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

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

# THE CHURCHMAN.

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MARCH, 1907.

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## The Month.

OUR columns this month make reference to the article in the current *Quarterly Review* on Recent Developments in Old Testament Criticism, which it is understood is by Professor George Adam Smith. It is only six years ago since the writer of that article wrote triumphantly that "Modern Criticism has won its war against the Traditional Theory. It only remains to fix the amount of the indemnity" ("Modern Criticism and the Teaching of the Old Testament," p. 72). Yet to-day he has to admit that the questions, instead of being solved, are still being debated as keenly as ever, owing to the emergence of new material which has raised fresh problems of fundamental importance. We call attention to the difference in the tone of these two statements, which are thus only six years apart. This is surely not without significance. Nor is it possible to avoid noting that Professor G. A. Smith admits that the Wellhausen position with regard to the patriarchal narratives can no longer be maintained, and that they certainly do reflect a period earlier than that of the monarchy. This, again, means much more than appears on the surface. It involves the whole theory of Wellhausen's view of religion. It has often been said, but it evidently needs constant reiteration, that the fundamental question is not that of documents or date or authorship, but of religion. Is Israel's religion due to evolution or revelation? Wellhausen and

Kuenen are frankly naturalistic, and they draw certain conclusions based on these naturalistic premises. How is it possible for a critic who believes in the supernatural to accept their conclusions about Israel's religion and Israel's book without in some way or other becoming involved in the premises from which Wellhausen starts? To accept his conclusions and then to destroy his premises is surely an impossible position. It is this that gives importance to the question whether Monotheism dates from, say, the sixteenth rather than the eighth century B.C.

It has been the fashion for several years past for those Hebrew scholars who have accepted the Higher Critical position to minimize the importance of the evidence of archæology, but the researches of men like Hommel and Winckler are compelling renewed attention to the fundamental positions of Old Testament criticism. As the editor of the *Expositor*, Dr. Robertson Nicoll, in reviewing George Adam Smith's book, from which we have just quoted, said :

“The significant fact is that the great first-hand archæologists as a rule do not trust the Higher Criticism. This means a great deal more than can be put on paper to account for their doubt. It means that they are living in an atmosphere where arguments that flourish outside do not thrive.”

These words are even truer to-day than six years ago. The reason is that the atmosphere in which archæologists live is the atmosphere of fact, and “deeds, not words,” is the ultimate criterion of Old Testament Criticism, as it is of everything else. It is a simple fact, which we believe can be proved on incontrovertible evidence, that no single archæological “find” during the last century has gone to substantiate the higher critical position, while a large number of such discoveries have supported the truth of the conservative view of the Old Testament.

It is very refreshing when a little common-sense is applied to questions of public controversy. We referred last month to the Bishop of Carlisle's words about the “persistent reiteration of the phantasy that the

Archæology  
and the  
Higher  
Criticism.

“Cowper-  
Temple  
Religion.”

religious education allowed by the Cowper-Temple clause may result in the establishment of some new form of religion." In the same direction we now have the characteristic common-sense of Mr. Eugene Stock in the following words from his letter to the *Times* :

"When will our controversialists on all sides realize that there is no such thing as 'Cowper-Temple religion'? The School Boards under the Act of 1870 could, and the Councils now can, direct any religion to be taught or none. All that the Cowper-Temple clause provides is a negative—viz., that no formulary distinctive of any denomination shall be taught. But you can teach religion—even Romanism—without a formulary."

Nothing could be truer to fact than these words, and as Mr. Stock goes on to say : "Thousands of Church of England children have attended these Board or Council schools" and on the teaching they have received "the Church has been able to build her fuller teaching." Mr. Stock also asks pertinently whether there is any definite evidence that children taught in Church schools have been "better Christians and better Churchmen," and then he truly indicates the real danger that is before us :

"I only hope the time is not near at hand when the Church will find that she has the whole work to do instead of part, and that, alas ! outside schools given over to secularism. Vast numbers of Nonconformists will join her in lamenting that hard necessity, and we shall all sadly remember the story of the Sybil."

We hope these words will be heeded by all Churchmen.

At the cost of repetition, we must call attention **The One Problem,** to the fundamental question at issue in this educational controversy, The Archbishop of Canterbury, in his speech at Ramsgate on January 28, gave expression to one point which, if we mistake not, will prove a weighty and far-reaching contribution to the solution of the problem :

"There must be a definite change, and that change must be on the lines of, in a large sense, accepting the principle of popular control, and the freedom of teachers as such from denominational tests. This principle he, for one, said they were morally bound in some form or other to agree to."

The Archbishop thus definitely and deliberately accepts the two fundamental principles of last year's Bill—popular control and the abolition of tests for teachers. Now, the problem is how to conserve the Church character of the schools while admitting these principles. The significance of the Archbishop of Canterbury's pronouncement is evident from the attitude to it taken by the Church Schools' Emergency League, which at its recent meeting carried a unanimous resolution :

“That the principles of complete popular control of denominational schools, and that no religious tests for teachers alleged by the Archbishop of Canterbury to be in accordance with the expressed will of the English people, with which His Grace appears to consent, are absolutely inconsistent with the maintenance of the Church School Trust.”

This also is perfectly definite, and it remains for Churchmen to reconcile these different policies—if they can. Meanwhile we must not be surprised if the Government and their Nonconformist supporters point to this divergence of principle among Churchmen, and argue from it to the impossibility of discovering what Churchmen really mean, and what they want for their schools. It is well that the issues should be so definitely raised and clearly stated.

