

## REMINISCENCES OF THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE.

The *Rochester Diocesan Chronicle* for September, contains the following reminiscences of the Lambeth Conference, which are evidently from the pen of the Bishop of the diocese:—

"The Lambeth Conference is over. Its results, so far as paper and ink contain them, have been already given to the Church. In a little while the 145 "Bishops of the Church of God" who took part in it will have returned to their homes, not a few of them never to see another Conference. Various judgments, and it is quite reasonable that it should be so, will be passed upon it, but it may not be inopportune to remark that a venerable and accomplished Bishop, who had been present at the two previous ones, and whose judgment is of great value, remarked to the writer, that of all three, this one 1888 was incomparably the best. Certainly it was the most numerous; certainly, also, it considered and pronounced upon a far greater number of important subjects; certainly, as shall be observed again, it was happily characterized by an unbroken brotherliness and harmony.

The Lambeth Conference of 1888 was ushered in and closed by two great Church functions, differing from each other almost as widely as the Abbey of Edward the Confessor differs from the great Church of Christopher Wren. Picturesqueness was, perhaps, the characteristic of the Westminster Abbey service. Few spectacles could be more suggestive or more attractive than the nave of the Abbey, in the twilight of that gray July evening, filled with Bishops from all corners of the globe, in their scarlet hoods, white rochets, and black satin chimeres, some come there for the first time in their lives, others for the last time, many of them old friends, all brethren in the faith and discipline of the Apostles. The marshalling was, perhaps, not so perfect as in St. Paul's at the closing function, but as the grand procession passed out of the nave into the dimly-lighted choir, the impressiveness of the spectacle seemed to consist quite as much in what could not be seen, except very dimly, but might easily be imagined. The chaplains, who were seated near the pulpit, had the best of the sermon; the Bishops, at a distance, could only hear fragments. We walked in order of consecration; State or Diocesan Bishops claimed no precedence of Missionary or Colonial Bishops. The venerable Bishop of the Niger's place in the procession was close to the Metropolitans, and who grudged it to him? But it was a grand principle to affirm and carry out. The vastness of the Anglican area, and the way in which God has delivered the Church from what fifty years ago was sternly stigmatised as the curse of her barrenness, would have made itself apparent to any one who observed the Bishops walking side by side, and who knew the dioceses they ruled. The writer sat in the Abbey between an African Bishop who governs the Church in the Transvaal and an American Bishop whose fair home is on the banks of the Mississippi. The opening and closing sermons were as different as the Primates who preached them are, were both delivered with great force and fire, were both pregnant with thought and gleaming with knowledge, were both eminently and delightfully characteristic of the two strong and history-making men. The first, while not forgetting the present, looked back with an irresistible historical instinct to men and books who made the primitive times great and luminous before the English Church was thought of; the other, with brawny speech and a great tender humanity, grappled with the great social problems which sometimes make

even the brightest hearts thoughtful, if not sombre, and brought the poor. "and those who have no helper," before the conscience and heart of the Church. Stateliness is the right word for the St. Paul's ceremonial; and the music was exquisite.

The function in Lambeth Palace Chapel, where the Bishops assembled on the morning of the first day of the Conference, was simple but edifying. The Holy Communion was celebrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by the officers of the Province, and the sermon was preached by the Bishop of Minnesota. Of that sermon it will be sufficient to say that it thrilled us with its intense earnestness, edified us by its large-hearted utterance of the Gospel of Christ. It was a very great occasion, used with dignity and unction. Two Bishops, both very competent judges, one who hardly ever praises anything or any one, the other whose least word of commendation is worth a volume of ordinary compliments, spoke of it to the writer with unqualified satisfaction. Then began the first session of Conference in the library of Lambeth Palace; the President in his chair, at the end of the apartment near the door, the Archbishop of York on his right hand and the Archbishop of Armagh on his left, and beyond them on each side, ranged in a semi-circle on a raised dais, the other Metropolitans; in front, all down the chamber, sat the other members in the Conference. Unluckily for those at a distance, the acoustic properties of the place are not proportioned to its dignity. From Tuesday, July 3, to Friday, July 6, the Conference held its first session, and was employed with discussion of a most important and instructive kind on the subjects about which it was proposed to appoint Committees, each subject being introduced by a speaker selected beforehand as specially conversant with it. Different impressions will have been produced on different minds by the speeches delivered on this occasion. The writer can only say for himself that so long as he lives he will be thankful to have been permitted to hear the introductory speeches on Polygamy, Standards of Faith, Temperance, Purity, the Spanish and Portuguese Churches' Reunion with English-speaking Christian Bodies. Yet the speech which simply electrified the entire Conference, and this in perfect consistency with an inability to agree with all its statements and arguments, was the opening address on Socialism. For array of facts, lucidity and precision of statement, cogent argumentation, entire mastery of a complicated and wide subject, and a manner which was powerfully inspired with a passionate fire of a genuine and sincere enthusiasm, it was unrivalled. Its impression still vividly abides with the writer now; long may it abide. Then followed a fortnight of Committees, of which some of us had a tolerably large share. Some of the Committees inaugurated the Church House, in Dean's Yard, by using it for their place of meeting. The last week of the Conference, from Monday, July 23, to Friday, July 27, was occupied with bringing up the reports of the Committees, debating resolutions with respect to them, of which the results are already made known. If possible, this week was even more interesting than the other, also as edifying; both, exhausting.

