

## THE MONTH.

THE Bishop of Rochester, in a Pastoral Letter to his clergy, remarks that Diocesan Conferences have now passed out of the region of experiment into that of recognized advantage, and that to presume to plead for them would be an impertinence. But he points out the value of conferences as preventing the entire absorption of energies within a limited area, and says that in the larger and fresher air of the diocese frank speech, kindly toleration, quiet self-respect, bright good humour, and simple devoutness might be of general use.

At the Norwich Conference, Sir Fowell Buxton moved a resolution empowering the committee to consider the union of small parishes, not merely with each other, but with any parishes adjoining them. The Rev. W. N. Ripley (St. Giles, Norwich), in seconding the motion, which was agreed to, suggested that there was a special necessity for it in the cathedral city. Canon Nisbet (rector of St. Giles's, London) dwelt upon the insufficiency of clerical income:—

In 1877 there were 1,500 parishes, with a population of only 220, and an average income of £183. If any young man were to come and consult him about taking orders he should tell him that, unless he had private means, he must be prepared to look anxiety in the face, or enforced celibacy, or, what was worse, an imprudent marriage. In the deanery of Repps there were thirty-six livings with a less population than 400, and nineteen under 250, and not one with an income of £600 a-year. If these parishes were united, and there were eleven instead of thirty-six parishes, there would be an average income of £800 a-year, and yet no clergyman would have more than a population of 1,100. . . . The clergy attached to these small parishes were required in our cities and towns.

On the concerted action of Diocesan Conferences, a Report was presented by a Committee. The Rev. S. Garratt remarked, that when a body was formed as now proposed, it could not but possess great moral weight, and there could virtually be no doubt that it would become, to a great extent, the governing body of the Church. They ought, therefore, to think well and consider long before they introduced a system of which this might be the result. It might be for good, or it might be for the greatest possible evil. What was proposed seemed to be an *imperium in imperio*. Sir W. Jones cordially sympathized with the views of Mr. Garratt. Lord Henniker, however, and Prebendary Meyrick, spoke in favour of a Central Committee. Archdeacons Perowne and Groome expressed doubts; but, ultimately, the resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority.

The Rev. R. W. Enraght, vicar of Holy Trinity, Birmingham, has publicly declared his determination to follow Mr. Dale to prison, and stated that as his diocesan had issued a second set of instructions,<sup>1</sup> after he had obeyed the first, there could be now no hope of a compromise, and he has resumed the points of ritual he gave up.<sup>2</sup>

In the Bishop of Manchester's Charge appears the following passage concerning Ritualistic lawlessness:—

To show what the present temper of extreme men really is, I may quote a paragraph from a letter of the President of the English Church Union, which appeared in the London *Times* of Friday last (Nov. 5):—

The determination (he says) to imprison three clergymen who are certainly acting in obedience to their consciences renders all attempts at conciliation

<sup>1</sup> The following is the Bishop's letter to Mr. Enraght:—

“Hartlebury, Kidderminster, Nov. 2, 1880.

“MY DEAR MR. ENRAGHT,—You will not have forgotten that on July 11, 1879, you undertook, in compliance with my direction and desire, to desist from certain observances of ritual in the administration of Holy Communion in your church, viz. :—

“From the use of lighted candles upon or near the communion-table when they are not wanted for the purpose of giving light;

“From wearing a chasuble and alb;

“From the ceremonial mixing of water with the wine; and

“From making the sign of the cross towards the congregation.

“There are other matters of ritual which have been determined to be contrary to the law of our Church, but which I have received information that you are in the habit of observing.

“I think it necessary, therefore, to order and direct that you shall desist, not only from the above-named observances, but from the following also, viz. :—

“From using in the administration of Holy Communion wafers not being, and instead of, bread such as is usual to be eaten;

“From standing, while saying the Prayer of Consecration, at the middle of the west side of the communion-table, with your back to the people, so as to prevent them from seeing you break the bread, or take the cup into your hand;

“From not continuing to stand during the whole time of your saying the Prayer of Consecration;

“From elevating the cup and paten more than is necessary for compliance with the rubrics;

“From causing the hymn, or prayer, commonly known as *Agnus Dei*, to be sung immediately after the Prayer of Consecration;

“From standing, instead of kneeling, while saying the Confession in the Communion Service; and

“From kissing the Prayer-Book.

“I shall be glad if you will assure me that you will undertake to comply with the directions which I thus feel it to be my duty to place upon you.—Yours very faithfully,  
“H. WORCESTER.”

<sup>2</sup> On the 20th Lord Penzance, sitting as Dean of Arches, issued his significavit to the Court of Chancery against the Rev. R. W. Enraght, and also against the Rev. S. F. Green, of Miles Platting, Manchester, for contumacy and contempt.

hopeless. It has been therefore resolved by the Council that all clerical members of the Union be recommended no longer to abstain from restoring the vestments prescribed by the Ornaments Rubric where they are desired by the communicants of the parish.

