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A NEW REFORMATION

David L. Edwards

I

ANYONE WHO IS ACQUAINTED with the outlines of the history of the Christian Church knows that there was a crisis in the sixteenth century. In Switzerland, Germany, Britain, Scandinavia and other countries the Protestant Reformation established a new form of Christianity. In Spain, France, Italy and other countries there was the Counter-Reformation, during which the Roman Catholic Church received a new spirit and a new appearance. Not surprisingly, many who have nursed the hope that Christianity may be renewed again have since the sixteenth century been inclined to express this hope in terms of a new Reformation. In England, for example, the great theme of the Puritans under Elizabeth I and the Stuart Kings was that the reform of the Church of England had been incomplete; they urged 'Reformation without tarrying for any'. In Victorian England F. D. Maurice prophesied that the way to a new Christendom would lie across greater upheavals than those of the sixteenth century. 'I foresee a terrible breaking down of nations, opinions, even of most precious beliefs, an overthrow of what we call our religion, in our way to reformation and unity.'[1] In our own time there are many Evangelicals who ardently pray and work for a spiritual revival which they describe as a return to the essential theology and evangelistic zeal of the sixteenth century Reformers. Some Christians who are unable to share this enthusiasm for Calvin (now dead for 400 years) yet can pay no greater tribute to the City of God about which they dream than to say that it would be a Church purified by a new Reformation. Dr George MacLeod, the founder of the Iona Community in the Church of Scotland, has also inspired what is called 'the New Reformation Foundation'. Roger Lloyd, the Sub-Dean of Winchester Cathedral, begins his recent paperback *The Ferment in the Church*: 'It looks as though Christians of today stand on the threshold of great changes in Christendom. The prospect of a new Reformation is clearly in sight.'

I should like to hear more widespread and more careful discussion about this idea of a new Reformation. I admit that I am only a publisher of theology. Perhaps what I really mean is that I should like such discussion to be written down in books which I could publish. But a publisher, without being a creator himself, can perhaps act as a kind of midwife. At any rate, publishers and printers were responsible for much of the fertility of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century. Indeed, that Reformation took place because of a book—because the Bible was translated and printed.

And the subsequent flow from the printing presses of tracts, sermons and immense controversial tomes was more than a publisher's delight: it also meant that writers, and those who produced writers, were the front-line troops in the war of ideas, and were themselves exposed to shot. The Reformation in Zürich is usually dated from Ash Wednesday, 1522. On that day a printer, Christoph Froschauer, produced two fried sausages and divided them among six men in his kitchen. (Zwingli the Reformer was present, but prudently did not taste any meat.) The printer thus explained to the Zürich City Council his defiance of the Catholic Church's rules for Lent: 'I am greatly loaded with responsibilities which demand much of my strength, property and work. I have to work day and night, weekdays and holidays, in order to complete the work by the time of the Frankfurt Fair. I am referring to the Letters of St Paul. My workers and I can hardly sustain ourselves simply with cereal, and I am not able to buy fish all the time.'[2]

II

In many important ways the Reformation which Froschaeur's sausages inaugurated was a disaster. It split Christendom; and consequently in almost every portion of a fragmented religious world there was to be found a fierce bigotry, a willingness to compromise morally in order to secure the support of the political powers against one's religious rivals, and a determination to penalize, even to torture and kill, anyone in one's power who would not subscribe to one's shibboleths. Unity, and tolerance as the road to unity, were scarcely conceivable as those religious passions raged. Only a few contrary voices were heard, such as Sebastian Castellio's protest against the burning of Servetus in Calvin's Geneva, a protest made in a prayer to Christ: 'Dost thou see things? Art thou become so changed, so cruel, so contrary to thyself? ... Dost thou now command that those who do not understand thy precepts as the mighty demand must be drowned in water, cut with lashes to the entrails, sprinkled with salt, dismembered by the sword, burned at the slow fire, and otherwise tortured in every manner and as long as possible? Dost thou, O Christ, command and approve of these things?'[3] Today we are rightly horrified at the violence of that Reformation 400 years ago. After their Thirty Years' War (1618-48), during which the Catholic and Protestant religions were both bloodily entangled with the crudest nationalisms and imperialisms, the people of Germany rightly swore that their country would never again be made a desert in the name of theological fanaticisms. Even in our own more gentle England, the fanaticism of the Civil War inevitably evoked a reaction, as the England of Charles II turned to pleasure and to the beginnings of experimental science and agnostic philosophy. In England, as on the Continent, men now sensibly preferred Enlightenment to Reformation. As Professor Owen Chadwick concludes his recent Pelican History of *The Reformation*: 'In the England of 1660 the word *Reformation* had acquired an ill odour. For two centuries and more it had been a glorious or wistful word, a word of hope and idealism.... Now ... it was associated with zealotry, with destruction, with discontent. It had begun to be a harassing word, encouraging the captious who would not leave good alone,

stimulating the fanatical critic. We begin to hear of a world worried by reformation, reformed and ruined, reformed to the ground.' And in the Britain of 1964 the cause of Reformation is still not likely to appeal if it carries with it any taint of the repulsive self-righteousness of the historic Reformers and Counter-Reformers—the pride which led them to persecute their fellow-Christians, and which blinded them to all the spiritual wealth which those fellow-Christians had to offer. We can never now forget that religious enthusiasm may be demonic.

Indeed, most of those who would like to see a Reformation of the twentieth century have come to believe that the toleration of one's fellow-Christians has a vast, positive significance. It is not that we are indifferent to all religious questions. Nor do we merely honour all other religious convictions while retaining our own with an uncritical loyalty. We have been taught by solid, hard experience that Christ looks at us through the eyes of our fellow-Christians, and speaks to us through what they believe. We have been led to see that Christian truth is infinitely greater than our understanding of it, so that we cannot any longer be astonished if we find that Christians from whom we are divided have in their possession portions of the truth, portions which we do not possess but which we need. We learn from theologians who come from traditions other than our own about the very foundations of our faith in biblical studies and philosophy. We learn from church historians and from living churchmen that churches other than our own have developed ways of ordering themselves which we need to study for their insights into the necessary re-formation of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Thus we Anglicans would, we know, be impoverished if any denominational arrogance were to prevent us from sitting at the feet of a Congregationalist scholar such as C. H. Dodd, or from examining the Congregational church order, to see what light it can throw on the acute problems which we experience in the relationship of the minister and the congregation. Many of us who work for the reform of the Church of England do so in the knowledge that this ancient, conservative church of ours is unlikely to accept changes of the dimensions required except under the pressure which is already resulting from its negotiations for unity with the Methodists. And many of us confidently look beyond Protestantism, to learn from such apparently foreign bodies as the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholics about the nature of Christian worship, about the Faith itself and about the sanctity in which the Faith must be embodied from generation to generation. Together with the persecuting temper we are determined to renounce parochialism and even patriotism; we are resolved to count nothing Christian alien. It has been for us a conversion, no less costly, no less *given*, than the time when on the Damascus Road Saul was humbled by the vision of Jesus, present and reigning in the Christians who were persecuted. This is the ecumenical conversion, a mighty gift of the Eternal Spirit to our century.

We must grant that many of the sixteenth-century Reformers had ecumenical ideals. Luther seems to have been sincere when he repeatedly claimed that he had never intended to break the peace of the Church. As a theologian he had protested against some abuses; the events which had

followed had not been of his seeking. As one studies his words from year to year through the crisis, one often has the impression that here is a man sleep-walking into Protestantism. Calvin more resolutely fashioned the Reformed Church in a permanent revolt against Catholicism, but his laborious correspondence tried to bring unity to Protestantism itself. For most Protestants in most of the sixteenth century, differences in church order had not been magnified into the later ruinous talk about validity and invalidity, purity and superstition. We must grant all that. Nevertheless, when Christoph Froschauer decided to consume one-third of one sausage on Ash Wednesday, 1522, he was exalting his interpretation of St Paul's epistles, which he was printing, over the authority of the Catholic Church; and essentially Protestantism has always been, as its name suggests, a protest about something which is believed to be important to someone who is believed to be wrong. And for many of us a great truth about the ecumenical century in which we now live is that this divisiveness of Protestantism—the dissidence of Dissent, as Matthew Arnold termed it—is now largely music of the past, not of the future. We are glad to sing with Luther about God as the 'safe stronghold', but we do not see the battle through Luther's eyes, and we do not confuse Pope Paul with Satan. We are convinced that there was importance and triviality, right and wrong, on both sides of the sixteenth-century cleavage.

For example, it is plainly contrary to the ethic of Jesus (and of St Paul) to make abstention from meat on Ash Wednesday a test of discipleship. Much in the Catholic system must be condemned as legalism. On the other hand, Evangelicalism is quite capable of making a law out of its own understanding of what the Gospel is and how the Gospel is to be received. For this reason many of us today want to affirm that Jesus Christ is greater than Protestantism; and many of us want to ask whether the rhythm of the Christian year, enacted before men's eyes in church and on their kitchen tables, can contribute something to the fullness of discipleship in the school of Jesus Christ. Clearly, it is a travesty of the Gospel to sell indulgences for sins as the monk Tetzel did in Luther's time, to pay for the rebuilding of St Peter's, Rome; yet there is a proper sense in which the Church has been created and accepted by Jesus Christ as his Body, so that our salvation is corporate. Clearly, in the Holy Communion the death of Christ is not repeated; but equally, in the Holy Communion we do not just remember a dead Christ through our own faith—our faith is increased by the spiritual coming to us of a Christ who is our living Lord, and who has become our Lord through the sacrifice of himself which he completed on Calvary, the sacrifice which is now dramatically (not literally) re-enacted in the unique mystery of the sacrament which he ordained. In these and many other ways, many of us see the Gospel of Jesus Christ for our time as transcending the historic positions of Catholicism and Protestantism alike.

We also see this Gospel as undercutting these arguments by its own major theme, the love of God for sinners. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth century grew out of the piety of the fifteenth, which was obsessed by the omnipresence of guilt and by the dance of death. Both centuries were introspective and morbid in ways which must seem to many of

us today neurotic. Our own century, the century of Hitler and Stalin, Freud and Sartre, knows what guilt is, social and personal guilt, and how futile men can feel as they struggle to live with their own littleness; but at least many of us try to avoid two mistakes. First, we do not greatly admire those who wallow in their own sense of sinfulness, or expatiate on their own feelings of confidence and joy, without showing constructive sympathy for the (perhaps more mundane) problems of their fellow-men. Secondly, if we believe that God exists we try not to utter the blasphemy of asserting that his conduct is morally inferior to an earthly father's; we try not to say that implacably he needs to be reconciled to us before he will stoop to show us love; we try not to project on to him our own tragic hatreds. I am not claiming that the whole religion of the original Reformation was neurotic. I believe—as will appear below—that there was much in that Reformation that we should covet for our time. Thousands of Protestant preachers and millions of Protestant laymen were, I am sure, healthily and creatively busy in loving and serving their fellows, and believed that God was as near to others as he was to them. Among the theologians, Luther, for all his student-type remarks about beds and lavatories, always seems to me to inhabit a cleaner world of thought than the logical lawyer Calvin, whose God had predestined the vast majority of the human race to endless torments. But that much in the spirit of that time was unhealthy, no one who has studied a fraction of its voluminous literature can doubt; and many of us are glad to think that what is best in the twentieth century has irrevocably rejected all varieties of the religion which placed such burdens of fantasy on men, half-concealing the God of love whose holiness is displayed on the cross (not on a judgement throne set loftily above it).

III

When I say that many of us want a Reformation in the twentieth century I am, of course, assuming that there is, or will be, enough power in Christianity.[4] Non-Christians would judge differently, thinking that not merely its neurotic deviations but Christianity itself is exposed and doomed, and that we should seek renewal from another source. I cannot prove in advance that Christianity will provide the answer. All I can say is that many of us hope that it will. This involves for us a belief that we need a new Christian movement, and our minds turn back to the Reformation of the sixteenth century as the nearest parallel. The energy then unleashed was creative on a scale which corresponds with the size of the job which we think needs to be done for our Church and for our world in our time.

Quite a few Christians think that even a new Reformation will not be enough. Perhaps we shall have to go back to the age of Constantine, to the fourth century, to find a true parallel. The full entry of the Christian Church into the world, which was inaugurated under the Emperor Constantine and which eventually led to the Christendom of the Middle Ages, is in many ways being ended in our time. Specially in a secularized Europe, we are aware that there are now almost no 'Christian' countries left. That chapter is being closed, and a new chapter opened. Or perhaps what we really need is something as utterly radical as a new Pentecost—a return to the womb and a new birth for the Christian community, with a new Paul and a new John to

give us a new doctrine. But for my own part I prefer to think of our need in terms of a new Reformation, because that implies a continuity with the past. I want to use, not abandon, the history of the Church which was founded at Pentecost and which began to baptize society under Constantine. I am sure that Christianity needs a radical change, but the restricted radicalism which would be involved in a new Reformation seems to be enough. It is, I know, at present more than enough for many conservatives in the British churches —so that a Christian in my position has to fight a war on two fronts, against all-out revolution and against reactionary conservatism.

The age of the great Reformers was one of bitter debate. In the Reformation of the twentieth century, there must also be a controversy, as the new challenges the old, and once again the Bible must be at the centre of the storm. However, this Reformation which we should now serve is, we must observe, a renewal which is already taking place in most of the denominations into which Christ's Church is tragically divided. It may be seen in the Church of Rome as well as in the Churches which inherit the old Reformation. Indeed, the readiness of the majority of the Roman Catholic bishops to abandon outmoded customs in the 'renewal' to which they were summoned by Pope John is one of the features of the Second Vatican Council which must bring deep thankfulness and also a healthy humiliation to Protestants. At the present moment, we observe radicalism in Rome and its thinkers quite as much as in the assemblies and theological centres of our own churches. The new spirit cuts right across denominational barriers. Will it in time allay the fears at present loudly voiced by the conservatives *within* all the denominations? That depends on a positive understanding of what the new spirit essentially is, and to this I now turn.

The Bible in the hands of the laity was the supreme instrument of the sixteenth-century Reformation. Of course we should be pathetically naïve to imagine that the wider distribution of the Scriptures is now enough to communicate the Word of God to the new age, because we cannot now be Fundamentalists—unless we are prepared to pay an appalling intellectual and psychological price. But the Bible must be at the centre, and one of the great signs of the new Reformation is to be found in the advances made within the last thirty years in the scholarly investigation of the Bible, in the translation of the Bible into modern languages including contemporary English, in Biblical theology and preaching, and in Bible study by laymen through paperbacks and study groups. But we know that the Bible, vital as it is, is not a complete and infallible text-book. The Bible is a library of human testimonies to the reality of God—to their search for God in which they discovered that the deepest truth was that all along God had been seeking them. We honour the Bible best when we join its search in our own day, and when we continue its witness in our own terms. And here we come, I think, to the heart of the Reformation movement.

What happened in the sixteenth century, and what has begun to happen in the twentieth, repeats the experience recorded in the Bible. This is the experience that God is *overwhelmingly near*. Every Reformation must renew the Bible's own protests against every tendency to lock God up in an ecclesiastical system. God blesses and uses our worship, but he retains his

sovereign liberty to reveal himself in places far from our ecclesiastical buildings, and in ways different from our ecclesiastical conventions. And when he reveals himself, the vision of that glory and love persuades Man to draw very near to God. As Karl Barth nowadays never tires of proclaiming, God reveals himself as *for us*. Man, if he sees anything of this, must see that he is God's friend. Wherever he is, Man, once he turns towards God, is accepted by God, is given new clothes and new food by God, and is invited into an intimate communion with God. That is the good news, the Gospel.

In the sixteenth century their problem was their feeling of personal guilt. Their sins seemed to have blotted out the vision of God. I have already shown my belief that even in Catholic or Protestant piety this problem remained, infecting the very idea of God and making the Church more exclusive than Jesus had been. But the Reformation began when Martin Luther learned from St Paul that nevertheless God was *near to him*, and that nevertheless God was *for him*. The sense that God's holiness, God's justice, was now shared with Man, instead of condemning Man—this sense of the gracious God was now vital. In our time, we are surrounded by signs of the gracious God. If we believe in God at all, we must be overwhelmed by the acknowledgement of the mighty acts of God in the twentieth century. If we believe in God, where else shall we find the source of the human courage and skill which are bringing freedom, health and prosperity within the grasp of Mankind? Who other than God inspired this age of democracy and science, which is unlocking more and more of the treasures in the earth and in the hearts of men and women? This is God's earth, these are God's children, and the Divine Spirit is behind this contemporary outpouring of blessings on them. But I wrote that we shall have this attitude towards our own age *if* in the first place 'we believe in God'. And the truth is that in our time, God is once more hidden from men—this time not so much by our sense of sin as by our sense of doubt. And therefore the heart of the Reformation of the twentieth century must be the recovery of a sense of the nearness of God *through the overcoming of our sense of fundamental doubt and anxiety*.

It is here, I think, that some current theological discussion is so hopeful. I am not claiming that any theological book so far written solves all our problems. But many theologians in our time are struggling to help us recover our awareness of God and deliver the concept of God from sentimentalism and superstition and the *deus ex machina*, which have made men feel that it doesn't matter whether God exists or not. These theologians protest, as the prophets and mystics protested down the ages. They say that God is not a myth but the very foundation of every reality which we know—not the old man in the sky but the 'heart of the matter' (Teilhard de Chardin's phrase)—not infinitely remote but infinitely real.

As I have studied the reactions to the Bishop of Woolwich's paperback *Honest to God* which I published last year, I have taken many of the criticisms seriously, as I hope is shown by the fact that I edited a sequel, *The Honest to God Debate*. But as the controversy recedes the conviction has grown in me that the Bishop of Woolwich has done what in our situation is the one thing needful. As he has often stated, he definitely intends to be loyal to the God of the Bible. What, then, is fresh and explosive in his thought?

