

Book Reviews

The Church: by G. C. Berkouwer. Eerdmans/IVP, Grand Rapids/Leicester, 1976. Pp. 438. Price £ 6.95.

To reflect upon the Church is a difficult task today because there are so many churches and so many differing views of the Church. And yet this exactly is what the author attempts to do in this book. The author is a well known European theologian and his earlier works such as *Modern Uncertainty and Christian Faith*, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, *Recent Developments in Roman Catholic Thought* have won for him a world-wide reputation as an articulate thinker and writer. The present work on the nature of the Church makes a substantial addition to the increasing literature on the Church in the modern world.

Is the Church today really what the lyrical descriptions about her claim to be—the people of God, the disciples of the Lord, the flock of the sole shepherd, the city set on the hill, the salt of the earth, the light of the world? The glaring discrepancy between these and what the Church is in truth today makes it necessary to bridge the gap between the ideal Church and the empirical Church. For this, a critical examination of the Church is necessary and the book does it using the framework of the four-fold classical definition of the Church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Each section of the book critically discusses one of these attributes.

The author makes a distinction between the attributes and marks of the Church and says that this distinction played a far reaching role in the controversy between Rome and the Reformation. He approvingly cites H. Bavinck, who considered the Roman Catholic error to be the lack of a distinction between attributes and marks because the attributes were seen as marks to point out the one, true Church. "Marks are the external radiation of an attribute." Thus all emphasis was laid on substantial attributes, which became apparent in the reality of the Church. However, the judgement of the Reformation was that one had not yet said everything when one had referred only to the Church's attributes. In speaking about the marks of the Church, the *notae ecclesiae*, the Reformation introduced a criterion by which the Church could be, and had to be, tested as to whether she was truly the Church.

The author sees the unity between the Father and Son as the great mystery of Christ's messianic life and regards it as the deep foundation for what belongs to the essence of the Church—its unity. One of the most interesting and original chapters in the book is the

one dealing with unity and pluriformity. Pluriformity points to an undeniable state of affairs: the multiplicity of the churches. The common meaning of pluriformity is the disclosure of one "essence" in many forms. While he is aware of the sin of disunity, Berkouwer is tempted to accept with A. Kuyper the view that pluriformity is a historical necessity and sees some positive aspects in it. Undeniably the doctrine of the pluriformity of the Church does not originate in the biblical portrait of the one Church. Rather, it has arisen in close connection with the actual course of development in the history of the Church. It is since the Reformation that the Church has passed over into a period of pluriformity. Just as there is multiformity in the whole of creaturely life, the Church of Christ is bound to reveal herself in more than one form.

Still the contradiction between unity for the Church as the will of God and diversity as perversion due to human sin remained. Perhaps a *modus vivendi* was reached in the Reformation which seemingly continued to maintain the grandeur of the single Church, but nevertheless actually admitted pluriformity as a new way of existence for ecclesiastical life. When plurality becomes more visible than ever before, the call to unity gains more force and this is one way to explain the rise of the ecumenical movement in our time more than ever before. The rejection by Rome of various forms of pluriformity is undoubtedly connected with her realisation that the Church is by definition one. Hence, multiformity and variation are possible only within the fellowship of the one Catholic Church. Although Roman Catholic ecclesiology today (i.e., since Vatican II) recognises "traces" (*vestigia*) of the Church in other churches (and this is of great significance to the ecumenical movement), it basically holds that the "Church of Christ subsists in the Roman Catholic Church."

The World Council of Churches uses the word "elements" in practically the same way as the concept of vestiges. The Toronto Statement of the WCC says: "The member churches of the ecumenical council recognise elements of the true Church in other churches. They are of the opinion that this mutual recognition obligates them to meet with one another in earnest dialogue; they hope these elements of truth will lead to a recognition of the full truth and to the unity that is founded on the full truth." What is looked forward to is not a forced, unattractive uniformity in the place of pluriformity, "but a pluriformity which is protected and preserved in the context of the reality of an unassailable fellowship." The unity of the Church is not a numerical description; the Church is understandable only as a unity in fellowship.

The catholicity of the Church is seen as expressing the decisive importance of the Gospel for all times and all peoples. There is quantitative (geographical) and qualitative (doctrinal) catholicity. Heresy is the opposite of true catholicity. In true catholicity all one-sidedness is harmoniously surmounted. The core part of this section

is the discussion on the "boundaries of the Church." The idea that found acceptance in the early Church—*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*—although not acceptable now contains an insight into the relatedness of Christ and the Church. The intention was not to push Christ into the background, but to attract attention to the way Christ gathers his Church. "*Ubi Christus ibi ecclesia*" (Where Christ is, there is the Church). And so we can as well say *extra Christum nulla salus*.

Another question Berkouwer raises is whether the Church can both be catholic and continually be reformed. The realisation that constant renovation and reformation are needed has found expression in the words "*ecclesia semper reformanda*" (the Church is always in need of being reformed). This reformation is for renewal and this renewal cannot be separated from the renewal of individual believers.

The designation "apostolic" emphatically recalls the apostolic past. Unlike the other three attributes, "apostolic" has a historical component. Berkouwer discusses this section under three main titles: "Apostolicity and Truth," "Apostolic Succession," and "Apostolic Confession." Confessing the apostolicity of the Church means "continuing subjection to the apostolic witness." So it does not signify an inert clinging to a far away past. Starting from this normative beginning the Church should be set in motion and only in this way can it be recognized as a truly apostolic Church.

The traditional way of interpretation is to deem the Church in the full sense of the word "holy" and then to relate sin to the individual members of the Church. This distinction plays an important role even today in Roman Catholic ecclesiology. This view of the Church is rejected as romanticization and idealization. The Church is seen as a fellowship which does not stand above and beyond sin. Individual and collective sin do in fact affect the Church. The sin of its members "sullies the body of Christ itself, shakes the spiritual building itself." The Reformation has placed the whole Church under the permanent testing of the Gospel.

The book ends with an interesting chapter on "Holiness and Mission," in which the whole question of *plantatio ecclesiae* (the planting of the Church) is raised. This motive, Berkouwer says, has been opposed, because it was seen as lacking appreciation for the expectation of the Kingdom and is too strongly concentrated on the institution of the Church, so that mission finds its terminal point in the Church. He asks for the recognition of the "missionary dimension of the Church as the sign of God's power and presence as a magnet for the nations." The need of the hour is for "an apologetic of deeds" which comes out of an understanding of its "world diaconate."

This is a very difficult and profound book. The book has been written at a very high level of scholarship. Without a detailed knowledge of current European theology, most of the book cannot be understood. But the book opens up new directions of thought about the nature and function of the Church. We must always be open to

all the revealing light that falls upon the mystery of the Church, for only then can the Church truly be the *ecclesia semper reformanda*.

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Israel Before Yahweh. An Exposition of Selected Psalms: by K. Luke. Pontifical Institute Publications, Alwaye, 1978. Pp. viii+248. Price Rs 20.

This small volume contains a Preface and expositions of sixteen psalms (1, 2, 12, 29, 36, 47, 60, 75, 76, 82, 91, 93, 101, 117, 137). Philological details and the discussion with other exegetes is mostly presented in notes (pp. 177-248).

