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Book Reviews

SOUTH INDIA AND CHURCH UNION: A DEFENCE OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

A Statement submitted to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Anglican Communion (Church Book Room. 1/-.)

The germ out of which the proposals for Church Union in South India has sprung, originated at a conference of ministers and missionaries held at Tranquebar, about 150 miles south of Madras, in May, 1919. There were thirty-three members of the Conference, and all were Indian except two, one an Englishman, the other an American. They were facing "the titanic task of winning India for Christ." After much prayer, thought and discussion, they issued a statement of which the substance is contained in the following words:

"Yet, confronted by such an overwhelming responsibility, we find ourselves weak and relatively impotent by our unhappy divisions—divisions for which we were not responsible and which have been, as it were, imposed upon us from without; divisions which we did not create and which we do

not desire to perpetuate."

From this, after long and careful consideration, the scheme for Church Union in South India has sprung. It proposes the union of the South India United Church; the South India Province of the Methodist Church; and the Dioceses of Madras, Dornakal, Tinnevelly, and Travancore and Cochin in the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. The desirability and urgency of such union needs no demonstration. Division among Christians in this country, unhappy though they are, have their origin in our ecclesiastical and political history, and we know and understand their causes even though we may not approve them; and long familiarity has accustomed us to the fact and deadened our sense of the scandal and practical mischiefs attaching to it. But it is not so in the Mission Field; and native Christians in India and elsewhere cannot understand why they should be divided into separate camps, the distinctions between which convey no intelligible meaning to them. Reasonable, however, as this may be, the scheme has been fiercely attacked from the Anglo-Catholic direction, just as, some thirty years ago, in 1913, somewhat similar proposals associated with a conference held at Kikuyu in central Africa were attacked. The object, of course, is to induce the Bishops, when the next Lambeth Conference meets, to refuse to The reason for disapproval is, as in the Kikuyu controversy, approve the scheme. that for a given period from the date of union, ministers who have not had episcopal ordination shall not be reordained. When that period has elapsed, those who seek to be ministers in the United Church will be ordained by the Bishops of the United Church. What the Anglo-Catholic party urges is that the principle of their private theory of the absolute necessity of Bishops for the very existence of the Church, will be given away, if during this preliminary period of thirty years, non-episcopal ministries are authoritatively recognized.

It is well, therefore, that those Churchpeople who are in full agreement with the proposed scheme should make their views known, so that the case for it should not be allowed to go by default, and we cordially welcome this Statement. It is put out in the names of twenty-three clergy of position and influence, among whom are the Deans of Chester and Gloucester; the Provost of Chelmsford; the Archdeacons of London and Sheffield; the Principals of six Evangelical theological Colleges; and the Secretaries of eight Evangelical Church Societies: C.M.S.; C.P.A.S.; C.C.C.S.; C.E.Z.M.S.; C.M.J.; A.E.G.M.; C.A.; N.C.L. Several of the signatories are, like the Vicar of Islington, Proctors in Convocation. We gather from the form of the letter prefixed to the Statement that the signatories have appended their names as individuals and not as thereby committing any of the organizations they may happen to represent. In any case, the names cannot lightly be ignored when attached to so cogently reasoned a document. It is, moreover, a valuable proof of the essential unity of evangelical thought on a matter of fundamental importance. The tone of the Statement is excellent. It shows a commendable desire to persuade rather than to confute objectors to the Scheme. It is somewhat long, nearly fifty pages, but, it should be remembered, there was a considerable amount of ground to be covered. This perhaps explains the sentence in the prefatory letter, which reads: "While each one of us writing individually might have expressed some phrases differently, we want it to be known that corporately we are in substantial agreement with this Statement." The document should of course be read as a whole and it will we think be found that any expressions which the reader might wish to put differently are sufficiently guarded by statements occurring on other pages.

