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THE CHURCHMAN.

MAY, 1908.

The Month.

The Spirit of Peace. THE past month has been crowded with events which are full of encouragement to those who, like ourselves, have been pleading for peaceful compromise as the basis of a settlement of the Education question. The introduction of the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill was itself a noteworthy event, especially when it is remembered that it came from the Bishop who has been for years the most strenuous leader of the opposition to Welsh Disestablishment. The way in which the supporters of the Government in the Press have met the Bishop's Bill is also very encouraging. The Archbishop of Canterbury's courageous and statesmanlike speech in the House of Lords was another powerful appeal for a peaceful settlement. The hearty response made by the leading Nonconformist organs in favour of a settlement by compromise is also full of significance. Nor must we overlook the leading article in the *Times* entitled "A Way of Peace," expressing "the long-felt weariness of a struggle constantly acknowledged to be somehow unworthy of the venerable truths for which men fight." In the light of these and other similar noteworthy and remarkable expressions of opinion we are confirmed in our conviction that it cannot be impossible for men of all Churches and parties to bring about an amicable settlement. Not the least potent factor in the situation is the marvellous effect of the action of the Archbishop and the majority of the Bishops in support of the Licensing Bill. It has cleared the air and deeply affected the relations of Church and Nonconformity on the question of Education. The result

is that a new atmosphere has been created which, it may be safely said, has never existed since the introduction of the Bill of 1902. If only such a state of feeling had existed in 1906, we believe that Mr. Birrell's Bill would have become law. We rejoice in the present situation, and most of all because of its signal proof of the potency of moral forces in the public life of our country. With all possible heartiness we endorse the words of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer when he said "God bless the efforts of those who are striving to bring about an arrangement on the Education question."

From various sides, including the National Education Society, some Government organs, and several leading Nonconformists, proposals have been made for a Conference of all parties, religious and political, in connexion with the Education question. We do not blind ourselves to the obvious difficulties in the way of a settlement, but it is much that such a Conference has been proposed, and it would certainly be worth while to hold it. At the same time it must be manifest to all that an arrangement can only be reached if each side is prepared to grant a great deal for which the other contends. There must be no spirit of mere bargaining in which everybody endeavours to obtain all that he needs. There must necessarily be a large amount of "give and take." It is satisfactory to know that on the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury three fundamental principles are accepted by the Church party, namely, popular control, abolition of tests for teachers, and no State aid for denominational teaching. On the other hand, Nonconformists will have to face the necessity of making very definite and large concessions. There is the question of facilities, and also of the liberty to be given to teachers who volunteer for denominational teaching. If these two vital points can be settled, we believe that other matters will not be difficult of adjustment. The greatest difficulties will of course be found in connexion with the Roman Catholic and Unitarian schools, and we entirely agree with the words of Dr. Dale,

quoted in the *British Weekly*, that no concordat seems to be possible with either of these parties because their ideas and principles are necessarily and diametrically opposed to those of Churchmen and Evangelical Nonconformists. But whatever special arrangement will have to be made to meet these and, it may be, other minorities, we cannot help feeling that a settlement suited to the needs of the vast majority of parents and children is well within the power of such a Conference as is now proposed. We hope that even before these lines appear in print steps will have been taken to summon it, in order that we may see whether we cannot solve our problems, or whether after all we must confess before the world that Christian men cannot agree upon the teaching to be given to the children of our land.

It has been urged by not a few Church-people

**The
Secular
Solution.** that there is no necessity to discuss the secular solution of the Education question, inasmuch as it is not, and is not soon likely to be, within the sphere of practical politics. We take leave to doubt this optimistic view, for the simple reason that there are not wanting signs of what the *Times* speaks of as "the long-felt weariness" of the present struggle. And while leading men like the Bishops of Carlisle and Chester and Professor Gwatkin write in serious strain deprecating the secular system, we are thoroughly justified in facing the possibility, and doing our utmost to prevent its realization. The following words of the Bishop of Chester are deserving of special notice :

"May I add a few words concerning those, belonging to different political and religious camps, who are enamoured of the plan of secular education supplemented by purely denominational efforts? I say nothing now of the certainty that, under such a system, a vast multitude of children will be in imminent danger of growing up in anything but 'the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' I say nothing of the point forcibly put by Professor Gwatkin (the *Times*, March 21), that 'to banish religion from the schools is a counsel of despair, dishonouring to both Church and State, and deeply harmful not only to religion, but to common morals.' I must content myself with remarking that the attractive notion of secular education being likely to provide 'port after stormy seas,' a paradise where 'beyond these voices there

is peace,' where passive resistance and other anarchical devices will vex not more—all this bright prospect is unsubstantial."

