

mence on Tuesday, October 15, the Monday evening concert being suppressed. Lord Suffield proposes to invite the Prince and Princess of Wales to pass the festival week at his seat at Gunton; and should this invitation be accepted, it is expected that both the Prince and Princess will be present at the performances.

BISHOP OXENDEN ON THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH.

THE following is from a sermon preached by the Right Rev. the Metropolitan of Canada, in Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury, just before the assembling of the Lambeth conference. His Lordship's text was, "Watchman, what of the night?" The watchman said, "The morning cometh"—Isaiah xxi, 11 12. After expressing his gratitude at being permitted once more to return to his old home, the Bishop spoke of the past history of the English Church. We know that more than eighteen centuries ago the banner of the cross was seen floating on the British shores, planted there, if not by Apostolic hands, at all events in Apostolic times. That banner was a signal that the Church's history was to be one of ceaseless warfare—that she was to struggle against a friendless world, and would only win the crown of life on condition of being faithful even unto death. In her earliest days the British Church was assailed by persecutions, and beset by errors; and if the Lord had not been on her side, then would they have swallowed her up quickly. But she was based on a strong foundation, and there was within her a living seed which could not be eradicated. There were walls and bulwarks around her against which not even the gates of hell could prevail. Ever and anon she might have been seen as a beacon in the midst of the waves, covered with the tempest spray, but she reared her head above it: she fell not, for she was founded on a rock. And yet every now and then, in her early history, had the inquiry been made, "Watchman, what of the night?" a very sorry answer would have been given. At one time when the Saxon rule prevailed, heathenism once more gained the ascendancy, and gross darkness overspread the land. Then were the ranks of the British Church so fearfully thinned by the persecutors, that she was reduced to a very small remnant, "as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done." Then it was that the rumor of our distress reached the ear of Gregory, and forthwith a band of Christian soldiers came to the relief of our beleaguered Church; and Augustine and his noble train entered this very city with no carnal weapons, but with those that were mighty through God for his glorious purpose. And though they introduced many customs alien to the purity of primitive times, still they may be said to have accomplished a work of faith and labour of love—a work which served to rekindle the dying embers of the Church. In the centuries that followed the Roman element more and more prevailed, so that the

Church, once so pure, was fairly leavened by it. But though she had imbibed many false doctrines, she for many years manfully maintained her independence of the See of Rome; and it was not until the thirteenth century that she was forced to succumb, and most unwillingly to bend her neck to the hated yoke. But it was still under protest: for in the darkest hour of that mediæval night she was not happy in her servitude; and there were to be found even then a few of her indomitable sons clinging to a purer faith, and asserting their right as members of an independent body. In the very worst of times, when Romanism had overflowed the whole surface of the Church, crippling her energies and leading her astray from the path of truth, even then there was an undercurrent of genuine piety; and within the visible Church, corrupt as it was, there existed always a communion of saints, a sanctuary beyond the outer court, uncontaminated by the buyers and sellers. At length shone forth the great and glorious era of the Reformation, according to the watchman's words, "The morning cometh"—a Reformation, forced on not by the will of man, but by the necessities of the times, when this Church of ours succeeded in throwing off the shackles which so sorely chafed her.

Since then the Church has passed through many phases. Various trials have assailed her, but she has come out of the furnace purified and unharmed. There have been sad times of deadness, too, but precious seasons of revival. Even within our own recollection there have been immense changes and fluctuations in the Church's course. New schools have arisen within her pale, each grasping some truth, though it may be with a certain admixture of error; and each made perhaps, in the providence of God, to effect some good for Him—one bringing out into greater prominence the glorious doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, such as justification by faith alone, and the quickening power of the Holy Spirit; and another insisting on a closer walk with God and a more reverential regard for His sanctuary and for the services thereof. But as in everything wherein man is the agent, so here there have been imperfections which have weakened and extravagancies which have impeded the onward progress of the Church. For such is human nature, that in recoiling from defect men can hardly help running into excess. And what is our condition now? At what stage have we arrived? At this period of the Church's trial—at this hour of her probation—if the question be asked, "Watchman, what of the night?" (and it is asked again and again by many an anxious and thoughtful inquirer) what answer shall we give? I believe that the Church—and bear in mind that I am speaking of our own beloved Anglican Church—of that great aggregate body, not only established here in England, in this her natural soil, but also spread over our numerous colonies, as well as throughout the States of America—this Church, which will in a few days be represented at the great Episcopal gathering at Lambeth, which has met here as

at its source, to receive a baptism from above to fit it for the important work on which it is about to enter—recognizes a common parentage, is banded together by its Apostolic forms and doctrines, and knit still together into one blessed brotherhood by that unity of feeling which, thank God, animates the whole. I believe that this Church of ours, after all that she has gone through, *is now settling down into a far healthier state than she was ever in before.* She is now putting forth her powers in this and other lands. She is multiplying her dioceses and opening missions in places where a few years back her presence would have been deemed an intrusion. She is doing through her great missionary societies a grand and noble work; and to one of these you are especially invited to make your offering to-day. She is calling up new appliances to bring wanderers into her fold and to awaken her own shrinking members; and whilst her clergy are devoting their best energies to the work of Christ, her laity are stretching forth their open hands to help them. The Spirit of God has again vouchsafed to breathe upon her; and this great and historic Church of ours, intimately connected as it is with the national life of this country, has in the last few days put forth new manifestations of life and energy. It is true, there are differences, grave differences, among her members, rising up at times almost as a partition wall to turn them. But we must remember that such was the case even in the days of the Apostles, and such will ever be the case. It is true that these restless and disturbing influences, when they exist, mar the Church's usefulness and sadden the hearts of the faithful. But even this is not an unmixed evil. Painful as it is to see discord and disunion in our Zion, better is it, far better, than that deadly union, that coherence of mere frozen particles, which marked our condition in days gone by. There is, too, at the present time, an increasing number of those who eschew party names, and a party spirit—who love the Church because she loves her Lord, and are determined to be faithful and true to her—naturally leaning to one side or the other, but preferring to identify themselves with no distinctive antagonistic school—a moderate central party, which will probably become the ultimate arbiter of the doctrines and practice of the Church. These, seeing the dangerous folly into which extreme men have run, are now feeling anxious to sound the note of moderation, and are asking for the old paths, where is the good way, and are ready to walk therein, that they may find rest for their souls. What the watchman foresaw in faith and hope, it is now our privilege to realize—"the morning coming—a morning that betokens brighter and better days—a morning full of promise to God's believing people." The Bishop, in conclusion, pleaded earnestly for an avoidance of strife and for a cultivation of real and determined Churchmanship. The miserable struggles which have been going on of late years are," said his Lordship, "doing infinite harm to the great work of religion, and help on terribly the infidelity which is menacing our Zion. Whilst the combatants are fight-