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THE MONTH.

THE first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences was held on the 8th at the National Society's Rooms, Westminster.¹ It was stated that up to the 4th inst. the following Conferences had by distinct resolution agreed to the nomination of three laymen and three clergymen to attend as representatives at the next meeting of the Council:—viz., Winchester, Bangor, Chichester, Ely, Lichfield, Lincoln, Norwich, Oxford, Peterborough, Rochester, St. Albans, St. Asaph, Truro, Ripon, Chester, Carlisle, Manchester, Sodor and Man:—

The committee carefully revised the terms of the provisional constitution and rules passed last July, and suggested certain by-laws to be submitted to the meeting of the Council early next year. Reports from several of the Conferences have been received, and others were expected. A summary of these, with other matters, was ordered to be brought before the committee at its next meeting on the 20th of December, with the view of preparing an *agenda* paper for the council.

At the third Annual Diocesan Conference in Norwich, 111 cleric and 120 lay members were present. In the opening address the Bishop spoke of lay-ministrations:—

I believe that at the present time one of the great practical wants of our Church, which has existed so long, and has held wisely to her formularies through so many generations, is adaptation—not to let go anything she has, or any of the principles she maintains, or many of the forms that she is employing, but along with them to seek to adapt her agency to the particular wants of the times in which she is called to serve God, and the particular circumstances in which vast masses of the population are placed. One element of that adaptation, I believe, would be to employ men of different ranks of life to labour and work generally, but more particularly in that class of life to which they belong, and the people amongst whom they are generally living. I speak this not only with regard to, as it is generally said, our working class, but among all classes of society we want a good deal in our Church of the adaptation of our different machinery to the exigencies of the time.

A Report on Church Discipline being presented, Mr. C. S.

¹ The Dean of Lichfield, the Master of Magdalene, Cambridge, Chancellor Espin, Canon Temple, Archdeacon Hannah, Archdeacon Emery, Canon Howell Evans, and the Rev. W. J. Jones, Mr. Stanley Leighton, M.P., Mr. C. Magniac, M.P., Mr. H. Cecil Raikes, Mr. F. S. Powell, and Mr. W. E. Hubbard were present.

Read protested against its adoption, and the Report was rejected by an overwhelming majority.¹

At the Chester Diocesan Conference, on the question, "The Just Limits of Variation in Ritual," an extremely interesting paper was read by General Sir Richard Wilbraham, K.C.B. Sir Richard dwelt on the importance

Of bringing under the wholesome influence of the Church those masses in our large towns who are unhappily becoming more and more estranged from it, if not actually hostile to it. It is only those whose sphere of work has lain among those masses who can, I think, fully estimate the vital importance of making every effort to bring them out of their state of practical heathenism. They are not only a standing reproach to the Church, but a great and increasing danger to the State. There are whole classes which—with, I fear, very rare individual exceptions—never enter any place of worship, for no form of Dissent has succeeded in laying hold of them any more than the Church has; indeed not so much; for it is a class above these which fills the Dissenting chapels.

Of the Chichester Diocesan Conference discussion on the Supreme Court, the *Guardian* says:—

We observe that a far more prominent part than usual was taken by lay speakers; nor can we refrain from adding that, so far as we can judge from the report, their utterances stood, in respect of good sense, moderation, and propriety of tone, in very favourable contrast with those of some of the more prominent clerical orators. The whole course of the debate and its result showed plainly—what the experience of the Colonial Church has always shown—the salutary effect produced by union of lay and clerical delegates in discussion, whether they subsequently vote by orders, or all together. . . . One other characteristic we are constrained to note with much regret—the intolerant tone of those who seemed to be champions of what is called the Ritualistic party, giving some occasion to the retort that they would accept no law except their own will, and representing one of the most dangerous and perplexing elements of our present difficulty.

