

years earlier, at the University of St Petersburg, there were present the leaders of the intellectual world, including Dostoyevsky and Leo Tolstoy. The notion of 'Godmanhood', though doubtless patient of a Catholic interpretation, appears here to be a syncretistic amalgam of orthodox Christianity, ancient Gnosticism and Hegelian monism; it is well summarized by Professor Zouboff,

The nativity of the Christ-child in Bethlehem, the first manifestation of the Incarnate Word, had been preceded by countless preparatory stages in the progressive subjugation of the 'chaos of disjunct elements' to the unifying power of the 'absolute idea', or Logos, acting through the nascent Sophia; and has *continued* after the Ascension of Christ, mainly (but not exclusively) through the Church He founded and empowered with the Spirit of God at the Pentecost for action, in the *continued* incarnation of the divine idea, 'or the deification (theosis) of all that exists by bringing it in'—as a subdued captive of the unifying power of the divine Love or Idea—'into the form of the absolute organism' of Logos-Sophia, or Christ, as the ever-widening manifestation of the Subject of being in its 'other one', i.e. in the phenomenal world of nature. For Sophia is not only the ideal humanity but also the 'world-soul', the unity of all created world.

The lectures clearly substantiate the remark the "The idea of unity is the central, cardinal conception of all Solovyev's philosophy, the cornerstone of all his ideological constructions, the fundamental criterion in his approach to any and all problems". From this significant viewpoint he has much that is both enlightening and moving to say of sin, suffering, and of the forces which set men at enmity with one another, and how they find their only solution in Christian love. A.G.

THE THEOLOGY OF WILLIAM BLAKE. By J. G. Davies: (Oxford U.P. 12s. 6d.)

The chief value of Blake's poetry lies in its revelation of what psychologists have until lately called the unconscious mind. More recently they have preferred to call it the autonomous psyche. Blake called it, more simply, the Imagination, and indeed to call this reservoir of images the unconscious in his case would be misleading, for to him it was not unconscious at all. He regarded this symbolism as of tremendous importance, and if anything over-rated it, calling it man's eternal world. But Mr Davies is not interested in the symbolic figures which crowd Blake's pages, and only refers to them once. His interest lies in the mental framework with which Blake surrounded his symbolism—his theology and ethics. He gives us therefore a very much over-intellectualised Blake. Blake was not primarily a thinker; he was a poet, and the chief office of the poets is to reflect either the outward world of Nature or the inner symbols of the mind. Blake did the latter. Thought, to him, was a secondary function, but in thinking he was always original and because of his very originality tended to over-stress the truths he had discovered and to present them as it were out of context. His 'deliberate severance from institutional religion was undoubtedly to the detriment not only of his art but also of his whole system of theology, since it rendered him too apt to over-emphasize those truths which he perceived, while neglecting other important aspects of the Gospel.'

Mr Davies gives a very accurate picture of Blake's thought, and comes to the conclusion that he was, on the whole, an orthodox Protestant Christian, somewhat inclining towards the left wing, but who could have repeated with conviction most of the articles of the Apostles' Creed. He was a monotheist, whose occasional

incautious phrases rendered him liable to a suspicion of pantheism; he held to the doctrines of the Incarnation, the Trinity, Original Sin, and the immortality of the soul, though always, it is true, imbruing the truths of faith with his own eccentric overtones. Suspicion of heterodoxy falls most upon his ethical system. While claiming to be a Christian, Blake repudiated with violence any organized system of morality. His position was that: 'There are not abstract moral norms, recognized by Christianity, to be applied to all situations: each problem demands its own individual solution as it arises.'

Christianity, to Blake, was the return to the position before the Fall, when man had not yet eaten of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He would have abolished the very words 'good' and 'evil' as savouring of abstract moral norms. That position was not peculiar to Blake; it was also the position of the Chinese Taoists and of such modern psychologists as Trigrant Burrow. But it invariably follows that when an ethical teacher solves the problem of good and evil in this way, by abolishing the terms, he has also, as a corollary, to advocate the abolition of man's individual consciousness. He has to abolish the ego. The Taoists did this, and so did Burrow. And if Blake did not go so far, he was only saved from advocating the abolition of the individual by what seems mere verbiage.

'According to Blake the source of evil was the separateness of the individual soul from the rest of the universe—in other words, selfconsciousness.' Blake separated the temporary and sinful individuality from a distinct and eternal 'identity.' In what respects individuality or 'selfhood' differs from identity, Blake is vague. Is an Identity self conscious, and, if so, how does it differ from a selfhood? One suspects that the 'identity' is merely a verbal lip-service to the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul, or rather due to the fact that Blake could not entirely abandon what he sensed was, after all, the truth, that men's souls are distinct and separate entities.

W. P. WITCUTT

THE HISTORY OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH. By Jules Lebreton, S.J. and Jacques Zeiller.

Translated from the French by Ernest Messenger, PH.D. Vol. IV. The Church in the Third Century. Part II. (Burns Oates; 25s.)

Indebtedness to the scholarly industry of Dr Messenger is increased by the publication of the fourth volume of his translation of Fliche and Martin's *Histoire de l'Eglise*. The new volume shows no falling away in the translator's skill, which rarely falters. Like its predecessors the present volume is marked by an inequality inseparable perhaps from work done in collaboration by specialists, a work too which in its general plan is neither frankly a manual nor yet a historian's history. Professor Zeiller, for example, is thoroughly at ease when treating of the great persecutions, but uncertain and almost self-contradictory when discussing Christians and military service. There are a number of misprints: p. 871 'reigns of power', p. 900 'perichorsis', pp. 903, 905 'Reliquae sacrae'; on p. 986, l. 2 'was' should read 'were'; p. 951 'Auxentius' should read 'Auxentium'; a note appears to be omitted on p. 1098; the reference to Tertullian on p. 1109 should be 'Apologeticum, L.' For the benefit of English readers Conybeare's *Monuments of Early Christianity* might be added to the bibliography of the chapter on apocryphal writings.

A.R.