

resurrection of the dead. As Fr Grollenberg actually remarks, he is doing this in the teeth of the Greek cultural and ideological background of the Corinthians (p. 130 ff.). So evidently Paul did not think that when preaching the gospel we simply have to accept the cultural assumptions of our listeners without question or criticism. And yet this is what the author seems to

me to do when trying to 'make sense' of Paul's teaching for his own readers. At least, that teaching comes across to me in an exceedingly weak solution. I think it would have seemed to Paul remarkably like the Corinthian errors he was so vehemently combating.

EDMUND HILL O.P.

THE YEAR OF THREE POPES by Peter Hebblethwaite. *Collins, London, 1978*
paperback 95p.

This book reads as enthrallingly as a good thriller. While being in no way offensive to pious papists it should also amuse and enlighten others who either suspect their own motives for being interested or else cannot fathom why the papacy remains such a fascinating subject at all.

The most speculative sections are obviously those on how the three men were elected in the first place. Although we shall presumably never know for sure it seems pretty clear that Montini, the obvious candidate to succeed John XXIII in 1963, was blocked until the fifth ballot by a determined group of ultra-conservative cardinals, led by Ottaviani and Siri, who hoped to stop Vatican II from ever being reassembled. Paul VI himself, interestingly enough, probably wanted Lercaro of Bologna, who had turned his archiepiscopal palace into a hostel for homeless boys.

The surprise election in August 1978 of Albino Luciani should not have been such a surprise at all, so Peter Hebblethwaite now concludes, with the benefit of hindsight and some ingenious deduction from unguarded statements by various eminent persons whose lips were of course sealed by terrible oaths. In brief, the theory runs that Cardinal Benelli of Florence, until recently a very powerful figure in the Vatican, either thinking himself too young or too much associated with the Roman Curia or else simply preferring to be *éminence grise*, had the bright idea that an Italian would be acceptable to the majority of the electors if he could be found among the cardinal archbishops of the major Italian cities. What with age, sickness, provincialism, or the hopelessly unacceptable conservatism of Siri of Genoa, the list soon reduced itself to one plaus-

ible name, that of the Patriarch of Venice: a popular bishop with a flair for communication, who was in the Lercaro mould and had just happened to have visited Brazil. On the day, Siri probably topped the list at the first ballot, but with Luciani close behind. On the second ballot Benelli's plan began to work, and on the third Luciani had picked up most of the votes except for a hard core of ultra-conservatives. He was elected, then "by a grand and spontaneous coalition of third world cardinals, moderates, progressives, and flexible conservatives", and "the irreducible opposition was small and impenitently right-wing" (p. 84). This theory would be confirmed by the obvious euphoria immediately afterwards: God's candidate and all that.

How Karol Wojtyla got elected, in October, has proved much harder to work out. We know that it took much longer – perhaps as many as eight ballots. Peter Hebblethwaite's story is that the first day went in showing that there was now no acceptable Italian. He favours the doomsday 'scenario' according to which it was a contest between Benelli and Siri (again!), thus between the smooth Curial autocrat dedicated to carrying through the reforms of Vatican II and the aging conservative who once described Vatican II as "the greatest disaster in recent ecclesiastical history" – but with about forty electors steadfastly voting for neither of them. Overnight, then, a sleepless night for most of them we may suppose, the cardinals had to face the prospect of electing a non-Italian. It is possible that some thought of Cardinal Koenig of Vienna (capital of a neutral country); and that he may have played a considerable role in gathering

votes for his friend Karol Wojtyła – but, as Hebblethwaite says, we all “simply under-estimated the courage and imagination of the College of Cardinals” (p. 154). The risks for the Catholic Church, and for the Polish people, are very great; but it was Krakow from which John Paul II was taken.

Summing up Pope Paul’s ministry of fifteen long difficult years, Peter Hebblethwaite rightly lays emphasis on the immense achievements that far outweigh his inconsistent practice of collegiality and the “paralysing caution” that overtook him on some (important) matters. He will be remembered as the pope who opened the Vatican to the Third World and who inaugurated reconciliation with the Orthodox Church. It is interesting to learn that his last reading was a chapter from Jean Guitton’s latest book. Paul VI was “intellectually formed by Pascal, Bernanos and Simone Weil”, and “theologically formed by reading Maritain, Congar and de Lubac” (p. 2).

Despite being taught while he was a seminarian by Ottaviani, Pope John Paul I not only became a friend of Lercaro but regarded Rosmini’s great work, *The Five Wounds of the Church*, as the greatest single theological influence on his

thinking. The five wounds were: the separation of the people from the clergy in worship; the defective education of the clergy; disunity among bishops; the nomination of bishops by the secular power; and the Church’s enslavement to wealth. The book was placed on the Index in 1849; but, a century later, and even now, is not a bad guide for a young bishop. Though plainly neither of the intellectual power nor the stamina of his predecessor or his successor, Albino Luciani was not a joke pope. By abandoning the titles – Vicar of Christ, Supreme Pontiff, Head of the Church – in favour of Pope, Bishop of Rome, and Supreme Pastor, John Paul I made a highly significant, and (we may surely hope) irrevocable shift in the understanding of the papal function. Peter Hebblethwaite concludes with an interesting “Theological Appendix” in which he charts the movement, as he puts it, “from papacy to Petrine ministry”: a movement that at least leaves hundreds of years of papal triumphalism behind to open a new era, to which Pope John Paul II is surely committed, when the Roman Church may once again become the church that “presides in love” (Ignatius of Antioch’s phrase for her).

FERGUS KERR O.P.

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION by Norman Anderson, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1978. pp. 162, paper £3.50.

Norman Anderson stands as a pillar of orthodoxy amidst the christological tempests of the Church of England, which benefits the Chairman of the House of Laity of the General Synod. Professor Sir Norman Anderson, OBE, LL.D., QC, DD, FBA, is a distinguished lawyer and on his own admission an amateur theologian who was invited to give the Bishop John Prideaux Memorial Lectures at the University of Exeter early in 1978 and he used the opportunity to contest the liberal theological opinions which are increasingly prevalent in Anglican debates on the nature of Jesus Christ. His range of interests is fairly narrow and in two chapters on ‘The Contemporary Debate’ he confines himself to criticisms of John Knox (the American, not his illustrious Scottish forebear), John Robinson, Dennis Nineham and Geoffrey

Lampe with his ‘Spirit Christology’, and open to criticism they certainly are. So are John Hick and Frances Young, contributors to *The Myth of God Incarnate*, dealt with in another chapter on the relationship between the historical tradition of the resurrection of Jesus and comparable myths in Hinduism and Buddhism. By contrast Anderson allies himself with Eric Mascall and F. D. Moule.

Anderson’s beliefs and theological conclusions would stand any test of orthodoxy but I am not sure that his arguments are so convincing. While not a fundamentalist, he is very conservative and relatively uncritical of the New Testament which he accepts as an authority of the utmost reliability. He explains his christological principles which may be expressed thus: he accepts the Chalcedonian christology of