

He was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the first week of the new year, and there truly took his place among his peers.

With this quotation we end. The "History of our own Times" is a work alike creditable to the author and the century. It places before us a faithful record of the events of the last forty years, written in a flowing and picturesque style, and though we are not always of the opinion of the historian, the opportunity is invariably offered us of forming a judgment for ourselves by listening to both sides of the question. We have before us the briefs of the plaintiff and the defendant, and it is for us to sum up. The book is one to be read, and to be studied.

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#### ART. VI.—THE CHURCH CONGRESS.

ON "The Internal Unity of the Church"—"The Influence of the three great Schools of Thought in the Church of England upon each other and upon the Church,"—the reader of the first Paper was the Bishop of Durham. The Bishop said:—

The existence of three schools of thought—I prefer so to speak of them, rather than as three parties—in our Church has now become the tritest of commonplaces. It is more important to observe that they had their prototypes in the Apostolic age; that, where a Church is vigorous and active they must almost of necessity coexist: that their coexistence is a guarantee of the fulness of teaching; that the loss of any one would be a serious impoverishment to the life of a Church; and that, therefore, it is not expedient to attempt to thrust out, or to starve out, any one of them, while, at the same time, adherence to the fundamental principles of the Catholic creed and loyalty to the Church in which they minister must be demanded of all alike. Pleading as I do to-day for toleration, and even large toleration, I am bound to emphasize this demand as a fundamental qualification. At this time more especially the obligation is the stronger, because some seem to think that a Church can do very well without a creed, or at least without a creed to which its ministers are required to subscribe. . . . I do not understand a clergyman standing up to teach in a Church without first asking himself definitely what he is going to teach. I can see no other prospect before such a Church but vagueness, irresoluteness, inanity, confusion, decay. The motive power is gone. The bond of cohesion is snapped. Dissolution—rapid dissolution—is the inevitable consequence. So far as I have read history, no body ever has held together for long under such conditions as this.

"Comprehensiveness" was the key-note of this elaborate Paper; but its protest against laxity and dilution was positive. In the revival of the English Church, said the Bishop, the Evangelical school was the earliest in time. The stress of its teaching was

laid altogether on personal religion, the relation of the individual soul to God. Then came the High Church movement; and with reference to this the Bishop quoted from a sermon preached by Bishop Selwyn a quarter of a century ago:—

In this sermon he [Bishop Selwyn] applied, somewhat quaintly but with striking effect, the summons of the Apocalyptic messenger—"The Spirit and the Bride say come"—to the two lessons which the two schools of theology then prominent in the Church were commissioned especially to teach—the direct inward communion of the individual soul with God, and the functions and destiny of the Church as the Spouse of Christ. If my memory serves me rightly, he went on to say, that the order in which these two messages were delivered to the Church of England was providential—first the Spirit, then the Bride. It was essential that the lesson of the responsibilities of the individual soul should be impressed upon her first. Otherwise the doctrine of the Church would assume a hard, stiff, mechanical form. It would tend to petrification, not to life.

The second Paper was read by the Rev. Dr. Boulton. The *Guardian* remarks that "it was from its own point of view an able Paper, well delivered, and attentively listened to, and he carried his audience thoroughly with him when he explained how unlikely it is and how undesirable that all the three bodies should be blended in a neutral-tinted but feeble compromise. His review of the effect of Broad Church principles on Biblical studies was very good; equally good, and not without its amusing features, was his description of the state of the Church of England half a century ago, and the contrast presented by the present aspects of her field of work. The improvement he attributed very largely to the efforts of the clergy of the Evangelical school, who alone, as he affirmed, dared fifty years ago to advocate missionary enterprise, to conduct cottage lectures, to use extempore prayers and hymns other than those which used to be bound up in our Prayer-book. Dr. Boulton was loudly and generally applauded when he sat down." For ourselves, we have never listened to a Congress Paper with more interest and satisfaction. Its candour, great ability, common sense, and courtesy, with unmistakable faithfulness to principles, commanded respect and won regard.

The Hon. C. L. Wood, Chairman of the English Church Union, did not speak with his usual ease; and whether from design or through inadvertence, some of his remarks were offensive to a large proportion of his hearers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, he laid great stress on the opinion of Cardinal Newman, and he concluded by saying that he hoped that the chair of St. Augustine might eventually stand in its proper relation to the chair of St. Gregory the Great.