There are five principal divisions: The Doctrine of the Church; Principles of Reunion; Necessary Elements in a United Church; The South India Scheme; and Some Objections Considered. Some of these are sub-divided further, and care has evidently been taken to omit no point of any importance which concerns the Scheme of Union. A prominent feature of the Statement is the manner in which it emphasizes the paramount authority of Holy Scripture as God's Word That is regarded as the supreme and final test by which every point of doctrine is to be decided. Under the heading of the doctrine of the Church, it is defined as the body of believers who are united with Christ by a sincere faith and are baptized. This is the sense in which the word, we are told, is used throughout the Statement, though we notice here and there that a slightly different sense attaches to it. In the New Testament, e.g., in the Epistle to the Ephesians, this is the meaning of the word Church, and it is obviously the true meaning. This spiritual union of all believers with Christ necessarily involves a spiritual union with each other and constitutes the Church, as "the visible organism through which the invisible personality is known" and "This forbids us to be content with a divorce between the Church visible and the Church invisible." It may be observed that if the Church visible consisted only of those, however imperfect, who were united to Christ by the Spirit, there would be no need of the distinction; but "in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good" (Art. xxvi.) and as in our Lord's parable, the tares amongst the wheat will grow along with it until the harvest. It is this which caused the distinction to be made and led to Hooker's well known caution against neglecting it.

Under Principles of Reunion the following are enumerated: Urgency, Reciprocity, Comprehensiveness, Liberty, Toleration, Catholicity. The treatment of these is brief as the points are more fully elucidated in the next section. But we may quote as an illustration of what is meant by comprehensiveness the words "The re-united Church must therefore be comprehensive enough to include as much as possible of the riches of common life now enjoyed by the separate denominations."

The Statement proceeds next to the necessary elements in a United Church, of which the first is the supreme Authority of Holy Scripture. The main strength and in fact the dominating note of the Statement throughout, is the firmness and clearness with which this is emphasized. When, for instance, the authority of the Church or of the Ministry are discussed, it is pointed out that these are The creeds and confessions strictly subordinate to the authority of Scripture. of the Church "are authoritative only if 'they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture'. Its ecclesiastical discipline and its moral pronouncements must be consistent with, and expressions of, Biblical principles. The Church is at every point subject to the judgment and criticism of the Bible which creates it." and "Just as the local ministry was in Apostolic times, subject to the ultimate authority of the apostles, so the whole ministry ever since has been subject to the ultimate authority of Scripture." There is a reference to ordinations by presbyters (pp. 28 and 29) which is probably one of the points which some of those who signed the Statement might have wished to express differently; but even there, the strong and definite statement is made that "The preaching of the apostolic Word is a surer mark of the Apostolic character of the ministry than its historic continuity with the Apostles" (p. 29) and later on the well known statement in which Arhebishops Davidson and Lang concurred: "The Free Church ministries are real ministries of the Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church " is quoted and adopted (p. 39).

The concluding portion of the Statement is concerned with certain particular objections which have been alleged against the Scheme of Union. Many of these are very trivial and they are all drawn from premises which have no ground in Scripture. But it is well that this should be made clear; and also that it should be shown by plain historical fact that the assumptions of the objectors are novelties in the Reformed Church of England, introduced by the Anglo-Catholic party since the middle of the last century, and entirely lacking in official sanction;

indeed, where they have, in any judicial sense, come before official consideration

they have been officially repudiated.

We hope the Statement will be widely read, for it contains an amount of historical and theological information which will be of great service to those who are concerned for the cause of Christian reunion and have opportunity in local discussions and conferences to promote it. The South India Scheme, if carried to a successful issue, will remove a great hindrance to the spread of the Gospel in that part of the Mission Field, and will give encouragement and hope to similar efforts elsewhere.

W.G.J.

INTO EXILE. THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTER REFORMATION IN BOHEMIA (1620-50).

By Ernest Sommer. London. New Europe Publishing Co. 7/6.

The shameful overthrow of the independent and prosperous Czechoslovak State by the treachery and tyranny of Hitler has brought into prominence that heroic Nation and People who have had such a tragic and chequered existence during the last 500 years. It has been well said that the Hussite Reformation in Bohemia at the beginning of the XVth century "transformed its people into a nation of heroes", and certainly after the martyrdom of John Huss and Jerome of Prague they were the first people to band together and fight for liberty of conscience.

Their marvellous victories under Ziska and Procopius, over the vastly superior forces of the Church and Empire, are without parallel in history. Their armies were invincible, although through internal divisions and the wily diplomacy of their foes the Bohemians were later on temporarily defeated. But early in the next century the spread of Lutheran teaching accomplished the revival of the Bohemian Reformation. And in spite of short persecuting intervals a considerable period of peace and progress was enjoyed by the Czechs till 1618 when the refusal of the Bohemians to accept the Emperor Ferdinand as king precipitated the unspeakable horrors of the Thirty Years War.

