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THE CHURCHMAN

MAY, 1880.

ART. I.—CONVOCA TION.

AMID the stir of contested elections and the resounding clamour of party cries, it falls to my lot to write a closing Article on the general subject of Church Councils. With the first assembling of Her Majesty's New Parliament, the Archbishops, in virtue of the Queen's Writ, will summon, for the consideration of important business, the Houses of Convocation. Proctors will have to be duly elected thereto, and already the newspapers contain letters advocating such reforms in Convocation as will on the one hand enlarge the constituency by the admission of stipendiary curates to the privilege of the franchise, and will on the other hand provide for a more adequate representation by a larger election of proctors. That Convocation should thus be assembled concurrently with the House of Commons, and that its members should be elected with the machinery of rival committees and systematic canvass after the fashion of their parliamentary brothers will differently affect diverse minds. Be these things as they may, Convocation is a seasonable subject, and in its consideration shall incidentally be said all that remains to be said by me on the subject of Diocesan Synods.

If Convocation possessed the living voice its friends so ardently claim for it, it might justly be raised to protest that never was there a corporate body whose actions were so mercilessly ridiculed and so persistently misrepresented. Worst of all—whose venerable constitution was so mischievously doctored by injudicious friends. In vain is pleaded the Canon which affirms it to be "The true Church of England by representation." In vain the Prolocutor in the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation affirms that "as at present constituted it is a good and

sufficient representation of the clergy of the Province," and earnestly "deprecates the use of expressions, come from what quarter they may, which imply that Convocation does not adequately represent the clergy—and does not possess the confidence of the Church."¹ In vain the Bishop of Gloucester declares, though apparently with some misgivings, that by the term "the living voice of the Church" we must agree to understand the formal and authoritative utterances of our Church as formulated and expressed by Convocation.² All in vain! Societies have been formed for the purpose of effecting a change in the mode of its existence. Robust clerical reformers irreverently treat its utterances with the respect accorded to the claims of the Tooley Street formula—"We, the people of England,"—or at best as the dull proceedings of an ecclesiastical debating society not read by one man in a thousand. The public prints make merry with its venerable forms as a kind of playing at parliamentary debate which supplies congenial pastime for episcopal and clerical leisure. The *Pall Mall Gazette* compares the Lower House of "that singular body" to the French Chamber of Deputies in its worst fits of excitement. The *Daily News* writes: "This motley assemblage doubtless contains some men of ability, and many men of theological and ecclesiastical learning. But in the affairs of ordinary life, in politics, in morals, in social economy, the most marked characteristic of Convocation is its complete and absolute divergence from the opinions of the average layman. Such persons may well be consulted as experts. If they were permitted to legislate, we should soon be forcibly reminded of Frederick Robertson's saying 'that it is one thing to make rules for a religious clique, it is another to frame laws for a great nation.'" As a popular commentary on the complacency and self-satisfaction with which some clerics regard Convocation as at present constituted, and who would even extend its powers as an instrument of legislation in sublime ignorance that Convocation is the portion of our church system from which an Ecclesiastical Insurance Society would exact the heaviest premiums, these opinions are worthy of attention.

The review of Convocation, nevertheless, would convince any unprejudiced mind that its history and proceedings have been unduly depreciated. The disputes which wasted the time and energies of Convocation in the early part of the eighteenth century, and which led in 1717 to its indefinite prorogation, are

¹ "The Reform of Convocation." By Edward Bickersteth, D.D., Dean of Lichfield, pp. 4, 5.

