

of the tensions within Anglicanism the launching of it has focussed, is to understand what the ecumenical spirit means to many of our separated brethren. The last book on our list is a pamphlet, *The Church of South India and the Church*, by Donald Rea, published for the Confraternity of Unity (Baxter's Press, Oxford, 1956). The author is an Anglican Papalist who accepts all Catholic doctrine including the Vatican decrees. Yet he possesses a distinctly Anglican mind and outlook. He holds that the Church of England, itself an 'imperfect' Church, can and must accept the South India compromise with all its anomalies, and that ultimately its development will further the cause of Christian unity in the direction of the true unity of Rome.

Canon Rea is well-read both in St Thomas and the latest work of Catholic theologians on ecclesiology. His ably-written pamphlet will enable Catholics to watch what is taking place among our separated brethren as a result of this manifestation of the ecumenical spirit, with suspended judgment as to whither it may be leading, but with sympathy bred of knowledge and understanding of the real situation with all its cross-currents and complexities.



EXTRACTS

THE Autumn number of PAX, the Quarterly Review of the Benedictines of Prinknash, contains an article of particular interest in relation to the manifold problems of Christian unity. It is by Dom Bede Griffiths, O.S.B., and is on Kerala. This is the name given, in the reorganization of the states of the Republic of India, to what was before composed of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar in the extreme south-west.

It has the distinction of being the most literate and best-educated state in the Indian Union. It is said there are more graduates per square mile around Tiruvalla, the town in which I am now living, than in any other part of the world.

Kerala, however, has a Communist government owing to the fact that in it there is found a combination of wealth and poverty, a high level of education and much unemployment.

On the other hand it has the distinction of being the most Christian State in India. Christians are said to number about one-third of the population, and their influence is even more considerable as they are one of the wealthiest of the communities.

There are traditions, to be by no means dismissed as legendary, that the Church in South India was founded by St Thomas the Apostle.

The most important witness to this tradition is St Ephraem the Syrian. He was bishop of Edessa in Mesopotamia in the fourth century and records not only that St Thomas preached the gospel in India, but also that he was martyred there and that his bones were afterwards moved to Edessa. This evidence is important because, if anything is certain, it is that the Church in India was from the earliest times closely connected with the East Syrian or Chaldean Church, of which Edessa was one of the principal sees. It was from this Church that the Church in India received its liturgy, and for many centuries it was subject to its jurisdiction. We may take it for certain that the Church was established in India in the fourth century and that it was in close touch with the Church of Edessa.

It continued its existence for the next thousand years, deriving its orders from the metropolitan of Persia. In the ninth century the metropolitan of Persia followed the greater part of the Syrian Church into the Nestorian heresy. There is no evidence, however, that the Church in India was ever affected by this and there is evidence that there was intercourse throughout this period between Indian Bishops and the Holy See.

When the Portuguese came in the fifteenth century the Syrian Church was recognized as being both Catholic and Orthodox and enjoyed full communion with the Holy See. But then begins one of the most tragic incidents in the history of the Church. The Portuguese were for the most part unable to conceive of a Catholicism other than the Latin Catholicism they themselves professed and they began a campaign to force the Syrian Church to accept the jurisdiction of a Latin bishop and to change their rites and customs.

The result was a disastrous schism which has lasted to the present day. The Syro-Malabar Church, which remained faithful to Rome, suffered the mutilation of its ancient rite and had to accept a Latin hierarchy. This policy has been reversed within the last thirty years; it now has its own hierarchy. But the centuries of Latinization are not so easy to eradicate. The Syrian Christians or Jacobites, in schism from Rome, themselves became divided under the influence of Protestant missionaries and by internal disputes. During the past twenty-five years, however, there has been a widespread reunion movement among them, initiated by Mar Ivanios, a leading Jacobite Bishop who visited England and was a well known and respected figure here. There are now nearly a hundred thousand Jacobites reunited with the Catholic Church, and the movement is still growing. They use not the East

Syrian rite, formerly used in Kerala, but a West Syrian rite derived from Antioch.

This rite is of great interest. It is one of the oldest rites in the Church and is now substantially the same as it was in the time of St John Chrysostom. The Syriac language is closely akin to the Aramaic which was spoken by our Lord and the Apostles and is derived from the Hebrew. The Liturgy has preserved an extremely primitive Hebrew character and one feels very close to the sources of Christianity. It is richly dramatic and symbolic and the whole liturgy takes the form of a dialogue between the priest, the deacon and the people. It is perhaps the best example of a fully corporate act of worship which it is possible to find. This is made effective because according to Eastern custom the liturgy can always be celebrated in the vernacular. Here in Kerala it is said (or rather sung, for the whole liturgy is chanted and all the people know the chants) in Malayalam.

Dom Bede goes on to discuss the possibility of the extension of this liturgy, so suited to the Indian character, to other parts of India. There are problems here and the question is a controversial one. The Latin liturgy is established all over the north of India and there is already considerable rivalry between the two rites. This is a great pity. The Latin Church on the whole remains a western European institution and is felt to be foreign to Indian tradition. The Syrian Church on the other hand is authentically Indian owing to the centuries it has been established in Kerala.

