
A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

and inspires the whole life, that in their daily work men are ready to lay down their lives for their brethren.[1]

Mr. C. T. Studd was leaving for Africa and his wife had to remain behind. Mr. Grubb in his biography says: 'On the eve of their parting, in a flash of inspiration, C. T. put the thought of both their hearts into a sentence, and that sentence became the motto of the Crusade. A young fellow sat talking with them and remonstrated with C. T. He said, "Is it a fact that at fifty-two you mean to leave your country, your home, your wife and your children?" "What?" said C. T., "have you been talking of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ to-night? *If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.*"'

[1] H. Smith, *The Economics of the Kingdom of God*, 99.

Faith and Order: The Conference in 1937.

By G. F. Barbour, D.Phil., Fincastle, Pitlochry.

The aspiration and the effort after Christian unity have two sources, outward and inward. The need of the world in our day provides the one, while the other springs from the sense that those who love and seek to follow the same Lord should be comrades, not rivals, on the road which His Spirit points out.

These motives naturally reinforce one another, yet for the sake of clearness we may consider them separately. The need of mankind for unity has never been so unmistakable as in these days, when applied science has made the whole world a neighbourhood, but has left it, as has been well said, without the neighbourly spirit. Hence come the strife and rivalry which fill us with foreboding. In many divergent ways men are seeking more or less consciously for security by massing themselves in social and national groups which grow ever more closely knit. Yet, since most of these are limited in area and depend for their unity on opposition to other groups, their final effect is to deepen divisions, both in the economic and national spheres. Comradeship within the circle of class or nation is taken to imply scorn of those without.

To a world thus striving after solidarity, yet unwilling to lay aside the antipathies which make unity impossible, the Church comes with her message of peace. But her messengers are inevitably asked whether she is qualified to lead divided nations or classes towards a unity of which she falls so far short in her own life. It is in the mission field that the ministry of reconciliation is most discredited by the division between its ministers; and the effort towards unity which took shape at the Lausanne Conference of 1927, and is officially known as the Faith and Order Movement, owns a missionary parentage. For it was at the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 that a great Christian leader—one of the greatest of our time—Bishop Brent of the Philippines, first conceived the idea of a new Ecumenical Council to deal with the differences which kept the churches apart and caused widespread dissipation of effort in the mission field. After seventeen years of waiting and preparation, and after the War had thrown its ghastly light on the divisions of Christendom, the Conference met; and during its sessions the missionary plea for reunion sounded again and again. Thus the Bishop of Tinnevelly, Dr. Norman Tubbs, in a short speech which deeply impressed the Conference, drew a parallel from the Council described in Ac 15, 'when the ideals of a home Church and of a mission Church stood out in vivid contrast, the one adhering to ancient institutions, to tradition, and the other moved by a world-wide vision and opportunity.' . . . 'We therefore,' he went on, 'earnestly ask the home Churches not to strain the loyalty of the mission Churches and of native Christians. If to move forward is dangerous, it is more dangerous to sit still. . . . The Church of Jerusalem took a vast risk when it allied itself with Gentile Christianity; cannot we, also, take risks?'

In the years that have passed since Lausanne this summons has become more urgent, as the dangers which confront Christianity in all its forms have become more visible. Orthodox thinkers like Berdyaev, Catholics like Christopher Dawson, Protestants like J. H. Oldham, draw the same picture in the same sharp outline—that of the advancing Totalitarian State, with its claim to

dominate soul and conscience as well as mind and body. Communism is united as a militant creed, while the Christian Church remains divided, and her divisions are sometimes most flagrant where the battle is hardest against secularism and race hatred.

Whether or not the lack of unity be judged the greatest obstacle to the advance of Christ's Kingdom —many would hold the weakening of the Church's faith to be a greater obstacle still—its harmful influence cannot be questioned. In the day of the Lord's controversy with the powers that altogether deny Him, His servants have little time to spare for controversies with one another.

This leads to the second main argument for unity. Those who, in their deeper thoughts and affections, hold the same allegiance, must lose both joy and power if they are alienated from one another, or even if they pursue wholly separate paths. Those who, like the writer, have known the Church of Scotland before and since the Union of 1929 can hardly help looking back with a kind of incredulity to the state of mind that prevailed before the two Churches now united began to confer. At that time, now nearly thirty years ago, men sprung from the same ecclesiastical stock had so long taken their separate ways to church, even in the same village, that this seemed part of the natural order. Though hostility had died away, we were content to know little or nothing of the other Church, of its great men and its distinctive forms of Christian service. Only when the barriers had begun to crumble, in part through the effects of the War, did most of us become conscious of the impoverishment involved in such isolation. So, doubtless, it will be when we or our successors have entered into wider unions; but let us not wait for another war to teach us this Christian duty.

