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The Pan-Anglican Congress.

By EUGENE STOCK.

JUST six years have passed away since the idea of a Pan-Anglican Congress was first mooted. There is a gathering, three or four times a year, of the secretaries of the Missionary Societies of the Church of England, at which, after a cup of tea, matters of common interest are discussed. At one of these gatherings, on June 11, 1902, Bishop Montgomery, the secretary of the S.P.G., asked the opinion of his brethren on the possibility of gathering a great Congress of Anglican Churchmen in the year of the next Lambeth Conference of Bishops, which had been fixed for 1908. Afterwards the Bishop submitted the question to the United Boards of Missions of Canterbury and York, and it was from them that the scheme was officially propounded. The Congress, therefore, was designed to have a definitely missionary character ; but it was not to be strictly a missionary gathering like the Anglican Missionary Conference of 1894. It was to consider any questions of importance in which, not the Church of England only, but the whole Anglican Communion, was interested.

With a view to ascertaining what questions it would be well to include in the programme, a letter was addressed to all the Bishops of the Anglican Communion, and to others in the dioceses abroad likely to be interested, inviting suggestions ; and the answers received from all parts of the world were of the deepest interest. In the meanwhile, a strong committee had been formed, comprising clergymen and laymen of all schools of thought, with the Bishop of St. Albans as chairman. Dr. Jacob has scarcely missed a meeting of the committee during the past four or five years, and the whole scheme owes much to his clearness of vision and wisdom in dealing with difficult matters, as well as to Bishop Montgomery's enthusiasm and large-heartedness. The latter has all along acted as chief secre-

tary, with Canon E. A. Stuart as his colleague; and when at length it became necessary to have a proper office to deal with the constantly increasing correspondence and other work, a secretary was found in the person of the Rev. A. B. Mynors, Vicar of Langley Burrell, to whom the Bishop of Gloucester gave special leave of absence from his parish for the purpose. If the Congress passes off without hitch, it will be largely owing to his energy and resourcefulness.

The preparation of the programme occupied many long sittings of both a sub-committee and the general committee, and I may be permitted to state that the scheme of arrangement eventually adopted was suggested by one of the most valued members of the committee, Mr. E. J. Palmer, of Balliol, who has just been appointed Bishop of Bombay. The essence of his scheme was that the various "sections," instead of having one day each, as was originally intended, were all to sit simultaneously throughout the week; the result being, in effect, that seven Church Congresses will be going on together, meeting in various halls in different parts of London. The sections are: A, The Church and Human Society; B, The Church and Modern Thought (this title has since been altered); C, The Church's Ministry (ordained and unordained); D, Missions in Non-Christian Lands; E, Missions in Christendom; F, The Anglican Communion; G, Work Among the Young. Separate sub-committees were appointed to work out the detailed programmes for these sections, and with Archdeacon Cunningham as secretary for B, Dr. Fry for A, and Bishop Montgomery himself for F—not to mention others—the sectional programmes have been successfully completed. One feature has been, I suppose, unique. A year ago it was resolved to ask experts in all parts of the world to write papers on the various subjects for publication beforehand, in order to facilitate study and promote the practical usefulness of the discussions. The result is remarkable. The S.P.C.K., which undertook the publishing work, has already issued more than thirty pamphlets, each containing from four to eight papers, making nearly two hundred papers in all; and

there are more to come. They form a really valuable library on Church questions of all kinds.

Besides the writers of these papers, some of whom are not coming to the Congress, but continuing at their work in distant lands, some three hundred other experts have been chosen by the different sections to open the discussions with short papers or speeches. Each section is to issue its own report, probably a volume of from 400 to 500 pages ; and these reports will undoubtedly form a storehouse of information and suggestion for the use of Churchmen in grappling with the many problems touching the life of the Church, or rather Churches, in coming years.

The Sectional Meetings, morning and afternoon for six days, will be the really most valuable feature of the Congress. But public attention is already more concentrated on the Evening Meetings and the Cathedral Services. Each section is to have one Evening Meeting in the Albert Hall, and great pains have been taken to select speakers who will represent all parts of the Anglican Communion. The chairmen will be Archbishops and Primates from South Africa, Australia, the West Indies, India, and the United States ; the Archbishop of Canterbury presiding on the first evening. As it is impossible to find seats even in the Albert Hall for all the thousands of members who have already been enrolled (on payment of a guinea each), additional meetings of the same type will be held simultaneously at the Church House ; and on four evenings St. Paul's Cathedral will be open also for short addresses from the pulpit, interspersed with hymns and brief prayers. Special meetings have also been arranged for men only, for women, for children, and for two or three special classes (as nurses). The seventh day of the Congress, Tuesday, June 23, is the Devotional Day, with papers and addresses on the Christian life.

