

Book Reviews

Church History 3: New Movements A.D. 1500-1800: by Alan Thomson. S.P.C.K., London, 1976. Pp. 161. Price £ 2.50 U.K. (Special edition for Africa, Asia, S. Pacific and Caribbean £ 1.60.)

The third volume in a projected four-volume series on Church History has appeared as TEF Study Guide 14. Like previous publications in this series the book offers a great deal that ought to be heartily welcomed. Students will find in it a simplified version of complex issues, some questions to stimulate their thinking or discussion and an occasional picture to break the monotony of print.

Unfortunately, the slim volume raises about as many problems as it is intended to solve. Chief among these is the attempt to contain three hundred years of a varied and complex history in some one hundred and sixty pages. This cannot be done, of course, without doing violence to socio-political relationships and distorting some of the facts. That the effort was made to provide such a guide in a readable manner is testimony to the craftsmanship of the author, Professor Alan Thomson. One wonders, however, what kind of reader the author anticipated; hardly a student in a B.D. College, one should think. For such a student one might have expected a more detailed analysis of the three movements, New Learning, New Lands, New Life which presumably are continued in Reform, Rationalism, Revolution. Nor should one expect such a student to be satisfied with generalizations which, unqualified, come close to being false [Cf. "Luther was one of the greatest theologians in the history of the Church" (p. 4), or "In most of what he wrote, Calvin was a good "Lutheran", basing everything on the Bible" (p. 23)].

It is to be regretted that the editors decided to limit historical maps to two (not very good ones at that); good maps are not as readily accessible to students in Asia as they might be to their European or North American counterparts. Equally regrettable is the omission of a detailed Working Bibliography. No guide to an important period of history should be without reliable and up-to-date references to sources and secondary works. Reproduction of illustrations, on the other hand, should have been resisted; what valiant Asian soldier or tribesman would see anything military in medieval Spanish soldiers of fortune and who is able to recognise in the view of Geneva anything but blot^s of grey?

Fortunately, some of the key dates of the period have been given and the convenient four-page chart at the end of the text helps in seeing major events in relation to each other. For a relatively small volume, the Index is helpful and fairly detailed, but one wonders how useful

the frequent study suggestions are when they usually refer only to a page or paragraph elsewhere in the book.

Undoubtedly, teaching Reformation History to people who are far removed from the cultural milieu which followed in its wake is not an easy matter and judgements on how to do it best may differ widely. It is questionable, though, whether any approach to the period under discussion should give the impression that Martin Luther so far outshines all other men and movements that he deserves to stand in a chapter all by himself while Melancthon and the later exponents of Lutheran orthodoxy (which, after all, holds the key to the bitter wars of religion which decimated the continent of Europe) receive hardly any mention at all.

The rather extensive missionary work of Protestants is contained in an all but inadequate reference to William Carey and to some of the efforts of Pietists; Roman Catholic missionary enterprises are treated with a little more detail. One final question: Should the Orthodox Church be grouped with Asian Christianity as if it were an adjunct of the expansion of post-Reformation denominationalism rather than being a continuing manifestation of Christendom, largely untouched by most of the developments discussed in this Guide?

The accessibility of this guide to Church History from 1500 to 1800 may eventually reduce heavy reliance, in India at least, on Williston Walker's *A History of the Christian Church*. It is doubtful, however, that a more thorough historical appreciation by students will be the result. The time has come perhaps when the TEF Editorial Group should seriously consider whether alternate methods of assisting students and teachers in Asia would not prove to be more adequate 'guides'.

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The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church:
edited by J. Neuner S. J. and J. Dupuis, S. J., Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1973. Pp. 679. Price Rs 17 (Rs 14 paper).

How does one contain the Christian faith, even within one single denomination, in six hundred and eighty pages? Some such question must undoubtedly have exercised the minds of the editors when they chose excerpts for this particular edition of doctrinal documents. Whatever criterion they finally decided on by which they would determine which text or how much of it to use, their task was undoubtedly made easier by the decision to limit themselves almost exclusively to papal pronouncements or conciliar decrees. Individual theologians do not seem to carry the weight that would have qualified them as exponents of the doctrine of the Church.

The collection of doctrinal documents representing the faith of the Catholic Church dates back to an earlier German publication by J. Neuner and H. Roos in 1938. Subsequent editions of this volume appeared under the general supervision of K. Rahner. The first English publication was a translation of the sixth edition, published in 1967. Some slight modifications only were made when the first Indian edition appeared in 1969 to correspond to the situation in this country. However, profound changes in theological thinking have now necessitated this totally revised edition.

