

THE CHURCHMAN

August, 1919.

THE MONTH.

The following are the "Findings" passed by the
Cheltenham Conference at the final session on June
Findings. 26 :—

A.—THE BASIS OF REUNION.

The Conference strongly reaffirms the principles of its previous findings on Reunion, and feels that the time has come for definite action, since unity is demanded in obedience to the mind of Christ in the presence of a world that cannot be renovated apart from the power of the Gospel.

(1) That the ultimate goal of unity is one visible Church founded upon the Lord Jesus Christ, into which all Churches, without breach of continuity with their past, can bring their special gifts, thus providing the widest variety in unity.

(2) That, as a witness to the fact of spiritual unity, interchange of pulpits with the accredited ministers and reciprocal intercommunion with the members of the Evangelical Free Churches are desirable.

(3) That the Bishops of the National Church be requested to declare their sanction of the participation of the ministers of the Non-Episcopal Churches in the services at the celebration of peace in the Cathedrals and churches; and, further, that all baptised and recognized members of those Churches desirous of doing so should be invited to join in the Holy Communion on that occasion.

(4) The Conference desires to co-operate with all episcopal and non-episcopal workers for unity, and heartily endorses the findings of the Mansfield Conference. (See *Towards Reunion*, Macmillan, Appendix B.)

(5) That efforts should be made to instruct the laity and make effective the widespread feeling in support of Christian unity.

(6) The following was adopted from the findings of the 1917 Conference :
That no proposals for Reunion which would involve the re-Ordination of ministers would be welcome or practicable.

B.—CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

That this Conference, while desirous of facilitating necessary reform in the administrative machinery of the Church, can only support the Enabling Bill on the understanding that the national character of the Church be fully maintained, and that the words (and that they) "do not belong to any religious body which is not in communion with the Church of England" be deleted from the qualification for the initial franchise; and that the following matters be excluded from the powers to be conferred upon the Church Assembly:

- (a) The appointment by the Crown to bishoprics and other ecclesiastical positions.
- (b) The constitution of the Final Court of Appeal in ecclesiastical causes.
- (c) The baptismal franchise for electors.

C.—THE EVANGELISTIC WORK OF THE CHURCH.

- (1) The concentration upon Evangelistic work is the primary and immediate duty of the Church.
- (2) That all Churchmen should use their influence to promote Evangelistic Missions and Conventions in rural deaneries, archdeaconries, or dioceses, and, if necessary, separate Missions in their own parishes.
- (3) That special efforts should be made to win for Christ the young life in our parishes, especially in the day and Sunday schools, and to re-establish family religion.
- (4) That a concordat on religious teaching in the elementary schools of the country is long overdue, and that immediate action should be taken to settle the question.

D.—THE CHURCH AND LABOUR.

- (1) That in the Christian community human labour must be regarded in relation to those who labour, and not merely as a commodity to be bought and sold.
- (2) That in the present industrial conflict the Church should urge on employers and employed the impartial application of Christian principles, especially in the matter of adherence to agreements.
- (3) That the duty of the Church is not to lay down any economic theory, as that is the work of experts, but to advocate the application of Christian principles to the solution of industrial problems, and to do all in its power to remove the material conditions that make that solution impossible.
- (4) That the Church should maintain as a Christian duty the just distribution of the rewards of industry between employers and employees.

Rightly to understand the Findings of the Chel-

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tenham Conference, it should be remembered that, as in previous years, they are to be taken as expressing the general sense of the Conference and not as representing in detail the views of individual members; and so read they form, we venture to say, a statement of policy of the utmost interest and value. They cover a wider variety of subjects than usual and they witness to the keen concern with which Evangelical Churchmen view some of the most pressing problems of the day. But the main business was Reunion, and it is with that question that the Cheltenham Conference has come to be prominently identified. Its Findings in this respect were referred to in the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury at the July session, although the reference showed a singularly ill-informed idea of what had really been done. We were told that "the Conference was prepared to throw over the whole position of the Church of England!"