This. He has urged people to *begin* their search for this God not in the Church (which is as well, because most people don't go to church) and not by looking at the sky (which is as well, because for most people the sky is just the sky), but by looking within themselves and within the experiences which already mean most to them. There they can glimpse a reality which is greater than themselves. It is in them, in the love and beauty which they know, in their homes and factories and newspapers. This reality is *there*, present in their everyday lives as it was once present in the daily life of Israel, or in the streets of Nazareth, or at the place called the place of the Skull. This reality is undeniable, in the sense that everyone experiences it. It is not to be labelled 'religious' or 'mystical' experience, save for a few temperaments. It is simply life, the life of which Jesus spoke in his parables. Some experience it more deeply. These are the men and women who have 'ears to hear' and 'eyes to see'. As their hearts are opened to it, it is gradually known to be an infinite and inexhaustible reality. And so this reality may be worshipped as power, as grace, as 'Father'.

When the dust of the nation-wide, indeed world-wide, theological controversy has finally settled, I hope that many people will find standing above the ruins of our ecclesiastical trivialities a reality which answers and purifies their own deepest intuitions—the reality of God, the predominance of God, the Kingdom of God. Some words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer have become famous through this controversy, haunting words about 'Man's coming of age' and about the need for a 'religionless Christianity'. But there are other words to recall. Bonhoeffer wrote them from his prison in Nazi Germany to a godchild in 1944. 'The day will come,' he wrote, 'when men will be called again to utter the word of God with such power as will change and renew the world. It will be a new language, which will horrify men and yet overwhelm them by its power. It will be the language of a new righteousness and truth, a language which proclaims the peace of God with men and the advent of his Kingdom.'[5] When that day comes, the new Reformation will be here.

IV

Bonhoeffer thought that the word of God could not reach our time unless it was clearly divorced from the religion which our time has rejected. Like most German theologians, he overstated his argument, but essentially he was right. The Christian Church has allowed itself to be confused with various social systems which our time is rightly destroying: with colonialism in Asia and Africa, in Latin America with a decadent Europe for the Catholics and with a decadent United States for the Protestants, with the old-style middle-class capitalism in Britain and Western Europe, with feudalism in Eastern Europe, with the Tsarist Empire in Russia, with Franco in Spain. The people of our time cannot be expected to receive a Gospel from a Church which seems to be allied with their enemies, any more than Germans or Englishmen 400 years ago could be expected to venerate the Rome of the Borgias. More subtly, the Church appears to be unable to help ordinary people to come nearer to God. The Church's teaching is so full of outmoded images and obviously unworthy traditions that people think that it is best to trust their own insights. The local congregations of the Church seem so

divided, sterile and impotent, so irrelevant, that people think that if they are to find God they must find and serve him in their own family life, in their own pleasure and work. An honest observer of the religious scene must, I think, sympathize with this popular, almost universal, rejection of organized Christianity as our time knows it. The parallel with the corrupt and fundamentally unreal life of the institutional Church on the eve of the Reformation is undeniable.

Yet some kind of a Church we do need. In Britain ours is not an individualist age, any more than Luther's was in Germany. (Protestant individualism is the product of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.) Most people outside the Church are of course highly aware of the solidarity of secular society, and many are conscious of what is lacking through the absence of any religious society which could command their allegiance. The churchless, virtually religionless, Christianity which remains in people's memories so obviously lacks clarity, conviction, vigour and creativity, that it is in effect little more than a 'God-shaped blank'. There are signs of some renewal of interest in the Church. As our newspapers bear witness, outside the Church there are astonishing numbers who are curious about some church personalities or events; they listen to religious broadcasts. Inside many branches of the Christian church there is the growth of the liturgical movement, uniting congregations in a deeper fellowship of worship and outgoing activity.

We cannot be surprised that a dominant theme of this emerging new Reformation—as expressed, for example, in the thinking which has gathered round the World Council of Churches—is that the Church must be reborn after the pattern of Jesus the Servant. The Church's ways of worship, work and doctrinal formulation must be drastically revised so that they meet people where they are, not where (in the Church's opinion) they ought to be. The preservation of the Church's customs and historic monuments must be reckoned secondary to the tasks of the Christian in the world. The clergyman must be seen as no longer the *parson*, the person of the place, but as the *minister*, the 'servant' of the laity in Christ's name. And the layman himself must be seen no longer as the condescending evangelist, but as the *servant*, doing a job of work for the sake of Christ and the people, not seeking a prominent 'religious' label. Throughout the Christian world congregations and church assemblies are finding that their habits are being questioned rudely from within their own membership. No doubt much of the criticism is unfair and unfortunately expressed. But the fact of the Church's irrelevance to our time is increasingly acknowledged by church leaders themselves. Although every established religious body is inevitably conservative, what is impressive about the Christian Church today is its growing mood of self-criticism and penitence. Few of the necessary changes have yet taken place, but at least many churchmen know that they must come if the Church is to survive as more than a dwindling religious remnant.

There is a comparison here with the ruthless activity of the sixteenth-century Reformation in subjecting the antiquated structures of the medieval Church to the demands of lay life. When Luther was a young man, the Church which he knew was largely asleep. Despite many unofficial stirrings

of devotion, German Christians had not yet been invited to make their contribution to the Universal Church. They were regarded as cows, to be milked by the Pope and the richer clergy. There was a tendency to regard parish priests as failed monks, laymen as ignorant and bestial, women as fit only for domestic duties which were despised. Luther, for all his faults, sounded a trumpet in the ears of Germany and exalted secular life as sacred. An explosion of energy resulted. Something similar is happening today. The European monopoly of Christian leadership is being broken. An authentically Asian or African Christianity is struggling to be born, with its own church order and its own theology. What it will contribute we cannot yet tell, but it will be something new and vital, enriching our own understanding of the Gospel. In many churches, Catholic or Protestant, the ministry of the priest or preacher is being broken, to be set again in its proper context of the ministry of the whole People of God. Christianity has been so extensively clericalized that we cannot know how a lay faith will express itself if freed, what instruction it will seek from the ordained ministry, what evangelism it will offer to laymen outside the Church, but we may reasonably trust that the emerging faith will be in harmony with the New Testament, which is dominated by a carpenter and below him by a tent-maker. In many ways, Christian women in our time are struggling to fulfil themselves—whether in ministry to fellow-members of the congregation, in the social services and the professions which clamour for them, or in a new partnership in the home. Men who lead the Church at present too easily forget that one-half of the human race (and more than one-half of the gathered congregations) is female—and too easily forget the accepted call of Jesus to women within the even more rigidly masculine society of those days.

A Reformation becomes effective as it embodies a renewed vision of God who is 'for me', 'for us', in the life of a purged Christian community which is 'for the world'. The community is never renewed for its own sake or by its own power—that is the tinkering of administrative adjustment, not Reformation. Instead, the community is subjected to God and for God's sake subjected also to the people whom God also loves. When a Christian community begins to be reformed in this sense, history shows that its appeal touches hearts and transforms lives. Then it is seen to be what Bonhoeffer called the Church (he thought and wrote much about Christian 'life together', and he never disowned this phrase for all his radical questionings): 'Christ existing as a community'. A Church actively aspiring after that condition is, I think, the only kind of Church that will begin to make sense in our time.

[1] Frederick Maurice, *Life of F. D. Maurice*, vol. ii, p. 354.
[2] *The Reformation in Its Own Words*, ed. H. J. Hillerbrand (SCM Press, 1964), p. 129.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 291-2.
[4] In this section I draw on a university sermon preached at St Andrews on 20th October, 1963, and printed in the *British Weekly* and in *Prism*.
[5] *Letters and Papers from Prison* (SCM Press, 1953), pp. 140-1.

THE NEW REFORMATION

Comment by John M. Todd

MY CONTRIBUTION is in the form of a direct comment on Mr Edwards's text. I shall refer to that text by part and paragraph.

Part I, paragraph 2. I am a publisher-midwife too. And it may be useful to say something of my position as an author as well. My interests are theological, ecumenical, historical, educational (adult), but since leaving Cambridge in 1940 I have done no methodical academic study. I have hoped that there may be something to be said for a journalist-publisher who tries to think seriously about these topics—as well as for the theologians and historians who take a part in journalism! I am acutely aware of the sheer power which does in fact lie in a publisher's hands, if only in the sense that sometimes his early encouragement or discouragement of particular projects can have an influence on men of outstanding ability far greater than it should do.

I agree that the success of the reformation was directly linked to printing. Chronologically, it is not *quite true* to put the printing of the Bible first. Froben's publication of Erasmus's texts was certainly a predisposing cause, but I think his decision to collect some of Luther's material together and print it as early as October 1518, together with the previous initiative of other printers in pirating the ninety-five Theses, played the essential part in Luther's success both in achieving fame and in evading the death of a heretic, and so living to translate the Bible. This translation then did, of course, become the principal tool of his great work.

Part II, paragraph 2. What we each learn from other Christians. Indeed, I stand amazed at my own theological and intellectual shift since 1944 when I became a Roman Catholic, and perhaps almost equally amazed at my own continuing commitment to this tradition, at least as strong as it was then, though for reasons, in the order of theological concept, which I must now express differently.

Paragraph 3. I think Roman Catholics need to learn from Protestants the beauty and importance of spontaneity; the whole basis of our own theology is the idea of the free gift of God and the free response of man, and yet for Catholics the heart of their religion for very long has in practice been the idea of authority, and so of rules. Our theology of the Church needs to be expressed biblically, existentially, sociologically, as well as in scholastic concepts; we have to re-learn the need for individual initiative, the responsibility which every member of the Church has. We have to see and learn about this as it is embodied in the wonderful tradition of personal spiritual commitment, of concern for one another, which shines out from all the traditions that stem from the sixteenth-century reformation.

Paragraph 4. I would entirely endorse the phrase about Luther: 'sleep-walking into Protestantism'. The logic of all the pressures, sociological, moral, theological, biblical, personal, built up over centuries, meant that the way forward would be the way out. But Luther could never grasp that he had in fact chosen the way 'out'—in the sense that he was founding a new and separate community which would continue for centuries in competition with the Roman Catholic Church.

Part III, end of paragraph 2, beginning of paragraph 3. Yes, the Catholic Church is also experiencing a division of a kind for which I find it difficult to find a parallel. The dividing lines are sharp and clear over many issues, and they run between two parties, the members of which sometimes have little else to unite them. I agree we would do well to try to define what the new spirit is, the spirit which is working such a radical change in the Roman Catholic Church and which the conservative Catholics, particularly in England, find so unintelligible, so undesirable.

The new spirit may be shown up partly by defining what is wrong with the old spirit—I think this is well conveyed by the definition given to it by Michael Novak in *The Open Church* (Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd): 'non-historical orthodoxy'. The conservatives have been content with formulæ of faith, without sufficient attention to the historical reality which is prior to these formulæ, both biblically and throughout history; they have failed to grasp that the living, changing reality of the Church is more important than the theology of the Church.

Paragraph 4. Personally I find 'scholarly investigation' of the Bible not only the most important thing in the last thirty years, but regard it as likely to be much the most important thing, along with investigation of the primitive Church, in the coming fifty years. Christianity is, simply is, in one sense the historic fact of Jesus Christ, and all that went before in the Judaic world, and all that went after in the Christian world. As the facts are progressively clarified at all levels, from pure archæology to theological language, they cannot but bring Christians together. Equally they will provide a progressively clearer and more convincing justification of Christian belief. Although this may sound rather foolishly 'prophetical', and in that sense it does suffer from some presumption, yet this expectation is firmly based on the corpus of fact and study which all together give us from, say, 100 B.C. to, say, A.D. 100 a detailed and convincing historical basis for our belief about Jesus Christ.

'Biblical theology'—yes; but it can become something of a jargon phrase. Let us indeed know what the New Testament language means by understanding its total context, and the genius of the men uttering it. But let us keep the study at this depth and avoid building up a merely superficial 'biblical theology'; and let us also not pretend that we can dispense with the insights, within various types of penetration into the text, achieved during the last twenty centuries.

Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9. Here we come to the crunch, I suppose. With much of what is here said, and with much of *Honest to God*, I agree. But I then have to add that I agree also with some of the Roman Catholic assessments of the Bishop of Woolwich's book, including most of what Fr McCabe had to say (see *The Honest to God Debate*), also with what the Rev. David Jenkins

has said about it. Perhaps the best way of putting it is that I find most of the demolition work agreeable, but the constructional work seems to me sometimes jejune. Let us take Edwards's paragraph 8.

I agree that the proper thing very often is to throw people back on to their own experience, and that this is indeed the usually fruitful approach. But I don't think the sentence 'This reality is undeniable, in the sense that everyone experiences it' is correct. If it were, there might, probably, be very little difficulty. But many people would deny precisely that they experience any such 'reality greater than themselves'. I think the difficulty of preaching Christianity is a good deal more difficult than that, and that the answer must also be, in the same line, more demanding. Though I find the suggested use of 'Father' acceptable as far as it goes, such a use by itself must appear so arbitrary, affected, even ludicrous (in the same way as, but much more absurdly than, Woolwich's use of 'the ground of our being'), that there simply seems no point and a great deal of loss in not retaining from the start in any such use of 'Father' the Trinitarian and Judaic nuances which it had or began to have when Jesus first spoke of his 'Father' and gave us this use of the word.

I should be happier if along with this appeal to experience went also an explicit appeal to all human knowledge and science (and to Newman's illative sense in which these do lead many to Christianity) and to the Bible in the sense of the historic facts. Both with reference to what Edwards says here and what Woolwich has said, I add a strong appeal to retain a reference to the primacy of prayer, and to the science of 'negative' theology (which for a great part states what Woolwich was presenting as something new), and to the science of prayer and asceticism. Here are treasures, for lack of which many go after sometimes much less adequate traditions in the East. A great science of Christian prayer and contemplation has been left aside by Christians themselves, of all allegiances, who have contributed thus to a basic narrowing and falsification of Christianity.

Part IV, paragraph 1. Of course, the great difficulty is the way in which 'prayer' has become institutionalized and turned into something merely identical with the liturgy which, in turn, has become a mere ritual. How this particular abuse can be avoided in future is a crucial issue. Meanwhile, certainly this paragraph remains part of the datum.

Paragraph 3. The liturgy, as a consequence of this, needs to be taken to the people. It is a 'service' for them, and it is necessary for the Church to make it easily available; when it takes place in a church it is often exceedingly unavailable.

Paragraph 4 I find rather inaccurate. The foundation of the Franciscans and Dominicans, the Brothers of the Common Life, the *devotio moderna*, centuries of reform plans, a reading of Langland and Chaucer do not really allow us to make generalizations of quite so corny a kind. The reality was more complex and more like our own world. Luther's every word is not gospel! But with what follows I agree. Africa and Asia—the great missiologues have foreseen for centuries what could and should be done, have understood the sense in which man's every religion is a striving towards the true God, and have even worked out in some cases the way in which par-

ticular religions do provide a prolegomena, or more, for the gospel. Yet the vast weight of convention, ecclesiastical law, etc., have virtually prevented anything being done. But we should remember other factors: sometimes the major difficulty has been in climate, health, transport, local politics and economics. And now the problem is often not that of 'adapting' to primitive religions or to strange and sophisticated religions, but to Marxist man, in many parts of these continents.

Yes, half the world is feminine. We might remember some other such facts too. 2,000 years of Christianity, 400 years of 'science', what are these beside the hundreds of thousands of years which seem likely to lie ahead? We look on our Churches as quasi-final, allowing only for minute adjustment. Yet the change in this little time of 2,000 years is vast. Try to re-create a meeting in the second century for Church administration, or for a liturgical assembly, and compare it with any twentieth-century equivalent. We have, I suppose, as far, and much farther, to go in the future.

Paragraph 5. I agree with the summing-up. Perhaps the major theme of the Second Vatican Council is turning out to be that the Church is the servant of the world; obviously enough this theme cannot be stated without a widely ranging and affirmative 'ecumenical' orientation—it is no good having a variety of actually contradictory and competitive Christian 'services' being offered. In practice this new reformation must mean very different things for the various Christian traditions which have concentrated on one aspect or another. We can only sum it up as a common happening in the way Mr Edwards has done. But in any such summing-up I should prefer to retain some explicit reference to the Bible, to the historic facts of Christianity, and to the primacy of prayer.

A BROAD CHURCH REFORMATION?

J. I. Packer

I

I AM GRATEFUL to the Editor for inviting me to discuss some of the ideas thrown out in the article 'A New Reformation'. Whether anything I write will be on Mr Edwards's wavelength, however, I do not know. For Mr Edwards stands foursquare in the Anglican Broad Church tradition (for which the S.C.M. as a movement, and the S.C.M. Press, seem to have a special affection these days), and one thing on which evangelicals and 'catholics' in the Church of England are able to agree is that Broad Church theology is a deeply ambiguous phenomenon.

Anglican Broad Churchmanship is much older than its name; the label is hardly more than a century old, but the thing has existed at least since the days of the Cambridge Platonists and Latitudinarians of the Restoration. It stems from what may be called the Renaissance tradition in the Western Church; its father-figures are men like Erasmus and Castellio, whom Mr Edwards quotes. The positive ideal that fires it is a vision of the Church as

the salt of society, a great moral and cultural force, guarding the nation's conscience and purifying and renewing its life. In the supposed interests of this ideal, it appears in constant reaction against dogmas and dogmatists, deprecating theological positions that are fixed and definite, pleading for less traditionalism, less zeal for orthodoxy, less confidence in the adequacy of existing formulations—in short, less positive theological assertion altogether, and, with this, more careful attention to the actual business of living out the code of Christ. The Broad Church spirit found expression in the Latitudinarians, in Thomas Arnold, in *Essays and Reviews*, in men like Stanley, Inge, and Henson; more recently, it has found expression in the work of the '*Soundings* school' in Cambridge and the exponents of 'South Bank religion'. History will, I think, recognize in *Honest to God* a typical, if highly personal, expression of the Broad Church reactionary temper—none the less reactionary for believing itself radical. The forms taken by the reaction vary according to what version of dogmatic Christianity it is against, but its spirit remains constant: a strong ethical and pastoral concern; a wide-ranging charity; a vivid awareness that the Church must keep in touch with cultural developments, if it is to serve men and society as it should; and, with this, what always seems to others a weak hold on the intellectual and evangelical content of Christianity.