It is worthwhile to have a look at the preface (pp. iii-iv) where the author briefly summarizes his views of the task of an interpreter of the psalms. "He (the interpreter) has first of all to clarify the setting of the individual poems in the religious life of the chosen nation. . . Secondly he has to show what the psalms meant for the people of Israel, and this is best done by analysing the words used by the psalmists." Thirdly the significance of a psalm for modern man has to be explained by showing "how a given psalm can be actualized and used as personal prayer." Finally the "general oriental background" has to be highlighted. In the expositions the author tries to put this programme into practice.

1. Each exposition starts with an attempt to determine the type of the psalm and its setting in life. The author describes the cultic situations against the background of which the psalms have to be understood. In the controversial question of genre and setting of Pss. 47 and 93 the author takes Mowinckel's position and understands the psalms as psalms of Yahweh's enthronement as king which was celebrated in connection with the New Year Festival. The author gives a vivid description of the Babylonian *akitu* festival (pp. 66, 67) on which the Israelite New Year Festival is said to have been moulded. According to the reviewer the author pays not enough attention to the fact that the Old Testament never mentions a festival of the enthronement of Yahweh (see however p. 68 and note 13 on p. 204). In connection with genre and setting the date of origin is discussed sometimes, the author mostly following those exegetes who assume an early date of origin.

2. It seems to the reviewer to be the most serious drawback of the book under discussion that the structure of the psalms is not analysed in fuller detail. The author spends mostly only a few sentences on this question and notes briefly the parts into which a given psalm falls. A detailed analysis of its structure (parts, relationship of the parts to each other, emphasis, climax etc.), however, is indispensable if the understanding of the meaning of a text unit

(e.g., a psalm) is aimed at. The author's brilliant word explanations should be supplemented by an analysis of the structure of the psalms.

3. The explanation of individual words is given top priority in the book under discussion. The author translates the psalms verse by verse and gives an impression of the usage of the key words and their meanings by adducing typical occurrences. In the notes he adds statistical information, philological details, and mentions books and articles from which further details can be gathered. It is impossible to give in a brief review article an impression of the richness of these word analyses. They are a mine for all interpreters of the psalms. To make use of this rich source a word index at the end of the book would be very helpful.

4. Stylistic questions are discussed only occasionally, and the author's statements were not always clear to me. Is the pattern of Ps. 36:6 not A:B:C//C:B (instead of A:B:C//B:C)? If in Ps. 117:1 the suffix of *shabbēhuhu* is taken into account, the pattern is A:B:C//A:B:C, not A:B:C//A:C, (see p. 161). But there are also very fine stylistic observations (see, e.g., p. 35 and note 9 on p. 190).

5. Throughout the book the author refers to Ancient Near Eastern texts in order to highlight the "general oriental background" of "peculiar patterns of thought" (p. iii). Mention has already been made of the description of the Babylonian *akitu* festival in connection with the explanation of Ps. 47 (pp. 66-67). In addition to that the four traditio-historical excursuses in connection with Ps. 82 should be noted: "The Divine Assembly" (pp. 121-124); "The Catalogue of the Gods' sins" (pp. 124-126); "Trial and Condemnation of Delinquent Gods" (pp. 126-128); "Mockery of Rival Gods" (pp. 128-129). It is a pity that these excursuses are not mentioned in the table of contents.

6. Each exposition concludes with an attempt to show the significance of the Psalm for modern man. The author is guided by the question how the Christian of our days can use the Psalms in devotion and prayer. The modern reader will find many valuable suggestions (e.g., at the end of the exposition of Ps. 36 on p. 65), although he may sometimes hesitate to follow the author, e.g., when he wants Ps. 60 to become "the prayer of the Church militant in the span of time between the two comings of Christ" (p. 84), or when he finds in Ps. 76 the message that "God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble" (p. 111). The hermeneutical problems would need a more extensive consideration than the space of the volume under discussion allows.

On the whole it can be said that K. Luke's book is of high value for the interpreter of the Psalms and can without hesitation be recommended to students, teachers and all those who want to learn from Israel and the Old Testament to live before God (compare the title of the book).

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Christology at the Crossroads. A Latin American Approach: by Jon Sobrino S.J. S.C.M. Press, London, 1978. Pp. xxvi+434. Price £ 4.95. Also Orbis Books, New York, Maryknoll. Price \$ 12.95. First published in 1976 as *Cristologia desde america latina* (esbozo a partir del seguimiento del Jesus historical, Centro de Reflection Teologica, Mexico).

Jesus, history, the oppressed, transformation of reality, the crucified God, the following of Jesus—these terms form the bone and nerve system of this new Christology. In the preface and the first two chapters Sobrino establishes his methodology. In chapters 3 to 6 the method is used to interpret the historical life of Jesus on the basis of four major realities, namely, Jesus' service to the Kingdom of God, his Faith, his Prayer and his Death. The next two chapters, 7-8, discuss the Resurrection as the place where fact and faith, history and transcendence, promise and fulfilment overflow into each other. The Resurrection is treated both as a hermeneutic and as a theological problem. Questions arising out of positions so far taken are met in chapters 9 and 10. There are tensions between Jesus of Nazareth and the Spirit of the Risen Lord; between Faith and Metaphysical Theology; between two types of Political Theology, the Prophetic and the Power-centred; and between Cult and Discipleship. There are also tensions between Historical Faith and Dogmatic Formulations. The last chapter, entitled *Theses for a Historical Christology*, contains a neat summary of the work. But I would request the reader in a hurry not to take advantage of this summary. He will miss the richness and nuances of the author's thought if he has not first gone through the whole work. The appended essay on *The Christ of the Ignatian Exercises* may be of greater interest to Jesuits than to the public unless, may be, the public is interested in probing the origins of Sobrino's spiritual vision from which his Christology probably springs.

In Latin America, this work has had a predecessor in Leonardo Boff's *Jesus Cristo Libertador. Ensaio de Cristologia Critica para o nosso Tempo*, published in 1972 (Petropolis, Brazil. English translation: *Jesus Christ Liberator. A Critical Christology for Our Time*, Orbis Books, New York, Maryknoll, 1978, \$ 9.95). True to the traditions of Latin American theology, Sobrino seeks a concrete Christology related to the actual life of his people, to an analysis of their situation and to the reality of the Gospel (pp. xi, 13, 34). The task of theology is "to reposition the path and course of believers so that their lives can be a continuing, advancing discipleship, a following of Jesus" (pp. 342, 347). Christology must therefore take cognisance of its situation and be continually innovative so that Christ may not fail to be Christ, may not fail to be of novel interest in every novel situation. In a world yearning for liberation from alienation and oppression of many kinds, Christology will be both "a critical theory and liberative praxis" (182, 382f., 347f.). It will not be mere explana-

tion, surely not speculation; it will not seek to justify Christ before the bar of reason but before the demands for a liberating and transforming praxis.

Sobrino therefore rejects most of the old classical Christologies: they reduce Christ to something abstract and absolute, incapable of prophetic denunciation, of conflictual history and the dialectics of reality; they have been found irrelevant for praxis; they have co-existed, even collaborated with oppression (pp. xv-xix, xi, 278, 286, 292, 297). But the author's concern is not to supplement classical Christologies, but "to make them more concrete on the basis of Jesus' history" (p. 103). He claims nothing completely new; the concepts used have been drawn from current European Christologies. What is novel is his way of structuring available data about Jesus and of giving a new direction to Christology (pp. xix-xx). From the history of Christology in Europe, Sobrino samples three authors, Karl Rahner, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann, who have attempted to re-orient Christology, and offers comments on their hermeneutical presuppositions, their strengths and their weaknesses (pp. 17-33). Sobrino feels closest to Moltmann and cites him oftener than any other author.

