

Reviews

Stephen Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber (eds.): *The Layman in Christian History*. 408 pp. 40s. S.C.M.
Bishop of Woolwich and others: *Layman's Church*. 99 pp. 5s. Lutterworth Press.

We have to thank the Department on the Laity of the World Council of Churches for what is, in the words of Stephen Neill, "a genuinely original" piece of work. In a series of sixteen essays, we are presented with a general survey "of the life and witness of the lay membership of the Church of Christ."

In the first five chapters the story is told down to the Age of the Reformation. In the pre-Constantinian Period, G. H. Williams makes clear that the layman was a thoroughgoing participant in the church's corporate priesthood, active in its worship, teaching, service, government and discipline. Even when a process of differentiation took place, "the cleric but concentrated in his person an action that continued to belong to the whole baptismal community." The third century, with its large influx of nominal Christians, witnessed the subordination of the laity. "Not very much remained of the 'royal priesthood' shared by all members of the People of God." The layman had to be content with his passionate interest in theology, and with being the advocate and benefactor of the church.

We emerge from almost total ignorance concerning the Dark Ages to find a fundamental division in Medieval life between clergy and laity, both in status and function, with the secular ruler, neither priest nor layman, clinging to the idea of royal authority within the church. The Reformation brought new emphasis on the unity of all Christians, incorporated by baptism and faith into the one fundamental Christian estate, and also, on the lay calling to serve Christ and his brethren in the world. It did not, however, maintain its witness to Christian solidarity, for, as Gordon Rupp points out, the real debate was not about laity but ministry, and was carried on by the clerics.

The story is then divided, first geographically, into chapters on Europe, Britain and the United States, and secondly, ecclesiastically, with chapters on the Radical Reformation, the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Younger Churches, and the Evangelical Churches in Latin America. A final chapter, by Hans-Ruedi Weber, deals with the "Rediscovery of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement."

Obviously no summary can do justice to the wealth of material. The long section on Roman Catholicism indicates a growing awareness that the Church does not equal the hierarchy, and pleads for a balance of brotherly co-operation between clergy and laity. The chapter on the "British Layman in Modern Times" seemed to this Free Churchman a little weighted on the Anglican side, though recompense is doubtless found in F. H. Littell's account of the Radical Reformation.

Many are the lessons to be learnt and re-learnt from this book, for it must be admitted that there is now a welcome sense of familiarity with some of the things it has to say. More than once it is pointed out that lay renewal, like the Liturgical Movement, is ecumenical in character, and that there is a further historical and essential connection between lay participation and missionary zeal (cf. especially, chapter 11).

This leads to a most important emphasis in both books under review. There are not only different aspects of lay Christianity (made clear for instance in the chapter on Britain), there are also different types of layman. In trying to define the area under consideration (p. 16f.), Stephen Neill points out that once we have distinguished between 'ordained' and 'lay' there are further distinctions to be made. There are, for instance, those who have and still do, "live of the Gospel"—monks, friars, missionaries, teachers—and those who, whilst not dependent on the church, nevertheless make it the centre of their lives and devote their spare time to its activities.

These are necessary, but the third type is surely most sensitive to his true role within the corporate ministry of the whole *laos*, namely the layman who really lives in the world and not in the church, who is aware of the tension between the two, but who realizes that here in daily work and life is the place where his vocation as a Christian is to be exercised.

The task of the ordained is not to enlist the laity for "church activities" but to help the laity to be the church genuinely dispersed—and immersed—in the world. As J. A. T. Robinson points out in chapter one of *Layman's Church*, we are all too adept at training the "good layman" to be a "good churchman" or, as Douglas Rhymes puts it, a "clericalised layman."

Reading in the first book F. C. Mather's account of the British Layman in Modern Times, one gets the impression of a growing amount of right thinking alongside a certain poverty of achievement in putting it into practice. The second book is, therefore, all the more welcome. It contains the main speeches at a lay conference organised by the Keble Group in 1962. The Bishop of Woolwich writes helpfully on the Ministry and the laity, and Canon Rhymes contributes a chapter which could be well used in any church as

the basis for a thoroughgoing act of self-examination, but otherwise it is largely concerned with domestic problems of the Anglican Church, and this might perhaps have been made a little clearer on the jacket.

M. H. TAYLOR

R. J. W. Bevan (ed.), *The Churches and Christian Unity*. 263 pp. 25s. Oxford University Press.

Robert Kaiser, *Inside the Council*. 250 pp. 25s. Burns and Oates.

Cardinal Bea, *The Unity of Christians*. 231 pp. 21s. Geoffrey Chapman.

