

THE RETURN OF CHRISTIANDOM

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649094875

The Return of Christendom by Various

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

VARIOUS

**THE RETURN OF
CHRISTIANDOM**

THE RETURN OF CHRISTENDOM

BY
A GROUP OF CHURCHMEN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
BISHOP GORE

AND AN EPILOGUE BY
G. K. CHESTERTON



LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

NOTE

THOUGH the chapters composing this book have been in every case the subject of careful consultation between the writers concerned, and are in a real sense the fruit of their collaboration, the authors do not claim that their outlook is identical in every detail, and responsibility for statements made and views put forward in each chapter rests with the contributor of that chapter alone.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	9
BISHOP GORE	
CHAPTER	
I. THE IDEA OF CHRISTENDOM IN RELATION TO MODERN SOCIETY	15
M. B. RECKITT, M.A.	
II. THE RETURN OF DOGMA	41
H. H. SLESSER	
III. THE NECESSITY OF CATHOLIC DOGMA	63
FR. L. S. THORNTON, M.A.	
IV. THE RETURN OF "THE KINGDOM OF GOD"	87
REV. P. E. T. WIDDRINGTON	
V. THE MEDIÆVAL THEORY OF SOCIAL ORDER	115
REV. A. J. CARLYLE, D.LITT.	
VI. THE OBSTACLE OF INDUSTRIALISM	127
A. J. PENTY	
VII. THE MORALIZATION OF PROPERTY	151
M. B. RECKITT, M.A.	
VIII. THE FAILURE OF MARXISM	185
REV. NILES CARPENTER, M.A., PH.D.	
IX. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE CHURCH TO-DAY	217
FR. PAUL B. BULL,	
EPILOGUE	243
G. K. CHESTERTON	

INTRODUCTION

THIS volume consists of essays written by a group of men who hold certain principles in common, and who have collaborated¹ so as to give their essays a certain manifest continuity and unity of idea and aim. I shall perhaps best serve the purpose of this introduction if I endeavour to enumerate and describe these principles, which they hold in common, and some consequent conclusions.

1. They are all Socialists² in a general sense, that is to say, they are all at one in believing that no stable or healthy industrial or social fabric can be built upon the principle of Individualism, or is consistent with the assertion of an almost unrestricted Right of Private Property. Accordingly, they hold that our present industrial society rests upon a rotten foundation; and that what is needed to remedy the manifest "sickness" of our "Acquisitive Society," is something much more than particular social reforms. There is needed the substitution of a true idea or principle of Society—that is of Socialism in some sense—for the false. What they ask for is such a peaceful and gradual revolution as can only come about if men's minds come to be so fully possessed with a certain set of ideas, which are now in the

¹ Perhaps I ought to say that the Fifth Essay (Dr. Carlyle's) has been contributed, so to speak, from outside, and that he should not be reckoned as belonging to the group.

² Dr. Carpenter prefers to be called a "Co-operationist," while some of the other contributors might choose to describe themselves as "Distributionists." None would accept the description "Socialist" save in its most general sense.

air, as that they shall gain compelling or driving power in practical affairs.

2. But as a basis for social reconstruction they entirely repudiate the Marxian materialism, or the doctrine of the inevitable Class War and victory of the proletariat. Human affairs are not governed by mechanical laws and do not move towards necessarily determined conclusions. These writers would appeal to the freedom of the human spirit. If there is no change of spirit among men, the class war might proceed to revolution and to the victory of the proletariat, but it would not really ameliorate the lot of men or give them liberty. It would only substitute a bureaucratic tyranny for a plutocratic: and a revolution leading to disillusionments would bring reaction. Moreover, these writers would repudiate the ideal of Communism and the older ideal of State Socialism, as both of them tending to bureaucracy and tyranny. They demand a form and ideal of society which shall secure for the individual his spiritual liberty, and such rights of "property for use" as this liberty and the maintenance of the family require.

3. They feel the weakness of the Labour Movement in general, and in particular in Great Britain, owing to its lack of dominant and guiding principles, and its consequent incoherence and endless tendency to internal faction and division.

4. They see the root and ground of the ideas of justice and brotherhood and the universal duty and joy of social service only in the Christian doctrine of God, as it was proclaimed by the prophets of Israel and given its completion and universality in Jesus Christ; and as it was entrusted to the Church to constitute the basis of its mission. In every element of this fundamental doctrine—of God, of the Incarnation, of the Holy Spirit, of the ultimate victory of Christ, of the life eternal—they see some strong guarantee, which exists nowhere else, for the ideas and principles which

real social recovery constantly postulates. Nor would they be content with any presentation of religion as a mere system of doctrine. They see the visibly organized Church with its sacramental fellowship as belonging to the essence of the religion of the Incarnation. This organized Church is the Body of Christ. It is His organ and instrument for action in the world. It is commissioned not only to proclaim a truth but to live a social life. It exists not only to teach men the way, but to show it embodied before their eyes. In a word, these writers are both Christians and Catholics.

Thus (5) they do not share the current fear of dogma in religion. I suppose they would admit that the dogmatic spirit may become excessive and tyrannical, and that the dogmatic authority needs the constant challenge of reason. But they perceive both that Christianity is nothing if not dogmatic—that is, that it rests essentially upon a message proclaimed to be divine—and that every continuous human society, if it is to maintain any moral ideal, must rest upon a dogmatic basis, that is to say, it must be able to appeal to a certain groundwork of principles which are taken for granted.

But (6), they do not disguise from themselves the deplorable failure of the Church to exhibit the reality of brotherhood and to stand for its principles of justice and love. If one looks back to the early centuries one sees, indeed, brotherhood really taught and really lived. It was this exhibition of brotherhood that won the reverence of the world in spite of its prejudice against the Christians. And through all the period of the Middle Ages, though it is in vain to attempt to conceal from ourselves the very dark aspects of mediæval practice, yet the Church held Europe in some real recognition of a fellowship, at once supernatural and super-national, to which all men and nations belonged or should belong, and in which all men were bound to justice and to the recognition of their spiritual equality before God.

But since the Reformation broke up the visible unity of the Church, and the spirit of individualism both in the churches of the Reformation and in the Catholic church obscured the doctrine of the Kingdom of God on earth, and made the Church appear as little else than a piece of spiritual machinery for saving the individual soul for another world, its social function throughout Europe has been almost forgotten. The fabric of Industrialism was built up in almost all European countries on a basis manifestly anti-Christian, almost without remonstrance from the Church. Now the fabric of Industrialism seems to be crumbling by its own inherent rottenness, and the cry for reconstruction is heard in all directions, but the principles on which alone reconstruction can be based and the spiritual force of which alone it can be accomplished seem to be lacking. So it is that men of all kinds, however much alienated from "institutional religion," are looking, pathetically enough, towards the Church of Jesus Christ, and asking, in very varied tones of voice, what it can do for them in the Name of its Master: and meanwhile there are signs that the Church is waking from a long sleep and beginning to understand again what it means to pray constantly "Thy Kingdom come on earth."

I detect differences amongst these writers, but if I have read the essays aright, I seem to see this body of common principles and conclusions animating them all, and leading them to make a double appeal, first to the Church to take its principles seriously and to "discern the signs of the times," and secondly, to the democracy to consider whether it be not true that there is no security for the principles to which it is blindly appealing, and no real hope of social salvation, save in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God.

It is because the point of view of these writers, and the principles on which their point of view is based, so urgently need presentation to the bewildered world of to-day, and