To satisfy this demand, Neuner and Dupuis considered it desirable to supplement their own extensive scholarship by drawing on the resources of several notable scholars for the work on the twenty three chapters of the current volume. In addition, the editors acknowledge their indebtedness to the 1962 edition by A. Schoenmetzer of the *Enchiridion Symbolorum*. The result of this pooling of resources is a significant collection of doctrinal statements on major theological tenets and a coverage of source material that ranges from early Christian symbols such as the Dêr-Balizeh Papyrus to the "De Iustitia in Mundo" (1971) of the Third Synod of Bishops in Rome or the Apostolic Letter "Ad Pascendum" of Paul VI (1972).

The editors wisely decided to enlarge on previous volumes in order to give attention to new theological emphases after Vatican II. Hence, chapters on Ecumenism, The Church and World Religions, and Christian Worship have been added. In response to the ever widening gap between Christian morality and secularism, three more chapters were introduced which reflect the official Roman position on Principles of Christian Life, The Social Doctrine of the Church, and Chastity and the Social Order.

The arrangement of the chapters follows the pattern of the ancient and accepted creeds of the Church, after the first three chapters of the book have been devoted to excerpts which establish this faith, clarify the relation between revelation and faith and set out the two foundation stones upon which this faith is to rest and from which it draws its strength, Tradition and Scripture. The arrangement of texts within each chapter is made on the basis of their chronological sequence. This affords not only clear comprehension but allows one to see progression (if any) or development of particular emphases or ways of interpretation on any given point of doctrine. Oddly, very little is made of pneumatology: the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is dealt with in the chapter on the Trinity and only incidentally elsewhere but it does not merit a separate chapter. The term "hermeneutic", so prominent in Protestant theology today, is not found in the subject index. It would seem then that the matter of biblical interpretation is implied, rather than stated, and appears to be clearly subordinated to the authority of the magisterium.

Biblical texts are helpfully taken from the RSV, except when the correct understanding of any given document demands recourse to the Vulgate. Extensive keys to the texts are given and a chronological list

of documents as well as an Analytic and Onomastic Index testify to the diligence and orderly method of procedure on the part of the editors. All major sections are introduced by brief statements which place the documents in context and afford a reasonable perspective. These aids give the volume an appearance of consistency and homogeneity, though an occasional repetition could not be wholly avoided because different men were dealing with the same documents for their respective emphasis. Apart from acknowledged errors there are virtually no mistakes in the text; a high editorial achievement, indeed.

By far less easy to assess than the above-mentioned points is the specifically 'catholic' view of authority which is implicit, and at times explicitly stated, throughout the volume. Here one becomes sadly aware that a wide gulf continues to exist between Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars and teachers in their respective understanding of what constitutes authoritative expressions of the faith. This obviously continues to be so despite far reaching and cordial ecumenical relations and healthy interaction on several levels. Neuner and Dupuis drive this divergence home with renewed emphasis. The authority of the magisterium is almost exclusively the authority quoted.

Intentionally or otherwise, the editors further underline this authority by quoting encyclicals, papal or conciliar pronouncements and such like documents which imply a high degree of uniformity and suggest that the faith of the Church has been the same throughout the ages, distinguished only by new formulations (which then are claimed *always* to have been the faith of the Church); in other words, later statements on any given dogma are little more than clarifications of earlier ambiguities. Such a narrow view of the nature of doctrine appears most alien to Protestant readers and may create, among the intolerant and theologically uninformed, a reinforcement of negative attitudes toward the Church of Rome. For this reason perhaps the volume under consideration should generally not be commended to everyone. On the other hand, theologically trained people too (unless of course, they be at some distance from theological libraries), should not be limited to this book alone when seeking to comprehend doctrinal documents of the Catholic Church, lest they be given a one-sided view of what constitutes the faith of that Church. However, as an initial guide to these documents of the faith or as ready reference to the statements of curia or councils, the book will be a most valuable asset in the libraries of theologians and historians alike.

