

THE CHURCHMAN

December, 1910.

The Month.

Unity. THE sister Church in America has been holding its General Convention in Cincinnati, and, with the influence of the Edinburgh Conference strong upon them, both the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops, without a single dissentient in either House, passed a resolution, calling on the Church to initiate a movement for a world Conference for the consideration of questions touching faith and order. They resolved, further, that all Christian communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour should be asked to unite with them in arranging for and conducting such a Conference. The step is a momentous one, and the prayers of English Churchmen will go with the committee that has been formed to take the necessary steps. Once again, outside the homeland, a daughter Church is showing us the way along a path which, if God's will is to be done on earth, we must ultimately tread.

Our distinguished namesake, the *Churchman* of New York, in its issue of October 29, contains an editorial article in which it comments on the resolution in favourable terms. The final paragraph of the article realizes the difficulties of the position, and faces them in words so noble that we are glad to reprint them.

“ Obvious perils lie in the path of so stupendous a task, but it is better to be in peril than in safety when the best things lie a hair's-breadth beyond

the risk. It is better, as the Bishop of the Philippines said, to risk this Church's distinctive character than to sit still in idle contemplation of a shattered Christendom. The day will come when every society which now calls itself a Church, ourselves included, will lose its distinctive character in the Church, the Holy City. Each will bring its own special honour and glory to contribute to the completeness of the whole, by the methods and in the ways by which God will lead them into that unity which is organic. The fragments of our broken Christendom will gain their life by losing it."

We would warmly commend these words to the many English Churchmen who look askance at the late Lambeth resolutions and all other efforts in the direction of unity, because they are afraid that we of the Church of England are jeopardizing our Catholicity thereby.

Revision of
the
Prayer-Book.

We cannot conceal our satisfaction that the great debate in the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury ended in a decisive victory for Prayer-Book reform. Canon Drummond's amendment deprecated revision at the present time, and mildly suggested the consideration of the advisability of drawing up a supplement. The matter was considered in no party spirit, and, indeed, it was better so. A supplement or appendix could be as little acceptable to particular schools of thought as a thoroughly revised Prayer-Book. Indeed, the merely supplementary nature of an appendix might easily lead to high-handed action on the part of a majority, and consequent irritation on the part of the minority. The persistent plea for delay has reminded someone of the story of the hole in the Irishman's roof, which he could not repair when it rained, and which there was no need to repair when the weather was dry. From the Church point of view the weather is as dry now as it will ever be. So, evidently, Convocation thinks, and it proceeds with its work of revision.

Two points of importance immediately arise. It may reassure some whose sympathies lie with Canon Drummond's amendment to read Canon Sutton's speech. There is need for revision, not so much in the interests of loyal Church-people, as of the many thousands who stand apart from all religion. We must win them, and to do so we need an instrument better

fitted for the present needs than a book compiled for other days can possibly be. No argument which ignores the man in the street must be urged, whether for revision or against it. That is the first point, and the second is this: there must be no revision in the interests of party. It was stated by one of the speakers at the Church Congress that Evangelicals who favoured revision did so in order to get rid of the indicative form of absolution in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, and for kindred reasons. The statement is untrue. The Evangelical school is concerned for the fulfilment of the Church's mission, and for our part we believe revision is needed to that end. Of course there will be difficulties over detail, and of course we must reserve to ourselves the right to vote and work against specific proposals with which we cannot agree. For the ultimate issue we have faith enough to be free from fear.

In the discussions to which the Royal Commission on Divorce has given rise one point of importance seems to have been somewhat lightly treated—viz., the value of St. Matthew's Gospel as an independent record of our Lord's life and teaching. St. Matthew records an exception to the indissolubility of marriage in the teaching of our Lord which both St. Mark and St. Luke ignore. The higher critics of the New Testament would have us believe that St. Matthew added the excepting clause as a concession to Jewish feeling, and Churchmen to-day are blindly following critical lead. We are not here concerned with the general question of divorce, but we venture to ask how much of the Sermon on the Mount—nay, how much of St. Matthew's Gospel—we are similarly to yield on the ground that it has no counterpart in St. Luke or St. Mark. We recognize the primary position of St. Mark as the Gospel behind the Synoptists; we gladly welcome Harnack's testimony to the value of St. Luke; but we are not inclined to yield to the critics the large amount of original matter which St. Matthew contains.

We are interested to find the Bishop of Birmingham, unless

he has changed his mind, takes the same view on the critical question. In his "Sermon on the Mount" (1899 edition) he writes :

"Various attempts have been made to obviate the force of this exception. But to the present writer they do not commend themselves as at all satisfactory. Chiefly it is pleaded that the exception does not appear in St. Luke's Gospel or in St. Paul's Epistles, where marriage is dealt with. But it is a law of interpretation that a command with a specific qualification is more precise than a general command without any specific qualification ; and that the one where the qualification occurs must interpret the other where this specific qualification does not occur" (p. 71).

