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THE CHURCHMAN

January, 1912.

The Month.

Central
Churchmen.

CANON DENTON THOMPSON, whose appointment to the Bishopric of Sodor and Man is a subject for real pleasure and congratulation, has conferred a boon upon us in the publication of the book to which we referred last month. He has collected the elements which go to make up Evangelical Churchmanship, and has presented them to the public as a homogeneous whole. We believe that they are in the main the elements which make up real Churchmanship, and that in consequence the title of the book is justified. We are thankful that the *Guardian* deemed the book worthy of a leading article, though we join issue with the article in its suggestion that the Canon is advocating the formation of a fourth party. The *Guardian* article betrayed a certain amount of ignorance of the Evangelical school. It is an ignorance which is frequently betrayed. In the past we have been somewhat to blame in the matter; we have not used the opportunities which the press, the magazine, the various diocesan and ecclesiastical gatherings have given us to make our position plain to the world at large. And now that the Rector of Birmingham has issued his book, people are writing and talking as if some new thing were being given to us for the first time. There must be no more of this. We exist to make an impress upon the life of the whole Church. We fail of our duty if we do not make it. There has been too much smug satisfaction amongst us; we have been too content with the possession of fundamental truths to pass them on as they ought to be passed

on. *Aurum accepisti, aurum redde* is a motto which represents a real duty. The discussion about this book has reminded us that we have not fully done that duty in the past. The book itself shows us how it must be done, clearly, fearlessly, fully, sympathetically, with broadminded liberality and with unsuspecting winsomeness. The book has given us a lead. If the book be followed, there are brighter days in store.

The Outlook for 1912. The fact that these Notes are written as the old year draws towards its close makes it fitting that they should be prospective in their outlook, rather than retrospective towards the past. What the new year holds in store is more matter for wistful wonder than for definite prophecy. One thing seems certain—if the omens be true, and the present any forecast of the future, it promises to be a year of controversy and deep unrest. This is true of things social, of things political, and of things ecclesiastical. It is also true of the wider field of international affairs. The class warfare, of which the late strike was a symptom, seems likely to continue. The forces of Anglicanism and of militant Nonconformity are being arrayed for the conflict on the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. Whatever view be held as to the excellence or otherwise of the present Insurance Bill, there is little doubt that its application in action will be attended by hostility and widely-spread resistance. We have heard, of late, how near the country was to a great foreign war during the recent summer. Let us hope that throughout the coming months better counsels will prevail, and that the responsible leaders of England and Germany may be divinely guided to the formation of a firm and lasting peace.

The Welsh Church. The old saw is finding a new fulfilment, and we are sorry for it: "If you have no case, abuse your opponent's attorney." We are not inclined to shut our eyes to the Nonconformist side of the present agitation. We have admitted to our columns articles intended to show

that they have a side. We are most anxious that relations between the Nonconformists and the Church of England should be as amicable and as close as possible. We believe that no good will be done to either side by the use of unguarded and unkind language—language which all too frequently has little basis in fact, and only adds fuel to the fire of resentment and hostility which we would gladly extinguish. In the heat of battle men speak, and live to regret what they have said. Amongst the lesser combatants and the camp-followers on both sides we expect to find language of the kind referred to, and are prepared to forgive it. But we do venture to respectfully suggest to the leaders of the Disestablishment campaign that some of the language used of late has been unworthy of a controversy between Christian men. To call the Established Church “a pagan institution,” as the press informs us has been done by one protagonist, though we should be glad to disbelieve it, is not only a false move in the controversy, but endangers the growing feeling towards unity which we are all so anxious to foster. We are compelled to fight, but we ask friend and foe alike to remember that one day we hope to live at peace together, perhaps here, certainly beyond the veil.

Our Present
Need.

