

THE CHURCHMAN

May, 1920.

THE MONTH.

Cheltenham
Conference.

THE Cheltenham Conference will be held on June 1, 2 and 3, and the Committee are to be congratulated upon an excellent programme. The Conference stands for Reunion ; indeed it may safely be said that no other Evangelical organization has done more or even so much to bring this great subject to the front, and it is fitting that the public meeting, on the evening of June 1, should offer a practical illustration of that " Fellowship of the Churches " which the Conference has so powerfully promoted. Under the presidency of the Rector, the Rev. H. A. Wilson, who is permanent Chairman of the Conference, this public meeting will be held in the Town Hall, Cheltenham, and addresses will be given, from the Church of England side, by the Bishop of Warrington, and from the Free Church side, by the Rev. R. C. Gillie. This, we believe, will be Mr. Gillie's first appearance at the Cheltenham Conference—the Bishop of Warrington was a welcome speaker last year—but we may be quite sure that he will come in the same spirit of brotherhood and fellowship which marked the presence and utterance of those other Nonconformists who attended previous Conferences and did so much to make them practically useful. He will receive a cordial welcome, and his contribution to the discussion will be awaited with great interest. The Conference proper opens on the following morning, June 2. Two general subjects have been assigned for consideration, viz., " Fellowship of the Churches " and the " Self-Government of the Church." At the first session, after the Chairman's address, a wide survey of the position will be taken, the immediate aspect of the subject for discussion being " The Position of the Anglican Communion in the Christian world." Among the speakers will be

the Rev. Dr. Griswold Cummins, Rector of Poughkeepsie, New York, who will, no doubt, present a point of view which should be as inspiring as, we believe, it will be new. It will not be forgotten that the proposal for holding the World Conference on Faith and Order emanated from New York, and it will be decidedly interesting to have first-hand information concerning the Reunion Movement on the other side of the Atlantic. The afternoon of June 2 is left free—a wise provision—but in the evening the Conference will reassemble to hear addresses on “Problems of the Home Church,” and in view of the practical aspect of the question it is interesting to note that several parochial clergy will be among the speakers. On the following day, June 3, in the morning, the subject of Fellowship will be considered, first, in relation to the Dominions, and second, in relation to the Mission Field. The afternoon session will be devoted to the discussion of “Evangelicals and the National Church Assembly.” At the evening session the Report or “Findings” will be settled and adopted. The Cheltenham Conference is a comparatively young movement, but its impact upon the life and work of the Church has been extraordinarily effective, and we believe that the result of the meeting in this year of great and important doings will be considerably to increase its influence. Among others who have accepted the invitation of the Committee to read papers or otherwise to take part in the discussions are the Bishop of Barking, Canon Allen, Canon Baines, Canon Flynn, Canon Morrow, Canon Thornton-Duesbery, the Rev. H. J. Carpenter, the Rev. Stuart H. Clark, the Rev. George F. Irwin, the Rev. G. T. Manley, the Rev. E. W. Mowll, the Rev. Dr. Mullins, the Rev. H. Foster Pegg, the Rev. C. S. Wallis and Mr. Albert Mitchell.

“Communion with Schismatics.” The doubt we expressed in our last issue concerning the practical value of the Mansfield Conference Resolutions is rather confirmed than removed by the resolution adopted by the Council of the English Church Union on the proposal of Canon Lacey seconded by the Rev. C. B. Lucas:—

“This Council, humbly adhering to the prescriptions of the sacred canons and the practice of the Catholic Church in regard to the avoidance of Communion with schismatics, approves the following propositions in principle:

“(1) Corporate groups of Christians, separated by schism, ought to be received into Communion by the proper authority if they show a desire to close the schism and are found orthodox.

“(2) They may then lawfully continue as corporate groups, retaining

such features of their former organization as are consistent with Catholic faith and practice.

“(3) Their ministers, if they desire it and are found to be personally qualified, should forthwith be admitted to Holy Orders.”

A rider, proposed by the Rev. C. B. Lucas, was adopted in the following terms:—

“That the Council cannot accept the Mansfield College statement on Reunion, since this statement is at least capable of being interpreted as laying down a position with reference to the Church which the Council cannot admit, and as obscuring the truth as to the necessity of episcopal ordination.”

Canon Lacey's attitude towards the rider is not stated in the reports, but he could hardly do otherwise than oppose it since it deliberately throws over the Mansfield statement of which he was one of the authors. But we are entitled to ask whether the Mansfield statement is to be interpreted in the light of the E.C.U. resolution which was passed on his proposition? Further we should like to know who, in his view, are the “schismatics”?

Several points of interest and importance are settled—at least for the present—by the judgment of Lord Coleridge in what is known as the Salford Patronage Case.

(1) That the presentation to a living need not be by deed. The facts in this case were peculiar. The living became vacant on April 13, 1918, and eight days previously the patron wrote to the Bishop of Manchester giving the name of the clergyman to whom he had offered and who had accepted the living. The Bishop was not satisfied that the nominee was “a fit person.” On May 3 the patron wrote pressing his nominee and on May 13 the Bishop refused to institute. On August 7 the patron signed the Deed of Presentation, but no reply was received after that date, and in December the Bishop, claiming that the living had lapsed to him, proceeded to take steps to institute a clergyman of his own choice. The patron thereupon instituted a suit of *quare impedit* against the Bishop, who then decided not to proceed with the institution till the case had been tried. If no valid presentation had been made till August 7, the living had clearly not lapsed to the Bishop in December. Lord Coleridge held, however, that there was an effective presentation on May 3, and overruled the plaintiff's objection.

(2) That a Bishop, before deciding to institute, has the right to

interrogate the presentee as to his practices and if they are illegal to require an undertaking that he will not continue them. The plaintiff claimed that if the presentee were prepared to make the customary declaration, nothing further could be exacted of him. "This," said the Judge "is to trifle with common sense," as in this particular case "the Bishop knew that the clerk construed the declaration as not inconsistent with his practices. The Bishop considered them illegal; the clerk did not, and the declaration would, therefore, be an idle form. *If they were illegal (the italics are ours) the Bishop was entitled to security against their repetition.*"

(3) That a presentee who follows illegal practices and refuses to discontinue them is not "a fit person" and the Bishop is not bound to institute. The practices in question in this case were the Reservation of the Sacrament, the ceremonial use of incense, the lighting of candles on and above the Communion Table which were not required for the purpose of giving light, and the wearing of chasuble and alb. Lord Coleridge examined these questions for himself and came to the conclusion that the first three were illegal, but he did not decide the question of vestments although he clearly intimated his view that there was an arguable case for them.

Judgment was, therefore, given for the Bishop of Manchester with costs. But it is believed there will be an appeal.

The Responsibility of the Bishops. How great a victory the Bishop of Manchester has gained for the cause of legality and loyalty within the Church of England may be gathered from the comments of the *Church Times*. We, however, rejoice that the Bishop's courageous action in refusing to institute a presentee who admitted quite frankly that he had followed the practices in question and refused to discontinue them, has been so amply vindicated, and we sincerely hope Lord Coleridge's judgment will be upheld on appeal. Now that it has again been established that bishops have power to refuse institution in such cases we trust that their lordships will not hesitate to use it. It is, as we have always held, upon them that the responsibility rests for securing that the services of the National Church shall be conducted according to law.