Our readers, however, can read the Findings for themselves and they will quickly see what a travesty of the true attitude of Cheltenham such a criticism really is. Of course those who approach the Reunion question timidly, half-heartedly and, perhaps, shamefacedly, will naturally be aghast at the firmness, decision and courage of the Cheltenham Findings. But then the Conference has never been in doubt that the goal in view is intercommunion with equality of ministry, and it is this which so many—even some with the most pious aspirations after unity—find it very difficult to concede; yet it must be conceded at once that without that recognition of equality there is not the smallest hope of making any successful appeal to Nonconformity. That has been made clear by Nonconformist leaders again and again and the principle was reasserted by Dr. Bartlet at Cheltenham. Reviewing the work of the Conference as a whole we can safely say that it was well worth all the thought and trouble and time expended upon it, and we believe that Churchmen—and particularly Evangelical Churchmen—have come to look upon this Annual Conference as fulfilling a distinct purpose in the life and work of the Church. They may not agree with all that is done there, still less with the “findings” which emanate from it; but they know that the Conference stands for thought as well as for action, and that no action is recommended or policy formulated that is not thoroughly thought out as an abstract proposition and carefully examined from the point of view of practical possibilities. The Conference does not profess to be more than it is. It is not a Conference of the Evangelical party, but it is clearly and emphatically representative of some of the wisest and most thoughtful members of the Evangelical School, and its Findings are not without interest from that point of view. It is true that its decisions do not bind individuals; the responsibility even of those who attend is of a distinctly limited character; but it is also true that conclusions reached after careful and thoughtful debate by a large body of men more or less in sympathy with each other’s ecclesiastical position are entitled to more than ordinary consideration; and we are glad to know that the weighty character of the “Findings” is becoming increasingly recognized—even by those not usually associated with the Evangelical School—and that from this point of view the influence of the Conference is steadily growing.

It is not within the province of a magazine to give a detailed report of the proceedings of a Conference such as that held at Cheltenham, but one or two outstanding features call for notice. And first, a word about the attendance. It was not quite so large as it was hoped it would be, for the reason that several clergy were anxious not to be away from their parishes when Peace was declared, and at the time of the Conference that event, since so happily realized, was expected at any moment. No fewer than sixteen of the signatories of the invitation to the Conference found themselves unable at the last moment, from this or some other cause, to be present. Their absence was a great loss, but in the circumstances it was inevitable. Coming now to the proceedings, great satisfaction must be expressed at the unqualified success of the preliminary public meeting, at which 1,500 people were present and stirring addresses were given by the Bishop of Sodor and Man, Dr. Guttery and Dr. Vernon Bartlet. It was a striking object-lesson in Christian unity, and if similar meetings could be held in other towns throughout England it would greatly strengthen the position. The Conference was fortunate in its Chairman. The Rector of Cheltenham, the Rev. H. A. Wilson, has a singularly full grasp of the Reunion problem, and his leadership, ever since the Conference was instituted, has proved a most valuable asset. That he is a man of action is clear from the following passage which we quote from his Presidential Address :—

“ Reunion is in the air,” so we are told in the hackneyed words which preface so many newspaper discussions of the subject. But we are not satisfied to leave it there, we want to bring it down to earth, to transform it from its vague and amorphous condition into a definite and tangible shape, we want “ to give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.”

We believe that the Christian Church in our land is languishing for a better understanding between its component parts. But timidity, apathy, and prejudice are a great triple alliance against this *entente cordiale*. There is, therefore, great need for plain speaking and bold demands. Carefully pruned and ambiguous utterances are common. Nearly every Christian community has glutted us with them. But for one reason and another definite and decisive action is delayed. The debate, for instance, in the Upper House of Canterbury Convocation, upon a motion to permit non-episcopalian ministers to preach in our churches ended in a non-committal postponement. It certainly was a most impressive fact that the resolution was moved by the Bishop of Winchester, and it is not the least sign of his real greatness that he is able to take a more charitable view of these questions than he would have done ten years ago. We very thankfully record his wide charity and statesmanlike appreciation of the great need of to-day. So, too, we welcome the pronounce-

ments which have come from the Committee on Faith and Order. But we want to stoke up the fires and get a move on. The time for unctuous and ambiguous platitudes is over, and the men in high places who want to go forward will appreciate our determination, and, conceivably, thank us for it (though the latter does not matter).

