

# THE PROPOSED WORLD COUNCIL.

## "The One Voice of Non-Roman Christendom."

### DANGEROUS PROPOSAL.

(By a Correspondent.)

IN 1910 the Episcopal Church of America invited all the Churches of Christendom to send representatives to a Conference on Faith and Order. The invitation met with such a warm reception that some of its members foolishly went on to mention what things such a Conference was likely to deal with—the Ministry, the Sacraments, validity of Orders, and so on. At this American Protestantism was utterly shocked, and frankly declared it was not interested in such subjects, but in Life and Work. They said in effect: Faith and Order may want corporate union with one Faith and one Ministry; but what we want is intercommunion and interchange of pulpits. We need some organization to speak with one voice on practical matters, such as prohibition, birth control, race problems, economics, peace and war, wages, housing conditions.

The war intervened. After it Archbishop Soderblom of Upsala took up this American idea, which was very much in the mind of Continental Protestants and made a strong appeal to them. He held a Conference in Stockholm in 1925 of like-minded people, officials of various Churches, but not official representatives. This was Life and Work. But when they met, they found themselves inevitably confronted with matters of Faith. For example, who was to be called a Christian? What Christian "Churches" were to be included under the title of Christian Church? They met on a basis of no creed, and therefore were bound to say that Unitarians must be included among Christians. The Unitarian Churches were part of the *Una Sancta*, a very popular expression with them. In a word, Life and Work Movement had a Unitarian basis and an intercommunion outlook. It is only fair to add that the large majority of members of Life and Work are Trinitarians, and there has always existed in its ranks a minority opposed to the "open Communion."

From Life and Work arose the so-called Universal Christian Council, a non-elective body, which was responsible for the summoning of the Oxford Conference, and which directs the policy and controls the procedure of the Movement.

The Faith and Order Conference met first at Lausanne in 1927, when Bishop Gore made a speech in which he said that the Conference must get down to realities of Faith and Order, or be content with the futilities of Stockholm. The Conference concurred with Dr. Gore, and its reports stated exactly where agreement had been reached and where there was disagreement. Ambiguity was thus avoided.

Before the Conference ended, Dr. William Adams Brown, the well-known Presbyterian, one of the most ardent supporters of Stockholm, proposed that Lausanne should have a service of intercommunion with an Anglican celebrant. The Anglican members objected, and declared that if such a service was held, they would leave the Movement, because it would commit them to something contrary to the basis on which they were assembled. The proposal was accordingly rejected. But Dr. Adams Brown and his friends, representing American and Continental Protestantism, persistently brought forward the same proposal at meetings of the Continuation Committee, and it was turned down with equal persistency.

Life and Work made proposals for the amalgamation of Faith and Order and the World Alliance for Peace with the Churches in 1929, when four representatives from each Movement met in Switzerland under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Chichester. The proposal was rejected, the members of the Lausanne Conference pointing out that they were not united on a Unitarian basis with an intercommunion objective. But Archbishop Soderblom was not discouraged. He again made the proposal, this time in London, and again the Faith and Order Anglicans opposed it absolutely.

Last week this proposal appeared again at Oxford in an elaborate scheme, the working of which nobody can understand. It is nothing less than the establishment by this Conference and by the Faith and Order Conference at Edinburgh of a World Council to take over the management of the two Movements, and to commit the direction of the whole work of reunion to a general assembly of two hundred members meeting

every five years. There will also be a Central Council of sixty members meeting annually. Of the sixty it is hoped that one-third will be laymen or women. These proposals are made by a Council of thirty-five, which was originally self-appointed, but afterwards appears to have received the general approval of the Continuation Committees of both Movements, but without any reference whatever to the Churches who constituted Faith and Order.

It should be repeated that Life and Work includes Unitarian Churches, whereas Faith and Order only includes those Churches that believe in the Incarnation of the Son of God. There is another important distinction. Faith and Order consists of officially appointed delegates from Churches, and elects its own chairmen, officers and executive. On the other hand, Life and Work is composed of a certain number of elected representatives of the Churches together with a number of non-elected members, and it is entirely under the direction of a non-elected Council known as the Universal Christian Council. In the Conference of Life and Work, no opportunity is given to the members of choosing its executive officers, and it has no constituency to which it is responsible.

