

Book Reviews

Sacrament, Sacrifice and Eucharist: by A. M. Stibbs. Tyndale Press, London, 1961. Pp. 93. Price 5s.

This is a small book on Sacrifice and the Eucharist written from the standpoint of a conservative Evangelical of the Church of England. In these ecumenical days we would like to think that the so-called Catholic and Evangelical wings of the Anglican Church are coming nearer to agreement on what they believe about the Eucharist—and frequently we are assured that this is the case. This book, however, is a reminder that old controversies are by no means dead. We may be grateful to Mr. Stibbs for putting so clearly and unambiguously the view of the not inconsiderable body of opinion which he represents.

Concrete proposals for *Prayer Book* revision in England in the not too distant future have struck fear into the hearts of a number of Evangelicals. They are apparently alarmed by the way in which the Liturgical movement is bringing many to a more traditionally Catholic understanding of the Eucharist. It is well known that the majority of those in the Anglican Church who have sought to reinterpret the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and tried to resolve the Catholic/Protestant deadlock on this topic owe allegiance to the Catholic wing of the Church. Any hopes, however, that this present book might contain a similar fruitful approach from the Evangelical side are quickly dashed.

Mr. Stibbs is deeply suspicious of Anglican revisions of the *Prayer Book* which depart from the 1662 order. In the new forms of exposition of the Eucharistic Sacrifice he detects the old doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass in disguise. He takes Dr. Mascall and Fr. Hebert to task for detracting from the centrality of Our Lord's sacrifice on the Cross.

The whole basis of Mr. Stibbs' exposition lies in his identification of sacrifice with a violent penal death. He repeatedly limits Christ's atoning work to his death. He interprets Mark 10:45 by saying that Our Lord 'by giving up his life in death would provide a ransom, a substitutionary exchange, and thus secure a consequent release, for the lives of men which were otherwise forfeited because of sin' (p. 33). This view of Christ's death as a substitutionary price dominates Mr. Stibbs' whole discussion of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Because he believes that the 'necessary transaction' was all limited to, and settled in, one critical 'hour' and 'day', he must needs find it 'intolerable to think of this necessary payment of ransom as going on continually or eternally'. By holding that the heart and essence of Our Lord's sacrifice lies

in the 'violent death' endured as penal substitution, he is compelled to make little of Our Lord's whole life of self-offering on earth and his present and continual life of self-oblation to his Father in heaven, with all that this means in relation to the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

Mr. Stibbs comes very near to making the Eucharistic memorial a 'bare' one. He much too easily sweeps aside any suggestion that *anamnesis* may contain a reference to memorial made before God. (It is interesting in this connection to read Fr. Bedale's note on Eucharistic Sacrifice in *Theology*, August 1953). He moreover dismisses any idea of feeding upon the risen and glorified Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, and baldly declares that 'such ideas we cannot find to be taught in, or supported by, the New Testament' (p. 50). 'Strong assurance of forgiveness', in Mr. Stibbs' opinion, is the chief benefit of reception of the Sacrament. 'Such profit', he says, 'in its reception depends upon understanding and faith.' The Prayer of Humble Access he interprets as a prayer for cleansing but *not* for strengthening, a truly astonishing statement. By dwelling in Christ are we not built up into and strengthened by him? The view which is being defended in this book, however, allows for no real communication of Christ's human nature to the members of his church.

When writing of the Administration of the Sacrament, Mr. Stibbs is frankly receptionist and states that 'the Sacrament exists only when and while the administration is taking place'. He sees no reason why the ministration of the Sacrament should be restricted to priests or any other minister and would happily authorize 'mature and godly members' of the congregation to celebrate. Qualification to receive Communion is to be determined solely by evidence of 'personal Baptism into Christ', whatever that may exactly mean.