Some may advance the objection that, as churches join into larger units, something will be lost of that intimate knowledge of the Church's work which characterized the smaller denominations. The risk is worth running for the sake of a larger outlook; yet it need not be too great if we bear in mind that, while our knowledge of the thought and work of other churches may indeed be fragmentary, this does not excuse indifference. A necessarily limited knowledge of fact may be filled out by Christian sympathy.

At the opening of the Lausanne Conference Bishop Brent said that 'in our hearts most of us are devotees of the cult of the incomplete—sectarianism.' From this 'cult of the incomplete' there are various ways of escape. Some find an early outlet through membership in the Student Christian Movement. To some it comes in the mission field, and to an increasing number through the international Christian gatherings of recent years. When a company drawn from many lands repeats the Lord's Prayer and sings the great hymns of the Christian Church in the language which each knows best, or joins in *Veni Creator Spiritus* in the original Latin, a unity is felt—real, but previously unrealized—and a desire is awakened to know more of the treasures laid up by other branches of the Christian Church. Those who have had such experiences must feel that it is laid upon them, difficult though the attempt may be, to pass on the enrichment of this wider fellowship to others not so privileged.

The most significant fact about the Conference at Lausanne is that representatives of all the great divisions of the Christian Church, save the Roman, found themselves in agreement on 'The Church's Message to the World—the Gospel.' A less known incident at the Conference shows how both affinities and divergences often appear in unexpected places. The Report on 'The Church's Common Confession of Faith,' as first presented, concluded with the words, 'We desire to leave on record our solemn and unanimous testimony that no external and written standards can take the place of that inward and personal experience of union with the living Christ, which is the only evidence of spiritual vitality, and that the object of our faith is not any statement about Christ but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.' These noble words, which appealed to the Scots Presbyterians present as expressing something very fundamental in the testimony of their Church, were, we were informed, drafted by one who stood far from our general theological position, the late Bishop Gore. They were finally weakened by the omission of the last two clauses at the instance of Lutheran opinion, which was in general standpoint much nearer to our own.

In looking back over the years since 1927 we can hardly claim that 'Faith and Order' was a direct cause of the two Unions consummated in Britain, those among Methodists, and Scots Presbyterians. But it has undoubtedly helped to form an atmosphere in which such unions become possible and natural. At the meeting of the Continuation Committee in Denmark last August one of the most encouraging statements came from Dr. George W. Richards of the Reformed Church in the United States, who described in moving words how two branches of that Church, near akin but long separ-

ated, had lately become one. Nor must we overlook the union movement among American Presbyterians, and that which has now begun in South Africa between Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists on the lines first traversed by the United Church of Canada. To promote better understanding both of agreements and differences in the hope that the latter may be finally removed is the direct object of Faith and Order—not to plan actual unions, which must be done by the churches themselves.

Yet we must acknowledge that not all the signposts point as hopefully towards unity as they did eight years ago. The Union in South India, which then seemed to be coming near, has been delayed; and the obstacles which have been encountered show how formidable are the difficulties to be surmounted before an incorporating union between episcopal and non-episcopal churches can be achieved. But, lying deeper than differences regarding Orders, episcopal and other, there are theological divergences which have tended to grow wider in these past years. Disputes between fundamentalist and modernist may have been less strident than at an earlier time; but there is a division—less easy to define, but real and increasing—between the churches which are widely influenced by the Barthian and neo-Calvinist theologies and those whose teaching has not in the main departed from the Liberal Protestantism of the past generation.

Divergent views on such definite issues as those of the Ministry and Sacraments often have their origin at these deeper levels. It is the perception of this which accounts for the large amount of time and energy which those who guide the Faith and Order Movement have put into the discussion of questions which to the practical man seem to have little bearing on the immediate need for unity. Thus a Commission of theologians, presided over by the Bishop of Gloucester, has issued a volume on *The Doctrine of Grace*, and their conclusions have been stated in a short Report. This has been discussed in various countries, and the result of these discussions has been in turn summarized by Canon Hodgson, now the Secretary of the Movement, in a pamphlet published some months ago.

When the second World Conference meets in Edinburgh on August 3rd, next year, it is expected that these Reports will form the basis of discussion for its first main section. The title is, 'The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ'; and if the thinkers of the various churches could grasp the way in which this great New Testament conception is held and interpreted by others, a real step would be taken towards unity.