As correctives of the formalism in faith and morals to which we are all prone, as warnings against the danger of absolutizing the relative, divinizing the human, and mistaking theology for God, as reminders that without love orthodoxy avails nothing, Broad Church contributions have a message that must be heeded; but as constructive endeavours they are constantly marred by a profound ambivalence to which their own authors often seem oblivious. Are we being asked to take Broad Church theology as just a set of corrective gestures, so many marginal comments on orthodoxy in distortion? Or should we take it as a censure of the very notion of orthodoxy, springing from doubt as to whether the revealed Word of God has any given intellectual content, and whether faith is really any more than loving one's neighbour on the basis of an all-embracing cosmic optimism? Does the flexibility with which this type of theology handles Scriptures and creeds, and its constant plea for the maximum of intellectual freedom, betoken love of truth, or doctrinal indifferentism? Mr Edwards's article raises just these problems. He is passionately anxious for a renewing of the Church; he is very knowledgeable about contemporary needs and trends; yet to me, at least, his article remains theologically enigmatic, both in what it says and in what it does not say. Do he and I believe in the same God? the same revelation? the same Christ? the same Holy Spirit? the same Church? I hope so, but I am honestly not quite sure. (This, of course, may be part of the 'appalling intellectual and psychological price' that, according to Mr Edwards, I must be paying for my beliefs about the Bible! Or it may not.)

II

Mr Edwards wants a new Reformation. So, as he rightly says, do many others; whatever may have been true in 1660, the emotive association of this word is favourable, rather than unfavourable, in most minds today. But

the idea of reformation means different things to different men; what does it mean to Mr Edwards? How does he understand the first Reformation? The strange thing here is that his account of it is entirely formalistic and external. He merely tells us that it was a time of crisis, when Christendom was split and new forms of Christianity were born; that despite the bitterness, intolerance, bigotry, fanaticism, neurotic theology, and 'repulsive self-righteousness of the historic Reformers', which made the movement from one standpoint a disaster, it was a genuinely creative affair, through which Christians recovered a sense of the reality and nearness of God, and found new inner resources for love and service of their fellows. Leaving aside the question of whether these ferocious strictures are justified (and it is safe to say that not a Reformation scholar in the world would venture to defend them), it must be pointed out that this is no account of what *happened* at the Reformation at all. What happened, according to the Reformers themselves, was that the Holy Spirit made known from the Scriptures the sovereignty of God in grace, the gift of righteousness to sinners, and the meaning of faith in God and His promises. In other words, Christians came to know the Christ of the Bible, whom hitherto they had not known. The whole movement, the Reformers declared, was basically and essentially a matter of *doctrine* (*doctrine* being understood, first as the biblical Word of God itself, and then as man's confessional echo of it); and the reformation of the Church was essentially God's work of correcting and building up the faith and life of His people, individually and corporately, inwardly and outwardly, by the application to them of His Word. It was, in truth, a reforming of them by the light of the knowledge of Christ. It is remarkable that, after forty years' continuous stress by scholars on the essentially theological character of the Reformation, and the Christological basis of its theology, Mr Edwards should be able to give an account of it which skates so lightly over these things.

This points to the reason why some of us, recalling what the first Reformation was about, find it hard to see in the recent Broad Church outbursts the harbingers of a second such movement. We hold that it is precisely the knowledge of the biblical Christ that is renewed when God visits His people to revive and reform them; and we cannot recognize in these Broad Church accounts of the person and work of Jesus Christ, and of the purposes of God fulfilled in Him, the authentic scriptural doctrine. Mr Edwards, with others, speaks of recovering an awareness of a reality greater than ourselves which 'may be worshipped as power, as grace, as "Father" '. But this does not meet the case, for the exposition proceeds without reference to Christ, for all the world as if divine fatherhood were a truth of natural religion; whereas the gospel doctrine of our sonship to God is Christological, adoption into God's family being represented as a gift of grace which only those who 'receive' Jesus Christ enjoy (Jn 1^{12}).

Mr Edwards seems to view the problem of guilt before God as a pseudo-problem, a neurotic phenomenon which warps one's theology. He wishes to by-pass it, and to reduce the whole question of religion to whether there exists a God who is 'for us'. But the question of guilt cannot be dismissed so simply, for it is really the question of the moral character of God. One

must, of course, distinguish between conviction of sin and guilt before God (*coram Deo*) and the natural man's bad conscience. It is important to see that the latter, which may or may not be a neurotic symptom, so far from indicating God-sent conviction of sin, may be just as effective in keeping one from God as is the good conscience of the Pharisee, but guilt before God is an objective fact, prior to any subjective conviction of it. It follows from the fact that God, as a moral Creator, has a law for His rational creatures, which we have broken. Embedded at the heart of the New Testament is the insistence that guilt constitutes the fundamental problem which Christ, by His death, resurrection, and gospel, solves. 'Through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins' (Acts 13^{38}). The apostles would have said that anyone who did not see that fundamentally the gospel was God's gracious answer to the question of man's guilt had not yet understood it. If Mr Edwards seriously wishes to canvass a notion of the love of God which makes propitiation for our sins on the cross (however you expound that) unnecessary, he has the New Testament against him; for 'herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 Jn 4^{10}); 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom 5^{8}). The basic question I would press on Mr Edwards here is: who and what is his Christ? If He is not the mediator, the sin-bearer, the divinely foretold priest-king, risen, ascended, and coming again, He is not the Christ of apostolic faith. The ideal of 'Christ existing as a community' presupposes knowledge of Christ in Himself. Do we agree, Mr Edwards and I, that Jesus Christ is our sin-bearer, who by His death for us cancelled our guilt before God, to bestow on us in its place the gift of righteousness and acceptance? Do we agree that the heart of the gospel, as the Creed says, is the forgiveness of sins through the cross? Certainly, no movement of thought in the churches which fails to lay weight on the forgiveness of sins through Christ can be regarded as a reformation, or anything like one.

III

Mr Edwards raises the question whether ecumenical dialogue, and the pressures resulting from steps towards union between particular churches, are not God-given means of bringing about the new reformation that, by common consent, we need. On this, various things must be said.

First, the sphere of unity is truth, and the means of renewal is a fresh apprehension, quickening mind, conscience, and imagination, of the truth of the gospel. Ecumenical enquiry, if it is to be a step on the road to reformation, must not be pursued simply as a means of adjusting ourselves to each other, but as a means of perfecting, through the sympathetic study of competing interpretations of Scripture, our knowledge of the biblical Christ. Bishop Stephen Neill has written: 'Oecumenicity is not a sentimental desire for unity at all costs; it is an earnest seeking after fellowship in the truth. And its basic principle is that, if a choice has to be made between unity and truth, it is always truth that must be chosen. Ideally, there should be no conflict; God is truth, and God wills unity. But we are human. Division is a painful reality in the life of the Churches. Nonetheless we shall be traitors to

God, if we compromise on the issue of truth for the sake of a superficial and unreal unity' (*Anglican Dialogue*, Autumn 1962, pp. 21 f.). If we fall below this standard of ecumenical integrity, our dialogue will become a means of deforming, rather than reforming, our Christianity.

Second, it is no doubt true that in a divided Christendom truth is fragmented (though it may seriously be asked whether the doctrinal divisions *within* the denominations do not in fact go deeper than those that separate them one from another), and it is true also that tolerance is a Christian duty, and that we have much to learn from each other. But tolerance—the costly business of protecting a man's right to be, as we think, wrong, and loving him while disliking his beliefs—must not become a cloak for indifference to truth, nor must a natural Christian desire for agreement between brethren be thought to justify lack of discrimination in testing what the other man says by Scripture. The mere fact that he says it does not of itself prove that it is of the Holy Ghost. Those who, with Mr Edwards, confidently look forward to learning about the Faith from Roman and Orthodox sources must surely be careful here.

Third, we must distinguish between the various levels at which ecumenical dialogue (and with it discussion between different traditions in the same denomination—the two belong together) does, and must, go on. At the first level, we are simply introduced to lines of thought and modes of practice which we recognize as being complementary to what we held before, not raising any problems of principle. The observance of the Christian year, which Mr Edwards mentions, is a case in point. At a second level, we are confronted by views which, at least verbally, seem to be at variance with our own; then we have to re-assess old positions and formulae in the light of new questions put to us by our partners in the discussion. But it may then appear that there is no substantial difference between the two sides. At a third level, however, we find ourselves facing real and intractable differences, which do not appear to yield to any amount of verbal adjustment. Here the temptation is to minimize and discount the differences: partly, no doubt, through sheer impatience; partly, too, through an all-too-human desire to bring the ecumenical enterprise, to which one has set one's hand, to a triumphant conclusion; but partly also by reason of the very strength of one's sense of fellowship in Christ with one's partner in the discussion. As, before our 'ecumenical conversion', if we are to use this phrase, the temptation was to minimize what 'we' and 'they' held in common, so now, in the context of ecumenical dialogue, the temptation is to minimize the things that still divide us. It is the sense that the leaders of ecumenical debate are constantly falling victim to this temptation, and discounting and glossing over real and deep differences in their zeal for 'progress towards unity', that disquiets many conservative evangelicals at the present time—this, coupled with perplexity as to how, when the ecumenical movement patently lacks a common understanding of biblical authority, sound agreement can in principle ever be reached.

Is the ecumenical movement a reformation in disguise, an instrument for leading us all out of error into truth without the pain and upheaval of the sixteenth-century reformation? One would like to hope that it might become

that, but if ever it is to do so it will have to take the theological reality of *error*, as the Bible depicts it, far more seriously than it has done hitherto. Religious enthusiasm, as Mr Edwards says, may be demonic; ecumenical enthusiasm, if linked with insensitiveness to error, becomes demonic too. At this point, if the ecumenical movement is to become a movement of genuine spiritual renewal, it has a long way to go, and we shall not help it to reach this goal by attaching any definitive significance to its endeavours and achievements thus far.

A NEW REFORMATION?

Thomas F. Torrance

THERE IS NO DOUBT that the Christian Churches are everywhere in ferment. The classical creeds are being subjected to rigorous testing, old venerable institutions are being shaken to their foundations, and unbelievable changes are taking place where they were least expected. We are surely in the midst of a new Reformation in which, as David Edwards says, we have been led to see that Christian truth is infinitely greater than our understanding of it. It is this conviction that serves to emancipate us from the narrow and restricted conceptions we have often inherited from this or that particular tradition or in this or that country, and therefore, as I see it, it must be a Reformation into a greater and deeper fullness of the Faith rather than a redacting or restricting of it. I do not mean that there is not much that might well be cut away, for the Church has too many customs and trappings that may have served their end once but serve little purpose in relation to its essential convictions today. Hence I like the insistence that Reformation implies a continuity with the past, for we cannot abandon the history of the Church throughout the ages. Yet this does mean that we must sit loose to our prejudices and stand fast by our foundations.

This Reformation has been going on steadily for the last thirty years, but what worries me about the present outcry is that rather crude and naïve notions have obtruded themselves vociferously upon this new Reformation and threaten to submerge it in a flood of muddy water in which clear and steady thinking is not made easy and in which many people are becoming more and more confused. It is alarming to find Churchmen sitting loose to the essential convictions of the Faith while standing fast by their prejudices, and indulging in the same kind of pathological iconoclasm which we see in teenagers in other ways. It is so easy to be destructive, to offer cheap remedies for our troubles, and to climb on to the various 'band-waggons' of the times in a misguided idea that this it to engage in communication and reformation. What we need is constructive thinking, the kind of thinking that takes place within a frame of continuous historical development where rigorous self-

criticism can be taken together with great advances in understanding and action. This is actually going on today, not just among a few theologians, nor merely in the Ecumenical Movement, but within the Evangelical, Roman and Orthodox Churches, and is already showing signs of far-reaching and exciting change. The upheaval and reform may well be greater than anything we have seen since the early centuries of the Christian era, for it involves the relation of the Church with all history and the whole world of nature.

In order to help understanding of what is happening, let me try to put it in the perspective of the great movements of the past, especially of the Reformation.

1. The Church is being forced to think through her convictions today in a way that she has had to do only twice before, in the great periods of change in cosmological outlook: (a) in the change from a primitive to a Ptolemaic cosmology that took place between the second and the fourth centuries, and (b) in the change from a Ptolemaic to a Copernican and Newtonian cosmology that took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We ourselves are in the midst of just such a vast shift in the thinking of mankind. In each of these periods basic epistemological and theological questions have been raised regarding similar if not identically the same issues, and in each there has taken place a considerable mutation in the forms of thought and speech that resulted from the changes in man's understanding of the universe.

Now there are people today who insist that the advances of modern science in the understanding of the universe make it necessary for us to discard the fundamental framework of the Christian faith as one that is bound up with obsolete cosmology. Even the basic concepts of the classical creeds have to be changed for they are alleged to be but constructs of an objectifying kind of thought that makes use of transitory patterns in man's understanding of the cosmos in order to establish itself. Hence we must dispense with the objective forms in which faith is cast and find new conceptual forms congenial to modern man in which to express our attitude to the universe, and so on.

If this is what is called the 'new Reformation' then it is a disastrous misunderstanding. Certainly the Church can never stand aside from what is going on in the world, for it is only within the world, and not outside of it, that she lives and acts and speaks, and fulfils her mission. But let us see what actually happened in the eras of great cosmological change in the past. In each of them theological formulations underwent their due measure of adaptation and restatement, yet in each the essential imagery and the basic conceptuality of Christian doctrine did not change, and the Church adjusted herself remarkably well. There were certainly great struggles but the apostolic and catholic faith proved adequate for all that was required of it in the change and advance in the understanding of the universe.

In actual fact it was not change in science or cosmology that constituted the real difficulty for theological statement. It was an unbiblical element in the culture and thought of the times, the axiomatic assumption of a radical disjunction between the sensible and the intelligible worlds, between the world of the creature and the world of God. Within the Ptolemaic cosmology this gave rise to Gnosticism and Arianism which divided God the Redeemer

from God the Creator, and made both the Son of God and the Holy Spirit creatures who had their being only on this side of the radical disjunction. The Church found itself struggling with two powerful ideas that threatened to destroy its existence: (a) the idea that God Himself does not intervene in the actual life of men in time and space for He is immutable and changeless, and (b) that the Word of God revealed in Christ is not grounded in the eternal Being of God but is detached and separated from Him and therefore mutable and changeable. This means (a) that redemption is only to be conceived mythologically for it is never actualized in creation, and (b) that all the Christian imagery and conceptuality of God are essentially correlative to creaturely existence and have no objective truth in God corresponding to them.

The answer of the Church to this menace was the Nicene Creed and the doctrine of the *homoousion*—that is, the doctrine that Jesus Christ as the Word and Son of God belongs to the divine side of reality, and is Himself very God come into our world to redeem and recreate us. With this doctrine the Church rejected the pagan separation of redemption from creation, and showed the absolute relevance of the Incarnation (including the life and passion of Christ) for the salvation of mankind. The Nicene theologians rendered a valuable service, for which the whole Church is indebted to them, in that they revealed the inner structure of Christian faith in its profound 'logical simplicity' and laid the basis for all subsequent theological advance.

Basically the same problems faced the Church again in the Reformation, but they were necessarily different because cast in a different idiom owing to a different understanding of the universe. Ptolemaic cosmology with a powerful ingredient of Neoplatonism and Christian theology had long been blended in a remarkable way to produce the notion of a sacramental universe in which the visible and physical creation was held to be the counterpart in time to eternal and heavenly patterns. This outlook had taken up into itself the old Hellenic disjunction between the sensible world and the intelligible world, the earthly and the heavenly, but had sought to span the hiatus between the two by Augustine's theory of illumination and his doctrine of the Church as sacramental organism full of grace. Deep in the Middle Ages changes began to be made. St Thomas rejected the theory of illumination and turned to Aristotelian philosophy for tools to effect a new synthesis. Within his own principles he brought about a profound integration between faith and reason, revealed and natural theology, but this in turn began to break up as a result of Ockham's attack upon the physics and metaphysics embedded in it. Then under a destructive nominalism the two worlds began to fall apart again with a widening disruption between faith and reason, the Church and the world.

That was the setting in which the Reformation took place in the sixteenth century when it sought to return to the biblical doctrine of God the Creator, who intervenes actively in the history of men in redemption and recreation and who has livingly objectified Himself for our knowledge in Jesus Christ. This had the effect of liberating nature for investigation by empirical science and of throwing Christian theology back upon its own positive foundations in the Word of God. Once again it was not science and cosmology that were

the real difficulty, but the assumption of a relation between God and the world in which God was not regarded as actively and personally at work in the affairs of human history, or intuitively knowable in a living and personal way, and in which there was produced a static and sterile view of nature as timelessly reflecting the changelessness and eternity of God. The Reformation met the double difficulty of Romanism and Nominalism by reconstructing the mediæval doctrine of God on a biblical basis and reconstructing the mediæval doctrine of grace by the help of classical Christology. It thus did two things: it restored the active relevance of the biblical doctrine of salvation for man in his ignorance, need and sin in historical existence, and emancipated nature from the domination of a rationalist theology for independent scientific investigation. In so doing, it not only adjusted itself to the changing outlook on the universe but contributed to it. I shall return to the doctrinal content of this reform below, but meantime it is worth noting that the Reformation met its difficulties through returning to the Nicene doctrine of the *homoousion* and the biblical conceptions of creation and redemption that it involved.

