

REVIEWS

THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

THE CHURCH OF GOD. (An Anglo-Russian Symposium.) By the Members of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. (S.P.C.K. ; 7/6.)

Dr. Frere in the preface tells us that this book is a collection of essays on various aspects of the doctrine of the Church. He adds that this topic has been much neglected in all the discussions on Reunion.

Of these eleven essays five are by Anglicans and the rest by Russian members of the Orthodox Church. To speak of the Anglican papers first. Those on *Christ and the Church* and *The Biblical conception of the Church in relation to the world* by the Rev. E. L. Mascall and Canon H. L. Goudge respectively seem to us not to set forth any specific Church of England statement on the subject, but rather (especially in the case of the first essay) to view the matter almost from an orthodox angle. This is still more true of the essay on the *Communion of Saints* by the Rev. D. J. Chitty. He has assimilated the Orthodox feeling in regard to the saints and their cult, but he betrays some bitterness and historical bias badly out of place in a book of this character, by such remarks as 'the rebellion against Rome (at the Reformation) was itself evidence of a blind desire for Orthodoxy still alive in the Western spirit,' and by his deletion of the names of St. Anselm and St. Thomas of Canterbury from his list of saints.

Of the two remaining Anglican papers, that of Ivan Young on *Eucharistic Worship* is very disappointing, being full of words and very little clarity of definition; that by Canon K. E. Kirk on *Loyalty to the Church* is a clever essay giving the historical basis of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England.

The most interesting papers, however, for a Catholic are those of the Russian contributors. They are six in number, and except for Mr. G. P. Fedotov's on *Orthodoxy and Historical Criticism* and Father S. Bulgakov's on *Religion and Art*, all have direct bearing on the *Thesis de Ecclesia*. We will only treat of three of these essays. The most outstanding is that on *Sobornost; The Catholicity of the Church*, by the Rev. G. V. Florovsky. Here the professor sets forth the Orthodox view of the Church. He emphasizes the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and the unity of its members by grace. Here Catholics would be in full agreement. But just as there has been a tendency which still lingers among our theologians to stress the exterior aspect of the Church and almost to forget the internal aspect, so some of the statements here are even more one-sided and could not be admitted by Catholics, e.g., 'In the Church there is not and cannot be any outward authority.' Yet in fairness must be quoted

what had gone before which seems a contradiction of the above statement, *viz.*, 'The hierarchs have received this power to teach, not from the church-people, but from the High Priest, Jesus Christ, in the Sacrament of Orders.' To which is added, 'but this teaching finds its limits in the expression of the whole church.'

In *The Church and National Life* Mr. Kartashov gives some interesting explanations of the Church's attitude to the State both in Byzantine times and in the modern Orthodox national states. He also recognizes that times have changed and advocates the forming of extra-territorial unions among the scattered Orthodox Churches in order to oppose the pagan nationalism, and this as a stage towards the Unity of the Christian World.

Mr. Zernov treats of *The Church and the Confessions*. He begins by comparing the Catholic and Protestant conception of the Church, but he sees only the legalistic and counter-Reformation elements in the Catholic Religion. He stresses the corporate conception of the Church which some of our teachers have undervalued, but at the same time he seems to suggest that man is not ultimately responsible for his own salvation. Yet he is quite honest in the criticism of his own Church, and his call on Christians to prepare the way for Reunion by a spirit of repentance and charity is quite Catholic in tone.

To speak of the whole collection of essays we will say frankly that while they are an inspiration to all workers in the cause, we cannot but regret that it was not possible to add some Catholic papers. The writers have often missed the point rather by what they have left unsaid than by what they say. We will conclude with a statement made by Mgr. d'Herbigny at Cambridge in 1923: 'England and the East re-act one upon the other; for while English influence tends to break down Oriental prejudice against the West, the East tends to check and to extinguish the Protestant heresies of England.' Much has happened since 1923!

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THE BURDEN OF BELIEF. By Ida Fr. Coudenhove. Translated by Conrad M. R. Bonacina. Introduction by Gerald Vann, O.P. (Sheed & Ward; 3/6.)

It is said that twenty thousand copies of *Von der Last Gottes*—the title of the original German of this book—have been sold. It is much to be wished, but hardly to be expected, that this translation will have a correspondingly large sale in English-speaking countries. Unfortunately the complexity of its style and the profundity of its thought are unlikely to recommend it to a wide public.