In this comprehensive and closely packed history Dr. Sommer gives us a graphic but appalling account of the relentless and systematic rape, subjugation and terrorisation of a whole People, and he records the dauntless faith, indomitable courage and anazing resistance of these fearless Czech people in their hopeless effort to defend their religious freedom and national heritage. When we read of the marvellous evidence of God's grace in the superhuman endurance of these persecuted Bohemians we can only re-echo the language of the Te Deum 'The noble army of martyrs praise Thee' of whom the world was not worthy.'

The whole 'conquest' of Bohemia was engineered by the Jesuits who used Ferdinand as their willing and obedient tool, and the barbarous methods employed are being all too exactly repeated to-day by Hitler's 'New'Order' in that unhappy land. The Jesuits then seized the University and controlled all education, while Hitler has closed the University entirely and proscribed all higher education for Czechs. Under Ferdinand's rule, which Hitler has copied, Czech nobles, intellectuals and peasants were tortured, murdered, expropriated and beggared and many villages and towns ruined or destroyed. The Bohemians were denied political and religious liberties. But then, as now, the spirit of the people was unconquerable. With surpassing hope and courage they patiently awaited, as to-day, their resurrection. History strangely repeats itself, for Czechs fought under Gustavus Adolphus for the liberation of their Fatherland just as they are doing today with the Soviet Armies. Happily their rights and liberties are not likely to be ignored in the Coming Peace as most shamefully they were at the Peace of Westphalia.

In the beginning of the struggle about 150,000 Czechs managed to escape, almost penniless, to foreign lands, and like the expatriated Huguenots 70 years later, these Exiles were highly skilled and industrious craftsmen and often well educated. They were thus the means of blessing and prosperity to the Countries which befriended them. The story makes sad but inspiring reading and as the Dean of Chichester says in his Foreword "Above all it is a record of faith, a faith in which belief in People and in God are inextricably intertwined." The fact that the Bohemian Reform Movement was the direct fruit of the influence of Wycliffe's teaching on Huss and Jerome of Prague makes it of special interest for English historical students.

C.S.C.

THE WRETCHEDNESS AND GREATNESS OF THE CHURCH.

Student Christian Movement Press (Price 2/6). By W. A. Visser't Hooft.

Revival of interest in, and concern about, the nature and functions of the Christian Church relative to the present world-order is one of the more encouraging developments of our time. Most of us-and this is particularly true of Evangelicals-have been content to regard the idea of the Church as a minor and vexatious issue. To raise it would be only to intensify the already existing and lamentable divisions among us. Such a policy had, inevitably, the effect of stereotyping the divisions that we feared to face. It stands condemned as both unworthy and dangerous in a day when the Church is everywhere confronted by determined and implacable foes.

Dr. Visser't Hooft writes from the standpoint of one whose deep concern for the Christian Church is informed by wide and intimate understanding of the pains and perils of "the Churches under the Cross." Our sympathy and admiration go out to them, and sometimes we idealise them to an extent which they from the thick of the struggle, would disown. "They have discovered in the moment of crisis that they are far from being the Church . . . It suddenly appears with a terrible clarity that the Church does not know how to witness to its faith and that it has no solid community." Assuming that this is both an accurate and a sympathetic statement of the case with regard to the persecuted Churches on the Continent of Europe, it requires no special insight, nothing, indeed, beyond a little imagination, to foresee how tragic would be the exposure of our own weakness were similar fiery trial to overtake the Christian Churches of our own land. And we have no guarantee, and certainly no right or reason to assume, that it will not. In any case, however, it is high time that we asked ourselves what is the will of God for His people in days such as these, and in such a world as this. Not fear for ourselves but concern to know and fulfil the divine purpose ought to provide the appropriate incentive.