During the past month suggestions have been made that the new Education Bill should contain a clause enacting that the Apostles' Creed shall be taught in all Provided schools. In view of the declaration put forth some months ago by a number of leading Nonconformists to the effect that their interpretation of Christian teaching was teaching that is not inconsistent with the Apostles' Creed, it seems to us neither fair nor wise to insist upon the teaching of the formulary itself, so long as there is a guarantee that the substance of the teaching shall be in accordance with it. The following words from the Dean of Carlisle's letter to the *Times* seem to us to indicate the lines along which we may obtain a settlement of our difficulties :

The Best Policy.

“Let the word ‘Christian’ be inserted in the Act instead of ‘religious,’ and defined as the declaration suggests, and we shall have secured real

Christian teaching for all the children whose parents do not withdraw them from such instruction ; and, at the same time, we shall show, without any sacrifice of principle, a Christian forbearance for what we perhaps consider the unnecessary scruples of those who are as anxious as we are ourselves that the children of the nation should be brought up in the Christian faith. Let us ask—and we can all agree in the demand—that this Christian teaching shall be given in school hours, and that a conscience clause shall be provided for those teachers who cannot conscientiously give this instruction. The result of such an arrangement would be that much, if not all, the present discord would be hushed—at any rate, among those who honestly desire that every child in every school should have the opportunity of Christian instruction put within its reach.”

We believe that if Churchmen had proceeded along these lines in their attitude to the Bill of last year we should now be enjoying peace, and we are still sanguine enough to believe that if this policy were adopted it would commend itself to the vast majority of English Christians. If, however, through the extremists either on the Church side or the Nonconformist this policy is rejected, we do not see that there is any other alternative but that of secularism, which would be hailed with delight as a victory by many who are the opponents of Christianity.

The *Guardian* is much dissatisfied with the results of the discussion at the recent Islington clerical meeting, more particularly with the attitude taken on the subject of vestments. With the plea of the *Guardian* for the necessity of all possible diversity in the Church we are in the heartiest agreement, though of course everything depends upon our interpretation of what is “possible.” Many Evangelicals would rejoice to see greater elasticity permitted in connection with services ; but they are firm in their belief that this desire for greater elasticity does not involve any change of doctrine, but only refers to the question of adaptation to modern life. Further, Evangelicals believe that it is not fair, or in accordance with the true state of the case, to contrast their desire for rubrical elasticity with the desire for a distinctive vestment for the Holy Communion. It is a simple matter of fact that the vast majority of those who wear vestments, and who

Evangelicals  
and Prayer-  
Book  
Revision.

are insisting upon their use, do intend by them certain doctrines which have been, and still are, associated with views that are quite incompatible with the teaching of the Prayer-Book and Articles. We do not go to High Churchmen who are indifferent to this matter for our interpretation of the meaning of the usage, but to those who not only wear them, but boldly teach their symbolical meaning. Surely the refusal of Evangelical Churchmen to yield this point is not at all of the same character as their desire for such a change of rubrics as will enable Churchmen to adapt the Prayer-Book to the needs of modern days. We are sorry to say it, but nevertheless we believe it to be true, that on this question of the chasuble for Holy Communion there is "a great gulf fixed" between the vast body of Evangelical Churchmen and those who are agitating for the use of this distinctive vestment. We may learn a lesson from the Lambeth judgment with regard to the eastward position. Archbishop Benson, while pronouncing it legal, stated plainly that it had no doctrinal meaning. Will those extreme Churchmen who are now wearing the chasuble rather than the surplice at Holy Communion say as plainly that the former vestment has no symbolical or doctrinal meaning? This would go far to settle the matter.

Controversy has been raging fiercely during the "The New Theology." month on "the new theology," as represented by the utterances of the Rev. R. J. Campbell of the City Temple, though, as it has been rightly said, it is neither new nor theology. It is certainly not new, since it is nothing more than a fresh attempt to apply the idealistic philosophy to the Christian religion, without much, or any, regard to the distinctive principles of New Testament Christianity. And it is not theology, for the simple reason that it cannot be brought into line with the plain fundamental verities of the New Testament. If Mr. Campbell's theology is true, then the whole Church has misread its Bible for all these centuries—an utterly impossible position. The whole controversy affords a sad

revelation of the extent to which an earnest and able man may go if once he leaves the landmarks of the New Testament. It is a fresh proof that everything ultimately leads up to our relation to the Bible. Is that our supreme authority, or is it not? On our answer will hang everything we think or do in relation to Christianity. We cannot profess to be altogether sorry for the emergence of this conflict, for we believe that good will come out of evil. The differences have been seething for several years, as all who have read Mr. Campbell's works know perfectly well. If, therefore, the controversy leads to Congregational and Baptist leaders ranging themselves openly, as they are doing, against this new view, the controversy will not have been in vain.

The Bishop of Birmingham's Pastoral Letter

**Doubt on Hearsay.** is full of good things well and wisely said, and not the least valuable among them is the reference to doubt :

“ It cannot be reasonable or right to take doubts on hearsay. For my own part, I am persuaded, after repeated study, with all the openness of mind that I can give to the matter, that it is those who doubt or disbelieve, and not those who believe, the bodily resurrection of Christ, who do violence to the evidence.”

This is a weighty testimony coming from one whom nobody can charge with any sort of obscurantism. It is well to remember, even though the fact is so familiar, that faith and evidence are never contrasted or opposed in Holy Scripture, as though faith was believing in spite of evidence. Faith is belief based on evidence. Reason and faith are never to be set against one another, for faith is essentially reasonable.

