

there a more regular, faithful, and steady attendance, or a more cordial reception and entertainment of the delegates, than in ours. If by means, however, that our Conventions are not attractive to the public, that is undoubtedly true. But it is not true in Vermont only, since the same fact might be alleged of every other Diocese, with the single exception of Virginia. And there, he must be perfectly conscious, that it is not so much the *proper business of the Convention* which attracts the crowd as the excitement of a great religious festival, kept up throughout the week with a zealous effort of preparation. I do not mean to make the slightest objection to this peculiarity in the custom of our Southern friends. On the contrary, I rejoice with them that they are able to render their annual assembly so interesting. But we of the North are accustomed to distinguish a little more exactly between the *Convention*, which meets to transact the business of the Church, and the *Convocation of the Clergy and the Laity*, who come together to a special feast of preaching, in connection with the proverbial warmth of *Virginian feeling and hospitality*.

There are two theories of what the Annual Convention of a Diocese should be. That which your correspondent, doubtless, prefers, would make it an occasion of display, intended for the public ear and eye. That which we prefer agrees better with the idea of a private family meeting, assembled once a year to confer, quietly and confidentially, about our own progress and condition, without any interruption from strangers, or any solicitude about the comments of a gazing crowd. Hence it is that our canon declares our Annual Convention to be "not public." Hence, also, is derived the natural consequence that it affords no field for any man who might be tempted to come only to play the orator and make confusion. And hence, too, is the happy result, under God, that we meet, without the slightest apprehension of party strife or angry discussion, to strengthen the bonds of mutual regard by the cordial intercourse of unity and kindness, to learn the doings of the past year, and consult on the course required to promote the advancement and prosperity of the spiritual field intrusted to our care.

I speak here, however, of the *CONVENTION*, properly considered. Of course there is no injunction of *secrecy*. A private meeting is one thing, and a secret meeting is another. Of course, likewise, we have religious services, to which the public are invited. A Missionary sermon is preached the evening before. A Convention sermon, with the Communion, marks the opening of the assembly. The Convocation of the Clergy, which holds one of its quarterly meetings at the same place and season, appoints such other public services as may be deemed useful. But the Convention itself is a *family conference of its own members only*. And I doubt not that in this very peculiarity we enjoy an important advantage over the ordinary system, notwithstanding the morbid appetite for publicity, which is so strongly characteristic of our age and country. The sum of the matter, therefore, amounts to this: Our Conventions are as attractive as any others, on the true grounds of *duty and principle*. All attractiveness beyond this we leave to the admirers of the other theory.

The imputation of *servility* in the clergy and the laity of our Diocese comes next to be considered, and here I can only compassionate the ignorance of your correspondent, on the one hand, and his boldness on the other. I refrain from those expressions of strong rebuke which such boldness deserves. For it is a very serious charge to make, on no better evidence than his own idle conjecture. And you must allow me to say, gentlemen, that it is a very serious charge for you to publish and scatter abroad on the wings of the wind, in a thousand quarters, without knowing whether it was founded on facts, or whether you would have the means afforded of contradicting it, if it were an error. Happily, however, it is a charge which carries on its face its own refutation. Every man of common intelligence throughout the United States must know that Vermont is perhaps the very last place in the world for the practice of *servility*.—There is not a spot upon the broad earth where true liberty, in its widest extent, is more universally understood, or more manfully defended. And as to the Churchmen of Vermont, I might challenge your correspondent to name a Diocese where the Bishop, the clergy, and the laity live together on a more thorough system of fraternal equality. But we claim the capacity of distinguishing between freedom and licentiousness; and we respect the just rights of one another as carefully as we guard our own. I have already shown that the peculiar features of our Diocesan Constitution are derived from Scripture and the primitive Church, to which all Episcopalians profess to render their allegiance. Is our faithfulness to these worthy to be branded as *servility*? I have

shown that the Bishop is as dependent on the clergy and the Laity as they are upon him. Is this *servility*? I have shown that our system is the true exponent of the *unity* of the body of Christ, in which there can be no authoritative action unless the whole of its constituent elements concur together. Is that *servility*? If your correspondent's idea of Christian liberty be such that he supposes it impossible to enjoy it under a just and Apostolic theory of the Episcopate, I can only lament his ignorance of true church principles. And I would advise him, in all kindness and sobriety, before he again assumes the office of censor over the clergy of Vermont, to study our standard writers on Ecclesiastical polity—Hooker, Potter, and the rest—whom it is very evident that he has either never read or has quite forgotten.

(Conclusion next week.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

FOR THE CHURCH TIMES.

ALL SAINTS' DAY.

"After this I beheld and lo! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice saying, *Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.*" Rev. vii. 9 10.

O Thou, who out of ev'ry land
Hast gather'd thine elected band,
To stand around thy throne;
Fain would we join the countless throng
Who cease not day and night in song
Thy saving pow'r to own.

O Lamb of God, by men denied,
Once set at nought and crucified,
Now raised to pow'r supreme:
For Thee alone Immortal King
Thro' heav'n and earth the praise shall ring—
Salvation all the theme.

Salvation from the burning flood,
Salvation bought with tears and blood,
Beyond all price the cost:
Salvation afar off and nigh,
Salvation to the doom'd to die;
Salvation to the lost.

Attune our hearts: and with the fire
Of love our unclean lips inspire,
To join th' incessant cry
Of Saints who swell the choral psalm,
Who wear the robe and bear the palm
Of Christ's great victory.

W. B.

* Eph. ii. 17.

News Department.

From Papers by Steamship America, Oct. 14.