It is the great merit of this relatively slight book that it offers just this kind of approach to our problem. The opening chapter reviews briefly and historically the idea of a people of God called, created, and constituted, to witness to Him, His Word, His purpose. The whole Bible is concerned with the beginning of the story. Principles enunciated and illustrated there are evident in subsequent centuries, strikingly evident in our own time. The true moments have always been those when God's people were conscious that they were obedient aliens in the existing world-order. Dark days have always followed when this has been replaced by worldly ideas of progress and accommodation. But God has never allowed the story to end there. "He takes from them all false security. He makes His word sound forth in a new way. He makes His people pass through suffering in order to approach the Cross of His Son." And in the plight of the persecuted Churches we see the contemporary action of the God who said in ancient times "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations like as corn is

sifted in a sieve."

Such a process must always declare, and emphasise, the essential oneness of the People of God, and recognition of that "oneness" is basic and essential to any true thought of Christian unity. The trouble so often begins when our movement toward Christian unity is inspired by untrue premises or by motives born of expedience. Moreover, there is a prior responsibility resting upon us, that of rebuilding the Church by obedience to the laws of its true life. practical consideration of what this involves the second chapter of the book is It means, first and most of all, an anxiety to hear and obey what the authoritative Word of God has to say to, and about, the Church. "Many reasons could be given for the sickness of our parishes, but the chief of all reasons is their failure to recognise the living authority of the Word which has made them and which alone can remake them." And in "the return to the Bible reported today from many parishes" Dr. Visser't Hooft finds clear evidence of the rebuilding of the Church. "The Churches under the Cross" are showing us the way, and the laity therein are playing their full part. Other signs and developments follow. "When the Bible is open and the cloud of witnesses begins to speak, when the clash between Church and world reveals the powerlessness of a church which is no more than an audience for religious lectures, the body cannot remain asleep. So here and there churches are awaking and in process of rebuilding." And as the process continues, develops, and extends, the Church "becomes again the light, the salt, the conscience of the world."

Ministry and laity are united in a true fellowship of worship, witness, and service. The closing chapters of the book face the implications of all of this for the reconstitution of the Universal Church and for the peculiar part which such a Church must play in world reconstruction. In the matter of Church Unity Dr. Visser't Hooft follows the true Reformation tradition. He repudiates alike the identification of the one Body of Christ with any factual communion or communions, and the "laisser faire" assumption that the unity of the Church is merely spiritual in a permanently invisible sense. It is well for us to be reminded how often, and with what tragic loss, modern Protestantism has been content to hold only the negative half of the Reformation witness. Our first duty is to believe and to assert the real and actual unity of the people of God. Our second is to promote and manifest it. We are given good ground for hope that, amid all the chaos of our time, progress is being made; and good counsel as to our own part therein.

What about world reconstruction? Here the Church has a special responsibility assigned to her in the purpose of God. It is real and explicit, though very different from what the world would like. The more the Church is true to her Creator and her nature the more she is able to reconstruct, both "by incarnating on earth the community of the new creation" and by fulfilling her vocation "to proclaim the concrete commandment of God at a given moment, for a given situation, on the basis of which the schemes must be claborated and the decisions taken." The application of these principles to some of the pressing issues before Church and State brings to its conclusion a most stimulating and commendable book.

T. W. ISHERWOOD.

THE INSPIRATION OF GOD.

By Canon Roger Lloyd. The Centenary Press (Price 5/-).

That there is an clusive and incalculable element in inspiration will be denied by no one who has given time and serious thought to the consideration of it. The very word is the expression of a problem and of an essentially religious assumption. We are faced with the obvious fact that in some particular realm,—intellectual, æsthetic, scientific or religious for examples—a man is outstanding, has the discernible quality of a genius. How is this to be explained? Or must we be content to regard him as an utterly inexplicable phenomenon, or human "sport" whose appearance is a mystery only when we forget that it is also an accident? The latter course would scarcely seem satisfactory or convincing in view of what has been achieved for humanity as a whole by the genius true to himself and his vocation.

