

of his book he took up the Hegelian notion that the onward movement of the Christ idea would one day lead the community to shed the single Jesus and realise its own wider Christ character. In the 3rd edition he opted for Hegel's smoother notion that Jesus was the essential personal agent of the idea of 'the God-manhood' for all succeeding humanity.

But smoothness did him no good. He lost by this book all hope of parochial or professorial opportunity. He became, therefore, a theologian beyond the church, endeavouring always to communicate the sense of the vitality of Jesus which had driven his contemporaries to fashion a history from imagination.

HAMISH F. G. SWANSTON

**COMMANDS OF CHRIST**, by Paul S. Minear. *St. Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1973. 190pp. £2.*

The importance of Minear's work is that it is well-informed and springs from scholarship, but it is not confined to it; he actually thinks about the meaning of the teaching of Jesus. It is not a literary, jig-saw-puzzle examination with reflections appended, but is a serious attempt by a thinking theologian to reach a synthesis of New Testament thought on some of the most fundamental of the moral demands of Jesus. It is not a technical book, but a profoundly Christian one. At the same time, with a magisterial touch, the author makes firm criticisms of the short-sightedness of some technical experts, such as Bultmann and Perrin.

Minear takes chiefly the moral commands of the Sermon on the Mount, grouping them to give their general impact. Thus he brings out well the positive importance of integrity as conveyed by the commands which centre round Let Your Yes be Yes, and the basic demand for generosity without hope of reward which is basic to Christianity and is the theme of the commands to Love and Lend. The structural similarity between a number of these commands is used to underline the total, unrequited nature of this generosity, which are simply the outcome of the filial relationship to God our Father. Another interesting chapter is that on the series of commands to Become Last of All, the servant sayings, where Minear attempts to work back to the original of these sayings, which have been expanded and applied to so many aspects of life. One may of course question whether there was indeed *an* original; may not Jesus himself have made similar remarks on a number of

different occasions and on a number of related topics, all expressing the same attitude of service and disregard of self? But Minear does not indulge in the contempt, found in so many scriptural purists, for any formulation which cannot be traced definitively back to Jesus himself. Clearly he regards the primitive treatment of Jesus' words as having occurred under the guidance of the Spirit of Jesus. But a reason for putting the sayings back in their original form and context is to bring out their prophetic character, the fact that they proclaim a total reversal of the accepted values and standards of success. From the beginning Minear, in a passage of unusual optimism and realism for a theologian, points out that Jesus has never been so popular (a welcome contrast to the usual gloomy remarks about the rising tide of ungodliness), but also that the general enthusiasm for Jesus 'dulls the original outrage of his mission' (p. 10). In the last few chapters the meditative element predominates: the reflection on the other uses of the images Ask, Seek, Knock adds a new dimension to their use in the gospel saying; the comparison between the commands to Watch and Pray in the synoptic apocalypse and the failure of the disciples to observe these precepts so quickly afterwards in the story of the Passion is a striking idea.

Personally I do not find this book as striking and significant as the author's *Images of the Church* (1961), but it is a warm and enlightening book, combining scholarship and insight in an impressive manner.

HENRY WANSBROUGH

**THE RISE OF THE MONOPHYSITE MOVEMENT: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries**, by W. H. C. Frend. *Cambridge University Press, 1972. xvii + 405 pp. £12.50.*

This expensive book, based on his Birkbeck lectures at Cambridge, is the author's third major study of the early Church. Like its predecessors, it deals with an area in which the history of the Christian Church is intertwined with that of the Roman Empire; and like his

first major work, *The Donatist Church*, it is devoted to a dissident movement. The Monophysite Church, like the Donatist, was a group that separated itself from the main current of Christianity which had become recognised by the imperial government and had penetrated