Perhaps one demands too much of editors whose primary and exclusive concern is with documents of the Catholic Church if one expects them to give some recognition at least in a critical apparatus to dissenting theological opinions and to controversies on given doctrinal issues. But this reviewer would have very much liked to see such recognition of dissenting or non-Roman views. Some admission of diversity in matters of faith and doctrine (whether or not it be labelled "heresy") can only narrow the credibility gap (especially in Mariology, marriage and family life and perhaps even on the social doctrines of the Church)

that has become an almost insurmountable gulf of separation for many contemporary believers. Perhaps a future edition of the Christian Faith (especially for use in Asia) may attempt such "bridging of gaps"; it could then be more than just a formidable array of dogma and might even lead to encounter with the living word, laying 'open new ways towards the truth' (Gaudium et Spes, p. 313).

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The Formation of the Gospel according to Mark: by Étienne Trocmé
(translated by Pamela Gaughan), S.P.C.K., London, 1975.
Pp. 293. Price £8.50.

Professor Trocmé's book was first published in French in 1963 and is now available to a wider readership in Pamela Gaughan's excellent translation. In it he puts forward the daring literary theory that the Gospel of Mark was composed of two separate parts: chapters 1-13 and chapters 14-16. The first part was written by a Greek-speaking Palestinian Jewish Christian around 50 A.D. As his attitudes are similar to those of the Seven Hellenists in Acts Trocmé suggests that the author may have been Philip the Evangelist. Chapters 14-16 were originally a document of a liturgical nature originating in Jerusalem and attributed to Mark: Mark may, indeed, have translated, supplemented and circulated it. These two documents were combined around 85 A.D. by an anonymous ecclesiastic in the Church at Rome. This final editor made only a few alterations and additions, but one of his purposes was to implant in his community the celebration of Holy Week, and in particular to establish Thursday night and Friday for the commemoration of the crucifixion.

This literary theory is quite unconvincing and, despite the assurance the author seems to have, is not properly established by his arguments. He claims that the final editor was responsible only for some retouching in various places, not for total rewriting, and yet he makes no attempt to use stylistic criteria to show that chapters 14-16 are by a different author from that of chapters 1-13. The arguments he uses are concerned with theological and ecclesiastical attitudes, but clearly he has greatly exaggerated the differences in these attitudes that he finds between the two parts of Mark. From the usual stylistic criteria it is quite clear that the whole of Mark (up to 16.8 of course) is by one author.

It is true, however, that some of the details in the Marcan Passion Narrative (e.g. the chronological note of 14:1-2) are curious and the explanation may lie in an imperfect blending of different sources at some stage, but they are no *proof* of the later hand of an editor. It is also true that Mark's unusual chronological scheme of the last week at Jerusalem may well reflect liturgical interest, and it is strange that his scheme is not followed by Luke, but it is partly broken up by Matthew too!

With regard to the use of Mark by Matthew and Luke Trocmé suggests that, whereas Matthew used Mark in its final form, Luke knew only chapters 1-13, which he may have discovered during his two-year stay in Caesarea when Paul was a prisoner there. (He rejects the Proto-Lucan theory.) For the Passion Narrative Luke had a separate source, which derived from the same original as that of Mark, but had evolved differently. In this he agrees with many scholars who find evidence for a separate account of the Passion behind Luke's narrative, but he differs from them in that they assume that Luke (at least in his final version) was conflating Mark's Passion Narrative with the other one. I find Trocmé's arguments here weak; my own view is that Luke was freely rewriting Mark. In any case a more detailed verse by verse examination of parallels convinces most scholars that Luke was dependent upon Mark in the Passion Narrative whether or not he had another continuous source. It is not enough to quote the drop in the percentage of exact verbal correspondence from 50 per cent in other Marcan sections to 27 per cent in the Passion story (p. 222). The words that Luke and Mark have in common still prove dependence and a detailed study shows that often Luke has an *equivalent* word or phrase even if not the *exact* Marcan word.

To refer to one detail, Trocmé's treatment of Mark 14:62 and Luke 22:67-70 (p. 235 f. note 2) is unsatisfactory. A more likely explanation of the agreement of Matthew and Luke against Mark in the reply of Jesus is that we should read 'You say that I am' in Mark with some manuscripts, and it is more likely that Luke's double question and answer is his homiletical expansion of Mark than that it contains original tradition.

