

## REVIEWS

THE REINTEGRATION OF THE CHURCH. By Nicolas Zernov. (S.C.M. Press; 7s. 6d.)

A book of 130 pages is not likely to exhaust the subject chosen by Professor Zernov. A review of 500 words will be even more incapable of commenting on such a book. If the following words therefore seem carping, it will not be for want of a deep appreciation of the right zeal of the Professor, but because this little book has had its fair share of praise and perhaps not enough criticism.

The title is a *petitio principii* and it is surprising to find it used for a book written by an Orthodox—which is presumably the form of Christianity native to the author. For the orthodox Orthodox the Church can no more be divided than it can be for a Catholic. The difference between them is: which half of the great split between East and West has remained the true Church? So we begin with an ambiguity. Is the Professor speaking for the Orthodox, or is he paddling his own canoe, as the phrase goes? That is the advantage of an *imprimatur*: It does not commit the Church to your views, but it does ensure that your views do not contradict its essentials the doctrine of the Church you represent, and the reader knows where he is.

After reading this little book it became clear to the reviewer how difficult it is to attempt to state your 'opponent's' point of view in these matters fairly. Should one rather make quite clear one's own? Scarcely any mention of the Catholic Church in these pages would be accepted as fair comment by even a most friendly Catholic. One wonders whether the author tried the device of showing the MS. to a Catholic. Thus the statement, 'It [i.e. the Roman Catholic Church] lacks some vital elements of Christian tradition which have been developed by those who remained outside the authority of the Pope' (p. 78), is a bald statement not enlarged upon. I think it false. It would be a interesting point to discuss in all friendliness. We are usually accused of having added too much.

The place of the Anglican Communion is put high in the matter of reunion. The author may be right, but it would be sad if the East for the sake of external unity abandoned their firm stand on the dogmatic basis of their Christian life. The Anglicans might have a solvent effect upon them.

If one starts with the assumption, as the author does, that the Church is split, splintered, then it is difficult to resolve the contradiction between the present state of affairs, as stated in those terms, and Christ's promise of, and his exhortation to, unity. But to say the Church is divided is only one way of looking at the difficulty. It is possible that Christians are divided but the Church not. It is as impossible for the Church to be divided as

it is for Christ to be divided; for the Church is the body of Christ, it is the Bride of Christ. Men can easily enough divide themselves from the Church. This is what has happened.

No educated Catholic would for a moment assert that the break away from unity, either in the early Church or in the sixteenth century, was entirely due to those who broke away. The Church gave these people ample excuse; it takes two to make a quarrel. On the other hand the fact that there were corrupt clergy and ignorant faithful in the Catholic Church of the sixteenth century does not *justify* a breakaway, though it may to some extent explain and condone it.

Professor Zernov perhaps exaggerates the importance of psychological factors in divisions. They are extremely important especially for the maintenance of those divisions; but we must not deny, in every case, a hard core of doctrinal difference. If we do, it will only lead to disappointment, such as there has been over the discussions between Anglicans and non-episcopal communions. Love is *not* superior to truth. We can only love what we know. Truth remains supreme, but it should not remain alone; and love of our separated brethren should lead us to want to understand their point of view, and from understanding to proceed to explain how it is at least incomplete.

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CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH. By Sister Jane Marie, O.P. (Bruce; \$3.96.)

This is 'the story of the life and action of the Church from her birth to the present day', and to judge by the very useful 'aids to learning' at the end of each section is intended for use in school and study groups. Its six hundred pages are packed with facts and as a reference book alone it is a treasure, though there are some surprising omissions: St Jerome's biblical work, for instance, goes unmentioned. On the other hand, rare justice is done to the influence of early Celtic monasticism. It is perhaps inevitable that in a book of this type historical narrative should sometimes turn into a catalogue of facts, but this is less forgivable when space is occupied by rambling discourses on the indestructible character of the Church. Nevertheless, under the guidance of a learned master this will form an invaluable textbook. The learned master—or at least easy access to source books—is a necessity because many terms will have to be defined at some length. This might have been done by maps and charts; the young student may easily lose his way among strangers, Goths, Huns, Visigoths, Franks, etc. The aids to learning, however, are fascinating: 'Write a script for a one-reel movie on the part of St Genevieve in the defence of Paris'. Especially commendable is the practice of putting questions *before* the sections, e.g. 'In your study of this unit see if you can find explanations of the following . . . "Secularism had its beginnings as far back as the thirteenth or fourteenth century".'

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