The proposal to establish the new World Council comes from Life and Work, and it is not proposed to submit it to the Churches for their acceptance, amendment, or rejection. The scheme is to be brought into existence at once, without consulting any Church. Of course, any Church is free to say that it will be no party to it; but the question arises, is it possible to be a member of Life and Work or Faith and Order without being committed to the new Ecumenical Council. The non-elective character of the present Council of thirty-five, and the whole non-representative character of the proposals for a World Council, are unlikely to appeal to some of the Churches which have taken a prominent part in the work of reunion. Up to the present they have been enabled to co-operate with the movements for reunion without violation of conscience or conviction, and without sacrifice of any of their principles. And the reason for this is that they have been allowed to express their Church's point of view freely, and differences as well as agreements have been faithfully recorded. Faith and Order has been consistently faithful to this practice.

Faith and Order makes no pretence to speak for the Churches, but in contrast to this the avowed purpose of the new World Council, according to the Archbishop of York, is to create an organ to speak with one voice for non-Roman Christendom. It is true that the non-proposers acknowledge that the new organization "shall have no power to legislate for the Churches or to commit them to action without their own consent," but it will speak with the one voice.

Are the Orthodox and Anglican Churches prepared to admit this claim? Are they willing to co-operate with the Council which will be set up whether they like it or not? Do they really think that it confers on the Church of Christ an organ which it so sorely needs? The Churches alone can answer such a question. Take the case of the Holy Orthodox Churches. They comprise 150,000,000 of Christians. In the Council of sixty they would have nine representatives. Even if they had fifty out of the sixty it is unlikely that they would regard the new World Council as a suitable substitute for an Ecumenical Council.

So far as the Anglican Communion is concerned, while the Lambeth Conference is composed of all the bishops of the Anglican Communion, nevertheless it is not empowered to speak with one voice for Anglican Christendom. It is unlikely that the autonomous Churches which comprise the Anglican Communion will agree to a new World Council to speak with one voice for them when they do not allow the Lambeth Conference to do so.

Up to the Oxford Conference, the Faith and Order Movement refused to countenance intercommunion services, and therefore the breach of Catholic order made by last Sunday's "intercommunion" service at St. Mary's, Oxford, in which the two Archbishops participated, is as serious as it is lamentable. It is well known that high ecclesiastical authorities in this country are bringing pressure to bear on the Bishop of Edinburgh to arrange for a similar intercommunion service during the coming Faith and Order Conference at Edinburgh.

# GROOVES OR GRAVES?

## Saint Ignatius Calling.

### THE THREE R's: RENUNCIATION: RETREAT: RELIGION.

ON July 31, three hundred and eighty-one years ago, there died a little Basque. He was one of the most quixotic of quixotic Spaniards, a man who has divided the world's opinion as sharply as his country divides it to-day.

Men have denounced him as well-nigh a fiend incarnate; yet he is canonized among the saints. Not only in the world has he caused divisions, but within the Church he has been loved and hated. Popes have proscribed his spiritual family, Catholic countries have banished them from their borders, masters of spiritual affairs have frowned upon the genius of his teaching. Yet, in spite of all, multitudes of Christians number him with the elect confessors of God, one of that glorious inner company of the most valiant and chivalrous champions of Christ.

St. Ignatius of Loyola was born in 1491. The following year Columbus sailed to open up the New World. It has been pointed out that, when we say "If only," it generally carries with it an implication of regret. But that, at least, is not my point of view about the quests of these two famous Spaniards. Indeed, it is difficult to say "If only" in respect of them. For I cannot strike out of my imagination that New World which Columbus discovered; nor can I strike out of the Christian world the achievements of St. Ignatius and his followers, for to few saints has been given so extensive an empire over posterity.

No wonder that the life of St. Ignatius has been written over and over again, for his life is one of the most important and absorbing stories in Christian history. It is a story interwoven with all the most burning controversies of the Reformation, and yet withal a magnificent record of self-sacrifice, of missionary heroism, of great scientific, literary and educational enterprise. St. Ignatius was the founder, and is still the inspiration, of one of the most powerful societies that the world, the flesh and the devil have ever had to reckon with. Unlike St. Benedict or St. Francis, the great Society of St. Ignatius has never borne the founder's name. He called his followers by our Lord's own name, so that they might always stand for "Jesus" in the world.

It is not my purpose now to attempt any account of the life of St. Ignatius, but rather to use the inspiration of his example by way of appeal for the needs of Christendom to-day. Our Archbishop has summoned us to rally for a renewal of consecration and service to God and the cause of God's Church. And in the example of St. Ignatius we may find at least some of the ways through which the "Recall to Religion" can be attained.

St. Ignatius is known all the world over as the author of the book we call *The Spiritual Exercises*. This book is the saint's record of the truths on which he meditated and the experiences through which he passed during his ten months' retreat at Manresa. If we can call it a book, it is one of the greatest books in the world. But it is hardly a book. Fr. Plater, S.J., says: "It has to be lived rather than read." St. Ignatius has been called "the world's novice-master." The spiritual exercises are not merely one of the many good methods of making a retreat, nor a valuable instruction about prayer. They are a novitiate in heroism, in generosity towards God.

