

THE CHURCHMAN

September, 1919.

THE MONTH.

**To our
Readers.** OUR first word this month must be a very sincere expression of regret at the delay in the publication of the August number of the CHURCHMAN. It was due entirely to circumstances over which we have no control. The number was prepared and printed in good time for copies to reach subscribers not later than the 1st of the month. The delay was in transit from the printing works at Frome to the publishing office in London, but exactly where it occurred or under what circumstances it was held up we are unable to discover. It will not be forgotten, however, that railways are still under the control of the Government and that everything has to give way for urgent Government business. We are taking every possible step open to us to prevent the recurrence of such an unpleasant incident, and we ask our readers to accept our apology for the inconvenience caused to them by the late delivery of their copies of the August number.

**The
Conference
Habit.** With the close of the holidays the Conference season will reopen. The Church Pastoral-Aid Society is inviting about one hundred of its friends to a gathering at Wimbledon to discuss the "Findings" of the various Evangelistic Conferences held in different parts of the country during the last ten months and to arrange for a plan of campaign. Early in October a great Evangelical Congress will be held in Manchester, under the auspices of the Northern Federation and Union of Evangelical Churchmen, which is certain to attract a large attendance from the twelve dioceses of the Province of York. Later in the month the Church Congress, which owing to the war has not met since 1913, will assemble at Leicester, and having regard to the central position of the Congress town, it is reasonable to believe that the numbers will be up to and probably beyond the average. How

many more Conferences, and other gatherings of a like nature, are already arranged for, or about to be arranged in the near future, we cannot say, but we believe the number is not inconsiderable. Of the importance of such gatherings we have no doubt. They have a social influence and promote the sense of fellowship; they are also useful in enlarging a man's vision, and in bringing him into touch with the latest and best methods of dealing with some of the more pressing problems of the day. Beyond all question if Conference or Congress is used aright a man should come away stronger spiritually and better equipped for the work he has to do. But there is another side to the story. We note a growing tendency to multiply Conferences, Congresses, Conventions, Public Meetings, etc., out of all proportion to the necessities of the case. The fact that we have just emerged from a four years' period of war when public gatherings of this kind could not conveniently be held, has, perhaps, helped to make their number seem larger than it is, but, without in the least desire to disparage those already arranged, we venture to suggest that in the near future some real effort should be made by those specially concerned to reduce rather than to increase the number of such meetings. If one looks round upon the audiences which assemble, or read, in the papers the lists of those present, it almost invariably happens that one sees the same faces and reads the same names time after time. There are men who have acquired what may be called the Conference habit, and we are doubtful whether it is altogether good. It provokes a degree of restlessness which is not wholesome, and it needs to be watched and—where necessary—checked.

From the nature of things Conferences and similar gatherings are attended, for the most part, by clergy.

The Claims of the Parish. The laity have their business to see to during the day—and being good Christians they know they must not be slothful in business—so that *their* attendance must largely be limited to evening meetings. But with clergy it is supposed to be different: they are practically masters of their own time, and have or are supposed to have more time to spare for engagements of that sort. And yet, we venture to ask, is it really so? The parochial clergyman has his hands very full, and in ordinary cases—we are not thinking of exceptional circumstances—the claims of the parish, if they are to be

