

ON THE NECESSITY OF HEARTY
CO-OPERATION OF THE CLERGY
AND LAITY OF THE CHURCH OF
ENGLAND REGARDING THE RE-
LIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE
YOUNG.

THE writer asks the heartfelt prayers of those who read it for the success of that duty which is now being awakened amongst thoughtful christians regarding the religious education of the young.

And first, he approaches the subject with feelings of surprise that so serious a matter should so long have lost its point amongst our own Church people, and because our state of respectability and the fact of our occupation in a large degree of the offices of trust politically, renders us somewhat blind to the defects of our Church work in the direction of education, and we fancy that the security which power apparently makes for us, gives us also security in the spiritual and moral world. None are so apathetic as the members of the Church of England. Let it be blazed abroad that the Church needs, sadly needs, doctrinal Christian Education, that schools must be built, not alone for those who can afford to send their sons for a superior education, but also that the humblest member of Christ's flock can find in the Church's bosom the Christian education which the machinery of our public schools does certainly deny. Approach the subject as we may, there can be no other verdict forthcoming but the schools are needed for our Church, schools for the young, schools taught by men who love the Church, whose commission is from the most High God and the Church's Lord to make disciples of all nations. This point is not pressed from a competitive standpoint, far from it, but it is simply from the knowledge that those are alone fitted to teach who care for the heart more than for the mind, those only who are content that, even if the mind is unable to grasp what is set before it, if only the heart is kind and loving and willing, that is quite sufficient. The education of the State, which has for its purpose the mental amelioration of its people, cannot for one moment be permitted to weigh in the balance with the immense responsibility the Church possesses, in making for the Church of Christ citizens whose hearts are but the reflex of the love of Christ. It would not be right to attempt to disparage State Education on the score of amount of work done; but it is right to shew people that if we judge right in minor or subordinate matters, judging wrongly in the supreme only aggravates the case, and instead of the good which we have fondly imagined has been attained, we find a withering of the whole moral being, upon which hangs the success at least of our worldly plans and hopes. Can any good result from starvation of the moral man and repletion of our mental powers. Day by day has the State encroached upon the sacred grounds and estate of the Church, absorbing here a sacred enclosure, and there a Divine legacy, until by the supineness of some men, who profess deep love and reverence for

their mother Church, but who occupy positions among the "powers that be," and thence imagining that their important selves can hold State in one hand and Church in the other, and that no possibility of a separation or encroachment of the stronger could exist while they held the intermediate place by their supineness and self-conceit, the Church takes, in a spirit of thankfulness, the sops occasionally thrown out from what was and is her inalienable right. I say that, for Christ's Church to accept such patronage, is to lose all reverence for sacred things, and to become accessories to a spirit of sacrilegious spoliation.

There is this one point, and it alone, which can be urged against the education of the children of the people being spiritually controlled, viz., that it is destructive of the political spirit, and, perhaps, it is to some extent because it is not very likely that a Dissenter would be willing to send his son to a Church School, or better, to a Parish school, and it is, further, not likely that were that Dissenter to be elected to power, he would give his voice in favour of the existence of a system of Church schools; one might, however, fancy that the matter could be cleared up by the State apportioning a certain rate of taxation for each religious body, to be applied for the support of separate schools, under the doctrine and discipline of the various denominations. Whether the State would consent to this or not, if hard pressed, one cannot tell, of course, if a sufficient number of petitions could be subscribed, the matter might have its way, and what we contend for be sufficiently acceded to. I fail to see in this arrangement any danger to the national character. The only difficulty would perhaps be in the due distribution of the proceeds of such taxation, and yet with the expensive machinery of our government, surely the task would not be so difficult. Here then lays the only means or avenue by which we may attain the desired end, viz., the permission that all religious bodies whose corporate capacity is recognized by the State, may petition the Government to withdraw their individual taxation towards the maintenance of State schools, and to divert them in the channel whither their own religious convictions lead them, and the Government may overcome the difficulty which may be raised by those who hold to no religious convictions, by maintaining the rate of taxation upon them for the support of the Government school or schools, as the case may be. We shall deal with other aspects of the question in another article.

PARSONS AND PARISHES.

THE earliest fable recorded in Holy Writ relates the unwillingness of certain trees to leave their natural duty for a position not properly theirs. Very few of the reproaches Abimelech must have received during his career could have stung him with greater force than Jotham's happily conceived narration. But the power of a fable lies in its universality, and not only in its appropriateness on the original occasion of its utterance. If Jotham

fixed his adversary as a comparatively worthless bramble, he also elevated in the popular estimation those more worthy souls who refrained from undertaking work lying out of their sphere. There are men in various walks of life who seem to be specially liable to the fault of neglecting their true work for something which is easier, more attractive, and more congenial to their tastes. If a man is thrust by circumstances over which he has no control into a position for which he is not naturally adapted, he ought to make the best of it, and will, if really in earnest, surprise himself and others by the good results which will follow. But such, whether successful or not, are not the persons in view just now. We are rather thinking of men who have voluntarily taken up work of a certain kind and pledged themselves to its due performance. To these the fable does apply, and to them we commend its perusal. In commercial houses it is very well known and recognized that failure of duty, on the part of heads of departments especially, will meet with speedy relegation to another place, or want of place. But in ecclesiastical life as at present constituted, it is, unfortunately, only too easy for many men to seriously neglect their true sphere without being called to account by authority. One recent legal measure attempts to deal with clerical neglect, with what success remains to be seen, but it does not seem likely to meet an important item, viz., parochial visitation. In theory, most clergymen admit the value of house-to-house visitation, but what is the practice in only too many cases? The work is simply not done, and an element of fundamental importance in the life of the people is found wanting.

It is well to see at once on what grounds this duty rests, in the mind of the church. Every priest has promised on his Ordination (1) to instruct the people committed to his charge; (2) to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within his cure; and (3) to maintain and set forwards quietness, peace and love, especially among the christian people committed to his charge. Plainly, this charge of souls is not met by Congregationalism, however well worked, or by any system short of the parochial. Still less is it fulfilled by men who, yielding to the call of societies and individuals, and without due authorization from their Bishops, leave their parishes and run to all points of the compass on any and every business that may come in their way. The obligation cannot, indeed, be fulfilled by anything short of regular and systematic visitation of the people in their own homes.

Taken at its best, and as contemplated by the Church wherever properly organized, the parochial system means (1) that in a given area there is one man who possesses jurisdiction over the souls residing in it, and who is responsible to God and His Church for the due provision of all that these souls need for their spiritual welfare. On this matter of jurisdiction we may note here that Mr. Benham, in his history of the Diocese of Canterbury,