To hear the discussion on "Church and Dissent," in the evening of the same day, there was a very large gathering.<sup>1</sup> The Dean of Peterborough had been prevented by illness from writing his Paper. Professor Plumptre had no hopes of any good result from negotiations for a reunion of the "home Churches," and had nothing practical to suggest, indeed, except a change of attitude:—

There remains [he said] the thought of a Christendom which includes all those bodies, and from which we dare not exclude any who "profess or call themselves Christians." That thought, while it leaves us free to hold fast to the forms of faith, of discipline, of ritual which we have inherited, or to modify them as may best meet our own necessities, while it gives us a fresh reason for maintaining the connection of the Church with the nation's life, as the best witness, so long as the connection is a reality, for that wider brotherhood which exists in spite of outward differences and interrupted communion, should at any rate mollify, in large measure, the feelings of bitterness and hostility which have found, even of late years, such frequent utterance. Look at the great body of Nonconformist agencies, Nonconformist hymns, and mission work and evangelizing literature, and schools and colleges, and ask whether the men who represent them are to be looked on as servants or enemies of Christ, elements of strength and nobleness in the nation's life, or only and wholly of evil? Can we say that the animus or the guilt of schism belongs to those who have inherited a position which was forced upon their fathers in part, at least, by the unwisdom and oppression of our own? Is it not our wisdom and duty to welcome every opportunity for courtesy, kindness, friendliness, for co-operation where to co-operate is possible?

Whether certain cheering facts, continued Professor Plumptre, are as the dawning of a brighter day, in which the entail of evil shall be cut off, and . . . the Church of England in her widened comprehensiveness, attract those who are weary of the narrowness of Dissent, and, by the reform of the evils which now attach to her system of patronage and endowment, shall disarm the objections which are made to her connection with the State:—

Or whether dark days lie before us in which, after discord has done its work, the servants of Christ shall stand face to face with a nation secularized and non-Christian, so that a common peril shall unite those who have hitherto been warring with each other—I dare not venture to forecast. It is enough for us to be content for a while with

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<sup>1</sup> One Leicester friend, himself a Nonconformist, told me, says the *Guardian*, that he had counted some 150 Nonconformists who were personally known to him, and were sitting within eye-shot; and it was stated that nearly if not quite all the Nonconformist ministers of the town were present.

the day of small things, and to do our little possible in the pathway of justice and charity and peace by acts of kindness and courtesy in the churchyard or the School Board, or in social intercourse. So may we, at least, inherit the blessing of the peacemakers, and take our place among the "healers of the breach and the restorers of paths to dwell in." So, sowing the good seed in the morning and the evening, we will wait, though the skies are dark and our labours end in apparent failure, for the far-off harvest.

Lord Nelson spoke well, and in a kindly spirit, concerning the removing of stumbling-blocks in the way of Dissenters. Churchmen ought never "to ignore the Christian witness borne by Dissenters—their holy lives and self-denying labours."

The Bishop of Liverpool followed.<sup>1</sup> After pointing out the "huge standing fact," the existence of Dissent on a large scale throughout the land, the Bishop asked, To what are we to attribute it?

Is there anything radically unsound or unscriptural in our Articles, Creeds, or formularies? I answer boldly, Nothing at all. Our great confession of faith, the Thirty-nine Articles, may safely challenge comparison with any confession in the world. Our Prayer-book, with all its imperfections, is a matchless manual of public worship, and is growing rather than declining in favour with mankind. Is there any general abstract dislike to Bishops, liturgies, and surplices in the English mind? I believe next to none at all. Give the average Englishman the pure Gospel of Christ in the pulpit, a holy, conscientious minister to preach it, a hearty, lively service to accompany it, diligent week-day pastoral work to follow it, and the vast majority of Englishmen are content, and want no more. We must go further than this to discover the cause of Dissent.

