

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE CHURCHMAN

May, 1909.

The Month.

A Call to Thought and Prayer. SIR EDWARD GREY does not speak very often, but when he does it is to the point, and his words carry deserved weight. His recent speech in the House of Commons on the naval question received widespread attention, and made a profound impression. In these columns we have nothing whatever to do with the political aspects of his utterances, but as Christians and Churchmen we ought to ponder carefully the following words :

“I would ask the people to consider to what consequences the growth of armaments has led. The great countries of Europe are raising enormous revenues, and something like one half of them is being spent on naval and military preparations. You may call it national insurance—that is perfectly true ; but it is equally true that one half of the national revenue of the great countries in Europe is being spent on what are, after all, preparations to kill each other. Surely the extent to which this expenditure has grown really becomes a satire and a reflection upon civilization.”

A satire and a reflection indeed ! And yet also, and chiefly, a call to prayer. As the *Guardian* truly says, political power is evidently unable to put a stop to this ruinous competition, but the Christian Church has surely something to do in the matter. A correspondent suggests a day of universal prayer for peace, and, with the *Guardian*, we wish that such an idea could be realized. But, even if this should prove impossible, the subject of peace can and should occupy a prominent place in our personal and parochial intercessions. No one could possibly set bounds to the awful conflagration which would ensue if war

broke out in Europe. Let us, therefore, make this a matter of urgent and constant prayer: "Give peace in our time, O Lord."

The Birmingham Controversy. The correspondence between the Bishop of Birmingham and Canon Henson has not been pleasant reading for Churchmen, and it is impossible to avoid regret that the circumstances ever occurred. In view of the recent utterances of the Lambeth Conference on Reunion, and the suggestions about meetings with brethren of other Churches for purposes of mutual understanding, Canon Henson's action was not altogether unnatural, and he might have been allowed to fulfil his engagement to the Rev. J. H. Jowett unhindered. The Vicar of St. Gabriel's does not emerge from this controversy particularly well, and, in the light of the facts connected with his church, it would have been wiser if he had not come into the arena of publicity. As it is, people have not only become aware of his existence by his unworthy remarks to Canon Henson, but attention has been called to the work of his Church. St. Gabriel's is situated in a poor part of Birmingham; it has a population of 4,800, and the parish church has accommodation for 650. The character of the church may be gauged from the fact that it was one of those in the then Diocese of Worcester which was reported to the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline, and on the occasion of the correspondent's visit there were actually only seven adults and the same number of children at the Sunday midday service. A Royal Commissioner might well express surprise at this, and call it remarkable. As a correspondent in the *Guardian* aptly asks, even supposing Bishop Gore to be right, was it wise of him "to place this obstacle in the way of Christian people, who are actually doing work which the Church has not been able to undertake?" Into the question of the legality of Canon Henson's act we do not enter, for it is, apparently, to be tested. While, from one point of view, we naturally regret that Canon Henson could not see his way to accept the Bishop's inhibition, we

regret still more keenly that Bishop Gore should have allowed himself to take this extreme step. A word to the Vicar, or else no notice at all, would have been far wiser in view of the facts of the case, and particularly in the face of the splendid work Mr. Jowett and his people are doing in the very heart of that slum parish where, as it would seem, the Church seems to be doing very little. It is difficult, too, to understand the Bishop's resolute action in this matter in the light of his unwillingness to insist on the law being kept by clergymen in his own diocese, the Vicar of St. Gabriel's included. Canon Henson goes to the heart of the matter in the following words :

“If there be real validity in the argument which you offered to the Ecclesiastical Disorders Commission, by which, in the teeth of the plainest declarations of law, you tolerate and even encourage in parish churches practices which are in your judgment legitimate, because their suppression would inflict a grievous wound on many consciences, can you refuse the like validity to the same argument urged by other English Churchmen in behalf of similar acquiescence in breaches of the law, though the consciences which would be hurt by a rigorous legality would not be those whose scruples you yourself share or sympathize with ?

“It has long seemed to me a melancholy and very suggestive contrast which is presented when one considers the attitude of the Bishops on the subject (say) of vestments, and that of preaching, or even lecturing, in a Nonconformist church. In the one case, though the illegal character of the act in question is undoubted, there is a general agreement that for the sake of peace there shall be no attempt made to enforce the law. In the other case, though the act is very probably quite legal, the whole public and private influence of the Bench is thrown into the scale against it.”

We naturally, and with justice, look for impartial administration from our Bishops, and not for anything that seems to favour one side at the expense of the other. The *Record* has recently pointed out, what has been known to a good many for some time, that Liddon House, a High Church institution, was planted down, with the sanction of the Bishop of London, in the parish of Brompton, not only without the Vicar's leave, but without his knowledge until within a few days of the actual opening. And only the other day the Bishop of London appointed as Vicar to a Holloway church which has been Evangelical ever since its foundation a curate whose associa-

tions and antecedents have been definitely High Church. Yet it is not much more than a year ago that the Bishop made a strong plea for continuity, and took action to prevent a contemplated change by which a Broad Churchman was to follow an extreme man. Why should not Evangelical rights and continuity be also recognized and preserved?

