

THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1912.

The Month.

The Season
of Congresses.

THE month of October may be taken to mark the final termination of the holiday season, and the beginning of the winter's work. In these days there is an increasing tendency to dedicate some part of the vacation period to conferences, the number of which has been, of late, unusually large. Already the Congress of Universities has met in London, drawing its representatives from all parts of the British Empire. The International Eugenics Conference gathered its members from a still wider field, as did also the Congress of Mathematicians recently assembled at Cambridge. Before these pages are in print the Trades' Union Congress and the British Association will have gathered and dispersed. In some cases the topics discussed at these gatherings appeal mainly to experts, and have little interest for the outside world. In other cases the matter in debate has a very direct bearing on the practical realities of life, and it may not be untimely before the period of discussion finally recedes into the past to ask ourselves which topics, if any, of those which have been propounded should engage the serious practical attention of Christians in general and Churchmen in particular. Conferences are not intended to be mere displays of rhetoric. They miss their object unless they can so stimulate and inform public opinion as to lead to useful and appropriate action.

We have already tried to indicate in these pages **The Problem of the Unfit.** the points in the Congress of Universities which were of special interest to Christian workers and to Christian statesmen. We wish to point out here that many of the problems raised at the Eugenics Congress are connected with matters which cannot possibly be ignored. What are we to do with the feeble-minded, the constitutionally criminal, with those who are absolutely unfit to take any healthy and effective part in life at all? Are we simply to ignore and neglect them? Simply to punish and confine them when they break out in some way more distressing than usual? Or is it more kind to them and much more helpful to the body politic to give our serious attention to well-thought-out schemes for confinement and segregation? We are not speaking now—it need hardly be said—of those who could be improved in character and standing by Christian and brotherly care. There is a residuum which cannot be left absolutely free, and the problem is how to deal with this residuum in a wise and Christian spirit. We have to guard ourselves, on the other hand, against the idea that if the race is physically sound, all is absolutely well with it. The world of life and spirit would, indeed, be poorer if there were subtracted from it all the noble living and high achievement that has often been accomplished by men and women whose health was frail and whose bodies were diseased.

Unless we are careful and keep our heads, the **The British Association.** discussion of this year's British Association may mean a recrudescence of the old stupid controversy between religion and science. Professor Schäfer disclaims any scientific foundation for the view of supernatural intervention in the first production of life. Immediately thoughtlessness exclaims, science denies the supernatural origin of life. The real truth is—and both men of science and men of faith, so far as both are thoughtful, admit it—science, as science, has nothing to do with the supernatural. When science has finished its researches and completed its survey of phenomena, there is still

left a mystery which demands God. Forty years ago evolution startled the Christian Church, and the timid feared for the faith. But we have realized that evolution is but a description of method ; it is not a discovery of origin. We shall be foolish indeed if to-day we are startled by chemistry. Life may be reduced to a synthesis of certain elements, brought together by chemical process. We are not chemists, and we must leave the criticism of the theory to those who are. But granting the theory for a moment, we must postulate a Great Chemist behind all things, or we are driven back to the old discredited theory of a fortuitous concatenation of atoms. Years ago men held a mechanical view of the universe which made God a Great Carpenter. Professor Schäfer, if he can substantiate his theory, will make Him a Great Chemist. These are matters of God's method, and we must listen to science. For us God is the great Originator of all things. They may use different languages, but both science and religion demand this. It matters little to our faith in the God who is our Father, whether He brought all things into immediate existence by the expression of His Will, or whether He created by a large process of evolution or, indeed, by a series of chemical syntheses.

Professor Schäfer holds out the hope that some

*The Origin
of Life.* day some chemist in some laboratory may make
"life." The hope is not new, and it has been disappointed again and again. The "life" thus made will be but a tiny morsel of "colloidal slime," a speck of jelly with some living function. What then? We shall have taken one step further back in the solution of the problem, and we shall meet mystery again, and as we look forward we shall find mystery even more mysterious. Manufacture your "colloidal slime," and you may have discovered a secret of method, you have not really advanced one single step to the discovery of origin. Bishop Welldon has put the position in the right perspective when he writes :

"After all, the more you can prove the possibility of producing or arranging the conditions of life without producing life itself the more mysterious

life becomes. While I welcome the speculations of the president, and shall still more welcome the amazing results which his speculations foreshadow—if ever they come to pass—I do not think he has at present shed much light upon the greatest of all mysteries.