My own solution of the problem is short and simple. I believe that the first seeds of Dissent were sown by the narrow intolerance of the Church in the days of the Stuarts. The wretched attempt to produce uniformity by fines, and penalties, and imprisonment "drove wise men almost mad," and made them say, "Can any good thing come out of a Church which sanctions such things?" I believe, secondly, that the utter deadness and apathy of the Church in the last century did even more to drive men and women out of our pale than the intolerance of the Stuarts. Bishops who scandalously neglected their dioceses, and were everything that Bishops ought not to be—parochial clergymen who did nothing for souls, preached no Gospel, performed hasty, cold,

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<sup>1</sup> The rising of the Bishop of Liverpool, says the *Guardian*, was the signal for loud and long-continued cheering. "As Canon Ryle he was always a favourite on the Church Congress platform, and his recent elevation to the Bench gave a special importance to his appearance at Leicester. He was greeted in a manner that was nothing less than enthusiastic. His speech was, as usual, straightforward, manly, and lucid. It did not everywhere carry all the very diverse elements of the audience with it, but was, on the whole, as well received as it was well delivered."

slovenly services in dirty churches full of high square pews like sheep-pens, and lived terribly worldly lives—these unhappy representatives of our Church filled the country; these were the real founders of Dissent, and caused half the chapels to be built in the land. I declare my own firm conviction, that if the Bishops and clergy of the last century had done their duty, and understood their times as well as many do now, an immense proportion of English Nonconformity would never have existed, and John Wesley and his companions would never have seceded from the Church of England. We reap what our forefathers sowed, and it is no use to complain. In short, Church apathy has created English Nonconformity, and to speak angrily and contemptuously of those whom we ourselves have made Dissenters is, to say the least, most unjust. That old saying is too much forgotten, *Schismaticus est qui separationem causat, non qui separat.*

The precise amount of good or harm which English Dissent has done, or is doing, continued the Bishop, is a wide and difficult question, and much may be said on both sides:—

On the one hand I have not the slightest sympathy with those who regard Dissent as an evil, and only evil, and would hand Nonconformists over to the “uncovenanted mercies” of God. I believe this to be an entirely untenable position. I shall never hesitate to declare my conviction that in thousands of parishes Dissenters have done an immense amount of spiritual good. They have supplied the Church’s “lack of service.” . . . . In short, when I look at the mass of infidelity, heathenism, and immorality which exists in the world, I must and will thank God for the work done by Trinitarian Dissenters. The enemy is coming in upon us like a flood; I welcome any volunteer who fights on our side, however strange and rough his uniform may be.

On the other hand, it is vain to deny that the inconveniences, not to say the evils, arising from English Dissent are very many and very great. The divisions of Christians are always an immense source of weakness to the whole cause of Christ in the world. An enormous amount of time, money, and energy is wasted on separate machinery and organization which would be saved if we were one united body. We supply the infidel with an argument which it is extremely difficult to refute. “When you can agree among yourselves,” he says, “it will be time enough for me to believe.” Collisions are continually arising between church and chapel, and especially in small parishes, where either party thinks its interests are in danger. The common cause of Christian education takes damage all over the country from the morbid fear of many that distinct religious teaching will injure their own particular denomination. Above all, the bitter crusade of Liberationists against the Establishment, which, if successful, would only paganize the rural districts, and do its promoters no good, is rapidly creating a breach between Episcopalians and their rivals, which will never be healed. All these, I say, are evils, grievous evils, and I pity the man who has not eyes to see them, or, seeing them,

does not long to devise means by which they may be lessened or removed.

"Can nothing be done," said Bishop Ryle, "to improve the relations of Church and Dissent? I dismiss, as utterly unworthy of notice, the new-born (Dean Stanley's) idea that the Church may be nationalized, and Church and Dissent brought together, by turning our parish churches into pantheons, and throwing open our pulpits to preachers of all denominations, with every kind of doctrine, or no doctrine at all. Anything more absurdly Utopian or unpractical I cannot conceive. I will not waste the time of Congress by dwelling on it. It is liberality run mad. It would never work."

Confining himself "to practical things," the Bishop suggested (1) Churchmen must remember to draw "a broad line of distinction between Dissenters and Dissenters:"—

If we suppose, for example, because some wild men are incessantly telling the public that the Established Church is a Babylon which ought to be destroyed—or that all the Prayer-books ought to be burned—or that the union of Church and State is an adulterous connection—or that all clergymen ought to be stripped of their endowments and turned into the streets—or that Anglican ministers are mere serfs and slaves who are paid out of the taxes—if, I say, we suppose because *some* Dissenters talk this rubbish, that *all* Dissenters agree with them, we are quite mistaken. I believe, on the contrary, that the vast majority of serious, God-fearing Nonconformists have no sympathy with this kind of language and thoroughly dislike it. Although attached to their own chapels they have no wish to quarrel with the Church, and are willing to "think and let think." The empty tubs always make most noise. We must not condemn all Dissenters on account of the extravagant words of a rabid minority.

