

know enough about what it would *be* for a human being to be God, to say that, even if all the information contained in the New Testament about Jesus were true, it would support the claim that he was God. However, the author does argue that we can go so far as to maintain that specifically Christian belief is *not unreasonable*. In a remarkably short time after the death of Jesus, people were confidently ascribing to Jesus a unique and crucial role in God's plan for humanity. And granted that the narratives of the Resurrection are *not* mere fabrications, they do at least *cohere with* belief that Jesus is God (269). And given sanctity in Christians, one may also hold that belief in the divinity of Christ is not unreasonable—such sanctity is to be expected, granted the divinity of Christ (271). And it cannot be shown, in spite of what has often been claimed, that to say that one being is both human and divine is self-contradictory. 'We cannot, perhaps, see how something can be a human subject without being what excludes that subject being divine. But this is no proof that a subject cannot be both human and divine' (292). Much the same applies to the assertion that there is at once unity and distinction in God, as implied by the doctrine of the Trinity (293–6). Someone might concede that contradiction cannot be demonstrated in the central doctrines of Christianity, but retort that this is cold comfort; what, she might ask, is their relevance? The author suggests that, apart from something like the Christian revelation, we could have no serious reason for belief in God as loving. The fulness of human love seems to demand that there should be another equal to and distinct from oneself; thus the appropriateness of a distinction of 'Persons' within God (302–3). The book ends with a consideration of difficulties about the nature and practice of prayer.

I myself feel that greater weight should have been put, in the early part of the book, on the positive analogy between the divine nature and the human intellect; if God is infinitely and actually in this respect what we are vestigially and potentially, there is no question either that God is wise, or of what is meant by God's wisdom. Also, with regard to the last third of the book, I think that a more powerful positive case *ought to* be able to be made for the centrally constitutive doctrines of Christianity, if indeed one should become or should remain a Christian; the author's negative apologetic, that contradiction cannot be shown, needs supplementing by something more extensive than his remarks about love, profound as these are as far as they go. And I believe that such a case *can be* made; that a consideration of politics, and of comparative mythology and religion, reveals a more or less universal 'hunger for an incarnate God' such as entails the appropriateness of the Christian mystery to the human condition. But these are very minor points, of alternative emphasis rather than of real disagreement, to register with what is really an excellent book.

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THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH by Avery Dulles, *O.U.P.*, 1985. pp. vii + 199. £17.50.

This work is the fruit of the author's continuing meditation on *Lumen Gentium*, the dogmatic constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council. The material was first presented in the form of the Martin D'Arcy Lectures at Campion Hall in Oxford in the Michaelmas Term of 1983. In exploring the catholicity of the church the book distinguishes this notion from that of catholicism and subsequently discusses the relation between the two. In doing so the author makes clear that the idea of catholicism need not, in the first instance, be automatically equated with the ecclesiastical system known as Roman Catholicism, but ultimately presents his case for claiming that Roman Catholicism most fully embodies and secures the essential catholicity of the church in all senses of that word. His overall contention is that catholicity means fullness in every way, a fullness which will be characterised by an inclusive, 'both-and' attitude rather than a selective 'either-or' approach, and he sets out to show that the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church exhibits this attitude.

It would seem that there is in fact a barely hidden agenda for the book has a markedly

apologetic character. Whatever may have been wrong with the R.C. Church in recent centuries, it has all been put right by Vatican II. Section 5 of Chapter 8 lists what are seen to be the main teachings of Vatican II on ecclesiology, presented in all their balanced perfection, and even claims that sufficient machinery for self-criticism is built into the system to ensure the ultimate correction of such faults, deviations and distortions as might creep in through human frailty. While the present reviewer shares implicitly the author's faith in the Roman Catholic Church, the picture does at times seem to be somewhat unrealistically irenic. However, as a propaganda exercise for Vatican II ecclesiology, the book is valuable in presenting an extremely subtle and sophisticated answer to the question 'Is it the same Church?', particularly when this is asked in the context of enthusiastic and wide-ranging ecumenical activities. The author makes a very good case for 'the inner connection between ecumenism and catholicity' (p. 171), pointing out the inherent contradiction between catholic fullness and hostile division among Christians.

The framework of the discussion is an analysis of the philosophical notion of catholicity, adumbrated in the *Introduction*, surveyed historically in chapter 1 and summed up (with rather redundant repetitiveness) in the *Conclusion*. It produces nothing very new but provides an interesting angle from which to synthesise various areas of ecclesiology, though catholicity does seem an unprofitably abstract notion until it is pinned down and exemplified in chapters 2 – 5. Here the author adopts an interesting four-fold scheme, considering the height, depth, breadth and length of the church as dimensions which illustrate its catholicity. Height signifies the fullness or catholicity of God himself, revealed in the fact that he is trinitarian life, and shared by his church since it is the body of Christ. Such catholicity is not confined to the human members of the church but is predicated of the cosmic pleroma of creation, and is qualitative, not quantitative. Depth refers to the reality of God's relationship with his creation demonstrated by the truth of the incarnation, and so demands that the church embrace human and created nature in all its fullness and earthiness. It is characterised by a sacramental economy, and the doctrine of transforming grace contrasted with imputation theories of salvation. Breadth refers to spatial or geographical extension, and demands the inculturation of the church in all races and nations, promoting diversified unity rather than uniformity or sectarian particularism. Length signifies catholicity in time and safeguards a concept of continuity combined with requisite renewal and adaptation dictated by the signs of the times: 'Tradition is not infinitely fluid ... it has a corrective as well as an interpretative function' (pps 98, 104). This scheme seems at times artificial and contrived, and some topics are strained by being forced into it, notably the treatment of the Eucharist, pp. 115 – 8. On the other hand it provokes some useful and interesting insights, such as the treatment of the pre-Christian embodiment of the church from Abel onwards in chapter 5, where the question is also faced of whether the historical continuum of the church must be regarded as decline from original perfection, progress towards final perfection, or merely perpetuation of the initial datum.

Though the author's preoccupation with the Roman brand of catholicism has been inescapable throughout the preceding chapters, it is in chapter 6 that he turns to explicit consideration of the system of Roman Catholicism. There he discusses the need for visible, material structures, especially the episcopal hierarchy, and in chapter 7 considers the case for papal primacy. These structures are related to the fourfold catholicity previously analysed and the classic objections to them refuted. A renewed concept of papal primacy as the necessary head of the college of bishops is presented, but otherwise the treatment of this material is superficial and slight. The work has the inevitable weakness of lecture material; it is very repetitive without treating any subject in depth. A number of very interesting topics are touched on, and some valuable new insights are provided, but the technical, though elegant, style and vocabulary are misleading in suggesting that this is a weighty book. It is certainly not worth the quite appalling price.

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