

JESUS, GOD AND MAN. *Modern Biblical Reflections*, by Raymond E. Brown, S.S. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1968. 109 pp. 25s.

CHRIST FOR US TODAY. Papers read at the Conference of Modern Churchmen, Somerville College, Oxford, July 1967, with an appended essay by Edward Carpenter, President of the Modern Churchmen's Union, edited by Norman Pittenger. *S.C.M. Press*, London, 1968.

CHRISTOLOGIE. *Essai dogmatique, L'Homme Jésus*, by C. Duquoc. *Les Editions du Cerf*, Paris, 1968. 336 pp.

GOD OUR SAVIOUR. *A Study of the Atonement*, by Peter De Rosa. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1968. 230 pp. 30s.

THE ATONEMENT, by F. R. Barry. *Hodder and Stoughton*, London, 1968. 224 pp. 16s.

'We are all Nestorians today.' An impression after reading these five books is that a quieter, less apologetic insistence on Jesus, God and man, has shifted the bias of what is now problematic. However questionable Nestorius' attempts to secure the personal unity of the God-man, whatever problems he left unsolved—and today judgments are kinder on his efforts than they were in the past—the permanent value of his position lies in the appreciation of the manhood of Jesus, and the refusal to jeopardize that insight into his humanity while maintaining its union with the divine. There is no clamorous defence of the divinity in these books, and their authors write, for the most part, with the cool assumption that we must give full value to the humanity of Jesus, while facing what is still problematic, that it was the humanity of one who was God.

Fr Brown has brought together two studies which until now have only been available separately and in part in periodical articles. Without raising the question of whether Jesus was God, since this is one of his cool assumptions, his first biblical reflection asks, 'Does the New Testament call Jesus God?' His qualified answer to this much narrower question is that 'In three clear instances and in five instances that have a certain probability Jesus is called God in the New Testament' (pp. 28-9). When the Old Testament heritage still dominated, 'God' referred strictly to the Father of Jesus, and the Christians found other ways of asserting his equality with God. Perhaps liturgical usage accounts for the appearance of this title for Jesus in the more recent strata of the New Testament. This cautious conclusion is matched by Fr Brown's answer to the second question, 'How much did Jesus know?' Here he focuses as an exegete on a central problem in christology today, the discussion of Jesus' human knowledge. The biblical data are carefully worked through to the conclusion that the Gospel allows a normal ignorance of the ordinary affairs of life and a use of the imperfect religious concepts of the time together with a knowledge which in some respects is clearly more than ordinary. Jesus

may not have known when the reign of God would finally come, but he knew that the kingdom would come through him, and grasped his own unique role from the beginning of his ministry. The relevance to us of this insistence on a truly human knowledge, even to the point of admitting limitations, is that only so can we know the depths of God's love for us through one who is properly human; the relevance to us of the insistence that he is God is that we do know God and his love in this man.

There is something like an echo of this in the Archbishop of Canterbury's sermon to the Modern Churchmen's 1967 conference at Oxford: 'Here is meaningfulness, here is Man in his true meaning, here is what we mean by God . . .' (p. 12). E. G. Parrinder's paper opens on a different note, recalling Nels Ferré's fear of an 'ecumenical totalitarianism' and an 'indiscriminate biblicism' in the World Council of Churches' confession of Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, for, as Ferré says, there are few, if any, sure New Testament texts which say plainly that 'Jesus is God' (p. 13). Parrinder's concern is more with another ecumenical totalitarianism aimed at the other world religions. A reformulation of christology is needed, without emptying it of 'the stuff of religion', if it is to speak to Islam, which already acknowledges Jesus as a sinless prophet, the Messiah, but not God, the Hindu who accepts him as an *avatar*, the Buddhist for whom he is only an honoured teacher though not supreme like the Buddha. It seems doubtful if this reformulation could be left where Professor Nineham leaves it in his study of 'Jesus in the Gospels' with the tentative suggestion of an 'event' christology, allowing that 'Jesus is genuinely, limitedly and confusedly human' and yet holding that 'God was uniquely active in and through him' (p. 64). Dr Caird on 'The Doctrine of Christ in the New Testament', criticizing the over-simplified views on development associated with Harnack, contributes two interesting points, one on the substantial agreement of Paul, Hebrews and John that the glorification of the Son of Man is the fulfilment