(2) Churchmen should cultivate the habit of treating Dissenters with kindness, courtesy, and toleration. (3) We must not waste time and energy on the pleasant but Quixotic idea that we can ever bring about a wholesale reunion of Church and Dissent.<sup>1</sup> (4) To improve the relations of Church and Dissent, we ought to co-operate with Dissenters whenever we can:—

It is vain to deny that there is much common ground on which we

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<sup>1</sup> Whatever may happen in isolated cases [said the Bishop], it is not reason to suppose that trained and educated Dissenting ministers, as a rule, will ignore their own orders, and seek to be re-ordained. Nor is it reason to suppose their congregations would follow them. And unhappily this is not all. Our own internal divisions place an insuperable barrier in the way of reunion. We do not approach the subject with clean hands. So long as our own beloved Church of England is infected with semi-Romanism on the extreme right, and semi-unbelief on the extreme left, and cannot cure or expel the disease, so long, we may depend on it, our Nonconformist brethren will never embark in our ship.

can work together without the slightest compromise of principle; and I contend that we ought to be always ready to occupy that ground in a brotherly spirit, and not to stand aloof, and turn the cold shoulder on possible allies. The great controversy with infidelity—the cause of Scriptural education—the maintenance of Sunday—the improvement of the dwellings of the poor—the grand temperance movement—the translation and circulation of the Bible—all these are points about which I advise every Churchman to work with Dissenters whenever he can.

His Lordship concluded by expressing an earnest hope that we should “all resolve to honour ‘the grace of God,’ wherever we see it:”—

In whomsoever we find “Aliquid Christi,” let us respect him, even though he does not belong to our own communion. In high esteem for the orders and worship of our Church I give place to no man. In my own way I am as “High” a Churchman as any one in this room. But we travel towards a world in which possession of the grace of the Holy Ghost will be the one thing needful, and Episcopacy and a Liturgy will be of no use to us if we have not been washed in the blood of Christ. Let us remember this on earth, and honour the grace of God, whatever be the denomination of the man who possesses it. After all, the “kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” “In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.”

The Rev. J. McCormick, in a vigorous speech, referred to the difference between orthodox Nonconformists and Roman Catholics. The Rev. Dr. Campion, on the other hand, asserted that Nonconformists “could not celebrate a valid Eucharist.”

The last speaker was Canon Hoare, of Tunbridge Wells, who said, that whilst receiving such free hospitality from Nonconformists in Leicester, the Congress certainly ought to speak kindly of them; and he urged his brethren of the clergy, in spite of their present irritation about the Burials Bill, to endeavour to carry out its provisions in a loyal and friendly spirit. “This advice,” we agree with *The Guardian*, “was, generally speaking, very well received.”<sup>1</sup> Canon Hoare added a few weighty words against any “reunion” movement tending in the direction of Rome.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Guardian* remarks:—“Archdeacon Denison’s reappearance in full vigour was cordially welcomed. But his assertion that our want of discipline is the real cause of Nonconformity did not ‘go down’ with many. Some thought that a restoration of Church discipline might even bear hard on the Archdeacon himself. Neither did the Congress care very much on this occasion for what Canon Trevor said to it in censure of the Burials Bill. The conciliatory words of the Bishop of Winchester, who followed, were much more to its mind. . . . And so [after Canon Hoare’s

On the important subject, "The Internal Organization of the Church: Whether it is desirable that increased facilities or powers of legislation should be granted to Convocation; and, if so, whether the granting of such powers or facilities should be accompanied by any, and what, Reforms of Convocation," the Bishop of Carlisle read the first Paper. It explained and vindicated the "Draft Bill" concerning rites and ceremonies, which is, as his Lordship said, mistakenly connected with his name, and it made answer especially to some strictures upon the "Draft Bill" recently made by the Bishop of Worcester in his Charge.—Bishop Harvey Goodwin was followed by the Dean of Lichfield in an elaborate Paper, mainly historical. It strongly protested against the admission of the laity into Convocation.—Professor Montagu Burrows warmly advocated lay co-operation; he thought a consultative lay body would do much good. He rather sharply complained of unwillingness on the part of the clergy to admit the laity to a share in the government of the Church.—The Archdeacon of Ely made an eloquent, vigorous, and practical speech. He spoke with warmth of the value of lay co-operation. For *his* part, said the Archdeacon, he should have no objection to the admission of the laity into Convocation, none whatever; but he thought a practical step, at present possible, was the formation of a consultative lay body, without whose adhesion no Convocation scheme should be laid before Parliament. He believed that the influence and action of the lay element would be wholesome, helpful, and conservative. Considering his long connection with Congresses and Diocesan Conferences, Archdeacon Emery's earnestly expressed views had great weight. He also advocated reform as regards the Lower House of Convocation.—The absence of Canon Garbett, through ill health, was matter of sincere regret with many; he had not been able to send his Paper.—The first selected speaker was the Rev. W. O. Purton. According to the *Record*, Mr. Purton said—