² "The Present Dangers of the Church of England." By Bishop Ellicott, pp. 102-106.

not its only records. The regulating of marriage licenses with a view to the prevention of clandestine marriages—the encouragement of charity schools—rules for the better instruction of youth for confirmation—the settling of qualifications of candidates for holy orders—Christian missions to the heathen and to our own plantations—protests against duelling and the licentiousness of the stage—the provision of a form of consecration of churches, to which attention was drawn by the building and endowment of fifty new churches in London never accomplished had not Convocation stirred in the matter;¹ such were the subjects with which this deliberative body was engaged when the torch of discord kindled a conflagration, whose flames could only be extinguished by scattering the embers and dispersing Convocation itself. Since Convocation has been aroused from its long slumber of 120 years it has too incessantly engaged its energies, it must be confessed, in the rattling of the dry leaves of tradition and ceremony. Remembering the critical times through which we have passed, too often there has been reason to inquire “Is this a time for divines to occupy men’s minds with interminable discussions on such unreal subjects as a misplaced comma in the Catechism, the proper colour of a vestment, or an explanatory rubric which means one thing to one man, another to another, and nothing at all to a third?” The remembrance, however, of the New Lectionary, the shortened Form, the Reports on Intemperance, and the forthcoming Revised Version, may remind us that its labours have not in our own day been wholly inoperative and absolutely inglorious.

II. The causes which have combined to discredit Convocation are not far to seek. Having slumbered for 120 years it has upon its awakening donned the antiquated garb of former days. To all intents and purposes its constitution is what it was in the days of the First Edward, whilst its powers have known substantially no change since the Act of Submission of Henry VIII. Convoked only by royal will, discussing only by royal permission, passing resolutions only by royal license, publishing them only by royal consent, and executing them only by royal authority; Convocation as it thus exists can never popularly express the voice and sentiments of the English Church. An entirely inadequate representation of the clergy, it has no place whatever for the expression of the opinions of the lay mind. More than all, however, is its evil reputation as the former scene of obstruction and stormy strife—a reputation which in many minds it shares with all councils wholly clerical. “Synodal elections, synodal debates, synodal decrees, I know not which (said Archdeacon Sinclair) to regard with

¹ See Lathbury’s “History of the Convocation.”

most apprehension.”¹ In the sense of relief with which Queen Anne dismissed the Convocation of 1705, there is much to amuse.

“Seeing the Convocation stands prorogued to the first day of March next, we direct you when that day comes to prorogue it to such further time as shall appear to be convenient,—and so we heartily bid you farewell.” This language but civilly anticipates the contemptuous terms in which Hallam sums up the History of Convocation in reference to the Bangorian controversy: “In the ferment of that age (says the historian) it was expedient for the state to scatter a little dust over the angry insects; the Convocation was accordingly prorogued in 1717.”² However profitable in some respects the proceedings of the revived Convocation may have been, they have not entirely retrieved its character, and some would be ready to find in its discussions proof of Clarendon’s dictum that “Clergymen understand the least and take the worst measures of human affairs of all mankind that can write or read.”

III. Such as Convocation was—inadequately representative and torn by strife—yet it would not be difficult to prove that its enforced state of inaction was fraught with evil results to the Church of England. To the want of synodal action, more than to any other causes, may be ascribed that episcopal isolation and “dignified prelacy” which was so great a reproach to our Church in the last century. In the absence of sympathetic and conciliar contact with their clergy, the bishops quickly forgot the hole of the pit whence they themselves were digged. They occupied their palaces and exalted positions as peers of the realm, like useless castles on the Rhine cliff, while far below flowed the current of church life. The slightest expression of the bishop’s will was law. “*Nil sine episcopo*” was written on every feature. “*Nil sine populo*” was nowhere to be seen. Living in stately seclusion, they only appeared from time to time with circumstances of pomp to impress the beholder. Of Bishop Hurd it is said, that “living at Hartlebury Castle, not a quarter of a mile from Hartlebury Church, he always travelled that quarter of a mile in his episcopal coach, with his servants in full dress liveries.”³ No marvel the Church was assumed to be dying of dignity—to be comatose and incapacitated by spiritual apathy. It was only when somewhat later the bishops were enjoined to set their houses in order, that the lesson seemed to be learned that episcopacy was for the Church, not the Church for episcopacy.

¹ “The Charges of Archdeacon Sinclair,” p. 205.

