

## Book Reviews

*Sex and Love in the Bible* : by William Graham Cole. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1960. Price 21s.

Sex is one of the most important factors in human life. Every society in the world is faced with the problem of perversion of man-woman relations, and the health of society as well as the happiness of homes depends on right understanding of sex and the development of right attitudes and discipline in relation to sex.

Certainly religious beliefs and practices have much to contribute to sex education. Right attitudes can also be built up only on a sound knowledge of facts. In this respect Dr. Cole's book on *Sex and Love in the Bible* is a welcome addition to the many books on sex. It is not easy to find a good book on sex. Here we have a book which attempts a factual survey of attitudes and practices recorded in the Bible and draws attention to some of the basic problems.

The first four chapters deal with *love*, human and divine, both in the Old and New Testaments. There are some valuable accounts of the Divine initiative, the relation of love to justice, the relation between *agape* and *philia* and the positive aspect of self-love. But the chapters stand somewhat detached from one another. Though different aspects of the relation between divine love and human love are brought out, very little is said about their relevance for man-woman relations. The concluding section is rather weak and platitudinous. The author seems to justify a subordinate role for the woman. 'She willingly accepts the fact that man is the head of the woman and submits to her husband's authority not grudgingly and in fear but willingly, freely, and in joy. This, after all, is precisely what the Christian life is. Christians are to be servants not only of one another but of all men' (p. 159).

The two succeeding chapters deal with sex attitudes and practices among people of Israel and the Early Christians against the background of their neighbours. It is pointed out that over and against the corrupt practices of the pagan world the Biblical faith expressed a concern for personal responsibility and for the consecration of everything by the Word of God.

This is followed by five chapters on certain specific problems relating to sex, namely pre-marital sex relations, the place of sex in marriage, prostitution, adultery, divorce, homo-sexuality and other perversions of sex. The author quotes the relevant facts

recorded in the Bible regarding what is prohibited and what is permitted. Enough is said to show that the full range of human sexuality is taken account of in the Bible. The author's contention is that over and against the legalism of the Old Testament, the New Testament is concerned with responsible freedom. He holds that the legalistic attitude which continued in the Church with a series of 'Thou shalt nots' has only accentuated the problems associated with sex. It does not help men and women to overcome the perversions of sex. The Kinsey report is quoted as evidence of the breakdown of moralism. The only remedy for the situation is the Biblical conception of responsible freedom. 'The Gospel of Christian liberty offers escape from a rigid legalism which says implicitly, if not explicitly, what the young knew to be false—that sex is shameful. Biblical faith proclaims the goodness of all the created world, including sexuality . . . To walk through life according to the rules is to live by the letter which kills. One must walk in the spirit which gives life. One must trust in the spirit and his guidance, proving all things and doing all things to the glory of God' (pp. 266-7). His interpretations of New Testament ethics, as maintaining a dialectic tension between the moralism of Jewish legalism and the libertinism of Graeco-Roman paganism, and his consequent concern for an ethics of the freedom of the spirit, certainly deserve to be taken seriously by the Church.

However what this book says about responsible freedom as the guiding principle in sex relations is not enough. How this is to be applied in terms of man's involvement in sin and in the perversion of sex needs to be faced more realistically. Further, some of his suggestions may be very misleading. For example he says: 'A married couple may be wholly selfish and sensual in their sexual relations, while an engaged pair, deeply in love, may be using their bodies to express a genuine unity of spirit. To approve the one and to condemn the other on moralistic grounds is the sheerest hypocrisy, especially when so many of these very engaged couples marry and live together happily afterward' (pp. 429-30).

The title would suggest a study of the Bible. Certainly much use is made of the Bible in this book. But one cannot help wondering whether the main conclusions of the book are based on the Biblical insights or modern psychological and sociological studies on sex. One is not sure whether the author has brought the modern theories and practices of sex sufficiently under the judgement of the Word of God.

J. R. CHANDRAN

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*An Introduction to Indian Church History* : by C. B. Firth. The Christian Students' Library. Published for the Senate of Serampore by the Christian Literature Society. Price Rs.3.75.

