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Volume Four

Number One

March 1955

# Book Reviews

## The Christian Students' Library

*The Christian Doctrine of Salvation:* by Sigfrid Estborn, B.A., D.D.,  
xi+238 pp. Rs.3-12.

*The Revelation of St. John the Divine:* by Anthony Hanson, D.D.,  
iv+82 pp. Re.1-2.

*The History of the Reformation:* by H. C. Lefever, B.D., Ph.D.,  
viii+231 pp. Rs.3-12.

(Published for the Senate of Serampore College by the Christian Literature Society, Madras.)

The first three volumes of the Christian Students' Library have now seen the light of day, and we can congratulate Dr. Marcus Ward, the General Editor, on the first fruits of his labours. Those of us who are concerned with teaching in the Theological Colleges and Schools have been eagerly looking forward to these first volumes and we are not disappointed; we have wanted for a long time books like these to put into the hands of our theological students, books that have been written with the Indian background and Indian readers in mind.

Of the three volumes now published, probably the most valuable is the first, 'The Christian Doctrine of Salvation' by Dr. Estborn, of Gurukul. As we might expect from the writer of 'The Religion of Tagore in the Light of the Gospel', there is no doubt whatever that this book has been written in India for those concerned in particular to present the Gospel of Salvation to Hindus, and much of its value lies in its attempt to draw out the differences and similarities of the Hindu and Christian doctrines of sin and salvation. Not everyone will agree with everything that Dr. Estborn has written, but his book is definitely one that will repay careful and concentrated study, and certainly deserves a fuller review than it has received here.

Of the other two volumes, Dr. Hanson's commentary on 'The Revelation of St. John the Divine' is a condensed and adapted reprint of his commentary in the Torch Bible Commentary series published by the Student Christian Movement Press—in itself a sufficient commendation for a book which will no doubt be widely used. Dr. Lefever's book on 'The History of the Reformation' is a readable and straightforward account of the movement to which most of the so-called Protestant Churches in India owe much of their theology and Church order.

The Wesley Press at Mysore can be congratulated on the appearance of the series, with an attractive cover and a print that is easy to the eyes; it is perhaps a pity that the necessity of keeping down the price has meant that the binding is a little flimsy, and we fear that library copies will soon have to be rebound.

Finally we look forward to the next stage in the programme behind these books, the translation of them into the different languages of India, for it is in this sphere that their real value will, we hope, lie.

P. M.

### Authority : its Use and Abuse

*Black Popes—Authority: its Use and Abuse:* by Archbishop Roberts, S.J.  
Longmans Green & Co., London, 1954, x + 139 pp. 8s. 6d.  
(Available from Orient Longmans, Ltd., Calcutta.)

The book is an interesting study of the doctrine of authority and its application to the different walks of life. With a rare degree of candour the author illustrates from the history of the papacy Lord Acton's famous dictum that all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The high-handedness of Pope Clement XIV in suppressing the Jesuit order in 1773 and the miscarriage of justice in the Pope's treatment of Father Ricci of China are discussed at length in one of the chapters in the book, which the author concludes as follow: 'The triumph of the Devil is never so complete as when his fifth-column of worldliness penetrates the headquarters of the Catholic Church. Reading papal history...one could wish that Catholics were less attached to the title "supreme pontiff" inherited from pagan priests and emperors, and more proud of St. Peter's title... "servant of the servants of God"' (p. 69). Notwithstanding the abuse of authority witnessed to by history, Christian duty for the author, it seems, is summed up in the word obedience. However, he gives this warning to those in authority: 'No man can climb to the summit of authority using the one leg of power. The other leg—responsibility must go with him every inch of the way' (p. 2). The main thesis of the book is on the one hand that authority must be commended and not asserted, and on the other that the obedience given must be intelligent and not slavish.

