

Perhaps the most significant thing about this scholarly, readable, and useful book is that its author allows Newman to have the last word, when he writes, 'The Catholic revival in Anglicanism must, like all movements, as Newman discerned, change in order to remain the same'.

JOHN COULSON

THE MESSIANIC SECRET edited by Christopher Tuckett. *Issues in Religion and Theology 1*. Fortress Press and SPCK. 1983. Pp. xi and 148 p/b £3.50

Aimed at students, teachers, clergy and general readers, these key studies are selected because they are neither too long nor too technical, and they are not otherwise easily available. Brief biographical details introduce the authors and there is a bibliography and an index of references. The papers are arranged in chronological order as follows: N.A. Dahl, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel* (1958).

J.B. Tyson, *The Blindness of the disciples in Mark* (1961).

T.A. Burkhill, *Mysterious Revelation* (1963).

G. Strecker, *The Theory of the Messianic Secret in Mark's Gospel* (1964). (E.T. by C. Tuckett).

E. Schweizer, *The Question of the Messianic Secret in Mark* (1965). (E.T. by C. Tuckett).

U. Luz, *The Secrecy Motif and the Markan Christology* (1965). (E.T. by R. Morgan).

W.C. Robinson Jr., *The Quest for Wrede's Secret Messiah* (1973).

J.D.C. Dunn, *The Messianic Secret in Mark* (1974).

H. Räisänen, *The Messianic Secret in Mark's Gospel* (1976). (E.T. by C. Tuckett).

Christopher Tuckett provides an excellent introduction with a full critical assessment of Wrede's seminal study and the way in which aspects of it have been accepted, modified or refuted. The essays selected for reproduction and translation in the volume are shown to be interesting examples of one possible line of argument with its merits or limitations. One fruitful development in recent research results from the separation of different types of material linked by Wrede in his original study.

Since discussion of the Messianic secret involves hypotheses about the origin, purpose and Christology of the Gospel of Mark, the collection serves as a useful survey of Markan studies in the last 25 years. Dr. Tuckett makes it clear that historical questions cannot be ignored since the genre gospel relates kerygma to the historical Jesus, but he thinks that useful insights can be gained by applying the techniques of literary critics and sociologists, and by examining comparable material (e.g. from Nag Hammadi) which may provide a background against which to read the Gospel.

MARGARET PAMMENT

MAGISTERIUM: TEACHING AUTHORITY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. by Francis A. Sullivan, S.J. *Gill and Macmillan*.

The term, magisterium, has often been used to designate the official groups (and the Pope) who were regarded as determining Catholic orthodoxy. Fr. Sullivan has very properly reverted to the earlier usage: "magisterium" means doctrinal authority, not those who exercise that authority.

He begins by pointing to the conviction that, by God's grace, the Church will be maintained in the truth of divine revelation, that she is thus indefectible, and in her ultimate and irreversible doctrinal judgments, infallible. This implies coherence with the original apostolic witness, which is preserved not exclusively in the texts of Scripture but in the living Tradition which is not exhausted by those texts. It is, however, to be borne in mind that linguistic expressions of Catholic truth are related to contingent and changing cultures. John XXIII pointed out, in inaugurating Vatican II, that while the truth remained identical its linguistic formulations could change with time and

circumstance.

It has further to be borne in mind that, as Newman argued in his celebrated essay on *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, implicit and unformulated Christian truths can come into the light of day and find linguistic magisterial expression as our understanding of the “deposit of faith” evolves. The Christology of the Chalcedonian Formula (451 A.D.) was the outcome of decades of theological argument subsequent to the definition of Nicaea I. More specifically, while it is the role of the episcopal college to teach the faith (and this college has a grace of truth), it remains open to the bishop of Rome to express a definition of faith *ex cathedra* (cf. the definitions of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Mother of God). A question arises about the “infallibility” of propositions on matters not divinely revealed; and in fact the Church has never “defined the infallibility” of such non-revealed, but often natural, truths. Throughout, Fr. Sullivan makes it clear that it is not so much the linguistic expressions that are infallible, but rather the meanings to which they seek to give expression.

Granted the principle of a development of doctrine, Fr. Sullivan reports (and presumably accepts) H. J. Sieben’s view that the infallibility of ecumenical councils was first explicitly affirmed by a 9th-century monk-bishop. But the question about reception of such definitions still remained. (Eastern Orthodox theologians still maintain that the Roman Catholic Church should participate in ecumenical councils, and it is noteworthy that the Eastern Orthodox have proclaimed no new definitions of faith since the break between East and West in the 11th century.)

Fr. Sullivan gives careful and balanced consideration to the authority of “non-infallible” official teaching. He criticises, and, I think, correctly, my “exegesis” of the term “obsequium religiosum”, used by Vatican II in reference to such non-infallible teaching. He urges a general attitude of docility, but I think in effect concedes that, even after such efforts, one may still conclude that there is something wrong about such teaching. (We have to admit that former Catholic attitudes to slavery and to “usury” – perhaps also to the heliocentric hypothesis proposed by Galileo – have been discarded. Karl Rahner and Canon John McHugh both give wise advice concerning *Humanae Vitae*; the latter’s helpful conclusion is all the more impressive, since he felt able to accept the teaching of that Encyclical). It is also to be observed that Fr. Sullivan appears to sympathise with the widely-held view that the norms of merely natural moral law are not proper matter for infallible definition.

The last chapter of Fr. Sullivan’s valuable book deals with the magisterium and the position, in its regard, of theologians in the Church. I warmly recommend this chapter, as indeed I do the whole book of which it is the concluding section. Fr. Sullivan thinks that there should be genuine, friendly and mutually respectful “dialogue” between theologians and those who officially exercise magisterium or advise those who do so. We cannot forget the service done to Christology by theologians between 325 and 451 A.D. He even proposes that theologians may be guided by a “charism” from the Holy Spirit. It is perhaps worthwhile to emphasise that, if we accept Lonergan’s theory of cognition, theologians as such will usually attain only to a theoretical understanding of divine revelation (and such understanding will usually be open to reconsideration, as is the case with hypotheses in the physical sciences). Definite truth is known to be attained when, from understanding, the process is made to positive “judgment” or “affirmation”; and in the sphere of divine revelation this move from hypothesis to judgment is the task of the episcopal college, and in extreme circumstances of the bishop of Rome.

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