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THE CHURCHMAN

May, 1912.

The Month.

The Coal Strike. THE strike is ended, but none too happily. The effort to bring peace, made so patiently and so gallantly by Mr. Asquith, failed, and the aid of an Act of Parliament had to be invoked. We do not wish to say anything about the conduct of either side, but we do point out that the country is faced with a problem which will need the most careful handling, unless it is to spell ruin for all. These recurrent strikes are not merely matters between masters and men, the nation is as vitally concerned as either. In the particular strike just ended, it has been difficult to decide with whom public sympathy lay and what public opinion on the matter was. The difficulty was caused by the technical character of the dispute. This means that, for the real settlement on proper and peaceful lines of the difficulties between capital and labour, we must have an educated public opinion. If this is true of public influence it is particularly true of religious influence. The Church cannot guide where it does not understand. We have said it before, but we must say it again. The study of social problems is part of the duty of the Church. The Conservative Churchman is afraid of that study, because most of it has hitherto been done by the Socialist and Liberal. There the Conservative Churchman has largely failed of his duty. We presume that behind a political position, as behind a religious position, there are principles. It behoves us

surely to study our social problems and to apply our principles to them. Principles that are incapable of application cannot be very valuable.

In an article in the *Hibbert Journal* for April, **The Right to Strike.** Mr. Robert A. Duff discusses the question of the right to strike. Mr. Duff sees that if that right is carried too far it may cease to be a right and to become an act of tyranny. He counsels the more excellent way of mutual understanding and the wooing of public opinion. He is dealing with the railway strike of last August, but his words are even more applicable to the present struggle. We venture to quote two paragraphs from a thoughtful article :

“ It is not by such coercive measures that better relations are established, but by seeking out the real causes of the difficulty. And that difficulty, in large measure at least, is common to both the companies and their servants, and arises from the heavy burdens imposed upon this public service by legislation, by imperial and local taxation, and the absence of any simple method of adjusting the charge to the discharges. Hence, capital is hard to get, workers are kept on small wages, and there is serious friction all round. If the real problem is to be faced, still more if it is to be solved, a larger and broader view will need to be taken by the State and by the public, as well as by the parties themselves, of the conditions necessary for success in this field.”

“ But I am convinced that the less the workers rely on their trump card, the strike, and the more they rely on full and accurate public ventilation of their case, the sooner will a remedy be found for their real grievances. They will make a grave mistake in tactics if they turn the sympathy of the public with their reasonable claims into the exasperation of the man who feels himself ill-used without cause. And they will gain much more in the end by asking for, and abiding by, some neutral arbiter's award, than by any attempt to coerce a whole nation into compliance.”

Educational Movements. The miners are not the only section of the community who are dissatisfied with the present condition and are agitating for a change. In the educational world many are by no means content with present methods, and there is persistent movement towards a change of system. The question of the abolition of Greek as a compulsory subject at the older Universities, is, for the moment, suspended. But it is refreshing to find a veteran teacher like Mr. Oscar

Browning come forward with such uncompromising support of the *status quo* as that given in his letter to the *Times* Educational Supplement of April 2. He writes as "one who has always endeavoured to stand in the van of educational reform, and who would die in the last ditch for the maintenance of what is called compulsory Greek." Towards another important movement we are, for our own part, very sympathetic, and hope for radical reform; that is the larger question of the examination system. The Consultative Committee's Report on the examination of secondary schools continues to evoke useful discussion. It is to be hoped that in the outcome, inspection of the school at work may come to take a larger part than it does at present, under the present system of external examination. A process of elimination, too, might well be set up with regard to existing examinations, with great advantage both to teachers and to pupils.

Reunion of
Scotch
Churches.

It is gratifying, amid the clash of conflict and the murmurs of unrest, to find that there are also spheres of our national life in which the movement towards unity and concord is the dominant theme. Important proposals have been framed on the subject of Scottish Church Reunion, and have been embodied in a "Memorandum showing suggested course of Procedure and of possible Legislation with a view to Presbyterian Reunion in Scotland." The proposals have been drawn up by the Church of Scotland Committee, and have been sent to the conveners of the United Free Church Committee. They are of course tentative, but the object of them is to show that Reunion is not only ideally desirable, but practically feasible, provided that there be earnest good-will on both sides. This is the only basis, as the framers are careful to emphasize, in which any scheme of Reunion can rest. The uniting Churches must be in hearty concord in this or any other scheme, before Parliamentary sanction is sought. One point in the proposals is of significant interest for ourselves who are deeply concerned for the future of the Church in Wales :

“The Church of Scotland maintains that the endowments are to be conserved for the United Church, and will go forward in the matter of union only upon the footing that the United Free Church and the Government of the day, which is to make itself responsible for the necessary legislation, accept the position that the endowments are not to be secularized.” Scotland, at any rate, will not tolerate the idea that money given for sacred objects shall be put to secular uses.