adequately discharged, leave but little time for outside engagements. If that is so, it raises the question how far those responsible for multiplying the number of such engagements are justified in pressing the clergy to leave their parishes? We are confident that the claims of his parish have the first charge upon the time of the parochial clergyman. It is said that there is an impression abroad that the stay-at-home clergyman is likely to be overlooked, and that preferment is given chiefly to those who are much in the public eye. We cannot say what is the measure of truth there may be in the suggestion, but we are convinced that the man who, remembering the serious terms of his ordination commission, determines to devote his best energies to the care of his own people, is not likely to lose the reward of faithful service. In this connexion there is another matter which requires attention. Is it really necessary that parochial clergy should be expected to give so large proportion of their time to Committee work? A story is current of a Bishop sending for one of his clergy who occupied a leading position and whose Committee experience was considerable. "My brother," said the Bishop, "recommend you to spend from two to three solid hours every day in visiting your people." "But, my lord, what would become of my Committees?" "I have nothing to do with that," came the retort; "you were not instituted to attend Committees." The incident—which is a perfectly true one—exaggerates, no doubt, the actual facts, but it contains a useful moral. The pressure of Committee work is not confined to London, although, perhaps, it is felt more acutely there than elsewhere owing to the fact that all the great Societies have their headquarters in the Metropolis; but it exists and is becoming more and more a difficulty in the country. With the growth of the Diocesan spirit there have arisen Diocesan Committees innumerable, and clergy feel bound to take part in them. It has been held as a reproach to Evangelical clergy that they do not sufficiently take their part in Diocesan work and that consequently Evangelical views are not represented. But if the failure arise from an earnest desire to satisfy first the claims of the parish, the reproach is by no means a dishonourable one. The subject is one of very great difficulty—and we have done no more than touch just the fringe of it—but we do urge most strongly that the claims of the parish should receive the fullest measure of the clergyman's time and thought and energy.

The programme for the next great gathering of the **Lambeth Conference.** Anglican Bishops, known as the Lambeth Conference, to be held in July and August of next year, has now been issued. The Conference meets, as a rule, once in ten years and should have been held in 1918, but the country was then at war and, seeing that the members come from all parts of the world, it was impossible to convene it. Some 250 to 300 Bishops are expected, and the subjects to which their attention will be asked include the following :—

1. Relation to and Reunion with other Churches—(a) Episcopal Churches ; (b) Non-Episcopal Churches, with questions as to—(1) Recognition of Ministers, (2) "Validity" of Sacraments, (3) Suggested Transitional Steps.
2. Missionary Problems—(a) Relation between Missions and Growing Churches ; (b) Missions and Governments ; (c) Liturgical Variations Permissible to a Province or Diocese ; (d) Marriage questions and other practical problems.
3. The Christian Faith in relation to—(a) Spiritualism ; (b) Christian Science ; (c) Theosophy.
4. Problems of Marriage and Sexual Morality.
5. The Position of Women in the Councils and Ministrations of the Church.
6. Christianity and International Relations, especially the League of Nations.
7. The Opportunity and Duty of the Church in regard to Industrial and Social Problems.
8. The Development of Provinces in the Anglican Communion.

The programme is good as far as it goes, but it would be easy to name half-a-dozen subjects upon which the Church would be grateful for guidance, and yet they find no place in the programme. The fact that the Archbishop of Canterbury has felt able to issue the invitation effectually disposes of a very interesting rumour which was current a few months ago and has not even yet wholly died away.

There seems to be a determined attempt to introduce into English churches the Roman service of **Benediction.** There was a case at Cury where, after repeated remonstrances had been as repeatedly disregarded, the former Bishop of Truro proceeded against the Incumbent, and he was deprived of his benefice. There is a case in the diocese of Birmingham where also the Bishop's wishes and commands are alike flouted, but in this case the Diocesan has decided that he will appeal to love rather than to law. What that may mean in practice we do not know, but the Bishop must have taken the measure of the Ritualistic party very imperfectly if he considers that anything short of compulsion will bring the offender to book. In the diocese of Bath and Wells the Bishop is acting with greater discretion. He has visited

the parish where Benediction is held and has formally ordered the abandonment of the practice. What will happen if the Incumbent flouts the order we do not know, but we do know what ought to happen. A more difficult case has arisen in the diocese of Chelmsford. The facts, as disclosed by the Bishop, are as follows:—

The Holy Communion service has been practically superseded by one drawn up and printed by the Incumbent called "How to follow the English Mass." This is a production entirely without authority. An individualistic form of Mass is surely an innovation so far as Catholic practice and doctrine are concerned.

The service of Benediction has been held every Sunday night for months past without any authority from myself.

The Procession of the Host has been commenced inside and outside the church, and services of various kinds have been introduced, parts of which (it is asserted) have been in Latin.