The new direction is to turn to the Jesus of history and heed his call to follow him. These together constitute the only possible christological epistemology (pp. xiii, xxiv). The historical Jesus is the only valid starting point for Christology; and discipleship, the only way of knowing Jesus the Christ. We cannot start with the Church's dogmas; nor with the titles attributed to Christ in the New Testament, nor the several New Testament Christologies, nor the major events of Jesus' life like the Resurrection or the Transformation, nor with cult, nor with Kerygma, nor the teaching of Jesus, nor finally with soteriology. Some of these surely bring us closer to the historical Jesus than others, but all of them presuppose the Jesus of history; all of them need to stay close to him lest they move closer to Docetism and Gnosticism which have actually infected many a traditional conception of Christ. The historical Jesus is the hermeneutical principle that safeguards the specific character of the Faith, and draws us "closer to the totality of Christ both in terms of knowledge and in terms of real-life praxis" (pp. 9, 337, 347f.). Now "the historical Jesus" is nothing else but "the history of Jesus," the history of his conflict-ridden prayer and faith, the concrete history of his conception of God and his Reign, the history of his growth and development through change, crisis and struggle, the history of his suffering through which he learned obedience and arrived at perfection (pp. 80-87, 91-102, 338). It is the history of his filiation "which went hand in hand with his developing historical self-surrender to the Father" (p. 339).

An important consequence of this position is that "the norm of truth is the historical Jesus" (p. 291). That should save us from

intellectual gnosticism and keep us from falling a prey to the common error of treating Jesus as a particular realisation of some generic conceptions already known independently of him. It is a habit of abstract Christologies to begin by asking, Is Jesus God, priest, messiah? Is his death a sacrifice?, as if we knew well what God, priest, sacrifice etc. meant before meeting the reality of Jesus. That is a reduction of the critical uniqueness of Jesus as if his historical reality brought us no new revelation and called into question none of our mental, moral, religious or social positions (pp. 270 f., 275, 291f., 284f., 329f.). The claim here is that it is with the historical Jesus that we come to know what it means to love, to be human, to be God.

The other component of the new approach is the hermeneutics of praxis. "The Son reveals himself as the Son insofar as we follow his path." The knowledge of God "cannot be dissociated from the way that leads to God—a way that passes through the cross." "Knowing God means going towards God." It is as we fashion reality that we come to know it; we understand it in the process (p. 292). The condition for an understanding of the Resurrection is the specific praxis of the following of Jesus (pp. 255-57; 274f.). The christological affirmation that Christ is the Way to the Father "can have meaning only for someone who follows the same road." It is therefore obvious that "orthodoxy is impossible without some praxis." "The ultimate supremacy of praxis over orthodoxy is evident" since what we get in revelation is no abstract knowledge, but a manifestation of God in action, "the historicized love of God" (p. 390f.). A central strand in Gospel praxis is opting to be for and with the oppressed in their suffering and struggle. "The oppressed human being is the mediation of God"; "going to God means going to the poor." They and their historical cross are the privileged locale of access to God for the Son of Man is concealed in the needy, the oppressed and the persecuted (pp. 196, 201, 207, 222f., 373). Solidarity in suffering has christological relevance. Suffering is "a font of knowledge leading to the concrete practice of transforming love." Sobrino quotes Feuerbach's saying, "Suffering precedes thought" (pp. 198-201, 222f., 373f.).

This description of the author's approach has conveyed a great deal of the substance of his Christology too. A large part of Sobrino's historical Christology consists chiefly in reflection on the process by which Jesus became a person and became the Son (pp. 105, 202). The focus guiding the reflection is the relational aspect of Jesus and his life. Jesus is essentially the Son; his profoundest reality is defined in relation to the Father rather than in relation to the Logos; it is further defined in relation to the Kingdom of God which is bound up with the transformation of the world and the liberation of the oppressed. The relation develops through crisis and change within dialectically developing prayer and faith and conflict culminating in the Cross. In the Cross and the Resurrection he becomes the "firstborn." This name, signifying "Son" in relationship to the

Father and "brother" in relation to human beings, means that the feature of "brotherliness" is part of Jesus' divinity (p. 106).

The treatment of the Death of Jesus is perhaps the best part of the book. It could not but be touching and profound, coming as it does direct from the heart of the Latin American situation of oppression and suffering, and struggle for justice. The Cross calls into question religion and state and every sort of power amassed to oppress people. The Cross judges us. Its sharpest question is not "how we can find a benevolent God but how we can find a benevolent human being" (p. 224). Here we are confronted with the necessity of revising our conceptions radically. Here we see how "suffering and death can be a mode of being for God" (pp. 196, 224f.), how God is in fact a crucified God, a God of conflict, partial to the oppressed (p. 161), a God who has no power but love, who "is a trinitarian" process on the way to its ultimate fulfilment, to being All in All (IC 15/28; pp. 226-28, 234). The Cross reveals that the oppressed human being is the mediation of God. In historical terms this means that "God is to be found in the crosses of the oppressed rather than in beauty, power or wisdom" (pp. 196-201). The Cross concretises and historicises the meaning of being incarnate, being human, being for others, of loving, believing and of being God. It discloses the deepest nature and inmost thrust of the history of Jesus and of human history. The temptation of Christologies has been to isolate the Cross of Jesus from the history of Jesus and from the real crosses of the oppressed through the ages; to isolate it from its harsh, terrifying negative aspects and dwell only on its positive salvific meaning; to isolate it from God lest he be affected by it and lose his *apatheia*. The strength of Sobrino's Christology comes from his rejection of such temptations and the rootedness of his reflections in the soil of history.

The Christology of this clearly written, powerful and inspiring book is by no means standing hesitant at the crossroads; it is sure of its direction and its steps seem firm as we watch it walk down the road of its choice. From an Indian standpoint we are glad to subscribe to and link up with several of Sobrino's positions which seem to respond to our own concerns. (a) The mystery and transcendence of God is upheld. Jesus' own ignorance and error are seen as part of the perfection of his faith by which he let God be God (pp. 101-104, 165). We would like to bring this position into dialogue with the Vedantic affirmation that the Absolute is so transcendent, so immanent that it is always the indescribable Nirguna Brahman, always the unutterable Beyond. (b) The idea of God as process, as Reality on the way to becoming All in All which He is not yet, of God incorporating himself into the historical process through the Son, of human life as participation in God's process as well as in the conflict between transcendence (Father) and history (Son)—this idea will have to be explored in dialectical interaction with the Indian conception of Brahman becoming Itself through creative self-manifestation in the world of *Vyavahara* and finding Itself as the *Paramartha*