Now, it is an initial fallacy to introduce this idea of "obedience to conscience." A matter of ritual observance, in itself, unless it rest upon a positive command of God, a point of almost absolute indifference—as, for instance, the lighting of candles or the wearing of vestments—can hardly, except by a very circuitous process, be brought under the domain of the moral sense at all. A man may say, "My declaration of conformity binds me to do everything prescribed in the Prayer-book, and my conscience tells me that the wearing of vestments or the lighting of altar-candles is prescribed;" to whom my reply would be, "But the conscience of the Church for more than two hundred years, by not adopting these usages, shows that it did not so interpret this rubric, and the highest appeal court in the realm has decided that it ought not to be so interpreted; and though this may be, as Dr. Littledale declares that it is, "a daring perversion of the law" (*Times*, November 5, 1880), yet plainly your conscience need not disturb itself till the perversion has been proved and the decision of the court reversed, and your interpretation of the rubric established as true. St. Paul's last appeal in a not altogether dissimilar question is to "the custom of the Churches" (1 Cor. xi. 16). Account for the fact how you please, nothing can be historically more certain than that from the date of the Ornaments Rubric in its present form for two centuries there was no such custom known in the Church of England as that which is now pronounced by self-constituted judges to be the only authentic and possible construction of that rubric's terms.

According to a recent vote of the Senate, Greek is not to be deprived of the important place which it has hitherto held in the studies of Cambridge, and candidates for Honours will still have to submit to a preliminary examination in two dead languages.

Peace has not been restored at Guy's Hospital: the senior members of the staff, Dr. Habershon and Mr. Cooper Forster, have resigned. Dr. Habershon, in the letter which he addressed to the Governors, renewed his protest against the nursing arrangements of the last twelve months; he has not changed his opinion as to the mischievous character of the system which has been introduced.

On the 11th, the New Testament Revisers, it is stated, concluded their long labours, that day being the 407th day on which they have assembled, the whole period over which their sessions have extended having been nearly ten years and a half:—

Through the kind thoughtfulness of Prebendary Humphry, the members present on this their last day of meeting assembled at St. Martin's Church, at seven p.m., and joined in an appropriate service, the special Psalms chosen being the 19th, the 90th, and the 122nd; and the special Lesson being Ephes. iv. 1-16. Suitable Collects were

introduced after the Collect for the day ; and after the General Thanksgiving, in which mention was made of the mercies vouchsafed to the members in having been permitted to conclude their great and holy undertaking, there was a solemn pause of some minutes for silent thanksgiving and prayer. The Dean of Lichfield read the Lesson out of the Revised New Testament. Doubtless, there went up from that company that evening many earnest aspirations and prayers for the Divine blessing upon their completed work. There were present, besides those already mentioned, the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol ; the Deans of Westminster, Rochester, and Llandaff ; Dr. Westcott, Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Hort, Dr. Scrivener, Dr. Newth, Dr. Moulton, and the secretary, Mr. Troutbeck.

At the annual *soirée* of the Leeds Church Institute, Lord Cranbrook made a stirring speech. The noble Viscount was followed by Mr. Herbert Gladstone, M.P., who met with a very cordial greeting, and said he stood there as a member of the Church of England, and as a supporter of the Established Church. He was a supporter of the Established Church because it had kept the lamp of truth and morality burning during eighteen centuries. He believed it was dear to the nation, and that in all parts of the world it was doing a great and noble and holy work.<sup>1</sup>

According to a recent report (but reports concerning Dulcigno are not to be trusted) some three thousand of the inhabitants have left the town ; the fugitives are said to be principally Christians, and the Mahomedans may co-operate in any scheme of resistance to which the Albanians may incline.

The Grahamstown correspondent of the *Guardian* writes (Oct. 21) : The "legal" Bishop of Natal,

Dr. Colenso, landed at Port Elizabeth last Thursday morning (14th inst.), and in spite of a formal inhibition from Bishop Merriman, which was duly served as soon as he set foot in the diocese, he came on to Grahamstown by train the same afternoon, preached twice in the Cathedral last Sunday, and is holding a confirmation this afternoon.

On the 20th, Sir Alexander Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice of England, died suddenly, aged seventy-eight.

Parliament is prorogued till December 2nd. Rumours have been published concerning dissensions in the Cabinet. The condition of Ireland is most deplorable.

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<sup>1</sup>The *Guardian* says :—"We see with satisfaction that Mr. Herbert Gladstone ventured to stand on the same platform with Lord Cranbrook, and atone for some former rash utterances by an open profession of Churchmanship and repudiation of a Disestablishment policy."