² Hallam’s “History of England,” vol. iii., c. 16.

³ Abbey and Overton, “History of the English Church in the 18th Century,” vol. ii. p. 30.

Amid all the pretensions of prelacy, this period was the period of greatest practical weakness. When great movements did arise, the bishops, having no opportunity for common counsel, and living for the most part in ignorance of the great wants and spiritual yearnings of the mass of the people, were unable to deal with them. Most thoroughly do I endorse the statement of the Rev. John Overton, "On that most perplexing question, 'How should the Church deal with the irregular but most valuable efforts of the Wesleys and Whitefield, and their fellow-labourers?'" it would have been most desirable for the clergy to have taken counsel together in their own proper assembly. As it was, the bishops had to deal with this new phase of spiritual life entirely on their own responsibility. They had no opportunity of consulting their brethren on the bench, or even with the clergy in their dioceses; for not only was the voice of Convocation hushed, but diocesan synods and ruridecanal chapters had also fallen into abeyance. The want of such consultation is conspicuous in the doubt and perplexity which evidently distracted the minds both of the clergy and many of the bishops, when they had to face the earlier phenomena of the Methodist movement."¹

IV. The revival of Convocation in its present weak and inadequately representative form has, on the other hand, been equally mischievous during the recent crisis of Church conflict. The bishops as a bench, it cannot be denied, have been in practical harmony with the mass of Churchmen, but no body of men has been better abused. They have lacked the power, perhaps the courage, to repress the evils they have abundantly deplored in their Charges. The Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation, arrogating a position not its own, has professed to give utterance to the living voice of the Church. That voice was far more adequately expressed in the Houses of Parliament during the passing of the Public Worship Bill. Had there been a Convocation adequately representing the clergy, or had there been at that time in operation a complete system of diocesan conferences of clergy and laity, such an expression of opinion would have gone forth as would have supported the bishops in the more vigorous exercise of their functions, and would of itself, without crushing out legitimate individual freedom of thought and action, have swept away the irritating excesses which alienated congregations and rendered the Church powerless for good in many cases by the absorption of all its energies in controversial strife. The necessity of strengthening the moral power of the bishops by concentrating in them the expression of the common sense of the diocese is rendered the more imperative by the final decision in

¹ *Abbey and Overton, vol. ii. p. 7.*

the Clewer case. Once more the direction in the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer is vitalized which enjoins "the parties that so doubt, or diversly take anything, shall always resort to the Bishop of the Diocese, who by his discretion shall take order for the quieting and appeasing of the same; so that the same order be not contrary to anything contained in this Book." The exercise of such discretion will entail a heavy sense of responsibility, and there are few bishops who would not rejoice to have some ready means whereby they might feel the pulse of their dioceses and at the same time have the advice of their shrewdest and most worthy councillors. Public opinion will not long endure the scandal that those who in theory exalt the office of a bishop to the highest point should in practice persistently set at naught his authority.

Frequently one has been reminded of Archbishop Whately's remark that "those who profess excessive veneration for bishops and yet disregard all bishops who do not agree with them, are like Addison's Tory freeholder who declared "I am for passive obedience and non-resistance, and I will oppose to the utmost any ministry and any king who will not maintain that doctrine."¹

V. If the present condition of Convocation be thus unsatisfactory, the question arises, "Is reform possible, and if so in what directions must it be attempted?" Broadly speaking, all the reforms discussed may practically be classed under two heads—1st, those which seek to increase the legislative powers of Convocation; and 2ndly, those which aim at making it more perfect as a consultative assembly. The first I cannot but regard as impracticable, the latter as most possible. Underlying the former is the idea of a spiritual parliament responsible in matters spiritual for the safety of religion as Parliament in matters secular for the safety of the commonwealth. In the pursuance of the analogy, its advocates not only set up Convocation as an assembly collateral to Parliament and in the main independent of it, but maintain the equality in synodical dignity of the Lower House of Convocation with the Upper after the fashion of the House of Commons with the House of Lords. Since May, 1532, when Convocation signed its own death warrant in the act of submission of the clergy, whereby all claim to legislate for the Church even in its more purely spiritual details was surrendered, no such power can be established. The very subsidies which were granted when its members were assembled in Convocation had to be confirmed by an Act of Parliament, the legislature not even acquiescing in the power of Convocation to bind the clergy in a