This movement towards internal reunion on the part of Scottish Presbyterianism is matter for profound thankfulness to all those who long for the general reunion of the Churches. A movement on so great a scale cannot fail to arrest public attention. There are in England, too, signs, far less prominent, but none the less real, that bodies of Christians, hitherto apart, are moving towards a closer approximation in thought and worship. One interesting example is worth mention here. Those who are conversant with the inner life of Wesleyan Methodism know that, till quite recent times, Good Friday, so far as it met with distinct observance at all, was something of a feast-day, on which the Band of Hope, or a similar organization, held its annual entertainment. This practice still lingers in country districts, and in Primitive Methodism is generally common. In a small northern watering-place—at which the writers of these words is staying—the Primitive Methodists are celebrating Good Friday with an annual tea-party followed by an entertainment, at which recitations, solos, action songs, are a leading feature. At the Wesleyan Methodist Church there is a service, with an address on the Seven Words from the Cross! The difference is marked, and very significant.

In the *Times* of April 3 there is published a correspondence between Lord Northampton, Lord St. Aldwyn, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the subject of the Eucharistic Vestments. The general result of it cannot fail to be very disquieting to loyal Churchmen.

Tendencies in
England.

Letters on
Vestments.

Lord Northampton, who was one of the Royal Commissioners and signed the Report, is startled and alarmed by the Resolution of the Upper House of the Canterbury Convocation passed last July, which proposes to leave the words of the Ornaments Rubric unaltered, and "to authorize, under specified conditions and with due safeguards, a diversity of use." This means, as Lord Northampton points out, that without any reference to Parliament (inasmuch as the text of the Rubric is not altered) "a diversity of use of Vestments is to be authorized, in direct contradiction to the findings of the Law Courts in 1871 and 1877." We regret to say that Lord Northampton has been unable to get any satisfaction. The situation in a nutshell is this: Those who wish for the Eucharistic Vestments know that it would be useless to ask them from Parliament, inasmuch as that is the place—under present conditions the only place—in which the Anglican laity can give expression to its views. Reference to Parliament must, therefore, at all costs be avoided. This is technically possible by leaving the words of the Ornaments Rubric intact. Convocation is then to devise a "process" of disobedience to the only authoritative and legally binding interpretation of the words of the Rubric. Obviously the last word in this matter should not be allowed to lie with Convocation as at present constituted.

The Archbishop of York, who had been appealed
St. Matthew's, to by the churchwardens of St. Matthew's, Sheffield,
Sheffield. on the subject of the recent removal from that church of certain images by a band of Kensitites, who conveyed them to the Archbishop's palace, has replied in two letters which are not calculated to lessen the disquietude with which the episcopal attitude towards law-breaking clergy is regarded by ordinary Churchmen. After expressing, very justly, his disapproval of the action of those who removed the images, the Archbishop urges the churchwardens and congregation to be patient in the matter, and to refrain from any provocation in word or deed, as in that way they will deprive the agitation of

any public interest or sympathy. He says, indeed, that there are matters in connection with the teaching and worship of St. Matthew's Church of which he cannot approve, and which prevent his visiting the church or licensing a curate to the parish, though in his subsequent letter he assures them that these matters do not relate to the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. In regard to these, he also assures them that he has "every reason to believe" the preaching of their Vicar "is, and always has been, true, earnest, and faithful." The question, however, is not whether the Vicar teaches the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, but whether, like the Church of Rome, he adds to them other teaching, which in practice goes far to deprive them of their life-giving power—teaching, moreover, directly contrary to that of the Church of which he is a minister.

Those who know the thoroughly Roman teaching and practice approved by the Vicar of St. Matthew's, Sheffield, will view the Archbishop's letter with grave anxiety, for it appears to indicate that nothing more is to be done to secure conformity to the Church's teaching and order in that parish. But if the matters are serious enough for him to decline to license a curate or to visit the Church, they are surely serious enough for him to take some further and more effective action.

A far-reaching step has just been taken. A native clergyman is to be consecrated bishop, and is to act as Suffragan to the Bishop of Madras. If we did not know something of the difficulties of Missionary work, we should be tempted to ask why has India had to wait so long. Indeed, that question does somewhat mingle with our satisfaction at the announcement just made. Natives of India have long shown their capacity for valuable service in commerce, in law, in medicine, and in politics. Moreover, splendid service has already been done in the Missionary cause by ordained native pastors. We cannot help feeling that we might have moved a little faster than we have. Of course, speed would have meant mistakes, but St. Paul was content to make them. His normal policy seems to