A commendable addition to the Christian Students' Library, this book deserves much praise. In less than two hundred and sixty pages the author has succeeded in providing a summary history of Christianity in India from its earliest beginnings to the present day.

Christianity came to India in an Eastern garb during very early times, if not in the first century itself brought by St. Thomas the Apostle. It continued to exist in the country without a break as Syrian Christianity ever since. Then from the sixteenth century Roman Catholicism was introduced into India by the Portuguese, and from the eighteenth century Protestant Christianity also made its way into the country.

The author has treated the early Roman Catholic efforts to convert, if need be by force, the Syrian Church into the Roman fold and the effect which it produced on the ancient Christian community in India. He has dealt briefly with the history of Syrian Christianity in the country to our times, referring to the several bodies into which it came to be split subsequent to the advent of the Portuguese. His treatment of the Roman Catholic Church in India is brief but careful. The evangelistic labours of Francis Xavier, Robert de Nobili, and others ; the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church to various parts of the country ; the educational and medical work of the Roman Catholic mission ; and the present state of the Church in the Indian subcontinent, are all discussed within the space available in a short book of the kind he has written.

The treatment of the Protestant missions in India takes up a discussion of the Tranquebar mission in the Tamilnad and the Serampore mission in Bengal. Besides, it deals also with the work of the Anglican missions and of various others. The author brings out the way in which these missions undertook, in addition to the propagation of the faith, to serve the people of the country by founding educational institutions, hospitals, medical colleges, agricultural schools and colleges, and leper institutes. The author's treatment of the union movements within Protestantism in India is broad based. All Western missionary enterprise in India, he says, had assumed a distinction between the Church and the Mission, and it was the latter that took up the work. Consequently, it was possible for the Missions to agree upon the principle of 'comity' in 1902 ; to form in 1914 the National Missionary Council of India, a name which came to be changed in 1923 to the National Christian Council ; to initiate movements towards the amalgamation of congregations founded by missionaries of the same denominations coming from different parts of the world ; and to take in hand the work of negotiations which led to the inauguration of the Church of South India and of discussions for the unification

of Churches established by missions both in North India and in Ceylon.

There are, however, a few points referring to the Syrian Church, on which the statements of the author need revision or correction.

1. On page 21, on the authority of Mingana the author refers to the note found in the Syriac commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, namely 'This Epistle has been translated from Greek into Syriac, by Mar Komai, with the help of Daniel the priest, the Indian'. The question as to whether the person referred to belonged to our India is very pertinent.

2. On page 24 there is reference to the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon who had 'under his authority all the bishops of places further east, even the metropolitan ones', and yet he was 'still subordinate to the Patriarch of Antioch'. The author seems here to read into the third century ideas which developed only later. Papa who was made bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the civil capital of Persia, seeing the unorganized state of the Church, tried to elevate his see to enjoy jurisdiction over the whole Church in the Persian territories. However, other bishops opposed him; in a Council which met in 315 they went so far as to depose Papa from the see. Driven to this extremity, the bishop of Seleucia is said to have appealed to the 'Western bishops', especially to those in and around Edessa, who gave their verdict in favour of Papa. Subsequently he reinstated himself in the see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon and succeeded eventually to organize the Church in Persia under its jurisdiction. (See W. A. Wigram: *The Assyrian Church*, S.P.C.K., London, 1910, pp. 40-55; and Adrian Fortescue: *The Lesser Eastern Churches*, C.T.S., London, 1913, pp. 41-42). This incident does not at all show that the first Catholicos of Persia was subordinate to the Patriarch of Antioch. The development of the major sees and their jurisdiction over adjacent provinces began most probably from about the middle of the third century, and that roughly is the time when Papa endeavoured to raise Seleucia-Ctesiphon into a major see. But he was opposed, not by Antioch or by any other see, but by his own suffragans. Even in that situation he tried to enlist the support of the bishops of the neighbouring provinces, not of Antioch. What we can see here is therefore the movement in the Persian Church towards centralization; that it was subordinate to the Patriarch of Antioch is not proved from this.

