

M.E. Gibbs

The Anglican Church in India 1600–1970,

ISPCK, Lucknow, 1972, 473 pp. Rs. 40.00; £3.00

It is paradoxical to note that many of the authentic books on Indian history are written by foreigners. These books, it should be admitted, are the results of diligent and painstaking research. There is no gainsaying that some of these books contain certain questionable points. This may be due to the prejudiced outlook of some authors who could not appreciate Indian culture. Consequently, they have sometimes disparaged the practices and customs of the natives. Such books should be taken with a pinch of salt. It is against this background that we have to evaluate the book of Miss Gibbs. One thing, very remarkable and noteworthy, is that she has skilfully avoided the above-mentioned pitfalls. Unlike many books, her book *The Anglican Church in India 1600–1970* is very objective and frank. Her long stay in India has enabled her to assimilate and appreciate the Indian scene with all its divergences from the European civilization.

Though the book covers a long period of three and a half centuries of Anglican Church history in India, the very experienced hand of the author has succeeded in shaping it in such a way that she could compress it in 473 pages to suit the taste of both the scholars and the ordinary readers.

The author has dealt in a digest form with many important points such as the problem of castes, the struggle for church independence, the establishment of the independent church of India, Burma and Ceylon in 1930, and their consciousness to adapt an Indian liturgy ("one of the objectives for which the church in India obtained freedom was to be able to devise liturgical forms more suited to Indian congregations" see p. 358) and many other interesting aspects of Indian Church history.

The position of the Anglican Church against the background of the Indian national movement must have been very delicate. The reader would expect some detailed description of the situation from a book like this if he does not skip pages as he might do with the history of C.F. Andrews. Similarly it would have been very greatly appreciated if the author has given a pastoral orientation instead of a biographical or historical one. But Miss

Gibbs says in her preface "If any of my readers are disappointed by what seems to them inadequate treatment of the matter with which they are familiar, I ask their pardon..."

This book is well organized in its treatise and has a substantial bibliography. In short, M.E. Gibbs has made a remarkable contribution to the Indian Church history by her erudite book *The Anglican Church in India 1600–1970*.

*Cherian Thalakulam*