We can all heartily agree with Mr. Stibbs when he pleads for a sermon at the Eucharist and also when he expresses dissatisfaction with the antiquarian and now slightly absurd 'North End' position. At one point at least he is in sympathy with the Liturgical Movement when he suggests that the Holy Table should be brought into the midst of the people, 'in the body of the Church'. But many will wish that he and those who share his views would take the truth of the *living* Body of Christ more seriously.

Four lines at the bottom of page 43 have been muddled by the printer. Fr. A. G. Hebert's name is consistently mis-spelt.

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Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann.
Selected, translated and introduced by Schubert M. Ogden.
Hodder and Stoughton. Price 21s.

It is important that we should try to understand just what is the significance of the work of a theologian and New Testament

scholar as influential as Rudolf Bultmann is proving to be in this generation. The English-speaking world has been helped in this by various writers, including men like John MacQuarrie, H. P. Owen and the editor of the work now before us. In addition, most of Bultmann's own major works, including his *Theology of the New Testament*, are available in English. Nevertheless, Dr. Ogden has rendered a notable service by publishing this series of Shorter Writings, which allow Bultmann to speak for himself on many topics. These writings, covering a period from 1917 to 1957, show him remarkably clear and self-consistent in his position and also demonstrate both his intense desire for intellectual integrity and his living concern for the Faith.

There is given an illuminating autobiographical sketch (pp. 283-288) which shows both the early influence of men like Jülicher and Johannes Weiss and the later developments which have led to Bultmann's name being inextricably associated with such themes as *Form Criticism*, *Existentialism*, and *Demythologising*. He also casts light on his early association with Karl Barth and the later divergencies which have led them to stand for quite distinct emphases in theological interpretation.

Those who are particularly interested in Bultmann's contribution to historical critical research will be glad to have his essay on 'A New Approach to the Synoptic Problem' (pp. 35-54) published in 1926. Further light on his approach to the New Testament is found in a much later essay, 'Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?' (pp. 289-296), which concludes the book. In all this approach we have to grasp the distinction which Bultmann makes between what is 'historical', in the sense of that which is merely chronicled as having happened in the past, and the truly 'historic' (*geschichtlich*) in which the significance of what is presented to us comes home to us as relevant and demanding for ourselves. It is here that he finds the genuine significance of what is presented to men in the New Testament, and this is, of course, the point where he finds the existential interpretations most helpful.

Superficially this may seem to reduce the Faith to a mere subjectivism, and this indeed is how many have understood Bultmann's insistence that what is given through the Faith is a new 'self-understanding' which seems to be to make everything completely man-centred. This negative impression of Bultmann tends to be confirmed by the very negative position which he takes as a New Testament critic, especially since it is his habit, in other writings, to take for granted his own somewhat radical conclusions about the reliability of the text. Finally, the very term *demythologising*, which he has popularized, leads to the same conclusion.

This book, however, will surely help to redress the balance and to bring out the extent to which a positive concern for the distinctiveness of the Faith controls Bultmann's work. This positive note emerges, for example, in the essay on 'Jesus and Paul' (pp. 182-201) composed in 1936 to rebut some of the extravagances of Nazi anti-semitic pseudo-scholarship. Other essays

on the meaning of the Christian faith make it clear that to speak of man's 'self-understanding' is by no means to imply that man is his own Master, or to suggest that Bultmann is drawn to any kind of timeless mysticism. On the contrary he is insistent that man's true being is found in his response to the Word of God, which comes to him from without. We realize also that, unwilling as he is to speak of the Resurrection as if it were an event of neutrally observable objective history, he does not at all reduce it to a mere subjective impression of the Apostles. Their glowing testimony that Christ was risen was a response to something which they had indeed been given. Similarly, though one is glad to think that many reputable New Testament critics have not found it necessary to go as far as Bultmann has done in questioning the reliability of our historical knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth, it is perfectly clear that for him, too, the Biblical testimony concerning Him who 'suffered under Pontius Pilate' is vital to the Christian Faith.