Canon Lloyd's attack upon this problem is conditioned by, and is dependent upon, his holding the Christian view of God. It is in terms of God and inspiration that the true, as distinct from the perverted, genius must be explained. spiration" means that God inspires. This premise he is courageous and wise enough to make clear from the beginning of his book, and he illustrates what he means by the use of a helpful analogy. "To speak of God as the Inspirer is the religious way of joining hands with the physicists who make exactly the same assertion about the essential character of fundamental reality, namely, that an eternal energy, unresting and unhasting, lies at the root of all things. The physicists think of it quantitatively, while we think of it qualitatively." And behind that assertion is the idea that divine inspiration "must be a manifestation of the essential energy of God" unless, indeed, the distinctively religious approach to the problem is wholly false. So arises the question "In what terms can we rightly speak of the energy of God?" Other questions are not far behind. "What do we mean when we call a man inspired?" And, perhaps most important of all, what is the relationship of the inspired man to the community from which he seems so obviously apart, and yet to which he belongs, and upon which, in a profound if not easily recognised sense, he depends?

It is the chief merit of a book with much to teach us that it is especially helpful in this last connexion. By a simple illustration, the force of which will be apparent to any parish priest not wholly concerned with routine and organisation, Canon Lloyd shows the immediate relationship between inspiration and fellowship and at a later stage in his argument indicates the depth and sureness of St. Paul's relevant insights in "Ephesians." We may note, in passing, that it is an argument for the reality of inspiration and an indication of its dependence upon acceptance by the community that so many of us today are naively crediting

Mr. T. S. Eliot with an "originality" which—as he would be the first to admit and as Canon Lloyd plainly shows—goes back to that supreme Pauline utterance. How much of our present failure and irrelevance in a world of tragedy is due to the Church's sustained failure to recognise, accept, and implement the inspiration of God mediated through St. Paul about "the beloved community?" Advance in understanding of this major problem will throw light upon two others, hardly less in practical significance but not so fundamental. Canon Lloyd deals wisely with each of them. What is the relevance of inspiration for the kind of actual world-order in which we live? By what canons of judgment are we to distinguish between genuine inspiration, and that disastrous perversion of it to which so much of the tragedy that has marred Church history is due, and which is all the more dangerous because sincerity is no certain insurance against it? In dealing with this second problem Canon Lloyd makes effective use of the case of Father Joseph, Richelieu's confederate, whose story Aldous Huxley has revived in his Grey Eminence." And, incidentally, he offers a useful criticism of the position adopted by Mr. Huxley in this connexion.

Canon Lloyd's last chapter but one need not detain us. It is a relatively simple, and a helpful treatment of "the inspired devotional life." The book closes with a discussion of "the inspiration of the artist," and here your reviewer finds himself more frequently in disagreement with the author than throughout all the preceding argument. Though in general agreement with the statement once a broadly theistic interpretation of the universe is accepted, the finger of God is laid upon a Shakespeare and a Bach" it must be recognised, sooner or later, that a distinction is to be drawn between genius, pure and simple, and inspiration. Content, quality, and spiritual direction all are significant in this regard if the Christian hypothesis is to be maintained. That Hardy, for example, was endowed with genius, and that the endowment demands recognition and evokes both respect and gratitude, we do not for a moment deny. But his claim to inspiration must be tested by the direction that he took, and by that test he fails. With all due respect to Canon Lloyd we suggest that the failure is evident by application of principles found in the earlier chapters of the book. Possibly the mistake proceeds from trying to prove too much; possibly from excessive deference to cultural genius. Finally, there are two questions one would like to ask from a merely factual point of view. Is it absolutely true that Brahms' 'Requiem' "wrings a genuinely Christian reaction from the minds of all who sing or hear it?" And is there not, again, need for some qualification of the statement that "more and more people are coming to realise that no human activity which is wholly severed from the religious impulse can bring forth the fulness of its promise." Some of us whose work takes us dences of it.

T. W. Isherwood.

THE WRATH AND THE PEACE OF GOD.

By Stephen Neill, Bishop of Tinnevelly. United Society for Christian Literature (Price 2/-).

The publication of this little book gives a more permanent form to a group of addresses delivered in May, 1942, at the Nilgiri Missionary Convention. The author, well known as a missionary statesman and a theologian, modestly describes them as "unsystematic expositions of Holy Scripture." We, however, can speak of them only in terms of superlative commendation and gratitude, and especially welcome the hint given in the preface that other studies of a similar nature may follow. Alike in respect of good Biblical scholarship, devotional insight, and practical usefulness these studies are of outstanding quality. They will serve a most useful purpose as the subject-matter of quiet meditation. And they are models of what clear and thoughtful Scriptural exposition ought to be.