The book seems to have an apologetic purpose behind it, namely to clear the Roman Church of the charge of totalitarianism and to present the authority exercised by the Church and its institutions in as sympathetic a light as possible. But the author's arguments are not likely to carry conviction with those who do not accept the premises from which he draws his conclusions. Our author has no doubt that St. Peter 'the first pope' was 'Christ's vicar' (p. 17), that it is 'God's ordinance that His Church is a monarchical government of Pope and Bishop' (p. 81), that 'Christ instituted the papacy to *commend* authority' (p. 54), that 'for the Protestant, obedience is to his own chosen warrant of private judgment' (p. 33), that Christ's Church is 'His broadcasting corporation guaranteed to bring His Voice so surely across time and space that 'he that heareth you (the apostles and their successors) heareth Me' (p. 77). The only comment we wish to make is that there is little use in arguing with a 'take it or leave it' attitude of mind! Members of the non-Roman Churches will find the author's solution of the problem of Church union as depressing as it is over-simplified. He says 'If Rome has not usurped it (God's authority), then there is no road to unity but by submitting to Rome' (p. 73).

According to the author, obedience is the price of unity, the price of freedom in the Church and of much else. He finds sanction for his view

in 'Christ, the Man of Obedience'. But the Gospels make it clear that this 'Man of Obedience' was also the greatest revolutionary that walked this earth of ours. It seems to us that the pattern of obedience to be traced in the Christ of the Gospels is very different from that depicted by the author of 'Black Popes'.

The book is of interest to readers as the expression of a distinct point of view with regard to authority in religion.

C. E. A.

## Race Relations

*The Ecumenical Movement and the Racial Problem*: by Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, 70 pp.

*The Catholic Church and the Race Question*: by Rev. Fr. Yves M. J. Congar, O.P., 62 pp.

(Pamphlets published under the theme *The Race Question and Modern Thought* by UNESCO, Paris. Two shillings each.)

*The Chosen People or The Bible, Christianity and Race*: By Dr. Gerald W. Bloomfield. x+91 pp. Six shillings. Longmans Green & Co., London, 1954.

(Available from Orient Longmans Ltd., Calcutta.)

The problems involved in the relations between different races have become one of the leading concerns on the Christian conscience in recent years. These three books discuss this problem from various points of view.

The first, written by the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, speaks of the growth of this concern in ecumenical circles. The first half of the book deals with 'facts' and gives a brief outline of the interracial situation in the U.S.A. and in S. Africa, and of the anti-Semitic activities of the National Socialists in Germany and other European countries, and concludes with references to ecumenical pronouncements on the matter. The second half discusses the 'issues' and speaks of the Church as a supra-racial entity and recalls her to a more faithful following of the implications of her real nature.

The second pamphlet, written by a Roman Catholic, begins with a statement of the principles involved, based on the Bible and theology of the Roman Church and goes on to discuss the present situation in race relations within that Church.

The third, written by a former missionary of the Universities Mission to Central Africa is concerned with the problem as it is experienced in various parts of Africa and discusses it more from a Biblical point of view, with special emphasis on the Biblical concept of the 'Chosen People'.

The degree of unanimity of opinion in this matter is striking. Here Roman Catholics and Protestants agree, at least in principle. All are certain that it is against God's will that any discrimination should be made on the basis of colour. All agree with the conclusion reached by scientists working under the auspices of the UNESCO that there is no ground for considering one race superior to another, and that in fact there are no pure races.

It is recognized, especially by the non-Roman writers, that in the past the witness of the Church in this matter has been weak and uncertain. In the last book there seems to be some special pleading, based on uncertain exegesis of the Bible, for the separate continuation of distinct cultures in the same locality and an attempt to justify some of the present inequalities along with an awareness that the sinfulness of man is a factor to be taken into account in this discussion. It is to be noted that the last chapter of the book emphasizes the need of the grace of God in the solution of these problems.

Christians in India ought to take note of these discussions, not merely as concerned with problems affecting other Christians elsewhere, or Indians living in other countries, but also as applying to us in the survival of caste and colour considerations that enter into our churches and social life.

M. P. J.

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Mr. Ashananda Nag, formerly Professor, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.

Dr. Herbert Jai Singh, Ph.D., Lecturer, Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur.

The Rev. John Foster, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Glasgow University; Visiting Professor, United Theological College, Bangalore.

The Rev. Basil Manuel, Lecturer and Librarian, Bishop's College, Calcutta.

## Books Received

S.C.M. Press :

F. H. L. PARKER: *Portrait of Calvin.*

LORD PERCY: *From the Concert of Europe to the United Nations.*

Orient Longmans :

DOM BENEDICT STEUART: *The Development of Christian Worship.*

GEDDES MACGREGOR: *From a Christian Ghetto.*

E. L. MASCALL: *Corpus Christi.*