It is significant, in this context, to observe how often in these papers Bultmann returns to the theme of the distinctively Christian doctrine of creation (an essay on the Task of Theology, 1933; a Sermon of 1st July, 1934; and a paper on the Meaning of the Christian Faith, 1936, pp. 158, 171 and 206ff.). It is in these essays that he underlines a distinctive position for the Christian expressed in the following sentence which we find at least twice in quite different writings:

'that God is the Creator means that man's action is not determined by timeless principles, but by the concrete situation, by the moment' (p. 159; p. 122).

Ogden himself, in a recent study of Bultmann, has pointed out a certain consensus of criticism of his position which seeks to expound a radical 'demythologising' while holding to the centrality of the apostolic proclamation concerning Jesus of Nazareth. In India, indeed, where there are so many other powerful currents of teaching to cut right across the distinctive Christian position, one is bound to question very seriously whether Bultmann is the most reliable guide in these matters. Nevertheless, such themes as these do show how definite he is in bringing out at least certain aspects of the essential witness of Christian faith, and it is well that we should be able to grasp this more fully from his own writings.

The translator has succeeded in giving us a good clear rendering of the original German. Only when he comes to the word *existentiell* does he find it advisable to retain it in the German form, and when he does so he puts it in italics to make it quite clear that he has done so. This is a practice which others might well emulate, and refrain from dotting their pages with such quite un-English terms as *kerygma*, *agape* and many more, to the bewilderment of the uninitiated and sometimes (dare we say it?)

to the self-deception of those who think that they understand!

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God and the Rich Society: by Denis L. Munby. Oxford University Press, 1961. Price 25s.

On the face of it a study like this, of the Christian encountering the problems of 'the affluent society', may not seem very relevant in a country which is still grappling with the grim realities of unconquered poverty. Even so, we do live in the same compact world, and the problems of riches in the midst of poverty is a reality which cannot be evaded. Indeed one merit of Mr. Munby's book is its courageous attempt, in chapter 5, to face the question of 'sharing the world's wealth'. Reading this chapter, we shall see both a Western economist dealing sharply with the complacency of his own society and also something of the formidable difficulties which have to be overcome to make it possible for the benefit of the economic strength of some to be shared effectively with others.

The book is also entirely relevant when we realize how fully the ideal of 'the Welfare State' has come to be accepted in our country, however remote the goal may appear. Along with the discussion of what this goal implies comes the salutary reminder of the positive value which the Christian faith recognizes in material things, as part of God's good creation. Here the author reminds us of the serious error of confusing the contrast of 'nature' and 'grace' with a totally non-Biblical contrast of 'material' and 'spiritual'. Grace, we are reminded, can lay hold upon the material and use it also for spiritual ends!

Mr. Munby is an economist and at times the reader may feel that, in spite of healthy elements of self-criticism, he is more satisfied than he should be with how economics work. For example, take these sentences about 'Market Mechanism':

Essentially, the advantage of the market mechanism is that it forces men to adapt themselves to an objective factor in the situation, the prices that face them. No conflict arises between persons and groups. You have to accept a change in the market price; there is no one to blame, no one to fight with (p. 122).

This statement was written in a society in which the adjustment may affect one dispensable article and another: when prices of basic essentials like food and clothing are pushed up by unscrupulous men who have 'cornered the market', it is less easy to see this as a kind of brute fact in which 'no one is to blame'.

The author is also rather severe in his comment on economic pronouncements by Church bodies which seem to him to reflect ignorance of the facts. For this reason he is surely right to plead

for more Christian thinking and action within society itself, by Christians directly involved. Here he is robust in his repudiation of the familiar assumption that this age of technological advance has so dehumanized society as to make responsible personal decision impossible. On the contrary, reminding us that in fact every age has its technology (whether primitive or advanced) he contends that no age has had so great a possibility as ours of not being enslaved by its own Technology. This in itself is a challenge to be taken seriously in the combat with the tendency to let things slide, but along with it is the author's clear faith that God, the Creator of all, is directly at work also in the events of our time. As we Christians share that faith, and are alert to see where obedience to Him calls us, we shall realize how much there is in these pages which does indeed speak to our condition today.