through its becoming (pp. 225, 227f., 234, 392). (c) We are happy to discover new allies in defending the primacy of praxis over orthodoxy and in vindicating discipleship and praxis as conditions of knowing and ways of understanding. (d) We should continue to affirm together, with still greater insistence and vigour, the truth intuited from the time of the Upanishads and the Buddha, namely, that suffering is a font of knowledge, and sorrow gives birth to thought and understanding. (e) For Sobrino a dogma is a doxological statement which arises where historical realities touch the mystery and wonder of God. "At that point," says Sobrino, "human thinking no longer has control over what it says" (pp. 334, 324). Dogmas then have a mystical character; they express in words the surrender and submission of one's ego to the mystery of God just as discipleship expresses the same in life. Here we have a relationship at once rooted in history and transcending it (pp. 324, 341, 385). We wish wholeheartedly to support this position, and want to see the mystical character not only of faith experience but also of theological discourse emphasised and maintained against every sort of positivism, rationalism and juridicism. (f) The author's refusal to absolutise Jesus and his emphasis on Jesus' relationality as the Way to the Father and the Revealer of the Way of the Son are full of promise for Christian dialogue in a pluralistic world like India with a growing sense of life's historicity. When however the author proceeds to speak of "the *absolute* character of his (Jesus') whole life," of the revelation in Jesus' history of "the *definitive* way to the Father," of the revelation in Christ of "the *ultimate* meaning of human existence," and of Christ's *uniqueness* and *irreplaceability* as the mediation between God and humanity (pp. 127, 387, 335; italics are mine), then we would like to pause and ask for clarifications: Are these affirmations derived from the history of Jesus or are they doxological statements? What is the connection between the absoluteness and uniqueness predicated here and Jesus' essential relationality? What in particular is the relationship of all this and of the historical Jesus himself to the totality of the known history of brotherly concern and love on our earth? Light is perhaps thrown on the last question by Sobrino's final position that love can be given, received and shared at levels deeper than the level of consciousness and knowledge. "Viewed theologically, the life of the Christian does not consist in knowing about that love but in receiving it and sharing it. Knowledge of it is subordinate to that process . . ." (p. 391). "We become like God insofar as we immerse ourselves in the historical process as Jesus did . . . It is immersion in that process that constitutes the gratuitous gift of faith, whether one does or does not realize consciously that it is the process of God himself. If someone really believes in the possibility of history despite all the misery around, . . . then one experiences this gratuitousness and realizes that love is the ultimate word of meaningfulness" (p. 392). This distinction between Christian terms and conscious realisation that something is God's on the one hand and the reality of love and

real participation in God's history with faith in history's possibilities on the other hand leaves us room to recognise the way of the Son wherever it may appear even far beyond the range of "Christian terms" and Christian doxological statements. The tasks indicated here need not be Latin America's theological tasks. The concerns behind them are not part of Latin American reality. They are part of Asian reality, and claim the attention of Asian theologians. But it is noteworthy that they should emerge, at least indirectly, within a Latin American Christology.

The main challenge that comes from this Christology to the Indian Church is that we take India's actual history seriously as one of the poles of our christological reflection; that we shift our discussion from the level of culture, ritual, philosophy and dogma (the great tradition) to the level of concrete reality (the little tradition); that we take a harder and closer look at the Gospel revelation that the oppressed are the mediation of the Crucified God and the privileged locale, the only locale of access to him.

The misprint (frougt) on p. 118 will do the reader no harm. On p. 224, what was meant was, I guess, anthropodicy rather than anthropocity. It is perhaps an oversight that we have Mark and Luke on p. 97 instead of Matthew and Luke.

The author holds that the term "Son of Man" was applied to Jesus after his Resurrection on the basis of resemblances perceived between him and the expected Son of Man (pp. 265, 377). There is no word to show how this position tallies with the fact that the use of the term "Son of Man," unlike the use of titles such as Lord, Christ, or Son of God, is common in the Gospels and is found invariably on Jesus' lips, while it is rare in the rest of the New Testament. This would be strange if the identification of the Son of Man with Jesus was the work of the post-resurrection community. The point of this observation is that all reconstruction of the processes and stages of early christological reflection are provisional and precarious.

In a footnote (p. 145, note 49) the author admits a limitation inherent in his method. To the question what *we all* should do, not as a collection of individuals but precisely as Church in order to establish God's Kingdom in history, we get "no clear answer from the historical Jesus." The reason: The Jesus of history preached the Kingdom, but after his Resurrection the Church came into being. But if in the mind of Jesus the Kingdom was bound up with individuals following him, if according to him the coming of the Kingdom on earth had no social perspectives, it may be looked upon as an interior mystical reality and not a historical one. If so where is the point in insisting on the history of Jesus? Today with our global inter-relatedness and growing socialisation, the Kingdom cannot be in history without being a visible social reality. Had a study been included of the social dimension of the Kingdom expressed or implied in Jesus' practice of table fellowship, his breaking down of social and

religious classes, his abolition of religio-social ostracism, the sharing of his experience of God as Father and his emphasis on the practice of love and brotherhood, a clear enough answer to the question posed could perhaps have come from the historical Jesus. If the historical Jesus believed in the possibility of transforming reality, liberating the oppressed and establishing justice through individual conversions and efforts alone, his understanding of reality was too defective to render his faith and obedience significant enough for our consideration. If the historical Jesus had no perspectives other than individual commitment to his way, then we have to go beyond him (though he remains the only valid starting point) to find adequate horizons for a Christology for today.

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Towards a Theology of Contemporary Ecumenism: A Collection of Addresses to Ecumenical Gatherings (1947-1978): by M. M. Thomas. C.L.S., Madras, 1978. Pp. 320. Price Rs. 15.

This is a collection of addresses delivered by Dr M. M. Thomas to different ecumenical assemblies in various parts of the world. These essays represent the search of Dr M. M. Thomas for an adequate theology of the Church and its mission. In this search, the theological questions raised by Dr M. M. Thomas regarding the "universality of Jesus Christ, the unity of the Church and contemporary struggles for world community" are of particular significance to Christianity in Asia, Africa and Latin America where the Christian values in the nascent cultures of these continents brought through western influence have, at the same time, been negated through colonial, imperialist and racist attitudes of western nations which are generally supposed to be "Christian." These have led to international tensions and conflicts. Hence, a search for an adequate theology for the "third world," which may reaffirm the credibility of Christian faith and practice and, at the same time, be relevant to conflicts arising out of inherent social inequalities and exploitation in these cultures. Can Christianity become a reconciling force within these national and international conflicts?

The title of the book *Towards a Theology of Contemporary Ecumenism* represents an affirmation by Dr Thomas, reflected in his various addresses, that Christianity has a positive and reconciling role to play in these conflicts. Hence, he uses the term "contemporary ecumenism" to express a larger concern than what is generally associated with ecumenism, i.e., efforts towards unity of churches. He uses the term in the larger context of building a world human community through reconciling, and sometimes transcending, conflicts by viewing them with a global perspective. Thus his concern extends beyond the unity of the Church to the unity of mankind.

In this search he examines the meaning of theology, which he considers to be the "cutting edge of the Church." His reflections express the awareness that traditional doctrinal interpretations need to be re-examined in the light of the contemporary struggles and conflicts in the world. In this connection some important questions have been raised in the essays about the nature of the Church, its mission and dimensions of salvation. Should the Church stay away from conflicts and struggles for fear of losing its identity? Can there be a Church without a mission? What is this mission: to strive for other-worldly spirituality; to be engaged effectively in formulating living theology through creative participation in immediate struggles and conflicts? What are the roles of priests and laity in this mission?

Of course, the essays reflect a theology which could be termed as "no theology" from the traditional point of view, since it pleads for active involvement in secular issues, rather than abstractions and speculations. Similarly, the Church's mission seems to become this-worldly and social, rather than leading to personal salvation pointing to heaven beyond time and space. Dr Thomas has gallantly carried out dialogues on these differing understandings of theology, for which some of his other books also ought to be read. Of course, the source of his theological reflection is the person and work of Jesus Christ and His redemptive mission, which, normally, also forms the premise for traditional doctrinal positions.