Now I believe that the real problems which the Church has to face today are not those created by science and the changes in cosmological theory, but in the recrudescence of the old pagan disjunction between God and the world, in which redemption is divorced from creation and the mighty acts of God are removed from actual history; in which a radical dichotomy is posited between the non-objectifiable and the objectifiable and the conceptuality and imagery mediated to us in the traditional Christ are regarded as detached from God and changeable. In other words, theological knowledge is not regarded as rooted and grounded in an objective Word from God to man, but as something thrown up by man himself in the form of mythological constructs as he seeks to express his attitude to the universe or even to existence. Thus in itself the knowledge of faith is non-conceptual and only symbolic (for God is not strictly 'knowable') and requires to be rationalized by borrowing conceptuality from philosophy or science. Once this radical dichotomy is posited, then, as for example in a Schleiermacher or a Bultmann, the basic affirmation of the Christian faith, namely that in Jesus Christ we have none other than the Being of God Himself in our human existence in space and time, is called in question as a rational statement in its own right and must be 're-edited' or 're-interpreted' as a correlate to human being or man's attitude to existence. Indeed, all the basic affirmations of the Christian Faith are processed in such a way that from being primarily and essentially theological statements they become statements of human concern with varying degrees of ultimacy. What is at stake here then is in a modern form the same problem that the Church faced when it battled with Gnostics and Arians in the early centuries. The great dividing line is once again the doctrine of the *Incarnation*, or if you will, the *homoousion*, i.e. the doctrine that Christ is not an expression of the attitude to the universe thrown up by the creative spirituality of the early Christians but that in Jesus Christ in our flesh and history we have in person the eternal Word of God, who has come to us from the Being of God Himself and who communicates to us a knowledge of God that derives from God and is objectively rooted in Him.

As anyone can see from the opening chapters of Calvin's *Institute* it was through recovering and maintaining this that the Reformers were able to carry through the reform of the Church which God laid upon them.

I cannot believe that a genuine reformation of the Church can take any other line, for a reformation involves a reconstructing of the forms of the Church's life and thought on its own proper foundations, not the hacking away of those foundations. Let me illustrate what I mean from an analogous movement in modern science, in the advance we have been making from classical physics to nuclear physics. This has involved a logical reconstruction of classical physics, and indeed a limitation of its range, but far from calling it in question it involves the establishing of classical physics all the more securely on its own proper foundations. That is the way also of scientific advance and reform in theology and Church in which great advances can be taken and are being taken because they do not mean that the classical foundations are rendered obsolete but are clarified and understood in such a way that we can build upon them a fuller and ampler edifice of thought which will serve the mission of the Church in the Gospel to the modern world.

2. Let us now come to the doctrinal content of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and in the light of it try to discern what is or ought to be the pattern of reform today—and here I wish to expand what was said above about the centrality of the *homoousion* in the Nicene theology. As I understand the Reformation, it was an attempt to carry through in the sixteenth century a movement of rethinking that corresponded very closely to that of the early Church. Let us consider it in four steps.

(a) At Nicaea, as Athanasius and Hilary tell us, the Fathers were confronted with so many different conceptions and notions thrown up in the debates with Valentinians and Arians that they set themselves to seek out and sift through the basic biblical images and conceptions and to reduce them to their fundamental essence in such a way that the basic logical structure or simplicity that was thus revealed would serve to throw light upon all the other forms of thought and speech and serve at the same time as a criterion for accurate assessment of them. The result was the *homoousion*, for in Jesus Christ who is not only the image but the reality or hypostasis of God we have the one objective standard by which all else is to be understood: He is the *scope of the Scriptures* and the *scope of the faith*. It is in Him that we have to do, not with a man-fashioned, but with a divinely-provided Form (the only *Eidos* of God-head) to which all else must conform in the life and thought and worship and mission of the Church. It is that central relation of Christ to the Holy Scriptures that was revived at the Reformation—where is that more clear than in the preaching and teaching of Martin Luther?

(b) It remains a fact of history, however, that the early Church did not carry through the results of its work in Christology into the whole round of the Church's thought and life. Thus in the West many aspects of the Church were allowed a luxuriant growth that was unchecked and uncriticized by the central dogma of Christ. The Reformation represents an attempt to carry through a Christological correction of the whole life and thought

of the Church. It was an attempt to put Christ and His Gospel once again into the very centre and to carry through extensive reform by bringing everything into conformity to Him and His Gospel.

(c) In carrying through this programme of reform the Church had to push the development of Christian theology beyond the point which it reached in the Ecumenical Councils, especially into the realm of soteriology, Church and mission. The movement of the Reformation was not contrary to but complementary to that of Nicaea, Ephesus, Chalcedon, etc. Look at it in this way. The Fathers in the early Church were concerned in the *homoousion* to affirm their faith in the deity of Christ, believing what God is to us in the saving acts of Christ He is eternally in His own divine Being. They thus stressed the *Being* of God in His Acts—they were concerned with theological ontology, the being and nature of the person of the incarnate Son. That did not stand in question with the Reformers, but what they were concerned to do was to stress the *Acts* of God in His Being—they focused attention on the saving work of the Son. We can state this in another way. The Fathers of the Early Church were concerned in the *homoousion* to assert the belief that when God communicates Himself to us in Christ it is none other than God Himself in His own divine Being that is revealed. The Fathers of the Reformation were concerned to apply the *homoousion* to salvation in Christ, insisting that when God gives Himself to us in Him it is none other than God Himself who is at work. God Himself is active in His saving gifts and benefits—that is to say, they applied the *homoousion* to the doctrine of *Grace*. Mediæval theology had evolved all sorts of distinctions here, proliferating many kinds of grace; grace was *something* that God communicated, something that was detachable from God and that could assume different forms in the creatures to whom it was communicated, as habitual grace or created grace or connatural grace, etc. But when the Reformers applied to Grace the *homoousion* they cut all these distinctions completely away and carried through a radical simplification of mediæval theology, for Grace is none other than Christ, God communicating Himself to us, the unconditional and sovereignly free self-giving of God the Lord and Saviour of men. Grace is total, and personal or hypostatic—Jesus Christ Himself.

This carried with it, of course, a rethinking of the doctrines of salvation and sanctification and of the Church and sacraments. Accepting fully the patristic doctrine of the Being of God in His Acts in Christ, the Reformation insisted on stressing the Acts of God in the Being of Christ, and in so doing carried through a great transition in theological thinking from a more static mode to a more dynamic mode. This corresponded in its way to the great shift in the whole thinking of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from a static to a more dynamic movement of scientific thought which has left its mark even upon the language and style that characterize the modern world in contrast to that of the ancient or mediæval world. It was indeed this stress upon the mighty, living, active God who intervenes in history creatively and redemptively and who has Himself come to us in history in Jesus Christ that helped to emancipate all thought from the still and sterile notion of *deus sive natura* in the Latin conception of God, and set in motion the great advances of modern times.

(d) Along with this came a recovery of the doctrine of the Spirit. The doctrine of Christ had hardly been set upon a proper foundation at Nicaea with the doctrine of the *homoousion* than the Church found itself faced with the same struggle with regard to the Holy Spirit, for the semi-Arians and Macedonians insisted on thinking of Him as a creature. But the Nicene theology found it was bound to go on in faithfulness to the biblical teaching to affirm the *homoousion* of the Spirit also, and so laid the foundation for the doctrine of the Trinity. A full doctrine of Christ and a full doctrine of the Spirit stand or fall together. Hence at the Reformation there took place a recovery of the doctrine of the Spirit, of the living presence and personal action of God in the world, released to mankind in fullness on the ground of the reconciling work of Christ. The doctrine of the Spirit and the stress upon the *Acts* of God in His Being went together. This also involved a recovery of the doctrine of the Church. Right up to the Council of Trent the Roman Church had never produced an authoritative doctrinal statement on the Church. There was indeed no significant monograph on the subject between Cyprian's *De Unitate* and Wyclif's *De Ecclesia*. But with the Reformation the whole picture was altered, and the doctrine of the Church as the community of believers livingly united to Him as His Body through the Spirit received its first great formulation since patristic times.

Then a problem arose for Protestantism—in the stress upon the saving acts of God in the being and person of the Son, reaction from the static ontological thinking of Rome led Protestants to find their special principle in the dynamic aspect in contrast to the ontological. Unfortunately a detachment of the Acts of God from His Being-in-His-Acts, and a consequent estrangement of Protestantism from patristic theology and historical dogma, resulted in the loss of the doctrine of the Spirit. Detached from the Being of God the 'Spirit' became swallowed up in the spirit of men or the consciousness of the Church, and detached from the Being of the Son the saving acts of God became dissolved into 'eschatological events' indistinguishable from man's own existential decisions.

Is this the 'New Reformation'? Here once again it would seem to me that Reformation can take place only on the Church's proper foundations, and that no real advance can be made until we learn to think together again the *Being-in-the-Act* and the *Act-in-the-Being*. I myself am convinced that it is this combination of Patristic and Reformation theology which is our only real answer to the problems that Roman theology still presents to us, and that if we can undertake this constructive re-thinking, as indeed Rome is now apparently undertaking herself, then we shall be able to gather up the historical development of the whole Church in a movement of profound clarification which will enable her at last to make advances in theological understanding comparable to those which have been taking place in modern science. As far as I can see, this is indeed what is now going on. Surely the rapprochement of the Roman, Orthodox and Evangelical Churches in these areas of theological understanding is evidence of this advance into new Reformation.

In this light I cannot but regard the passion for existentialism and anthropocentric theology which one finds in so many quarters as a retrograde

movement, and indeed in theology as in science a flight from the hard and exact thinking that is required of us in genuine advance. One thing, however, seems certain, that the Ecumenical Movement means that for the whole of the future any permanent theological advance must take place within the dialogue between the great historical traditions of the Churches, and that means in the centre of the apostolic and catholic faith where that dialogue inevitably places us. No doubt pop-Churchmen and pop-theologians may gather almost as great a following today as an Arius in the fourth century but unless their work is concerned with the kind of reconstruction that is rooted in the centre and grounded upon the original and eternal foundations it will also have only peripheral and passing significance. A new Reformation, however, is quite a different thing.

3. The Reformation can and must be looked at as a movement in thinking in which there was a shift from the priority of thought itself to the priority of being, or rather to the priority of truth. It was through the struggles of the Reformers with the Roman notion of tradition and the highly intellectual notion of truth that prevailed among the mediæval schoolmen (whether realists or nominalists) that the principle of objectivity emerged which was to assume such a masterful role in the whole development of modern science. The Reformers had a passionate belief in the truth and were ready to sacrifice pleasant illusions and traditional preconceptions for the sake of the truth. They were determined to let the truth declare itself to them, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, irrespective of what it called in question in themselves.

A highly instructive statement of this principle is found in Calvin's letter to Francis I with which he prefaced his *Institute*. Wherever there is divergence of opinion appeal must be made beyond all ecclesiastical authority or biblical citation to the Truth of God Himself for the Truth itself is the ultimate authority upon which we must cast ourselves and upon which everyone must rely. That Truth must be allowed to retain its own weight and authority, or Majesty, and it is by reference to it directly that judgement must be passed on the truth or error of theological interpretation or statement. But this involves on our part a movement of the mind in which we refer everything to God in accordance with His absolute priority and nothing to ourselves, and this in turn means that we must allow ourselves before the Truth to be stripped of all our own prejudgements and feigned suppositions. Unless in this way we are freed from ourselves and in a manner go outside of ourselves, as Calvin put it, we cannot know the Truth as it is in Itself.

Calvin went on in the early chapters of the *Institute* to show that since true knowledge of God involves a movement of the mind in which we are cast upon the given Reality such knowledge requires of us obedience to God and to His own way of revealing Himself to us. We know Him only by serving Him and following the way He lays down in communicating Himself to us. It is not difficult to see the transition from this to the pursuit of natural knowledge in experimental science, especially in the writings of a Calvinist like Francis Bacon who deliberately transferred Calvin's method of interpreting 'the books of God' to the interpretation of 'the books of nature'. Thus there arose the notion of scientific thinking as thinking that is obedient to

its proper object, thinking which follows the clues supplied to it by the object itself, and therefore thinking which develops special modes of inquiry and proof appropriate to the nature of that object. Thus the scientist is not free to think what he likes. He is bound to his proper object and compelled to think of it in accordance with its own nature, as it becomes revealed under his questioning.

Now when Reformed theology developed its own scientific method along these lines, it rejected two primary principles in Roman theology.

(a) It rejected the idea that the criterion of the truth is lodged in the subject of the knower or the interpreter. In all interpretation of the Scriptures, for example, we are thrown back upon the Truth of the Word of God which we must allow to declare itself to us as it calls in question all our prior understanding or vaunted authorities. Reformed theology had to fight for this on a double front: against the humanist thinkers who held the autonomous reason of the individual to be the measure of all things, and against the Roman theologians who claimed that the Roman Church (the collective subject) was the supreme judge of all truth. What Reformed theology did was to transfer the centre of authority from the subject of the interpreter (Rome or the individual) back to the Truth Itself.

(b) It rejected the idea that the definition of the Truth belongs to the Truth and is a necessary extension of it. This idea had long been developed by the Canon Lawyers and then by the nominalist theologians and remains inherent in the claim that whenever the Roman Church officially defines a truth, the definition becomes an extension of the truth and as such is so binding that acceptance of it is necessary for salvation. The Reformed theologians insisted, however, that definitions or formulations of the faith are only fallible statements and are intended to point to the truth or to serve it and must never be confused with the truth itself. They can be regarded only as symbols which are always subject to correction in the light of the truth itself.

Thus in steering a course between arbitrary individualism on the one hand and authoritarian dogmatism on the other hand, the theology of the Reformation was battling for the principle of objectivity that now governs all branches of disciplined, scientific knowledge. At the Reformation this principle of objectivity was given vivid expression in two doctrines, (i) election or predestination and (ii) justification by Grace. Predestination means that in all our relations with God, in thinking and acting, we have to reckon with the absolute priority of God. By His very nature, God as God always comes first. Thus our loving of God depends on His loving of us, our choosing of God upon His choosing of us, and even our knowing of God depends upon His knowing of us, for it is only by God that we can know God. Justification by Grace means that in all our relations with God, as moral or religious beings, we can never claim to have the right or truth in ourselves, but may find our right or truth only in Christ. Justification by Grace calls in question our self-justification—for it tells us that whether we are good or bad, we can be saved only by the free Grace of God, whether we are old or young we can enter the Kingdom of God only like little children who do not trust at all in themselves but only in their heavenly Father. When we apply

justification by Grace to the task of theology it means that we can never claim the truth for our own statements, but must rather think of them as pointing a way to Christ who alone is the Truth. Theological statements do not carry their truth in themselves but are true only in so far as they direct us away from ourselves to the one Truth of God. That is why justification is such a powerful statement of objectivity in theology, for it throws us at every point upon God Himself, and will never let us repose upon our own efforts.

It is not for nothing, therefore, that justification or election, i.e. the absolute priority of God's Grace, has been regarded as of the essence of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, for it means that the Church was reformed from beyond itself, and that it had to be freed from imprisonment in its own preconceptions, its own self-understanding, and its own immanent development in order to be renewed, and realigned to the Truth of God, and before it could leap forward in fulfilment of its mission in the world. But if so, this is surely the essence of all true Reformation, for objectivity is as essential now as then, and as essential in the great forward movements of the Church as it is in the most rigorous and progressive movements of modern science.

Now it is just here, I believe, that Protestantism is being sifted and tested down to its foundations today, and it is at this point that we *either* move forward into a great new Reformation *or* lapse back into the old errors that have dogged the history of the Church. The problem is perhaps most acute or at least most apparent in modern Protestantism's doctrine of the Spirit of God, for 'the Spirit' has come to mean little more than our subjective awareness of God or our religious self-understanding, and has very little if anything to do with the objective reality of the Being and living Presence and Action of God Himself in the world. This is very distressing, for it means that the Church is suffering from a very serious malady: it has become so obsessed with itself and its own consciousness that it is unable to distinguish the objective reality of the Truth and Action of God from its own subjective states. In personal life, of course, this would be a symptom of serious mental disorder and confusion. Can we look upon it in any other light when it concerns the social or religious consciousness, or the Church itself? I cannot help but feel that failure to distinguish between objective realities and subjective conditions in modern theology is an alarming sign of irrational and indeed mental disorder in the life and soul of the Church. Thus I find it scientifically and theologically impossible to see in the so-called 'new theology' of Protestantism anything like a new Reformation, but rather the reverse, something revealing a deep-seated traumatic disturbance in modern Protestantism, in fact a diseased understanding of the Gospel. This revulsion from objectivity, and obsession for the reduction of the great Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement to forms of self-understanding for their explanation indicates that religious man is in desperate need of some kind of deep spiritual psychiatry and therapy.

Nevertheless, I am convinced we *are* in the midst of a real Reformation, even though we have today on the periphery of the movement, as in the

sixteenth century, strange aberrations or anachronistic relapses. When we examine the history of Christian theology we can see that a positive advance has been taking place toward a coherent understanding of the Gospel. This is one that increasingly brings the teaching of the Fathers and of the Reformers to their full development and gives them expression in the modern dynamic style. This is the new biblical and dogmatic theology that is found in all the Churches, Roman and Orthodox as well as the Evangelical Churches, which cuts across the face of the old divisions and traditions and sets the understanding of the Christian Faith upon a scientific basis on its own proper foundation. Now at last this is beginning to reveal clear lines of advance in Christian understanding that has been going on for centuries, through the middle ages as well as the modern ages. One of the notable features of this is the common understanding between Roman and Evangelical theology that is leaping ahead at such a rate that it is often difficult to keep up with it—but one of the most tragic features of it is that just when the Church of Rome needs dialogue at a critical and profound level, involving the hard scientific thinking of pure theology, with the Evangelical Churches, she is so often met by a reactionary and anti-rational existentialism and a regress into obsolete speculations which have been tested and discarded again and again in the long history of the Church as errors.

There are at least two things here that are proving a help to the Church in steering it into the full stream of genuine and enduring Reformation. One is the Ecumenical Movement, which means that as all the Churches enter into dialogue they are flung back into the centre of the great historical development of the Christian Church and are weaned away from the side-developments into which they are tempted when separated from one another. The other is the fact that the whole of the future of the world will be mastered more and more by empirical science which can only force the Church back upon its own proper foundations and into more rigorous and objective thinking of its own proper object, the one Truth of God as it is revealed in Jesus Christ. Thus a way of thinking which was one of the great achievements of the Reformation and one of its chief contributions to the modern world now by way of empirical science can exercise a healthy pressure upon Christian theology and once again minister to its purification and clarification.