It is in the author and background of chapters 1-13 that Prof. Trocmé finds most interest. (Somewhat confusingly the author of these chapters is referred to in most of the book as "the Evangelist", "the author of Mark" or even "Mark".) His approach to this material is stimulating, fresh and imaginative. He has probed it like a detective convinced that all the clues are there for the looking. For him it is a source of hints upon which conclusions can be based about the original writer and his Church. His method is to establish the biases: the aversions displayed by the writer and the causes he defends.

With regard to the aversions, he investigates criticisms made of Non-Christians and, indirectly or directly, of Christians. In the first category are the Pharisees, Herod and the Herodians, the Scribes and the Chief Priests, but there is a lack of hostility towards the Romans, due to apologetic reasons. The writer's strongest aversion under this heading, however, is to the Temple, despite his easy indifference to the rite of sacrifice. In this and in other matters of controversy touched upon in these chapters of Mark Trocmé sees the opposition of the writer to his fellow Christians, in fact to a large section of the primitive Church: he reproaches them for their acceptance of the practices and ideas current in Pharisaic Judaism, for their

somewhat naively apocalyptic eschatology, and for christological speculation that is likely to turn the leaders of the Churches aside from their real task, which is missionary and pastoral. In particular he is attacking certain Church Leaders: he has a tendency to detract from the pre-eminent tradition accorded to Simon Peter, but his hostility is addressed far more strongly against the authority of James, the Lord's brother. James is only once named, but Trocmé finds a hostility towards the whole family of Jesus that reveals the writer to be 'a person of headstrong character, original and audacious and little inclined to indulgence or patience' (p. 136).

With regard to the causes he defends, Prof. Trocmé does not regard the writer as a speculative theologian: he merely received and passed on theological ideas contained in the Church tradition, but following an emotional urge he paid very special attention to a few ideas with practical consequences, above all concerning Christian mission. He had (like Matthew) a primarily ecclesiological purpose. It was he who first thought of giving the Christian communities a body of teaching in the shape of an account of Jesus' ministry on earth. He wishes to defend the practices of the communities he represents and to appeal to other Churches to change their thinking. For him there is not always a clear distinction between the earthly work of Christ and his continuing mission through the Church.

Prof. Trocmé sees in these chapters of Mark a certain christological reserve. The writer has received from the Church tradition pericopes in which Jesus is a rabbi and a Messiah, and from popular society in northern Palestine reminiscences of Jesus as an amazing healer. These two images he has welded together into a coherent whole. His Jesus defies all definition and the only proper attitude to him is wondering awe and unconditional obedience, rather than christological speculation. There is no reason why he should not be very like the historical Jesus, but he is also clearly the Christ of the Christian faith.

However, the writer was thinking not of Jesus alone, but of Jesus as the leader of a group of men, so that constantly there are points of relevance between the account of Jesus and his disciples and the continuing relationship of the Lord with his Church: the Church is a continuation of companionship that was only briefly interrupted by the Resurrection. The writer is particularly interested in the mission of the Church: in the progress of the mission of Jesus and his disciples and in the challenges to missionary discipleship he is concerned with the present rather than the past. He is appealing for recruits for a missionary venture among the common people of Palestine.

The book is written in a lively, readable style, with some fine touches of humour. The footnotes, however, are too many and too long for comfortable reading. Prof. Trocmé has arranged his material so that his own exposition is given clearly in the text, but the many relevant critical problems are discussed in the footnotes. Admittedly the text itself should not be burdened with much of the material in

the footnotes, so it is not easy to suggest a different arrangement. Perhaps it would be best to read the text first and then the footnotes separately! They are written so clearly and knowledgeably that for their references and their evaluations of the critical positions they are most valuable. One could put together a straightforward critical commentary on most of Mark's Gospel from them!

The refreshing thing about this book is its individualism. Prof. Trocmé's reconstruction of the situation behind Mark's Gospel is a very different one from that assumed by form critics and commentators such as D. E. Nineham, yet it is also in contrast to the more conservative historical approach of commentators such as Taylor and Cranfield. He has much in common with redaction critics, but has his own independent approach, disarmingly challenging many general critical assumptions. However, one is often left more admiring of his ingenuity than convinced by his reconstruction. His detailed expositions are thought-provoking and rewarding, but often unconvincing. His arguments sometimes appear to be over-subtle and although he estimates that the writer 'has no gift for abstract thinking' (p. 172 note 2), the motives he attributes to him are highly sophisticated. None the less there are many valuable insights that future commentators must consider and some of his suggestions about the attitudes behind the Marcan material may not be far from the truth.

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