And again, in an appendix, the Bishop writes :

"Christ, by a distinct act of legislation, prohibited divorce among His disciples in such sense as allows of remarriage, except in the case of the adultery of one of the parties, in which case He did not prohibit it. . . . I do not think, then, that the obvious force of the passages in St. Matthew can be dissolved."

Bishop Gore believes that the Church is free to ignore our Lord's exception ; and he evidently regrets that the Lambeth Conference of 1888 gave a modified recognition to that exception. We do not propose to deal with that side of the matter here. We are only concerned at the moment in making a protest against the treatment to which the Gospel according to St. Matthew is being subjected—a treatment which in our judgment is fraught with larger issues than many suspect.

It is always well to pay some attention to the impressions that may be made on the mind of the "general reader," sometimes spoken of as "the man in the street." He would naturally form his opinions of the recent Church Congress at Cambridge from the accounts given in the public press, and when he read that, in a large and crowded meeting, the Bishop of Birmingham was cheered for saying that the Anglican Communion would certainly be rent in twain on the day on which any non-episcopally ordained minister was formally allowed within their communion to celebrate the Eucharist, he would not unnaturally conclude that

Bishops on the
Episcopate.

such an utterance, coming from so representative a man as the Bishop of Birmingham, was a fair index of the mind of the Church of England on the point, or, at any rate, of the sentiments of the Episcopal Bench. It is as well, therefore, while the topic is still before us, to point out that so far is this proposition from carrying universal support that two Bishops—one in the Northern and the other in the Southern Province—have taken the earliest opportunity to repudiate it with emphasis. The repudiation in each case is couched in such weighty terms, and uttered with such an obvious sense of responsibility, that it should certainly be placed on record.

The Bishop of Durham, writing in the *Inter-
preter* for October on the Edinburgh Conference,
says :

“One reflection was forced upon me. It was that at present, certainly, the most formidable obstacle to large and wholesome movements of co-operation and ultimate union is a theory of Episcopal succession and ministration which puts it in the very front rank of the Christian verities, instead of setting it in a great, a sacred, but secondary place. The theory which makes the Episcopal succession, determined on a certain definite plan of consecrations, the repository of Divine grace upon earth, so that outside it the ministration of grace is at best irregular, out of covenant certainly, void of the fulness of Divine validity, is by its nature antagonistic to modifications of itself in favour of a larger truth. For it can scarcely admit any truth as to the Divine methods of distribution to be larger. And what I gravely feel, not the less as time goes on, is that the theory, however imposing, commended by whatever greatness of tradition and sanctity of names, is not a revelation, but an inference from inferences, based at the last resort on presuppositions.”

The other pronouncement is by the Bishop of Hereford. In his address to the Hereford Diocesan Conference, the Bishop, speaking also of the Edinburgh Conference and its drawing together of various religious bodies, said :

“I venture to say to our clergy that I hope it will not be hindered by the separatist episcopal utterances heard at our recent Church Congress. . . . And, for my own part, I feel it a plain duty to say that such episcopal utterances as those to which I refer should be estimated simply as survivals from darker days, and should no longer influence the Christian mind. When

a highly esteemed Bishop tells us that acceptance of episcopacy is an absolutely necessary condition and requirement before we can hold communion and fellowship with Christians of any other denomination, he is surely forgetting that our Lord left no such rule for His Church, and laid no such restriction upon His followers; he is refusing to admit, what scholars and historians have made clear, that whilst the monarchical episcopate soon became general in the Church, it was not from the first a universal or necessary requirement."

A correspondent, writing to the *Spectator* on this matter of episcopacy, recalls one or two passages from older divines, showing their Catholic breadth of view as opposed to the novel and rigid exclusiveness of present-day High Anglican sectarianism. His first quotation is from Hooker ("Eccl. Pol.," III. xi. 16):

Hooker and
Andrewes,

"Although I see that certain reformed Churches, the Scottish especially and French, have not that which best agreeth with the Sacred Scripture, I mean the Government that is by Bishops . . . this their defect and imperfection I had rather lament in such case than exagitate [*i.e.*, inveigh against], considering that men oftentimes, without any fault of their own, may be driven to want that kind of polity or regiment which is best, and to content themselves with that which either the irremediable error of former times or the necessity of the present hath cast upon them."

The other quotation is from Bishop Andrewes' answer to the French *pasteur* Du Moulin ("Opuscula," 191):

"Nec tamen si nostra Divini juris sit, inde sequitur, vel quod sine ea salus non sit, vel quod stare non possit Ecclesia. Ferreus sit qui salutem eis neget. Nos non sumus illi ferrei."