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The Memoirs Called Gospels: by G. P. Gilmour. Hodder and Stoughton, London. Pp. 299. Price 21s.

Dr. Gilmour, President and Vice-Chancellor of McMaster University in Canada, has been a lecturer on religious knowledge for many years. In this latter capacity he came to realize the problems that beset beginners in the study of the Bible. Led by the belief that the Bible is the word of God and that it contains all the truth necessary for salvation, he tries in this book to help young people to understand the meaning of the Gospel.

The book is divided into three sections consisting of eighteen chapters. The first of them discusses how to approach the Bible. The author thinks that a radical change is necessary in the method of Biblical study usually adopted in the West. For it conforms to the Greek ways at the cost of the Palestinian background of the Gospels, due possibly to its strange vocabulary and linguistic style. The basic emphasis of the Bible, says the author, differs from that of Greece. The idea of revelation which is basic to the Hebrew religion does not stand in any way inferior to the idea of reason, and the gift of reason is presupposed in the discernment of revelation. The Biblical revelation is something more than mere information, and Dr. Gilmour is not clothing 'a body of Middle East breeding, which in turn is a fleshly tabernacle for the eternal Spirit' with an English dress. His emphasis, on the contrary, is that the truth of the Bible should be translated against the background of the Hebrew background.

The second section introduces the Gospel, while the third makes a survey of the records. Here he refers to the miracle stories, Virgin Birth, Resurrection, and so on, discarding popular misconceptions on them in his characteristically humorous way. 'The Gospel story', he says, 'opens with a cradle mysteriously filled, and ends with a cross mysteriously occupied, and a grave

mysteriously emptied.' In Christ is revealed man's most adequate idea of God and also his most adequate idea of man. Faith in him does not come from belief in miracles, which are of course 'signs for the power of God', but from his Person. His resurrection is not supernatural but suprahistorical; it is as real as the atom which though invisible, makes its effects on human lives.

The language is simple and clear. Each chapter opens with a verse from the Bible, which leads on to the subject discussed in the chapter. Had the notes and the reading list been given either as footnotes or at the end of each chapter, instead of at the end, it would have helped the reader better. The book is a valuable aid to students of the New Testament, and it serves its purpose of enabling the readers to find the Person behind the memoirs.

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Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace: by Ronald H. Bainton. Hodder and Stoughton, London. Pp. 299. Price 25s.

We are living in an atomic age, in which the bomb 'has brought bewilderment and division' and 'has divided the bishops and their flocks'. But there are men and women all over the world who are distressed about this terrible tangle and yearn for a way out. Such people need guidance, encouragement, and leadership in order that they may work incessantly for the eradication of the menace. Although Professor Ronald H. Bainton, the great Church historian of the Yale University Divinity School, may not assume the last in a physical sense, his vast erudition, versatile scholarship, and unshakable Christian conviction do qualify him most eminently to offer the first two against a 'behaviour which threatens to bring an end to history'.

Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace is a book in which Professor Bainton has done a great service in this field in an admirable way. On the ground of an analysis of history which takes him far back into pre-Christian antiquity and leads him on to our own time, the author shows how impossible it is to justify any war, least of all an atomic war. Even in ancient days when the Prince of Peace had not come into the world men had glorified not war but peace. War was indeed a concession and there were a number of rules guiding its conduct. Alexander of Macedonia, though his cosmopolitanism deserves praise, was 'none the less berated in the silver age of Latin literature for his brutality and ambition'.