The Churches and Christian Unity is a symposium of essays, intended to foster appreciation of the points of view of the various Christian bodies and to show their relation to the ecumenical movement. There are two Baptist contributions. One is by Kenneth Latourette who writes the Prologue, "World-Wide Christianity at the Twentieth Century Mark." He shows that although, because of the "population explosion," there are many more unevangelised peoples than ever before, yet "the faith is more widely represented, more deeply rooted among more peoples, and is having a more extensive effect upon the human race than at any earlier period." He sees no possibility that there will be union under one of the existing branches of the church, but "more significantly, a common tie is developing through loyalty to the one Lord and through the growing conviction that he calls all who acknowledge him as Lord and Saviour to mutual trust and love and effective mission to all mankind." (p. 8.)

Dr. E. A. Payne contributes the essay on "The Baptists," indicating both the varieties and the consistencies in our communion. He shows from history the reasons for the critical attitude towards the World Council of Churches, but reminds us that Baptists are taking part in the discussions relating to the Church of North India and the United Church of Ceylon.

The most significant feature of the ecumenical movement during the past decade has been the greater non-Protestant participation. The Montreal Conference had a strong delegation from the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and we are assured that the Roman Catholic observers didn't merely observe! The Orthodox viewpoint in this book is given by Vladimir Rodzianko, who makes clear his Church's rejection of Roman jurisdictional unity and papal infallibility. He thinks the road to reunion is very long indeed. The Roman Catholic, Bernard Leeming, not only contributes the essay on his own communion but also the chapter on the "General Problems of Ecumenism," and he does so with a remarkable breadth of knowledge and sympathy. Fully aware of the difficulties ahead, he points

nevertheless to some hopeful signs for ultimate reunion. These include the recourse to prayer; the vision we now have of one, holy, universal and apostolic Church of Christ; the new method observed in debate of not slurring over disagreements but going back to wider and deeper principles; increased zeal in theological studies; growing interest in liturgy; the greater importance given to laity; more appreciation of the inter-connexion of Scripture and tradition, and organic unions, in particular that of the Church of South India.

The last chapter on "The Church of South India" is a splendid piece of work written by a layman, Rajaiah Paul. He writes with urgency: "God is calling all Christian people everywhere, more insistently than ever before, to come together." This does not mean "unthinking, precipitate action," but rather that Christians should begin to listen to the voice of God and be prepared to be led by the Spirit. He is singularly free from "clerical jargon" and soon gets to the heart of things: "Trying to work out a complete plan of union satisfactory to all parties is not the way. The thinking and planning must be done at a deeper level, at the foot of the Cross, where every Church and every Christian comes under the judgment of Christ and can see where he or it has fallen short." (p. 237) One of the main arguments against organic union is that aspects of truth would be lost, but the united life of the C.S.I. during the last fifteen years has proved that it is possible for people to absorb new values while conserving all that is best and most valuable in their own tradition. "There are many things which the Holy Spirit cannot teach us while we remain in our divided state." This book is a valuable contribution to the ecumenical debate and should remove many prejudices about the positions of other Christians, while helping to allay the fears of those who still stand outside the Ecumenical Movement.

Robert Kaiser was *Time* magazine's special correspondent for the Vatican Council, which he sees as a turning-point in Christian history, and of which he writes in *Inside the Council*. Pope John is his hero, a man with a vision of the church renewed and equipped to meet the challenge of this terrifying and exciting age. He was a man who "never sat easily on the 'throne' of St. Peter and went to extraordinary lengths not to insist on papal formalities." Kaiser describes the struggle between the Conservative and Progressive elements in the Council, and in particular the recalcitrance of the Curialist Cardinals. Whatever may be said about the "political categories" which he uses to describe the "parties" within Catholicism, Kaiser reveals the radical renewal that is going on in that communion.

Cardinal Bea's book is in two parts. The first part is a collection of addresses given before Catholics and non-Catholics by the President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. He lays stress

upon the need for meeting one another, for "ecumenical dialogue not monologue," for devotion to truth, but love and respect for separated Christians. He calls for joint action in social and international matters. He gives us no blue-print for reunion, but seeks to prepare the ground for ecumenical encounter. The disturbing thing about the book is the apparent necessity to judge Protestant demands in the light of Catholic dogma and its integrity. Does that mean that we must appear at the bar of the Roman Church instead of the Word of God? There again, "unity would not be perfect . . . unless it included submissiveness to those commissioned by God to guide and rule us in matters of faith and of practice . . ." (p. 82) And again, "no love for our separated brethren can move us to touch even in the slightest the sacred deposit of the faith." (p. 138)

Perhaps the brightest ray of hope is in his emphasising the need for more Bible study among the scholars, the clergy and the laity, and in his contention that "truth cannot change, though human perception of it can grow in depth and width."

R. W. F. ARCHER

Robert S. Paul, *An Apologeticall Narration*. 148 pp. 15s.
Independent Press.

