

“It Seemed Good . . .”

THE Authority of the Holy Spirit was a reality in the life of the Early Church. Following the great experience of Pentecost the Apostles were men who recognised His Sovereignty in all matters of faith and order, and His guidance was accepted without question as the revealed Will of God. Because they so absolutely trusted Him, bold decisions were taken and great experiments made which delivered the Christian Church from narrow Judaism and gave it that Catholicity in which “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision. Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.”

The recognition of this authority is clearly seen in the decrees of the first Christian Council at Jerusalem when their findings were summed up in those significant words “it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.” His sovereignty touched their life and work at every point and it was the chief factor in the rapid extension of the Church throughout the Roman Empire.

The activity of the Holy Spirit has never ceased, and is the explanation of the amazing growth of the Christian Church to the uttermost part of the earth during the last 150 years or more. The whole story of Christian Missions is a glorious chapter of great things attempted by men and women who believed in the activity of God the Holy Spirit, and have dared to trust Him and follow His lead in the great activities of establishing the Church of Christ which “the gates of hell shall not prevail against,” and because God has blessed so wonderfully His work in the great countries of Africa, China and India, the Christian Church is now compelled to face the urgent call of Church Union.

It is with this background that we need to view the proposals for Church Union in South India. Those responsible for the scheme believe that the Holy Spirit is leading them in this matter and they are prepared to trust His guidance. They are honestly facing vital questions—“Is the Spirit of God leading and guiding this movement to Union? And is there the solid will and determination to follow where He leads?”

A careful study of the scheme will convince most people that it adequately safeguards the great doctrines of the Christian Faith and the true teaching of the Church of England. Even a severe critic of the proposals admits that “there is a clear and definite assent to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation and of Justification by Faith and Salvation by Grace.” There is nothing in the scheme which is in conflict with the teaching of the Word of God and it stands with the Anglican Church in acknowledging the supremacy of Holy Scripture.

It is a vital issue, it challenges our willingness to acknowledge and to obey the authority of the Holy Spirit, and our faith to trust Him, of whom the Lord said, “He will guide you into all truth.” Above all it is a challenge for definite and persistent prayer on the part of all who believe that it is the Lord’s will “that they all may be one.”

THE EDITOR.