No wonder the Bishop speaks of the situation as "very grave." The Incumbent has failed to regard the authority of the Bishop who is holding his hand until after the holidays. In the meantime he took the very proper course of asking the diocese that special prayer should be offered up in every church for the Vicar of Thaxted and for himself "that the right spirit and the right judgment may be given to both of us, and I trust that by September a right solution of this grievous trouble may be reached." There will be a very genuine desire that the "right solution" may be found without resort to legal proceedings, but of the absolute necessity for practices of the kind described by the Bishop being "promptly made to cease," we imagine that the Bishop of Chelmsford has not the remotest doubt.

**Los von
Canterbury.**

The possibility of the Convocations sanctioning the admission of Nonconformists to Church of England pulpits, and giving permission to women to pray and preach in our churches, caused something of a sensation in Anglo-Catholic circles. The *Church Times* darkly hinted at secession and disruption, and in this it was but following the threats of some of the more extreme men. A similar cry has often been raised before and nothing has ever come of it, but this time it seemed as if there really were something behind it. A correspondent of the *Church Times*, however, challenges the whole position. He asserts that "some people seem to take a kind of gloomy satisfaction in toying with the idea of a 'Los von Canterbury' movement, when things appear to be going wrong; the possibility of secession

is a kind of skeleton-in-the-cupboard, which is allowed to be half seen through a chink of the door when trouble is impending, but locked away again when the excitement has died down." He thinks that the time has come "for the skeleton to be dragged into the daylight, thoroughly examined, and, if found unlikely to be a creditable or useful ally, frankly consigned to the dustheap." Accordingly he proceeds to examine this "skeleton," with results which, if extremely interesting to onlookers, are not likely to please those who have made the threats. Indeed he has made them look not a little foolish, for, like a set of petulant children, they have not foreseen what the practical results of such a secession would be.

What Secession would mean. The correspondent faces the facts, and we are shown, almost for the first time, how the secession movement would work. He writes:—

It is not likely that any of the present English bishops would join the movement, and its episcopate would therefore have to be procured from Colonial sources. It is to be presumed that the disruption of the Mother Church of England would immediately involve that of the Anglican Communion throughout the world; Scotland, South Africa, Nassau, Korea, the U.M.C.A. dioceses, and certain parts of the American, Canadian, and Australian Churches would no doubt declare themselves to be in union with the "Non-juring Church," whilst Ireland, and the greater parts of the Canadian, Australian, and Indian Churches would adhere to the residual "Established Church." The Anglican Communion, as it now exists, would disappear, leaving in its place an "Anglo-Catholic" and an "Anglo-Protestant-Episcopal Church." With the fate of the latter we need not concern ourselves; having lost so many of its most vigorous sons, it would be an organism of low vitality with little power of self-defence; it would probably not retain the delights of "Establishment" very long, and would be soon swallowed up and lost in the amorphous welter of undenominational Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. The cathedrals would be nationalized as temples of a creedless ethic, faintly flavoured with reminiscences of Christian emotion, and lost to Catholic worship for ever.

We can hardly be expected to share the correspondent's view as to the "low vitality" of the "Anglo-Protestant-Episcopal Church." The men whom it would be likely to lose are certainly not "its most vigorous sons," but rather those whose continued presence in the Church is a source of weakness and not of strength; and the thought of their secession seems to conjure up before our minds the vision of a really vigorous Church, active and effective because at unity within itself, with its teaching based upon the sure word of Holy Scripture and absolutely loyal to the Reformation. Such

a Church would quickly become a power in our land and would go from strength to strength.

But what of the other Church? The correspondent leaves us in no doubt what would happen to it:—

Death from
Inanition.

The "Non-juring" Anglo-Catholic Church, on the other hand, would be a small body; I doubt whether it would include, in England, more than three or four hundred congregations, if as many—governed by, perhaps, five or six bishops. Probably great numbers of those who are now with us would prefer to take refuge in the imposing organization and the tried stability of the Roman Church, rather than embark upon the desperate venture of founding a new denomination. It would start its career without funds or buildings; for years after the secession it would have to worship in hired rooms and public halls. It would have neither the plant nor the organization for training its future priests; it would be too weak in men and money to feed the existing Catholic missions overseas. It would be a shrivelled, artificial sect, without a history or a past. Possibly a really great and Napoleonic leader might be able, in course of time, to make a success of it; but at present no such figure is visible amongst us. Humanly speaking, it seems probable that it would suffer the fate which overtook the Non-juring Church of 1688 and seems likely to overtake the "Old Catholic" Church of 1870, and, after struggling feebly along for a few years, with a scanty band of adherents and a pathetic absence of inspiration and enthusiasm, expire of inanition.