THE SCOTCH EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

The most important and hopeful feature in our ecclesiastical news from Scotland, is the fact that the laity have at length been admitted by two of the most catholic-minded bishops of the church, to share in the administration of the affairs of the church. On the 21st the laity of the diocese of St. Andrew's, attended by the invitation of the bishop his primary Visitation in his cathedral of St. Ninian's, at Perth; and on the preceding day the laity of the diocese of Moray and Ross had attended in convocation at Inverness, in obedience to the summons of their bishop, which, both from its intrinsic excellence of composition, and as marking, I believe, emphatically a great fact in the history of the church, I transcribe at full length:—

"To the Faithful Lay Members of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, resident within the United Dioceses of Moray and Ross, greeting.

"Whereas, when our Divine Lord and Master ascended up into heaven, and founded His mystical body the Church, which was to consist of all orders and degrees of men here below, He made provision for its unity and orderly government by entrusting the rule and supervision thereof to His Apostles, and to those who should succeed them in their sacred functions even to the end of the world.

"And whereas the successive holders of the Apostolic office, the Bishops of the Christian Church, have from time to time as the exigencies of the Church required, convened in synod the clergy of their respective dioceses, to aid them in this great work with their counsel and advice; which practice has tended greatly to the well being of the Church at large, no less than to its local efficiency.

"And whereas the laws and canons of our own branch of the Church Catholic, following herein the ca-

none of the ancient Church, have sanctioned and required the frequent meetings of such synods of the clergy, to the end that the Bishops, aided by the counsel and learning of their presbyters, might be enabled the better to rule and govern the faithful committed to their care; and such synods have, through God's guidance and mercy, tended greatly to the preservation of Evangelic truth and Apostolic order amongst us, and to the general efficiency and well being of our Church.

"We, impressed with the conviction that the Bishops of the Church have thus been greatly aided in their responsible office by the counsel and wisdom of their presbyters, and that every Bishop is at liberty to seek out and call forth into exercise the reason and varied gifts bestowed upon all orders and degrees of the faithful, in such manner and to such extent as he may think best calculated to make them useful and subservient to the great and important objects for which the Christian Church was founded; and further, believing that our brethren of the laity will not shrink from bearing their legitimate part in the public cares of the Church, and from affording to him who is set over them in the Lord that counsel and advice which he may seek at their hands, do hereby invite and convene so many of the lay communicants of the respective congregations in our diocese, as may have it in their power to attend, to meet in the chapel of St. John's, in Inverness, on Wednesday the 20th day of September, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, for the purpose of conferring with us on such of the affairs of the Church in this diocese as come legitimately within their province.

"That we may seek the blessing of the Great Head of the Church upon this our undertaking, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our deliberations, it is proposed, God willing, that the members of this Convocation should partake together of the Holy Communion before entering upon the important work for which they are convened.

"That the divine blessing may rest upon you in this and in every other good work, is the constant prayer of your faithful friend and Bishop, ROBERT EDEN, Bishop of Moray and Ross.

Hedgefield, Inverness, Sept. 2, 1854.

In a subsequent letter we have the following account:—

The Convocation of the laity of the diocese of Moray and Ross, to which I so recently referred, was held at Inverness on the 20th September. At eleven o'clock on that day the Litany was said by the Bishop's chaplain, and the Holy Communion was administered. Thereafter the Bishop constituted the Convocation in the name of the Holy Trinity, and then delivered to the laity present an address from which I select the following passages:—

"I confess (said the Bishop) that amongst the motives which have influenced me in summoning to counsel the lay members of my diocese, that of engaging them in discussions for the purpose of determining controversies has had no place. I had rather thought of engaging them in such practical work as would leave little time or thought for controversy, and whose valuable and beneficial results might go far to blast its edge, and tend to draw Churchmen together on points on which they are agreed, rather than engage them on those on which they may differ. "If any man will do God's will he shall know of the doctrine," encourages me to believe that when all orders and degrees of man are severally engaged in doing God's will by doing His Church's work in the Church's way, according to their several abilities in their respective stations, our knowledge of truth will become clearer, and unity of sentiment will be promoted by unity of action."

Then alluding to the prevalent evil which rises from the want of united action and sympathy among Scottish Churchmen, the Bishop well remarked:—

"The first step as it appears to me which should be taken towards removing a defect like this is to awaken an interest in the affairs of the diocese in which we live, and to this end to give the members a direct personal interest in its affairs, and to enlist their energies and to seek their co-operation in the management of them. Men who have been accustomed to limit their thoughts and exertions as Churchmen to their own particular congregation can form but a slight idea of the many subjects on which their talents and energies may be employed when called on to exercise them in the larger sphere of the diocese, and much more when they be called to operate in the still wider field of the Church at large.

"If (continued the Bishop) representatives of each congregation come together for mutual conference at regular and stated intervals, to deliberate, not only on what may concern those whom they immediately represent, but upon that which concerns the whole diocese, they are more likely to agree upon certain fixed principles by which the affairs of the diocese should be regulated, and applying these principles to the organization of the various congregations, subject to an elasticity which may meet any peculiarities, to arrive at such a degree of uniformity throughout as will evidence them to be parts and members of the same body. I could (said the Bishop in conclusion) dwell largely and hopefully upon the advantage which I feel I should myself derive in conducting and superintending the affairs of the diocese when in difficulty or doubt. I might cease upon receiving the honest and wise counsel of those who are so much interested in the good government of the diocese as he upon whom the responsibility rests. It is no slight advantage to me that the Church by its