

THE CHURCHMAN

April, 1935.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The King's Silver Jubilee.

THE celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the reign of King George the Fifth will give his subjects throughout the Empire an opportunity of expressing their loyalty and devotion to our Royal House. The personal character of the King and Queen have won for them the affection and esteem of the people. The King has reigned during a period marked by many changes. Many of the countries of Europe during the last twenty-five years have gone through revolutions that have changed their whole systems of government. In our own country the Monarchy is more firmly based than ever on the will of the people. The period of the Great War was a peculiarly trying time to the King, but his conduct throughout served to strengthen the ties more firmly that bound him to his people. In all his work for the welfare of the Empire he has always been assisted most graciously by Queen Mary to whose ready sympathy with the people in all their interests the Nation owes much. During the King's serious illness a few years ago the affection of his subjects was most markedly displayed, and it is said that the King was greatly touched by it. The completion of the twenty-five years of his reign is to be marked by a Fund which the Prince of Wales has started as the King's Silver Jubilee Fund. Its object is to make more complete provision for the welfare of the youth of the country. There is little doubt but that the scheme will be warmly welcomed and will be heartily supported.

The Church of Finland.

Three important Reports dealing with aspects of the Reunion problem were presented to the Convocations at their last meetings. One of these was the report of a Conference between representatives of the Church of Finland and of our own Church. A further document has since been issued containing a summary of the proceedings of the two Conferences held in 1933 and 1934. This presents the views of the Church of Finland upon the chief points under discussion, which included the Holy Scriptures, the Creeds, the Sacraments,

and the Ministry. One of the most interesting points in regard to the Church of Finland is, that in the year 1884, through the death of its three Bishops at one time, the Church lost its Episcopal succession, and owing to the attitude of the Russian Government it was impossible to apply to the Swedish Church to provide a Bishop to consecrate new Bishops. Those who hold that Episcopacy is essential to the existence of the Church and that there can be no valid priesthood without Episcopal Ordination, and consequently no valid Sacraments, are faced with the problem of accounting for the continuance of the Finnish Church in a healthy and vigorous condition, and without any indication that the power of the Holy Spirit has been withdrawn from it, owing to the lack of Episcopal oversight. Arrangements are being made for English Bishops to take part in the Consecration of Bishops for the Church of Finland and thus to restore the Succession. The Church of Rome will not, we fear, regard this as a restoration of the Apostolic Succession.

Conference with the Church of Scotland.

The second Report gave an account of the Conferences with the representatives of the Church of Scotland. The Bishop of Gloucester, in his Diocesan Magazine, states that a very serious difficulty arose in regard to this Conference, for the proposal originally was that the Conference should be free and unrestricted, but a motion was carried in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland "that any agreement in regard to the Orders and Sacraments of the conferring Churches could only be based on the recognition of the equal standing of the accepted Communicants and Ministers in each." The Bishop complains that this made the Conference really futile, for it assumed the main question which the Conference should discuss. We fail to follow the Bishop's reasoning. The Presbyterians are constantly told by the Anglo-Catholic section of the Church of England that their Ministry is not on the same footing as that of the Episcopal Church, and it is not surprising that they met this superiority complex with the definite claim as to their own position. As long as the Anglo-Catholics are allowed to maintain their assertions in regard to Apostolical Succession as being essential to the existence of the Church we may expect learned Presbyterians like Dr. Carnegie Simpson to maintain, as he does in his recent book, *The Evangelical Church Catholic*, the validity of the Presbyterian Succession. He may well exclaim, as he does in that book, how easy agreement with the Anglican Church might be if we had to deal only with its great scholars like Bishop Westcott and Dr. Hort. Anglican extremists must not think that they can hoodwink the clear-headed theologians and scholarly historians of the Church of Scotland with their baseless assumptions and unfounded assertions. We are not surprised that these conferences should be for the present suspended—"to be resumed, we trust, when in God's Providence the time shall appear opportune."

A Sketch of a United Church.

