

and one can hardly operate without the lived experience of the faith in Community, that is Tradition. Dr. Kee himself is especially sensitive on this issue when Dr. Robinson refuses validity to Orders in the Free Churches. He describes him as 'adopting the conventional attitude of ecclesiastical fundamentalism' (p. 145), limited by 'inhibitions and assumptions' (p. 148). He finds it odd that the Bishop wanted modern translations of the Bible while retaining antique forms of prayer even for the Our Father, refusing 'to demythologise the priesthood' (p. 146) and talking an antiquated language to 'an invisible God' (p. 155). Dr. Robinson still thought that a truly contemporary person could be a Christian ... 'so long as there are no metaphysical, supernatural, mythological or religious prior conditions attached' (p. 161). One wonders whom the Bishop was talking for or speaking to. It is not surprising that he himself recognized that many Christians thought him to be denying what they affirmed, but it is not so clear how he thought that he was not denying what they affirmed. Dr. Kee says that the Bishop opposed the traditional doctrine of God 'because it is wrong, it misrepresents God', and opposed 'the old morality' because it 'was not truly moral' (p. 167).

Dr. Kee does not develop many of these issues in detail, and perhaps the Bishop's thought was not systematic enough to do so usefully. However, the book's title still puzzles this reviewer.

RICHARD J. TAYLOR

THE MAKING OF THE MODERN CHURCH: CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND SINCE 1800 by B.G. Worrall. S.P.C.K. 1988. Pp 312. £9.95.

This book tells the story of English Christianity since 1800. There are chapters on the usual subjects: the Oxford Movement, for example, and religion and science in the nineteenth century; and on the Missionary Movement, the Ecumenical Movement, and twentieth-century Biblical Theology. One has heard the story before: how Christianity grew amazingly in the Victorian years and spread missionary enterprises all over the globe; how there followed a more recent period of institutional decline, chiefly caused by Liberalism in its various forms; and how the tide has now turned in favour of Christianity, and will not recede as long as 'liberalism' does not revive.

Mr Worrall, who teaches Theological Studies at Thames Polytechnic, sums up this interpretation of modern Christian history, which he has outlined very clearly and moderately, by saying that 'by the late 1970s' (and by how much more, one is tempted to add, in the late 1980's) 'it was no longer common to find the very possibility of spiritual values being denied, and a new openness to religion was widespread'. Similarly, after a discussion of *The Myth of God Incarnate*, he says that 'by the later 1970s most academic biblical scholarship was showing more confidence in the broad historical reliability of the texts and a number of academic

philosophers and scientists were showing more openness to a christian view of the world.' And he seems to sum up his attitude when in his closing pages he says that 'by far the liveliest section of the Church in Britain at the end of the twentieth century is the so-called "House Church Movement" '. This is a movement whose origins lie in Brethrenism and Pentecostalism, and which has a strongly adventist theology: Mr Worrall is suggesting that the liveliest part of the British Church is to be found in Protestant, rather eccentric circles.

As far as Roman Catholicism is concerned, the author emphasises what he regards as the insularity of a Catholic community largely unaffected by the Second Vatican Council. However, 'in the last quarter of the twentieth century the Roman Catholic Church in England is probably less feared and more widely respected than it has been at any time since the Reformation, signs of great spiritual vitality are apparent, and the possibility of a fuller working-out of Vatican II offers hope for the future'. This is more encouraging than Mr. Worrall's account of the older Protestant Free Churches: even the discussions on church unity have contributed to their decline, and their best hope of recovery is to be found in reinforcement, if not replacement, by Pentecostalism, the Black-led Churches and the House-Church movement. A view of church history which concentrates on signs of 'decline' and 'spiritual renewal' (however defined) has inevitable limitations. I myself have been castigated recently by some reviewers for pointing out these limitations, and I won't repeat the exercise here. In *The Making of the Modern Church*, however, the approach leaves one, for example, with the impression that ecclesiastical politics is a thing of the past (though Mr Worrall does regret that leaders of the older Churches have not always given Pentecostalism an unqualified welcome.) It is unfortunate, I think, that there is no full-length consideration of the twentieth-century Church of England and of its relative place in the structure of modern English Christianity, or of its changing relationship with the Roman Catholic Church in England. There is a section on William Temple, which Mr Worrall may have felt acted as a substitute, but it doesn't as far as I am concerned, because Mr Worrall's main anxiety is to discuss Temple's theology, which he interprets as offering an explanation of the world in terms of the world's own philosophy: 'it does not challenge the world and its philosophy'. This leads us back to 'Biblical Theology', so that the opportunity to look more closely at what 'the making of the modern Church' may have meant in England is lost in familiar statements about an alleged 'liberal' failure to understand that the Bible is basically a book of theology. (To the contrary: writers like Jowett, Rashdall and Troeltsch were well aware of the theological nature of the Bible—they were simply not always impressed by the theological conclusions drawn from it.)

Catholic readers who attach high value to the Charismatic Movement will find this book sympathetic. Others may feel that this interpretation of modern church history, which depends on a firm contrast between 'Faith' and 'Liberalism', is beginning to run out of steam. 'Liberalism' has been a convenient Aunt Sally, but it does not provide an adequate explanation of the weaknesses of modern Christianity in England.

JOHN KENT