

Review.

The Church Systems of England in the Nineteenth Century. The Sixth Congregational Union Lecture. By J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A. Pp. 688. Hodder & Stoughton. 1881.

THIS is a bulky volume; and though, on the whole, it is well written, we doubt whether it will be much read. It contains twelve lectures: the Age and the Churches; Religious Liberalism in its Influence on Church Polity; the Evangelical Revival; the Oxford School; the Broad Church; the Ritualistic Controversy; Methodism, Plymouth Brethrenism, and others. The subjects discussed have an interest for devout and thoughtful readers, whether Nonconformists or Churchmen; and the book contains passages which are not only readable but suggestive. Here and there the author touches upon subjects which he does not seem to us to have deeply studied; and he makes use of terms, e.g., "Erastian," with the historical significance of which he shows himself unacquainted. As regards the Evangelical section of the Church, in particular, he fails to discern and appreciate. Evangelicals remain true to the great principle of a National Church; yet he cannot understand their position, and thinks he has done enough when he dubs it Erastian. In many passages of his work, however, he shows a laudable freedom from prejudice, and a desire to give credit where credit is due; but we cannot say that his arguments are closely reasoned, or that the descriptions of movements which he dislikes are flavoured with generous liberality. *Liberalism*, everybody knows, is a favourite word with our Radical Nonconformists; but although they belong to the "Liberal" party, and form the organization which they call "The Liberation Society," we have yet to learn that *liberal* is precisely the word which designates the extreme section of the Liberal party in their action as regards opponents, whether political or religious. But, as we have said, our author sometimes merits praise; and Churchmen may profit from his criticism. We gladly quote his own remarks, in the Preface, as to "fairness and courtesy:" he has "anxiously sought to do justice, not only to the motives, but also to the principles of those to whom" he is "conscientiously opposed." "The one question," he adds—"the one great question as to every system—is how far it is in harmony with His will [the will of "the great Head of the Church"], and is calculated to promote His glory."

In his first lecture, on the Age and the Churches, Mr. Rogers quotes, with warm approval, from Archbishop Tait's recently published Charge, "The Church of the Future." He proceeds to describe those lay members of the National Church, whether Evangelical or Broad, or moderately "High," who are at one with the Primate in regard to Christian "comprehensiveness." In one of his best passages—we quote it as follows—Mr. Rogers says:—

There are multitudes of sincere Churchmen—and their number is continually on the increase—whose loyalty to their own Church is associated with a large-hearted charity towards Nonconformists. They are Churchmen by preference, or by descent, or by force of circumstances. They have grown up into a hearty attachment to the forms and arrangement of a Church dear to them as the Church of their fathers, and linked in their memories with all the most sacred seasons of their lives. The simple but sublime words of its Liturgy have a fascination for them entirely apart from their theological teaching or their artistic beauty. They have that charm which belongs to the words familiar to us in our childhood—a charm which endears to the Scotch peasant the homely

words of the national version of the Psalms, and which causes an English Nonconformist to see a beauty in some of the hymns of Watts which offend against the laws of rhyme and rhythm. They not only prefer the ritual of the Episcopal Church, but they desire that that Church should remain the Church of the nation; partly because they shrink from the disturbances which would result from the removal of an institution so deeply rooted in the associations, traditions, and habits of the people; partly because they cannot reconcile their minds to the idea of a nation without a national Church and a national faith; and partly because they fear that without a public provision for religious teaching and worship large districts in the country would be left to lapse into heathenism. Their loyalty to the Church is stainless, but it is not so blind and indiscriminating as to induce them to approve claims which are as mistaken in policy as they are untenable in principle. They are as much opposed to the spirit as to the doctrines and ritual of Rome, and are resolved to prevent the intrusion of either into the Reformed Church of England. If its clergy will bear their honours meekly, they are content that they should retain them, but if they will flaunt their prerogatives in the face of those who are as true Christians and as loyal citizens as themselves; if they show themselves unable to learn the spirit of comprehensiveness which is characteristic of the age; if they persist in limiting the kingdom of Heaven to their own Church, if not to their own party in it, laymen will leave the Establishment to fight its own battles, if they do not become instruments in the overthrow of an institution whose clergy show that they have lost the character of nationality altogether.

