

wills the Church to be, but that it is made concrete at present in the primacy of the bishop of Rome,

Probably the reaction of Anglicans to this book will be more worthy of attention than those of a Catholic reviewer. I confine myself to pointing out that there are a few misprints in the book (including "not" for "now" on page 108), and to some personally chosen remarks.

Mr de Satgé is prepared to accept the common modern view that the "Tu es Petrus" verses in Mt 16 are an addition to the Markan account of Simon Peter's confession of faith. I still hold, as I argued in *The Originality of St Matthew* over thirty years ago, that the Markan account is manifestly something left over when the "Tu es Petrus" passage was discarded; in other words, the "Tu es Petrus" material was part of the source-material lying *behind* St Mark's Gospel. (The reader may well ask why St Mark, traditionally supposed to be relaying Peter's own oral teaching, deliberately omitted something so redounding to Peter's prestige. I personally think that this "bias" against Peter pervades St Mark's Gospel, and that it reflects not so much the author's view of the first of the apos-

cles, but Peter's own instinct of modesty – and perhaps repentance. The great Anglican scholar C H Turner, more than fifty years ago, saw in this cool attitude to Peter an evidence confirming the tradition that Mark depended on Peter's oral teaching).

Mr de Satgé is well aware that much papal (not to say episcopal) teaching is "official" and yet not "infallibly" defined. This enables him to deal very fairly and very sympathetically with the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, with the teaching of which he does not necessarily disagree, though he thinks it may be susceptible of further development and refinement. I should like to recommend to him a trio of important articles by Fr John McHugh in *The Clergy Review* of 1969, in which a careful theologian, on the basis that there is certainly no new *ex cathedra* teaching in the encyclical in question, makes very clear (as does Karl Rahner) what is the proper and licit attitude of Catholics to such undefined teaching.

It remains to observe that this book is the third of what its publishers call "a notable ecumenical trilogy". I much regret that I have not read its two predecessors.

B C BUTLER

GOD OR CHRIST? by Jean Millet, *SCM Press*, pp 261 £5.95.

The Abbé Millet stands in need of a severe English editor who would excise a quantity of lapel-holding remarks like 'Do I have to recall?' (p 4 *et al. pl.*), 'I almost said', (p 11 *et al. pl.*), and 'I was going to say', (p 27 *et al. pl.*), correct importantly misleading misprints, (pp 111 and 122, for examples), and tidy away some oddities like 'as is generally known', *Jesus* 'presented himself as the very manifestation of God, as God himself', (p 9), and the reference to the Apostles' Creed as one of 'the first doctrinal formulations', (p 11), though he might, perhaps, spare the account of that time when 'shrouds were miraculously discovered', (p 33). The Abbé stands in this need because such things may prevent decent readers discovering the real excitements of his book. And there are many.

The Abbé's main theme, rather too often repeated in simple terms, is that his

sociological study of the Catholic Church reveals it to be a bi-polar institution. 'All the elements of the religious life which inspire it are ordered around two poles of attraction: belief in God and belief in Christ', (p 1). Belief in God is belief in order, explanation and purpose. It is transcendental. Belief in Christ is belief in events, processes, and futures. It is historical. To reduce, attenuate or alter in any way, 'and here I am still using the language of social psychology' the attraction exercised by one or other of these two poles is to change 'the very essence' of Christianity: 'in sociological terms, it is to substitute another religion for it', (p 2). The Abbé is dealing with the fundamentals of Catholicism. And he is greatly worried. At least, he is worried as a Catholic by what he observes as a social scientist. In the present time the structures expressive of this bi-polarity are subject to a great

strain. 'One of the two poles seems increasingly to be getting the better of the other, and this development tends to produce a real imbalance within this church, which is evidenced by the inner tensions which threaten its very existence as an institution', (p 2).

The forces of imbalance have been Spanish-speaking for some time, evidently. There should, I think, be a good number of readers to enjoy the excitements of the Abbé's account of Cardinal Bérulle and Sr Anne of Jesus. She is clearly the most impressive of all Carmelites, after Elijah and Teresa of Avila, converting the theocentricity of her patron into a thorough-going christocentricity. For what she termed his 'simple view of God' she substituted the 'imitation of Jesus'. His adoption of her spirituality was fateful for the character of 'French' devotion, seminary exercises, and, in time, the generality of Catholic prayer. We most of us came to see God in Jesus only. The Abbé tells this history very well. His narrative runs swiftly. His language becomes appropriately racy. Those who care for none of these things, and would run ahead to find out what is being said in Spanish today, will find he has got there before them, and is ready with some surprises.

If there, even now, remain any who doubt the sense and sensitivity of Paul VI, they must surely be convinced by the Abbé's careful analysis of what that Pope was doing 'after the Council'. He presents a quick review of the documents which issued from Vatican II, noting that 'throughout the texts (with the exception of *Gaudium et Spes*, which tends towards christocentricity), the conditions have been created for some equilibrium between the two tendencies', (p 188). But there is also a 'social logic' operating in the post-conciliar community. There has been no halt in christocentric developments. Bishops have met at Medellín. P. Blanquart has composed an essay '*A la recherche d'une théologie de la violence*'. 'There is resolute talk of an atheistic Christianity', in the work of J. Sobrino, (p 200). Christocentricity 'attains its extreme forms' in modern Latin Ameri-

can ideological writing, 'beyond which it is not possible to go', (p 200).

