

as the authorities understood the sense of call that took them from the College. But under the strong and capable leadership of Principal Ramsay Armitage—who will be in England this summer—the breaches have been repaired and the College again has an almost complete, and certainly a very competent, teaching staff. The last year or two has seen the appointment of three young men of marked ability, one of them R. F. Hettlinger, an Englishman who combines the chair of Systematic Theology with the duties of Dean of Residence. Theological Colleges such as Wycliffe, and Emmanuel College, Saskatoon, have a great contribution to make to Evangelical life and witness in our Church. What they inherit they hold confidently, clearly, and with a sense of trusteeship discharged in fellowship with other theological colleges of different background and outlook.

## THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

BY THE REV. F. W. DILLISTONE, D.D.

I AM not aware that there is any leading domestic issue concerned with the faith or practice of the Church which is exercising the minds of clergy or laity in the Episcopal Church at the present time. At the General Convention in 1947 two highly controversial matters were debated. Certain alterations in the Canons regulating marriage and divorce were approved, and the effort is now being made to give these revised Canons a fair chance to work themselves out in practice. The other matter, which concerned the possibility of union with the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., was more or less shelved and there seems little likelihood of further developments in that field until after the Lambeth Conference has met and reported. During a time therefore of relative quiet, the Church is being given the opportunity of consolidation and advance in its pastoral and missionary responsibilities.

One factor making for greater cohesion in the life of the Church is the establishment of the new Seabury House outside New York. This provides a convenient residence for the Presiding Bishop and gives admirable facilities for the meetings of committees and conferences. By the newly-adopted arrangement, moreover, it is possible for the Church to have as its Presiding Bishop one who is at the zenith of his powers and who is set free from immediate diocesan responsibilities in order that he may give leadership to the whole Church. It is already clear that Bishop Sherrill commands wide confidence, not only within the Episcopal Church but outside it, and his experience should prove of the greatest value in the years which lie immediately ahead.

There seems little doubt that the greatest challenge to the Church at the moment is simply to lay hold of the opportunities ready to its hand. Just recently I listened to one of the missionary secretaries of the National Council who had returned from a tour through Mexico

and Latin America. This is, I confess, a part of the world about which I know very little, but I was amazed to hear of the openings presenting themselves to the Episcopal Church in that area. It appears that in places where there is a loosening of ties with the Roman Church people turn more readily to the Episcopal Church than to any other of the Protestant communions, and if only men were available valuable missions could be established straightaway. Then again in China, in spite of the confused situation, the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. bears a special responsibility and probably all the missionary recruits that it can supply will be needed.

Above all, however, it is on the home front that the calls for "true and faithful pastors" are being heard. Recently I heard some striking figures which show the nature of the situation very clearly. In 1890 the communicant strength of the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. was slightly over 500,000; in 1946 it was well over 1,500,000, and there was a considerable increase during the succeeding year. Yet whereas in 1900 there were just over 5,000 clergy on the active list, in 1947 there were only 5,272. Thus during a period in which the membership almost tripled, the number of clergy has remained almost stationary. (In regard to communicant strength, it is worth noting that a century ago it was probably less than 100,000 for the whole Church.) Here are some further figures. It has been computed that between 1935-45, 11 per cent. of all churches and chapels were closed, and this can hardly be wondered at when the very minimum annual number of clergy needed to fill the ranks of those who retire or die is estimated at 300; but the average number of men ordained in the years 1940-45 was only 125 for the whole Church. And even at present, with the seminaries swollen as never before, there are not sufficient candidates to supply 200 per annum in the next few years. Thus the man-power problem is one of the most serious confronting the Church at this juncture. The missionary dioceses are understaffed, large urban parishes have no curates, and even in settled dioceses, such as Massachusetts, it is hard to fill all vacancies.

The prospect is not, however, too dark. Recruiting embassies which have visited some of the Liberal Arts Colleges in recent months report a very favourable reception and evidences of a vital interest in the Christian ministry. The quality of the men at present in the seminaries is very high and there is certainly no evidence of lowering standards in order to increase number. Yet it must be finally admitted that without more men the Church will not be able to undertake work of expansion in this country, nor will she be able to buy up the missionary opportunities overseas. There is probably no prayer which needs to be more often used for the Church in this country than that which requests that many men might offer themselves for the sacred ministry and that so the Church might rejoice in a due supply of true and faithful pastors, and the bounds of God's Kingdom be enlarged. Though consisting of not much more than 2% of the population, the Episcopal Church has the opportunity of playing a part of real significance at this notable time in the life of this great country.