

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

CES CHRETIENS 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

is the interaction of reflection and action. Deciding how to live by reflecting on the Scriptures and living by those decisions makes our whole life prayer. Prayer is thought *and* action. Within this frame work asceticism, prayers and liturgy, etc., can all be rehabilitated.

These books are all witnesses to the developing sense of the Church's mission in the world. One aspect of this is a new theology of action, for priests and laity, which represents a triumph over a withdrawn and defensive spirituality and accords with one contemporary view of man as controller of his environment and destiny. But the other aspect of the Church's mission, namely the mission field, tends to be neglected in England. In France the new theology of

action was combined with an evaluation of the Church's sociological position and her alienation from the poor. This resulted in the poor being given a precise social and political identity: the workers. This judgment may have been simplified and it cannot be transferred as it stands to England; nevertheless, this definition of the field of action was essential to the vitality of the Church's mission in France. In England there is a flow of books on the theology of action, but the field of action itself is described in them only in the most general terms as a technological, urbanized, materialist society. Effective action requires a more specific assessment of the Church's actual position in this society and a clearer definition of the new direction in which she should go.

WILLIAM HALTON

ANNOUNCING THE WORD OF GOD, by J. A. Jungmann. *Burns Oates, 1967.* 174 pp. 30s.

THEMES OF CATECHESIS, by Marcel van Caster. *Burns and Oates, 1967.* 207 pp. 21s.

Jungmann and van Caster: both have done much for catechetics and we have come to expect a lot from them, perhaps too much. Unhappily I found each of these books a bit of a disappointment.

In *Announcing the Word of God* Jungmann attempts to give some theological reflections on the main themes which he highlighted in *The Good News Yesterday and Today* (1936). That book marked a turning point in catechetics. Broadly speaking, the catechetical movement had, until then, concerned itself with improving methods. Jungmann turned our attention to content and structure and took us back through scripture and liturgy to God's message as Salvation History. In 1962 an English translation was published in America and in recent years the ideas of Jungmann have been absorbed in this country through catechetical courses and literature.

It is a mark of Jungmann's earlier success that this recent volume seems to have little to say that is new or surprising. For this reason it is just a bit disappointing, but it is useful to have it, nonetheless. While we have to press forward to new insights in the wake of Vatican II we should remember that many Catholics are still in a theological twilight. As Jungmann puts it, 'our earnest care, however, must be directed to the great mass of those who are indeed within the Church into which they were born, but who have never given the slightest thought to what that means' (p. 9), and '... the fresh wind now blowing has

still to penetrate many neglected corners, so further study is still required; and most advantage will come from study that approaches the subject historically' (p. 19).

It is this historical approach that is often lacking in other works on renewal and which Jungmann is so well fitted to provide. He traces the preaching of the Word from its origins in the early Church through later periods and shows how heresy led to definition of disputed points which in turn has sometimes produced a certain imbalance. Such an historical approach is undertaken not from a love of archaeologism but because it enables us to see that the Church has changed, is changing and should continue to change.

One area of theology at present most vigorously debated is Christology. It is asserted by many that we have tended to stress the divinity of Christ to the detriment of an awareness of his humanity. Jungmann traces in detail how this has come about. Similarly, the way in which devotion to Mary has developed is examined and this illuminates the chapter on Mary in the Second Vatican Council's decree on the Church. Other topics include the Church; Grace; the Eucharist; religion in the world; prayer. Catechists and teachers will find a lot in this book to meditate on and to give a solid background to their experiments in making religion living and creative for their pupils. It will not give them material that is immediately of use in teaching or preaching. The German original was written in 1963 and,