of man's destiny in the manhood of Christ, the other suggesting that their agreement in ascribing pre-existence to him is an express contradiction of Jewish claims about the Torah. The question of how Jesus could be both fully man and fully God never arose for the New Testament writers. 'They held that the union of the human and divine which had been achieved in Jesus was precisely that which God had intended from all eternity as the destiny of man' (p. 79). When Professor Wiles strays beyond his patristic brief he suggests we may see 'degree christology', with its starting-point in Jesus as an individual historical person, as a more direct antithesis of the Alexandrian approach than that of Antioch. Canon Dillstone says that we are no longer looking for an ideal humanity, but an existential man 'on the edge of nothingness', who is struggling towards identity. This may be the revelation of man that we are seeking in Jesus, but it is doubtful whether Canon Montefiore's account of the revelation of God can satisfy us. Is it enough that God's presence in Jesus is 'in the same kind of mode as he is present to all men' (p. 104), only the difference of Jesus' response making him unique? This paper gained sensational publicity, we are told, for its description of Jesus's human personality as 'homosexual', although this was intended without implying any moral connotation, but we may feel equally reserved about its treatment of Jesus as a vehicle of disclosure, and the readiness to accept a process theology which would see the sufferings of Jesus as God's self-disclosure of a suffering divinity. The uniqueness of God's disclosure and action through Jesus are themselves questioned in Professor Reid's post-Christian philosophical view; he balks at the 'theory-laden' God-man, sinless and divine. Professor Lampe thinks that sinlessness in Jesus is not to be evaluated with reference to the moral perfection of his every action, and P. N. Hamilton considers that any modern christology must be very wary of asserting claims to uniqueness. He declines 'to affirm traditional uniqueness-claims as to the nature of God's indwelling in the person of Jesus' (p. 156). Process theology apparently forbids us to say that Jesus' acts and decisions were *also*—still less that they were *really*—God's (p. 161), and Hamilton can find no way of accepting the claim that God's indwelling in Jesus differs not only in degree but in kind from his indwelling in other men without impairing or denying his manhood (pp. 166-7). This is a

sad conclusion which makes one hope that the Archdeacon of Westminster's appended plea that the Modern Churchmen will set their face against the contemporary flight from reason will not go unanswered.

Fr Duquoc, a Dominican of the Lyons Province, has written a dogmatic essay on Jesus the man which demonstrates a new style of christology. Scripture sensitively explored with an openness to modern thought saves it from the pretensions of system-making. This is not simply an essay in biblical theology, but neither is scripture merely invoked to establish dogmatic theses. The author is not bound by biblical categories of thought, but his theological reflection is grounded in positive study of the scriptures. One sees the working out of this method in the two parts developed in this volume: first, reflection on the theological significance of the mysteries of the life of Christ, a treatise neglected since the time of St Thomas, as Karl Rahner has remarked; second, a study of the titles of Christ, which goes beyond the familiar pattern of New Testament Christologies, such as those of Cullmann and Fuller, by its inclusion of a speculative treatment of the knowledge and consciousness and the personal and dynamic unity of Christ. It will be interesting to see how Fr Duquoc continues this successful work in a promised second volume on the paschal mystery.

In *God Our Saviour*, Fr De Rosa writes with the ease of a practised teacher to sketch the whole movement of salvation. He makes some effective use of contemporary literature to convey a sense of the human condition and man's behaviour. He places the proper stress on the manhood of the Saviour, and accepts with many modern theologians the limitedness of his knowledge, and a self-awareness which might be called 'intuition' rather than 'vision'. Though personally sinless Jesus shared our sinful condition, and died to sin for us. On a 'justice view' of atonement this must look like the vindictiveness of God on an innocent man, but Fr De Rosa has another view which stresses the reconciling initiative of God, the internal love of the Father and his will to save. 'God's action of raising Christ eternalizes Christ's sacrificial love for him' (p. 181). None of us can miss the *parousia* for when we die Christ comes for us, and in glory the transfigured manhood of Christ always mediates to us the vision of God (p. 224). Fr De Rosa has taken trouble to see that his heart is in the right place; one hopes he will be forgiven if

in writing this readable book he has sometimes made new theology sound too easy.

