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THE CHURCHMAN

July, 1937.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Coronation.

THE chief event of the last quarter was the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in Westminster Abbey on May 12th. It is not too much to say that the attention of the whole world was centred on the occurrences of that day, and the loyalty of every part of the British Empire was manifested in an active and striking manner. This was in some measure due to the fact that for the first time it was possible for people in the remotest parts to take part in the service through the Broadcast. Although the outward pageantry naturally attracted a great deal of attention, there has probably never been an occasion when the spiritual significance of the Coronation has been more fully realized both by the King and Queen and by the people generally. The Archbishop of Canterbury's "Recall to Religion" associated the dedication of the people with the King to the service of God, and as he has pointed out, this has had a great part in arousing a realization of the spiritual importance of the Coronation. There are some features of the Ceremony that appeal especially to those members of the Church of England who value the Protestant character of their Church. It is important to remember that the true character of our Church is indicated in the King's Declaration when he says "I do solemnly and in the Presence of God profess, testify and declare that I am a faithful Protestant, and that I will according to the true intent of the enactments which secure the Protestant Succession to the Throne of my Realm, uphold and maintain the said enactments to the best of my powers according to law." Of equal importance is the King's response to the question of the Archbishop, "Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God, the true profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law? And will you maintain and preserve inviolably the Settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof as by law established?"

The Significance of the Ceremonies.

It is of the utmost importance to emphasize these facts in view of the determined efforts that are being made by a section of Church people to undo the work of the Reformation, and to deny the Protestant character of our Church. As long as such a statement is made by the King in practically the greatest service that is held in connection with his sovereignty no reasonable person can deny that our Church is a Protestant Church and that its true Catholic character rests upon the fact that it is truly Protestant. At the recent Annual Meeting of the National Church League the Bishop of Truro referred to the question put to the King by the Archbishop of Canterbury in reference to

maintaining the Protestant Reformed Religion, and he went on to say "The Protestant Reformed Religion is undoubtedly the religion of this country, but if it is to remain effectively so, then it is the concern of all of us to be up and doing." He then paid tribute to the League as the most statesman-like Society engaged in maintaining the Protestant Reformed Religion. The work of such a society deserves to be supported if our Church is not to succumb to the wiles of those who "are fascinated by the glamour of Rome or the Middle Ages." The presentation of the Bible to the King is a reminder of our Church's fidelity to the Bible and also a witness to the King and People that their lives and conduct are to be guided by the laws of God, for as the Archbishop says to the King "This Book is the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is wisdom. This is the royal law, these are the lively oracles of God." One other part of the ceremony deserves special mention in these days when the conception of loyalty in totalitarian States allows of no place for the supreme loyalty to God. In presenting the Orb surmounted by the Cross to the King, he is reminded that it symbolizes that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ our Redeemer.

The Rumanian Report.

At the recent meeting of the Lower House of Convocation of Canterbury, Prebendary Hinde brought up the Report of the Commission on the relationship of the Church of England with the Rumanian Church together with the Report of the Conference of the delegates appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury held at Bucharest. At a meeting of the Convocation on January 20th, the Report was accepted by the Lower House after approval by the Upper House. Prebendary Hinde's contention at the last Session was that it had been inadequately discussed and that closer scrutiny reveals that what was then hastily accepted as consonant with Anglican formularies was in fact inconsistent with the formularies of the Church of England. He added that at the Lambeth Conference of 1930 it was stated to the Orthodox Delegation that the Anglican Church laid great stress on the co-operation of the laity, but that no consultation with the laity took place before the formulation or adoption of the aforesaid Resolution. He asked that no Resolution dealing with such weighty matters should be submitted to the House until its precise terms were before them in print and a sufficient interval allowed for its consideration. He also asked that the laity should be consulted before the Resolution should be reported to the Rumanian Church. Although this matter has probably been settled so far as the Lower House of Convocation is concerned, the last has by no means been heard of the subject. There is a strong feeling that the Delegation to Bucharest left the representatives of the Rumanian Church with an inadequate impression of the true teaching of the Church of England, and efforts will be made to convey to the Rumanians a better conception of the actual teaching of our Church. Matters cannot be allowed to remain in their present position, and we believe that a statement will shortly be issued dealing with the whole question and representing the correct attitude of our Church as it is set out in the Prayer Book and Thirty-nine Articles.

The Oxford Conference of Evangelical Churchmen.