War, then, was a concession. Pacifism was therefore the natural order to be followed. But it could not be practised by nations in their relations one with another. So there evolved two kinds of wars—the just war and the crusade. Even these two go back to pre-Christian times. The idea of the just war was developed by the ancient Greeks 'in the context of the ideas of

peace'. Its purpose was the establishment of peace. Parallels to just war were there among the Romans and the Hebrews. Everywhere its purpose is the establishment of peace and justice. The ideal, therefore, is peace, not war. During her early days the Church was pacifist. It was the conversion of Constantine to the faith that terminated the pacifist period. When a Christian came at the head of the empire, it became natural for Christians to defend the state, and thus there evolved the idea of just war within the context of Christian thinking. To begin with St. Ambrose, and later St. Augustine, accepted the idea. The Barbarian invasion of Europe led Christians to make adaptations of it and pave the way for the endorsement of the idea of crusade.

Professor Bainton delineates the story of the Crusades of the Middle Ages and shows how those wars resulted in diluting Christian conscience in regard to war. After the Middle Ages came the period of the Reformation in Europe. The major bodies involved in it did not, as a matter of fact, condemn war. On the other hand, while extolling peace as the ideal, they held to the idea of just war. However, the Anabaptists, and later the Quakers, considered war as against Christian principles. In this they were keeping close to the spirit of the Christian Gospel.

We have come today to a state of being in which war cannot be defended either on the ground of the principle of just war or as crusade. For one thing modern war 'has become so completely depersonalized that justice cannot be administered on a basis of individual responsibility, nor can punishment be made to fit the crime'. War has, therefore, lost its defensible meaning. Professor Bainton refers in passing to those who in our time 'reinterpret the Judaeo-Christian tradition in terms of political realism' and oppose pacifism as idealism; they forget, says Professor Bainton, that the 'New Testament is not concerned with the power struggle'. On the contrary, 'the Christian ethic has always impressed outsiders'—from Celsus in the second century to Alfred Loisy in our own time—'as pacifist to the point of being weakness'.

War, then, is an evil. How can it be eradicated? Professor Bainton makes a number of suggestions. In his view there is only one ethic that can bind the whole human race—and that is the ethic of natural law. It does not favour war. The Christian is committed to the ethic of the Gospel. It is also opposed to war. So Christians and non-Christians have a common ground. They should all therefore join together to boycott war, the first step towards which lies in total disarmament.

Political realists will say that 'if we renounce power, we shall be at a disadvantage'. We, of course, shall, admits Professor Bainton. But, he asks, 'When were the scrupulous not at a disadvantage in dealing with the unscrupulous?' What is the solution? 'Shall the scrupulous then become unscrupulous in order to survive? Are we to renounce honour, shame, mercy, and compassion in order to live? The ancient pagans would not have said so. Did not Socrates declare that to suffer injustice is better than to inflict it? Shall we allow this pagan to take over the virtues

which we have been wont to call Christian, while we invoke Christ to justify nuclear annihilation ?'

Professor Bainton has not obviously answered all problems involved in the pacifist position in regard to war, and where he has done it, his answer may not be convincing enough at least to some of his readers. At the same time, the fact has to be admitted that he has presented his point of view ably and consistently against the background of his great fund of scholarship, and the work deserves to be commended most highly.

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The Shape of Death : Life, Death, and Immortality in the Early Fathers : by Jaroslav Pelikan. Macmillan, London, 1962. Pp. 128. Price 13s. 6d.

This is a book dealing with the ideas on life, death, and immortality as they are contained in the works of five second- and third-century Christian writers. The men chosen are: Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Origen, and Irenaeus.

Professor Pelikan represents the ideas of these men in five geometric figures. 'The arc of existence', by which he describes the thought of Tatian, 'emphasizes the finality of death.' 'The circle of immortality', which in his view signifies the idea of Clement of Alexandria, 'represents the analogy between the life of man and the eternal life of God.' Cyprian's teaching is symbolized by the author in the 'triangle of morality', which 'says that even with an immortal soul a man must die to God and receive life from God'. The 'parabola of eternity', which for him brings out the emphasis of Origen, 'makes death God's way of bringing the soul back to himself'. And finally the 'spiral of history', which he employs to depict the teaching of Irenaeus, 'urges that the death of a man cannot be understood apart from the death of Adam and the death of Christ'.