We happen to know of a very large Council School in one of our great cities where an inquiry was made as to how many of the children attended Sunday-school. Only about three or four out of some hundreds went to any Sunday-school whatever. We do not believe that this is at all an exceptional case, and the obvious conclusion is that if these children were not given Bible teaching in the day-school, they would obtain it nowhere else, and would grow up almost entirely without any real instruction in Bible knowledge and morality. This is what the secularist propaganda is aiming at and striving for with all its might. Let us be on our guard to prevent the accomplishment of this malign endeavour.

It has long seemed to us a very serious blot on
the Church policy of elementary education that little
or nothing has been done in the interests of the
large numbers of Church children who attend Council Schools.

**The
Provided
Schools.**

In our endeavours to safeguard our own schools we have been too apt to forget the very large proportion of our own children who do not come within their walls. It is this forgetfulness of Church children in Provided Schools that appears to us to give serious significance to the following words of the Bishop of Birmingham in his speech in the House of Lords on the introduction of the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill :

"At present their stronghold was the position of the denominational schools, and he did not think they would be justified as trustees of a great public duty in surrendering that stronghold for the prospect of additional facilities in all schools. The reason why he thought so was because he did not believe that the parents of any very large number of children would ask for special facilities where any kind of religious teaching was already given as the normal and established kind. If special facilities were allowed, it was highly probable they would be very little used."

It is one of the welcome features of the Bishop of St. Asaph's proposal that there shall be facilities for Church teaching in Provided Schools, and yet the Bishop of Birmingham seems to

be quite content to maintain denominational teaching in Church School without considering whether the interests of Church children in Provided Schools could not be furthered. The frank admission of the Bishop that no very large number of parents would ask for special facilities is of great importance and significance, more particularly in view of the persistent statements that the parents are the people to decide as to the character of the religious teaching given to their children. Mr. A. C. Benson, like many other people, has expressed his doubts whether the demands for parents' rights come from any large number of the parents themselves. "It seems to me," says Mr. Benson, "that the outcry principally comes from the people who want to give other people's children denominational teaching rather than from those who wish their own children to receive it." At any rate, the Bishop of Birmingham's admission has seriously shaken the "Parents' Rights" theory, and it would surely be well worth our while as Churchmen to see whether we cannot do something to give proper Church teaching to the Church children in Council Schools.

**The
Attitude of
Churchmen.** At the risk of being charged with unnecessary repetition, we again venture to call our readers' attention to the absolute necessity of some positive policy on the part of Churchmen. The present situation is directly due to the Act of 1902, and since Churchmen do not find themselves satisfied either with Government proposals or the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill, it is surely for them to say what they require, and to show how the policy of rate-aid introduced by Mr. Balfour's Act can be reconciled with the admitted principles of popular control and the abolition of denominational tests for teachers. If neither Mr. Birrell's nor Mr. McKenna's Bill will satisfy Churchmen, if the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill is regarded as surrendering vital positions, and if the Archbishop of Canterbury is thought to be far too generous and hopeful, it is essential that Churchmen should say what they want and produce their solution. This opposition without any definite

suggestion does not carry us forward at all. Is it not a striking fact that throughout the controversy of the last two years those who have opposed the Government proposals have never put forward any positive plans of their own? What we desire to know is, how those who prefer denominational education can continue to have it in the schools if those schools are supported out of the rates. It is perfectly true that at the present moment half the schools of the country are denominational, but it is also true that they are being paid for almost entirely out of public money. How is it possible to overlook this simple but all-powerful fact in contending for the maintenance of Church Schools? We would plead, then, that, whether at a Conference or in some other way, Churchmen should be prepared with a definite, positive, constructive, and statesmanlike policy of their own for the settlement of this question.

The
Licensing
Bill.