The third Report has a peculiar character of its own. It is entitled "A Sketch of a United Church," and is the product of the joint conference of representatives of the Church of England and representatives of the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches. It is obvious that the Conference saw that there was no possibility of reaching any practical result in regard to Reunion, and that the best that they could do in the circumstances was to indulge in a vision, which might, perhaps, be reached in the far distant future, of a Church "so constituted as to allow adherents of the different systems and principles to work and worship together in full fellowship, each finding in the united Church that which he specially valued in his own Communion in the days of separation." The various systems indicated in this paragraph are the Episcopal, Presbyteral and Congregational. The one central fact upon which all seem agreed is that the one-and-only ultimate Authority in the Church of God is that of Jesus Christ, Himself, the Head of the Body. The chief cause of division and the great barrier to Reunion is the theory of the Ministry that is held by the Anglo-Catholic section of the Anglican Communion. It is impossible to expect that the members of the Non-Episcopal Churches who are quite unconscious of any Spiritual defect in their Ministries, or of any lack of the power of the Holy Spirit in their work, should be brought to admit that the only covenanted channel of Divine Grace to mankind is through a practically mechanical succession by the imposition of hands upon chosen Ministers without a break from the time of our Lord and His Apostles. In spite of the hostile criticism with which the expression that Episcopacy is of the *bene esse* and not of the *esse* of the Church is met, we maintain that the expression represents the truth of the case.

Centenary of the Church Pastoral-Aid Society.

The Church Pastoral-Aid Society will be celebrating its Centenary early next year, and Evangelical Churchpeople will unite to make the celebration worthy of the occasion. In this number of *THE CHURCHMAN*, Mr. W. Guy Johnson draws attention to the origin of the Society and the remarkable development of its work during the last hundred years. The Church of England owes a great debt to the Society for the wonderful work which it has accomplished. From its earliest days it has provided workers, both Clerical and Lay, for many of the largest and poorest parishes in the slum areas of some of our great industrial towns. It has thus helped to bring the Message of the Gospel to hundreds of thousands of people who might otherwise never have had the opportunity of hearing it. The Society continues its splendid work and we hope that its Centenary will be marked by a large increase in the support which it receives from Churchpeople.

Clifton Theological College.

It is not very often that it is possible to arrange for a special ordination in the Chapel of a College, a fact which gives additional interest to the announcement which appeared in *The Times* that on Sunday, March 17, the Bishop of Bristol ordained in the Chapel of Clifton Theological College the Vice-Principal, Mr. E. Dowse, as a Deacon with licence to act as assistant Chaplain of the College. The announcement is, moreover, a reminder of the noteworthy success which has marked the course of this College during the three years which have elapsed since it was founded. Starting with twenty-eight students, in one term it outgrew its accommodation, and provision had to be made for housing some forty-four men. At the end of the first year forty-two students were in residence and during the last two years the numbers have ranged from forty-five to fifty. In the three years as many as thirty students have been ordained and they are working in all parts of England as well as in the Mission Field. In this number the College has had seven Gospellers.

It is not only the quantity but also the quality of the men being trained which gives cause for thankfulness. They are men with a real love for souls, eager to undertake all forms of Christian Service. Each Sunday some twenty churches have been served in the way of Bible Classes, Sunday School work or other activities, and after a visit in the early days the Visitor, the Bishop of Hereford, described the students as "an earnest and devoted set of men whose ministry would be of untold advantage to the Church." More recently the Bishop of Bristol confirmed this judgment in saying that those whom he had ordained in his diocese "impressed him as men of the type we need." A Vicar, speaking of a College ordinand, who was zealously tackling the difficult problem of a large slum City parish, declared that "if he could have the pick of England he would not choose a different man as a Curate."

Such testimony is an evidence that the College is already an asset for the promotion of Evangelical principles and for the whole Church of England in the provision of well-taught, spiritually minded men for the ministry. There was at one time a danger that the College might have to be closed for financial reasons, but that has, at any rate for the present, been averted. We trust that the effort now being made by Sir Thomas Inskip, Bishop Knox and others to secure permanence for the College, so that its continuance may not again be endangered, will have the success that so valuable a work deserves.

The older Evangelical Theological Colleges, such as Wycliffe at Oxford, Ridley at Cambridge and St. John's Hall at Highbury, have set a high standard both of work and men, and it is good to find that this youngest recruit is following the lines of so worthy a tradition. The number of Evangelical Theological Training Colleges is small as compared with those of other schools of thought, and there is need for yet more if Evangelical principles are to be adequately represented in the Ministry of the Church.