The former Bishop of Southwell has written a book on *The Atonement* in the series *Knowing Christianity*, which is more informative on the old theology. Besides literature—more *King Lear* in this book than *Brideshead Revisited*—there is helpful illustration from psychological lore. As in the previous work there is no question of Jesus having done something which enabled God to forgive; the stress falls again on the

divine initiative to save. Instead of notions of penal substitution, Dr Barry has an instructive analogy from the patient's identification with the psychiatrist. Of course there are bogies from mediaeval atonement theory, and the account of St Thomas, though right in suggesting that he had no one atonement theory, misses his distinctive instrumental conception of Christ's humanity, the points of comparison with Abelard, and sees only an extension of Anselmian thinking. OSUMUND LEWRY, O.P.

FAITH AND THEOLOGY, by M.-D. Chenu. Translated by Denis Hickey. *Gill and Son*, Dublin and Sydney, 1968. 236 pp. 35s.

This book, compiled from a number of studies written prior to and during the Second Vatican Council, provides a fine example of theological reflection which is thoroughly contemporary and progressive without ignoring or rejecting the great inherited tradition of Christian thought. As the translator points out, it shows quite clearly that the renewal in Roman Catholic theology was well under way before the convocation of the Council and he instances not only the name of Fr Chenu, but also those of Lagrange, Congar, Jungmann and Rahner, to which many others might be added.

Fr Chenu takes as his starting-point the apparent tension between the direct and mysterious encounter with God which is the heart of personal religion and the formalism of adhesion to truth which is involved in the acceptance of dogmas and formulas prescribed by authority. Having shown that, in spite of the limitations of human language and the imperfections of the Christian institutions, the tension is both inevitable and to be expected in view of the historical and embodied character of human existence, he goes on to consider a whole series of other dualities, in a way which progressively elucidates the nature of the theologian's vocation and function. Faith and reason, the Bible and systematic theology, truth and freedom, the dogmatic roles of the theologian and of the bishop are discussed in succession and the book reaches its climax in an exposition of the Christian doctrine of matter and of the relation of body and spirit in man. Here Fr Chenu is rightly critical of any tendency to deny or even to under-estimate either the essential goodness of matter as created by God or the importance of the body as a genuine constituent of human nature and not just a temporary and troublesome integument of the human soul. Here he passes a severe judgment

on the Platonic and neo-Platonic elements that have been prominent at recurrent periods in the Church's history; not only the pseudo-Areopagite but such great figures as St Anselm, St Bonaventura and even St Augustine himself do not emerge unscathed. As we might expect, the key figure for Fr Chenu is St Thomas Aquinas, but this is not just a matter of Dominican loyalty or of parrot-like reproduction of the *ipsissima verba* of the Angelic Doctor. His supreme value is seen to lie in his intrepid insistence on the legitimate autonomy of the temporal order and of the ultimate significance of matter as well as spirit. 'The choice lies between the pessimism of Augustine and the optimism of Aquinas.' More is involved than a passive acceptance of Aristotelian philosophy; Fr Chenu is emphatic on the need in missionary work of 'a genuine immersion in the spirit as well as in the language of the native races'. 'One cannot really say that the Gospel has been preached in a particular place until the people themselves have elaborated a native theology. The word of God can only be incarnated in terms of the thought-patterns of a specific culture. Until this comes about in a given civilization, the faith is nothing more than an imported product. A Catholic theology which cannot be taught in German, Russian, Chinese or Bantu is a contradiction in terms.' There is nothing romantic about Fr Chenu's assessment of the triumphs and failures of the Church's institutions; as examples of the latter he instances the attitude of Gregory IX to the Aristotelian movement of the thirteenth century and the unhappy experience of Père Lagrange in the twentieth.

The strictly theoretical discussion comes to its climax in the chapter on 'The Human Situation: Corporality and Temporality', which provides the basis for the extremely concrete