

CHRISTIAN HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION, Studies presented to John Knox, edited by W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule and R. R. Niebuhr. *Cambridge University Press, 1967. 428 pp. 55s.*

I am not dignant to make a proper comment upon this splendid *Festschrift*. The editors have brought together a unified and exciting collection of papers by deservedly eminent men. These do not abide my question. What I have done is to make an arbitrary, but I hope not graceless, choice. I have selected the papers of the three co-editors for particular notice. Those who were convened for this celebration will certainly not object to this acknowledgement of the editors' hard work.

Long before I joined the seminary I had relished John Knox's remark about 'the monstrous regiment'. It was a long time after I had left the seminary that I discovered the other John Knox and recognized that he was saying in a disciplined and scholarly manner what I was struggling to teach myself. Professor D. E. Ninham in this collection of papers fairly summarizes Professor Knox's view of the Church thuswise:

What the New Testament, including the gospels, *directly* reveals to us is a community, newly arisen in the first and early second centuries... they assert the immediate origins of this new community and its life lay in the activity of one Jesus, who had lived and died in Palestine in the earlier part of the first century but had been raised from the dead and was to be identified with the Christ with whom they were now in communion. Accordingly, they record some of their memories of the 'days of his flesh' mainly in the belief that a knowledge of his relationships and activities then would help to clarify and deepen relations with him in the present.

To the questions that Knox's position gives rise, the three editors in their papers have addressed themselves.

The Christian says, 'Jesus makes a difference to us now'. 'How?' asks the other. To this common situation Professor R. R. Niebuhr presents his paper, 'Archegos: An Essay on the Relation between the Biblical Jesus Christ and

the Present-Day Reader'. He begins by refusing to differentiate 'the other' who may be scholar or pewman, Christian or non-Christian, or any man who on reading the Gospel has 'a perception of Jesus as a person'. To have this perception of a person is to see 'the I in the thou'; to ask 'What is the meaning of Jesus?' is to ask 'How is Jesus related to me?'. Professor Knox answered this question by saying that a man understands himself through his participation in the collective-memory or culture of his society, and through participation in the Church's remembering of Christ a man can understand himself in relation to Christ. Professor Niebuhr suggests that Professor Knox's notion of collective memory is, like Bultmann's notion of determining choice, not wrong but inadequate to account for Jesus' present importance. For him it is because men are aware of the onslaught of God that they realise God is active in Jesus. Jesus enables men, as in his contemporary Palestine, to believe now in the reality of the Reign of God. In Jesus the Reign of God is immediate and concrete. He is, therefore, a personal comment upon Israel's previous understanding of that Reign. In him the Scriptures are interpreted. He is not simply the man who makes it possible for others to understand or to love, but to understand and love 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. Jesus is the *archegos*, the pioneer (Hebrews 12, 2). He moves onwards from the situation of the Old Testament.

The main part of Professor Niebuhr's paper is given over to making an analogy between the history of Israel coming to know itself and then understanding Jesus as the powerful *locus* of the Reign of God, and a man or society coming to know itself and to see Jesus as the meaning of existence. This is a form of typology, and I would passionately dispute Professor Niebuhr's suggestion that the 'method of reading history according to type and antitype' is finished. How could this be when, as he himself remarks, men always have 'the felt

Issues in Science and Religion

IAN G. BARBOUR

'Compact and didactic in style rather than popular or polemical and each chapter ends with a stocktaking summary which is a masterpiece of clarity. . . I know of nothing contemporary with a better claim to become a standard text'—*British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*

'This is a very good book . . . must be read'—*New Christian*. 30s net

Six World Religions

L. ALETRINO

The author is editor of the Dutch paper *Algemeen Handelsblad* and has considerable experience in presenting religious issues in a lively and readable style. His work has already enjoyed great success in Holland, and this translation has been made from the third Dutch edition. The main religions described are Islam, Buddhism, Brahmanism, Hinduism, Shintoism and Judaism, and the standpoint adopted throughout has been a historical one.

8s 6d net

S C M PRESS

moral need for a clearly symbolized principle of internal or personal unity and of steadfastness in the human world'? I would think that this comes out in primary and secondary Christian matters. The central doctrine that 'he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies' (Romans 8, 11), is a typological doctrine. As God has done to Jesus, so he will do to us. The paradigmatic past will be made effectively present. The peripheral doctrine of original sin is also framed according to a typological structure, Adam's sin is in us now. I think that Professor Niebuhr's argument is itself of this kind.