"This is distinctively," continues Mr. Rogers, "the lay sentiment of the day. There are, it is true, clerically-minded laymen who are as zealous for Church power as the highest cleric in the land":—

But it is not from men of this type that the views of the English people are to be learned. Those views are expressed by the Primate rather than by the Bishop of Lincoln. In truth, if there is a bishop who throws himself into the work of this stirring age, as one who is in harmony with all its loftiest aspirations and most generous impulses, who thinks more of usefulness than of dignity, who scorns the conventional ideas of his Church and his order when they interfere with his work for the public good, who frankly recognizes the work of Nonconformists and enters into fraternal relations with them, even while ready, on every fitting opportunity, to combat the principles of their Nonconformity, there is the man whom the laity of the Church delight to honour. The lay mind, whether in Conformist or Nonconformist Churches, is impatient of priestly arrogance and subtle sectarian distinctions. For consistency, faithfulness, zeal, it has high respect; for official pretensions only contempt. It is independent, practical, touched with the scientific spirit of the times, even where there is no great scientific knowledge, and none of the scepticism which science sometimes engenders.

Mr. Rogers quotes, in illustration, words spoken by the Duke of Devonshire at Barrow-in-Furness, when the opening of four churches in one day was celebrated, in the presence of the Primate of the province. The Duke alluded to those matters within the National Church which "give rise to considerable anxiety;" and the Archbishop, in reply, expressed his hope and belief that, in the long run, the spirit of obedience would prevail. Numbers who are good Churchmen, says Mr. Rogers, are alarmed at the growth of priestism, and view the "lawlessness" of certain clergymen with indignation. Mr. Rogers might have quoted from many a speech of the Earl of Shaftesbury to establish the point, that not in attacks from without, but in divisions within the Church, lies the danger; priestism, not Liberationism, is the enemy. Upon this point, we observe, he does not quote Mr. Gladstone.

We have referred to the use made by Mr. Rogers of the epithet *Erastian*. Here is a specimen passage. Alluding to the High Church party, he says:—"Between it and Erastianism there can be no real concord; and yet Erastians, alarmed for the security of their favourite institution [he

means the Church of England], have tolerated the aggressions of sacerdotalism." One may well inquire *How* have Evangelicals "tolerated" sacerdotalism? Mr. Rogers, in effect means, as we suppose, that the Evangelicals would not become Liberationists! Evangelical Churchmen, as a rule, have not given way to the impatience of indignation; they have stuck to their principles; their preaching, their spoken and written protests, their practice, have been throughout in defence of the National Church, that Church which was founded in this country during Apostolic times, and which Mr. Rogers is pleased to term their "*favourite institution*."¹ But, after all, he does not distinguish and define; and, therefore, we hardly know, sometimes, what section of Churchmen he is blaming. Now and then, under the title "Erastians," he appears to address Broad Churchmen; on page 57, he says that there is an "Erastianism intent on preserving a National Church *at all costs*." In other passages, however, he alludes to Evangelicals; and we may be pardoned if we venture to observe that the papers in *THE CHURCHMAN*, by Canon Saumarez Smith, are, on this point, in our judgment, a sufficient reply to his remarks. He is well aware that Evangelical Churchmen, whatever else may with justice be said of them, cannot be accused of indifference in regard to dogma. They are accused indeed, even by Nonconformist critics, of being too staunchly doctrinal. At all events, they hold the doctrines which Evangelical Churchmen taught a hundred years ago. That Congregationalists have been moving from Congregational landmarks the sermons of that eminent Congregationalist, Dr. Dale, not long ago reviewed in this Magazine, may be quoted to show. If the Age be moving away from certain doctrines, as Mr. Rogers thinks, surely the question remains, unchanged, in all its force, *What saith the Scripture?*

When our Congregationalist author, as on page 58, points out that, whereas the Prayer Book plainly sets forth such and such doctrines certain clergymen "ignore, and even contradict," those very doctrines, in the words of a Congregationalist, he may be directed to "*look at home,*" *que l'on dit*.