¹ Quoted in "Bishop Blomfield's Life." Edited by his son, p. 291.

matter of taxation. Since 1664, when by verbal agreement between the Archbishop and the Lord Chancellor it was agreed that the clergy should silently waive the privilege of taxing their own body but should be included in the ordinary money bills prepared by the House of Commons, Convocation has been legislatively but a venerable shadow, unnecessary to the Crown and inconsiderable in itself. The interests of the Church are regarded as being sufficiently secured by the presence of certain bishops in the House of Lords, and by the right which the beneficed clergy possess of voting for the knights of the shire in virtue of their ecclesiastical freeholds. That the country will ever permit Convocation to assume and exercise the legislative functions its ambitious advocates fondly desire, is a matter not worth consideration. On one condition only could this be allowed, viz., that Convocation should represent the Church as a whole, and therefore include lay as well as clerical members.

VI. As this subject—viz. the admission of the laity to Convocation—is being urged by many members of the Evangelical party, I proceed next to consider the insuperable difficulties in the way of such proposed reform. Such a change, if effected, would constitute revolution, not reform. The body now known as Convocation would have ceased to exist, and another assembly would have been created in its stead. It may be a grievance that the Church has not a distinct body fairly representing her lay as well as clerical members. If so, let such a remedy be found. That Convocation has not reformed itself into such a body affords, however, no ground of grievance against that ancient assembly when it is remembered that its very constitution is purely clerical. Its title is “Convocations of the *clergy*,” and the Order of Her Majesty in Council for the assembly of that body just made public, reads thus: “That the Lord High Chancellor do upon notice of this, Her Majesty’s Order, forthwith cause writs to be issued in due form of law for electing new Members of the Convocation of the clergy, which writs are to be returnable on Friday, the 30th day of April, 1880.” Further, let the theory as well as the title of Convocation be borne in mind. If regarded as summoned by Her Majesty’s writ, then most assuredly it is as “the spirituality,” distinct from the temporality, that its members are called together. If regarded as summoned by the Archbishops as heads of the respective Provinces of Canterbury and York, then it is ‘*totus clerus*,’ ‘the whole clergy,’ who, in theory are called together. A change which, thus ignoring title and theory, would incorporate the laity with the clergy, must be considered revolutionary. I confess, says one of our bishops:—

I do not see where the Constitutional power exists to change the Convocations of the clergy into bodies partly clerical and partly lay.

The metr politans could not do it; the Crown could not do it, and if Parliamentary sanction were required, I know not whether Church or State would be more alarmed at the project. In fact the scheme appears to me to be absolutely impossible without such a revolution in the Church of England as few of us would like to see.¹

If, laying aside all ambition to discharge the legislative functions of any estate of the realm, Convocations of the clergy would consent to act as a body purely consultative, they would gain in influence and would complete that system of synodical councils which the thoughtful laity would cease to regard with jealousy, when it was frankly avowed that no binding decrees were contemplated, but simply that common counsel which is denied to men of no profession who have at heart the promotion of the best interests of the community in which they dwell. Such a system, if perfected symmetrically in all its ecclesiastical degrees, would recognize the rural-decanal synod or chapter, the archidiaconal synod, the diocesan synod, the provincial synod or Convocation, and the national synod, or, as it has been called, the Pan-Anglican Conference—all bodies purely clerical, simply deliberative and in no sense legislative. The practical value of the rural-decanal gathering is now generally admitted. The diocesan has been discredited, unfortunately, by the sacerdotal party, for it cannot be forgotten that the first diocesan synod in our own days was that of Exeter in 1851, occasioned by the attempt of Bishop Phillpott "to safeguard the faith endangered by the Gorham case." In the early history of the Church two purposes seem to have been answered by such diocesan gatherings. In them the bishops promulgated the decrees of provincial synods and met their own co-presbyters for consultation. In days when dioceses were territorially small and the clergy numerically few, such gatherings would be practicable.² The mutual right of the bishop and clergy for common counsel, rendered impossible in consequence of numbers, can now only be met by representation. The privilege of the dean and chapter to fulfil this function, as '*senatus episcopi*,' cannot be conceded.³ They have their place in this respect, but, elected by the Crown or by the bishop, they can, in no sense, adequately represent the parochial clergy.

