

Editorial

“NO longer is the evangelical considered an oddity in the Church. Leadership is being thrust upon him whether he likes it or not.” The truth of these words, at the conclusion of Mr. Wood’s article in this number, will strike home to every reader. Evangelicals have passed through the long years of witness in the wilderness, which may be said to have marked the first half of this century, and our opportunity is not merely at hand but around us.

This being so, it is fitting that we should consider carefully that for which we stand. The main matter in this number is therefore devoted to a study of “The Essence of Evangelicalism”. The original plan was to publish a symposium of representative evangelicals, writing independently, and to follow this with two of the papers read at the Islington Conference. The later decision to publish the whole Conference as a pamphlet, which THE CHURCHMAN warmly commends, led to a rearrangement: two shorter contributions to the symposium are followed by a longer and more general study by the Rev. M. A. P. Wood, President of the Islington Conference. The views expressed naturally overlap to some small extent, but together they should stimulate thought and help to a clearer understanding of our position.

The symposium is followed by a study of evangelicalism in action—“The Significance of Harringay”. This article is an extract from the closing chapter of Mr. Colquhoun’s *Harringay Story*,¹ which has just been published. It is very much hoped that every reader of THE CHURCHMAN will make it a definite responsibility to read and mark this book, whether or not they were in a position to take part in the Greater London Crusade. Mr. Colquhoun describes first the origin of the Crusade, and the various developments which led to Harringay. He provides much fascinating information about the programme of publicity and the preparation of counsellors. The actual story of the Crusade, the three months compressed, as necessity demanded, into some eighty pages, loses none of its thrill and wonder in the telling. The third part contains a number of stories of the Crusade’s influence, and an assessment of the results.

Inevitably such a book has its limitations. It does not set out to be more than a straightforward record, seen from the inside, but making use of the vast mass of newspaper material available. Written as it was within six or seven months of the last day of the Crusade its perspective is naturally short. But it would have been the greatest pity had not a detailed account been available now, when more people than ever are interested, and when the second year of the Crusade is beginning. Furthermore, though the terms of reference demanded the inclusion of facts, figures and statistics, it is noteworthy that Mr. Colquhoun has written a book which is easy to read, and will carry the ordinary Christian not only to the last page, but into the very heart of

¹ *Harringay Story: The Official Record of the Greater London Crusade.* By Frank Colquhoun. Hodder and Stoughton, pp. 254, 10/6.

the spiritual forces behind the Crusade—it will not only interest, but humble and challenge him.

It might be said that the theme of the book is, first, a study of God's use of men and women who will put themselves at His disposal. Dr. Graham was one of a team of many thousands, each one contributing his part, or hers, whether it was small or great, direct or indirect, in the name of the Lord and in the power of His might. The vastness of the scale should not blind us to the fact that the same principles will work out, as many have discovered before or since, in a parish—a fact of which we need constant reminding.

Secondly, the theme is of the action of God on the soul. The book shows Him at work, opening the eyes of the blind, bringing the spiritually dead to life and strengthening or restoring those already His. And it can only be wished that the length of the book allowed this theme to be worked out in even more detail than was possible.

One particular fact about the Crusade cannot be mentioned too often. As Mr. Colquhoun says, "The key . . . was the co-operation of the churches and their ministers". If anyone desires encouragement for the future it is in this fact, that by deliberate policy the Crusades are church-centred. In this connection, a most worthwhile study has recently been made by the *British Weekly*.¹ Objective research, testing the truth of the notoriously flimsy survey by the *Evening Standard* in December, has revealed conclusively three outstanding points: First, that the proportion of churchgoers and of "outsiders" or irregulars who came forward was about equal, thus both deepening and enlarging congregations. Secondly, the high proportion of Anglican converts, though this might have been expected. Thirdly—and this bears out what Mr. Colquhoun had written on the evidence available when he was preparing his book—the "delayed-action" conversions—the many, especially in the older age groups, who since the Crusade have moved slowly but definitely to faith. And in some ways this is the most striking testimony to the work.

All this leads us back, in wonder and humility, to the privilege of living at this time. Let us pray, in our churches and our homes, for the work to be done at Glasgow and at Wembley. Let us pray for all that is being done on a lesser scale, wherever men and women are witnessing. Let us not be afraid to dig deep and strengthen our understanding of the faith. For, as Mr. Wood writes in the symposium, "We have a Gospel which transforms lives; we have a Gospel which promotes holiness and self sacrifice; we have a Gospel which drives people not only into full time service in this country but out into the four corners of the mission field. We believe very humbly that we have the Gospel that man needs to-day".

¹ *February 10th, 1955, et. seq.*