Three other Reports are being prepared, which are intended similarly to form the basis of work for the three remaining sections. One deals with the Church of Christ and the Word of God. The relation between Church and Word is not a subject to which much thought has been given of late in this country; but to thinkers on the Continent it is a cardinal issue, and the personnel of this Commission is mainly European. Dr. Wilhelm Zoellner is Chairman, and it is greatly to be hoped that the sharp controversies through which the German Church is now passing will not too gravely hinder his Commission in its task.

Next comes the Commission on Ministry and Sacraments. These central subjects were assigned to separate sections of the Conference in 1927, but they have been found to be so closely inter-related that they have now been conjoined; for the validity of the Sacraments depends on the commission or authorization of the minister who dispenses them, and the ministerial function in its turn depends on the view taken of the Sacraments and their relation to the Word. As the Bishop of Gloucester's Commission has completed its work on the Doctrine of Grace, this far-reaching subject has been assigned to it.

The remaining Commission was at first described as that on 'the Empirical Approach to Unity,' and its first task was to survey the actual hindrances to union on the one hand, and forces making for union on the other. The American representatives at the Continuation Committee in 1934 were as anxious that the social and historical factors in the situation should not be overlooked, as the Germans were to emphasize the underlying theological conceptions. So it was decided to devote a separate inquiry to each, and that on the 'Empirical Approach' was assigned to a Commission presided over by Dean W. L. Sperry of Boston. But a year later it was felt that its scope should be widened and that a more comprehensive and dignified title should be assigned to it. So the subject was renamed, 'The Church's Unity in Life and Worship,' and certain topics falling within it were specified. These included 'A Report of progress made towards unity since 1927, and . . . the lessons to be learned from it,' and over against this 'the non-theological factors in the cause and cure of disunity—those elements of tradition in worship, thought, and practice which may give churches standing on similar theological ground a different ethos, and thus tend to make union difficult. To these have

been added other topics which form a bridge between the theological and the practical. These are, 'the Church visible and invisible,' 'the Communion of Saints,' 'what conception of the unity of the visible Church on earth we have in mind as the goal of our efforts'; and 'the means whereby full union and communion might be worked out and established, such as Proclamation of a spiritual *koinonia*, common worship, co-operation, federation.'

Other plans for the Conference include an opening statement on 'The Church's Witness in the World To-day,' in which the anarchic world-situation, intellectual, social, political, will be rapidly surveyed, so that the Conference may deliberate from the outset in no aloof, academic temper, but as a body of Christian men charged to reconsider questions of Faith and Order in face of a world-outlook as menacing as any which has confronted the Church for centuries. Here, it is hoped, the Conference will benefit by the conclusions of the Life and Work (Stockholm) Conference, which is to meet at Oxford immediately before. On two Sunday evenings, in full session, the Conference will listen to 'statements by speakers representing different communions, each bearing witness to what the worship and life of his Church means to him.' Finally, it is hoped that the whole work of the Conference will lead up to 'an affirmation of union in allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ in view of the world-situation.'

If the churches of Britain, and especially those in Scotland, are to gain that enlargement of Christian experience and fellowship which the holding of the 'second Lausanne' in Edinburgh will bring to their doors, the coming months will prove all too short for the work of preparation through prayer and study. As to study, much will be gained if theological clubs, 'fraternals,' and similar bodies will find a place for the main topics named above in their programmes for the coming winter.[1] Special study groups will also be needed, and it will be a real gain if laymen and women join in these, especially in the discussion of Subject IV. —Unity in Life and Worship.

One particular issue under this head has a very wide appeal—the kind of Church for which we look as the embodiment of unity. There must be within it no rigid uniformity, but room must be found for many different forms of worship, as well as for adaptability in the practical work of the Church. It is easy to criticise other communions, especially the Orthodox, for their lack of these qualities, yet Protestants have been slow to learn that brethren may dwell together in unity, even though they find spiritual nourishment in varying theologies and forms of worship. Dr. Oldham once said that 'differences were meant by God, not to divide, but to enrich'; and Professor Ménégoz has recently reminded us that no one up to the present 'has succeeded in restoring that fine balance of forces which in the earliest Christian society had made of the Church the body of the Spirit of Christ, at once one and multiple.'[2]

But the question remains how this ideal of unity amid variety may be attained. There are two main possibilities. One is federation with inter-communion, the other is that of distinctive groups or orders within a unitary Church. In comments on the Lausanne Reports, gathered in the volume entitled *Convictions*, several churches express themselves as in favour of a federal form of union which would leave full scope for local and other divergences. This is especially the point of view of the French churches which have recently been drawn together into 'The Federation of Evangelical Churches of France,' Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, Free, and Baptist. Over against it stands the view of others, notably the Anglicans, that nothing short of a full, incorporating union must be the goal to which we move; though the possibility remains that federation might be a stage on the way.