There are two other aspects of the Reformation in the sixteenth century that demand from us consideration today: the relations of Christianity to *nature* and to *nationalism.*

4. The Reformation in the sixteenth century certainly involved a profound change in the attitude to nature. To understand that let us return for a moment to the outlook of the Augustinian tradition which held sway in the West for nearly a thousand years, that is, the tradition in which Ptolemaic cosmology with a powerful ingredient of Neoplatonism and Christian theology had combined to produce the notion of the sacramental universe in which the visible and the sensuous world was held to be the counterpart in time to the invisible and eternal realities of the spiritual world. In this outlook nature was looked at only to be looked *through* toward God and the eternal realities. As such it had no significance in itself but had signifi-

cance only so far as it reflected spiritual and heavenly forms and was moved by an immanent longing for them. In the Thomist modification of that, the world of nature was meaningful only as it was understood to be impregnated with final causes, but that meant that the understanding of nature was inevitably controlled by prior understanding of the eternal ideas in the mind of God. This carried with it the difficult notion of the eternity of the world (*aeternitas mundi*) which gave St Thomas so much trouble and which only served to harden the sterile changelessness of nature.

This view came under the attack of Duns Scotus, who held that creation was not causally related to timeless ideas in the mind of God but rather to creative ideas which God freely produced along with the created realities themselves. Hence all creation was regarded as contingent upon the freedom of the creative will of God. Unfortunately, this was given a rather difficult interpretation by William of Ockham, whose thinking drove a deep wedge between faith and reason and made nature repose upon the arbitrary and unpredictable will of an inscrutable Deity. It became clear with Ockham that so long as the mediæval synthesis remained in its old form the notion of a genuine creation or the conception of what is really contingent could not be thought out without the threat of atheism—what was needed was a radical change in the doctrine of God. This was in fact brought about by the Reformation, as we have already noted. With it the whole outlook upon nature changed. It is that change in the concept of nature that is so characteristic of the whole of modernity. The two Reformation doctrines that are of primary importance here are *creation out of nothing* and *grace alone*. We considered these at an earlier point, but now we must consider them in this connexion.

Creation out of nothing means that the creaturely world is utterly distinct from God yet entirely contingent upon His will. Its actual contingency depends on its creaturely relation to God. Creaturely processes cannot be known by cognition of eternal ideas in the mind of God but only by examining the creaturely realities in their utter contingency and distinctness from God. On the other hand we cannot argue from nature to God, for if we are true to the contingency of nature we can only press our inquiry of nature up to the frontiers of creaturely being where it is bounded by nothing. This did not imply at the Reformation, as it had to mean within the Mediæval synthesis, some form of atheism, or a vast hiatus between faith and reason. Nature in all its distinctness is related to God by His creative activity, and does not carry final meaning in itself, for in itself it runs out into nothing. And knowledge of God is gained not through abstraction from knowledge of sensible realities but by direct intuitive experience of God which we are given through His Word and Spirit. Here, then, as Francis Bacon expressed it, we have to give to nature what is nature's and to faith what is faith's: we study the books of nature in accordance with the nature of nature, and the books of God in accordance with the nature of God who discloses Himself to us through them. This change released natural science from the domination of a rational theology and released positive theology from distortion through a so-called natural theology. Along with the principle of objectivity which we have already discussed, this gave rise to the notion of positive or 'dog-

matic science', such as pure physics or pure theology. But as Bacon himself realized this position in natural science or in positive theology depends upon the Biblical and Reformed doctrine of Creation out of nothing—cut away that doctrine and theology could only degenerate into deism, and natural science could only lead to atheism. Everything depends upon active and creative relation of God to nature, for that alone preserves the utter contingency of nature and obstructs its divinisation.

Along with this, however, goes the Reformation doctrine of Grace. That can be expounded in this way. In the Augustinian and Mediæval outlook the whole focus of man's mind was directed *upward and away* from nature to God, and therefore nature had only symbolic significance as it was seen to reflect eternal verities and forms. This gave rise to the kind of culture which we associate with the great Gothic cathedrals with their lofty spires pointing upward into eternity. But with the Reformation the stress was upon the turning of God in all His compassion and love *toward* the world which He had made and which He continues in His Grace to maintain as His creation. The stress here upon Grace alone means that man in response to the divine Grace looks with God in gratitude and wonder in the direction God Himself looks, at the world which He has made, and enters into that movement of His Grace toward the world. Thus Reformation man turned his eyes outward to the great world which God had made, and as Francis Bacon expressed it, set himself to exercise domination over it, understand and occupy it in obedience and gratitude to God. Natural science thus becomes a religious duty, for in its pursuit man is gratefully and obediently fulfilling his divinely appointed functions in relation to nature.

The validity of this depends, however, as Bacon was not slow to point out, upon the distinction that must be maintained between the kingdom of Grace (*regnum gratiae*) and the kingdom of man (*regnum hominis*). In the kingdom of Grace man lives according to Grace, in utter dependence upon God, by Grace alone; but in the kingdom of man, man is *by Grace* made to have a dominion over nature—yet this is a dominion which he may exercise only as he is ready to be the servant of nature, for he can know nature and control it only as he follows the clues which nature itself provides. Thus it is only as a creature of Grace and as a servant in the order of creation that man is given this dominion. This also means that man cannot transfer the dominion he has been given over nature into the kingdom of Grace, for man has no dominion over God. In relation to nature, then, man is a 'maker', one who fashions and constructs things, for the kind of knowledge he gains through serving nature is a form of power; but in relation to God man lives only as a child of the heavenly Father, by Grace alone in utter dependence on God. Everything would go wrong in theology if man tried to exercise in relation to God the kind of power or mastery which he is called to exercise in the realm of nature; and everything would go wrong in natural science if he allowed theological presuppositions to control and direct his examination of natural processes, instead of seeking to know those processes out of themselves in their contingent nature apart from God.

How remarkably far-sighted Francis Bacon was, for he put his finger upon the very points where modern science and theology find themselves up

against difficulties again and again, and where misunderstanding can only lead to disastrous confusion!

Let us return to Bacon's notion of experimental science as the putting of the question to nature, which in the field of determinate objects, necessarily takes on a violent form. We have to compel nature through experiments to answer our questions. Now Bacon himself granted that we can only control nature by serving it and following the clues it supplies us out of itself. Even when we have to 'disturb' it, we are not departing from nature but are still following it and developing its potentialities. We can achieve true knowledge only when we allow our minds to be obedient to the patterns nature reveals under our experiments. Many modern thinkers have tried to draw other conclusions from the experimental method of science. Because we force nature to answer questions in accordance with our own stipulations, we also, they claim, control the answers nature gives us. But this really means that it is we who determine the pattern that the universe takes as we apply to it our scientific questioning. This is the line taken by Wren-Lewis, who claims that in scientific knowledge we are not concerned with some order 'out there' in nature independent of us, but one that we ourselves create and impose upon nature. It is thus the technologist who, it is alleged, supplies us with the clearest example of scientific activity, in his inventions and in the imposition of his own artistry upon nature. According to Wren-Lewis, this transition in which the mastery is passing from pure science to technology is the great revolution in which the modern world is involved.

It must be granted that all human knowledge and not least scientific knowledge is reached through a compromise between thought and being, but that does not entitle us to draw the conclusion that it is we human beings who impart order to nature or rationality to the universe. There could be no science at all if we were not up against an implacably objective rationality in things independent of any and all of us. Certainly we do not find ready-made equations in nature. We have to frame these ourselves, but we do so not by imposing patterns of our own creation upon nature but by acting in obedience to a rationality inherent in nature itself. Number, as a calm and sober reflection surely forces us to realize, represents something quite objective. Hence our basic statements in mathematics and physics are made by way of *recognition* or reflection of what is there independently rather than by invention or imposition on our part.

Now when we relate the way in which Wren-Lewis thinks of scientific knowledge to the new attitude to nature that derived from the Reformation, it would appear to have far-reaching implications for theology. Detach the view of nature that arises out of the doctrine of creation out of nothing from God's direct creative activity, detach it also from the doctrine of the renewal and redemption of the world through Jesus Christ, and it follows that it is in man's control of nature through advance in technological science that the creative and redemptive patterns of God come to view, for there is no other order or pattern in nature than that which we impose upon it. Here man's creative activity is identified with God's; or to express it in another way, here we have a relapse into the old idea of *deus sive natura*. At the Reformation nature was released from the control of a rationalist theology; after the

Reformation nature lost its connexion with God through His Grace and an extensive secularization of man's understanding of the universe took place. Now, however, this 'new Reformation' appears to be taking the form of an identification of the creative and redemptive activity of God with the artistry and invention of man! One is, so to speak, the obverse of the other; Christology is but a way of speaking of the immanent processes the world manifests under the masterful control of scientific and technological man! It is as he realizes this that Modern Man is said to grow up!

There are elements of truth in this attitude to nature that we cannot reject, for they arise out of a genuine Christology: that is, out of the doctrine that the Creator Logos of God has Himself entered into His creation as a creature and that all creation is somehow ontologically related to Jesus Christ in as much as it coheres in Him the one Word of God through which all that is made is made; and out of the doctrine that in a profound sense all creation is affected by the redemptive activity of God in the death and resurrection of Christ, for in Him who is the Head of all things visible and invisible all things are gathered up and renewed. But it would be a perversion and a distortion of the Christian Gospel to resolve Christology and soteriology without remainder, so to speak, into the processes and advances of technological science. But is this not the sort of thing that is being claimed for the 'new Reformation' that comes to view, for example, in the recent writings of the Bishop of Woolwich who relies so very heavily upon Wren-Lewis? John Robinson is not a technologist like Wren-Lewis, but he is obviously a sort of artist whose thinking involves the imposition of his own creative and indeed pictorial images upon 'God', that is, not some Reality 'out there' independent of us, but One identified with the ground of our own being. He may be infinitely near to us, yet is helplessly involved in the toils of our own processes of life and thought, for He is unable by definition to stoop down to us and intervene creatively and redemptively in our need and condition. Like the God of Schleiermacher, He is a God without pity and mercy, and like the God of Bultmann He is present and active in the death of Jesus Christ in no other way than He is present and active in a fatal accident in the street. What is happening here? We have on the one hand in these thinkers a movement of thought which detaches nature from the Creator-creature relation, and so introduces the ancient radical dichotomy between God and the world, in which God is denied any active intervention in the world, and then as this leads to the secularization of the world and nature and even of religion (called the maturation of man!), the problem is met by finding God in the ground of being, and somehow identifying the patterns that become revealed under man's masterful technology and artistry with the creative and redemptive order. This is a sort of inverted Deism taking the form of *natura sive deus* rather than *deus sive natura.* People like Alasdair Macintyre cannot be blamed for calling this atheism! It is certainly remarkably parallel to the 'atheism' which the Nicene theologians found in the Arian movement in the fourth century.

Several things may now be said. The root error here is a sin against the principal of scientific objectivity which we saw to be one of the great contributions of the Reformation and to belong to the essence of every genuine

Reformation. Whether in exegesis or in the interpretation of history or in theological formulation many modern thinkers have lapsed into a way of thinking in which they will accept as true only what they can form and fashion through their own imagining and conceiving. They think from a centre in themselves and not from a centre in the object 'out there' independent of them, so that their thinking is first by way of self-expression and then by way of projection. This artistic way of thinking in theology is parallel to the new technological way of thinking which does not think of technology as applied science but as the supreme form and indeed the very essence of all science. Everyone at work in the universities knows that this tension between pure science with its rigorous principles of objectivity and a masterful technology is one of the most serious problems we have to face, but there can be no doubt that the whole of modern civilization will be destroyed and all the great advance of modern science will be brought to nought if this trespass upon the rigours of scientific objectivity is allowed to go on. Today pure theology is thrown into a new partnership with pure science, for, *mutatis mutandis*, they are now seen to be battling for the same principle so far at least as their scientific methods are concerned, and the integrity of their relations to their respective fields of study. Theologically speaking, the root problem here is the sin of the human mind, in which man is still trying to be as God, and to impose his own will upon the universe, and still insisting on a Christ who will subserve his own wishes and aspirations.

This is a much more difficult problem than naked atheism or materialism, for it operates with a view of nature that has been produced by the Reformation understanding of Creation and Incarnation, but detached from the doctrine of God and from the high Christology of the Reformation and of the Early Church upon which it rested. We cannot let go for a single moment the insight of the Greek Fathers or the Reformers as to the fact that all creation has been renewed in Christ and that He, the eternal Word and Son of God, the Creator and Redeemer, is in control of all things and will make all things serve the purpose of His saving economy. That includes the developments and advances of science, for science is a gift of God. For this reason we have to engage in constant dialogue with those who explore nature and develop its resources which God has planted there for His own glory, but we must do it, as Francis Bacon expressed it, only as those upon whom God has set His Grace and who, while they gain power over nature by serving it, can never transfer their God-given dominion over nature to the realm of Grace or to the knowledge of the Creator Himself. Let it be granted (and who would deny it?) that this is an area where we have still to do a lot of hard thinking, but let it also be clear that we can carry through the new Reformation or fulfil the on-going Reformation only by taking seriously the implacable objectivity of God, by learning to distinguish His objective Reality from our own subjective states, and self-expressions, and by thinking on the basis of the Creation and Redemption of God in the Incarnation of His eternal Son. It is no service to nature or to science to lapse back into some form of monism or pantheism. Let me put the problem in a nutshell. When Paul Tillich claims that all theological statements are analogical

except one, the statement that God is being, then he also insists that *being is God*. This is not Reformation, for it cannot serve either the advance of science or the advance of theology.

On the other hand these modernist lines of thought force us to reflect again upon what happened at the Reformation when the great transition was made from an Augustinian to a Reformed view of nature. It would seem to me that something essential tended to be lost in that change, and that what we now require is a profound reconstruction of the whole history of Christian thought on this subject which gathers up the Augustinian and the Reformed attitudes to nature. We cannot afford to give up the outlook so wonderfully symbolized in the Gothic cathedrals. If the Augustinian looking away from nature to God requires to be balanced by a looking out upon nature as God's good handiwork and the object of His Grace, the Reformed outlook upon the world which is to be pursued and investigated for its own sake needs to be balanced by a recovery of the dimension of the 'heavenly' and the 'supernatural' and the 'eternal'. I do not mean to say that this was lost by the Reformers themselves (cf. the section in Calvin's *Institute* on the *meditatio vitae futurae* or *meditatio vitae coelestis*), but it is now clear that the Reformation emancipation of nature through the doctrine of creation out of nothing easily lent itself to secularization, to the development of deism, and even to agnosticism. Nor do I mean that we must return to the Augustinian or the Thomist way of relating nature to Grace, but I do mean that we have here on our hands one of the most important although one of the most difficult tasks; for the whole subject must be thought through in such a way as to do ample justice to the ancient, mediæval and modern insights, yet all on the basis of the biblical doctrines of creation and redemption. If *Honest to God* has any contribution to make at this point, it is surely in throwing into high relief the tragedy that happens to Neo-Protestant prayer when it loses its relation to the transcendence of God, and when it allows Neo-Protestant subjectivism to smother or suppress the objective Reality of God in His own divine and eternal Being and Majesty.

5. We have finally to consider the relation of the Reformation in the sixteenth century to the rise of nationalism. The Reformation was not intended as a movement of schism but on the contrary a movement to integrate the on-going faith and life of the Church in the fulness of the catholic faith as it came to view in the great Ecumenical Councils, but it failed or was retarded as a unity-movement through two principal factors. *First*, the Western Church had become geared into a process of development in which it was governed ultimately by popular piety, that is, by a massive subjectivity coming to expression through the Papacy. Reform proved far too difficult, for it called for a logical and theological reconstruction which was too costly: it would have meant a profound reorientation in its traditional way of thinking and a rejection of appeal to its own consciousness as the ultimate court of appeal. Hence the Reforming elements were ejected from the Church, and the old Church barricaded itself securely behind its own self-expression and tradition. The upheaval in the Roman Church that is now going on really means that at last this reorientation is taking place, slowly but steadily, for the pressure of objectivity has driven it back beyond its own

traditional formulations of the faith to the substance of the faith. The distinction the late Pope John drew between the substance and the formulation of the faith at the outset of the Vatican Council now appears as a great turning-point in the history of Rome. Who can say what will come out of it? It certainly seems at the moment as if the new Reformation may well come in its most formidable form from the Roman Church rather than from the Evangelical Churches which are still so entangled in the swamps of subjectivity and relativity.

Secondly, and this is the point we are concerned with at the moment, the Church Reformed emerged at the same time as Europe was breaking up under the pressure of nationalist movements. Thus instead of there emerging *one* Evangelical Church there emerged many Evangelical Churches which inevitably became geared into the hardening cleavages between the nations (*cuius regio eius religio*), and so the Church Reformed *absorbed into itself* the divisions of the world into which it had been sent to preach the Gospel of reconciliation through Christ. This became a more difficult problem because of the new attitude to nature and its exploration which began to abound in the Protestant countries and to affect social and political relations as well as experimental science. Thus the development of a modern culture in the dynamic Protestant style was inseparable from the new appreciation of nature and the advance of empirical science. This began its rapid advance toward the end of the eighteenth century with the rise of Romantic idealism but it was in the nineteenth century that Protestantism yielded a brilliant and magnificent culture comparable to that of the Middle Ages. Meantime the Evangelical Churches in various countries had developed highly distinctive traditions of their own and had been passing through further internal division, with the result that the patterns of faith, worship and order became more and more determined by non-theological factors, and the barriers of division became harder than ever. In every country the Protestant Church tended to become a servant of public opinion, an expression of the national and cultural consciousness of the people, instead of the manifestation of the one Body of Christ entrusted with a revolutionary message of reconciliation that cuts across all the divisions of mankind and through proclaiming one equal love of God gathers all men without respect of colour or race or class into the one fold of the one Shepherd.

Thus the nineteenth century threw up an immense problem within Protestantism: the integration of the self-consciousness of the Church with the culture that developed out of the new attitude to nature. This led finally, especially in Germany, to the logically understandable yet quite un-Christian attempt to reduce the Christian Church to a socio-religious expression of 'blood and soil', to integrate grace with nature, on the ground that grace does not destroy nature but perfects and completes it, that is on the ground of a doctrine of *deus sive natura* or rather *natura sive deus*. There is no need to trace the story of this development, but we note that it did serve to shake the Church to its foundations, not only in Germany, and to put its faith to the test, and it also served to sharpen the issues between it and a movement of reform that had been going on steadily all through the nineteenth century and which has at last come to the surface in the great biblical and dogmatic

theology of our time, and not least in the new theological developments in the Church of Rome. We have already spoken of this advance, one of the most significant and formidable in the whole history of Christian thought, but part of it, and alongside of it, there was a parallel movement which we must consider.