The advocates of secession will not thank this writer for showing up so effectively the weakness of their position. That his estimate is right we do not for a moment question; and it is easy to understand that, with such a fate awaiting the disruptionists, the more sober-minded members of the party will seek to restrain the hot-heads who talk of going out. But, if we may humbly do so, we venture to remind members of the extreme "Catholic" section within the Church of England that, if they are troubled about their position, it is not necessary for them to remain, neither need they seek to form a separate Church such as must ultimately "expire of inanition." There is another course open to them—they can join the Church of Rome with whose principles and practices they seem often to be more in agreement than they are with the Protestant and Reformed Church of England. This is the kind of "Los von Canterbury" movement that would be greatly appreciated. But the counsel of the *Church Times* correspondent is "to stay in and fight."

Some Church
Questions. The Enabling Bill was amended in the House of Lords in such a way as to meet many of the objections that have been taken to it, and it will be interesting

to see whether the House of Commons will now let it through. The Bishop of Salisbury evidently has his doubts. In a letter to his diocese he says :—

The impression borne upon me by the debate [in the House of Lords] was that Parliament was determined, not only to claim its rights, but to exercise them to the full, and the amendment moved by Lord Finlay and accepted by the Archbishop, which makes it necessary for Parliament to actively support the proposals of the Church Assembly, and not only give a passive acquiescence by allowing them to lie on the table, will afford the fullest opportunity for Parliamentary control. How far this will destroy the purpose of the Bill, and paralysed the efforts of the Church towards spiritual freedom, remains to be seen. Looking to the composition of the House of Commons and the fact that it is no longer to be reckoned on as sympathetic with the highest interests of the Church, it is difficult to be sanguine. Personally, I have for a long time been convinced that any real freedom for the Church of England can only be obtained by "cutting the ropes," and that efforts to untie the knot will only be regarded as attempts "to make the best of both worlds." It is a great satisfaction to all supporters of the Bill, and to all in this diocese who, like myself, desire it to have the best possible chance, that Sir Robert Williams is to pilot it through the probably rough waters of the House of Commons.

The Bishop describes himself as "a supporter, if not a very optimistic supporter," of the Bill. In regard, however, to the proposals of the Joint Committee for the admission of Nonconformists, he is not a "supporter" at all. His letter makes it clear that Reunionists have still many difficulties to overcome. He says :—

I am convinced that such proposals, accompanied by restrictions, limitations, and difficult tests of orthodoxy, would be, and quite naturally, rejected by Nonconformist opinion. They assume, quite mistakenly I believe, that the Nonconformists as a whole are prepared to sacrifice their views or independence in order to unite with the Church of England. That they desire Reunion earnestly and sincerely is beyond all question; but to suppose that they are prepared to pay any price for it means a complete misunderstanding of their position and claims. That they would desire to be admitted as preachers in our churches on the specified conditions I do not for a moment believe. I cannot feel that the plan, if adopted, would be successful in promoting the end aimed at. There would be no reality about it. It would, at a considerable strain on both sides, cover up differences rather than heal them. Giving the semblance of agreement and the impression that no important differences divide us, it would in itself pass the severest condemnation upon the divisions. Without the justification of real and serious divergence of opinion and teaching, those divisions would be a crime against Christianity and a betrayal of its purpose and spirit. I yield to no one in my desire for Union, based on reality, and without betrayal of conviction. I believe, although it is the fashion to despise it, that co-operation on common ground for the good of the people, more social friendliness and abandonment of an attitude that looks like a claim to superiority—and, most of all, conferences such as we have in Salisbury with the ministers of the city for discussion and devotion—are sounder and surer methods than those which are being quite prematurely advocated.