3. On page 104 the schism after the Council of Chalcedon is briefly described. The author says that 'dissension broke out between those who accepted and those who rejected the doctrinal definition of the Council of Chalcedon (451), that there are "two natures" (the divine and the human) in the one Person, our Lord Jesus Christ. The party which rejected this is known as Monophysite, from their view that in the incarnate Christ there is only "one nature"'. This interpretation of the schism following the Council of Chalcedon has been widely held but it does not take

into account the point of view of the so-called Monophysites. The issue between them and those who accepted the Council of Chalcedon is not that the latter accepted 'two natures' and the former only 'one nature'; but it was rather that the latter tried to force the phrase 'in two natures', and the former would have only 'of two natures'. It is true that the former insisted on the phrase 'one incarnate nature of God the Word'; it was not their creation. Cyril of Alexandria (412-444) had popularized it and eastern Chalcedonians of the sixth century did positively accept and defend it. The Council of Chalcedon did not, in fact, condemn the phrase. (See my article on *Were They Monophysites?* in *The Indian Journal of Theology*, January 1962).

4. On page 173 there is the statement that Mar Dionysius 'went so far as to consecrate *muron* (holy oil), a function usually understood to belong to Patriarch alone' is a clear mistake which should be corrected. Mar Dionysius did not consecrate *muron*; it was done by the Catholicos subsequent to the appointment of the dignitary in 1912. According to the Canon Law accepted by the Syrian Church, consecration of *muron* is reserved for the Patriarch, the Catholicos, and the Metropolitan-Primate of a Province. (See Bar Hebraeus: *Hudaya*, III, 1).

5. On the same page the footnote is misleading. It does, in fact, contradict the author's words on page 24, where he says that towards the end of the third century, namely about a century and a half before Nestorius ever came on the scene of history, the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was called a 'Catholicos'. The title is not therefore 'Nestorian' as the note implies.

6. On page 174 the author says that the party in the Syrian Church which accepted the Catholicate assumed in 1934 'a new name, the Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar'. The word which the author uses with reference to this Church is 'Jacobite'. It is a fact that the words 'Monophysite' and 'Jacobite' have, for a long time, been employed by opponents, despite protests, to refer to the ecclesiastical tradition in the east which repudiated the Council of Chalcedon. But that is no reason why the Churches concerned should accept the words as their names. The name by which they call themselves officially is 'Orthodox'—the Syrian Orthodox, the Coptic Orthodox, the Armenian Orthodox, the Ethiopian Orthodox. The Syrian Church of India accepted the ecclesiastical affiliation of the Syrian Orthodox Church from 1665, and the name 'Jacobite' has often been wrongly applied to it. In 1934, when the Catholicate adopted a Constitution, it naturally employed its name as the Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar. From its point of view, the name was not anything new.

May we hope that the author will note these points and make appropriate modifications in ensuing editions of the book?

V. C. SAMUEL

*Images of God : An Essay on the Life and Death of Symbols* : by  
A. C. Bridge. Hodder and Stoughton, London. Pp. 158.  
Price 16s.

Art is the expression of the leading ideas which govern the ethos of society. It is a language which conveys meaning by symbols. This language is less precise than everyday speech or philosophical discussion but more profound than these. Symbolism denotes and makes present an invariable reality. It is a coming together of a material thing with an immaterial and transcendent reality. Failure to see the meaning in symbols is due to paralysis of perceptive facilities of man which is indeed sickness.

The creative artists' task is to make symbols by concentrating upon a transcendent reality and expressing and embodying his apprehension of that reality in a material image. The work becomes *pastiche*, i.e. second-hand work in slavish imitation of the works of others, if there is no transcendent component. In the history of art this has happened.