“It seems to me that science in all its departments, great as its achievements have been, has stood, and still stands, baffled at the door of creation. No doubt the principle of evolution, which has bridged so many gulfs in nature, not unreasonably suggests the prospect of bridging the gulf between animate and inanimate nature, or between life and lifelessness—even, if I may not say, between life and death.

“I am afraid that the key of the great problem still remains, and is likely to remain, in the hands of Providence. There is nothing in Professor Schäfer’s address which ought to excite the slightest opposition or uneasiness in the mind of any Christian. Man is what he is, not what he was. His powers are such as they are, not such as they were; and Professor Schäfer is himself careful to distinguish between life, which he calls a problem of matter, and the soul, upon which all the spiritual aims and aspirations of humanity are centred.”

Just one point more. In his last paragraph *Life and Soul*. Bishop Welldon notices that Professor Schäfer distinguishes between life as a problem of matter and life as a problem of spirit. It is an all-important distinction, as our modern philosophers—men who have just as much right to be heard as scientists—Eucken, Bergson, and Croce, are in various ways trying to teach us. We doubt if chemists will ever be able to make life, we certainly cannot go to the laboratory of the physicist for “soul.” A modern novel has talked of the “Soul-shop.” The phrase has an irreverent note about it, but it is a break from materialism, and therein is its hope. The daily papers have in the main struck a true note upon this question, and we venture to quote a paragraph from a leading article in the *Daily Mirror* which puts our point :

“More life the scientist reveals to us: does he give us more life, the only life that matters to us, *our* life, the life of man, and of the soul in him ?

“He patches us up, and we thank him; he wards pain from our bodies, and we are pleased; he fits up our life with many useful devices, for which occasionally we make him rich. And now, perhaps, he will make more life for us out of the elements. Only let us be clear about that ambiguous word. The ‘life’ he will make will not be of any importance to us, because it will not be a deepening of quality in the soul.

“And so—it’s a commonplace—all the manipulations and discoveries, the blendings and dissections, leave that presiding critical soul-life apart and

unattracted. Something beautiful, something good, is more to us than something new and curious. Thus, after the promise of more life from the chemist, one recalls with another kind of curiosity that similar claim which had reference to the sphere chemists never touch—that mysterious Word of ‘I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly.’”

Yes, He is the Life, and modern science, at its truest, has never yet threatened to deny or to supersede His claim.

Slavery in
Portuguese
West Africa.

Besides the debates of Congresses, a matter of grave urgency which has arisen during the last month is the question of Slavery in Portuguese West Africa. The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society has done its best to present to the world the state of things in the Portuguese Islands of San Thomé and Principe, and the efforts of the Society have been seconded with ability and determination by our contemporary the *Spectator*. In a recent letter to that paper the Portuguese Minister in London has tried to show that the statements of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society have been “victoriously and triumphantly refuted.” The *Spectator*, however, by reference to, and quotation from, a Parliamentary White Paper published during August, has no difficulty in showing that this statement is quite misleading, and that under thinly-veiled forms the cruel reality of slavery is practised in these islands, for which, it must be remembered, Great Britain has made herself responsible by treaty. As the *Spectator* remarks, it would, indeed, make our ancestors turn in their graves if some other Power were to take in hand the suppression of slavery in these islands, and Great Britain were to find herself fighting in defence of it. And how would Evangelicals, who claim to trace their ancestry from the “Clapham” sect, appear in the matter?

Two Grave
Problems.