In pleading for a living theology and an involved Church Dr Thomas may have raised disturbing questions for the majority of the faithful Christians who have little understanding of theology, the nature of the Church and its mission beyond the normal programme of religious education of the churches; but it must be conceded that he has certainly raised some pertinent issues, which are worthy of reflection in "third world" countries, where the inadequacy of the conventional methods and theological interpretations is becoming increasingly apparent.

The book has a presentable get-up and cover design, the printing is good. The price seems to be on the higher side, which places it beyond the reach of an average pastor and layman who needs to be sensitised to the issues raised by Dr Thomas.

D. V. SINGH

Bishop's College, Calcutta

Inside Out—A Style for Dialogue: edited by Rex Davis. W.C.C., Geneva, 1977. Pp. 76. Price Sfr. 10 (U.S. \$ 4).

The editor of this book felt that the W.C.C.'s 1977 Consultation on Dialogue held at Chiang Mai "needed a workbook, an invitation to explore this issue with other people" (p. 3).

The book takes the theme of dialogue-in-community as it emerged at Chiang Mai—"a consultation *on* dialogue, not a dialogue in itself" (p. 5). Its main ingredient is a transcript of taped interviews by various participants. The frankness of the comments reproduced in this section, ranging from wholesale approval of what is acknowledged as high level, theoretical discussion, to unrestrained, gut level exasperation with the irrelevancy of it all, is to be respected. However, the force with which the negative comments comes over defeats the object of producing this little book, and casts not a little doubt on the validity of pursuing investigation into dialogue any further.

"Inside and Outside of God's Acts" is a collection of the Chiang Mai Bible Studies, offered here presumably for either one's private perusal or devotion, or for use with Church groups. On the whole, they are excellently prepared and do deserve some attention, particularly Christoph Barth's balanced and refreshing approach to exclusivism and inclusivism from a biblical perspective. Here, after wading through the previous forty-seven pages, do I find the first, but strong, glimpse of any invitation to explore the implications surrounding the Church's place in the community at large. The remainder is given that the Bible is no answer book for all the new questions raised by dialogue and our relation with other faiths; insights from Genesis 12 indicate that openings for valuable dialogue have been provided by God's dealings with men *outside* our community in increasingly new and critical times.

The closing pages consist of an appraisal of the Consultation by Stanley Samartha ("Searching for Common Ground") and a précis of the Chiang Mai Statement.

If, as John Deschner says (p. 26), Chiang Mai quickly faced the issue which, at the 1975 W.C.C. General Assembly in Nairobi, temporarily put the dampers on dialogue—that of the connection between dialogue and the whole missionary enterprise—this "workbook" says nothing about it. Instead, this issue—old but still without a satisfactory resolution to it—is too often side-tracked onto the connection between Church unity and dialogue, a topic which perhaps by its freshness commands more attention in the body of the book. For one brief moment in the statement presented at the end of the book, something deserving of a follow-up is raised: our theology must today be worked out in a dialogue situation, appreciating that the actual encounter of faiths is asking penetrating questions about God's activity in history. But this is not all that should be said about dialogue; what else needs to have been said—including some statement on the place of dialogue in the Church's mission—has not been said strongly enough to grasp one's attention.

As a "workbook" *Inside Out* . . . lacks in solid, thought-provoking, clearly presented material which churches may take up and investigate in their own community's environment. It did, however, help to reinforce some of my thinking on this oft-worked issue of inter-faith

dialogue: it is simply a mundane, everyday job of the Church seeking to communicate with its non-Christian environment, requiring neither high level, sophisticated discussion nor workbooks on high level, sophisticated discussion.

S. ANDREW MORTON

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One Man's Prayers: by George Appleton. S.P.C.K., London, 1977. Pp. 89. Price £ 1.25.

Diary of Daily Prayer: by J. Barrie Shepherd. St Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1975. Pp. 67. Price 95 p.

Prayers for Impossible Days: by Paul Geres. S.P.C.K., London, 1976. Pp. 51. Price 95 p.

Psalm 23. An Anthology: versions collected and annotated by K.H. Strange and R.G.E. Sandback. St Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1978. Pp. ix+118. Price £ 2.45.

People in Prayer. Ten portraits from the Bible: by John White. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1978. Pp. 160. Price £ 1.10.

Prayer is a very personal thing. That seems a trite remark. But it needs to be made. Ultimately there will be as many methods, as many kinds of prayer, and certainly as many prayers, as there are people. I suppose I am not unique in not liking to pray through other people's words—with rare exceptions. Yet there must be a number of people who do like to pray through other people's words. Three of the books reviewed here are composed and collected by individuals.

Of these I found Bishop Appleton's the most interesting and appealing and prayable, perhaps because they are so well worded, so real and so realistic. Take this, prayed in Jerusalem: "Lord, I keep on thinking how I may wash the feet of others, not seeing thee kneeling before me, waiting to wash my feet . . ." Or this, entitled "Disturber of our peace": "O Holy Spirit, who dost so deeply disturb our peace: continue, we pray thee, thy probings and promptings, and goad us until we go thy way, to our own greater blessing and deeper peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord."

The *Diary of Daily Prayer* is a kind of "stream of consciousness" prayer, a jotting down of personal memories with an occasional interjection of the divine name. I am not sure for whom it is intended. Perhaps the elderly and convalescent might find it more useful than I did.

There is no doubt about whom *Prayers for Impossible Days* is aimed at. The titles of the prayers tell us that. "Prayers for days when you are tired of others," "prayer for days when things go against

you," "prayer after a separation," "prayer when life has become routine," "prayer of a discouraged boss," "prayer after a family break up," "prayer when you worry about money," "prayer when you are tired of praying," etc., etc. There is certainly a place for this kind of prayer, and a need for these kinds of prayers. (Someone has just written asking for a loan of the book.) There are many rooms in the Father's house. And there must be rooms there even for the truculent, the disgruntled, the bitter, provided they attempt at least to overcome their defect...

Surely one of the most popular of all prayers must be Psalm 23. I didn't realise how popular it was until I got hold of this book. The authors have collected 87 versions, in the original Hebrew, Latin, English and English dialects. They know of well over 100. One is a translation from the Japanese. Another in pidgin could well bear translation. It begins "Mi olsem sipsip na Yawe i wasman bilong me." There are twenty (surely too many) Scottish and Shetlandic versions and a few modern versions. For the borstal boy, the Lord becomes "my probation officer." And in the space age "He plotteth my course across the vacuum of space, He directs me safely through the maze of stars, He guards my ship from the blazing meteorite..."

There are, of course, the more staid modern versions—the Good News, the Living Bible, the NEB and even a few Catholic versions—Ronald Knox, the Jerusalem Bible and Gelineau or the Grail version. The original Vulgate version of Jerome is also printed. The authors state in the footnote that this version is "still in use in the Roman Church." It is not. Even in the few places where Latin is still used, there is a new more accurate translation available. This was made in the 50s.

All this, and the stimulating introduction, is proof of the remarkable drawing power of these few but such appealing words. I have seen three different versions in Hindi and I myself helped to make one in Bhili, the dialect of the Bhil tribe in North-West India—where God became a cowboy, since the Bhils don't keep sheep, only cattle. Understandably almost everything else was almost literally translatable. I myself dared to produce two English versions, one of which was incorporated in my *Words with God* (The Psalms, selected, edited, arranged and introduced).