The
Natural
Voice.

The Bishop of Birmingham has just issued a series of definite recommendations as to the way in which Church services should be rendered. They are so valuable that we print the first six in full :

"1. It is desirable that all prayers said in the vestry or in the pulpit should be said and responded to with an Amen, in a natural voice, without any organ.

"2. At choral Morning and Evening Prayer the introductory portion (before the opening versicle, 'O Lord, open Thou') should be said by the minister, and the Confession and Lord's Prayer should be joined in by the people, in a natural voice or on a very low note, without any organ.

"3. With due regard to acoustic necessities, the prayers after the Third Collect should be read by the minister, and responded to by the people in the natural voice, without any organ.

"4. Inasmuch as the services of Morning and Evening Prayer have an introductory part, which is intended to be introductory, it does not seem desirable ordinarily to sing any opening hymn before this.

"5. In all cases of versicles or petitions with responses, or prayers with Amens, the minister should (in respect of singing, monotoning, or saying) as far as possible do as the people and choir do—*i.e.*, if the response be inflected or monotoned, so should the versicle or petition in the Litany.

"6. In choral celebrations of the Holy Communion there are parts which should be said and not sung; amongst them, the Invitation, Confession, Absolution, Comfortable Words, and the Prayer of Humble Access."

We are in hearty agreement with the Bishop when he expresses his belief that "in every parish where these suggestions are acted upon there will be a real advance made both in liturgical propriety and spiritual edification." Such words, coming from the Bishop of Birmingham, are in the highest degree significant, and fully justify those Churchmen who have insisted on adhering to the use of the natural voice in the conduct of Divine Service. We sincerely hope these wise words will be heeded. They come as a welcome confirmation of the Bishop

of Liverpool's similar plea in his recent Charge. This is what Bishop Chavasse says :

“Why should it be thought necessary for a man to whom God has given a strong and melodious voice to cast aside its natural use when he draws near to pray to God? Why should he suddenly assume an unnatural tone and a rapidity of utterance which are apt to surprise even his most intimate friends when they hear them for the first time? Our forefathers put on a preaching voice in the pulpit, and they were rightly told to be natural, and before the just criticism of the pew the preaching voice has disappeared. Why should we adopt in the reading-desk, on the plea of a musical service, a praying voice? To the great majority of our Church-people there are few things more painful than to have to take part in a service sung by a clergyman whose musical gifts and knowledge are slender, and by a half-trained and sometimes not very devotional choir. Such services strike the ordinary worshipper as mechanical and unreal.”

We should like these admirable words of the two Bishops to be printed in leaflet form and scattered broadcast. They would do immense service to the cause of “spiritual edification” in the Church. There are literary and spiritual beauties in our Prayer-Book which are practically unknown to many people because of the attempts to modernize the services by a so-called musical rendering.

Although no public action seems likely to be taken on this subject for some time, it is impossible to avoid noticing the real significance of certain recent events. Not the least important is the letter of Mr. Athelstan Riley, which has been rightly regarded by the *Times* and other organs as eminently favourable to peace. Although it may not indicate any change of policy, the spirit of the letter is very different from that which has hitherto been manifested by Mr. Riley and those who think with him. It shows, at any rate, that he is conscious of the gravity and complexity of the present situation, and of the impossibility of things remaining where they are. Then, the address of the President of the National Union of Teachers at Morecambe on Easter Monday was noteworthy for its frank and fearless advocacy of secular schools. It is surely a fact of great importance that the official

The
Education
Question.

spokesman of the teachers should express his conviction that the only way of peace is to secularize the schools. It is an awful sarcasm on our profession of Christianity, and if ever secularism comes to pass, it will be due, as we have often said, to the extremists on both sides, whose demands have hitherto made compromise impossible. Another important and truly significant fact which has come to light during the past month is the serious diminution in the number of voluntary schools. While ten new Church schools were opened, one hundred were closed. This by itself is surely an indication, as the *Guardian* wisely says, that the plain duty of Churchmen is to "seek for a settlement on sound, constructive lines." The present controversies are doing much to prevent us from having an efficient national system of primary education, and thereby from keeping pace with other nations. While other countries have settled their elementary education problems, and are giving themselves systematically to thorough primary education and compulsory continuation schools, we are still surrounded with inefficiency, still maintaining the deplorable system of half-time schools, and still apparently far from any compulsory continuation schools. If once the religious question could be got out of the way, we believe it would not be long before the mass of the people could be made to realize that education, both on personal and national grounds, is a matter of vital consequence and far-reaching importance.