The Byzantine culture was a religious one where 'if you went into a shop in Constantinople to buy a loaf, the baker, instead of telling you the price, will argue that the Father is greater than the Son . . .'. The artists who served the Church had as their aim the creation of symbols for this ethos of society. There was in their symbols both the material element and the essential transcendent component. This was a sign of health. But at the time of the Renaissance Christian iconographers introduced into their art Greek naturalism and humanism (p. 49). Christ was shown to be Christ by virtue of his human perfection rather than by referring to his divinity. 'Halos were reduced to vestigial rings which could scarcely be seen; Mary was represented as a pretty girl, no longer as the *Theotokos*; and the Christ-child as a chubby human babe; John the Baptist . . . as an elegantly half-starved young man . . .' (p. 53). The transcending component of symbolism was conspicuous by its absence. The author's judgement is that 'the art of this period was not made primarily to the glory of God but to the glory of man' (p. 57). Transcendent truths were thus obscured in the symbols of that period. Concentration was upon the human and material components of the theological images and the result could be seen in theological assertions of the infallible church, transubstantiated sacraments, fundamentalist Bible. Theological symbolism lost its power as it did not convey reality beyond themselves. This was a sign of sickness unto death.

Mankind needs to be related to powerful symbols. Towards this task theology is committed. It must therefore inject leading ideas of the Christian faith into the ethos of modern society. Artists who are also committed to symbolic means of communication must convey transcendent ideas to the modern materialist community. The Church must find in this an ally. The principles

which govern art should therefore be a guiding factor in the formation of theological symbolism.

How does the principle apply to theological symbolism? Christ is the image of the invisible God. A symbol is a coming together of a material thing and a transcendent reality. Christ is the symbol of God because 'the fundamental ground of Christian faith is the conviction that the material man, Jesus, and the transcendent God were, in some sense, inseparable, and that the historical Jesus cannot be considered apart from God' (p. 82). Christ is the image of the invisible God . . . for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (Col. 1:15ff.). In Christ, perfectly and completely, a living and transcendent reality does reveal itself by coming into union with material things. Because of this (as in art) you could no more concentrate on the bare historical humanity of Jesus. Similarly, the Church is the image of the risen Christ. The transcendent reality is the risen Christ to which the Church bears witness. It is this balancing of transcendent reality and material component which is the chief lesson theology has to learn from the arts. This has relevance to the issue of demythologization.

The various symbols used by the artists and the theologians are thus closely related. This is the main thesis of the book. In establishing this the author has done great service to 'artists who love God and Christians who love the arts'.

A. D. MANUEL

*Nazareth*

*Son of Man* : by Leslie Paul. Hodder and Stoughton. Price 21s.

To write a life of Jesus is probably an impossible task, and any attempt is valuable in so far as it throws a new light on some aspects of that life, but perhaps must not be judged by its success or failure in presenting the full picture. The title of the present book indicates the particular aspect of the Life which is stressed, but even in this aspect it is not on the whole very convincing.

The author, Leslie Paul, is a journalist whose previous works have been largely philosophical, though he has also contributed to devotion and religious biography. His very full list of sources at the end of the volume includes a reference to only one commentary, the rest being either references to the Biblical text, or to popularizations, apart from a fair number from Josephus and other classical authorities. All these references are to translations, and it is perhaps unfortunate that he had not any access to the originals.

The most valuable part of the book is the vivid picture of the background which is enhanced by the author's first-hand knowledge of Palestine. Almost a third of the book is devoted to chapters on the reactions of Judaism to Greek and Roman civilizations, and to the religious and social background of the New

Testament, and this will prove very valuable to those who are concerned with the teaching of this subject for the L.Th or first-year B.D. course. It would therefore prove a useful work for addition to a College Library from this point of view.

When the story turns to its central figure the keynote is struck in a paragraph which is quoted on the dust-cover; 'a young man of barely even local fame came down from the hills of Galilee to join the movement led by John the Baptist, by whom he was baptized and honoured. Ostensibly a movement of religious reform, it had a rebellious flavour . . . Jesus became in his turn leader of a new agitation which inherited the fire and fervour of John's followers after John's execution'. The author only quotes the enquiry of John through his disciples as a sign of 'coolness between the two', but completely fails to interpret, or even to mention, the significance of the reply sent by Jesus to John. So the picture is given of a frustrated rebel, with a consciousness of a deeper vocation, but never quite sure of what it was. 'The baffling problem he had to solve was the nature of the messiahship'. The author frequently refers to Jesus as 'poet and visionary', but with a vision which he could not make clear to his contemporaries. The description of the last days provides various touches which seem to have a completely wrong atmosphere, e.g. in the Garden of Gethsemane 'When the guard promptly laid hands on Jesus, the half-awake Peter whirled his sword and struck off the ear of the High Priest's servant. It was not an effective way of fighting, and revealed the amateur, and Jesus, who saw the hopelessness of ranging two swords and a dozen frightened men against the Temple toughs, persuaded Peter to put up his sword, which did not in any case belong to their dedicated life'.