Of all the books noticed I found *People in Prayer* the most spiritually and intellectually satisfying. The author takes prayers from the Bible prayed by nine eminent people (David occurs twice) and analyses them. He shows their relevance to our situation and, in the process, elucidates some knotty problems. I personally have never seen a better explanation of Jacob, or even of Job, than those given here.

Some of his insights are really thought-provoking. On Jacob: "Faith is an attitude of will which says, 'Whether I feel that God is

there or not, whether I feel he will heed me or not, his Word tells me he hears and answers and I am going to count on that'." With reference to Daniel he remarks: "The we/they dichotomy is alien to his thinking. He and his people are one. He mourns the sins of people long dead as though they were a part of him . . . Herein lies a secret for would-be intercessors. You must not pray 'Have mercy on them, O Lord,' but 'Have mercy on us.' . . . You are not better than they, only more fortunate. If you would (really pray) say with Daniel—'Lord, we are sinners, we rebel constantly, have mercy on us'." Reflecting on Hannah and her prayer he remarks: "Agony must be expressed to a God who is *there*." I would only omit the "t" in the last word. Of Job in the presence of God he says, "Being big became to Job as unnecessary as speech had become. There is something both profoundly healthy and holy about being small and reduced to silence." He goes on to think about Paul's prayer for the Ephesians and Christ's last battle, his prayers in the Garden and on the Cross . . . Here is a book I can heartily recommend.

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Songs from a Strange Land: by John Goldingay. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1978. Pp.172. Price £ 2.15.

These studies in Psalms 42-51 are a valuable addition to "The Bible Speaks Today" series which aims "to expound the biblical text with accuracy, to relate it to contemporary life, and to be readable." It has been a pleasurable as well as instructive experience to follow these expositions for they retain the lightness of touch of their original presentation as sermons preached to theological students.

Working from his own translation, the author brings out and stresses the significance of the poetic structure of each psalm, which is often obscured in English versions. The reader unfamiliar with the original will also appreciate the concise discussions of alternative readings, and the brief guides to key words (transliterated) and themes met with. Due weight is given in these expositions to the personal or liturgical context in which the psalms may have been composed or used, with side-long glances at their application to present-day practices of individual and corporate worship, but the author never forgets that the Church reads them in the light of Christ and the twentieth century.

The New Testament qualification of Old Testament understanding is frequently pointed out, and some attention is given to a consideration of hermeneutics. It may not be very clear what can be done about the centrality of the idea of kingship in Psalms 45 and 47 (p. 92), but it is noted that a solution to the problem of having to talk of sin and salvation in concepts which have an exclusively religious con-

notation in English is indicated in Psalm 51. The understanding of sin as *failure*, which is as frequent in the Old Testament generally as it is here (vv. 2b, 3b, 4a, 5b, 9a, 13b), suggests that it is a dominant feature of the Old Testament concept, "and this is striking, for failure is the secularised version of sin which modern man (Christian or not) especially fears" (p. 154).

Perhaps it would be ungrateful to ask for some illustrations from psychology or literature on this theme, or for more than the few given in other parts of these studies (cf. pp. 44-46, 63, 65, 99, 133f., 150, 152), for the reader should be able to build on the solid exegetical foundation provided him. But the book would be even more useful if the footnotes indicating cross-references between the ten psalms discussed were supplemented by indices to the numerous other Old Testament and New Testament references.

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Communicating the Word of God: by J. N. M. Wijngaards. Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1979. Pp. 304. Price Rs. 15.

"My finding is that the Bible is in a very bad way in the Church. In a century during which biblical scholarship has made tremendous advances . . ., there has been an increasing frustration of preachers with the Scriptures as a basis of sermons, a steady decline in the educational use of the Bible in the Church, and a mounting ignorance of the contents of the Bible by the members of the Church." So wrote James Smart (*The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church*, S.C.M. Press, 1970, pp. 9f.). His alarm has been echoed by several other writers, for example Elizabeth Achtmeier, *The Old Testament and the Proclamation of the Gospel* (Westminster Press, 1973), James Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World* (S.C.M. Press, 1973).

At least part of the reason for this problem is the fact that the way the Bible is taught in theological colleges and seminaries does little to prepare students to communicate it after they leave. A casual listening to the average Sunday sermon would seem to indicate that any biblical criticism that has been learnt is rapidly forgotten. It appears that the same is true in the Roman Catholic Church. Fr Wijngaards writes in the book under review that an analysis of sermons preached by deacons revealed "that they composed their sermons for the greater part from the sermons and instructions they had heard before entering the seminary. Six years of philosophy, theology, Bible studies and heaven-knows-what-else had apparently made little difference to their preaching."

This book sets out to remedy this defect. It is divided into two parts. Part I deals with general principles—the importance of the

Bible in preaching and instruction, the authority of the Bible, whether there is any place for one-way communication, the problem of boredom. Part II, the longer part, describes and illustrates a considerable number of techniques.

Part II contains a wealth of information, advice and suggestions, a veritable gold-mine for anyone who is concerned with communication of Scripture or based on Scripture. Clearly not all of the techniques suggested will appeal to everyone, but this could form an extremely useful handbook.

Part I also contains some good sections. Of particular value is chapter 3 "On listening and Asking Questions." This contains an excellent section on Jesus' models of preaching. It also, rightly I think, defends preaching against the charge that it is necessarily a one-way form of communication. "The solution lies in making our audience speak in our own presentation . . . We have to aim at verbalising the questions of the audience in our own words" (p. 75). The author also has some wise things to say about the dullness of many sermons: "One of the fundamental reasons why the standard instruction fails to interest is that it is seen to propagate an ideology, rather than proclaim a salvific message on behalf of a living God" (p. 79).

The weakest chapter of Part I, and it is an important weakness, is that on "The Authority of Scripture Today." The problem is set out (pp. 42-44) in a manner which ignores the way in which the process of biblical criticism itself poses questions for biblical authority and also ignores the much more radical questions posed for biblical authority by the awareness of cultural relativism (cf. D.E. Nineham, *The Use and Abuse of the Bible*, S.P.C.K. 1976). Hence the solution to the problem also smacks of the glib and superficial: "Fidelity to God's word requires the ability to distinguish the ever-present and ever-relevant demands of God from what is passing and time-bound. The message of Scripture should be disentangled from religious concepts that are contrary to our modern scientific outlook or which have a theology of God and man that is unacceptable to contemporary society" (p. 50).

This weakness is significant because the type of authority which Scripture is judged to possess will affect fundamentally one's notion of what there is to communicate. Some of the illustrations of the suggested techniques in Part II thus reflect a woolliness concerning authority. Biblical stories are told or biblical characters are portrayed—Rehoboam, David and Nabal, Gideon—in order to draw moral lessons, when it is not at all clear that the drawing of the lesson is in keeping with the intention of the passage. The section on "theological perspective" advocates a method which seems not very far removed from allegory and which shares the danger of subjectivism with allegory. A distinction is made, with apparent ease, between Old Testament laws and proverbs which are absolute and those which are of permanent value.

The book would have been strengthened if this question of authority had been tackled with more precision. However, the techniques stand up as techniques even when one disagrees with the particular use to which they have been put. They provide a wealth of suggestive ideas. They show the careful preparation which is necessary if the Word of God is to be communicated. Above all, they show that biblical criticism is not something to be forgotten the day after a B.D. is completed, but may actually be put to the service of "Communicating the Word of God."