The attendance of Bishops all through the Conference was remarkably full and punctual. Some who had not arrived in England in time for the first week were in time for the last; and in the interval two fresh consecrations augmented the gathering at its close. Three remarks, neither, it is hoped, inopportune nor unseemly, may close a statement which the clergy of the diocese will welcome, and lay Churchmen, even with a show of reason, claim. If any kind of happy augury about the spiritual unity, and brotherly concord, and practical sympathy, and generous resolution to try to understand each other of the general body of

Churchmen, even over questions confessedly open to controversy, may safely be gathered from the harmony and concord of an important gathering of the Church's fathers and governors, we are likely, in the time to come, to walk side by side in a more kindly and yet sincere respect for each other than we have ever yet succeeded in doing; we must always expect to differ, but we may also be willing to love. Of course, there were no questions full of living and scorching fire for us to talk over, such as induced, and perhaps compelled, the heated debates in the first Lambeth Conference, of which Gray and Thirlwall, Tait and Wilberforce, were members and leaders. The hatchet of that South African controversy has long ago been buried. But had there been any disposition for troubled debate, there would have been ample opportunity for it. Of eager, animated, almost impetuous discussion, occasionally there was no lack. On some of the subjects the man is to be pitied—nay, blamed—who does not feel, and feel strongly. But from first to last, may the writer be forgiven for saying it, not a word was said, in his hearing at least (and he was hardly ever absent), that could rankle in the most sensitive nature; not a syllable of acrimony breathed that could leave behind it a sensation of pain, either in the conscience of the speaker or the heart of a listener. The Holy Spirit, earnestly invoked from the first, seemed ever to be with us, and to hallow the atmosphere of the meeting with His Holy Presence. It was the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ that we had come together to advance by worship and counsel; and His parting promise seemed eminently fulfilled to us—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." No doubt there was occasional, and even keen, disappointment. Some of us may have wished to have gone further in certain directions and to have published more. Any dozen men out of the one hundred and forty-five present might, perhaps, have made bolder ventures and hazarded wider risks for what they would hold to be vital truth. But the wisdom of the majority in an assembly such as that is a very trustworthy wisdom, likely to justify itself in the end to thoughtful Churchmen; and prudence is not always cowardice, it may be the humble self-restraint of saints. One other feature in the Conference is what may be not improperly called the dignity that marked the discussions; as well as the considerateness of the great majority of silent members, to whose reticence it is in no slight measure due that on so many and such large subjects the reports could be discussed at all and accepted. In most assemblies (other than those on Mount Olympus) there are speakers who not only feel sure that they have something important to say, but who also are under the impression that every one is burning to hear it. There are also others, among whom the writer places himself, who never seem to have much to say that other people either have not already said, or are not certain soon to say much better; and to them it is far more clear that their rising to speak will be greeted with a courteous uneasiness, and their sitting down rewarded with gentle applause. The latter class must not, indeed, claim to be masters of assemblies, but they save business from chaos. The value of the Conference to those who composed it—in the deepening, modifying, even transforming of opinion, in the formation of personal friendship, in the holy association of common worship, in the visions and ideals conceived and cherished, not only within the venerable walls of Lambeth Palace, but in the happy opportunity of intercourse and society over all the length and breadth of England, and in some of its noblest shrines, cannot be set too high.

Of this, however, no one can speak for his neighbour; each can only thank God for himself. To many a far-off land our brethren and kinsmen will carry back for the rest of their