This is the Ecumenical Movement which owes a great deal to the concentration upon research into the historical Jesus which served to throw Christ and His Gospel back into the centre of the picture once again, and owes more to the attempt to give full theological interpretation to Jesus through His atoning and saving work. This has resulted in a steady attack upon the nationalist and cultural divisions into which the Evangelical Church has become fragmented. Here we see Christianity showing its ancient power to cut across the divisions of mankind, to preach a Gospel of reconciliation that must be lived out in such a way that the deep cleavages that have grown up among men and overcome and healed. At the same time this falls more and more under the objective way of thinking which presses on us from the side of empirical science. The principle of objectivity means that there cannot be more than one science in any field; faithfulness to the object carrying with it detachment from unwarranted and unchecked presuppositions imports unity. And it must import unity where we think as we are compelled to think, not out of our own subjectivity but as the facts force us to think in accordance with their own nature. This is the kind of objectivity that is now making itself felt again, not only among the Evangelical Churches but among the Roman and Orthodox Churches, so that the movement for unity is being driven steadily deeper and deeper. And yet it is by no means mere method that is playing this forceful part, but method that arises out of content, order that is determined by inner substance, for it is the atonement itself, the at-onement inherent in the nature of the Incarnation and Redemption, that is at work vanquishing the divisions that emerge out of nationalist and cultural roots and the devastating effects of sheer human sin.

Without doubt we are in the midst of a vast new Reformation—it shows a steady and ineluctable advance in spite of wilder and more extravagant theologies and movements which appear on the flanks of the Church's forward march. No doubt they may serve a purpose, if they draw the attention of those who are only concerned with worship or order in the Church to the impossibility of separating the thinking of the Church from the thinking of the scientists in the world at large, for it is to the world that the Church proclaims its message, and within this world which more and more is being dominated by science and a scientific culture that it must live out the divine life. But the Church will fail and inevitably be flung aside if it takes the road of subjectivity, and offers a Christianity as some sort of self-expression of the human spirit, a poetic or mythological epiphenomenon to the real work of exploring and developing nature. I cannot see any Reformation coming to its fulfilment and taking its place as it ought within the thinking of mankind, and among all the peoples of the earth, except that which is wholly committed to believe in the Creator and Redeemer God, and which takes seriously and realistically the stupendous fact of the Incarnation, and except that

which develops its theological understanding not by means of its own artistic creations but through rigorous and disciplined obedience to the objective reality of the Word of God made flesh in Jesus Christ.

The Christian Church is confronted today with its Nebuchadnezzar and his dream of a vast image reaching up to heaven, the image of a technological empire in which man imposes his own will and the patterns of his own invention upon the universe. But like Daniel the Church must speak of the stone that is cut out of the mountain not by human hands, which will smite the image of human empire and break it in pieces, and will itself become a mountain that fills the whole earth. The New Reformation cannot do without its apocalyptic message which is a transference to the history of human achievement in all the empires of political, social and scientific endeavour of the Gospel of salvation by grace alone.

A LOCAL REFORMATION—IS IT ON?

David Head

WHAT DETERMINES THE NEW SHAPE?

DAVID EDWARDS has vigorously puffed his dandelion 'clock' to tell the time of our Church life, and a thousand seeds have taken wing. It will be good if they take root and produce a crop of comment; better if their eventual golden flowers help to make the strong wine of renewal.

Mr Edwards writes of 'the Church's irrelevance to our time'. The new reformation he anticipates is needed not to purge local Churches of corruption but to prick them out of ineffectiveness. But what is the desired *effect* of the local Church? He points to this in his last paragraph. Reformation will bring a new vision of God as 'for us' within 'the life of a purged Christian community which is "for the world" '. That is his conclusion, and the beginning of our thinking. Can we get this clearly taped without the wow and flutter of ecclesiastical distractions and distortions? The Church exists for God and for the world; better, for God's world. It shares the present activity of the Mediator. It is called to be 'where Christ is' and where man is—and this is not a matter of division of time and labour, but two things the Church must be at the same time and in the same locality. Its work is priestly—and what it does and offers is done and offered on behalf of the world of which it is part. 'Christ existing as a community' will live in the world as Christ lived—aware as He was of being 'sent'; identified, as He was in baptism, with men in their sin and repentance; living out His vocation as suffering servant. God's determined purpose is one perfected world centred in Christ, and this is determinative for local Church life until the travail is over and the new age born.

WHAT DETERS THE NEW SHAPE?

There cannot be a local Church anywhere in the world that has completely failed to recognize this calling. Every murmur of intercessory prayer is witness. But every denial of friendship-over-natural-barriers, and every money-raising effort for local funds, and every inward-looking decision, shouts a different slogan than 'for the world'. And reformation is urgent because local Churches in general have failed to work out its implications in the pattern of their contemporary life.

Members of the local Church may agree sadly that it is ineffective. But even the way they express this points to the need of fundamental renewal. The main, if not sole, topic of regret is the fall of numbers at worship and membership figures. Certainly these indicate increasing loss of contact with people, and it may be of people with the Gospel; that is serious enough. But to focus attention here and there only gives the strong impression—which most people outside the Church hold—that our business is to get more 'support' for the Church and its activities.

Even when the concern is larger, it is often stereotyped. The anxiety may be that there has been no offer for the ministry in recent years; seldom that no one is putting up for the local council at the next elections. Complaints are made that so few come to the prayer meeting; but there has never been a meeting to try to understand the local housing problems and how they affect John and Jane, who come regularly, and Bill and Betty, who never come at all. The minister will visit a member dying of cancer; but no voice has been raised in any quarter about the paucity of money for cancer research. The Church youth club has leadership, but the warden of the local community centre appeals in vain for a committed Christian to join his committee.

It is this lack of a full sense of vocation that results in little local demand for reform, and little local discontent with things as they are. To these two things we turn.

LITTLE DEMAND FOR THE NEW SHAPE

There are ways in which comparison of our time with the sixteenth-century Reformation can be very misleading. Professor Owen Chadwick, writing on the Reformation, says that 'widespread, popular and unsatisfied demands for reform are usually in the end revolutionary'. Are our local Churches today making demands that merit any one of those three adjectives? In Methodism we are still in the state where connexional departments and chairmen make suggestions (not too radical and not much heeded), and a minister or an ex-university student or an enterprising man-of-the-world may try—against opposition—to make some adjustment to mother Church's well-worn dress. And sometimes a local congregation will accept a new patch here or a shortened sleeve there—with some misgivings.

We shall be told not to be impatient and imprudent. David Edwards can speak of 'a renewal which is already taking place', and he mentions repentance and toleration as some of the signs. After all, the Reformation took a couple of hundred years to bring off. Yet we should heed Albert van den

Heuvel when he takes the astonishing reception of *Honest to God* by many outside organized Church life as an indication of how unrenewed Church communities are. In spite of the new discovery of the Bible which Mr Edwards mentions, in spite of new ecumenical insights and new experiments (which remain experiments), not much seems to have happened.

Mr van den Heuvel comments: 'The local church, more than any other expression of the Church, remained the same: a bit emptier perhaps, a bit redecorated perhaps, but it was not renewed.' He adds: 'And so the frustration grew. Many left: many still leave.' We may wonder how many there are in our local congregations, of any age, who are aware of this frustration —in themselves or in others. The usual grumble is more about lack of liveliness than about inadequate thoughts, time-tables and structures. I am glad to join with those who pray for revival, but the last time I did so I heard the Lord being told categorically that He must stop Churches from changing from afternoon to morning Sunday School. Many a revivalist who wants to see men brought to Christ assumes that this will involve a happy adoption of and adaptation to conventional Church life and worship. And many a local congregation hopes that one day the tide will turn and people will come flocking back into the Churches *as they are*. There is every indication that this will not happen, and that if such a thing did happen it would be a bad sign. We should want secular man to worship not out of panic or paranoia, but out of conviction. Local Church life—as far as he is concerned—is not convincing. And there are ministers, in and out of the ministry, and lay people, in and out of the organized Church, who would agree with him.

LITTLE DISCONTENT WITH THE OLD SHAPE

There is indeed a lot that can be said in support of 'things as they are'. The life of the local Church community is not just an inherited pattern become a survival. It works, and it has its own logic. Its justification is that many are helped by present ways of worship, that smaller fellowships are needed, that wide healthy interests are encouraged (in Guild and Young Wives, for instance), that week-evening meetings (Men's Club, Youth Club, and so on) bring people over the threshold and some of them into worship and later membership. Obligations to support certain funds and hold certain meetings (such as Home and Overseas Missions) keep Methodists outward-looking. And there may even be some contact with other local denominational Churches. I came to Christ through this pattern. There are young people, and a few older ones, who still do.

The sum of these activities 'adds up', even though in terms of attendance and interest many Churches show a slight annual subtraction. Drastic change is opposed because we might lose what we have. From time to time a special attempt is made to bring people in. And we can always blame our fall of numbers on the mediocre choir, or the newfangled way the minister conducts worship, or death.

There is cause for a little discontent of course—but only a little, so long as no one realizes that the Church's only justification is what it does for the world (in the first place, people in the neighbourhood); and that the Lordship

of Christ over the whole of modern life makes greater and different demands than loyal attendance at worship (excellent as that is); and that multitudes of men and women seem incapable of receiving Christ through the auspices of religious activity.

DEFINING THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

It is one thing to believe in the Church as the priestly community in each locality; it is another thing to express this in terms of where I live now. David Edwards draws encouragement from the growing mood of self-criticism within the Church, yet admits 'few of the necessary changes have yet taken place'. Have we even seen what these 'necessary changes' are? We hear voices raised in criticism, few in constructive criticism.

Yet pointers already exist, in the Paul Report, at East Harlem and Notting Hill, in European training programmes, through the work of William Temple College, and the Luton Industrial Mission, and the Iona Community, and a small handful of central, inner belt, outer suburban, town and village Churches which keep out of the headlines, but have truly proved what it is to be re-born when you are old.

What is coming? Weekly Holy Communion with sermon? A new kind of child and adult education programme? More ecumenical co-operation? A different use of Sunday? Something much more radical? Whatever it is will be the working out of the Servant Church of which David Edwards speaks, and three preliminary things may be said.

First, the Servant Church within each neighbourhood or community will consist of all Christians accepting a shared responsibility for all 'neighbours'. We are occasionally seeing a local Council of Churches making the members of the Churches available to all in need. One area of Birmingham has a 'Parish Steward' in every street, with the expressed purpose that no need shall go unnoticed and unmet. Church leaders meet regularly with those who serve the neighbourhood in statutory and voluntary organizations. This particular group has gained much from a study of 'Responsibility in the Welfare State' (Birmingham Council of Christian Churches) which tells how the Churches of another outer suburb investigated and set out to meet neighbourhood needs. Such a comprehensive and ecumenical approach begins to make sense of the priestly ministry of Christ's people 'in one place'.

Secondly, the local Church which accepts its vocation of witnessing service will be on the look-out for suitable patterns of life, and will find many insights in existing organizations which are geared for service to others. The Rev. Paul Carlson has recently written for the World Council of Churches of the valuable lessons about structure to be learnt from 'Alcoholics Anonymous', with its emphasis on one person in need standing side by side with another. Another example with great possibilities of translation into ecclesiastical terms is Rotary and similar societies. Its motto, 'Service before Self', is worked out, first in the professional life of each member, and then through the fellowship of a weekly meal and the activity of a number of committees. Individuals represent Rotary on a large number of welfare organizations, and Rotarians are expected to be available to share in Community Associations, and many other special social projects. Here is machinery far more

adapted to service than much of our local Church life—and we note the particular stress on weekly attendance at the meal where common concerns are discussed and an address is given.

Thirdly, let us continually ask ourselves what is the basic pattern, the minimum requirement for the local Church to be servant-priest under Christ. Two things appear essential: there must be the sense of 'Christ existing as a community', and also the sense of 'Christ for the world'. The first involves some kind of 'assembling'—whether in an all-inclusive congregation or a house-fellowship. The best assembly might well be, as for Rotary and the early Church, a weekly meal, a meal which included the taking of special bread and wine, and a 'conversation on the work of God', and the proclaimed Word. Children would be part of it. Liturgical elements (hymns, prayers) could be brought in only as required. But it would be a sit-down meal of fellowship in which the engagement with the manifold world of experience would be discussed and planned. The invitation to others would not be to a Church Service, but to a friendly meal at which a few special acts were performed and commercial concerns were faced. In the western world, this Sunday meal would certainly need to have the modesty of a 'Famine Lunch' —a practical recognition of fellowship with the world family, many of whom are often excluded from the 'family table' with its daily bread. And this would *be* our public worship, expressing our corporate worship in life, in dispersion.

The other essential is for each member to be truly 'in the world'. This means plenty of time to share in all that is going on. It may mean that the Church premises are not used in the week—or made available for 'secular' activities. Training in faith and understanding of contemporary life might be gained through extra-mural lectures (to suit various levels of intelligence), or received in the city through training at a central place—systematic training, with the utmost economy of time, therefore probably given on Sundays. If small meetings of Christians together were included in the programme (and we need more intimate relationships) it would be insisted that such groups should include the semi-interested and non-committed. But these are no more than the vaguest hints of new possibilities coming out of a new reformation.

WHAT DECIDES WHETHER A NEW SHAPE IS POSSIBLE?

Whatever the new shape needs to be, is it on? How are local Churches to face the urgency and possibility of reform? Mr Edwards has mentioned aspects of the Reformation which have their counterpart today. The catalysts are already at work. One is the study of the Bible amid the fresh breezes of modern scholarship. Another is the spate of cheap Christian literature. It may well be that reform is delayed because there are far too many illiterate Christians out of touch with what the Spirit has been saying to the Churches these fifty years: hear them talking about 'foreign missions'.

Another is the ecumenical adventure, still only a remote incident to many. The immediacy of the Anglican-Methodist proposals has already done much to stir up local Churches to find one another and new truth in the bargain.

And there is the virtuous circle of holiness expressing itself in 'worldly'

terms. As soon as members of the local Church find themselves in 'frontier' situations, involved in local needs, thinking about their work in fresh terms, rubbing shoulders with decent godless people whose indifference is a challenge and whose depth of caring a rebuke, talking with a Bermondsey Buddhist or a Midland Muslim about his faith, working alongside a humanist at something of common concern, getting on committees where values owe little to the Sermon on the Mount—as soon as these uncomfortable positions are gladly taken up, new vistas of the Church are at once in view, and the local Church is already six months gone in pregnant waiting.

But what about the power needed for new life all round? David Edwards asks whether there is sufficient energy in our day for a new reformation. Where will it come from? That much every believer knows. The Holy Spirit must stir the earth of our deep minds, and strike the rock of our common life, if living waters are to bring new life and shape to our well-trodden deserts. Christ dares us. Ask.

NEW BOTTLES OR NEW WINE?

John J. Vincent

THE FIRST REFORMATION was concerned with throwing out broken bottles so that the pure wine of the Gospel might be more adequately contained. But it also claimed to have found what the true wine really was.

The second Reformation, in our day, must in the same way tackle the two simultaneously. So far, we have had great noise over bottles. Church organization, liturgy, Bible translations, modern apologetics, sociological surveys, with the inevitable ecumenical conferences about 'Christianity and ——'. It has been a great to-do. As Albert van den Heuval recently pointed out in *Christian Comment* for March 1964, it has almost all been a wash-out; the 'Renewal Theologians' trained us in a glorious vocabulary of 'rediscoveries'—bible, laity, politics, mission, community, liturgy; taking 'a cup of changed world, a teaspoonful of despair about the actual situation of the Church and a half a pound request for total renewal'. All it ended up in was 'eternal experiments which were never allowed to become a strategy'. There is an admirable and attractive summary of the main lines of 'Renewal' in David Paton's *One Church Renewed for Mission*, prepared for the current Faith and Order jamboree at Nottingham in September.

And I stand with it. The work of renewal must be done. The people doing it (Renewal Group in Methodism, for example) have a long task ahead. It must be done, or there will be no bottles at all. Then what will you do with the wine?

But if it is half the story, it may not be the more important half. If it is discovering the contemporary clothing, what is to be the body? If it is the streamlined, polythene, unbreakable, hygienic bottle, what is to be the wine?

Implicitly, the debate about myth and secularization is a debate about the bottle. But the demythologizers also presume to continue a particular brand of the wine. So we begin there and then ask whether the theological secularizers have yet learned the lesson.

WHAT IS THE MYTH?

Bultmann's great work was to attempt to remove the New Testament bottle, to remove the myth so that the essential element could be seen for what it was. The mythical terms used in the New Testament *obscure* the real purpose behind them. We need new terms which will explain the 'understanding of existence' which the myth was supposed to make plain; for the myth explains it no more.

So, discover what the myth is and take it away.

The myth was above all *eschatological* and *apocalyptic*. The message of Jesus was that the eschatological issues could be presently reckoned with by entering into the salvation which will finally be revealed. This, the early Church preached, had already happened in the death and resurrection of Jesus. In hearing this 'kerygma' and appropriating it, people themselves became 'saved'.

The first demythologizer was John, who said that the resurrection of Jesus, Pentecost and the *parousia* of Jesus are one and the same event, and those who believe have already 'eternal life'. Thus, to demythologize is to reject the world-view of the New Testament and to put the essential meaning into our contemporary world-view. This contemporary world-view is the existentialist understanding of man and his life.

What is left? The *kerygma*, the essential thing to be preached: that Jesus died, rose and lives (whatever its existential meaning). Here Bultmann is with Dodd and the older biblical theologians in imagining a set verbal form of words (the *kerygma*) which has saving effect when heeded.

