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## THE MONTH.

THE chief ecclesiastical event has been the Lichfield Diocesan Synod. Some 450 clergymen assembled in the Cathedral. The prayers were all in Latin, "derived from ancient sources." No reporters were present; but the Bishop's address has appeared in full. It deals mainly with "evangelical work," "services for the masses," and "lay agency." Its earnestness, deep-toned spirituality, and directness, have been generally admired; but certain passages, particularly in regard to the Act of Uniformity and services in consecrated buildings conducted by laymen, have naturally raised misgivings.

With respect to the votes of the Convocation of Canterbury (June CHURCHMAN, p. 240), the *Guardian*<sup>1</sup> (June 18th) says:

We cannot say that we regret this caution. The Bishop of Lichfield is naturally disappointed at his failure to lead the Church in a direction which seems to him so full of usefulness. But it must be obvious that more consideration is needed, and more safeguards should be enforced, before the proposal can be accepted and acted upon.

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There is a great difference between allowing a certain amount of lay preaching in buildings to which no one need go, and admitting laymen to a chief part in the chief services of the central place of worship, and though the Bishop of Lichfield's proposal is limited to bye-services, yet we doubt whether this limitation, even if it were observed, would be always understood by the less educated. They would see the church used for lay-preaching, and they would almost certainly invest the doctrines so supported with all the authority of the pulpit. And we do not quite understand why the Bishop assumes that the "poorest and the meanest" will only listen to a lay preacher, and that till laymen are admitted to preach in the churches the poor will be "banished to school-rooms or to Mission chapels." It is surely within the power of a clergyman to preach so that the poor shall understand him. Or is simplicity of speech a purely lay accomplishment?

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Guardian* the Rev. C. H. SALE writes: "The Bishop repudiates all desire of new organizations. He has immense confidence in the Church of God. He believes in its ministry, Bishops, priests, and deacons; in its methods and commission, 'because of God.' Nevertheless, he ends by relying for the evangelization of the masses upon the ministrations of laymen in our churches. Certain laws of realm and Church and the solemn judgment of Convocation are acknowledged to be in the way. These laws must be abolished or modified, and certainly will be. Meantime they are more or less ignored or evaded, and may be thus pardonably dealt with, so that their spirit be observed; and in deciding this question a latitude is claimed which does not seem to be based on any very logical method.

"Without going further into the debatable points with which this address bristles, it may be allowed to ask, with all respect, why the Bishop makes this humiliating confession of the failure of the Christian ministry, and calls despairingly for the uncommissioned ministrations of laymen in our Church, at a moment when the unanimous resolution of the Episcopate on the extension of the diaconate has placed at the service of the Church the very class of men whom he desiderates within the ranks of the ministry in which he believes."