

Adolf Schlatter, and we should have to believe, despite the impression we gain to the contrary, that he still has a high admiration of Bultmann. He is a lonely spirit, sometimes haunted in his exegesis by the fear that someone may have thought of his solution before. Perhaps it will win him footnotes all to himself in future commentaries. But perhaps he will simply be lumped under 'Bultmann; with variations'. Like some other scholars who have recently

climbed the public rostrum, E. Käsemann's manner can be rather tiresome. But when he is really on the track of the truth about the Gospel and Christ, he writes moving and stimulating pages, reiterating his basic point that Jesus did not come to save the pious, and was at war on all forms of phariseeism. The vigour of these utterances is well conveyed in the English translation by Canon W. J. Montague.

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**THE TRINITY**, by Karl Rahner, S. J. *Burns & Oates/Herder and Herder, London, 1970. 112 pp. 30s.*

Books on the doctrine of the Trinity are relatively rare. This is not because publishers are afraid that such books would not sell but because theologians themselves feel uncertain when they have to teach, or worse, have to preach on the doctrine of the Trinity. This small book by Karl Rahner will convince many readers that their uncertainty and fear are exaggerated.

Karl Rahner has never had any doubt that the doctrine of the Trinity is the core of Christian belief and that no renewal of theology can be complete without a real revision of the average textbook theology of the Trinity. The 'death of God' theology which generally did not give any attention to the Trinitarian concept of God seems to have confirmed this point of view. Christians can only speak about the Trinity or they have to remain silent.

The English edition of this work by Rahner is the translation of chapter 5 of the second volume of *Mysterium Salutis*, a modern German handbook for dogma, published in 1967. Partly it is a revision of articles published in *Theological Investigations*. The reader has to bear this in mind because he will, for instance, miss a section on the doctrine of the Trinity in Scripture and meet with some repetitions, though always in a different context.

The important contribution of this book to a renewal of the theology of the Trinity is that it does away with a lot of questions which gave rise to lengthy discussions with subtle distinctions in the theological handbooks. Karl Rahner shows convincingly that many of these questions are bound up with a certain type of theology which has been very useful in the past but now fails to conceptualize for modern man the good news of the gospel.

In the first part of his book, Karl Rahner outlines the method and structure of a new treatise on the Triune God. He wants to link

the theology of the Trinity with the Christian way of life. He shows that it is impossible to separate questions such as 'whether God exists' and 'whether God is one' from the question 'who God is'. It is not possible any longer to speak about God without speaking about the Trinity. The theology of the Trinity is not an intellectual game but a mystery of salvation. We believe in the Trinity because God has revealed himself in the life and death of Jesus. Questions such as whether another person of the Trinity could have been incarnate are meaningless. We have to stick to the facts.

The second part of the book gives the main lines of the official Trinitarian doctrine of the Church. Like Karl Barth who has clearly influenced Karl Rahner's theology of the Trinity, Rahner wonders whether the term 'person' is still a suitable word to be used in the doctrine of the Trinity. This term has now acquired shades of meaning which cannot easily be reconciled with the Trinitarian doctrine.

This consideration plays a great part in the third part of the book where Karl Rahner tries to give a systematic outline of a new Trinitarian theology. This part may be less appealing to English readership because the terms used are rather technical. The book concludes with refuting the classic 'psychological' doctrine of the Trinity.

This book opens up new possibilities of talking about the Trinity. One may wonder, however, whether Karl Rahner is not too worried about the unity of the Trinity as if we knew what unity in a merely human context means. Can the word 'person' really be avoided? One cannot help thinking that for Karl Rahner the doctrine of the Trinity remains something of an embarrassment and this should not be necessary.

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