Way back, Fritz Buri wrote an article entitled '*Entmythologisierung oder Entkerygmatisierung der Theologie?*' in which he suggested that what we now needed to do was to take away the *kerygma* in order to get at the essential core. Why retain this relic of the myth? In fact, as Ernst Fuchs says, *all that the kerygma says is already in what Jesus said*, so that we now need the gospels and the historical Jesus *first*, for the *kerygma* points to them. This is fine. But do we need the *kerygma* to point?

From many points of view, the *kerygma* notion has probably served its time in theology. Even were it airtight as a theological notion, its *effect* has been simply to reinforce traditional Protestant verbalism, 'orthodoxy', and anti-social actionism (cf. Amos Wilder). Bultmann is thus first and foremost not a demythologizer but a *Lutheran*. 'The message' must at all costs remain. Or else what is there to which people are to respond? (cf. also Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study*, pp. 54-60).

What is there, indeed? This is the whole question, on which more in a moment.

We need first to get clear what *the myth* is. The myth is not merely the bits in first-century cosmology which we do not like, not merely the *deus ex machina* that Robinson dislikes, but *the whole Christ story*. To subtract anything is to subtract all. But to retain anything (as Bultmann does) is to raise the question, 'Why not retain all?' 'Why only retain what suits your Lutheranism (the *kerygma*) and your existentialism (the assessment of the human situation)?' Why not retain *all*? That is, what is it *all* about?

DEMYTHOLOGIZING THE KERYGMA

It is, then, Bultmann's *kerygma* which is now the 'meaningless myth'. Listen to any congregation after a neo-orthodox or existentialist preacher! The *kerygma* must be demythologized!

Further, it is the whole salvation story of the Bible which now needs to be demythologized. It is not only the setting of Jesus within first-century apocalypticism which needs now to be excluded, but the setting of Jesus within a framework of personal salvation expectation which in fact represents (I believe it can be shown) only a subsidiary part of the biblical story, and whose run-out into 'personal faith' comprises exactly the place where the whole thing has become nonsense to our ears. Paul, of course, well knew the peculiarity within Christian thinking of 'his Gospel'. Well he knew the singularity of his own experience of 'faith'. Yet these have become the classic theology of Protestantism, the much boasted 'legacy' of the first Reformation.

What would it mean to demythologize the salvation-myth, the *kerygma*? It would mean to give full value to the *earthly* Jesus. Ernst Fuchs, Gerhard Ebeling, Ernst Käsemann and others of the post-Bultmann school in Germany are well aware of the problems in this area, beginning from radical presuppositions. But their concern is instructive even before their results can be useful. It would mean, again, that we consider whether we have not leapt upon the notion of 'revelation' without allowing it also to be judgmental. How much of the New Testament, let alone the Old, is the residual attempt of man's religiosity to lay hold of an utterly other and inscrutable God? If we may still talk of 'revelation', the *area* in which anything at all after Jesus is now clear has become smaller, narrowed to the two years, the parables, the teaching, the discipleship words, the healings, the prophetic deeds, the passion, the resurrection.

The claim of Christianity is, essentially, that hidden somewhere in *that* whole existence of the man Jesus is the clue to existence and to whatever God there is and to whatever worlds there are to be.

But even this claim, barely stated, needs to be 'demythologized', as we shall attempt in a moment.

Essentially, to 'demythologize', then, is not to think that there is some truth which can be extracted from the myth and which can be given separate existence as some kind of 'truth'. Rather is it to keep telling the story, the myth, the symbol, and repeatedly to draw out its present implication, knowing that the latter hangs wholly upon the singularity of the former; but

knowing too that to claim that 'all things belong to Christ' is to demand that it really be 'all things' and not the personal acceptance of the *kerygma* alone.

A CHRISTOLOGY BOTH THE MYTH AND THE MEANING

The whole claim of Christianity—that is, of Christology (for Christianity is by definition about the 'things that belong to Christ')—is that nothing can be known of the 'other side' save what can be seen in the 'this side'—that is, in the man Jesus who stands before us. Bultmann writes:

> Myth is an expression of man's conviction that the origin and purpose of the world in which he lives are to be sought, not within it, but beyond it—that is, beyond the realm of known and tangible reality—and that this realm is perpetually dominated and menaced by those mysterious powers which are its source and limit (*Kerygma and Myth*, pp. 10f).

Against this, Christianity asserts, point for point:

> Christology is the conviction that the origin and purpose of the world in which man lives are not to be sought beyond it but within it—that is, within the realm of known and tangible reality—and that this realm is perpetually dominated and menaced by that mysterious power which is its source and limit, notably Christ (for all other powers have been made subject to Him).

That is, the Christology is the myth. And the Christology is also the truth behind the myth. To be a Christian is to be lost in it, to see myself as visible, meaningful, accepted and significant only in it and through it, crying 'only look on us as found in Him'.

In *Him*, the *man*, who now 'lives and reigns'.

In Him, the *Truth* (acceptable life on earth) and the *myth* (the life, death, resurrection).

Let us tell in outline the central story, the story of Jesus—on the one hand the essence, the truth, on the other hand the myth, the symbol—in its form both 'totally demythologized' and simultaneously 'totally positivist' (if we may use opposed slogans to stake out the ground for the view we are trying to get).

Once in time, there was a man called Jesus, who lived as other men, yet walked the way of God and was pleasing to God. He left his own home and became a wandering preacher, gathering men about him as disciples, whom he called to be with him, to learn from him, so that he might send them out to preach, teach and heal, just as he himself did. By his teaching, he heralded the end of the old Law, and replaced it by himself as the criterion and embodiment of love, insisting on the right of all to enter into this by receiving forgiveness. By his preaching, he proclaimed the presence and the coming of the Kingdom of God, which is simultaneously the inner realm of meaning and acceptance in every human event, and the final righteousness of God. By his healing, he overcame the powers of superstitious 'providence', and opened up wholeness of mind, body and spirit to every person. All this aroused the hatred of the Jewish authorities, who conspired with the Romans to have him condemned and crucified. But,

on the third day after his death, he began to appear again to his disciples, assuring them that he was alive, that he would be with them as they set about doing in the world what he had done, and commanding them to go and proclaim to all men the meaning that had been given to life by the events of his own life.

What does it mean? If it is right, it means that every man already stands in the presence of God on earth. In human existence, every man, relationship, secular situation, nation, society, class is confronted by practical and decisive issues demanding certain courses of action. Each issue is truly 'existential', because it is a hidden manifestation of the issue with which Christ himself dealt. Each issue is thus an issue of life or death—the bringing of healing by willing participation in Christ, or else the death of the personality which refuses to have its existence and significance so determined. Christ is the Way whereby the mundane, the secular, the human can be given the gift of ultimate significance ('eternal life' in the New Testament). To 'believe' is to 'trust' that this is really true by being prepared to be lost in actions which will only either 'work' or 'be justified' if, in fact, it is true. 'Faith' in the New Testament is the preparedness to act as if the utterly unprovable—that God accepts what belongs to Christ—were true. It is to 'act boldly', as if the hidden were already plain.

The myth, the symbol, is thus the effectual prophetic *sign* of the gift of God which is both *discriminatory*, restricting itself to the deeds which are found to belong to Christ, and also *indiscriminate*, because all stand equally before the opportunity of acceptance and entry. The Christian's only 'advantage' is that he *knows* what in fact applies to all. The atonement is the classic way of saying that the Christ deed now stands between all men and God. All men equally 'share in the benefits of His passion'. All men now equally stand before the opportunity to become consciously disciples to it. This alone is what 'being a Christian' or 'joining the Church' can mean in relation to this essential Christology.

Is it too far out? It is hardly farther away from the New Testament than the evangelical notion that by a personal 'leap of faith' I can 'avail myself' of the salvation preached in the *kerygma*.

But what, then, of 'modern secular existence'? The problem of secular history and the world demands that we retrace our steps a little to get that discussion in focus. For, if Jesus is as we have just claimed, then discipleship to Him is discipleship to the *world*, for he is hidden within it.

A SECULAR CHRIST

The only adequate Christian answer to the challenge of the modern secular world must be an answer inherent in the nature of Christ himself. It is no use trying to extend an insular, domestic, private view of Christ and expecting to end up with the Christ of the New Testament. The classic Protestant view is, as we shall see, inadequate for this reason. What is needed is a Christian theology which does full justice to the whole Christ, and yet does not need to turn a somersault before it can have an implication for the modern world.

The outline of a 'secular Christ' perhaps gives us what we are looking for.

Initially, it needs to be recalled that God was in Christ 'reconciling *the world* to himself', that God 'so loved *the world*' that He gave His only Son, that 'thrones, principalities and powers' are set under him, that 'all things' were created in him and for him, and that 'all things' hold together in him (See Col. 1, *New English Bible*).

The end and aim of the Christian operation is thus 'the world'. Just as Christ cared for, healed, and died for, the ungodly who crucified him, so also the whole Christian revelation is 'for' the world. If the Church sees it before all men see it, the Church sees it 'on behalf of' the world, for whom it is really intended. The Church is only the slavegirl, the handmaid, the lackey of Christ (maybe one day to be the bride!), who does now for the world what the Master did and does for it. This is what salvation, healing, death and resurrection are about—the saving, the healing, the dying and rising again of the world.

This is not to 'depersonalize the Gospel', but to insist that the personal shall find its place within the whole context of real life. The person works from inwardness outwards, in the realm of nature; from 'saving my soul', to 'bearing witness to it in the world outside'. But in the realm of Christ, the movement is from the outside, the secular, where Christ is, to the inside, the personal, where the individual is.

I have tried to say elsewhere something of what it means to say that 'the secular Christ' is the Way for the world, both in terms of basic motivations and policies, and also in terms of strategies whereby 'salvation' comes to the secular (cf. *Christ in a Nuclear World* (1962); *Christian Nuclear Perspective* (1964)).

One is bound to say, however, that there is very little evidence, despite lip-service to the notion of the 'secular' and even the 'secular Christ', that the theologians wish to be drawn into any of the real issues of the secular world. Those who are drawn, all too often cease to be theologians. The typical 'Renewal' theologians of our day, anxious above all to be 'secular', make the mistake of assuming that the world *as it is* can be 'baptized' with Christ; that the patterns, impulses and combinations of secular industrial society are *as such* capable of Christian understanding and status. This, it seems to me, is the weakness in the work of E. R. Wickham, and others, and though John Robinson talks of 'the holy as the "depth" of the common', this still needs to be 'Christologized' (answering the question, '*What* depth?').

The area of Creation still needs Redemption. Christology can and does lead to Universality, but the process cannot be reversed. If there is a Christian 'ground of our being', it is only as shown in 'the Man for others'.

Therefore, the great task is the discovery of Christ in the secular—but it must still be Christ. This is surely what Bonhoeffer was after, and not more theological debate:

> The coming of age of the world is no longer an occasion for polemics or apologetics; but it is now really better understood that it understands itself, namely in the light of the gospel of Christ.

In so far as the world has come of age, Christ has come of age. In so far as

the Christian is a Christian, he is a 'secular' man. For the secular is alone and exactly where the ultimate, the significant, the meaningful (or, in mythological terms, that which pertains to his salvation) meet him. For that which meets him is the secular God, the man Jesus.

The question for the younger theologians of today is: 'Can there be a New Reformation which takes account of the Real Christ?'

AN HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL EXISTENTIALISM

Where does all this stand in relation to current theological positions relating to history?

The tragedy of biblical theology is that *Heilsgeschichte* got stuck at an atomized view of *Heil*, and never really got to *Geschichte* at all. Bultmann even talked of unredeemable, mundane, earthly *Historie*, as over against kairos-filled, redeemed, significant *Geschichte*. Cullmann operated essentially in the same sphere: There was a 'history of salvation', which was the area of God's concern, and while, after the mid-point, Christ, it was intended that all men should be brought into the area of salvation, the failure of Christian preaching (and sundry moments of truth which confronted the Church since 1945!) really excluded much possibility of Cullmann's excellent scheme accounting for the dilemmas of contemporary history. Bultmann, in reply, stated that the dilemmas were irrelevant, as the point of involvement in the divine activity was a purely personal, existential one.

In these terms, is there any hope of progress? Well, possibly, if we retain the concepts but move along a different line. Are not existential decisions about the nature of Christ as much inherent with ethical implications as Peter's 'Thou art the Christ' is immediately combated (or explained) by 'Take up the Cross'? So George Edwards in the recent essays volume *Biblical Realism Confronts the Nation* (Fellowship Press, 1963). And does this not mean that the whole 'existential decision' category needs, first, to be *ethicized*—since ethics, or things actually to be done, are the only possible area of decision—and, second, to be *communalized*—since individual ethics are irresponsible unless they be community, *koinonia* ethics (so my paper, *ibid*)? Paul Lehmann's *Ethics in a Christian Context* (1963) hovers on the point of solutions here but fails to take the plunge into many of the troublesome seas.

Is not this to say, with all its dangers, that the Christian revelation is the event whereby God has shown the possibility of significance and acceptance latent within any and every human deed or historical event? This brings us near to Barth's conception of an *Urgeschichte*, a primal or eternal history, which has its *content* in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, but which forms the basis and hidden meaning of all other history. Such a view can hold its own against Bultmann and Cullmann without too much difficulty, as John Godsey has shown in his paper, 'History of Salvation and World History' (*Drew Gateway*, Winter 1964). Godsey shows how Barth and Niebuhr 'hold together a view of the history of salvation and the idea of contingent contemporaneity' thus overcoming both 'Cullman's monotonous view of time and Bultmann's volatalization of history into eschatology'.

Carl Michalson argues, consequently, in *The Rationality of Faith*, that history, rather than nature, is the source of faith, and the ground for the 'reasonableness' of faith. If this is so, then the old natural/supernatural and faith/reason dichotomies can be abandoned. For faith functions analogously to the historical understanding, and no specially 'religious' insight is needed to discern, both existentially and eschatologically, Christ as the 'hinge of history'. Paul van Buren's great contribution is in this area: to insist that in a day when 'God' cannot be spoken of, the secular record of the historical Jesus becomes both the source and the yardstick of Christian belief. I believe that van Buren's book, for all its faults, will prove to have a great deal more light to give us in the future.

Thus, the category of the existential needs to be drawn out into the decisions which really confront men—the political, the ethical, the personal. And these are precisely the areas in which the whole Christ of the New Testament is already present. Thus the category of the historical needs to be drawn out into genuine secular history as the place where the hidden Christ and the hidden Kingdom are present.

CHRISTOLOGICAL, NOT THEOLOGICAL POSITIVISM

To place Christ thus so firmly in the area of the secular, the historical, and to speak of this as sufficient and essential Christianity does not mean that all talk of 'God' is ended, but that all talk of 'God' returns completely to the area of faith, where it should always have been. We talk of 'God' with confidence as Christians in so far as we have been grasped by the totality of Jesus' view of reality. But on no other grounds, be they of natural theology, metaphysics, personal experience or deductive reason, can we have confidence in 'God' as Christians. 'God' thus returns to the place He occupied in the New Testament world, which certainly did *not* have a uniform or constant or firm understanding or concept of 'God'—which certainly was a 'religious' world, but was religious because God was unknown.

Many of the things said in Robinson's *Honest to God* leave the way wide open to a revival of 'natural theology', which van Buren rightly describes as a 'road leading into the wilderness'. The search for God as the depth in man is in grave danger of becoming a slightly more sophisticated form of the psychologizing self-contemplation which characterized the brilliant but Christologically eccentric nineteenth-century theologies of Schleiermacher and the rest. If in some ways van Buren's book already confirms Dr Robinson's hunch that *Honest to God* would prove to be in retrospect 'not radical enough', it is because van Buren has a better historical and theological perspective than the still unredeemed optimistic liberalism of Cambridge. It cannot be too strongly stated that any 'Theological Positivism' is out of the question. It never was possible, and it certainly is not going to be possible today. 'Christological Positivism' is our only chance.

A secular Christology rather than a secular natural theology must likewise be the source of a new Christian ethic. So far, recent Christian 'radicalism' has only produced ethical compromises and half-truths ('the new morality', etc.). If we are to have a genuine theology of Christianity today and a 'Christian radicalism' which is genuinely Christian and genuinely

radical, the ethical, pragmatic, discipleship strain is going to have to assert itself over the easy-going, *laissez-faire* of Tillich's culture-Christianity co-existence. The New Reformation must be Christocentric before it can be world-affirming.

Therefore, the great problem is not 'to rethink our faith in secular terms' (as if it were basically other than secular), not 'to find a language without myth', but to find out, in Bonhoeffer's words, 'Who (and What) Christ is for man today'. The former projects will doubtless please our intellectual curiosity and vanity. But they remain matters *anterior* to the main task—the discovery of Christ in the twentieth century. Writing and thinking theologically can only be Christian if they go hand in hand with action and discovery—'existential confrontation' in the area God has made his own in Christ—the secular.

THE MYTH AT THE HEART OF THE FIRST REFORMATION

Biblical theology contemporarily runs out into a codified *kerygma.* Philosophical theology attempts to create a God out of the image of the secular. Beside these two has gone in recent years a revival of historical theology, which has produced a new variety of reformation orthodoxy which would have horrified the Reformers as much as it presently fails to impress the Catholics.

The rediscovery of Luther (one thinks of Edmund Schlinck, Gordon Rupp, Philip Watson) and the rediscovery of Calvin (one thinks of Karl Barth, Thomas Torrance) have led to an insistence that the main burden of the Reformers' work was the reassertion of orthodox Christianity—'Let God be God', and so on. Yet, however much this may be true of Calvin's *Institute* or Luther's *Prefaces*, it was not these great central doctrines which sparked off or sustained the Reformation. It was, so the older scholars insisted, a basic and uncompromising stand upon justification, upon *sola fide*, upon the religion of the heart, which started the whole thing off. The Reformation was not the *Institute*, nor was it the mature, balanced ecclesiastical Luther of the 1530s.

Be this so or not, the classic myth of the Reformation still haunts us, still dominates us. The myth begins with Adam's fall, producing alienation from God for all men, who are rescued by the atoning death of Christ, which must be appropriated by grace through faith, so that justification occurs and sanctification begins. This is the myth which so easily runs down into our contemporary emphasis on 'existential decision', which we naïvely assume is the same thing as 'believing Jesus Christ died for me'. This is the myth unerringly portrayed in our confessional standards (Wesley, of course), our hymns, our sermons.

