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THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1919.

THE MONTH.

It is objected by the critics of the present Govern-
Actions, ment that whilst their speeches are admirable their
not Words. action, or rather want of action, leaves much to be
desired. The same remark applies with equal force to the attitude
of the Church towards the poverty of the clergy. We hear again
and again from dignitaries of the Church of the sad case of many
of the clergy, but very little is done to alleviate the position. The
Bishop of London raised a considerable sum and distributed it among
his clergy, some of whom were said to be starving, but it is not
of that kind of relief of which we are thinking. Doles are very
useful to tide over an emergency, but they afford no permanent
relief; and what is really needed is that the question of the poverty
of the clergy should be seriously grappled with and a real remedy
discovered. The first thing required is to find out the facts, and
for this purpose small Commissions, authorized by the Bishop,
should be appointed in every diocese, to discover the financial
position of the clergy. It would not be enough to be told that
there are so many livings under £300 a year or under £250 or £200
or £150, as the case may be, because that does not by any means
cover the whole ground. A man's official income may be £150,
but his private means may be three times that amount, and to
send him a grant to relieve his need would be ridiculous; or, again,
the holder of a benefice worth £300 may be a married man with
four or five children, and he would be infinitely worse off than a
bachelor or a married man without family would be whose living
was only worth £200.

**Expenditure
the Test.** The fact is, of course, that the real conditions cannot be gauged by merely taking into account the question of income; it is much more important to find out what is the man's necessary expenditure. Again, the present system of measuring everything by the rule of income works hardly in another way. Some official body—a Diocesan Board, the Central Church Fund or the Ecclesiastical Commission—makes grants to men whose incomes do not exceed, let us say, £200; and the whole Church, or the official element of the Church, says "Excellent; what more *can* we do?" But what of the man whose income is just above the line, say by £2 or £3? He gets nothing, yet his need may be as great as, and perhaps greater, than that of the man whose income is on the line or just below it. The real facts require to be known, and they can only be discovered by local inquiry, patiently and laboriously undertaken. No central body can do this effectively; it must be done diocese by diocese, archdeaconry by archdeaconry, or even rural deanery by rural deanery. The more limited the area, the more effective the inquiry will be, for it is common knowledge that the clergy most in need of help do not obtrude their difficulties, and their real condition can only be ascertained by private inquiry. The matter urgently requires careful attention. It is a grave reflection upon the whole diocese when a man is so weighed down by financial anxiety that he loses his mental balance and commits suicide. Such a case has happened within quite recent times; it is exceptional, of course, but many are crushed by the burden they carry. Is it not time, therefore, that the Church stopped *talking* about clerical poverty and began to *do* something effectually to relieve it?

**The Church
Congress.** The Church Congress has been revived. It last met at Southampton in 1913. A great Congress was anticipated at Birmingham in 1914, but on the outbreak of war, the meeting-places were commandeered by the Government, and the pressure of public events was so great that it had to be abandoned. In the following year, the Bishop of Chelmsford, with characteristic courage, invited the Church Congress to meet at Southend-on-Sea, and the invitation was accepted, but long before the arrangements materialized the air-raids came, and it was hopeless to expect that people would willingly spend the inside

of a week in the danger zone. Again the Congress was cancelled, and no attempt was made to revive it until this year, when in the spring an invitation came from Leicester, and, although the time for preparation was quite unusually short, it was determined to accept the proposal and, all being well, the Congress will be held from October 14 to 17 under the presidency of the Bishop of Peterborough. "The general subject of the Congress will be "The Church in the New Age," and it will be considered in its connexion with "The Faith in the Light of the War," "Christian Ideals in World Politics," "Christian Ideals of Education," "The Christian Doctrine of the Future Life," "Christian Ideals of Citizenship and Service," "The Church's Equipment for Corporate Life and Witness," and "The Church of England in its relationship to other Churches." It is a bold and comprehensive programme, and the Congress should prove of real service at this juncture of the nation's history. The nation is waiting for a lead, for a message; it is looking to the Church for guidance. It may be questioned, indeed, whether the Church ever had a more superb opportunity than is now presented to it, and the question in many minds is whether the Church is able to make adequate response. If the Church Congress can succeed in focussing attention upon the things that matter, and then frame a message to the nation such as the nation will understand and to which it will pay heed, it will render conspicuous service to the State and to the Church.

THE CHURCHMAN has so long and so ardently advocated the interchange of pulpits that it is with special pleasure we note that the question is at length receiving attention at the hands of the Church's leaders. It cannot be said, however, that much real progress has been made towards the goal: indeed, the cause would seem to have suffered a serious check in the action of the Lower House of Convocation of Canterbury, which referred back the Report of a Joint Committee which essayed to deal with the matter on lines more liberal than those usually associated with Convocation; and more serious still is the decision to suspend further action upon the Report until after the Lambeth Conference has met next summer. But these hindrances notwithstanding the movement is receiving attention, and Bishops are discussing it in the public press. They could

Interchange
of Pulpits.

not well keep silent, seeing that the letter signed by seven of the most prominent Nonconformist leaders has altered the whole aspect of the question.

