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Editorial

IT is important that no mistake should be made by the convocations in their coming decision on the Church of South India, but it is by no means certain that the strength of certain adverse views will not prove decisive.

Since both clergy and laity can exercise considerable influence in the right direction, a careful study of the first article in this number is imperative. This article follows that on the theological issues, which was printed in September. Two further studies, on the Biblical Doctrine of the Church and on Nonconformity and Reunion, provide further background material, and extend the range of discussion to the whole problem of reunion. Both these articles originated as papers read at the Oxford Conference of Evangelical Churchmen.

Attention should be drawn to two small publications on South India. *What is this Church of South India?* by Douglas Webster,¹ published earlier this year, gives an admirable summary of the origin and position of the C.S.I., in a straightforward style which makes it a good handbook for circulation among the laity. The revised edition of *An Order for the Lord's Supper* of the C.S.I. has also been published in England.² Mr. Webster devotes several pages of his pamphlet to a study of the service, and the two publications might well be read together.

Whilst doing our utmost to move public opinion in the way we believe God would have, we must pray that the C.S.I. should be alive to the dangers of its position. As Dr. Dewick points out in a Letter to the Editor, "there is certainly a trend . . . towards liturgical worship and increasing ritual". Where this is merely a reaction from non-liturgical forms of service on the part of those bred in non-episcopal churches, no harm may come. But there is always the danger of a trend towards sacerdotal doctrines, and this would certainly be more pronounced should schemes of union develop, as it is hoped, in North India, where the tone of the Anglican church is less Evangelical than in the South. If the C.S.I. maintains its doctrinal position in fact as well as in word, it will be of the very greatest help in the right progress of the world-wide movement towards reunion. Whatever the dangers, we may well take courage from some words in Mr. Higginson's article: "Because Christ Jesus is the Master Builder the finished product is assured. . . . Hence the assistants in the work of building need never fear failure. Christ Jesus the Lord is in charge and our duty is to fulfil His plans".

The campaign which the National Society and the National Union of Teachers have undertaken against horror "comics" will receive the widest support of churchmen. Apart from its intrinsic value, such a

¹ *What is this Church of South India* by Douglas Webster, Highway Press, pp. 31, 1/6.

² *An Order for the Lord's Supper* (C.S.I.), Oxford University Press, pp. 16, 1/3.

campaign is also a healthy sign of the trend of the nation's conscience. It seems unfortunate, therefore, that certain sections of the religious press, while supporting that particular campaign, should attempt to decry what is termed the new Puritan Reaction. Closely examined, the objection seems to be to the rising tide of distaste for the salacious and the sordid, especially in literature. There has always been the tension between liberty and licence, and every Christian has to find his own balance ; nor will anyone desire a return to a negative pseudo-puritanism which is more concerned with outward conformity than with inward spirituality. But the present trend is towards a healthy condemnation of unworthy and unchristian values ; and surely the responsibility of us all is to guide this trend into the way of right convictions and spiritual power, so that the house, national and personal, is not merely swept and garnished but filled with God's Spirit of purity and grace.

It will be noticed that a correspondence column appears for the first time. This can be a useful vent of opinion, and it is hoped that when a reader is impressed by any point in an article in this or future numbers, which he wishes to comment on or dispute, he will feel free to write to the Editor. This is only one of the many uses of a correspondence column, and the editor hopes it will not languish for lack of letters.