Equally incisive were his criticisms upon the Enabling Bill. Nor was his description of the grave state of the country at the present time less effective:—

Under the pretext of "carrying on" and being brave under troubles, gaiety has degenerated into a frivolity approximating to that which characterized ancient nations before their fall. There is a love of pleasure and a diseased craving for new sensations which equals that which prevailed in the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent without the appreciation of the fine arts which partly redeemed that time. Graceful and dignified dancing has been displaced by "fox-trots," "bunny-hugs," and such-like unseemly prancings, performed to the semi-savage blare and jangle of jazz-bands. In our balls and dance-rooms the cult of the barbaric and the negro rules. Gentleness, refinement, delicacy in taste and expression are being supplanted by an absence of restraint and a daring familiarity in talk and behaviour between the sexes which is rapidly destroying the safeguards and lowering the whole tone of social life. These things are evidence of a rottenness at the heart of the nation—that rottenness and moral decay which ushered in the fall of great nations in days gone by. "The daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with stretched forth necks, walking and mincing as they go." Read to the end of the Third Chapter of Isaiah and see the fearful end foretold by the prophet. The tender charm and winsome modesty of women are being sacrificed to a bold and brazen fashion in dress and manner which appeals to the lowest in men. The divorce courts are besieged with unprecedented crowds of applicants. And all this is occurring after four years of nightmarish horror!

He referred with sympathy and understanding to the Labour problem and concluded by urging that "the Church is not called to get, but to give; not to rule, but to serve. And the Church can best serve this generation by teaching and living as did He Who girded Himself with a towel and washed His disciples' feet." The Address formed an admirable introduction to the Conference. It set a high standard which was maintained throughout. The discussions were most helpful and inspiring, and that on the last day added greatly to the dignity and weight of the Findings. In our last issue we gave the full text of the papers contributed by the Rev. J. R. Cohu, the Rev. T. J. Pulvertaft, the Rev. Alfred Fawkes, the Rev. C. H. K. Boughton, and the Rev. G. E. Ford. In this number we complete the series by the publication of the papers of the Bishop of Warrington, the Rev. C. W. Wilson, Canon Devereux, and the Rev. Henry Edwards. Together these two

issues of the CHURCHMAN will form a valuable and useful record of the proceedings of the Cheltenham Conference of 1919.

The Enabling Bill has passed through Committee in the House of Lords, but not without some very important amendments. Those moved by Lord Haldane were altogether rejected, but others were passed which will afford substantial safeguards, and the whole tone of the debate in Committee showed how useful has been the criticisms passed outside Parliament upon the Bill. We are far from saying that the Bill is perfect, but in its present form it will be much more acceptable to the general body of Churchmen than it was in its original shape. It has yet to encounter the stormy sea of the House of Commons, but the statement of the Lord Chancellor seemed to show that, although the members of the Government are divided about the measure, there is not likely to be any opposition from that quarter. They will probably leave the House free to vote as it likes. There is, however, the possibility that the measure will be reconsidered by the Cabinet, "perhaps a reconstituted Cabinet" (whatever that may mean), and it is not easy to forecast the course of events with any degree of certainty, but the outlook for the Bill is distinctly hopeful. The two amendments accepted by the promoters of the Bill and agreed to by the Lords are (1) that the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Privy Council will not advise, as the Bill originally proposed, whether the Royal Assent should be given to a measure submitted to them by the Church Assembly, but will report to the King the nature and legal effect of the measure and their views as to its expediency. "Such reports," said Lord Finlay, "would furnish Ministers, who were the constitutional advisers of His Majesty, with valuable material upon which to forward their advice to the Crown." On the motion of Lord Finlay it was also agreed (2) that after the report had been duly laid before both Houses of Parliament, "on an address from each House of Parliament asking that such measure should be presented to his Majesty," such measure should be so presented and should have the force and effect of an Act of Parliament on the Royal Assent being signified. This change makes it clear that both Houses of Parliament will have the opportunity of discussing any measure recommended in the report. Lord Muir-Mackenzie's

