

ESSAYS ON NEW TESTAMENT THEMES by Ernst Käsemann; *S.C.M. Press, 18s.*

STUDIES OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS by Ernst Fuchs; *S.C.M. Press, 21s.*

THEOLOGY AND PREACHING by Heinrich Ott; *Lutterworth Press, 21s.*

The managers of international ecumenism have so far succeeded in muffling the impact of Bultmannism in the latest Protestant thinking; but the lecture given by Ernst Käsemann two years ago at the Faith and Order Conference in Montreal should have indicated that the understanding of the nature of the Church promoted by his kind of exegesis undermines radically the hardwon basis of the ecumenical progress of the World Council. But the interest of the books under review is by no means limited to their making available to the English reader some more of the post-Bultmannian theology that now prevails in most influential centres of Protestant thought – they constitute more than just a warning of how illusory much existing ecumenism in fact is because of its careful avoidance of the reality of Bultmann's presence: for the Catholic theologian at any rate they are of great interest in themselves.

Ernst Käsemann, now of Tübingen, has distanced himself from Bultmann rather more than these essays disclose; but if it is for the most part his ecclesiological preoccupations that come to the fore here, it is characteristic that the exegesis is never conducted in isolation from philosophical critique of the interpretative categories involved. This is even more manifest in the studies by Ernst Fuchs, Bultmann's successor in the New Testament chair at Marburg. For, despite the title, the book is far more taken up with speculative-theological issues than with pure exegesis. Most of what Fuchs writes revolves round the 'hermeneu-

tical problem' – that is, round the problem of interpretation, not just in biblical exegesis and translation but in any understanding or meaning at all. The emphasis he places on the 'linguisticity' of human existence, supported largely by his study of Heidegger, seems to offer a remarkably apt point of contact with the kind of theological thinking one can imagine developing from study of Wittgenstein. There is now enough evidence to show that this would not be trumpery concordism.

Heinrich Ott, Barth's successor at Basel, presents himself here as a loyal Barthian who has felt the effect of Bultmann's ideas. This means that he wants to unite Barth's stress on the word of God ('Let God be God') with Bultmann's concern for the structure of man's understanding of this word (existential interpretation). He sets out to clarify the relation between systematic theology and kerygmatic preaching, making a convincing bid to bring out that this connection is more essential than much practice and theory would currently suggest. He remains provisionally in the position of searching for the foundations of a future dogmatics but tests his programme in terms of a discussion of the doctrine of sin as contained in the Heidelberg Catechism (1562), one of the greatest documents of Protestantism.

Though well translated, none of these books makes easy reading. But they repay the effort and we can only be grateful for their publication.

Fergus Kerr, O.P.

THE HEART OF MAN: ITS GENIUS FOR GOOD AND EVIL by Erich Fromm. *Routledge and Kegan Paul, 15s.*

The name of Erich Fromm will be more familiar to American than to British readers. Educated in German universities, he has spent the most fruitful years of his life in the United States as university teacher, consultant psychologist, and psychoanalyst. His chief published works indicate by

their titles his interest in social psychology: *Escape from Freedom* (1941), *Man for Himself* (1947), and *The Sane Society* (1955). His new book serves both as introduction to his main ideas and as a development of certain of them. In some ways it is a manifesto for our times, challenging, read-

able, well worth discussing. It could be used as a starting-point for dialogue between Christians and Humanists, involving also Jews, Marxists, and Buddhists (in whom Dr Fromm is particularly interested, as this and other of his writings show). It meets well the purpose of the series *Religious Perspectives* in which it appears.

The series as a whole illustrates how much there is in common between opposing groups, when once we begin to discuss man and the problems he faces in the modern world. The present book has long passages, for example in the chapter *Individual and Social Narcissism*, readily translatable into Christian or into Marxist terms. It would seem possible to advance a Christian-Marxist-Freudian agreement of some value if representatives of these positions could only come together with a sufficiently scientific outlook; they all profess the importance of such an outlook. But it seems too true that, as Fromm says: 'The vast majority of the men in the West, although they have "learned" the scientific

method in school or at the university, never really have been touched by the method of scientific, critical thinking. Even most of the professionals in the field of the natural sciences have remained *technicians*, and have not acquired a *scientific attitude*. For the majority of the population, the scientific method they were taught has had even less significance.' Group narcissism prevails, and surely not only as expressed in those national, racial and political movements to which the author points. Is not the sectarian strife of schools of psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts often an expression of contemporary group narcissism? Dr Fromm has faith in humanism as capable of transcending our numerous divisions, but Humanist Societies also can, and do, display narcissist attitudes. That is one reason why his book leaves a strengthened impression of the urgent need to improve communication between all who in any way care for the future of the human race.

Anthony Ross, O.P.

Correction.

In the June issue of *New Blackfriars*, SAMUEL JOHNSON: SELECTED WRITINGS, edited by R. T. Davies was wrongly described as being published by the Oxford University Press. The book is in fact published by Faber and Faber at 45s.