An important feature of the whole scheme is the Thank-offering. The whole Anglican Communion is asked to make a special contribution towards the work of the Church abroad. Gifts may be earmarked for any branch of the work, or left

unappropriated, and the latter portion will be distributed by a special committee of bishops, clergy, and laity. The total sum is to be solemnly "presented" to God at the closing service at St. Paul's, on Wednesday, June 24, St. John the Baptist's Day. I fear that, in England at least, Church-people have quite failed to see the greatness of this opportunity of making an offering worthy of the Lord, and that shall involve real sacrifice. When I hear of a wealthy diocese proposing to raise £6,000, which a dozen men at most ought to give merely to start the fund in that diocese, and when I hear of a prosperous congregation hoping it may raise £50, a sum which many of its individual members could give without feeling it, I smile mournfully at the idea of our rivalling the Wesleyan million! Still more deplorable is it when ordinary subscriptions and collections for Christian objects are diverted in order to make up what is in such a case falsely called a thank-offering. So with the Living Thank-offering of men and women for foreign service, suggested by the Bishop of Dorking's offer of himself. It ought clearly not to include those who had already offered, and who would be going out in any case. It should properly consist of offers elicited specially by the occasion.

What may be expected as a result of the Pan-Anglican Congress? I have already referred to the value of the written papers for future reference, and no doubt many of the utterances at the meetings will be not less worth preserving. Moreover, the very atmosphere of some of the sections ought to be an influence of no small importance. Section A, on The Church and Human Society, is exciting very widespread interest. Many of the questions it will discuss have little connexion with the Church's work abroad, belonging, as they do, to the circumstances of industrial and municipal life in our own country; but it will be a great advantage to show Churchmen from abroad that Churchmen at home are earnestly moving in the cause of social reform; besides which, problems more or less similar present themselves in the larger Colonial States and in

the U.S.A. If it be objected that the section seems to have been rather unduly influenced by the Christian Social Union, that will only tend to promote the frank discussion needed for the formation of a well-instructed and healthy public opinion. If, again, the Higher Criticism is more strongly represented in Section B than is consistent with due impartiality, it cannot be doubted that the papers and addresses will, on the whole, tend much to convince men of the unique authority of Christ and Christianity. In Section C, great activity has been manifested in pushing lay work to the front, the Bishop of Stepney having taken an energetic lead in the effort ; and also in promoting all kinds of work for women, in doing which Mrs. Creighton has set a brilliant example of industry and ability. Sections D and E, which between them cover the whole field of Foreign Missions, have programmes of the most varied attractiveness, and the former meets in two divisions with twenty-one sessions. Section G was an afterthought, but it seems likely to give a real impetus to work of all kinds among the young.

But, in my judgment, in Section F is the heart and core of the Congress, and it is in regard to its subject, The Anglican Communion, that I expect the most important and lasting results. The subjects it will discuss, viz., the relations of the Anglican Churches to each other, the degree of independence consistent with unity, the preparation of what I may call still embryo Churches for their future ecclesiastical life, and the relation of the whole Anglican Communion to other sections of Christendom, whether the old historic Churches of East and West or the modern Reformed Communions of all kinds—these involve questions of ever-increasing urgency, which will more and more press themselves upon public attention. Meanwhile, our national insularity will be corrected ; the “man in the street” will begin to realize that there is such a thing as the Anglican Communion, and even the fairly instructed Churchman will begin to understand it better. Men will see what inter-communion practically means. They will see why it is that while, say, the Church of Ireland, or the Protestant Episcopal

Church of the United States, is absolutely independent and self-governing, in no way subject to either the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Privy Council, an Irish clergyman or an American clergyman can minister or preach in our churches under very simple conditions. They will see the reasonableness of the self-governing Churches of Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand maintaining their independence, while voluntarily binding themselves in various ways to the Home Church. And they will look forward to the future settlement of the Church in India, in China, and in Japan, in West and East and Central Africa, on an independent basis, with the right to adapt (for instance) the Prayer-book to their local circumstances (as the Irish and American Churches have done), while yet doing all in so conservative a spirit as never to endanger their full communion with the older Anglican Churches.

It is an inspiring outlook. We shall certainly realize as never before the greatness of our Communion. At the same time, as Bishop Montgomery has earnestly urged, let us guard against "blowing the Anglican trumpet." Our Church has indeed abundant cause to praise God for His mercies and blessings, especially as she sees her sisters and daughters gathering from the ends of the earth. But we need to humble ourselves for grievous shortcomings, and to pray for grace to rise to our responsibilities. In the fulfilment, in particular, of the Church's primary duty to evangelize the world, we are far behind our fellow-Christians of other Churches and denominations. A new spirit is needed among us. May it please God to use the Pan-Anglican Congress to stir all our hearts to fresh and persevering efforts in His service!