These quotations are followed by a reference to the well-known fact of Bishop Cosin's intercourse when in exile with the Reformed Churches on the Continent. They all go to show that for these masters of Anglican theology it was possible to hold a most lofty estimate of episcopacy without any of the more exclusive inferences of modern days.

An unauthorized, but evidently correct, account of the long-expected Report of the Royal Commission on the Church in Wales has been issued. It bristles with elaborate and carefully compiled statistics.

The Church
in Wales.

From these some fairly obvious conclusions may be deduced. There can be no doubt that in recent years there has been great progress in the life and work of the Anglican Church in Wales, so that it now outnumbers any other religious body in the Principality. With regard to the Nonconformist bodies, a striking picture is given of the way in which the zeal for chapel-building has quite outrun the actual needs. To quote the *Guardian's* summary of this point: "Whereas the Church of England provides one church for every 1,080 of the population, the Nonconformist provides one church for every 450. So great is the accommodation provided by all the denominations beyond the actual requirements of the population, that if all the people over three years of age were to go to church at the same time on any particular Sunday, there would still be more than 100,000 unoccupied sittings." It should be noted that the Report gives full and ungrudging recognition to the splendid work done by the Nonconformists in their Sunday-schools.

An interesting additional Report has been issued
 A **Minority**
 Report. by Lord Hugh Cecil and the Archdeacon of
 Carmarthen. One of the striking features in this
 is the information afforded as to the miserable underpayment
 of ministers in the Principality. In the Congregational churches
 one-third of the ministers receive less than £80 a year, and
 more than one-tenth of them receive less than £60. One
 cannot help wondering how much of this pitiable poverty might
 be prevented if only there were less overlapping of competing
 agencies, and more combined concentration in religious work.
 The sheer waste of it all is seen most vividly from the fact that
 in some small villages two or three chapels belong to different
 denominations, each of which provides more sittings than would
 suffice for the entire population of the village. The impression
 we gather from the Reports as a whole is that they afford no
 reasonable basis for any measure of Disestablishment or
 Disendowment of the Anglican Church in Wales.

**The Education
Question.**

We do not yet seem to have advanced very far towards a settlement of the religious difficulty. Although the proposals of the Settlement Committee have had a strong backing, recent events show that any attempt to make them the basis for legislation would meet with strong opposition. Mr. Lathbury published in the *Times* for October 10 an earnest appeal on behalf of what is practically secularism. This was promptly followed by an eloquent letter from the Bishop of Carlisle, repudiating any such suggestion and defending what is, in effect, the position of the Settlement Committee. Since then Lord Salisbury has put out a plea for what may be called the advanced "denominational" position, with strong emphasis on the parental right of choice in the matter. The tragedy of the situation is that while Churchmen disagree the Church of England is losing her schools. The Bishop of St. Asaph reminds us that, between August 1, 1903, and August 1, 1909, 372 Church of England schools were closed, owing to inability to comply with the demands of the Education Department, and that in the same period 298 of the same schools were transferred. In other words, we have lost 670 of our schools. And, as the Bishop points out, if we had only accepted the right of entry that was once offered, we might have assured the giving of genuine religious instruction in all the Elementary Schools of the land.

**Candidates for
Ordination.**

No more difficult problem is at present before the mind of the Church than that which concerns the training of candidates for Holy Orders. The Bishops of the Southern Province have passed a resolution, demanding that after 1917 every candidate (there are to be some exceptions) should possess a University degree. Probably a degree examination does provide the best rough test of general education. But there is considerable doubt whether the resolution of the Southern Upper House is not too sweeping, and that doubt has evidently weighed with the Northern House of Bishops to the extent that they are asking for a general meeting

of Bishops before they follow in the wake of the South. In the pages of the *Church Quarterly Review* there have been, first, a symposium in which several writers have taken part, and, second, a long article by the editor, who also presides over a training institution—King's College, London. Those pages are worthy of careful study; so also is the speech of Dr. Figgis of Mirfield, made at the annual meeting of the institution at Kelham. Two points of importance emerge. First, it is clear that the course of training must be made wider and more comprehensive, and, consequently, longer and more expensive. Secondly, to quote the *Church Times* summary of Dr. Figgis' speech, "The present system supplies a variety of training which is of the utmost value. To destroy it would be to exclude from the ranks of the priesthood some of the best and most promising men."

Bearing these two points in mind, it is necessary to insist that all institutions which are effectively and thoroughly training candidates for the ministry must be treated with even-handed justice. We doubt not that, whatever decisions are ultimately arrived at, this will be carefully done. And, furthermore, every school of thought in the Church, which believes that it has a contribution to make to the life and doctrine of the whole, will have to see to it that the means are provided for the maintenance of the necessary institutions, and the proper training of those who are admitted to them. A matter of money must not be allowed to interfere with the efficiency of our future clergy, or we shall never be able to fulfil the mission to which the Lord of the Church has called us.