In forming the ideas represented by these symbols the ancient Christian thinkers, whether knowingly or unknowingly, synthesized Biblical emphases with Greek philosophical ideas. Each one of these has something significant to say, and all of them put together will alone give the complete Christian answer to the question of life, death, and immortality. That answer can be given, but not in a geometric figure, says Professor Pelikan ; it can be given in the figure of the Cross. It gives men 'the faith to live in courage and to die in dignity'.

The book is a collection of five lectures with a Preface and a Conclusion. They had originally been delivered as the Laidlaw Lectures at Knox College, Toronto, in September, 1959. The treatment is clear and the style lucid and simple. Having taken the ideas of five early Christian writers, Professor Pelikan has made them contemporary and relevant, particularly by his own symbol of the Cross. The work should be rated very high. References to

authorities quoted would have added to the value of the book.

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Saint Francis of Assisi: by Elizabeth Goudge. Hodder and Stoughton, London. Price 3s. 6d.

People from all walks of life, countries, generations and faiths have looked up to this poor man of Assisi for fresh insight and meaning in life. Francis renounced everything and embraced absolute poverty in his attempt to follow the steps of his Master. In this, he did not become a loser. The things which all may possess in common, the beauty of the earth, the joy of life, the sense of human brotherhood and of a heavenly Father's love, were his in full measure. He felt within himself a new sense of freedom and harmony with life. Men and women were drawn towards him, and his ideal of life, not only in his own generation but even today. In our country, to Gandhiji the Saint of Assisi was a constant example. And yet a close study of this thirteenth-century saint for the twentieth-century reader was lacking until this admirable book appeared.

It is the author's expressed desire to introduce St. Francis to those who do not know him well. To achieve her purpose, she makes good use of all the available knowledge about the conditions which prevailed in that distant past in Europe and elsewhere. These afford a good canvas on which the portrait of the saint is painted. There are the familiar facts but behind them are deep thoughts and feelings which play their decisive role. With marvellous insight the author tries to catch these and displays them for the readers' view. This aspect of the book helps a serious reader to come really in touch with the saint of old, and the author's purpose well finds fulfilment this way. But at times one feels tempted to leave the author alone with her flights of imagination as when she records about what the saint might have experienced in the Holy Land, and turn a page or two to follow the thread of the story! But there is also enough of light and warmth to keep alive the interest of the readers, especially by stories chosen and woven into the web of the book from the Little Flowers of St. Francis.

In short, all the characteristics of a grand novel and those of a popular biography are blended together in this book.

ALBERT D. MANUEL

Nazareth

Saints and Scholars: Twenty-five Medieval Portraits: by David Knowles. Cambridge University Press. Paper-back edition. Price 9s. 6d.

One of the greatest historical works of recent years has undoubtedly been the monumental studies of Professor Knowles on

the Monastic and Religious Orders. But few indeed will be the students in India who will be able to read all the four volumes of such a specialist study. It was therefore an excellent idea to publish a series of portraits drawn from this great work, depicting some of the leaders of monastic thought and life in the Middle Ages.

As far as we are concerned in India, this book will also be able to fulfil another very useful purpose. Of necessity the amount of time that the average student can spend on the medieval history of the Western Church is very limited, and he so often gets to know only the bare bones, with little or no idea of the flesh and blood with which they were clothed. Here he will find vivid pen pictures of some of the greatest figures in the medieval Church, among them Bede and Anselm, Ailred and Hugh. Only two concern great leaders outside England, the introductory essay on Benedict and the brilliant study of Francis of Assisi. But for these two essays alone, this paper-back is a gift at 9s. 6d.

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