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admirable closing speech! this, certainly the most remarkable meeting closed, and closed also the most remarkable day of the Congress of 1880. The afternoon meeting had certainly brought out an unexpected kindness of sentiment amongst the three schools of Churchmen towards each other; this evening meeting evinced a feeling certainly not less kindly on the part of Churchmen towards their fellow-citizens not of the Church. If there was nothing said by any partisan, High, Broad, or Low, in the afternoon—and there was certainly next to nothing—which could gall or wound any Churchman of the other schools, there was assuredly as little said at night which could reasonably irritate the susceptibilities of Nonconformists. There was, on the contrary, free confession of the errors and shortcomings of the Church in the past, and repeated expression of a desire to amend the one and cure the other. We have reason, indeed, to know that the many Nonconformists present were much gratified at the equity of tone and general fairness which characterized the discussion."



That while agreeing in the main with Archdeacon Emery he must go a little further. They had had the *principles*, he would give the *details*. He advocated, as to Convocation (1), Upper and Lower House of Canterbury sitting together, as in York; (2) a large increase of parochial proctors for the clergy; curates to vote; (3) cumulative vote—with voting papers—for due representation of minorities; (4) diminution of *ex-officio* members. As to a consultative lay body, he advocated that members should be elected from Diocesan Conferences: cumulative vote here also; that they should speak in the presence of a selected body from both Convocations of clergy; and that nothing should be submitted to Parliament without consent of the majority of this body. Mr. Purton quoted from recommendations of the Lower House of Canterbury<sup>1</sup> to show that they merely suggested “consultation.” He insisted that the laity should speak and vote. With reference to the “Draft Bill,” he mentioned that at the Chichester Diocesan Conference only two speakers had a good word to say for it, and they were the two Archdeacons. He spoke of the influence of the lay element in Diocesan Conferences, and pleaded earnestly for Church reforms.

Mr. Beresford Hope followed. The right honourable gentleman denied Professor Burrows’s allegations about a clerical jealousy of laymen; he said that such jealousy had long since passed away. He did not believe that “the Bishop of Carlisle’s Bill” had any chance of passing into law:—

Both Houses were jealous of restrictions upon their authority. Even in the most churchy House of Commons it would be severely criticized with lengthened debates. But the political creed of the present House of Commons was to do as little good to and hamper and clip the Church as much as possible. Such a Bill would provoke debate, recrimination, and evil speaking about the Church, the mischief of which was inexpressible.

Mr. Beresford Hope further agreed with Archdeacon Emery and other speakers that it was desirable to establish, by the action and goodwill of the clergy, a consultative lay body; this could be done without Parliamentary action—could be done without delay.

Several speakers followed; “but we did not perceive,” says the *Guardian*, “that the subject was much advanced by their efforts. It was sufficiently apparent, from the tone of this meeting, which coincided signally with some opinions expressed by the Bishop of Peterborough in his Inaugural Address, that men’s minds

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<sup>1</sup> In the year 1877. “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 Archbishops, 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.”

are quite ripe for the formation of a consultative and representative assembly of laymen to work in co-operation with Convocation. There were some who did not even shrink from the idea of laymen sitting side by side with clerical Proctors in Convocation itself. There was a strong and unanimous demand for reforms in Convocation considered as representative of the clergy; and a no less strong and unanimous determination to have as little to do with Parliament about these matters as possible."

And here we may quote those passages in the Inaugural Address which referred to lay co-operation, and, especially, to the formation of a general assembly, "elected, representative, deliberative, entitled to speak for the whole Church."

