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Editorial.

Conference on the Nursing Profession.

IN THE LEADING ARTICLE of *The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Quarterly News Letter* for September, 1955, on the Conference on the Nursing Profession held recently by the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at the Chateau de Bossey, near Geneva, we read with the greatest interest, and a feeling of refreshing encouragement:—

"The members of the conference set out to study the following subjects as containing some of the main issues confronting the nursing profession today.

- "1. The responsibility of the Church in regard to the care of the sick.
- "2. The social and moral causes of the difficulties of recruiting.
- "3. The preparation of nurses.
- "4. The 'Christian' Hospital (Institution under the direct control of a religious order or Deaconess House) and its special problems.

"Each of these subjects was introduced by a lecture followed by general discussion and finally studied by one of the four groups formed by members of the Conference. Each of these groups produced a report which was submitted to a plenary session for discussion.

"As this is the first occasion on which issues relating to the nursing profession have been discussed under the auspices of the World Council of Churches this conference may well prove to be of outstanding importance and we are therefore happy to think that the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was officially invited to participate in it.

"Lively discussion was provoked and many points of interest touched upon but perhaps the most important was the realization of the growing need for a revival of the vocational spirit amongst people in all walks of life, but more particularly by virtue of the nature of their work amongst members of the nursing profession, and the responsibility of the Church in this matter.

"Furthermore it was unanimously agreed that the church as a congregation of professing Christians has a responsibility to the sick to ensure as far as possible that they shall be restored to health of the whole person, body, mind and spirit; and that this could best be achieved by social help, therapeutic methods, pastoral care and evangelistic approach.

"It was realized that this called for team work on the part of Lay administrators, Doctors, Nurses and Chaplains but it was generally felt that the nurse because

of her intimate contact with the patient was the focal point of this team and as such had a rightful claim on the help of the Church in order to carry out her duties as a Christian. That the nurse as a member of the Church must be the hands of Christ attending upon His sick members, that because Christ is King she must rule and direct the patients in His name and in His spirit. Because Christ is Priest she must offer herself in compassion with the patient and for this reason must be prepared for self-sacrifice in such matters as hours of duty and conditions of service. Because Christ is Prophet she must proclaim the gospel by the human efficiency with which she attends upon the patient and by the readiness she displays to take advantage of any opportunity offered to speak on spiritual matters.

"Perhaps the outstanding feature of this conference which was truly international in character, was the spirit of harmony and goodwill which prevailed and the free interchange of views which took place between Doctors, Nurses, Ministers of Religion and Lay Hospital administrators from many different countries and of varying religious denominations.

"All those privileged to attend the conference came away from Bossey feeling heartened, strengthened and inspired but with the realization that the value of the conference would be measured by its translation into action through Christian endeavour.

"It is interesting, however, to note that there was a unanimous demand for the Ecumenical Institute to organise two similar conferences in the not too distant future; one on 'The Preparation of Hospital Chaplains' and the other for Doctors on 'The Meaning of Healing in the Modern Sense of the Word and in the light of Man's Basic Relationship with God.'

L. G. DUFF GRANT,
President."

The return of vocational inspiration for nursing which evolved from this conference is truly exhilarating.

Truth.

For what is truth?
Since it is found to be,
Later, no more than sooth-
Sayer's early fantasy
So often! But may you
Guard what your conscience tells
Or mind thinks to be true;
For he who conscience sells,
That sale will rue!

EVELYN PRINSEP.

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