At the first meeting of the Liverpool Diocesan Conference there was a large attendance. The constitution provisionally adopted in this diocese is a mixture of the collective and the elective: all clergymen holding the Bishop's licence are summoned; a layman or two laymen from each parish, are elected. On the advantages of Diocesan Conferences the Bishop spoke with his

¹ The Conference discussed the question of "Deacons and Secular Occupations." The Rev. S. Garratt moved for a Committee to consider whether any legal or other impediments prevented deacons from supporting themselves by honest trade or profession, and if any, what they are, and whether it is desirable to remove them. Sir T. F. Buxton seconded, and the motion was, after a short discussion, carried.

usual power.¹ As to sending delegates to the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences, his Lordship suggested a reference to the Standing Committee (as in Canterbury): he thought it "wiser to wait." On the motion of Archdeacon Bardsley, seconded by Canon Clarke, this question was referred to the Standing Committee without discussion.

The condition of the town parishes of the diocese was duly discussed, and the general feeling seemed to be in favour of a greatly-increased and organized lay-help.

At Hereford, in the second annual Diocesan Conference, on the motion of the Bishop, carried unanimously, delegates were chosen for the Central Council. After discussing Mr. Mundella's Proposals for Revision of Code and Examination Schedules, the following Resolution was agreed to:—

That in the opinion of this Conference any alteration in the present system of Government grant which involves excessive expenditure, excessive raising of the standard of education, and frequent changes in the code, is much to be deprecated.

To the late Bishop Barclay, of Jerusalem, many tributes of respect have been paid.

A meeting preliminary to the forming of an Association, which it is proposed to call the Curates' Alliance, has been held:—

The object of the Association suggested in the circular of invitation is "the removal of the grievances of the unbeneficed clergy, and with the wider aim of promoting such general reforms as are necessary for the existence of the Church of England as the Church of the people." The questions put forward in the circular as being of pressing moment were, the position and prospects of curates, the readjustment of ecclesiastical revenues, the reform of Convocation, the state of the laws regulating patronage, and the need of union.

At the Annual Conference of the Church Association, the Chairman, Mr. Valpy, referred to the imprisonments for contempt:—

¹ For example. He said: "At present our dioceses are far less strong than they ought to be. We are weak, though endowed and established. The plain truth is, that numbers and size alone do not constitute strength. In the late Franco-German war the French found, to their cost, that crowds of 'men with muskets' do not make an army. Discipline, training, and organization are the first principles of military success. Men must learn how to act together, to stand together, to move together, to support one another, to fill their own places, and to obey the word of command. These are the secrets of an effective soldiery. Now, a Conference tends to organize the Church of England in a diocese. At any rate, I am slow to believe that clergymen and picked laymen from any diocese can meet, confer, and take counsel together annually without adding great power and vigour to the Church, unless they waste their time most strangely. If, by conferring and conversing together, we can only find out the weak points in our present position, and consider the best remedies, we shall have gained something."

There has been a great deal of abuse of the Church Association on account of the carrying out of the legal process against Mr. Green. It has been said that we actually sent down persons to the place to become parishioners. I am prepared to assert on behalf of the Council that there is not the smallest particle of truth in that statement. The Association did not hear of the case until after some three hundred parishioners had made a complaint to the Bishop of the diocese with regard to the Romish practices of the vicar, and had received no redress. They also preferred a request that his Lordship would receive a deputation from their body; but the Bishop refused to see them, and no alteration was made in the services. Finding that they could obtain no redress of the wrongs of which they justly complained, and that they were refused a hearing, they then applied for the first time to the Council, and were advised as to the steps to be taken. Had the Bishop exercised his episcopal authority, and given the parishioners proper redress, there would have been no necessity to take legal proceedings. It is asserted that the complainants are Dissenters, and the only persons in the parish who complain of the Bishop's proceedings, but the fact that they made a declaration that they were members of the Church of England before the proceedings commenced negatives the assertion that they are Dissenters; and those who know the parish state there are hundreds of persons there who objected, and do object, to the Romish services.