The Bishop pointed out that in seeking the revival of her public assemblies—which were a part of her original constitution, and to the gathering together of which her Master had promised from the first the blessing of His presence—the Church was only, like all other living things, developing her life in accordance with its own inherent and necessary laws:—

This feeling first took outward shape in the revival of Convocation. But it soon became manifest that Convocation could not completely satisfy this need of the Church; and for this reason—that while, on the one hand, Convocation represented only the clergy, on the other hand a great change had passed, during its abeyance, over the great council of the nation, which at one time might have been regarded, and indeed was regarded, as representing the laity of the Church. Parliament—which at one time in its history was virtually a lay Convocation—had long ceased to be an assembly exclusively of Churchmen; it had even ceased, or was just then ceasing to be, an assembly exclusively of Christians.

When, therefore, the time for the revival of Church councils had come, some place had to be found, under these altered conditions, for the representation of the laity, and that, too, in their distinctive character as members of the Church, and not, as heretofore, as members of the nation.

"It appears to me," continued the Bishop, "that Church Congresses, in their constitution and idea, are an attempt to find such a place for the laity:—"

Certainly they first gave to the laity an equal place with the clergy in a Church Conference, and they seem, moreover, to have aimed from the first at giving to each Congress a representative character; not representative by election, for which the Church was not then ripe, but representative at least by selection; the principle acted on from the first by Congress committees being that, so far as regarded its selected elements, the Congress should as much as possible present that aspect which it would present if freely elected by the Church at large. Add to this the fact that *bonâ fide* membership in the Church is a condition of membership in the Congress; and, further, that it must

be presided over by the Bishop of the diocese in which it assembles, and you will see, I think, that the Church Congress from the first was something more than a mere chance-medley of persons interested in Church matters—a mere fortuitous concourse of Church atoms—and that it has always exhibited the distinct, even if rudimentary, outlines of those mixed and representative assemblies of clergy and laity which are becoming, under the conditions of modern political and ecclesiastical life, the form in which Church corporate life is necessarily and instinctively shaping itself.

But these elements being, as I have said, but imperfectly present in Church Congresses, it is clear that these labour under considerable disadvantages, and are exposed to dangers from which other assemblies are free. For instance, not being in any way legislative, their discussions are not steadied and weighted by the sense of responsibility attaching to words which may become laws; and further, as the subjects for discussion do not arise spontaneously from the necessities of legislation, there is the obvious temptation to select, not those which are solid and important, even if unattractive, but rather those that are telling and popular, and which will *draw* speakers and an audience.

Again, these Congresses not being truly and perfectly representative, not only are they an imperfect test of Church feeling and opinion, but they are actually in danger of becoming an untrue test, inasmuch as a sense of fairness induces each committee to aim at giving to all schools in the Church an equal representation in our debates, which, as all schools in the Church are not equal in numbers or importance, must be so far a misleading representation. And inasmuch as Congress is not, properly speaking, a deliberative assembly—does not, that is to say, come to any decision directly upon any question discussed by it—there is the obvious temptation to come at this decision indirectly, if not by votes, by voices; by the volume of sound which greets the appearance of some party leader, or the cheers which follow the utterance of some party watchword, as each party in turn tries thus to elicit what may appear in the papers as the “feeling of the Congress,” forgetting that, after all, shouting proves nothing except the strength of the lungs of the shouters.

In one word, the dangers of Church Congresses are manifestly these—that in numbers they may prove unwieldy; in choice of subjects limited; in discussion rhetorical and declamatory; in general result unpractical.

Now, if this be so—if, on the one hand, Congresses are really exposed to these dangers, and if, on the other hand, much of their original work is now being done by more regular Church assemblies which have since sprung into existence, and which are, what Congresses are not, elective, representative, and deliberative—it may be asked, and, indeed, it is being asked by many, whether Congresses, having done their work in the past, might not give place to those other Church assemblies, the formation of which they have so largely stimulated?

“And, if I were asked why this is not yet so,” continued the

Bishop—"if I were asked to explain the fact of the continuance of such assemblies as we see here to-day, I should venture to interpret it as meaning this—that the desire and the need which Congresses first sought to meet are not yet all fulfilled."

Our ruridecanal, our diocesan conferences, excellent as they are, are still local; they are not yet even provincial. They cannot, therefore, claim to speak for the whole Church. There is yet to be evolved out of them, and there are, I think, signs that there will yet be evolved out of them by a process of natural growth and selection, some central and general assembly, elected, representative, deliberative—entitled to speak for the whole Church, lay and clerical, with all the weight of its representative character—a body to which may yet be intrusted, whether *in amalgamation* [the italics are our own] or in alliance with a largely reformed Convocation, within due and reasonable limits, some such powers of self-regulation, of local control, as Parliament seems increasingly disposed to grant to other institutions not more desirous, nor, I will venture to say, more deserving of it than the Church of England.

