

BLACKFRIARS

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TO PEACE AND WAR. (S.C.M. Press; 1/-.)

A report drawn up by the Committee on Church and Nation to be submitted to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It was found after discussion that despite disagreement there was a great deal of common ground: the Report states the two opposing views (pacifist and non-pacifist) and gives the common conclusions with regard both to doctrine and to practical politics. The non-pacifists share to a great extent the traditional Catholic view; they justify the use of force in certain cases as consonant with the Gospel; they condemn both wars of aggression, and the employment of offensive tactics, reprisals, the bombing of civilians, in warfare which in itself is justifiable. They fail to point out, however, that these condemned tactics are certain to be adopted in any future war; and that, even when it can be clearly decided that here and now a given state is the aggressor, it is more than difficult to decide whether this is not the case simply because of some anterior aggression, and the determination to preserve an unjust *status quo*, on the part of the other state. These practical difficulties the pacifists are quick to point out. But if the non-pacifists are academic in the sense that they fail to take due account of contemporary realities of warfare, the pacifists on the other hand, arguing too exclusively from the standpoint of those realities, generalize to the point of neglecting the distinction between counsel and precept, and so lay themselves open to cogent criticism from the other side. Both sides, however, as will be seen, are likely to reach identical conclusions when faced with the actual facts of a modern conflict between Big Powers.

The statement of the opposing views is followed by a statement of a common programme of action: the abolition of war, they are agreed, is "a supreme Christian duty"; and their programme includes emphasizing the international character of the Church, preaching and teaching the "oecumenical responsibilities of Church membership," supporting the development and perfecting of the "pacific methods already embodied in the Covenant," urging on the statesmen of the world the need for removing the causes of war, economic (trade barriers), political (injustices to minorities, etc.), the question (especially the psychological aspect) of colonies, the development of international law. Appendices give extracts from some of the papers read to the Committee: a more detailed discussion between Principal Curtis and Professor Macgregor of the problem of pacifism in the light of the teaching and practice of Christ, notes on a Christian philosophy of the State, on the idea of a super-State, and on the Commonwealth ideal.

This very inexpensive pamphlet should be extremely valuable,

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not only as providing a clear and authoritative statement of the position of one at least of the churches, but also as giving a survey of the whole problem, and advancing a constructive programme for the attainment of peace. It is a pity that in that programme the necessity of working for justice within as well as between the nations does not figure.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

DAMIEN THE LEPER. By John Villiers Farrow. Foreword by Hugh Walpole. (Burns Oates; 7/6.)

FATHER CONSTANT LIEVENS, S.J., *The Apostle of Chota-Nagpur*. By Lieut.-Colonel Francis J. Bowen. (Alexander Ouseley; 3/6.)

EDMUND LESTER, S.J. By Father Clement Tigar, S.J. Foreword by the Archbishop of Westminster. (Longmans; 3/6.)

The first two of these little biographies deals with two heroic Flemish priests who left all to help the destitute. *Father Damien*, as all the world knows and still wonders at, shattered his health and cheerfully died of mankind's most hideous disease, to bring comfort temporal and spiritual to the living dead on Molokai. There he laid himself in death, for him there was no return to his native land. *Father Lievens*, less known to the world but equally a hero, did return to his own country but only to die almost immediately of consumption brought on by his herculean labours to bring help both spiritual and temporal to a vast native province in North India. These labours were so blessed as to merit for him the title of "the greatest missionary since St. Francis Xavier." The success of his work was never known to Fr. Lievens in this life. He died in 1893, but by 1908 there were 100,000 converts in his mission field, 25,000 of these being received into the Church between 1906 and 1907. In the centre of his native village of Moorslade is a great equestrian statue, a rare honour to a priest, but it is not a ramping steed he bestrides, as a military conqueror; the horse stands with bent head regarding a native of India kneeling for the blessing of the great missionary who holds a cross high in his hands.

The third biography, small like the two others, is of one of the most energetic priests England has had in modern times. In a different way, but to an almost equally heroic extent, Father Lester worked in a country we call Christian, but only by courtesy. Much of England is ignorant of the truths of faith, and probably more than half of it is in no better condition spiritually than many a foreign mission field. Father Lester must have realized this, hence the enormous value of his efforts to bring labourers