At a Meeting of the S.P.G. in Lincoln under the presidency of the Bishop of the Diocese, Sir Richard Temple, Bart., G.C.S.I., the late Governor of Bombay, delivered an interesting and encouraging address on Church Mission work in India.¹

Mr. Bradlaugh has been worsted on another appeal.

The Cambridge correspondent of the *Record* refers to the protest in the able Charge of the Bishop of Ely against "the novel practice of evening communion," which he regarded as fast becoming a mark of division, and as tending very distinctly to irreverence.²

¹ One objection, said Sir Richard, was that missions were failures. He would ask them to consider in what did failure or success consist. What would they consider to be a successful result? What was the result? Why, that at that moment there were 390,000 native Christians in India, of whom 100,000 were communicants. Besides these there were 200,000 boys and girls at school, who, though not all of them Christian, were entrusted by heathen parents to the missionaries, and were receiving Christian instruction. Out of these no less than 40,000 were girls. So that, with converts and scholars, there were 590,000 persons, or, in round numbers, 600,000 altogether.

² The correspondent says:—Would it not be fair to ask the Bishop if he has ever been present at an evening communion, to judge for himself of its irreverent tendencies? It is really incredible that anything but personal lack of acquaintance with the thing as it is can account for so earnest a denunciation by so good and kindly a man as the Bishop of Ely. I cannot think that his objection can be based on a strongly materialistic view of the ordinance. But if not, what then? Does he really think

In the Arches Court, on appeal by Sir Henry W. Peek, M.P., and other inhabitants of the City parish of St. Mary-at-Hill, from a decision of the Chancellor of the Diocese of London (Dr. Tristram, Q.C.), granting a faculty for certain alterations in the church, Lord Penzance said:—

In the absence of a clearly expressed opinion in their favour by a sufficient body of the parishioners, the Court ought not to sanction such an interference with the existing arrangements of this old Church. The order of the Court below must be reversed, and the faculty refused.

On the occasion of Mr. John Bright's seventieth birthday, several congratulatory addresses from his constituents at Birmingham, and his workpeople and friends at Rochdale, were presented, the event being also celebrated by the decoration and illumination of the latter town. The right hon. gentleman made a characteristic speech.

The conversion to Christianity of one of the most learned and famous of living Mohammedan Ulemas is a remarkable event. Never before probably has so eminent a Mussulman embraced the Gospel as the Effendi (Ahmed Tewfik) whose baptism took place in London on the 11th. Sir William Muir was one of the "witnesses" at the font.

The Very Rev. G. H. S. Johnson, Dean of Wells, has passed away. Dr. Plumpton,¹ an eminent scholar, who has well earned preferment, has been appointed to the vacant Deanery.²

The new Dean of Westminster, Dr. Bradley, has been instituted.

To the Deanery of Carlisle, vacant by the resignation of the veteran Dr. Close, Mr. Gladstone nominated the Rev. John Oakley, Vicar of St. Saviour's, Hoxton.

Dr. McHale, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, has died, at the age of 90.³

that the average attendants at evening communions have come from a late dinner-table, plentifully supplied with wine? Does he know so little of the people and their habits? True, evening communicants seldom display the "reverence" of marked gestures of devotion; simple and orderly kneeling is all that one usually sees. But if by reverence is meant collectedness of demeanour, absolutely orderly approach to and departure from the table, and earnest private prayer after communicating, surely there are few more reverent worshippers than evening communicants, at least in such Cambridge churches as follow this "novel practice." If the custom is hardening into a mark of difference, the fault is surely with the opinions which condemn the guiltless in this matter.

¹ The Rev. E. H. Plumpton, Prebendary of St. Paul's, Professor in King's College, London, whose writings are numerous and distinguished.

² The Canonry of Westminster, rendered vacant by the death of the Warden of All Souls', Oxford, has been filled by the appointment of the Rev. T. J. Fowles, Vicar of St. Stephen's, Paddington.

³ Rather profanely termed by "the Liberator," O'Connell, whose cause he espoused, "the Lion of the fold of Judah."