The last chapter is entitled 'The Epilogue which was a Prologue' but even this does not succeed in counteracting the impression of the book as a whole, and does not carry conviction. One is left with the feeling that if Jesus were no more than is described in the book the Epilogue provides the type of *deus ex machina* with which the Greek dramatists saved an impossible situation. Perhaps it is not arrogance for a professional theologian to suggest that in order to write a Life of Jesus it is necessary to know some theology, and not merely to be steeped in the historical background.

D. F. HUDSON

*Journeys on the Razor-Edged Path: A Search for Spiritual Understanding*: by Simons Roof. Hodder and Stoughton. Pp. 204. Price 15s.

This interestingly written book shows a wide range of information which the author has been able to collect from men belonging to the religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. A person born of Christian parents and brought up in their faith, he continues to hold to it. But 'In the name of the God of love whom I

adore, and in the light of the personal integrity which makes that love for Him possible', he believes that it is 'a hopeless enterprise to attempt to confine our God within the straight-jacket dogma of any single sect, or denomination, or even religion'. So he attempts in the book to substantiate this belief by referring to a large number of anecdotes, stories, and experiences. On the whole it is a vindication of the interpretation of religion propagated by the Ramakrishna Movement, and men and women of that way of thinking are sure to find joy in reading the work. Others also will find it useful as a guide to that view of religion.

It has to be said, however, that except for the fresh concatenation of the materials, the author does not cover any new ground. His basic emphasis, for instance, that God is not confined to any particular religion, does not constitute a new thought, at least for the Christian. But this admission on the part of the Christian does not imply an acceptance of the view that all religions are essentially the same. On the contrary, the Christian believes that there is the question of truth with reference, as much to religion, as to any other aspect of experience. That men and women have, in all levels of religious emphases, cultures and philosophic ideas, enjoyed an inward satisfaction or even mental peace, does not mean that on this ground the question of truth need not be raised in religion. With his admirable acquaintance with men of the various faiths and their experience, although the author is a person well suited to take up that enquiry, it is regrettable that he has not done it in the present volume.

The value of the book lies not in the theory which the author is trying to promote, but in its ability to interpret to the West the reality of spiritual experience enjoyed by men and women of Eastern religions. A sympathetic understanding of this kind is very necessary, and the book is sure to help its creation. The addition of an index and references to quotations from written sources would have enhanced the value of the book.

V. C. SAMUEL

*The Spirit of Life* : by Tom Rees. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1961. Pp. 192.

Here is a small book of great value, a clear and concise treatment of what the Bible has to say about the Holy Spirit. The author says the book is not a theological treatise. But it contains all or almost all the important verses that form the basis of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, in Biblical Theology. 'I make no apology for quoting the Bible constantly and liberally' says he. Therefore his text is copiously interspersed with quotations from the Bible, most of which are written out in full.

Any one who reads these pages will see the balanced views of the author and admire his 'British common sense'. This is

especially so since there are many exaggerated views on the subject and many writers draw out their own biased interpretations and prejudice conclusions while they expound the scriptures.

The language used in this book is simple, direct, and personal. Hence the treatise is very readable, attractive, and useful. The author from his rich experience gives striking illustrations from ordinary experiences of life, and this 'rivets' as it were his statements to our memory to be our possession permanently.