It is not merely a question of rites and ceremonies, but of a wholly different tradition of life and thought. The eastern Church has preserved a way of life and thought, which finds expression in its liturgy, which is quite different from the tradition of the West. It knows nothing of scholastic philosophy and theology, or of moral theology and Canon law. But it is steeped in the tradition of the Bible and the Fathers and the ancient symbolic mode of thought. . . . In the wider perspective of India and the far East, it may be said with certainty that the only hope of the spread of the Gospel in these parts is that it should be presented in an authentically eastern way, and it is the eastern Church with its eastern liturgy which is best adapted to this end, because it preserves a tradition of life and thought and worship, which is both eastern and Catholic. The Catholic Church, wrote Pope Benedict XV in words which should be impressed on the minds of all the faithful, is neither Latin, nor Greek nor Slav, but universal. Unless the Church can show herself Indian in India and Chinese in China and Japanese in Japan, she will never reveal her authentically Catholic character.

It is clear that Kerala is a kind of crucible in which the Church in

India is being tested. It has an opportunity of developing a Catholicism which is both eastern and Indian. There is also in South India a great opportunity for ecumenical work, for we cannot forget that many of our Anglican and Free Church brethren are themselves supremely conscious of these issues and in the Church of South India scheme are attempting, on their own lines, to face and tackle them. It is encouraging therefore to read an editorial note appended to Dom Bede Griffiths' article which tells us that he has received permission from Rome to pass over to the Syro-Malankara rite and to found a contemplative monastery in the diocese of Tiruvalla. He and his companion in this great venture of faith, Fr Francis Mahieu, O.C.S.O., beg prayers for God's blessing on their work.

The EASTERN CHURCHES QUARTERLY, Autumn 1957, is almost wholly taken up with what is in effect a valuable commentary on the subject matter of Dom Bede Griffiths' article from which we have made extensive extracts and summaries. We have not space to do more than mention some of its contents very briefly. Priority must be given to two important pieces of documentation. The first is a series of comments upon the Report of the All-India Study Week held in Madras on December 6th-13th, 1956. This study week, which had for its theme Indian culture and the fullness of Christ, received the blessing of the Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore. It was agreed that Indian culture is a dynamic force in India, and that it is the door to the Indian heart and must be sympathetically understood, accepted, used, though with 'prudent daring'. There were between 150 and 200 members; the majority of them hailed from different parts of South India, but a fair number had come from the north. Many nuns, at least sixty of them, representing some of the best-known educational institutes; priests, from both the diocesan and regular clergy, and a good group of seminarians; some laity, especially teachers and students. Two key extracts from the comments on this Report may be quoted:

In his address of welcome the Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore had stressed the *in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas* spirit by which he wished our deliberations to be animated. This spirit did prevail all through the liveliest debates. Indian culture is infinitely variegated and the different Christian communities themselves have widely diverse historical backgrounds. 'Adaptation' should be a 'life process'; it cannot be a blue-printed *a priori* affair, but it must respect the living manifolds of the Indian-Christian situation.

And again: Fr Extross, talking about the main theme, says:

Thomism is too hard-headed and rational for the Hindu temperament. But Hindu thought at its best is the most uncompromising statement

of the primacy of the spiritual, and the most amazing quest of the Absolute that human philosophy has ever known. Perhaps we Catholics would find many points of contact with Hindu philosophic thought and religious aspiration were we to study the great Eastern Fathers—Basil, the Gregories, Ephraem—instead of neglecting them as we do.

And, we might add, through that study many points of contact also between Hindu thought and Thomism at its best.

The second piece of documentation is the text of the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church for the safe-guarding of the integrity of the Syro-Malankara Rite, February 25th, 1957. It is interesting and encouraging as illustrating the minute care the Holy See is taking to prevent the infiltration of western influences, good in their proper place, but alien to the ethos of an oriental rite, which, owing to the close contacts between the two rites since the reunion movement began twenty-five years since, have shown a tendency to creep in. These directives will effect a complete restoration to the eastern rite of its original purity.

Lastly the news and comments contain an interesting account of the three outstanding Jacobite priests recently reconciled with the Holy See. These show that the reunion movement, begun by Mar Ivanios, is still making remarkable progress. The youngest of these three priests, Father C. A. Abraham, who studied for some time in the University of Oxford, writes in this issue of E.C.Q. a deeply interesting apologia for his return to Catholic unity.



REVIEWS

ENIGMA—A STUDY OF MORAL REARMAMENT. By Sir Arnold Lunn. (Longmans; 16s.)

In *Enigma* Sir Arnold Lunn writes about Moral Rearmament (M.R.A.) with a twofold purpose; to diminish prejudice against M.R.A. in England generally, and to inform accurately the Catholic community about this important spiritual movement, described by Father Seiler, S.J., University Chaplain in Switzerland, as 'Eine grosse Phenomene'. He has attempted to observe the events with the coolness of an unconcerned spectator, no easy task in respect of a subject which has roused violent feelings for and against, especially for one who is bound by the English Hierarchy's edict, disapproving of any English Catholic's participation in M.R.A., and he succeeds well.

The earlier chapters are mainly concerned with examining the