

A "CITY" WITHOUT THE "FOUNDATIONS."

BY THE REV. W. E. CHADWICK, D.D.

We regret to inform our readers that within a few days after receiving this article from Dr. Chadwick, we learned of his sudden death. He was a frequent contributor to *THE CHURCHMAN* and one of our regular reviewers. He had a distinguished career at Cambridge University, where he obtained his D.D. degree in 1907. He was also a B.Sc. of Victoria University, Manchester. After his ordination in 1881 he held several important positions in the Church, including St. Giles, Northampton, and St. Peter's, St. Albans, and for eight years he was Chaplain of the Colonial and Continental Church Society's Church, Christ Church, Clarens. He had also been a Select Preacher and Hulsean Lecturer at Cambridge. He was always a diligent student and was specially interested in social problems and the relation of Christianity to them. He was the author of several books on these subjects. Among the best known were *The Social Teaching of St. Paul*, *The Social Principles of the Gospel*, *Social Relationships in the Light of Christianity* (Hulsean Lectures), *Christian Citizenship*, *The Church, the State and the Poor*. He was a convinced Evangelical Churchman and maintained his principles with a wide and sound scholarship. We shall greatly miss his help.—THE EDITOR.

CIVITAS DEI. By Lionel Curtis. *Macmillan & Co. Ltd.* 10s. 6d. net.

MR. CURTIS is a politician with a noble political ideal: one which, he admits, will take long to realise; but, as science now leads us "to expect that society will continue to exist for a period enormously longer than that which has passed since men were first able to distinguish themselves from animals"—a view not held at the opening of the Christian era—he believes that his ideal is worth patiently working for; especially as every step realised towards it will produce a further amelioration of our present unhappy conditions. The ideal is that of "a world commonwealth as the goal of human endeavour," which will come into existence when "the commonwealth will no longer be limited to the national state," but "when nations conscious of their own distinctive histories and structures, will have learned to function as organs of one international commonwealth." By a commonwealth Mr. Curtis means "an order of society" [a nation] "which would exercise and develop the instinct in men to serve one another," in other words, "a society in which has been accepted the government of men by themselves as the guiding principle in human affairs."

Over against the principle of the commonwealth stands the principle of "authority," one which may have been accepted involuntarily, like that of a conqueror or a king, or voluntarily like that of a dictator or an oligarchy. The common feature of all forms of authority is that men live under the pressure of a govern-

ment external to themselves, instead of one inspired by principles of mutual responsibility and service.

At least three-parts of Mr. Curtis's book consists of a historical survey, one reaching from the prehistoric age down to the present time. The object of this survey is to show the failure of all the various forms of "authority" to produce the ideal commonwealth. Mr. Curtis's history is not what may be termed scientific history, which records facts or events, and traces the causes or results of these. It is rather the kind of history one finds in a barrister's brief, where every scrap of evidence which will lend credence to a theory which he desires to prove, is carefully set out, but in which all the evidence which might lead to a different conclusion is as carefully ignored.

As Mr. Curtis's object throughout is to extol the commonwealth in which the principle of mutual responsibility and service rules, he naturally finds in Christ the chief exponent of this: "the principles which Jesus propounded on the hills of Galilee were those of the commonwealth." In order to give a background to his elaboration of his conception of Christ, Mr. Curtis devotes a considerable proportion of his historical survey to the period covered by the Gospels, and to the periods preceding and following this.

Mr. Curtis draws a vivid picture of the atmosphere in which Jesus passed the years previous to His public ministry. He believes that "conventional pictures of Jesus, calmly maturing his thoughts in the quiet and retirement of rustic seclusion are at variance with obvious facts. . . . From the rising of Judas to the fall of Jerusalem the valleys where Jesus spent his youth were a furnace of revolution. He analysed life and studied its elements in a crucible white with heat." We have next a picture of Jesus in this atmosphere struggling against the temptation to lead a national revolt; for "it is likely that Jesus had grown to be conscious of his own exceptional powers. He had probably realised his own capacity for handling the revolutionary movement, if he had chosen to do so." This inward struggle Mr. Curtis believes to be the origin of the story of the Temptation—one which afterwards in "the form of a parable" Jesus told to his disciples. The reason why Jesus rejected the temptation to become a national leader was that he saw that "the ultimate good for man was to serve each other and not themselves; whereas to lead a rebellion would be to use the principle of authority. If a rebellion were successful it would only mean the substitution of a Jewish for a Roman authority. We need not follow Mr. Curtis further in what we can only term his imaginary portrait of Christ. He is not the first who within recent years has attempted the same task. Mr. Curtis's own view of the credibility of the Gospels is expressed thus: "The life of Jesus was cut short by his enemies, but not before his ideas had been stated in sayings and parables that his followers remembered and placed on record, together with much else that in course of time they had come to believe that he had said and done." On the question of the credibility of the records

we believe that the majority of people will prefer the picture of Christ drawn by those whose knowledge came directly from "those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."