In a masterly paper which does not seem patient of summary, Professor Niebuhr sets out a Christology of relevance. Each man seeks to become a co-ordinated *persona*, an identifiable agent continually re-identifying himself with the changing part he sustains in the world at large. One man in his time plays many parts. We cannot be ourselves co-ordinated, cannot experience integrity of self, unless we accept our share in the co-ordination of the community, accept the trustworthiness of others. We know our own weakness and the possibility of strength. This is the 'faith before faith'. Each one of us is like Israel, confused and unknowing in the service of the little gods of every green tree and every high hill, aware at the same time of the covenant-call of Yahweh. Something struggles in us towards harmonious expression beyond ourselves. We expect (hope for and wait confidently) the manifestation of that power which gives pattern to the world and makes us discontent with our own chaos. We expect, like Jesus' contemporaries, an authoritative messiah. 'Jesus of Nazareth is the manifestation of the tendency and character that rules all powers.' Our lives are the place of contending pressures, and we see in Jesus 'the pattern of action' for our entry on the Reign of God Jesus shows us how to be an intelligent and patient *persona*. This is his present meaning for us.

Professor W. R. Farmer, in 'An Historical Essay on the Humanity of Jesus Christ', provides a particular and worked out example of in what this Christian patience consists. He considers the meaning of some of Jesus' parables in order to uncover the character of the man who told them. He shows how the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20, 1-16), the Prodigal Son (Luke 15, 11-32), and the Pharisee and the tax-collector (Luke 18, 9-14a), deal with the basic problem

conditioning the 'life-situation' of the Jews in Palestine at the time of Jesus, 'that of the law and its adequacy as a norm by which they could find a meaningful and satisfying mode of existence within a life-affirming cosmopolitan culture which was constantly calling the separatist character of Jewish communal life into question'. Professor Farmer shows how the teaching of these parables—compassion for the sinner and rebuke for the self-righteous—is quite unlike that of rabbinic parables dealing with the same question. It is a teaching which tells us a great deal about Jesus. Similar conclusions from the same materials are set out in Professor J. D. M. Derrett's article 'Law in the New Testament: The Parable of the Prodigal Son' (NTS, 14, 1, Oct. 1967, pp. 56-74).

Professor Farmer's study of the historical Jesus arrives at similar results to those of Professor Niebuhr's work. We are shown that the redemptive work of Christ was the encouraging of the 'individual and covenantal renewal that was taking place in response to his preaching', and that Jesus worked a revolution against 'sinful attempts to structure human existence on some exclusive ground'. Professor C. F. D. Moule's consideration of 'Obligation in the Ethic of Paul' leads him to dispute Professor Knox's thesis (*Chapters in the Life of Paul*, 1950, *The Ethic of Jesus in the Teaching of the Church*, 1961) that Paul unconsciously relaxed the revolutionary demand of Jesus for repentance. Professor Moule sees Paul's attack on legalism as part of the Christian revolution.

The legalism of the Judaizers is 'Adam's self-centredness', and the attempt to prove one's justice is sinful because it is a refusal to acknowledge man's dependence on God; Paul's concept of 'Adam's primal sin', and the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, demand that the Christian realize his full dependence on his Father. The only proper attitude is meeting our failure with repentance, with the self-demand for not less than all. Professor Moule's demonstration of Paul's employment of Adam's self-centredness as a picture of our present, and his demand that God's initiative in Christ be constantly 'reappropriated by repeated becoming' complements Professor Niebuhr's account of the faith which precedes life; his discussion of Paul's assault on the Pharisees who 'use the law in an attempt to establish' their righteousness, makes Professor Farmer's construction of Jesus' teaching and its effect on his contemporaries doubly convincing. His final sentence epitomizes the temper of this *Festschrift* and tells us much of the theologian in whose honour these papers were prepared: 'I offer these reflexions on Professor Knox's delineation of Paul as a token of my serious concern to wrestle with the implications of what he writes and of the way in which he stimulates a reader; and I know that he will welcome friendly debate on paper in exactly the same spirit in which he has always welcomed and engaged in it, with lively and genial interest, in verbal dialogue.'

HAMISH F. G. SWANSTON

THE CHURCH AND THE CHRISTIAN UNION: The Bampton Lectures for 1964, by Stephen Neill. *Oxford University Press, London, 1968.* 423 pp. 63s.

TOWARDS CHRISTIAN UNITY, a Symposium edited by Bernard Leeming, S.J. *Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1968.* 167 pp. 21s.

'The Church cannot be understood except in its nature as an expanding and missionary body. Yet the Churches have always found it extremely difficult to take seriously this aspect of their being.' Bishop Neill proposes to take it seriously. After a neat survey of attempts in recent years to define the boundaries of the Church (including the tentative approaches of Vatican II) he concludes that it is impossible to do so in terms of what the Church now is. It can only be attempted in terms of a larger reality to which it is dynamically related. We can only ask meaningfully about the Church, what is it *for*? It is for the world, it is missionary—the only society, as William Temple once remarked, which exists for the sake of those who are not members of it.

With this key many doors open. His appointment as Bampton lecturer enabled Bishop Neill to focus on questions arising out of his many years of experience as an Anglican bishop, historian of ecumenism, Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and the only surviving member of the commission which drafted the Church of South India scheme. What emerges (here fully revised) is a history and contemporary assessment of most of the important questions that have been asked about the Church, theological, pastoral and sociological, during the four decades since Bishop Headlam gave the first ecumenical Bampton. He enters on a sort of running debate with Headlam, scattering research projects liberally through his footnotes.