

condemnation of new Churches as schismatic and Puritan oversimplification. Thus placed, Field called Tridentine Rome itself schismatic and Puritans jejune. At the time of his death Field was working on a book intended to clarify the points of contention between Rome and the Church of England.

Taking us through the seventeenth century with its liberal Protestants, through the eighteenth century with its Liberal Catholics, through the nineteenth century with its High Church tradition, Dr Avis settles to three paradigms: the Erastian (a single Christian commonwealth), which reached its height before the Civil War; the Apostolic, which came to its reformed apogee in the Anglo-Catholic movement (derided by Arnold and Hare as 'episcopolatry'), and the Christological or Baptismal, which now hold the ring by holding a reductionist doctrine of the Church. He approves of the Catholic and Evangelical wings as balances to the centre, and does not want to see 'a dominant liberal consensus' drive them to the margin or beyond. In a word, Dr. Avis asks for a full spectrum in which he places his own easel near a moderate middle. 'Not too little, not too much, but just right' was the great Erasmic advice—in a nutshell, common baptismal faith of all professing Christians.

Reading this book of amazing range and judgment, written by an Essex vicar, I am reminded of Mandell Creighton, sitting in his Northumberland vicarage of Embleton composing his five volumes *History of the Papacy*. By way of the Cambridge Dixie professorship and Peterborough, he ended as Bishop of London. And Dr. Avis?

ALBERIC STACPOOLE OSB

**MODERN CATHOLICISM: Vatican II and After** edited by Adrian Hastings. *SPCK*. Pp xvii + 473. £20.

The sub-title of this book is a salutary reminder that there are now children being baptised into the church whose parents were not born when the Second Vatican Council ended twenty-six years ago. This large, but very readable book therefore begins with historical introductions. There are introductions to the period between Vatican I and II, and to the place of councils in church history, brief biographical introductions to popes Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI, and more detailed introductions to the main documents of the Council. Each section ends with a brief selected bibliography for further reading, producing in less than 200 pages a reliable guide to those approaching the subject for the first time, or for those who teach the history of the period. It could well become what Adrian Hastings intended—a handbook.

Having dealt with the period of the Council, the book now moves on to the impact of the Council and the changes which it has brought about at all levels, institutional, liturgical, ethical, devotional. Or does it? I believe at this point there is a subtle transition from the descriptive to the prescriptive, from the sub-title to the main title, from the historical to the theological, even ideological. If I may put it in an uncharacteristically

abrasive way I should say that if 'tradition' is a Catholic word, 'modern' is a Protestant word. The idea of 'modern Catholicism' is therefore to some a vision—to others a nightmare. 'Modern Catholicism' is not a synonym for 'how the Catholic Church happens to be at this period in time'. Rather it is a vision, a prescription, a goal for the transformation of Catholicism. The contributors, women and men, lay and clergy, working throughout the world, are advocates of modern Catholicism and this is a factor in their particular presentations. For them the Council opened the door, or a window of opportunity, for the church to move in this direction. Their essays examine the extent to which the potential has been realised. Or more ominously, Peter Hebblethwaite, in a concluding essay on John Paul II argues that the pope is now implementing reactionary policies in the name of the Council. How ironic that progressive Catholics looked for a non-Italian pope, on the assumption that this would mean a new perspective on the modern world. At a time when Italy is an important member of the European Economic Community and has re-entered the world scene, the non-Italian pope maintains a restricted Polish view of things, the time-warped perspective of a world which has gone.

The transition in the book comes with a chapter on 'Unfinished Business' by Joseph Laishley, of Heythrop College. He is not referring to a mere updating, ad hoc reforms which will always engender debate. The fundamental division concerns a change of attitude or mind-set (he might even have said *metanoia*/conversion) which accepts historicity and plurality. Each decade sees important changes in our world, and requires different responses to the Council. This 'unfinished' situation is at once threatening and creative. In the modern world it is no longer possible to adopt absolutist, ahistorical, essentialist norms from which doctrinal and ethical positions are deduced. Practices which arose because of actual needs have been 'Platonized', given ontological status so that they are maintained even when the original circumstances have disappeared, indeed even when they prevent a response to new needs. Laishley applies this new perspective to Ecclesial and Theological Pluralism, Intercommunion, Birth Control, and Celibacy.

Other chapters deal with the impact of the Council on such matters as Devotion, the Place of Women in the Church, Marian Apparitions, Church and State, War. There is also a fascinating roundup of studies on the impact of the Council on countries and regions throughout the world. Of particular interest is the section by Grazyna Sikorska on Eastern Europe. There is also an account of ecumenical relations with different churches, 'the elite discussing the exotic', and this leads me to my final observation.

It is impossible to do justice to such a collection of essays of consistently high quality, but a Protestant might get the impression that the Catholic Church has at last accepted the Protestant approach to the modern world. This is said at specific points, quite disarmingly. However such a conclusion would be quite superficial. The dividing line is not drawn between Catholic and Protestant, but runs through both communities. It could perhaps be illustrated in those too much ignored words of Jesus which were blasphemous to the ears of his co-

religionists: 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.' This saying is echoed several times in the book: the church was not made for the pope, but the pope for the church; the world was not made for the church, but the church for the world. Ecumenism will come to nothing if the oikumene is the church rather than the world. Liberation theology has provided an illustration of this point. 'God so loved the world...' Not surprisingly it is when Christians embody the love of God for His world that they discover themselves graciously to be members of the Body of Christ. Modern Catholicism, as defined in this book, should be a sign of hope to all Christians. It frequently happens that those who wish to acknowledge the achievements of the modern world commit themselves to principles which are in fact much older and more fundamental than those rigid and relatively recent positions guarded as tradition.

ALISTAIR KEE

**THE RESURRECTION: NARRATIVE AND BELIEF** by J.I.H. McDonald, SPCK. 1989, Pp. xii + 161. £15.00

In his foreword to this book James P. Mackey says, 'I asked the Scripture scholar if he could show how "risen" life could be attributed to Jesus before his death and consequently felt by us before ours.'

He then summarizes the argument of the book (viii—ix): From the opening chapter ... the unique character of Christian faith becomes obvious: instead of idealized figures ... we have a future already effective for us in a man who is victorious precisely by living and dying like all of us.... This one Paul encountered, much in the way any of us can encounter him, by granting entry ... to the life, the spirit, that made Jesus what he was and is, 'God with us' ... This one Mark depicts in metaphorical story. ... if only by refusing to add any final and unambiguous encounter with a risen and victorious Lord, Mark lets us know that we can encounter this one still in the obstacles and failures of life. ... With Matthew and Luke, scenes from the ends of the Gospels are shown to contain the key to the whole structure of the Gospels ... Matthew's sense of power ... of Jesus from his great closing scene ... Luke's equally powerful sense of the glory of the Lord ... in the structure of a journey, the interpretation of Scripture, the fellowship of a meal.... ... the main point of the book: that resurrections are ends, in the true sense of emergences of what was there all along; and so ... beginnings of what is always there for us all. And finally ... John's ... deployment of symbolism in order to reveal what Jesus revealed: eternal life, like eternal beauty, ... underneath the fragility of all finite existence.'

In his own Introduction the author makes the all-important point that to interpret the New Testament is 'to be drawn into its world and to find meaning there.' The reader is throughout challenged by it; and it is a description of a world which has already reached considerable sophistication compared with its Old Testament roots: the simple morality of Deuteronomy is reworked into an understanding of history which requires hope for the re-creation of the nation as an integral part of the divine purpose. Ideas about the after-life, overlapping with Old