This treatise is written for the ordinary man to be of help to him in clearing some prevailing misconceptions. For example, many Christians think that they have not received the Holy Spirit, and several others are of the opinion that speaking in tongues is a necessary sign that one has received the Holy Spirit. To such people this book is a veritable balm of Gilead, for it gives to them the satisfying and consoling Christian answer from the Bible itself. And his presentation of the Biblical material is sane, balanced, and correct. Moreover this book is a devotional volume for Christian meditation and as such a source of help to every Christian. So we commend this book highly to young college students and also to older people.

*A Chosen Vessel*: by C. F. D. Moule. Lutterworth, London, 1961. Pp. 79. Price 2s. 6d.

This booklet is No. 37 of the series of World Christian Books and is Part Two of *Studies in Acts*. Part One was published a few years ago under the title *Christ's Messengers* by the same author.

The methods and activities of the tireless evangelist Saint Paul are fascinatingly described in these pages in such a way that the reader comes to a real acquaintance with the great Apostle of the Gentiles. His vivid personality, his human frailties, his passionate longings, his tender care for his converts, his faithful friendships, his burning zeal, his righteous indignation, his indefatigable energy, his astute programme of establishing a nucleus church in every prominent city of strategic importance in the Roman Empire, all these and many other things which are beautifully and succinctly described here brings to the reader a living picture of St. Paul. The author has a knack of saying in a small compass of words a large amount of detailed facts clearly and attractively. Thus we have here the findings of the best scholars on the Acts of the Apostles stated precisely, clearly, and authoritatively. Though the book is as interesting as a novel, it should not be read or glanced through just for pleasurable passing time. The best way is to read the Acts of the Apostles at one stretch, then study the book carefully looking at the references, and finally as a finish go through the source book once again. This booklet is also an excellent textbook that can be used with great profit in study circles especially in the S.C.M., Y.M.C.A., and M.Y.F. camps because the author's treatment of the subject not only gives new insights into the understanding of the Bible but

also presents effectively the challenge of the young people to the ministry of preaching the Gospel.

*The Renewal of Missions* : by The Rt. Rev. John Sadiq. Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1961. Pp. 40.

This extremely valuable contribution to the study of renewal of missions by the Bishop of Nagpur is the Carey Lecture for 1961, delivered under the auspices of the Council of Serampore College. The Council of Serampore is to be thanked for asking the Bishop to give this inspiring lecture which is characterized by conviction, clarity, and conciseness. It is a booklet that should be in the hands of every pastor and thoughtful layman. With exemplary economy of expression, accuracy of details, and profound insight the author has treated the subject under the two headings, the missionary obligation and the resources of the Church (in India today). How much time has been spent in reading and preparing for this lecture can be guessed from the fifty-four quotations from eminent authors who have dealt with this subject. But this is not merely a résumé of what others have said. It is much more. It is full of thought-provoking ideas and the emphasis is on the practical aspect of carrying out the work. That is, it deals with not merely the 'why' but also the 'how' of the renewal of missions. The publishers ought to be congratulated for the clear and faultless printing and the attractive format of this brochure.

*How to Understand the Old Testament* : by Frank Michaeli. Key Books No. 10, Lutterworth Press, 1961. Pp. 47. Price 2s.

Professor Michaeli's book in its abridged and simplified English version serves well the purpose of the Key Books 'to produce short and simple books on the Christian faith and life'. It shows clearly the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments. It is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the contents of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is considered as History, as Law and as Prophecy. The second section aims to show that Christ is 'the centre of History', 'the fulfilment of the Law', and 'the fulfilment of Prophecy'. A few illustrations like the custom of polygamy in Africa are discussed to show the application of the Old Testament to concrete issues. The book is based on a sound understanding of the place the Old Testament should occupy in the Christian Church. Sometimes the author makes over-simplified statements. It is unfortunate that in the first section no consideration has been given to the Psalms. These criticisms do not affect the general usefulness of the book to the ordinary Christian reader.

*Victorious Faith* : by John Stephens. Key Books No. 9, Lutterworth Press, 1961. Pp. 47. Price 2s.