IN accordance with our usual custom we are able to give in this issue of *THE CHURCHMAN*, through the kindness of the readers, most of the papers which were read at the Oxford Conference of Evangelical Churchmen held last April at St. Peter's Hall. The general subject of the Conference was "The Responsibility of the Church." The Conference was favoured with the presence of a number of speakers who were well qualified to deal with the various aspects of the subject. The programme was arranged in order that every aspect of the Church in relation to both God and man might be considered. Our readers will see from the papers that every aspect was considered adequately and clearly and that the Findings of the Conference, which we give for purposes of reference, represent in large measure the results of the discussion. One important paper by Canon Thompson Elliott, the Vicar of Leeds, is omitted, as the chief points with which he dealt were to be presented in a book to be issued immediately after the Conference. The book, *Back to God*, has already appeared, and we may direct the attention of our readers to the notice of it which appears among our "Reviews of Books." This paper dealt with the wider aspects of the responsibility of the Church to the Nation. The subject of more immediate importance to Church people in view of the recent Report of the Relationship of Church and State was read by Mr. Mountford on the Responsibility of the Church to the Christian State. The Church's Responsibility to its Members, especially in regard to teaching and discipline, was dealt with by Canon R. F. Pearce; while the subject of Evangelization was considered by Canon Morgan. The final section of the subject was the Church in Relationship to the World. Mr. Pite dealt with Anti-Christian Movements, and the Rev. W. L. B. Caley, with the Church's Missionary activities.

The Conference shows that Evangelical Churchmen are fully alive to the conditions of thought in the world to-day and to the message of the Gospel which alone can satisfy the world's needs.

THE FINDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

The following Findings were agreed upon at the final session of the Conference. They are to be taken, as in previous years, as expressing the general sense of the Conference, and not as representing in detail the views of individual members.

1. The Conference (meeting so soon after the Archbishop's Recall to Religion) records its conviction that the first responsibility of the Church (whether the term be used of the Universal Church on earth, or more particularly of the Church of England) in facing the present world situation is to withdraw itself in spirit to stand before the judgement seat of God: and then to return to witness afresh to the world the Word of His Grace in the light of the Cross of Christ.

2. It is the special responsibility of the Church of England to maintain the spiritual liberty recovered at the Reformation, with its free access to the Bible; and in fresh study of Reformation principles and life and in fellowship with the sister churches of the Reformation to concentrate on faithful witness to the Truth. This can only be done in whole-hearted surrender to the service of Christ.

The Uncompromising Message of the Cross.

3. The Conference recognizes that in spite of much advance in thought and conduct, sin has come to be regarded in the modern mind as a mere incident in an evolutionary process, and the facts of judgement and punishment are simply put on one side ; that the distaste for that dogmatic theology which has long acted as a moral astringent has weakened both the sense of duty and the moral appeal of the Christian Faith, and produced a condition of softness and emotionalism. It is the responsibility of the Church to face this situation in the light of the Cross with a positive faith preached positively. The Church must give a faithful witness to the uncompromising message of the Cross and its power to grapple with sin.

4. But the Conference also, in humble thankfulness to Almighty God, recognizes the underlying steadiness of the English people in the face of deep moral and spiritual issues. It believes that this steadiness is not the least of the fruits of the English Reformation ; the fourth centenary of which must not be allowed to be side-tracked into the simple celebration of the putting forth of the Bible in English : for, great and far-reaching as that fact was, it was only one outstanding incident in the great movement of life and liberty that was the greatest event in history since Pentecost.

Upholding the Christian Standard.

5. The fact that the English State is a Christian State, in intimate relation with the English Church, gives to the Church a position of responsibility of which it is its duty to make full use for the fulfilment of God's righteous will. At this particular time the Church has a special responsibility to uphold the Christian standard of morals in relation to marriage and the due performance of all contractual obligations.

6. Still regarding the responsibility of the Church from the particular point of view of the English Church ; that responsibility includes the systematic teaching from the pulpit of the Faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures and expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and the Book of Common Prayer.

7. The responsibility of the Church (here regarded in the wider sense) for evangelization is admittedly paramount. That responsibility calls for the closest examination of old methods and the fearless acceptance of new ways of approach. The witness of the Church must be both spoken and lived ; and the strongest testimony to Christ Jesus—crucified and risen—is the witness of lives changed by Him in the power of the Holy Spirit.

A New Responsibility to the World.

8. The great Church—universal on earth—has in these days a new responsibility to the world. The anti-Christian forces challenge the Christian faith with a pureness of ideal passion for material amelioration that cannot be denied ; yet they provide no effective belief in immortality, recognize no intervention by a supernatural power, and no moral imperative : they offer no redemption, and have no possibility of belief in the Holy Spirit. The Christian must live better than the Marxian Communist ; he must out-think the scientific humanist ; and he must out-love those whose zeal and ideals fall short of the love of God in Christ and the Christian response to that love.

9. The responsibility of the Church to the non-Christian world which the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century brought home to the individual believer has in these days passed into a recognition of the corporate responsibility of the Church. The Conference rejoices that the Church of England is endeavouring to give official fulfilment of that duty. Nevertheless, the ultimate impulse must be looked for in the devotion of the individual Christian, and is still in practice the task and privilege of the members of the Church personally.

10. The Conference sums up its findings with the solemn recognition that the over-mastering responsibility and obligation of the Church is to God Himself—the personal and gracious Lord who gave the Son of His love for the life of the world. The Church stands under the judgement of the Word of God, and the Recall to Religion must be the recall of the Church to the living God of revelation.