The Abbé is not at all sure who will go with these christocentrists to the edge of possibility. Not those women and men who rejoice in the tradition of western civilisation, for 'by reason of its intellectual structure, its realism, and its sense of "eternity", humanist culture quite naturally led towards theocentricity', (p 218). Not those who belong to other religions, nor those who have an interest in the recurring structures of human existence. The Abbé has a quotation from Professor Lévi-Strauss: 'Viewed from the outside religious faith (or its practice) is being impoverished or divested of a large number of its values which affect human sensibilities', (quoted on p 218). All this is being done in the name of the Church. 'As they could not decently argue from the letter of the texts, which told against them, they invoked "the spirit of the Council"', (p 214). Paul VI could not ignore the activities of those whose witness to Christ put aside his Father, and separated them from so many women and men. He could not expect such things to cease at a papal word of condemnation. His anxious care for the gospel proclamation in the Church led him to make pastoral interventions in the discussion. These were designed as 'correctives to the more or less fallacious interpretations' of the conciliar decrees. The most significant of them was the *Profession of Faith* he published in June 1968. 'Here the equilibrium between theocentricity and christocentricity is fully safeguarded', (p 215). It is a bi-polar text. Upon Paul VI an heroic task had been imposed. He became the necessary hero. And was much abused. Some, however, have responded to his restatement of balanced orthodoxy. Abbé Millet points to a renascence among Catholics of the contemplative life which is always, as his historical survey has shown, a paradigm of theocentricity. He rejoices in the monks of Solismes, (p 216), and in those scientists at Pasadena and Princeton who contemplate 'a superior Rationality', (p 212). He is hap-

py that the Third World populations, 'despite their geographical and even sociological proximity', have held themselves apart from merely christocentric notions, (p 208). In his final chapter he looks forward to a Church which shall have recovered equilibrium: 'It will emerge from its present crisis, and soon the hyper-christocentric adventures of this twentieth century will just seem like a bad dream' (p 233).

All may yet be as well as the Abbé expects. Or it may not. Or not for some time. There are many to preach salvation by the rebel Christ. Not so many to declare the grace of our creative Father. And certainly far too few of a generous enough spirit to make known the truth at both poles of belief. But if Christ sets us free, it is that we may enjoy the freedom of the Sons of God.

HAMISH F G SWANSTON

EARLY ARIANISM: A VIEW OF SALVATION by Robert C Gregg and Dennis E Groh. SCM Press, London, 1981. pp 209 £12.50.

The Emperor Constantine had a confident grasp of the origins of the Arian controversy. The Bishop of Alexandria had put to his clergy "something connected with an unprofitable question" and Arius had "inconsiderately insisted on what ought never to have been conceived at all, or if conceived, should have been buried in profound silence". Many casual students of the early history of the church must have found themselves thinking that the Emperor had a point. Most scholarly discussion of the crisis, while not endorsing the Emperor's view that the matter was "intrinsically trifling and of little moment", has seen it as a dispute between philosophers and theologians about the immanent nature of God, and has been unable to explain satisfactorily how a debate so far removed from the interests and comprehension of most Christians could have caused such bitter, widespread, and enduring dissensions within the church.

The authors of the book under review propose a re-interpretation of early Arianism in which the stake is seen to be very much higher than has been thought hitherto. For them, the origins of the crisis lie not in "an ecclesiastical version of the tussle within the metaphysics of late Platonism", or in "clashing halves of Origen's crumbling theological synthesis", or even in "competing exegetical traditions and methods" (p 79). At issue are two opposed views of salvation.

To be sure, these opposed views of salvation rest on opposing philosophical presuppositions, and these did become the battleground over which much of the fight was conducted. But Professors Gregg and Groh caution us against being misled by the prominence which the philosophical issues have achieved in the surviving sources of the controversy: they would not have us mistake the field of battle for the cause of war. In their view, the overriding preoccupation of Arius was not, as has so often been maintained, to safeguard the transcendence and unchangeability of God by reducing the Son to the status of a creature, but to assert the creaturely status of the Son in order to safeguard the possibility of salvation. The crux of the Arians' dispute with Alexandrian orthodoxy is the meaning to be given to Jesus' title "Son of God". For Alexandrian orthodoxy, influenced by an essentialist metaphysics, Jesus must be the Son of God "by nature". Changeable, and therefore corruptible human nature could not be saved in any other way than by having incorruptibility bestowed upon it by a Son of God who is "by nature" unchangeable, and therefore fully divine. For the early Arians, influenced by a voluntarist, transactional ethics, being a Son of God means winning God's favour by steady advance through free moral choice towards a state of achieved unchangeability in obedience to his will.