Vestments. There are still no signs of acceptance of the York proposals as a basis of compromise on the part of those who wear the Vestments, and perhaps we shall hear nothing more until after Convocation meets this month. Meanwhile a few indications of representative opinion may be recorded. The Evangelical clergy of Liverpool have passed a resolution, with five dissentients, affirming their belief that the York proposals will not make for peace. At a meeting held at the Church House, called in support of the present law, a Ritualistic clergyman was invited to speak, and he did so to

some point. After saying that the Vestments in their origin meant nothing at all, but were simply connected with ordinary civilian dress, he went on to express his opinion about them as they are used ecclesiastically to-day :

“As the representative of a very large number of clergy and laity, although he spoke without their authority, he wanted to say very clearly that the Vestments as used to-day in the Church of England did mean a very great deal. High Churchmen would be very strongly antagonistic to any sort of attempt to draw a legal line of distinction between the two parties in the Church, either in the way of legalizing or forbidding the Vestments. He wanted to give a clear answer as to why the Vestments were used. When they spoke of the restoration of the Mass in the Church of England, or, as he should prefer to put it, the restoration to its proper position of the Mass in the Church of England—the restoration of the Mass as a sacrifice for the living and the dead, a sacrifice for worship, thanksgiving, and intercession—the use of the Vestments, broadly speaking, meant that. The clergy who used the Vestments used them for the purpose of restoring the Mass to the position, practically speaking, of the Roman Catholic Church.”

This is exactly what very many Churchmen have known for a long time past. The only true view of the Vestments is to be obtained from those who use them. Those who wish to keep themselves abreast of facts and considerations on this subject should make a point of studying the *Church Gazette* for April, which is full of able and forcible points against any alteration of the law. Not least in importance was the letter in the *Times*, signed “D.,” honoured by large type, asking the pertinent question whether the York proposals would really make for peace, unity, and the establishment of the authority of the law :

“But is there the slightest reason to suppose that this gain would be secured? Is there a single priest of the pre-Reformation school who is prepared to renounce, in deference to any law of an Erastian Church, the practices on which he sets so much value? Is there a single Bishop who will undertake to enforce the altered law ?

“Failing such engagements, we know what experience would lead us to anticipate. The Ritualistic clergy would go on defying the law, in company with Passive Resisters and the Amazons of to-day, and the Bishops would continue to think it impolitic to coerce them. But it would also be proclaimed that the Protestant section of the Church had been driven to a surrender, and some clergymen who have hitherto hesitated to adopt a Eucharistic Vestment would be emboldened to indulge their desire. The

Church as a whole would have been dragged a step back towards the the medievalist ideal."

Surely this goes straight to the heart of the matter.

The Lenten addresses at Birmingham Cathedral by Bishop Gore show that he still favours the impossible position on the Christian Ministry which he expounded in his well-known book on the subject. Impossible, we venture to say, both from the standpoint of the New Testament and also from that of Church history. It is only by exercising imagination to a remarkable degree that his theory of the Ministry can be made even approximately historical. Lightfoot's great contention still holds the field that Episcopacy came from the Presbyterate, and not from the Apostolate; and until the Bishop of Birmingham can set this aside on absolutely irrefragable grounds, his characteristic position on Apostolic Succession, with all its serious and far-reaching effects, will inevitably fail to obtain the assent of the best historical scholarship. But the Bishop's frank and fearless utterances on certain aspects of his subject fill us with hope that he will yet be enabled to see the impossibility of his main contentions. Thus, nothing could be finer than these words from one of the addresses:

There was a book that had a great fascination for him—"The First Lay Preachers of the Methodists." Reading this book, he asked himself why these men not within the Church came to be outside it. It was in part their fault. No doubt they were somewhat hard to discipline, but in the main it was half the fault of the Church that they were not within. They were precisely the men the Church needed to reawaken her out of her dead sleep. There was a freedom which we required in the State; we required the State, moreover, to give freedom to religious bodies to exercise their own affairs, but there was a freedom required also within the Church. We wanted to cultivate the ideal of freedom.

This ideal of freedom is what Evangelical Churchmen have been cultivating for many years, and this in substance is what Canon Henson meant when he showed sympathy with Mr. Jowett and his work. Holding such a view of freedom, we do

not wonder that Bishop Gore spoke of his action in inhibiting Canon Henson as "a great bore." His heart is evidently well set in the direction of spiritual liberty, and some day we look to see him in the van of progress.

Although we have not been able to agree with the Bishop of Liverpool's plea for compromise in the matter of the Vestments, we are profoundly thankful for many helpful and inspiring suggestions contained in his Charge. We have already referred to one point, and shall probably have occasion to refer to another next month, for which we have no room at present; but we must call special attention to the Bishop's closing words as he pleads with the clergy in particular for a closer walk with God as the secret of increased efficiency in parish work. We wish it were possible for us to insert the whole of the earnest and forceful plea, but the following words are the very heart of it :

"Let men take knowledge of us that we have been with Christ, and let us go back to tell Him what we have done and what we have taught. His presence is our peace, our strength, our inspiration, and our sunshine. It makes drudgery Divine. It gilds the blackest slum with the radiance of heaven. Let us keep close to Him by watching against sin, by prayer, by reading of Holy Scripture, by the use of the Holy Communion, by self-discipline, and by devoted service."

There are few more significant passages in the Bible than these nine words : " There they dwelt with the King for His work."

NOTE.—Owing to unforeseen difficulties at the last moment, the continuation of the Symposium on "Home Reunion" has to be deferred until next month, when a contribution to the discussion will be made by a representative Nonconformist scholar, Professor Vernon Bartlet, D.D., of Mansfield College, Oxford. The subject is, however, involved in the Bishop of Carlisle's article in this issue.

