

setting of the sayings, (b) the Marcan pattern, (c) Jesus' own use of the term, (d) Jesus the Son of Man. And so Dr Hooker concludes in a

way which is wholly consonant with the more usual findings of Christian tradition.

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**THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY OF CHRIST: A STUDY OF PATTERN IN CHRISTOLOGY**, by John Knox. *Cambridge University Press*, 1967. 118 pp. 20s.

The first three chapters of this book contain an account of the development of Christology within the New Testament; the remaining three contain a critical reformulation of Christology in accordance with the author's own outlook. The New-Testament development is seen as moving from an initial adoptionism through a kenotic phase to docetism, though, as Dr Knox makes plain, docetism was not the form of story which the Church was willing finally to accept. This does not mean, however, that Dr Knox is himself willing to accept the classical Chalcedonian doctrine in anything other than a highly symbolic and mythological interpretation. For him the personal pre-existence of Jesus is simply incompatible with the reality of his human nature. This is not argued but repeatedly asserted: 'We can have the humanity without the pre-existence and we can have the pre-existence without the humanity. There is absolutely no way of having both' (p. 106). However, Dr Knox wishes to retain the traditional formulas, while giving them a meaning that Chalcedon would certainly have repudiated: 'When we join the congregation in confessing the pre-existence, we are asserting, as we are bound by our own existence as Christians to do, that God, the Father Almighty, Maker of the heavens and the earth, was back of, present in, and acting through the whole event of which the human life of Jesus was the centre. We are saying that *God* was in Christ—not in the resurrection only, but in the whole of the human career from conception through death' (p. 107. 'Through' in American English means, of course, 'up to and including', not 'up to and beyond'). Surprisingly, Dr Knox denies that this position is adoptionist; the reason for this would seem to be that he does not in any case hold that the purpose of Christology is to make sense of the life of Jesus as it is recorded in the Gospels; it is to make sense of the experience of the primitive Church. What it does, and what the Church has done from the start, is to weave a pattern of myth around the figure of the earthly Jesus in order to provide a conceptual scheme for the expression of the Church's own experience. In spite of the way in which Dr Knox speaks of

the Church as having a 'memory' of Jesus, it seems clear that for him the Gospels do not constitute in any sense a record of the witness of those who saw the deeds and heard the words of Jesus; what they are really *about* is not Jesus but the consciousness of primitive Christians. And, as far as Jesus himself is concerned, it is axiomatic that if he is fully human he cannot be, in anything other than a symbolic or pictorial sense, divine. Thus Dr Knox tells us that to speak of God the Word as being made flesh in Christ 'is by no means the same thing as identifying Jesus of Nazareth with this pre-existing, and always existing, hypostasis. Just as the reality of God is not exhausted in the Logos, yet is fully present in it, so the reality of the Logos was fully present in the Event of which the human life of Jesus was the centre and therefore pre-eminently in that human life itself, but without being simply identical with Jesus' (p. 109). He says categorically that 'it is impossible to conceive that God could become a man' (p. 111).

It is perfectly clear that Dr Knox believes himself to be interpreting the classical Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and not to be putting something else in its place; it is equally clear to me that he is in fact doing nothing of the sort. That this is so appears from the fact that, if he is right, it would have been idolatrous for the Apostles during the earthly life of Jesus to have given Jesus the worship which we now give him. Dr Knox, by his own avowal, is not happy to say that the Word was incarnate in Jesus but that 'the Incarnation took place in Jesus-in-the-midst-of-his-own—in other words, in the nascent Church' (p. 112). This is not a matter of theological technicalities and hair-splitting; it strikes at the root of Christian discipleship, the giving to a man who was crucified in Palestine the unconditional allegiance which God alone can rightly receive. The assertions which Christians make at their baptism are no longer assertions about Jesus; 'Jesus' becomes simply the model for the correlation and systematization of the experience of the Christian Church, parallel to the way in which the concepts of atomic physics provide a model for the correlation and systematization of physical phenomena. It is significant and disquieting