While the outburst of violence which followed the introduction of this measure has subsided, the opposition has not really decreased. It is one of the saddest features of our public life that political feeling should be allowed to enter so largely into questions which involve great moral issues. From the purely political and party point of view the Government had much—indeed, almost everything—to lose by the introduction of this measure; and this fact alone, it seems to us, ought to have led men of all parties to give a dispassionate consideration to the Bill on its merits. A measure which can unite such very different men as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of London, Durham, Liverpool, and Birmingham must have a great deal to recommend it, and we heartily rejoice in the bold and unflinching utterances of all the Prelates we have now named in support of the Bill. That the Government is ready to consider all amendments which are in harmony with the general principles of the Bill has been clear since Mr. Asquith's speech in introducing it. That the Government proposes, or Parliament will allow, "confiscation and robbery" we simply refuse to believe; and as to the threats

of the loss of subscriptions to Church work from men in the brewing interest, we will only say, in the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, that "it is difficult to conceive of any course of action less likely to influence our opinion in the direction the writers desire." We are old-fashioned enough to remember and to believe some familiar words: "But what shall we do for the hundred talents? . . . the Lord is able to give thee much more than this." In the debates and discussions which are soon to come in Parliament we believe it will be abundantly evident that this measure will prove one of the greatest steps in moral reform that we have had in the present generation.

Some
Salient
Facts.

The discussions of the past month have gone far to confirm the view we expressed in our last number that the time limit is the *crux* of the situation. It must never be forgotten that the interests of all persons closely connected with a licensed trade have always been strictly limited, and this limitation has been well known to the officials of the trade. The Act of 1828 expressly provides that licences shall endure for one year and no longer. It has been known that at all times the discretion of magistrates to refuse renewals has been absolutely the same as the discretion to grant new ones. The judgment of the House of Lords in *Sharp v. Wakefield*, in 1891, was simply a confirmation of what had been laid down as the unmistakable law in one case after another whenever the question arose. We commend to the earnest and serious consideration of all those who are interested in this subject the following significant words of the *Morning Post*. We quote them because they come from one of the most strenuous political opponents of the Government, and they carry all the more weight on this account:

"Under these circumstances, and in view of the constant temperance agitation, anyone familiar with the licensed trade was clearly bound to regard investment in licences as of the nature of a gamble. The trouble is, however, that since the case of *Sharp v. Wakefield* there has been much reconstruction of brewery undertakings and formation of limited liability companies, in which ordinary investors have been led to take part as ordinary investors do—on general impressions and without expert knowledge of the trade con-

ditions. In doing so the general public are only too constantly embarking upon enterprises whose foundations are insecure; that is the inevitable dark side of the Companies Acts. The State cannot be expected, at great cost to its own prosperity, to save men harmless from such misfortunes. That is to say, it cannot be expected, by abandoning any idea of a time limit, to convert existing licences into freeholds, and so render secure investments which a very slight inquiry at the time of their making would have shown to be speculative. What the State can do and must do is to give these licence-holders, not a freehold, but a period in which to turn round and escape from their position, perhaps with diminishing profits, but without catastrophic loss."

These are some of the salient facts which, in our judgment, dominate the situation, and no consideration of the Government Bill can in any sense be adequate which does not keep these facts continually in view.

Vestments. Although the question of Vestments has been temporarily laid aside amid the stress of other controversies, the Report of the Five Bishops is giving rise to not a little discussion in the Church papers. We wish to call special attention to a new contribution to the discussion in the form of a pamphlet by Mr. J. T. Tomlinson, "An Examination of the Bishops' Report" (Robert Scott, 1s. net). Mr. Tomlinson examines the conclusions of the Bishops in detail, and provides material for a further and fuller consideration of the entire subject. Mr. Tomlinson's great authority on all liturgical questions, coupled with the fact that the Bishops singled him out for severe criticism, lends special importance to this new pamphlet. It is a weighty contribution to the discussion, and will enable readers to see that the Bishops' contentions are not quite so obvious and conclusive as several recent reviews and articles would have us believe. Mr. Tomlinson makes some very important points, and gives abundant reason for showing that to act upon the Bishops' advice would be not only to go clean contrary to our own Church history for three and a half centuries, and thereby commit a serious breach in the unity and continuity of Church usage, but would do more than anything else to bring about a catastrophe which would be prejudicial to the highest interests of the Church and nation.