An eminent Congregationalist, the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, in the "Congregational Year Book" for 1872, says a good deal about "ignoring and even contradicting" doctrines. Referring to the extent to which Trust Deeds are violated, by Ministers enjoying the property and privileges which are secured to them only on their contract loyally to observe the conditions and provisions of the Trusts, this plain-spoken Minister boldly declares—"At this moment many of the most eminent of our Ministers are preaching under Trust Deeds containing statements of doctrine which nothing could induce them to utter from their pulpits." Further, he says, "Were the original donors to rise from their graves,

¹ On page 65 our author says:—"Evangelicals have gained nothing by concessions, but they have practically given up the whole controversy." One asks, "What on earth does he mean? *Concessions!* What are they? The Church, and the Prayer Book, with the Articles, are the same; we have fullest liberty to teach just as of yore; recent decisions have declared that the semi-Romanism, against which we have always strongly protested, is illegal; the truths called Evangelical are preached in more pulpits now than in any preceding period; many of the High Church Clergy call themselves "Evangelical High Churchmen;" the laity of the Church, according to Mr. Rogers's own argument, with the Primate at their head, are liberal and large-hearted; wherever—still according to Mr. Rogers—a prelate is evangelical enough to pay due honour to Nonconformist good works, church-folk honour him; and yet, forsooth, we "have practically given up the whole controversy!" What Mr. Rogers really blames, we suppose, is that, whereas the Tractarian movement resulted in Ritualism, and many of the Clergy are ultra-sacerdotalists, Evangelicals still remain loyal supporters of the National Church.

they would—unless, indeed, they have learned a larger theology, as we may be sure they have—be simply horrified to hear the doctrine which is systematically taught from their pulpits; pulpits which they thought they had secured for the preaching of the narrower Gospel which satisfied their hearts. As a matter of fact," says Mr. Baldwin Brown, "Trust Deeds are constantly ignored, and by our very ablest and most successful men, Chairmen of the Congregational Union." Mr. Rogers, we presume, has no thought of forsaking the Union. Yet, while he argues against the Established Church from the ignoring and contradicting of a section of her Clergy, he passes over in silence, so far as we have observed, the ignoring and contradicting on the part of his fellow Ministers in the Congregational Union.

In the chapter headed "The Evangelical Revival" appear some statements concerning the Gorham case which serve to show, as we think, that Mr. Rogers has not read the history of the Gorham proceedings. At all events, such works as those written by Dean Goode, an Evangelical, and Canon Mozley, a Broad High Churchman, remain unanswered. Mr. Rogers contents himself with asserting, as an axiom on one's historical conscience, that the decision in the Gorham case "decided nothing except that it was not expedient to expel a party so powerful as the Evangelicals had become," and, further, it introduced, he says, a mischievous principle of comprehensiveness. For ourselves, we hold that the doctrine taught by Evangelical theologians concerning "Baptismal Regeneration" is the doctrine of the Prayer Book.¹ Mr. Rogers is of opinion, indeed, that the Evangelical Fathers cannot be said to have had a theology; but he does not say of them what Dr. Dale says of Congregationalists in these days: the Evangelical Fathers were *not looking out for a theology!*

Short Notices.

The King's English. By G. WASHINGTON MOON, F.R.S.L. Pp. 170. Hatchards, 1881.

This is a really interesting book. Many of our readers will remember that clever criticism, *The Dean's English*, a reply to Dean Alford's essays on *The Queen's English*. Mr. Moon is an accomplished writer, and his present work is suggestive as well as readable. "Source and History," "Origin and Progress," "Puzzling Peculiarities," and "Spelling Reform," are the titles of the four chapters. The volume, with a neat cloth cover, is well-printed.

Lectures in Defence of the Christian Faith. By Professor GODET. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1881.

These Lectures, translated by Canon Lyttelton, are learned, and, for anxious inquirers in cultured circles, have an especial value; deep thoughts; close reasoning; intense conviction. The reply to M. Réville is a choice morsel.

Apostolical Christianity; its History and Development. By the Rev. C. A. Row, M.A., Prebendary of St. Paul's. Pp. 260. Church of England Sunday School Institute.

This book is a reprint of Prebendary Row's articles in the *Church Sunday School Magazine*, 1878-79.

¹ See the June CHURCHMAN, A Layman, Sir William Charley, page 208, A Divine, Dr. Boulton, page 236.