"That some such central and general assembly of the Church of England will yet be the completion of her present growth of representative institutions, seems to me," said Dr. Magee, "as certain as any event in the future can be. That when it does come it will bring its own defects and dangers is quite certain. He must be a careless student of Church history who believes that Church councils are a panacea for all Church difficulties. But of this, nevertheless, I am persuaded, that some such uniting central assembly of the Church is all but a necessity, if she is to hold her own amidst her many rivals, who, though inferior to her in numbers, are yet superior to her in this, that they are, what she as yet is not, thoroughly and completely organized, whether for work, for reform, or for defence."

This portion of the presiding Bishop's Congress Charge appears to us not the least remarkable among the pregnant passages of recent pleas for Church Reform.<sup>1</sup>

On "The Church and the Poor—Compulsory Insurance," an able Paper was read by the Rev. W. L. Blackley, and several speeches were full of interest. "Church Patronage," and "The Position of Curates," were discussed with animation. The subject of "Church Finance"<sup>2</sup> was introduced by the Hon. Wilbraham

<sup>1</sup> Our readers may be interested in comparing the suggestions of the Bishop of Peterborough with those of the Right Hon. H. C. E. Childers, M.P., CHURCHMAN, vol. i. p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> In one of the interesting letters from the *Record's* special correspondent, it is remarked that considering the dangers which threaten all established institutions, too much importance could hardly be attached to the opportunity which the Congress afforded of eliciting the opinions of well-informed Churchmen from all parts of the country on such points

Egerton, M.P. He showed the urgent need there is of some wider and more general organization of the financial resources of the Church; and he pointed out that Churchmen are very far behind the Dissenting societies in respect of the system and efficiency with which our financial concerns are managed.—Lord John Manners brought before the Congress the work of the Tithes Redemption Trust, of which he is chairman. This trust has effected the restoration of near £3,000 a year of tithes to a number of poor parishes from which these sums had been formerly taken. Altogether, through the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and other agencies, he stated that about £132,000 per annum of tithes has been already given back to the parochial clergy.—Sir T. Fowell Buxton advocated, under certain restrictions, the union of small and badly-endowed parishes, which, he said, were now exceedingly hard to fill up with worthy incumbents.—Next came Mr. T. Salt, who advocated, as has been more than once ably done before, the amendment of the Pluralities Act of 1838. For our own part, as has already been stated in the CHURCHMAN, we believe that under certain circumstances the union of small contiguous parishes is desirable.

In the discussion on the Cathedral system the general feeling

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as "The Reformation of our Cathedral System," "Church Patronage and Preferment," and "Church Finance." These, writes the correspondent, "are not party questions within the Church. They affect all sections of the Church alike, and they are of vital importance to all at the present moment. The absorbing demands upon the time of all earnest clergymen, and the special desire of the Evangelical clergy to devote themselves to the chief work of the ministry, have tended to relegate the consideration of these subjects in the past to a few, mostly High Churchmen, who have worked them very much from their own standpoint, and have secured not a little help in the extension of their own views of Church doctrine and worship by the prominent part they have taken in these ecclesiastico-economic questions. But amongst our Evangelical clergy are men fully competent to enter upon these matters, and to redeem them from the one-sidedness with which they have been treated, and it is greatly to be desired that the duty should be pressed upon their attention, and that they should be moved to undertake the public and prominent service to the Church which was a large element in the development of Evangelical influence in the past generation. . . . I am not a novice nor a careless observer of the signs of the times. I see with pain and sorrow that some of our most cherished Evangelical societies lack both the men and the money which were once at their command. . . . The times [continues the *Record's* correspondent] are changing. New measures require new men. Where are they, and upon what platform are they to do their meed of service for the Church in this time? I venture to think that it is in connection with these subjects, which have heretofore been appropriated by High and Broad Churchmen, that they must come forward in order to ensure the vigour and permanence of the Church's institutions in association with the scriptural principles and the devotional fervour which it is the especial duty of Evangelical Churchmen to maintain and cultivate."