In addition to these general features of perplexity and unrest, Christian workers have special difficulties of their own. Is our work prospering as it should? Are we living our lives and doing our work in the proper spirit and on the right method? Or should we, as we enter on 1912, do well to submit our principles to revision and reconstruction? It is related that Tennyson once replied to a friend who questioned him about the dearest object in his life: “My greatest wish is to have a clearer vision of God.” A recent writer in the *Methodist Recorder* has pleaded in earnest, forceful terms for renewed devotion to this ideal—“the vision of God.” Are we not laying greater emphasis now on “action” than on “vision”? It is, no doubt, a noble ideal to be “up and doing,” and the spirit of the age is loud in

its call for practical activity. It is difficult for true-hearted men and women to resist the call. They plunge bravely into a course of uninterrupted service and of ceaseless activity. At times they feel conscious of their lack of prayerful, thoughtful leisure, and they comfort themselves with the maxim, *laborare est orare*. But that maxim—as the writer above referred to rightly insists—is a sublime half-truth. If our work be our only prayer, it will grow weak and cease, because it no longer draws its strength and inspiration from the vision of God.

Active workers, immersed in the direction of the manifold organizations which they have called into being, get into the way of thinking that they have no right to pause or to withdraw. And yet the example of our Lord Himself lends no countenance whatever to such a theory of life. We read of occasions on which He retired from the supplications and entreaties of the multitudes to be alone with God in solitary prayer. The same law held for Him as for us—that only through communion with God could His work be effective. What is needed to-day is not greater or more manifold activity; it is the vision that comes from communion with the Unseen and the Divine. To quote once more from the article referred to :

The Vision
of God.

“ We want to put God back again into His position of august priority. In the beginning—not of Creation only, but of all things—God! That clearer vision is exacting, it makes great demands, it is the issue of vigil and sacrifice, prayer and sacrament, but it holds the secret of all spiritual beauty and fruitfulness and power. When we see Him clearly we shall do our work as it always has been done when the Church wrought under the compelling inspiration of the Presence, and the world shall know and feel that there is a God in Zion.”

Islington last year reminded us that there were differences amongst us. Islington this year is to remind us of fundamental things, and in a moment the differences disappear. The papers are to deal with the call of God to holiness and to service, and will of course be devotional in character. We believe they will show Evan-

Islington,
1912.

gicalism at its best, setting forward those principles of our position which, in themselves unalterable, are capable of meeting the varying needs of successive generations. We are glad to notice that Canon Simpson is to deal with Christ's Provision on the Cross. Canon Simpson would perhaps be loath to reckon himself a member of the Evangelical school, but he is probably the most insistent exponent of the centrality of the Cross amongst our present-day preachers. His books are full of true Evangelicalism, and, after all, the true teaching of the redemptive work of Christ on Calvary is the first and essential test. Islington will give Dr. Simpson the warmest possible welcome. The whole programme presents a prospect of absorbing interest and real usefulness, and we congratulate the Vicar of Islington upon the prospect, as we believe we shall be able to congratulate him and to thank God when the Islington of 1912 has come and gone.

In the busy Yorkshire town of Halifax, in the
Conventions. great rural deanery of Islington, and elsewhere, Conventions have been held during the past few weeks. They have been wonderful gatherings, and pregnant with tremendous hope. Crowds have come to listen and to pray; speakers of all schools of thought have presented the great truths of the faith in such simplicity and clearness that none have been able to misunderstand, and with such loyalty to fundamental truth that few have been able to criticize or be hurt. It is a very hopeful sign that, in a matter where there is no attempt at sensation or excitement, so very many have been interested. The religious faculty is not dead, indifference is not supreme; what is needed is simply plain, earnest teaching, real witness-bearing, and the preachers of the faith can still turn the world upside-down. The Convention certainly captured Halifax, and the quiet, reverent demeanour of the crowds who came seems to point to real progress. We believe much the same was the case at Islington. Another aspect, and a no less hopeful one, was the happy way in which Churchmen of all schools of

thought combined to exercise together the teaching and evangelizing ministry of the Church. Men shared in the meetings together whom ten years ago no one platform could have held, and that without any sacrifice of principles, and without maudlin protestations of unreal unity. We are finding that there is a common faith, a common Christianity, and, as we find it more and more, we shall learn to shed eccentricities and concentrate our energies, as these Conventions did, on the proclamation of the truth as the truth is in Jesus.