Mr. Curtis is not a historian. He is an ardent politician with, as we have already said, a very noble ideal. It is his love of politics which causes him to speak of "our notion of Church and state" being that of "two authorities competing for sovereignty," and which "has led us to seclude religion and politics in separate compartments of our minds. In the teaching of Jesus there is no such distinction. To his mind religion and politics were merely two aspects of life, a sphere viewed from two different angles." Mr. Curtis has built a castle in the air, a very attractive one, we fully admit. But those who build such castles must remember the old saying about the responsibility of putting foundations under them. What are Mr. Curtis's foundations? He calls his book *Civitas Dei*, which he translates "The Commonwealth of God." But how "of God"? We have chiefly in his own words described his conception of Christ—"a young Galilean," with extraordinary powers of insight and intuition, and with an equally extraordinary moral sensibility. But there is not a word to suggest whence these extraordinary powers were derived. Mr. Curtis has no place for the miraculous: "the historian," he says, "would never allow that something had happened outside or contrary to the law of nature. He applies to ancient events exactly the same standards as are used by judges in analysing evidence of recent events." Apparently Mr. Curtis has equally little room for what is usually known as "revelation." Where, as in Jesus, he finds exceptional insight and moral judgment these are attributed to "intuition"—a favourite word with our author. Does Mr. Curtis believe in the existence of God—either objective or subjective, either as transcendent or immanent? Such sentences as the following are not assuring; speaking of Christ he says: "To Him the final reality was the spirit of goodness personified—God, conceived [*sic*] as a Father, possessed with a desire to perfect the children he had made in his likeness."

Mr. Curtis, as we have already seen, is primarily a politician, consequently he looks to political agencies for the formation of the "commonwealth," whether national or universal, indeed he is somewhat sarcastic of the utility of other agencies, as the following will show: "The effect of institutions on those who live under them is immeasurable. Religious and secular teachers have their part to play, and it is an important part. But the claim of Churches and schools to be answerable in the first degree for forming the character of a people, a claim not seldom supported by politicians and public officials, is a dangerous fallacy. The most potent factor in raising or lowering the character of a people, in increasing or diminishing their sense of duty to each other, is the structure of the society in which they live. Politics is the art of so adapting that structure as to raise the sense of duty in

each to all. . . . Teaching and preaching are necessary to the process, but they yield in the end a harvest of cynicism, unless the actual power of men to serve each other is continuously increased" [by what means?] "as they can bear it."

If Mr. Curtis would turn his eyes from his vision of the future and study carefully the actual conditions of the present, from his universal commonwealth to the unhappy relationships—economic, social, political and international—existing in the world to-day, will he not find that there lie beneath all these evils, the evil moral natures of both individuals and nations? In what lies the one hope of changing these? Surely in the power of righteousness proceeding from God, a righteousness not of man's devising, however remarkable his intuitions, but a righteousness whose nature has been most fully revealed by One Who, if once "a young Galilean," is also of like nature to God Himself; and who is not only the revealer of God's will, but the mediator of God's power. This faith is the only foundation upon which the true *Civitas Dei* can be built.

CHRISTIANITY IS PACIFICISM. By W. Robinson. *Geo. Allen & Unwin, Ltd.* 2s. 6d. paper, 4s. 6d. cloth.

The Principal of Overdale College, Selby Oak, develops a strong argument in support of his thesis, in the course of which he surveys the teaching of the Old Testament and that of Our Lord.

As to the former, we think he misrepresents the intelligence of those who, while they would agree with much that he says, yet cannot look at the O.T. quite as he does.

As to the latter, we do not find his argument convincing, though he does interpret much of the life and teaching of Christ quite admirably.

Our space is regrettably limited so we are unable to deal adequately with this apologia for pacificism. We should say that while all Christians must hate war, and on every ground should be peace-makers, yet there are circumstances in which it may be a moral duty to take up arms. The parallel cases of prostitution and slavery are not on all fours. Neither is a necessity. But war may be. And we do not think that the Bible or Our Lord would condemn any man who engaged in war in such a case.

Boys Together, by Dorothy M. Graves (Church Book Room, Wine Office Court, 1s. net), is a study in the lives of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, and St. Paul. The booklet is excellently produced with a number of interesting photographs taken by the authoress of scenes in Palestine. The subject matter is well arranged, and aims at carrying out the wishes of the writer to make the Bible a living Book.