seemed to be, that Canons Residentiary ought to reside; it is a mistake to give an incumbent £600 or £1,000 a year to take a three months' holiday.—Mr. Magniac, M.P., said that when the Ely Conference declared that the Canons should reside nine months in the year, it meant that they must do diocesan work for that time.—Canon Trevor read an able and amusing Paper, well worth studying, on the evils of non-residence.—The Canons, clearly, must do diocesan work; but what is their work to be? That a Canon should be the Diocesan Inspector is not a suggestion, we think, likely to be adopted.—In regard to evangelistic services, Canon Farrar made the remark that there are but fifty-two Sundays in a year; what can six Canons do as preachers in a diocese? Dr. Farrar forgot, however, that important evangelistic services are held on week days. A Canon would not be overworked, surely, if he preached five evenings a week during Lent, Advent, and Epiphany.<sup>1</sup>

On "The Religious Condition of the Nation," admirable speeches were made by the Rev. Canon Lefroy and the Rev. F. F. Goe, who referred particularly to the middle classes. The Working Men's Meeting was, in many respects, especially considering it was held in an ultra-Radical town, a very great success.

At the closing meeting of the Congress, on Friday evening, an unprecedented event took place. The Nonconformist ministers of Leicester, in number upwards of fifteen, mounted the platform and presented, through the Bishop of the Diocese, as President, an address of welcome and of brotherly greeting to the Congress. The address was read by the Rev. Joseph Wood, one of the ministers, and at present chairman of the School Board. The closing sentences of this remarkable Paper ran as follows:—

We trust that your visit to the town has been pleasant to yourselves, and will be full of advantage to the Church of Christ. There is no Nonconformist in our midst who would not deplore as a great calamity any diminution of the religious efficiency of the Church of England.

We rather earnestly hope that your labours here will have for their result an increase of spiritual power—such as shall be felt throughout the whole of your communion, and throughout the country at large. We offer you our greetings in the spirit of the wise and comprehensive charity which is happily becoming more and more a distinctive note of the churches of our time, well assured that all who seek to follow as disciples in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who labour with a single heart to bring in his glorious kingdom, are friends and allies, notwithstanding the different means they use, and the different names by which they are called.

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<sup>1</sup> Not a single evangelical clergyman, so far as we are aware, read or spoke on Cathedral Reform. One representative evangelical was prepared to speak, but through some misadventure he was not called upon.

In his eloquent and impressive reply—one of Dr. Magee's happiest speeches—the Bishop said :—

We know that Nonconformists have vied with Churchmen in eager hospitality, and I can assure you that without that we should have found it difficult to house the members of our Congress in Leicester. I can assure you we cordially accept that result. This *rapprochement* between Nonconformists and Churchmen, so happily expressed to-night and during the last four days, is no new thing in Leicester. Nearly seventy years ago one of the most eloquent orations ever made was spoken over the grave of an incumbent of this town by a great Christian orator, whose name is indissolubly connected with the religious history of Leicester—Dr. Robert Hall. Nearly seventy years have passed since Robert Hall expressed the grief of a Christian brother over the grave of Thomas Robertson, the minister of St. Mary's. Gladly, therefore, do we recognize the renewal of good feeling, the renewal of these deep principles of charity and mutual forbearance and mutual reflection, that then blossomed around that grave, and that are bearing fruit here to-night.

And here we must close this Article. We have not attempted to give a sketch of the proceedings of the Congress, but rather to show the drift of a few of the meetings which have especially attracted our own attention. Viewed as a whole, the Leicester gathering must be, we think, pronounced one of the most successful of all the Church Congresses. The Archbishop of York preached a very valuable opening sermon, and read a masterly Paper on the weakness and evils of Positivism. The Bishop of the Diocese made, as was expected, an admirable chairman, and fully kept up his reputation as an orator second to none. The attendance was large; the speeches as a rule were practical; there were no "scenes;" an earnestness and reverence of tone was unmistakable. We must add that while High Churchmen and Evangelicals held their own quietly, kindly, and firmly, at two or three gatherings Broad Churchmen were rampant and aggressive. The Ritualists made no way; an attempt by a section of them to silence Bishop Riley served only to show their weakness. The speech of Bishop Ryle on the Protestant Church of Mexico was excellent.

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### Reviews.

*A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities.* Edited by WILLIAM SMITH, D.C.L., LL.D., and SAMUEL CHEETHAM, M.A., Archdeacon of Southwark, and Professor of Pastoral Theology in King's College, London. Volume II. John Murray. 1880.

THE value of Dr. Smith's series of Dictionaries is so universally acknowledged that it would be a useless expenditure of time and labour to explain their general design, or to pronounce any eulogium upon the mode of its execution. We shall content ourselves, therefore, so far as any