churchmen in regard to the practice, and the overwhelming majority of Churchmen will at once and very heartily agree with the *Guardian* in the following words :

"Those who maintain the extreme rigorist view, and hold that the Church of England has no power to act in a matter of custom and discipline, and

that since the Universal Episcopate of Christendom cannot be convoked, a custom once accepted must be for ever stereotyped, have become the slaves of a theory, and are ignoring facts."

In our judgment, the whole idea of Fasting Communion savours of materialism and inability to enter into the full spiritual meaning of the Holy Communion as instituted by our Lord and recorded in the New Testament. If only we could adhere closely to the simplicity and sufficiency of the New Testament teaching, the whole question of Fasting or non-Fasting Communion would pale into insignificance. The spirit of true Communion does not depend upon the condition of fasting or the opposite, or on times and seasons. It is "the heart that makes" the communicant as well as "the theologian."

A Striking
Appeal.

Bishop Hamlyn, of the Gold Coast, has recently sent home an urgent appeal for help. In calling attention to the monthly review of the S.P.G. work by Bishop Montgomery, in which the Bishop speaks of meagre pittances which alone the S.P.G. can dole out to their workers, Bishop Hamlyn makes the following comment :

"On the same page of the paper that contains the report of the S.P.G. monthly meeting I read the account of the presentation of an additional and most costly vestment to one of the home churches, for a man to wear only very occasionally. The garment is of the most costly materials and workmanship, richly decorated with jewels and real pearls, and finished with a morse rich with jewels. Is it right thus to go on spending on the needless decoration of the clergy and of the church money that is so urgently needed, and would provide churches and pay clergy, where so often one man has to try and work a district as large as the United Kingdom? The heathen come to us with pathetic appeals for teachers, and we have to hide our heads in confusion while we refuse; and they ask—as they do ask—'Do Christians in England really care whether we perish in darkness or not?'"

Surely these solemn words ought to go to the heart of everyone concerned. When the mission-field is so inadequately provided with bare necessities for spiritual work, it ought to be impossible for us to spend money on unnecessary decorations of churches and men, and on extravagant additions to organs and other adjuncts to our services. Bishop Hamlyn, speaking of his own huge diocese, says that if it is not Christianized it will soon

become Mohammedan. Here is an opportunity for us to test our Churchmanship in the best possible way.

The circular letter of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, to which reference was made last month, has been utilized as the occasion of a correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph*, and we are glad that wide attention should thus be given to a most valuable appeal on behalf of spiritual methods for spiritual work. One point in the letter has especially caused a stir—the appeal to clergy to regard theatrical performances “as a serious menace to the spiritual influence of the Church.” This has been taken as the text of an article on “The Morality of the Stage,” which appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* for August 28, by its well-known dramatic critic. The following extracts deserve careful attention :

“So long as religion enjoins the virtue of chastity, its professors must look with hostility upon the very numerous pieces in which women, often young and beautiful, are presented in dresses radically immodest. . . . The tendency of the stage, broadly speaking, is to preach a kind of conventional morality far below the standard admissible by serious people. One may go further, and say that plays have been produced, particularly French plays, such as the clever works of M. Capus, in which the accepted ideas of the sanctity of marriage are treated with contempt. . . . For years past a large proportion of plays have concerned themselves with the question of the seventh commandment ; and whilst, as a rule, in order to dodge the Censor, it is pretended that no actual breach has occurred, the audience know that this is merely a pretence. It may be stated with confidence that in a large number of these plays the question of adultery is handled so facetiously as to tend to cause people to regard it as a trivial matter ; whilst in numbers of the others, where the matter is handled more seriously, the actual consequences of sin are of such little inconvenience to the sinners that, although theoretically the plays preach a moral, the actual lesson is of no weight at all. . . . No doubt there are exceptions. . . . Yet, speaking with a really substantial knowledge of the subject, I feel bound to say that if I were a religious man in the normal sense of the word, and had to answer the question candidly whether the influence of our stage is good or evil, I should have no hesitation in saying that, despite much that is good and admirable, the balance is seriously to the bad. I think our theatre as a whole does a little good ; I am sure that it does a great deal of harm.”