¹ The Bishop of Carlisle's Pastoral Letter, p. 13.

² Our own *Reformatio Legum* directs that Diocesan Synods should be held once a year.

³ "There is not in any single answer from all the deans and chapters of England, in 1854, any indication that they regarded themselves as in origin, foundation, design, attributes, rights or powers having even a theoretical connection with episcopal government or ecclesiastical counsel." *Vide* questions put, in 1854, to all English Chapters: "What are the relations between the Bishop and the Chapter?" Bishop Benson's Essay in "Essays on Cathedrals," p. 275.

They form no portion of the constitution of the Early Church, and, though "a valuable institution, are but a modern invention." The idea of the bishop having counsel from his clergy through the rural deans would be fully and fairly met if only, as the late Archdeacon Sinclair argued, the rural deans were not appointed by the bishop, but elected in chapter by the clergy themselves. The suggestion of Bishop Wordsworth that from the rural deans the bishop might elect the canons and prebends of his cathedral is one which seems well worthy of consideration, as, in some little degree, giving the body of the clergy an indirect connection and power of co-option into the dignities of the Mother Church. The culminating form of gatherings is represented by the Conference of Bishops recently assembled at Lambeth, which presents to the faithful the results of serious deliberation on questions affecting the condition of the Church in divers parts of the world, but does nothing more than "commend the conclusions" therein adopted. The Report on the Best Mode of Maintaining Union among the various Churches of the Anglican Communion recognises the Conference of Bishops meeting under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury as "offering at least the hope that the problem hitherto unsolved of combining together, for consultation, representatives of Churches so differently situated and administered, may find, in the Providential course of events, its own solution." The letter issued by the Conference speaks, in its closing paragraph, thus :—

We do not claim to be lords over God's heritage, but we commend the results of this our Conference to the reason and conscience of our brethren as enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God, praying that all, throughout the world, who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be of one mind, may be united in one fellowship, may hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints, and worship their one Lord in the spirit of purity and love.

In the system of purely clerical gathering the Provincial Convocations hold thus an intermediate place between the ascending series of diocesan and national, and any reform contemplating the admission of laymen as an integral part of Convocation, ignoring as it does, the past history and present constitution of Convocation, seems wholly impracticable.

A plausible plan has recently been suggested of forming a consultative body of laymen outside Convocation with whom Convocation shall co-operate and take counsel.

In reference to this suggestion, discussed with more or less approval in the Lichfield and Carlisle Diocesan Conferences, it will be sufficient to observe that the appointment of such Provincial Houses of Laymen in addition to the two Houses of Can-

terbury and two of York Convocation, making six distinct bodies whose consent before Parliament was approached in reference to ecclesiastical matters would be necessary—would present the most cumbrous machinery that could be devised, and would continually afford an illustration of how a thing could not be done. The relations of the Houses, lay and clerical, would be of the most delicate nature. The consent of Parliament would be required for such a co-ordinate authority. If Joseph Hume, in his day, voted for the restoration of Convocation on the ground that Disestablishment would be hastened, the formation of such lay Houses in combination with the Provincial Houses of Convocation would only result in collision with Parliament, and end in dislocating the relation between Church and State, and speedily bringing about the Disestablishment of the Church.¹