The book contains a number of misprints: without making an exhaustive list, I noted some thirty. More seriously, among the helpful diagrams which accompany the text, the diagrams for Figure 12 (p. 103) and Figure 20 (p. 142) have been exchanged.

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A Guide to Isaiah 40 66: by E. John Hamlin. S.P.C.K., London, 1979. Pp. x+230. Price £ 4.50 net. £ 2.50 non-net (Special edition for Africa, Asia, South Pacific and Caribbeans).

This book, which is Number 16 in the TEF Study Guides, is similar in structure to other commentaries in the series. After a brief introduction, the text is treated by sections. For each section, there is "Background and Outline," which describes the occasion for which it was composed, and briefly summarizes the main theme and contents; "Reading Suggestions," which show how a close study of the language and structure of a passage can help to clarify its meaning; "Interpretation," which shows how the prophet's message applied to his own people, and "Notes" explaining particular words and points of possible difficulty. There are also study suggestions for each section. On the whole the book makes the kind of sensible judgements and useful suggestions one has come to expect of this series. Some of the contemporary applications under "Interpretation" might be questioned, but this is inevitable, since the subjective element is much greater here. For reasons which are not clear, proportionately much less space is devoted to chapters 56-66 than to 40-55.

As in other books in the series photographs are skilfully used to draw out the meaning of the text. In addition to the commentary by sections, there are three special notes on "The Historical Background of Isaiah 40-66" (this should be 40-55), "Who Wrote the Book of Isaiah?" and "The Historical Background of Isaiah 56-66." There is also a glossary which discusses important themes and ideas which occur in several of the poems and in other parts of the Bible.

The book is carefully produced, with few printing errors (though the page numbers referred to in the caption to the picture on p. 133 are incorrect).

Altogether this is a useful addition to the series. The biggest problem is the price. While the non-net price for Asia and other areas is to be welcomed, nevertheless £ 2.50 (which is over Rs. 45 at current exchange rates—at least at the time of writing!) places it beyond the means of a very large number of students. Would it not be possible to print this series in a country where books may be produced at less exorbitant prices?

M. R. WESTALL

Manilal C. Parekh, Dhanjibhai Fakirbhai: A Selection: edited with introductions by R.H.S. Boyd. C. L. S., Madras, 1974. Pp. 304. Price Rs. 15.

The first appearance of a book usually attracts the attention of columnists, but the volume will be soon eclipsed by the appearance of fresh ones. Robin Boyd's volumes in the field of Indian Christian Theology are of a different type, which continue to be in the memory and concern of magazines. His renowned volume *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, first published in 1969, was a unique compendium providing a rather comprehensive anthology of the outstanding pioneers of Indian Christian Theology. It served as a basis for beginners in the field, but had to be completed by supplementary volumes of more detailed studies, as Boyd himself has confessed in his preface: "It is my hope that this book may stimulate others to produce more adequate studies, and to carry forward the work of Christian Theology in India." Boyd himself has continued the study and added more to his original volume in the revised edition of 1975. However, in the meanwhile he brought out the volume under review.

It is a double volume compendium, as is evident from its structure and format, the two volumes being marked by the Editor as Part I and Part II. Part I is on Manilal C. Parekh and Part II on Dhanjibhai Fakirbhai. Each part has a table of contents and an appendix of explanatory notes (which should have been better placed as foot-notes) and a Bibliography of sources which the author has made use of.

Part I, on Parekh, contains eight chapters. In chapter 1, "Introduction," the author explains the meaning of important terms such as "Bhagavata Dharama," "Spirit," "Spiritual and Carnal," "Hindu," and briefly introduces Parekh's views on the Church, on Baptism and on Caste. A brief introduction to Parekh's religious and philosophical background has been provided, thereby enabling the reader to understand the original words of Parekh himself in the selections that follow.

Chapter 2 is an autobiographical sketch, which is quite brief, yet sufficient for the reader to understand the human background of Parekh's thoughts. Born in a family with a long Jain tradition and

influenced by his father's faith in Vaisnavism, which holds Krishna as the chief incarnation, Parekh was oriented to two different religious and moral traditions at home and then to others such as Shaivism. However he had no clear conception about God until he came to know Christ through the reading of *The Imitation of Christ* which reflected the marvellous personality of Christ. Then he was attracted to Keshub Chundra Sen, who made it his "mission to harmonise all the religions of the world" christocentrically. Besides, the reading of Carlyle, Emerson, Luther and Wordsworth inspired in him a missionary spirit. At least he made up his mind to become a missionary of the Brahma Samaj, which was very much "like the Unitarian Church in the West and was also largely rationalistic" on which the mystic element of transcendental faith was superimposed by Keshub, and he did so after passing his B.A. But the subjective character of the New Dispensation Brahma Samaj exposed a lack of objectivity for his faith, which became a challenge as he read Cardinal Newman and then the Bible on his sick bed. The great idea of God incarnating himself, which he first learnt from Vaisnavism, which was, however, lacking in Brahma Samaj, now struck him and he found the fulfilment of this longing in Jesus Christ who is the Incarnation of God.

An arresting fact in the autobiography in chapter 2 is that Parekh was not excommunicated by his own original religious community during all these years and even after his joining the Anglican Church in 1918, a fact which surprised even Mahatma Gandhi. Parekh claims that this was due to "the genuineness of my spiritual life and to the large-heartedness of my community." Parekh was struck by the "most unsatisfactory conditions" of Christian life and work, and he felt that "the Indian Christians could by no means be called Christians in my sense of the term," because they were anti-national and anti-Hindu, and the "so-called Church of Christ was almost entirely 'carnal' in the Pauline sense of the term."

Another striking event narrated in the autobiography is Parekh's preaching tour all over India for five years from 1924, during which he gave such an exposition to Christianity as well as Hinduism that both Christians and Hindus were pleasantly surprised at the harmony of the two religions, and he attracted many followers seeking the harmony of all religions. The motive of his evangelistic task is vividly put in the following words:

Christianity came to India and other countries of Asia loaded with European Civilisation, Western Culture and British, Dutch, French or Portuguese Imperialism. In fact it was nothing less than a sort of five-fold Imperialism, religious, racial, cultural, economic and political, and I wanted to restore it to its primitive glory. This work of mine was looked upon as similar to that of Mahatma Gandhi in the political field and I was called by an American paper "the Gandhi of the Christian Church."

Chapter 3 of Part I "Selections from the Gujarati Autobiography" presents more ideas by means of selections under appropriate headings. Boyd has added much to our knowledge of Indian Christian thinkers by bringing these original writings to the wider public, most of whom would not have known about them had they remained limited to the Gujarati reading scholars only. Chapters 4 to 8 contain Parekh's original writings on very vital issues in Indian Christian Theology that have to be grappled with today.

Part II of the volume under review, which is on Dhanjibhai Fakirbhai (1895-1967), contains six chapters, and follows more or less the same methodology of presentation as Boyd has followed in Part I. Chapter 1 is an "Introduction" dealing with the writings and the leading ideas of D. Fakirbhai, presented as the editor's own exposition and is quite appropriate as it prepares the reader to read the Indian thinker's own writings in the succeeding chapters; the chapter closes with a comparison between Manilal Parekh and Dhanjibhai Fakirbhai, bringing out their mutual awareness, common foundations and yet their different goals. The editor has his bias for Fakirbhai, who, in his evaluation, was more genuinely Christian with a more cordial association with the organised Church and the Christian communities, while maintaining close links with many Hindu friends; he had a *pratyksanu bhava* of Christ which made him uncompromisingly Christian. Boyd's observation that Fakirbhai's writings have ideas similar to Teilhard de Chardin, both the writers being scientists and mystics, one eastern and the other western, must arouse interest in research scholars in order to throw more light on the matter at a deeper level.