I remember some words of Mrs. Herman: "St. Ignatius is the great enemy of mediocrity—goodness that is not great or heroic. . . . With that common sense that was his very genius he brought the heroic ideal within reach of the unheroic multitude. 'Heroism for the Million,' 'How a Milkman may be all for Jesus'—that is how an Ignatian retreat would be advertised, had St. Ignatius been a Protestant slum evangelist." It is not surprising that the appeal of St. Ignatius soon spread out from the cloister to the street, that the Reformers were so alarmed by the success of the Ignatian appeal that they attributed magical and malevolent powers to his followers.

Christians may still be divided in their opinions about St. Ignatius, his *Spiritual Exercises*, and his Society. But there are two great lessons which St. Ignatius cannot fail to teach every kind of Christian, and Christianity is inexpressibly poorer whenever and wherever they are forgotten. The first is that renunciation is the road to recovery.

The second is that the way of retreat is the road to victory.

*Renunciation is the road to recovery.* To stoop is to conquer. We are summoned to work and pray for the recall to religion. To ask in the name of the Lord means much more than quoting His Holy Name. To work for the cause of the Lord means more than reading about it and listening to sermons. There are times when, like St. Ignatius, we are compelled to ask ourselves: What is the end of man? To what purpose were we born? Great saints have spent hours and days pondering over these two questions, which lie at rock bottom of all theology and philosophy. And there are times when, with a great bump, we come up against some of the sayings of our Lord: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." The men and women who have taken these sayings to heart and made them the ruling convictions of their lives are the salt of the Church and the world. They are the people who have got things done and altered human lives.

They have been found in every station and class. They have shrunk from the limelight, and are by no means always to be found in high position; the only crowns which they have worn are crowns of gold shaped like thorns—unknown, yet well known; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing all things. They have learned the splendour of sacrifice. They teach us that to stand on your dignity is only to make a fool of yourself, that true dignity means humility and loving service.

Far be it from us to speak scornfully of the sober, attractive type of goodness which our English way of religion produces. When all our failings are acknowledged, it is, after all, to poor old England and her Church that all nations seem to turn in distress. Nevertheless, we badly need more heroic souls. Somehow the heroic is lacking. The passionate desire for sacrifice is rare. There is a wish to please God and to work for Him, but without any great renunciation.

Fr. Gerald Rawlinson made this appeal to the large body of priests who heard him some years ago at the Priests' Convention in Oxford. That appeal is still waiting to be answered. The author of "Murder in the Cathedral" affirms that the dominant vice of our time, from the point of view of the Church, is the sin of avarice. Many clergy, as we well know, are as poor as church mice. Yet not all. In every parish there are some who are heroic and witness to the duty and dignity of the way of renunciation.

People sometimes label us priests as feeble and uninspiring. And so we often are. But I always remember Studdert Kennedy's reply: "Well, you must remember that God has got only the laity to draw on." The laity, too, are sometimes called worthy and uninteresting. No one can help being uninteresting and uninspiring if the Cross is missing from his religion. We shall always be so where our religion does not give birth to souls of the heroic type. There can be only one way of recovery and advance, and that way, as our Lord says, is not the *Via Media* or *Via Spatiosa*, but *Via Arcta*, the Narrow Way through the Narrow Gate.

*The way of retreat is the road to victory.* We could give you a chorus, not of three R's only, but three times three. Over and over again it has been proved that the way of retreat is the way of reflection, reformation, renewal, re-conversion, refreshment, relief, rejoicing, and real religion. Retreats for priests and laity have made some headway among us. But so far, in spite of all, and the movement is vigorous, comparatively small signs of movement are found in hundreds of parishes; and, what is more serious still, we are told that the number of priests who make their retreats, so far from growing, is actually diminishing. A retreat is, without doubt, a means of grace. It gives the priest a chance to listen to the recall to his own personal religion, to get out of the rut and routine, to regain the vision of His Master and his vocation, to sanctify himself, to make his soul, to enlarge, purify and consecrate his personality.

Is it the expense? But, then, there are places of retreat where you may pay as much or as little as you can afford. Is it time? It is impossible to do everything we ought to do in life. We have to make a selection. Dare we say that we have no time to worship, no time to pray? We ought to be terrified at the thought of living without these things. Our lives are so full of dangers and duties that we simply dare not neglect our own personal religion. A parish ought