The book takes its title from the first chapter, which has for background Romans i. verses 9-15, and xv. verses 20-24, 28-9. The Apostle's teaching and attitude are examined and applied with particular reference to those whose concern is the cause of Christ in the India of today. Careful thought is given, among other things, to what the Bible has to say, and we ought to understand, about the wrath of God, and there is an illuminating comment on the probable nature of the "reprobate mind" mentioned in Romans i. 28. Bishop Neill suggests that it may refer to the mind which has lost the capacity to discriminate

between good and evil, between the true and the counterfeit. "The faith of Abraham" is the theme of the second chapter of the book. Scholarly reference is paid to the text of Romans iv. verses 1 and 19,—the comments in the latter case are both intriguing and apt-and the quality of Abraham's pioneer faith is examined in relation to some of the problems which the man of faith must face today. The most helpful, and perhaps the most urgently needed, section of this chapter is that which considers faith in relation to those ordinances which are bound up with the life and experience of the Christian community. Chapter three, with a title somewhat suggestive of the Bible Readings of "Keswick' half a century ago, is outstanding for its sustained challenge to the conscience of the most dedicated of Christ's servants. The teaching of Romans vii. is applied with a touch that is at once sure and sympathetic, and some of the great Pauline words of command—'reckon,' 'present,' 'follow'—are made to live in terms of Christian discipleship in our time. Study of a fourth word— 'walk'—is postponed till the fourth and last chapter, which is wholly concerned with the Christian's newness of life in Christ and in the Spirit. "We are Christians, and therefore the Spirit dwells in us as the renewing principle, as the source in us of the divine life. But this is not enough; that inner life must find its expression in act, in the re-orientation of all the activities of life according to the new principle. That is what is meant by walking in the Spirit." Among other points made with quiet power in this chapter is the extent to which our walk in the Spirit is threatened and hindered by the persistent habit of "thinking like a man and not like God." The classic instance of what this means, and of whither it leads, is the fall of Peter and nothing in the book is finer or more stimulating than the author's study and explanation of this episode. It is marked, let it be said, by combined fidelity to the Scriptural record and to psychological probabilities.

The printing of the book, otherwise excellent, presents one textual problem. A line would seem to have been omitted from the last paragraph on page 31. It would be interesting to set out upon an essay in textual emendation, but it

is wiser to resist the temptation!

A reviewer's work should be marked by dispassionate detachment. It is obvious that we find it, in this case, easier to commend than to criticise. If anyone should imagine that praise has been immoderate, we can but add—buy the book and read it for yourself!

T. W. ISHERWOOD.

THE ABOLITION OF MAN.

By C. S. Lewis. Oxford University Press. 2/6 net.

The sub-title of this small volume which comprises the report of the Riddell Lectures of 1943 is that of "reflections on education with special reference to

the teaching of English in the upper forms of schools."

The Author has chosen as a starting point for these lectures a little book on English intended for boys and girls in the upper forms of schools, and in the light of its teaching, he expresses a doubt whether 'we are sufficiently attentive to the importance of elementary text-books.' He makes excellent use of the well known story of Coleridge at the waterfall where one onlooker referred to it as 'sublime,' and another, as 'pretty,' and discusses at length the issues raised by these judgments. He proceeds to employ in considering value—judgments, the great thing which the Chinese call the Tao, and which he defines as 'the reality beyond all predicates, the abyss that was before the Creator Himself.' He adds that 'it is Nature, it is the Way, the Road; it is the Way in which the universe goes on, the Way in which things everlastingly emerge, stilly and tranquilly, into space and time.' In an illuminating Appendix he gives some striking illustrations of the Tao culled from ancient sources.

The last lecture deals exclusively with the intriguing title of the book. Mr. Lewis asks, in what sense is Man the possessor of increasing power over Nature? He deduces that each new power won by Man is a power over man as well, and, that each advance leaves him weaker as well as stronger. He goes on to show that in the ultimate, "Man's final conquest has proved to be the abolition of Man," or, in other words "Man's conquest of Nature turns out, in the moment

of its consummation, to be Nature's conquest of Man."

This is a most thought-provoking book, and deserves the attention and study of all those interested in the education of the young. W.G.L.