The Roman Church shows another method of dealing with this problem in her system of Religious Orders. Within the rigid, hierarchical system, which we condemn as destructive of Christian freedom, Rome has found room for variety by encouraging societies of men and women to dedicate themselves to the cultivation of different fruits of the Christian spirit and to the pursuance of different forms of Christian service. Something may also be learned from the Orthodox conception of autocephalous churches, united in belief and worship, but independent in organization.

This field of study is unfamiliar, but it is full of interest; and, while we recognize that the Spirit may lead the Church to a larger unity by ways as yet unsuspected, it is well worth while to examine the paths which are already visible. This applies both to worship and organization, for there has always been a uniting of new with old in the living periods of the Church's history. A true loyalty to tradition ought not to exclude the willingness either to borrow from other branches of the Church or to strike out new paths. Even unity might be purchased at too high a price if it involved

[1] Information and literature will be gladly supplied by Canon Hodgson, Cheney Court, Winchester.

[2] *Convictions* (S.C.M.), p. 12.

immobility during the time of waiting; for this would make it impossible to bring our full contribution of faith and experience into a re-united Church. In the present writer's view this consideration has a direct bearing on such a question as the place and service of women in the Church.

There is also a danger that certain churches may look on the movement towards unity too much in a one-dimensional way, as concerned with the line which connects each with some other Church—for example, in the case of the Church of Scotland, that which connects Edinburgh with Lambeth. But the problem is essentially two-dimensional, and so is at once more complex and more hopeful. Around each of us on the theological map are churches whose chief emphasis falls on very various aspects of Christian truth. Different lines of approach may thus be tried simultaneously towards a fuller understanding, and different affinities may be discovered. Thus no two churches need feel that, if unforeseen difficulties be found on the way towards a contemplated union, the whole quest for unity need therefore be abandoned.

One final word on the nature of this task of conference and the spirit in which it must be approached. It is not an easy task; for those engaged in it must often be aware of a tension—of what even seems a tug in opposite directions. A double effort is needed, to set forth the testimony of the Church which one is commissioned to represent, and at the same time to understand the testimony of others, to grasp points of view hitherto unfamiliar or antipathetic in the hope of reaching a deeper harmony. If the first motive is exclusively stressed, no progress will be made: each side will be ruled by the fear that, in the process of 'give and take,' all the 'give' will be on their side and all the 'take' on the other. Suspicion will continue to rule, and unity will remain afar off. If, on the other hand—a less probable danger—there is too great a readiness to make concessions, valuable elements in the testimony and life of the different churches may fail to be preserved. The one hopeful way is that all who take part should go forward with open minds, believing that others are seeking for unity as genuinely as themselves; and that all should trust in the guidance of the Spirit, who can show them things of which they have not dreamed. Thus only can the Church give an example of unity to a distracted world.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Varia.

THE general character of this work[1] has already been indicated in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES (June 1936), and there is little to add in explanation or comment on this second part. The textual notes, again, are elaborate and extensive, though it is seldom that there is a serious difference of reading. The editorial notes are largely concerned with references to other Rabbinic and Talmudic writings, though sometimes we find useful explanations of words, especially of Greek and Latin words. The text itself is still the most interesting part of the whole work. Here we have all those features which we have learned to associate with ancient Jewish exegesis. There is the stress laid on individual words and even letters, the fanciful interpretation alternating with good, common sense, application of the lesson, the love of parable and allegory, and the careful citation of learned authority. The Siphre is in no sense, however, a continuous commentary, but rather a selection of important passages, which are treated at some length. Thus, in the present number, we pass from notes on Dt 6^9 to 11^{10}, and have an extensive disquisition on the contrast between the land of Israel and that of Egypt. From this point onwards every verse is discussed down to 12^5, a verse of which the comment still remains to be completed in the next part. About a quarter of the whole work has now been published.

THEODORE H. ROBINSON.

Cardiff.

[1] *Siphre zu Deuteronomium*, Pt. II., ed. by Dr. Louis Finkelstein (Marcus, Breslau; R.M.6.00).

The Johannine Literature.[2]

THESE scholarly volumes are a striking combination of two qualities, a religious appreciation of the Fourth Gospel and a critical analysis. Professor

[2] *Das vierte Evangelium, in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt verdeutscht und erklärt* (M.6): *Studien zum vierten Evangelium* (M.10.90) (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1936).