In his *Victorious Faith*, sub-titled *Martyrs down through the Ages*, the Literature Secretary of the Christian Council of Nigeria

tells briefly the stories of the martyrdom of some devout Christians chosen from different ages and countries. In the Introduction we read of St. Stephen, the first martyr of the Church, in whose story the writer finds a pattern of all martyrdoms. We are told the stories of Perpetua and her friends, the martyrs of Yatshusiro, the boy martyrs of Uganda, Chou Yung Yao and Wang Hsin, and lastly the story of two of the Kikuyu martyrs who died just about ten years ago. The accounts are brief, but moving. The cruelties measured out shock and horrify the reader. Some of these heroes are hardly known at all. These are all ordinary Christian people and this is one of the merits of the collection of the stories. They were not afraid to lay down their lives for the sake of their faith in Jesus Christ.

*Come Wind, Come Weather: The Present Experiences of the Church in China*: by Leslie Lyall. Hodder and Stoughton, 1961. Pp. 119. Price 4s. 6d.

It is very valuable to have in print some account of the Church in People's China because unlike the case of the Russian Church there is a dearth of material on the present state of the Church in China. The impression that is usually created is that the situation is not as alarming as one might expect and that the Church enjoys freedom to practise and profess the Christian faith. Lyall wants to show that this is simply not true. He says that the Anglican, Quaker and Norwegian delegations which visited China during the years of 1954-1956 were deluded. He therefore aims 'to set out in an unbiased manner the way in which the Communist Government has handled the Protestant Church in China'.

He recalls the large inflow of missionaries of all sorts into China after World War II and the renewed interest shown by Chinese Christians in evangelistic work. However with the revolution all foreign missionaries had to leave the country. To the Communists they were agents of Western imperialism. The author is deeply sad that his national colleagues should also have taken this attitude, without raising any protest. The trend of change in the Church through the 'Accusation Campaign' and the 'Three Self-Movement' is outlined and behind it all is noticed the clever plan of the Communist régime. The author believes that the freedom of the Church has been lost and that the Church has made serious compromises when with the Three Self-Movement it accepted the slogan 'love country: love Church' in this order. We are given a glimpse of the suffering and the persecution of those who did not fall in line with the new pattern of the Church. We are also told that in spite of sufferings the Church is growing especially in some of the interior parts.

One gets the impression that the book is not an altogether unbiased picture of facts. The author is critical of Christian leaders who advocated the 'Three Self-Movement' but he does not expose the failure of the missionaries. Or again, he criticizes

the enforced unity of the Protestants, but does not recognize that disunity is sinful and that it was imported into China by the Western missionary agencies. He has no word to say about the state of the Roman Catholic Church. His understanding of the Communist party is negative. He sees it only as a 'common spiritual foe'. While he admits the all-round progress achieved in the years that immediately followed the revolution there is no positive appreciation of it. Those who live outside the iron curtain must be slow to criticize their Christian brethren who live in Communist countries confronted with so many restrictions and difficulties. Many will agree with the author in his criticism of the 'communes'. There is a certain amount of overlapping and repetition. However the book deserves our attention at least for our interest in and prayer for the Chinese Christians.

E. C. JOHN

*United Theological College  
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*The Race Before Us*: by James Davidson Ross. Hodder and Stoughton. Price 18s.

At first I wondered why Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton had sent this book to a theological journal for review. But as I read the book, that opinion quickly faded. This is the kind of book that priests and ministers should read much more frequently than they do: it is the kind of book that will teach them much about the human material with which their ministry is constantly concerned. And incidentally there are some remarks to sting their own consciences, and make them think about the way they exercise their ministry. What of this remark, made about a naval chaplain? 'If a bloke was in trouble, he didn't preach at him, he helped him'. A timely reminder for each one of us.

The story is the autobiography of a young airman, who had to spend two and a half years in hospital. It tells what that experience did to his whole outlook on life. My only regret was that the story ended with his leaving hospital: I would like to have read on, and seen how his changed outlook shaped his new life. Perhaps that part of the story must wait some years before its telling.

Perhaps I should add one warning. The enjoyment of this book does depend to a considerable extent on a knowledge of English dialect and slang. But for those who are at home in that medium, it is a book not to be missed. The reviewer at least is a better man for having read it.

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