

Foreword by the
Rt. Rev. Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man.

The Challenge of To-day in the Light of the Cross.

EVANGELICAL Churchmen claim to believe that the heart of the Gospel is what St. Paul called "the Word of the Cross," and yet they have contributed little to the large output of theological literature on the doctrine of the Atonement in the last twenty years. Is there not a danger of our accepting a tradition while doing nothing to implement it, and of letting glib phrases become a substitute for hard thinking?

Throughout the Conference I therefore tried to apply some relevant teaching of the New Testament on the Death of our Lord to each of the papers in turn, and I have been asked to set down here some of the results. In doing this I have reversed the order of the papers read.

"The Challenge in regard to the World" is based, of course, on the universality of the Gospel of Redemption. The constraining motive for Christian missions is the conviction that "One died for all" (II Cor. v. 14). And the quest of the Greeks, recorded in the twelfth chapter of St. John's Gospel, led directly to our Lord's prediction that "if I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself." I have often regretted that the last of the comfortable words in our liturgy does not finish the quotation—"and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

As we face "the Challenge in regard to Europe after the War", we realise that nothing can possibly avail for the healing of the nations but the great love of God which He commends to us "in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us" and "while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 8, 10). And only those could dare to bring the knowledge of this love who humbly acknowledge that they themselves are sinners saved by grace, "forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us," (Eph. iv. 32). Even so, the evil is so tremendous and deep-seated that we may well lose heart unless we remember that our Lord defeated all the powers of darkness in the Cross, "triumphing over them in it" (Col. ii. 15).

The power of the Cross lies in its meaning. As St. Paul says, "The love of Christ constraineth us, *because we thus judge*," that is, because of the interpretation of the Cross (II Cor. v. 14). The bearing of this upon Education is obvious. But "the Challenge in regard to Education" goes deeper than this. The progress of knowledge, and especially of scientific knowledge, has tended to materialism and humanism. And it is in this realm particularly, that we need the corrective of St. Paul's words—"God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).

Upon "the Challenge in regard to Social Righteousness", the Cross throws a flood of light, not only because of the condemnation of sin which it reveals as the root evil, such that only the spotless Lamb of God could avail to take away: but also because of the divine compassion for human suffering which the dying Saviour showed. Here, too, the emphasis which Dr. Moberly laid upon His "vicarious penitence" contains a truth that is sorely needed in these days.

So "the Challenge to Evangelical Churchmen" is primarily to faithfulness in our witness to the "Word of the Cross." And for this we need, not only deeper thought, but deeper consecration. When our Lord said to His disciples, "This is My Body which is given for you," may this not have been a secondary reference to His Body, the Church, which must be "broken" and "given", if it is to take its full part in its witness to the message of the Cross?