

prayer which reaches out beyond time and circumstances. Suggestions are made as to time and place—a time, a place, that are both given up to God. These are practical and, even as to space in the ordinary unspacious home, practicable (one knows how quickly a very small an area can become a place apart, a 'home' of whatever kind), besides testing one's strength of intention.

In particular, the element of *time* is emphasized, and in a matter of eight pages the highest and, as it were, the lowest demands of prayer are put before us. 'It is precisely because our time is so very precious that we must offer it to God', and from this it follows that no interior prayer while we are working, no combination of attention to God so to speak with attention to any kind of doing can be a substitute for the totally 'useless' giving up of time and self wholly to listening to, to waiting upon God. On the low level we have to convince ourselves, to make our own busy-ness recognize a ruler. Here the analogy is obvious between prayer in the personal life of a Christian and the place of the contemplative orders in the Church, and we see how the whole is patterned in the part.

One of the author's most striking chapters—'Learn to leave all things'—is that in which she draws an analogy between the moment of death when we are called upon to leave all things to face God, and the moment of prayer when we call upon ourselves to make this holocaust—body and heart and mind united in will—and she shows how by whole-

hearted self-giving, repeated again and again in what might seem tiny trivial ways—the page of a book we want to finish, the useful task to complete, every kind of excuse whereby we cheat, or try to cheat ourselves—we practise, prepare for the moment of death and predispose our hearts to receive grace. We are invited to launch ourselves daily into prayer as we must one day launch ourselves into death.

But, as always in the Christian life, there is no once and for all rule, no settling down, not even to the acceptance of aridity as given to us by God. This may be required of our faith, but it may be the result of habitual half-heartedness. Only as we live our prayer, and as our prayer lives in us, as faith begets fidelity, and longing for love begets love can truth be glimpsed. We live at risk all the time, but we are baptized into Christ, marked with his Cross, and the last pages of the book touch upon the obligations of this marking in the hostile world we live in today. So from the intimacy of private prayer we come to public work, the evidently useful growing from the apparently useless.

There are chapters on the sacraments, on Our Lady; and some original reflections on the prayer of children, all of which contain vivid images, and all filled with a quality of excitement, a spiritual zest, which could transform our lives. This is a book which marks the reader and will remain in his mind either as encouragement or reproach.

The translation is of a quality to match the text.
KATHERINE WATSON

NATHAN SÖDERBLOM—His Life and Work, by Bengt Sundkler. *Lutterworth Press*, London, 1968. 438 pp. 63s.

The Handbook *Drafts for Sections*, presented as aids for preparatory study for participants in the Six Sections of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala last summer, has upon its cover a picture of the Cathedral of that city, the square before it now marked with a large street notice, *Nathan Söderblom's plan*. It is significant that nowhere else in the Handbook is Söderblom's name mentioned or his words quoted; the street notice looks like a sign-post and seems to be saying, 'this is the way we go from here'. For Nathan Söderblom, Swedish pastor and pastor's son, who became, young and somewhat unexpectedly, Archbishop of Uppsala in 1914 and died in 1931, was, in a very real sense, the founder of the ecumenical movement in its present conciliar form.

NATHAN SÖDERBLOM—His Life and Work, by Bengt Sundkler. *Lutterworth Press*, London, 1968.

Those who know something of the immense field of ecumenical literature will recognize the qualifications of its author, Bengt Sundkler, for the work he has undertaken in this new biography. It is emphatically history, a history of the first half of the ecumenical movement built round the vivid, deep and many-sided personality of Archbishop Söderblom. It draws upon a wealth of personal material, showing him in his thought and action, his writings, his many friends and collaborators. It describes also the stages by which he grew up in a country manse, under the influence of a father of remarkable character, in the early nineteenth-century tradition of Swedish Lutheran pietism, to a broad comprehensive Christian outlook as scholar, administrator and leader, within in the widening circle of ecumenical thinking.

Söderblom served as pastor to the Swedish Church in Paris and as a Professor in Comparative Religion in Germany, he early visited America as a student and was at home in England, where he had many friends, among them distinguished Anglican scholars. An able linguist at ease in French, German, English and the Scandinavian languages, he became Primate of Sweden on the eve of World War I. Christianity's sins of omission, especially in the realm of international justice, lay as the burden on his heart. Söderblom's great mission in life was to repair the omissions.

His office as Primate soon gave him the opportunity. He initiated wide-reaching efforts for peace during the years 1915-1918 and to some extent succeeded in making contact with the opposing sides, though the strength of national feeling was an impediment to action for most of those with whom he made contact, even when they deeply sympathized with his efforts. Thus the foundations were laid for further post-war action, which was his constant pre-occupation.

Along these lines arose his advocacy of a World Christian Conference on life and work to be based upon the urgent concern of Christians for peace and social justice, for which unity in service among Christians would take priority of unity in belief, the keynote being doctrine divides, service unites. These efforts of the Archbishop and his many collaborators were at last realized in the great World Conference in Stockholm in 1925, named the Life and Work Conference. Söderblom was the Chairman and moving spirit.

There followed a series of conferences for promoting Christian unity with two differing bases: *Faith and Order* at Lausanne in 1927, to

restore the imbalance between doctrine and service created by the emphasis of Stockholm; *Life and Work* at Oxford, followed by *Faith and Order* again at Edinburgh, ten years later. Söderblom did not live to attend these last two. This conciliar series marking the movement over twelve years, culminated after World War II in the setting up of the First World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1947. This vast organization, the focal point of world-wide ecumenism with its permanent headquarters at Geneva, retained *Faith and Order* as a specific department, the life and work spirit being absorbed into the organization as a whole.

Söderblom's own position and personality left a permanent mark upon world ecumenism; that mark has been assimilated into the evolution of its future history. While always an orthodox Lutheran with a deep evangelical faith in the Cross of Christ, he was not without an increasing tendency which, in a wide sense, was Catholic. He insisted very early that the Roman Catholic Church, as a great Christian institution, should be included in all ecumenical councils. Such advances as were made, however, were consistently but politely refused, nor did the Encyclical *Mortalium Animos* in 1927 help. He was deeply interested in Orthodoxy and was instrumental in bringing the Orthodox into touch with western ecumenism; and welcomed them to Stockholm.

Today ecumenism is showing signs of a renewed emphasis on life and work, Söderblom's particular legacy to it. This is manifested by the increasing urgency felt for wider and more frequent intercommunion, reflected even in the ideas of contemporary Roman Catholic ecumenists.

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