that Dr Knox and those who think with him find it more congenial to talk about the Christ-Event than about the Person Christ; but how does one give personal allegiance to an *event*? One might have a genuine (though, it is to be hoped, a conditional and finite) devotion to Lord Nelson but hardly to the Battle of Trafalgar. Plainly, Dr Knox is striving to avoid entangling Christian belief with metaphysical concepts and systems; but, like so many of those who attempt this task, he uncritically accepts the assumptions of one particular contemporary metaphysical doctrine, in his case the doctrine that experience is the object and not just the medium of knowledge. (To preserve the Christian faith from contamination by metaphysics you need a metaphysician, not a non-metaphysician!) In asserting, as he does, without argument that the true humanity of Jesus excludes his pre-existence, Dr Knox brushes aside as unworthy of attention the whole tradition of Christological thought. It is significant that, while mythologizing belief about Christ, Dr Knox sees no need to mythologize belief about God; indeed, it is precisely because he understands 'God' in the traditional metaphysical sense that he denies Jesus' metaphysical pre-existence. More thorough-going revisionists, such as Dr Van Buren, find no difficulty in saying (of course in a

mythological sense) that Christ is God, because for them Christ and God are equally mythological. Dr Knox, however, appears to be running with the mythological Christological hare and following with the metaphysical theistic hounds. He is quite certainly doing his best to retain the traditional Christian attitude to Jesus; he speaks of Jesus as divine, but only in the sense that his divinity is 'a transformed, a redeemed and redemptive, *humanity*' (p. 113) and, while using the term 'divinity' of Jesus, he noticeably avoids the term 'deity'. He explicitly asserts that what matters is not who Christ *was* but what was *happening* in him and that nothing more can be required of a Christology than that it takes adequate account of the experience of the Church (pp. 56f). I can only comment that a Christology which limits itself to taking adequate account of the experience of the Church will be found in the end not to have taken adequate account of that experience. It is paradoxical that Dr Knox, with his extreme emphasis upon the experience of the Church, finds himself unable to accept the Church's own account of the ground of that experience; this does, I think, suggest that the metaphysical, epistemological and methodological tools with which he has equipped himself are not in fact adequate to his task.

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**RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD**, by S. Radhakrishnan. *George Allen and Unwin*. 25s.

For a lifetime the eminent author of this study has been caught up in a passionate effort to bridge the spiritual and intellectual gulf between East and West. He is so eminent that it is an embarrassment to know how to describe him; which of his many titles to apply. Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan has served his country as ambassador to Russia during the grim days of the Stalinist ice age, as Vice-President and as one of India's best loved Presidents. His massive scholarship is embodied in editions of the central scriptures of Hinduism, the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Brahma Sutra*, which have been recognized as classics. But Dr Radhakrishnan is equally well known as an authority on comparative religion from books like *Religion and Society*, *An Idealist View of Life* and *East and West in Religion*. His seminars at All Souls during the time when he was Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford revealed, too, the wide range of his interests, his fascination with the lives and works of outstanding figures from many different faiths.

It is from a unique vantage point, then, that *Religion in a Changing World* has been written. And it is a book which Catholics cannot afford to ignore. The changes which Dr Radhakrishnan emphasizes have come about because now 'The human race is one. This oneness of humanity is more than a phrase it is not a mere dream. It is becoming a historic fact. . . . We stand on the threshold of a new society, a single society.'

His interpretation of this new situation comes close in some ways to Teilhard de Chardin's vision of convergence, of increasing complexification, and it is clear that he has gained a deeper respect for the Church on account of the wider, more genuinely universal views which have lately been circulating among Catholics. Above all because of the ecumenism and spirit of rigorous self-criticism promoted by Pope John through the Second Vatican Council and since supported by Pope Paul. The Christian churches generally now find more favour in Hindu eyes because of their greater tolerance of one another and their lessening