

One of the central problems with which theology should concern itself is with 'the other', the non-Christian world of other religions and of the secular. He gives a fascinating account of the churches' record—at times fairly enlightened—in confronting other cultures since Greek world first met Hebrew. The Church must always maintain openness, even at some risk, if it is to find the language to speak to the world outside itself. Within the Christian family he asks what it would mean for our differences over sacramental theology and practice if the starting-point were the missionary reality of the Church, as it was in the early years. Take the vexed question of infant baptism, for instance. What if we were to transpose the problem from what happens to the person baptized to what it means to the Church as a whole on relation to its witnessing character, its mission? His most searching questions concern the ministry. What is the essential nature of the priesthood? Surprisingly enough this is one of the questions most rarely treated in ecumenical discussions. Following von Rad he analyses the Old Testament concept (access to the holy, knowledge, declaration of the will of God, intercession for the people, suffering) and shows how these marks apply to the priesthood of Christ and, by participation, of the Church as a whole. He seems to allow no place here for degrees of participation. He is more concerned to show that the threefold ministry grew up (by a process admittedly obscure) out of the needs of an already existing Christian fellowship which did not keep the missionary situation sufficiently in view. The work of further expansion had to call on other forces outside the strictly ecclesial structure: religious orders, missionary societies. The missionary needs of today pose further questions: women in the ministry, the function of the layman at the frontier where the Church meets the world.

Plenty of avenues to explore. For one thing, this book should make us examine afresh the theme of mission in Vatican II. But Bishop Neill would be the first to admit that his

approach cannot exhaust the mystery of the Church. In fact, it raises other questions central to the ecumenical debate. His emphasis (especially as regards the ministry) calls for a balancing factor, the element of order, some criterion of stability and continuity amidst adaptation and change. Which brings us to the heuristic problem that preoccupied the Faith and Order conference at Bristol last September: by what authority do we interpret the complex data of the Church in the New Testament and sub-apostolic age and in the light of sociological factors?

Towards Christian Unity is a collection of papers given at Heythrop last July when delegates came from the dioceses of England and Wales to discuss how the Directory on Ecumenism could be implemented and to exchange information on what had, or had not been done in their areas. In this temperature taking there are plenty of indications of how far our official ecumenism is sound in wind and limb and how much further exercise is needed compared with Heythrop I five years ago when Cardinal Bea presided just before the opening of the Council. What particularly concerned the delegates (apart from the question of reciprocity of pulpits which is somewhat muted here) was education in ecumenism at all levels, academic and grass-roots. This Symposium makes a useful contribution to that process with its handy bibliographies and the syllabus for multilateral discussion groups drawn up by Fr Henry St John, O.P., and printed here as an appendix. Especially valuable are the talks from the 'fraternal delegates'; a distinguished Congregationalist, Methodist, Evangelical Anglican and the General Secretary and Associate General Secretary of the British Council of Churches state their hopes and frank reservations *vis-à-vis* relations with the Roman Catholic Church. Here is a chance of getting one's teeth into the 'good red meat' of dialogue. But an important voice is missing. Perhaps the Eastern Churches will have their say at Heythrop III.

ANTHONY NYE, S.J.

CHURCH AND STATE IN BRITAIN SINCE 1820, by David Nicholls. *Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1967.* cloth 35s. paperback 18s.

The three great revolutions, the American, the French and the Industrial, which governed the political, social and economic development of the nineteenth century, inevitably transformed earlier notions or arrangements determining

the connexions between Church and state or Church and society. This became one of the most important constitutional issues of the time and ultimately its implications became evident everywhere.

Present-day controversies are limited by what went before if only for the reason that things might have happened differently. The purpose of this series of *Readings in Politics and Society* is to help discussions of modern problems by illustrating them historically. This aim is successfully achieved in this collection of documents which brings together many of the most important British writings and speeches on the relations between Church and state from earlier writers like Coleridge to contemporary figures such as Lord Butler.

The extracts are roughly divided into four main chapters. The first outlines the idea of the Christian Commonwealth as it was variously defended during the first half of the nineteenth century. This is followed by several passages from those who favoured separation or disestablishment. A third chapter gives later examples of attempts to vindicate the idea of a Christian society, while the pluralist position is the subject of the final chapter. The present reviewer thought it a happy coincidence that Newman's insistence on the rights of conscience should be followed by Figgis's defence of a Free Church in a Free State—Figgis having consciously used Newman's writings in his critique of ultramontaniam. There are two appendices. The first is a selection of Catholic documents from the unfortunate encyclical *Mirari vos* in 1832, to the decree of the Second

Vatican Council on religious liberty. The second appendix deals with the relation between law and morals, and includes different comments on the work and report of the Wolfenden Committee.

The extracts are introduced by brief but helpful remarks and there is a general introduction giving basic historical, administrative or legal details, and an outline of the present situation in England. There is also an interesting account of the theories and opinions of those who still believe in the ideal of a Christian commonwealth and those who prefer the liberal ideal of the secular state. This includes a discussion of possible ways (logical, psychological or sociological) in which ethics might be said to be independent of religion.

The author himself favours religious pluralism, a Free Church in a Free State, and he sees the Church's concern as a limited one—its business is religion and it is concerned with the ultimate purpose and significance of life. He comes down against the view that the Church is simply the nation seen from a particular angle, that the Church is a total community or omniscient body, and he takes issue with Bishop Robinson and Dr Vidler. Even those who disagree with his conclusions will be interested in his reasoning and they will find his collection of documents a useful source of information.

J. DEREK HOLMES

ACTION MARCHE VERS DIEU, by Louis-Joseph Lebreton. *Les Editions ouvrières, Paris, 1967.* 184 pp.

L'ÉVANGILE DE JUSTICE, by Paul Gauthier. *Les Editions du Cerf, 1967.* 318 pp.

CES CHRÉTIENS QUE NOUS DEVENONS, by A.-M. Besnard. *Les Editions du Cerf, 1967.* 159 pp.

PRAYER IN THE SECULAR CITY, by Douglas Rhymes. *Lutterworth Press, 1967.* 140 pp. 8s. 6d.

The re-discovered definition of the Church's role in the world as being a mission to the poor, found its most vital expression in the priest-worker movement and its confirmation in Vatican II. *Action Marche vers Dieu*, first published in 1949, was contemporary with the early stages. Lebreton argues that action for others is an authentic means of union with God and, *vis-à-vis* the Marxists, that religious action is effectively opposed to capitalism and is not a further alienation. The chief obstacles are the Church's alignment with bourgeois capitalism and the degenerate theory that the spiritual life consists merely in piety and devotions.

L'Évangile de Justice scrutinizes the schemas of Vatican II, in conjunction with background documents and discussions, to see how far these ideas were endorsed by the Council. The Church's mission to the poor and the pastoral

necessity of the priest-workers were confirmed. But Gauthier regrets that the disentanglement from capitalism was far from complete. For him the Gospel teaching on justice is a clear condemnation of the inequalities between rich and poor, whether individuals, classes or nations. The Church cannot evangelize the poor until she is no longer possessed by the rich.

Ces Chrétiens que Nous Devenons also develops a spirituality of action. Besnard rejects the old *prie-dieu* pieties in favour of a liturgical and sacramental spirituality. True spirituality is concerned with the burdens of daily life and seeks to co-operate with God's will as revealed through events.

Prayer in the Secular City argues against the idea that prayer is an inner conversation, separated from life or at best a separate activity alongside other activities. The spiritual life