have been to have entrusted to each Church the control of itself. Perhaps if he had not done so the troubles at Corinth, the defection in Galatia, and the heresies of the Lycus Valley would not have arisen. Certainly, modern Missions would not have been so bold as St. Paul. But if St. Paul had possessed our modern caution, and instead of ordaining "elders in every Church," had depended for the government of the churches upon the mere handful of Missionary colleagues who travelled about with him, we cannot but believe that the area of his Missionary operations would have been considerably lessened. We know it can be contended that the "elders in every Church," were simply native pastors of comparatively inferior rank, but it must still be remembered that they were overseers—Bishops of the native churches. We realize how great are the problems and perplexities of modern Missionary enterprise, and we do not in the least wish even to seem to find fault, but now that the experiment has been made, we pray that God's richest blessing may rest upon it; and we venture to hope that our leaders in the Missionary cause may see their way to repeat it again and again.

Religion in
France.

In spite of transient phases of national antipathy there have always been many bonds of union between England and France, and in matters of the intellectual life there have been many affinities. It is true that we in England with our slower processes and our apparently illogical compromises, in matters both ecclesiastical and political, have been amazed and almost shocked by the cool and remorseless logic with which conflicting issues have been perceived and acted upon in France. England was startled at the time of the Revolution by the clean sweep which France made of Christianity as presented by Roman Catholic Ecclesiasticism. In more recent times we have stood aghast at the "thorough" policy which has disestablished and disendowed the churches, expelled the priest from the schools, removed the crucifixes from the law courts, and driven away the majority of the monastic clergy. We have seemed unable to avoid the conclusion that France is hopelessly

atheist and radically materialistic. It is possible that such a judgment may turn out to be superficial and inadequate. M. Sabatier's recent book "*La France Nouvelle*," which has deservedly attracted considerable attention, maintains that France—so determinedly anti-Ecclesiastical—is religious at heart. She is, in her own way, feeling after God. It is true that the destructive phase has been fierce and ruthless. When we think what Roman Catholicism had come to mean for France by 1789, we can hardly wonder that it was so. But a constructive period may follow, and the present development of patriotism in politics, and of idealism in thought, may be the earlier stages of a movement which will bring France to a knowledge of God in Christ.

Robert
Browning.

The present month will probably see a large output of literature on the subject of Browning, his place in the hierarchy of poets, and his general influence on thought. Our own pages contain an article on his religious teaching. In this place we must content ourselves with saying that the present seems especially to be a time when we shall do well to listen to his message of high faith and resolute optimism. Some are inclined to say that "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world," expresses a shallow view, and that all is most certainly *not* right with the world. This, however, is to miss the depth of Browning's idea. It is because earth is not all, but there is a heaven also, and that God's rule is not ended by earth, but continued in heaven; that we can work for Him and with Him in hope, and not simply struggle with the fortitude of despair. Another thing we may lay to heart is Browning's invincible optimism in his estimate of people; his power of seeing the good in those who seem so bad. Those who are compelled to take a share in party strife, whether ecclesiastical or political, may always sweeten its acerbity by seeing the good in those from whom they differ. And in these days of minute, critical investigation, the New Testament student will do well to read and re-read *The Death*

in the Desert. It may well be questioned whether the view of St. John and his writings there set forth is not nearer to the absolute truth than much of the critical writing of the present day.

The Rev. E. C. Dewick won the Hulsean Prize in 1908 with an essay which he has just published on Primitive Christian Eschatology. The book is interesting, thorough, and illuminating, and we hope to review it in our pages in due course. Here we only refer to it in order to notice two cautions which Mr. Dewick incidentally suggests to the students of to-day. Mr. Dewick is writing of the limitations of our Lord's knowledge, and raises some difficult questions; he then adds:

Caution in
Criticism.

Those who are willing to concentrate their attention on one aspect alone of the Person of Jesus will find little difficulty in supplying an answer to the questions such as these; but a satisfactory solution of the problem of our Lord's human limitations is one of the tasks which still lies before the Church of the future. In the meantime, it behoves the Christian scholar to remember the limitations of his own knowledge, and to abstain from hasty dogmatism on such matters.

Later on in his book Mr. Dewick has occasion to criticise the position taken by Professor Harnack, and adds:

Harnack's contention would be weighty if Jesus had lived in the Germany of to-day; it does not apply to the conditions of life among the Jews twenty centuries ago.

Mr. Dewick is a young scholar, but he is a sane one. He has early learnt the lesson which comes so hardly to the younger, and, be it said without irreverence, to some of the older critics of to-day, that modern scholarship is not omniscient. He has learnt, too, that if we are to understand our Lord's teaching, we must understand the age in which He lived and the people to whom He spoke. There has been much wild writing on the subject of Eschatology during these latter days. We are most thankful for the spirit in which this latest contribution to the study of a subject, probably the most thorough in the English language, is presented to us. It is a book which must not be allowed to pass unheeded.