VII. Another reform frequently advocated must be regarded as impracticable, if the provincial and synodical character of the Convocations of the clergy be sustained, viz., the suggestion that the Convocations of Canterbury and York should be fused into one body. Some advantages, without doubt, would arise from such an action, but they would be more than balanced by the security now given against crude and hasty legislation, and by the distinct representation of the two distinct phases of character which, as the Bishop of Carlisle truly points out, still distinguish the populations of the North and South. Such a union, moreover, could not be effected without the loss of the rights and privileges of one of our Archbishops to summon his own suffragan bishops and provincial clergy. The attempts to carry less important questions than this, in which matters of privilege have been involved, have often rent Churches in twain.

In the past history of Convocation, as the Prolocutor of Canterbury has reminded us,² the difficulty of joint consultation and co-operation has not been insuperable, and if so in the past why in the present? The Preamble to the Thirty-Nine Articles states that they were agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of

¹ The Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation, in 1877, passed two resolutions, with this object in view:—"1st. That it is more desirable that this Convocation, without any disturbance of its ancient constitution, should provide for consultation with some recognised representative body of the laity. 2nd. That, in the opinion of this House, it would be for the advantage of the Church that a Provincial House of Laymen should be formed, to be convened from time to time by the Archbishop, and to be in close communication with the Synod, who shall always be consulted before application is made to the Crown or to Parliament, to give legal effect to any Act of the Synod. The laymen to be elected by the lay members of each diocese in Diocesan Conference, and the House of Laymen to bring before the Provincial Synod any matters ecclesiastical in their judgment requiring consideration, by means of petition to his Grace the President."

² "The Reform of Convocation," pp. 15, 16.

both Provinces and the whole Clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the year 1562. It is known that the York Convocation was represented by the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of Durham and Chester only, who subscribed them. This arrangement was simply for convenience, and in no way indicated a superiority in the Province of Canterbury over that of York. When, again, on December 20th, 1661, the Book of Common Prayer was ratified in London, duly authorised proxies were sent up to represent the Lower House of Convocation of York. In this way, and by the operations of joint committees, inconveniences may be removed, and the object attained without the risk of a constitutional deadlock.

VIII. Lest, however, the reader should suppose that, in the writer's opinion, all reforms are impossible, I hasten to enumerate such reforms as, without in any degree committing THE CHURCHMAN, it seems to myself are desirable and feasible.

(1). First and foremost of all—in order that Convocations might have free and full exercise of deliberation, they should be summoned by the archbishops, as their own provincial synods, and the Crown-writ mode of assembling should be allowed to fall into abeyance. The principles which should regulate the inter-action of Parliament and Convocation in matters affecting the ritual or discipline of the National Church and the adjustment of the technical rights of the clergy, as represented in Convocation, and the laity as represented in Parliament, would be, as Bishop Ellicott states, matters of supreme difficulty. It is suggested, however, that the Convocations should possess the right of veto, and that nothing, in reference to the discipline of the Church, should receive the Royal assent which had passed the Houses of Parliament which did not also receive the formally expressed consent of both Convocations. When once made adequately representative, such Convocations would, by the methodical consideration of questions through committees of experts, gain a moral weight and influence in the country which Convocation, as at present, cannot be said to possess.

(2). Secondly—let there be one chamber only in the Convocation of Canterbury, as in that of York. The anomalous powers of the Lower House, and their frequent conflicts with the Upper, would never have arisen had not the Convocations been summoned by the Crown-writ, and the members led, involuntarily, to regard their position, as bishops and clergy in Convocation, as analogous to those of Lords and Commons in Parliament. The present constitution of our Convocation, Jeremy Taylor¹ maintained, was a departure from primitive tradition, and in no Catholic institution do the presbyters form a separate

¹ Quoted "Church Quarterly Review," Oct. 1879, p. 180.

house, and possess a power of veto on the propositions of the bishops.