amendment to specify in the Bill the nature of the subjects with which such measures may deal, and to provide that no such measure shall deal with questions of doctrine nor modify in any way the relation between Church and State was withdrawn as the Archbishop of Canterbury urged that in view of the safeguards provided by the Bill in regard to the approval of measures by the Church Assembly, the Committee of the Privy Council, a Secretary of State, and both Houses of Parliament in succession, it would be better to leave the subjects which might be dealt with to the discretion of those authorities. The further progress of the Bill will be watched with interest, but it must frankly be recognised that it is within the bounds of possibility that it may be passed into law this session. And then—?

The two Convocations of Canterbury and York
The Ministry of Women. have had before them Reports of Joint Committees on the Ministry of Women, but nothing has been done.

In the Northern Province the Lower House adopted the Report, but the Upper House has referred it back for further consideration. In the Southern Province, the Bishops referred the Report to the Lower House for discussion and report, but the Lower House was too obsessed by the importance of the matter to attend to it this session, and so the matter is blocked for the present. The resolutions appended to the Report of the Joint Committee of the Southern Province are as follows :—

(a) That in view of the Apostolic teaching that women equally with men are members of the one Body of Christ and partakers of the Holy Spirit, and in order that fuller use may be made in the Church's service of the gifts and experience of women, this House makes the following recommendation :

That under conditions laid down by the Bishop of the diocese it should be permissible for women duly qualified and approved by him to speak and pray in consecrated buildings at services or meetings for prayer or instruction other than the regular and appointed services of the Church.

(b) As to the exercise of the Bishop's discretion, the Committee further recommend :

(i.) That no woman should be permitted to speak or pray publicly in a consecrated building until she has produced evidence of having been baptised and confirmed, and of being a communicant.

(ii.) That no woman under the age of thirty should be permitted to address a mixed assembly in a consecrated building.

(iii.) That the Bishop should require written evidence of unblemished character from three competent persons, one of whom must be in Holy Orders.

(iv.) That the Bishop should require proof of adequate knowledge and ability.

(v.) That the Bishop should require a declaration of assent to the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and to the teaching of the Book of Common Prayer.

(vi.) That some simple form of distinctive dress should be worn by women speaking or praying in a consecrated building.

Neither Convocation has come to a decision upon the reports of the Joint Committees on Relations with Nonconformists. In the North the Lower House referred the Report back to the Committee, a decision in which the Upper House had to acquiesce; and in the Southern Province the Lower House, after some hostile speeches, one of which must frankly be characterised as disgraceful, passed the following resolution: "That this House, while unable to agree to the resolutions contained in the Report of the Joint Committee on Co-operation in Christian Teaching and Prayer between Churchpeople and Nonconformists, is anxious that the subject of united fellowship and worship with those who are separated from us should receive fuller consideration, and requests that a larger Joint Committee be appointed by the Archbishop to consider how greater unity with Nonconformists in fellowship and worship may be promoted consistently with Catholic order." The Resolutions with which the Lower House were "unable to agree" were as follows:—

1. That upon special occasions of public importance, or in gatherings for common devotion and mutual edification, members of Christian communions separated from the Church of England may, from time to time, be invited, by the incumbent and Churchwardens, with the approval of the Church Council (where such exists), to join in speaking and in offering prayer in consecrated buildings, provided—

(a) that in all cases what is so done is outside the regular and appointed services of the Church.

(b) that *before* any invitation is issued by the incumbent, the consent of the Bishop has been in each case previously obtained.

2. That, similarly, clergy of the Church of England may accept invitations to take part in services other than those of the Church provided—

(a) that such services are of a special character and not part of the *ordinary* worship of other communions;

(b) that the approval of the Bishop has been *first* obtained;

(c) that in parishes other than their own (except in the case of places held by the Bishop to be extra-parochial) the incumbent has first given his consent.