We very much hope that the lectures recently delivered on "The Co-operation of the Church with the Spirit of the Age" will be published in book form, and so made accessible to a wider circle. At present only newspaper reports have been available, and these, being fragmentary, are bound to be to some extent misleading. Sentences such as these the Dean has penned, and charges like these he has made, can only be rightly appreciated if taken with the whole surrounding context. The lectures certainly have the merit of fearlessness and candour. Dr. Inge has never been afraid to speak out frankly. His strictures on the present state of things have been received with a chorus of disapproval and amazement. But they are none the less valuable for that. The British democracy has reached a period in its history when it needs, above all else, a candid friend to tell it the truth about itself in plain and unsparing terms. There is very little doubt that many of the forces and tendencies at present prevalent in the body politic will, if allowed to proceed unchecked, lead in the end to disintegration and destruction of the whole national fabric. It is not at all inconsistent with general optimism to view with dismay some particular epoch in our nation's history. Dr. Inge is no pessimist, but he sees most clearly the elements of weakness in the present phase of English social life. We hope that his words will be brought within the reach of a wider circle of readers, and will be studied with the thoughtful attention that they well deserve.

Greek at Oxford. The Statute by which those undergraduates at Oxford who are candidates for honours in Mathematics and Science were to be permitted to offer only one ancient language for Responsions has been rejected in Convocation by a majority of 235. Oxford, therefore, continues to claim from all her intending students an initial knowledge of Greek as well as Latin. For this result our feelings can only be those of unmixed gladness. Towards the machinery by which it has been secured our sentiments may not be so wholly cordial. If members of Convocation are to be summoned back to Oxford to decide the final issue of some great question, it is a pity that the summons cannot be sent forth and responded to in vacation rather than in term. A meeting of non-resident members of Convocation in term-time is bound, to a great extent, to be an assemblage of clerics. They have their time largely at their own disposal. It would be interesting to know the feeling of the members of the teaching and other professions on a point of this kind. Schoolmasters especially, whose work is so closely linked with that of the University, might well have a better opportunity of recording their vote than is possible for them by a meeting held when their own school work is in full progress.

The Older Ideal. The question of the retention of compulsory Greek is not one that concerns clergy in particular, but Oxford men in general. The ecclesiastical authorities may surely be trusted to see that Greek always retains its proper place in a system of theological training. We cannot help feeling, therefore, that the appeal to Convocation—though undoubtedly liable to grave abuse—does maintain the idea that Oxford does not consist only of her resident teachers at any given time, but includes a larger body—that is, the assemblage of her graduate sons who are keenly interested in the welfare of their Alma Mater and wish to give to her all possible support. For ourselves, we hold, as we have already said in these pages, that Oxford and Cambridge may well be

permitted to maintain intact the older ideal of education—that the study of the two classical languages is the proper basis of culture. We agree with the Warden of Keble that the maintenance of this ideal is for Oxford a sacred trust. If it be objected that Greek in the amount required at present is farcical, we would reply, “Let it cease to be a farce and become a reality.” Oxford and Cambridge alike can afford to do this if they think it fit. Other Universities may even give expression to newer ideals; the ancient one ought still to find a home in the older seats of learning.

We have refrained up to the present from making any comment on the book on “Miracles in the New Testament,” written by the Rev. J. M. Thompson. We only wish here to call attention, firstly, to the article in which Mr. Harriss deals with it, in our present issue; and, secondly, to the fact that the various articles and sermons contributed to the *Guardian* have been published by Longmans in a small and well-printed volume. Each of the contributions to this volume is worthy of careful and detailed study. The points elaborated by Dr. Lock are especially worthy of attention. He points to the fact that if Q be taken as our earliest canonical document and St. John’s Gospel as one of our latest, there is an undoubted increase in the attribution of miracle to our Lord, and there is also a profounder Christology. Now, there are two ways of explaining this. It is at present customary, in certain quarters, to say that, starting from a comparatively simple and straightforward account of a non-miraculous Jesus, there has been a constant and accumulating growth of legendary accretion. On the other hand, it is possible that the later writers had not only fuller access to biographical detail about our Lord, but “a gradual deepening of insight into the meaning of His life.” “And it is therefore as likely as not that the writer of the Fourth Gospel is far nearer to the true interpretation of what Jesus said and did and was than the compiler of Q.”