(3). Thirdly—let there be adequate representation. On the unsatisfactory character of Convocation, in this respect, there is all but unanimity of opinion. The Dean of Lichfield, although strongly convinced that the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury is a good and sufficient representation, nevertheless gives his full approval to some moderate increase of the elected proctors. Reports of Committees of Convocation in 1871, 1875, fully concur in the unsatisfactory nature of the present representation. Containing, as the Southern Province does, 23 dioceses, it will be found that the proctors number 154; but of this number 108 are ex-officio members, and 46, therefore, of the whole number, represent, and are elected by, 11,000 clergy! In the Northern Province it is well known matters are not so patently unfair. In that Province each archdeaconry sends two proctors, Archbishop Longley, in 1861, having extended to all the archdeaconries, except that of Man, the rule which previously existed only in the archdeaconries of York and Durham of electing each two proctors. By this exercise of his prerogative he increased the whole number of proctors from 17 to 29. It is not easy to understand what valid reasons forbid the Archbishop of Canterbury to do in his Province that which his brother archbishop has done in York. At present, instead of each archdeaconry, each diocese only has two proctors to represent it. If Convocation were gathered wholly and solely by his own summons, such an increased representation would be essential. Summoned by the Queen's writ, the words name "the whole clergy," and therefore, in principle, cover the widest and fullest representation. That the old custom of sending two proctors for each archdeaconry prevailed in the Southern as well as in the Northern Convocation seems manifest from the fact that in the diocese of Lichfield the three archdeaconries still elect respectively two proctors, the six thus elected then selecting from among their own number two to represent the whole diocese.¹

The subject of giving votes to licensed curates in full orders is one which has enlisted much support, but it is not easy to understand with what consistency it can be argued if Convocation be a consultative assembly of those upon whom rests the burden of responsibility. It is only those bishops and deans who have dioceses and cathedrals who are now in Convocation, and no un-beneficed clergy, therefore, by parity of custom, can claim a place.

It may be permitted to indulge the hope that, in God's good providence, the efforts of our reformers will issue in making

¹ "Reform of Convocation." By Dean Bickersteth, p. 10.

the Convocations of the clergy provincial consultative gatherings of the clergy, possessing the full confidence of the clergy, and entitled, by their deliberative wisdom, to the respectful regard of the nation. Then, and only then, it may further be permitted to hope that from the various diocesan conferences, when fully established, there will arise one Central representative Conference of such a character in some respects as shadowed forth by the second resolution of Convocation already quoted, a body authorized to deal with all legislative questions, and whose recommendations, as being the matured wisdom of all Churchmen, lay and cleric, and being safeguarded by the veto of Convocation, would commend themselves to the Legislature of the country. The elements of this solution of our difficulties are now gathered together, and the process of crystallization is already in operation. The work will be one of years, but it is to this work, and not to the undue exaltation of Convocation by increasing its legislative powers as a clerical body, or of practical destruction of our ancient provincial synods by the infusion of the lay element, that the Evangelical section of our Church should heartily devote itself, whilst, at the same time, arousing itself to secure that which, through its own apathy, it does not possess, viz., a fair share of representation in that body which claims to be "the true Church of England by representation."

JOHN W. BARDSLEY.

ART. II.—HOSPITALS.

PART II.

WHETHER the out-patients should pay is a much disputed point. It is said that the giving of advice and medicine gratis has a pauperizing effect, and that a charge of from 4*d.* to 6*d.* a visit would be easily forthcoming, while the expenses of the department would be reduced. It is an almost unanswerable argument that our hospitals are, as a rule, poor, with a few notable exceptions, and that those who are benefited should provide a small sum towards its funds is but just. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the objections to this alteration are grave, and that our great hospitals are right in proceeding very slowly along a course which has so many disadvantages as well as advantages to be considered. For, in the first place, it is an undoubted fact that our hospitals were firmly established on the foundation of being charities, and the requiring of payment from the recipients of the bounty involves to some extent an overthrow of that foundation; and a still