The present position may briefly be explained. **Nonconformist Acceptance.** The Bishop of Norwich recently preached in a Baptist Church and propounded a scheme for the interchange of pulpits subject to these conditions : (1) Assent to the first three articles of the Lambeth Quadrilateral ; (2) that the preacher should not deal with the subject of Church order unless invited to do so ; and (3) that the interchange has the consent of the proper and regular authorities. It seemed at first that this proposal would fall flat, when to the great delight of Reunionists a letter appeared in *The Times* signed by Dr. Forsyth, Mr. Gillie, Mr. Jowett, Dr. Scott Lidgett, Principal Selbie, Mr. Shakespeare, and Dr. Carnegie Simpson welcoming the proposal, declaring that, made by a Bishop of the Church of England, it was " a challenge to us all to translate into action the desire for unity which is in so many hearts," and expressing the hope " that it will meet with a sympathetic and practical response." It was distinctly unfortunate that this letter was followed by the publication of a correspondence which had taken place earlier between the Bishop of Gloucester and the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning the postponement of the question until after the Lambeth Conference. What made the matter more serious was that the Bishop of Gloucester was able to say that the Bishops of London, Chichester, Coventry, Exeter and Salisbury were in entire agreement with him in begging for postponement, and that the Bishops of Winchester, Rochester, Southwell and Ely were also favourable to the delay, although the first three were members of the Joint Committee and the fourth is in favour of that Committee's original proposals. It looked at first sight as if this were to be the only answer to the Nonconformist acceptance, and if it had been the cause would have been hopeless indeed. But it was not. The Bishops of Bristol, Carlisle, Hereford, Norwich and Manchester have written splendidly in *The Times* on the question, and Nonconformists may and, we hope, will take heart that there are among the English Bishops some, at any rate, who are prepared to carry the matter to a conclusion.

Bishop Gore's These Bishops were moved to write by a peculiarly
Objections characteristic letter from Bishop Gore. We need not
Answered. refer to it further than to say that his main argument
 was that " deep in the heart of the Catholic principle lies the equating
 of faith and order as equally essential elements in the Christian
 religion as it was delivered to us. Accordingly at no period would
 the Catholic Church (using the term in its historical or technical
 sense) have been willing to accept among its preachers those who
 were not participators in its sacraments." We quote so much of
 it to serve as an introduction to the following passage from the
 very effective reply from the Bishop of Carlisle :—

Bishop Gore is, I think, undoubtedly right when he says in yesterday's issue of *The Times* that the interchange of pulpits is contrary to Catholic tradition and Catholic principle in the technical—*i.e.*, the ecclesiastical—use of the term " Catholic." Why is this saying true? Is it not because the interchange of pulpits implies the brotherly fellowship of all Christian communions, whereas Catholic tradition and principle repudiates that fellowship? Technical Catholicity is founded on exclusiveness and monopoly, an exclusive priesthood, a monopoly of valid sacraments, and a special favouritism with God. As the Jews considered themselves the elect of God, so the Catholics consider themselves God's elect. To interchange pulpits and *a fortiori* to share in common Communion at the Table of the Lord would demand the abandonment of these claims to Divine favour for ecclesiastical monopoly.

And yet the Christian Gospel makes this demand. Hence it is a hard Gospel. Its essence is the Cross, the Cross of self-crucifixion and fellowship with the crucifixion of the incarnate Lord. The two foundations of Christianity as revealed by Christ are the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. These two, however submersive of Catholic tradition and principle, make the interchange of pulpits and common Communion the most natural of Christian duties and the most reasonable of Christian privileges. For if Nonconformist ministers are ministers of Christ's Gospel, why should they not preach in Anglican pulpits? But if Nonconformists are not the children of God, how can Bishop Gore count them " among his most honoured friends " ? And if Nonconformists are, equally with Churchmen, children of the universal Father, why should they not all be guests at the Table of the Lord, Who lived and died to save them all?

The Bishop says that preachers of the Gospel are bound not to strive and please men. True! But are they not equally bound to strive to please God? Yet how can it be pleasing to the Founder of the Christian Faith to equate His Faith with ecclesiastical order and to teach as necessary to salvation doctrines not even alluded to by Him or by His Apostles? In the Collection of Christ's sayings, commonly called the Sermon on the Mount, the traditions and principles which Bishop Gore calls " Catholic," are not only not approved, but by implication are severely condemned for their pride and partiality. Moreover, Christ said that whoever built the house of his life on His sayings, which contain none of these Catholic traditions and principles, would find that he had built on rock. But whosoever built on any other foundation would find that he had built on sand. This solemn saying is as true of Churches and nations as of individuals.