During the month of August there have appeared in the *Times* two articles of the profoundest interest to all those who have at heart the further extension of Christianity. One was from the special correspondent in Tokyo, who contemplates with grave concern

the condition of Japan in the coming days. The last fifty years of constructive statesmanship have been an era of *Meiji*, or Enlightenment, with a system of disciplined patriotism, having the Emperor for its pivot. Now that pivot has been removed, and if the welfare of Japan is to rest on a secure basis, many of its statesmen see that the coming era must be one of *Taisho*, or Righteousness. In the effort to secure this, some of them meditate forming a composite religion that shall incorporate the best elements in all existing creeds. Such a scheme is in itself a pathetic expression of the need for "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ." The other article, which deals with Pan-Islamism, depicts in clear and somewhat lurid outline the determined efforts that are being made for world-wide revival of Islamism. The Italian War and British co-operation with Russia in Persia are being treated as exhibitions of Christian hostility to Islam. Christians may well pray earnestly that our diplomatists and statesmen may be divinely guided, so that the already great difficulties which hinder the winning of the Moslem world for Christ may not be increased by far-reaching international complications.

General Booth. "The General has laid down his sword." So was it announced to the world that one of the most striking figures in our religious and social life had passed to his rest. In many ways his methods and his beliefs were not ours; but he knew Christ, he understood human nature, and he lived to serve. It was only slowly that the world began to understand and appreciate him. Charlatan, impostor, fanatic—so men used to call him. He went on with his work unheeding, despite opposition, despite misunderstanding, despite, of late years, serious physical disability. To the credit of the world, he came into his inheritance in the esteem of men before he died. Oxford gave him her chiefest honour years ago, the King and Queen spoke for England as they sent messages of sympathy to the quiet chamber of his sleeping, and the citizens of London, headed by their First Magistrate, doffed their hats in respectful

silence as he passed to his burying. He ignored opposition or misrepresentation, though we know not what it cost him; but he rejoiced in the sunshine of appreciation that came to him in his latter days, and truly he deserved it.

It is not the time fully to estimate his character or discuss his work in detail. William Booth was a gift of God to his generation; he had his faults, but his hunger for the souls of men—ay, and for the welfare of their bodies—his splendid all-absorbing efforts, his versatile genius in the doing of his work, his determined perseverance that never brooked a hindrance, made him one of the world's strong men, one of the benefactors of his race. Thank God for him! A freelance, priest of no church, yet an autocrat within his own communion, he presents a problem to mere ecclesiasticism; yet even ecclesiasticism began to understand him, and his life amid all its many services will do this—it will tend to break down some of the old exclusiveness which has hindered the progress of the Catholic Church.

To the September number of the *Treasury* Evangelicals and Vestments. Canon Simpson contributes a thoughtful and deeply interesting article on "The Real Presence." Towards the end of it he says:

"The more Evangelical we are, the more real should the Sacrament become. The more strongly we believe in justification by faith, the more ready should we be to mark out the Holy Communion, which is the epitome of the Gospel, as the core of all our worshipful acts. Evangelicals ought to be the first to desire that its celebration should be accompanied with the use of vestments which, by contrast with those employed for the lesser and subordinate services, distinguish it as the characteristic rite of Christ's Gospel."

This counsel comes from one who is, we believe, a friend to the Evangelical school of thought, and who shares some, at any rate, of its distinctive tenets. It is, therefore, in all friendliness that we point out in reply how true Evangelicalism *does* "mark out" the Eucharist, but *not* at the expense of the preaching of the Word. It is no mark of a genuine Evangelical

to belittle the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. With regard to the use of a particular vestment, the obvious reply is not far to seek. We may preface it by a quotation from Canon Simpson's article on "The Lord's Supper" in the new "Prayer-Book Dictionary." He there says :

"The Supper of the Lord, and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass, was the title affixed to the reformed Liturgy in the First Prayer-Book of Edward VI. (1549). The last few words disappeared from the Second Prayer-Book (1552), and have never been revived, not because the term *Mass* is in itself objectionable, nor because the rite, as now celebrated, was regarded as essentially different from that for which provision was made in the mediæval Missal, *but because associations had gathered round its use which it was desirable to break.*"

We have italicized the last words because they exactly express our objections, not only to the *Mass*, but to the *Mass* vestments. They are associated with a doctrine of the Holy Communion which the Church of England has explicitly repudiated. Into the abstract question of *a* distinctive vestment there is no need to enter, because it is not a matter of practical politics. The only vestments it is suggested we should employ are the *Mass* vestments, and the associations which have gathered round them are such that we firmly believe their use to be an obstacle and a hindrance to any true conception of the Holy Communion.

