

TOWARDS A REFORMED UNITY

IS CHRIST DIVIDED? Edited by William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury. (Penguin Books; 9d.) A CHRISTIAN YEAR BOOK. 1943 edition. (Student Christian Movement Press; 2s. 6d.)

Neither of these books lives up to the expectations which their titles arouse. The first—a collection of essays enjoying distinguished editorship—makes it plain that a considerable measure of charity reigned between the Reformed Churches ‘across the frontiers and above the battle.’ But despite frequent and usually well-informed references to the Catholic Church an imperfect sympathy with our position and very scanty reference to the Orthodox point of view make it questionable whether another text than I Cor. i, 13, might not have been chosen for the enlightenment of the book-stall purchaser.

The second edition of the *Year Book*, perhaps because its ‘general standpoint is that of the non-Roman Churches’ and yet finds room for two concise articles on Roman Catholics and the Eastern Churches, is a better guide to the growing interest in, and work for, Unity. The need is great, but the path is not easy. Rock-climbing necessarily precludes all short-cuts, even in an emergency. Yet ‘charity prevaleth above all things.’

H.K.

THE CHURCH OF THE EASTERN CHRISTIANS. By Nicolas Zernov, D.Ph. (S.P.C.K.; paper, 2s. 6d.; cloth, 4s.)

This is an essay towards understanding, in the form of a ‘description of the Eastern Church by one of its members who has lived among Western Christians for some years’; subject to a serious caveat mentioned below, it certainly should help the Westerner to a better appreciation of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

It is inevitable that some of Dr. Zernov’s historical and other judgements should be disputed. For example, he stresses the possible effect of early Celtic Christianity on the formation of the English religious character. But he overlooks the fact that in *England* the Romano-Celtic church was completely destroyed (at the barbarian invasions, and that the British Christians of Wales were on the worst possible terms with the nascent Christians of England after the coming of Augustine. Again, he says that Catholics would say that ‘if the Russians had been under the rule of Rome, the (bolshevik) persecution would never have happened.’ The present reviewer has never heard such a view expressed by any Roman Catholic. On the other hand, Dr. Zernov puts a very proper emphasis on the part of the Crusades (especially the Fourth) in making the schism between East and West definitive, and on the political origins of the schism in general. There are a few slips here and there: e.g., the monophysite split is put before the Nestorian

(p. 8), and the Syrian Jacobites are omitted on p. 18, where, too, the number of non-Orthodox Eastern Christians is badly under-estimated.

But a more serious adverse criticism one feels bound to make is this. Without a doubt Dr. Zernov gives a picture that in some respects is valid for the whole of Orthodox Christianity; but he does not make it clear that in other, and some far-reaching, respects he is showing us a predominantly Russian view, sometimes representing only a section of Russian Orthodoxy at that. Those who have warned us against forming a conception of the Orthodox Church based mainly on Russia, or even a section of Russians, are quite right: to do so would only still further put off that day of unity and truth for which we long. And this reviewer feels the more bound to say this because his own sympathies tend to coincide with some of these Russian views and trends which, moreover, he believes (together with Dr. Zernov) to be in peculiar consonance with the religious sentiment and understanding of English people.

As an example of what I am referring to, Dr. Zernov writes on p. 58 that 'A bishop in the East, as an individual, has no special power to make priests or deacons; his role is to sanction in the name of the Catholic Church the ordination performed by the Holy Ghost, who acts through the unanimous decision of a local church gathering for the celebration of the Eucharist.' Is that the belief of the Eastern Orthodox Church? Perhaps it is. But surely there is no doubt that many Orthodox bishops, priests, deacons and lay people would deny it most strenuously.

- DONALD ATTWATER.

THE EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS. Edited by E. H. Blakeney. (S.P.C.K.; 6s.)

The production of modern editions of Patristic texts has been sadly neglected in England, and Dr. Blakeney's work should call attention to a great need. He points out (p. 33, note on *kainon genos*) that the spirit of the Cross introduces a new relation to life, and one of the most striking characteristics of Christianity is the 'new and youthful life' which Christ brought into the world. It is also a fact that the freshness of Christianity appears in all its vigour in the Gospels and the writings of the early Christians, so that Christianity to-day can win a new power by returning to its sources. Evidently Dr. Blakeney had this in mind when he undertook his edition of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, which has been described as the noblest of early Christian writings.

The Introduction to the text is brief, and is written for those who are unfamiliar with the *Epistle*: it includes also a list of the chief references to Christians in heathen writers of the second century. The text follows, and some may regret Dr. Blakeney's decision to omit the 11th and 12th chapters, which, though spurious,