The *Apologeticall Narration*, a thirty-one-page pamphlet which first appeared early in 1644, was the work of five members of the minority group of Independents at the Westminster Assembly. In it they sought to explain why they dissented from the Presbyterian views of the majority of their colleagues, adhering instead to the "Congregational way," and pleaded for religious tolerance. Their tract initiated a period of lively debate on the nature of the Church, and called forth the classic Congregationalist expositions of that doctrine by the New England Puritans, John Cotton, Thomas Hooker and John Norton.

This volume contains a facsimile of the pamphlet together with explanatory notes on the text, and a valuable introductory essay, to say nothing of a useful bibliographical note, scholarly footnotes, and an index. Dr. Paul's introduction sets the pamphlet in its historical context—no mean achievement considering the complexity of the religious and political events of the period. It also provides excellent short biographies of Goodwin, Nye, Simpson, Burroughes and Bridge, the "dissenting brethren," as well as a wealth of information about others.

This is a notable contribution both to our understanding of early Congregationalism and to the theological discussion of our own day. Fundamentally the "dissenting brethren" were concerned with something deeper than polity, namely the nature of spiritual authority, one of the crucial problems today. Their basic insight,

that the Church can only claim to possess the authority of Christ as it exercises it in his spirit, has relevance for us as Dr. Paul makes clear. Significant too is his suggestion that an important part of the church historian's task in the immediate future, must be to help the denominations face honestly the "non-theological factors" (or as he calls them the "hidden motives") in the development of their distinctive principles and practices.

E. CLIPSHAM

Hans Joachim Hillerbrand, *A Bibliography of Anabaptism, 1520-1630*. 281 pp. 8 dollars.
Institute of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, Indiana.

One of the notable features of the historical study of recent decades has been renewed and more sympathetic attention to the left wing of the Reformation. There has been a great increase in the contemporary material available for such study. For those embarking upon it an indispensable tool has now been provided by the research institute of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. This exhaustive bibliography compiled by Professor Hillerbrand (now of Duke University, North Carolina) contains over 4,600 entries and includes articles as well as books and pamphlets. The Spiritualists and Anti-Trinitarians have been excluded but for them the writings of Bainton and George H. Williams serve as a guide. Here under areas, persons, subjects, titles and authors is a remarkable monument to painstaking and comprehensive research and an encouragement to further enterprise in the main field.

An examination of seventeenth century English publications on what had occurred on the Continent a hundred years before would provide a few additional items. We do not find here, for example, Robert Baillie's *Anabaptism, The True Fountaine of Independency* (London, 1647), W. Hughes *Münster and Abingdon* (Oxford, 1657), or the anonymous pamphlets *A Warning for England, especially for London, in the famous History of the frantick Anabaptists* (London, 1642), *Mock Majesty: or the Siege of Münster* (London, 1644).

ERNEST A. PAYNE

T. W. Manson, *A Companion to the Bible*, entirely revised and reset by H. H. Rowley. 628 pp. 35s. T. & T. Clark.

For nearly a quarter of a century Manson's *Companion* has been a useful aid to all who were required to teach or study the Bible. But new material is continually coming to light and new judgments have to be passed. Once again Professor Rowley has placed us all in his debt by a first class work of revision.

The work follows substantially the same pattern but with an

almost completely new team of writers. Dr. G. R. Beasley-Murray has written the section, "Introduction to the New Testament," formerly written by Manson himself, and Manson's final appendix has been revised by the editor. The only other Baptist contributor is A. S. Herbert, but the team includes such well known authoritative scholars as John Huxtable, Matthew Black, N. H. Snaith, F. F. Bruce and C. W. Dugmore.

It is a pity that since 1939 the price has doubled but then that is just another of those changes that a quarter of a century has brought.

J. A. Wainwright, *School and Church: Partners in Christian Education*. 107 pp. 7s. 6d. Oxford University Press.

As co-operation grows between schools and churches it is of the utmost importance that it should be on a firm basis and that the experience that some districts have had should be made available for the rest. This is what Mr. Wainwright seeks to do in this book and he does it well. He begins by stating the principles on which co-operation needs to rest and then gives many examples of the form such co-operation has taken. If the examples are not so forward looking as the earlier chapters on theory this is all to the good, for it shows an author who has seen what is vital and who knows where the ship ought to be going. This book could be a most useful starting point for discussion groups between churches and schools provided the groups got to grips with the principles and tried to work them out in their situation and did not simply try to copy what had been done in other places. The former method will lead to progress; the latter to dull stagnation. It is to be warmly commended and we hope it will be widely used.

BOOKS RECEIVED

R. W. Thomson, *Ministering to the Forces*. 64 pp. 4s. Baptist Union and Congregational Union.

Daniel Jenkins, *The Christian Belief in God*. 226 pp. 25s. Faber and Faber.

Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* (Vol II, *Man in the Church*). 211 pp. 55s. Darton, Longman and Todd.

H. H. Rowley, *Men of God*. 306 pp. 42s. Nelson.

W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*. 547 pp. 63s. Cambridge University Press.

C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*. 545 pp. 55s. Cambridge University Press.