There is much more in the article to the same effect, and it is not the testimony of a narrow “Puritan,” but of a man of the

world who does not claim to be religious. Then, again, a recent play by Sir Arthur Pinero is described by the dramatic critic of the *Times* as "sordid, brutal, ugly," and adds that the author "seems to have been at all possible pains to disgust us with all his chief characters." In the face of such testimonies, can it be fairly said that the modern stage is an institution which deserves the support of the Christian public?

Two recent illustrations of the problem of the Church and Stage. stage in relation to the Church may be given.

The following is an account given of a Commemoration Festival in connection with a theological college :

"The Commemoration Festival in connection with the College of the Resurrection was held on Saturday last. At 6 a.m. Low Mass, Matins, and Prime were said in the House Chapel, and High Mass was sung at 7 a.m. . . . At 3 p.m. a procession was formed in the House Chapel, and proceeded through the grounds to the College quadrangle. . . . The Graduals, Psalms, and Antiphons were sung in procession. In the quadrangle the *Te Deum* and the hymn 'Now thank we all our God' was sung, and an address was given by the Superior. Psalms and Antiphons were sung from the College to the Chapel, where the Blessing was given. Later in the afternoon tea was served on the house lawn, after which the College Dramatic Society presented 'A Pair of Spectacles,' which was preceded by 'The Man in the Street.' The plays were much enjoyed by all, and the festival will be long remembered by all who were present."

And a writer in a religious paper is able to speak of Sir Arthur Pinero's play mentioned above (to which the *Times* referred as "sordid, brutal, ugly,") as "profoundly moral," and "possessing loftiness of purpose." Yet the same writer speaks of it as "sordid, and indeed a vulgar story," and says that "the whole play is unpleasant." It is evident that we are here faced by two ideals of the place and power of the stage in human life. How can what the writer admits to be a "sordid, and indeed a vulgar story," really tend to purity and righteousness? No wonder that the Speaker of the House of Commons has just been pleading not only against the abolition of the Censorship, but also in favour of a much stricter supervision. As Canon Streatfeild wrote in the *Record* of September 10, the Church should take some steps to say what the Speaker and other

like-minded witnesses have been saying with such convincing power.

We referred in our August number to the remarkable articles by Professor Eerdmans. In the *The Critical Revolt*, *Glasgow Herald* for August 28, under the heading of "A Critical Revolt," Dr. Orr calls attention to Professor Eerdmans' two recent volumes on the subject. Here is Kuenen's own pupil and successor, a long-convinced defender of the Wellhausen theory, now coming forth as its avowed antagonist, and saying that he renounces his connection with the Wellhausen school, and contests generally the documentary hypothesis. Well may Dr. Orr speak in the following words :

"The phenomenon is certainly startling, though doubtless efforts will not be wanting to show that, like an adverse by-election, it means nothing. Eerdmans is not a scholar whose erudition can be despised. He is not a 'traditionalist' whose bias may be supposed to incline him to conservative positions. He is not—and this may be noted at once—a 'conservative' in any sense. His standpoint, so far as appears, is as 'rationalistic' as his predecessor's, and his own theories are probably in many ways as open to criticism as those which he opposes. This, however, only adds significance to his uncompromising revolt from the reigning school. The theory which he assails he knows right well, for he was himself trained in it, he has lived in it, and every page he writes shows his minute acquaintance with its details. And his condemnation of it is complete. The reasonings, too, by which his contention is supported are, if far from new, of a character which, coming from such a source, cannot be lightly set aside. This, too, from Kuenen's own chair! One can say, without risk of exaggeration, that, given a few more such assaults, a good many of our Bible dictionaries will have to be written anew."

It is perfectly evident that we are not by any means at the end of Old Testament problems. What the dominant school of modern criticism has spoken of as "assured results" are as far from certainty as ever, and all this discussion justifies to the full the hesitation of conservative scholars, and their determination not to be carried away by the stream that has been running so free and full in the direction of a denial of that view of the Old Testament which has come down to us from Apostolic times.