Chapters 2-6 give us a full spectrum of Fakirbhai's theological thinking, and the editor presents this by means of a wide range of selections from the writings of the Indian mystic. The central idea in chapter 2 is "Love" as the most essential and adequate category for describing the nature of God, which is best and fully understood christocentrically and in no other way; "Love" is the key to theology and spirituality too, as further elucidated by the selections in the succeeding chapters. The only true yoga is the Yoga of Love, and Love is the bond of unity of the Trinity in the Godhead; Revelation is Love in action, the focal point of which is the Christ event, which reveals the fulness of God; and Christian life means to follow Christ in "love union with God" and with love in action among men. The full Godhead of Christ is beyond doubt confessed by Fakirbhai in his *Kristopanishad*. Christ is the Saviour, in whom God recreates us into "New Being" by giving us, through him, all that is essential for the New Being; this is possible by *satat prarthana* (prayer without ceasing) with complete surrender to him who has won "the Victory of Love."

The editor's keen interest in enriching Indian Christian theological literature and the skill with which he does it is commendable. One might observe that he is just editing and compiling. However,

he does not refrain from commenting whenever there is scope for doing so. The reader may not agree with all his opinions; but no one can blame him for not making the futile attempt to write a *Summa Theologica* for India by grinding the diverse Indian thinkers in his own crucible; he rightly denies that it is his legitimate task, at any rate. The book must be recommended without hesitation to all students of Indian Christian theology as essential reading.

It is of course a minor observation that the format of the book could have been better by placing the tables of contents of both the parts at the beginning, giving footnotes instead of appending them, collecting the bibliographies at the end, and providing a reference index of subjects and names.

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Commitment to Care: by Dean Turner. The Devin-Adair Company, Old Greenwich, 1978. Pp. 415. Price \$ 12.50.

In this book the design argument is once more examined. It is often supposed that the advances in scientific knowledge achieved during this century make the idea of reason and purpose in the universe unnecessary. Turner suggests that the reverse is the case. The further scientific investigation extends, the more complex does the organisation of the natural world show itself to be. When Hume took up Epicurus' hypothesis, as modified by French philosophers, of the random collision of minute particles to account for the constitution of the world, it seemed hardly plausible. It was made so by Darwin's account of evolution by chance variation and natural selection. Yet can we really believe that the precise structures of atoms and molecules are the result of one long series of happy accidents with no intelligence acting at any point? And in the organic world is it really still plausible to maintain that chance variation and random selection alone will account for the complexities of organisation that we now know about? Are we really to believe, for instance, that the DNA molecule got itself together by chance, bearing in mind its astonishing structure and its astonishing behaviour?

Scientific investigation raises a related question. The very possibility of it presupposes that the universe has a rational structure. For if the universe were not consistently intelligible no discoveries would be possible. Corresponding to the rationality of our minds there has to be an objective rationality in the universe. And in fact in all sciences comprehensible, rational structures are brought to light: astronomy, subatomic physics and molecular biology are examples. The universe, so far as science has extended, is rational through and through. Yet the atheist holds that the universe is ultimately irrational. All this has arisen by chance; there is no reason and no pur-

pose informing it in any way. This combination of demonstrable, universal rationality and supposed ultimate irrationality Turner finds incongruous. The agnostic position Turner does not explicitly mention. But it is not hard to see what his position would be. Agnostics suggest that there are limits set by the human understanding; the world does not have to make sense to us. Yet with such an immense amount of sense made is it not reasonable to look for sense in the ultimate ground? Sense here can only mean reason and purpose. Turner's case for God is that the universe is rational everywhere we look; therefore the ultimate ground must be rational.

My own view is that if the design argument is taken as an argument from analogy, as it generally is, it is weak. Chance variation and natural selection are extremely slow and cumbrous methods, compared with human planning, for achieving a particular end. But if the argument is taken as one of inverse probability, as Paley intended, it remains extremely strong. Here the emphasis is on the astonishingly complex organisation of the things in the world. Reason and purpose must have some part in evolution. I think that Dean Turner would agree with this.

The basic concept of God which Turner sets forth to make sense of the world and of human life is Responsible Care. It is filled in with other terms: infinite mind, a conscious, feeling, knowing, caring Spirit. Responsible Care does alright as an interpretation of the statement God is Love. But that was not meant to be all that was to be said about God. And Turner does not deal closely with all the hard questions of the being of God and his relationship to the world. Nevertheless he has some interesting things to say in the attempt to make this concept of God square with the harsh facts of life.

Turner takes the non-omnipotent, non-omniscient view of God. Correspondingly creation's grand design allows for a certain amount of freedom, contingency and openness in the creative process. There is room for chance and accident. The evolution of living organisms is partly to be explained by chance. And he has some good examples from modern science to show the way in which accidents do occur, for instance genetic accidents resulting in deformities. The partial independence of the world means that God's actions in it must be by discontinuous intervention. This is understood by means of an analogy with our own voluntary action in the world through our brains and nervous systems. We put our intentions into effect through an influence on the quanta of energy in our brains. How this is done is unknown. But we do it all the time. It is suggested that in the same sort of way God can influence the behaviour of atomic particles and quanta in the material world. These ideas form part of Turner's general view that love, informed by reason, is the ultimate Reality in which our world is grounded.

This is a polemic book. Perhaps it is not altogether surprising that Turner's criticisms of people holding other views are not always

fair. He is not always fair to atheists. He says that if the metaphysical views of atheists were correct there would be no ideals that should compel people to treat one another decently, for existence would be ultimately absurd. Yet they will not allow anyone to treat their own existences as mere absurdities. To this the atheist can reasonably reply that from the ultimate viewpoint existence is absurd. But we do not have to adopt that view all the time. On the human level there can be ideals—the greatest happiness principle, for example. And there can be hopes even though there is no ultimate hope. There is, for example, the powerful Marxist hope which motivates many people who know they will not see it realised.

Turner criticises the behaviourists for incoherence. He suggests that they claim that we can teach people to behave more responsibly by teaching them that there is no such thing as responsible behaviour. But this is not their position. They hold that the concept of responsibility is outdated by a number of findings in science, for example in psychiatry, and should be dropped. But people can be taught to behave in ways that society finds acceptable. This may be mistaken but it is not inconsistent.

Turner is unfair also to theologians. He appears to suggest that many hold that there is no goodness in natural human life. I know of no theologian who holds that. But many do take a realistic view of human nature. And they believe that only the grace of God can renew it. Turner's own Pelagian theology misses the depth of Paul and Augustine and Luther. They knew the need for responsible care in life. But they thought that it was the outcome of the love of God poured into the heart through the Holy Spirit. It was only this that could renew the inner springs of action and make possible a spontaneous care for other people that was independent of their gratitude or ingratitude.

It is not necessary to agree with all Turner's theology nor with all his philosophical views to appreciate the case he has made for Theism in the modern world. He has the scientific and philosophical knowledge to make the case effectively. This comes out, for example, in the long and exceedingly well-informed essay on Relativity and in his discussion of certain problems in modern logic. Because he has the knowledge, he has the nerve to challenge a good deal of current scientific and philosophical orthodoxy.

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