My experience is that, provided you allow this myth to go on being worshipped, preached and sung, most Protestants are quite happy for all manner of lesser heresies to go unharassed. Yet it is also, in my experience, this myth which has become the classic irrelevance in our churches. If it means anything at all, it certainly does not mean what our 'experimental theology' makes of it. Its constant reiteration is the point at which the more intelligent in

our congregations simply 'switch off'. It has not been true in their experience, and the people they see who claim it true for them, simply confirm their scepticism.

This is the point at which modern Protestant thinking and preaching needs to be 'demythologized'.

A good instance of this occurs in preaching, the most typical manifestation of the Protestant theological myth and the most obvious form of Protestant intellectualism and irrelevance. The would-be preacher is taught to cull all manner of literature for 'telling illustrations'. These will be events in life which can be retold, which will arouse the imagination of the hearers. But at the end, they will have been told only because they illustrate some 'spiritual' truth. 'How like life itself', 'how like the spiritual realm', 'how like our relationship with God', 'how like our salvation', the triumphant preacher concludes. The congregation has by now 'switched off', for now comes the moral, the pill for which all before was only sugar coating.

Whereas, if there is to be Christian speaking, Christian proclamation, the only possible 'illustrations' will be *examples*, incidents which are themselves about the thing spoken about—the deeds on earth, which by God's grace belong to the pattern of Christ. What such deeds are, we are tragically uncertain about at present. But the discovery of them is crucial. When we have them, there may be something to preach about as well. Meantime, the congregations will continue rightly to reject as 'just a lot of theology' the faithful reiteration of the *kerygma*. For the *kerygma* is merely the account of God's deed which validates, instructs and determines human deeds.

Thus, one of the ablest preachers of my generation, his study shelves lined with F. W. Boreham and his files replete with the quite brilliant 'grand manner' sermons which justly earned him a wide reputation, in fact preached his greatest sermon when, in his mid-thirties, with wife and children, he embarked on the six-year discipline of the medical school. Because speaking could no longer contain the weight of incarnation, and because (*mea culpa*) the only possible presentation of the God deed was in human deed.

LEARNING THE DOCTRINE BY DOING THE WILL

So then, finally, we take a look at the Church which must evolve if we are to find Christ again, if we are to 'do the will' so that through it we may 'learn the doctrine'.

The Liturgical Movement has largely failed to create new patterns of Christian living, because it has not been clear enough that the liturgical thing done was only in order to discipleship within the world. We are now at the stage where the liturgical renewalist has so far reacted against personal devotion and individualism, 'faith' in the Protestant sense, and 'piety' in the medieval sense (both essentially identical), that he needs to learn that there is no great virtue in substituting a swept and garnished ecclesia and liturgy for a swept and garnished personal soul. If individual religion is condemned, so, too, is much of our contemporary ecclesiastical and liturgical enquiry.

Unless, as J. P. Benoit has it, 'there is a deeper love of Christ . . .'. 'The warmth of love to Christ creates the liturgy.' But what is Christ? Is the

Christ of the Gospels in any sense to be contained within the liturgy? And if so, what liturgy? Or does the liturgy (Sunday, baptism or communion) merely and sufficiently delineate by imitation, symbol, sign (and perhaps also explanatory word) the real presence of Christ in the world?

And are we not already there, if we would only listen to our people? Despite faithful sermons on the 'How', and not just the 'What', some of the finest twentieth-century Christians I know very rarely say their prayers. Shall we pray again until we know who it is to whom we are to pray? And shall we need to pray unless we are in situations for his sake, in which we cannot abide without his aid?

The howl is that in a day when we are busy turning out new and better intellectual bottles, *nobody is drinking*. So long as the attention is focused upon what modern man can or cannot be persuaded to believe about God, then modern man is well pleased, and remains where he always was. In the classic response of the stewardship campaign non-cooperator, he 'prefers to continue as before'—that is, he prefers to do nothing. All the words are only about ideas, so what the heck? He'll get on with the business of living without benefit of clergy. (Whether or not he sits in a church on Sundays is, of course, irrelevant at this point.)

The myth debate, the *Honest to God* debate, the secularization debate, the liturgical debate, the Church unity debate, can all proceed (who could stop them in midstream anyway?). But meantime the world rushes on to heights and depths undreamed of—without us. And it was all originally 'in aid of' the world, this Christianity of ours!

Oh! but we are saved by faith, you say. *Hier stehe ich: ich kann nicht anders*. But if it had been so clear, Luther would not have needed to say it. And if he had been as sure of his faith as we try to be today, he would not have needed to stand where he stood. He said it because obedience to a Living Christ had landed him in such an idiotic and impossible situation (unless by a faint straw, Christ be Lord). And only the man who stands there dare say it. Only the man who is a disciple, as Bonhoeffer says, dare say he is saved by grace. The great issue is the discovery of discipleship, the presence of Christ in deeds in the world. Seek first the incarnate Kingdom (with a nod to Nkrumah), and all other things shall be added unto you. The New Reformation today must begin here.

And if it be objected that such a course is too unpredictable, too dangerous, too precipitous, let it be recalled that precisely such a course is daily embarked upon by all men in their everyday life (godless, secular, or Christian—Christianity being about the how and the what of the embarking). And let it be recalled, for good measure, that precisely such was the unpredictable, irreversible venture on untried seas which we today call the incarnation of God.

Note: The themes of this paper are developed further in *Christ and Methodism* (Epworth Press, Autumn 1964). The paper was first presented at the Conference of the Renewal Group at High Leigh, Whitsun 1964; and at the Theological Consultation of the Division of World Missions of the Methodist Church, USA, in Chicago, July 1964.

THE SYNOD OF WHITBY, A.D. 664
Its Missionary and Ecumenical Significance

John Foster

SOME TODAY may bewail the Synod of Whitby, instead of celebrating its thirteenth centenary, a triumph of the Pope of Rome, and a step back, not forward, in the story of English Christianity. It was occasioned by rivalry between the two missions engaged in England's conversion. The southern Roman mission had been sent by Pope Gregory the Great, Augustine coming through Gaul to Canterbury in 597. The northern Celtic mission came from Ireland, Columba landing in Iona in 563, and Aidan coming thence to Lindisfarne in 635. Only the ignorant would try to turn the Celtic missionaries into Protestants, but reputable historians have sometimes exaggerated their independence of Rome. Adamnan, St Columba's biographer, and his successor as Abbot of Iona from 679 to 704, ends his book with this sentiment:

> This same man of blessed memory has received this special grace, that, in spite of living in this remote little island, his fame has reached as far as the peninsula of Spain, the Gauls, Italy which lies over the Alps, even to that City of cities, Rome itself.

Thus lack of relationship to Rome is put down to Iona's remoteness and recognition of Columba by Rome seen as his crowning glory.

If then we need expect little to bewail, what is there to celebrate?

The two missions, with their different ways, began most notably to meet and mingle when in 644 Oswy, King of Northumbria, married the Princess Eanfled. She was daughter of Edwin, the late King, and was baptized in 626 as 'first fruit of Northumbria', by Paulinus, who belonged to Augustine's mission. After her father's death in 633, she was brought up in Kent. Oswy, with his elder brother Oswald, belonged to the rival line of claimants to Northumbria's throne. They were exiled in Edwin's time. Converted and baptized in Iona, they recovered Northumbria from Edwin's enemies, and reigned over it in turn. The most obvious differences of the two missions concerned the monk's tonsure, and the celebration of Easter.

Celtic monks used to shave the front of the head to a line between the ears. Elsewhere, monks shaved just the crown. But, as an abbot even in this time of controversy wrote, 'Difference of tonsure does no harm to those who have pure faith in God and true love to their neighbour'. The Easter difficulty was more serious.

In Ireland Christians were untouched by a reform of the calendar accepted in Rome. With two reckonings of Easter, confusion was inevitable. Bede says:

> The Queen with her followers kept Easter as in Kent, having a priest from Kent called Romanus.... When the King had ended the Lenten Fast and was celebrating Easter, the Queen and her party were only at Palm Sunday.[1]

But even about this Bede could add: 'As long as Aidan lived, people were prepared to put up with the difference, because everybody loved him so.'

While King Oswy favoured the Celtic mission, his son Alfrid was influenced the other way, not only by his mother, but by a young English cleric, whom he much admired, Wilfrid. Wilfrid, as a boy of fourteen, had gone off to that second Iona which St Aidan had founded at Lindisfarne. And there he had begun to learn to be a monk. The Queen's interest in this handsome, well-born boy gave him an introduction to her cousin, the King of Kent. There in 653, aged nineteen, he met another Northumbrian noble who had taken to religion, Benedict Biscop. He was later to found the twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, which were soon to nurture the Venerable Bede, the first learned Englishman, father of our history, and the one who tells us of all these things. The two youths travelled across Europe, visiting Lyons (from the year 177 full of the memories of saints and martyrs) and then going on to Rome. Wilfrid returned in 658, convinced that Gaul and Italy represented the main stream of western Christianity, compared with which Iona and Ireland were a mere backwater. Wilfrid was made Abbot of the monastery at Ripon and, though only thirty, emerged as the dominant figure here in the Synod of Whitby.

This Synod was called by the King, who said that those who share one faith should observe one rule. They were deciding more than they knew, not for Northumbria only but for all Britain—which of the two traditions, Celtic or Latin, should prevail. For Iona itself in the end would come to accept their decision. Discussion started with the festival of Easter. Wilfrid leapt into the fray.

> Easter as we keep it we have seen in Rome, where the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul lived, taught, suffered and are buried. So also in Italy and in Gaul, where we have travelled for study or to pray. And so we find it in Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece, and all the world, except only for Irish, Picts and Britons—two distant islands of the sea, and not even the whole of them, stupidly opposing the whole world.

Colman replied, the Irish missionary from Iona, now Abbot of Lindisfarne. If Wilfrid claimed an Apostle, so would he, 'St John who was counted worthy to lean on the Lord's breast'. These words make it clear that Colman was recalling the year 190, when churches in Asia Minor were reproved for their old-fashioned way of keeping Easter, out of step with all the rest, and Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, had named among his supporters 'now fallen asleep, John who reclined on the Lord's breast'.[2] Colman was mistaken in thinking it a continuance of the old Easter controversy, though it was again a minority trying to hold on to an outmoded way.

Wilfrid had his reply, less disrespectful this time, but decisive.

> Your fathers were holy men. Yet are those few, in one corner of a distant isle, to take precedence of the universal Church? Your Columba—ours too, since he was Christ's—was a saint and mighty man. But can you set him against the Prince of the Apostles, to whom the Lord said, 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven'?

The King, partly persuaded already by his wife and son, closed the argument with a smile. 'If he be doorkeeper, then I tell you straight, I am not for

setting my word against his.' And so the allegiance was decided. The tradition which had come from Rome through Gaul to Canterbury was to prevail. Much of this may seem trivial enough, but the decision at Whitby was to prove momentous, not only for England, nor for Europe, but for the future of the whole Christian cause. That decision at first bore hard on the Celtic mission. Colman and the other missionaries withdrew, and went sadly home. It was an unhappy breach beween the English and those who had converted not only the north, but the country far down through the midlands, and had even shared in the winning of Wessex. But who can doubt that the decision was a right one? Here was something more important than the Common Market, the question of England's *religious* entry into Europe. We must try not to think of it, as one tends to do, whether through Scottish sensitiveness or through English sympathy, in terms of England versus Scotland. There was not an England yet, only several small kingdoms, the largest, Northumbria, stretching from the Humber to the Forth. There was not yet a Scotland—only the Kingdom of Strathclyde (Britons) in the south-west, the colony of Scots (immigrants from Ireland) in what is now Argyll, and the rest Pictland.

The decision demanded by the dynamic Wilfrid was comparable to what we are now experiencing in modern missions, the impatience of a rising Younger Church at being tied to the narrow denominationalism of the parent mission, and its demand for wider, ecumenical relations. Wilfrid, who led in this demand, was soon to lead in one other sign that the Church of England was quickly come to maturity. As early as 678, before the conversion of parts of the country (notably Sussex) had begun, he had started *foreign* missionary work among the Frisians. England's decision for closer links with the Continent was to have unexpected results in this department of the Church's life. Wilfrid's monastery at Ripon would produce Willibrord, in 690 to become Apostle of the Netherlands; Winfrith, going from Wessex to join this mission and push farther east, would become Boniface (his episcopal name), Germany's Apostle, Saint and Martyr.

In all this we should recognize the proof that, while the Celtic missionaries went home, they had fulfilled their mission. At the confluence of two rivers, the distinctive colour of the one water may disappear, but the river itself must add to the power and depth of the continuing onward flow. Even so, Celtic tonsure and Celtic Easter disappeared. But the missionary spirit, so marked a feature of the Irish-Iona-Lindisfarne tradition, was truly passed on. At a time when Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa, the earliest Christian strongholds, were overrun by a triumphant Islam, missionaries by the hundred from our England redeemed this picture of defeat by registering victory in Northern Europe—not only the Netherlands and Germany, but ultimately all the Scandinavian lands as well.

So, in the providence of God, we must this year recall not a mission interrupted, but a work well done.

[1] This and following quotations from Bede are from his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, III.
[2] Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 24.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Dissenting footnotes to the High Leigh Papers, July 1964

Oliver A. Beckerlegge

'AT THE CLOSE of this present service, we shall observe the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and to that service we invite all who love the Lord, to meet with Him at His Table.'

With some such words, the gracious invitation to the Lord's Supper has been issued in thousands of Methodist chapels down the years, as it was in my home chapel in my childhood and youth. And I am never present at the service today without instinctively visualizing the scene as I knew it thirty years ago. As J. C. Bowmer has more than once remarked on the difficulty of knowing precisely how non-liturgical services were conducted among the smaller sections of Methodism,[1] it is perhaps worth while giving a detailed description, that their outlines may at last be recorded, and their significance —at any rate to those who took part in them—indicated.

The evening's service came to a close; and as the organist played a voluntary, the choir left their seats, and the gallery congregation came downstairs, and took their seats in the body of the chapel, as those who were not remaining departed. With the big congregations of those days, this took a few minutes, and during this time the Poor Steward, standing at the corner of the communion rail, caught the eye of a number of the senior leaders of the Church until, with himself, eight leaders had occupied the front pew, and the minister had taken his seat by the Table. The order of service varied slightly from time to time, according to the minister conducting it, and according to the divine leading on each occasion; but normally it included, after an opening hymn, a brief address of perhaps five or six minutes' duration on some aspect of the service; then followed prayers by the minister and often, as in a prayer meeting, by members of the congregation, and the reading of the Words of Institution. When it came to the time for the distribution of the elements, the minister handed plates of bread to four of the leaders, two at the left and two at the right-hand side, who took them to the congregation in the pews, each leader covering one side of the two aisles. When they had distributed to perhaps half the worshippers, four trays of wine were handed to the remaining leaders who similarly passed them along the waiting rows of the congregation, each leader handing his plate or tray back to the minister as he concluded his block of pews. When all the leaders had resumed their seats, the minister offered the bread and service concluded with a hymn. Since those days, I have shared in the service in many forms, both leading it and as a member of the congregation, in the wine to them, and finally partook himself. After more prayers, the

large and small companies, on special and on ordinary occasions, but rarely, if ever, have I experienced the sense of awe and solemnity that rested on us in those earlier days.

What did that form of service proclaim, that form which is fast disappearing in these days, but was typical of two of the three sections of Methodism? It proclaimed a number of vital truths. It proclaimed in the first place something of the nature of the service, that element in it of which A. Raymond George speaks[2] when he says 'worship should be regarded as the corporate act of the whole people of God'; it proclaimed that in the Lord's Supper *the Church observes* Christ's 'last and kindest word', rather than that one administers. There is no record in the New Testament of an apostle or anyone else *administering* the Sacrament; what we do see is believers meeting to break bread, the Church commemorating its Lord. 'Do this,' said Jesus to the company of disciples, as He says it to the whole Church, 'in remembrance of Me.' Paul speaks of 'When ye come together to eat . . .' and 'The cup of blessing which *we* bless; . . . *we all* are partakers of that one bread'. And the story of Pentecost concludes with the description of how the Church 'continued in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers'. In all these passages we find the Church as a community fulfilling a command, not one person administering a rite. Indeed, in Scripture, there is no trace of the Sacrament being separated from the joint evening meal or agapé; and it is sheer impertinence for any one person to insist on his right to preside. For the sake of order, as we say, we may normally expect that the minister will conduct the service; but we dare not say more than that. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament which *the Church observes*.

In the second place, this service proclaimed that there is no virtue in any one *form* of service. To be sure, the outward form did not vary very greatly from month to month, nor from minister to minister. But the prayers varied, being extempore; sometimes members of the congregation led in prayer, or in leading a verse of a hymn, and sometimes not; for all I know, occasionally a minister may have used a form of prayer, for all non-Wesleyan sections (except the New Connexion) possessed a Book of Offices. But Christ was there in that company, whatever form it took, for we were doing it in remembrance of Him. I once heard a leading Methodist scholar give a lecture to students on how to 'educate folk up' to the use of the Book of Offices, who had hitherto been used to an extempore form of Sacramental service. At the close a neighbour remarked to me: 'And now perhaps he will tell us how to educate folk up to an extempore form, who have been used to the service book.' Precisely; the one form is no more elevated than the other; both can be slovenly, and both can be dignified.

It proclaimed again that there is no virtue in the ministerial touch. The stewards took the bread and the wine to the people, and passed the plate and the tray along the rows in the pews. Each thus served his neighbour; the whole Church waited on one another. If we were receiving at anyone's hands, it was God's. As the Duke of Wellington is reputed to have whispered to one who instinctively drew back at Sacrament from a too close proximity to the victor of Waterloo, 'We are all equal here'; and I always feel

embarrassed when a communicant waits for me to put the bread into his hands. Who am I that I should touch the bread any more than he?

It proclaimed again that there is no virtue in kneeling to receive the Sacrament. After all, the earliest Supper of all was taken by the disciples reclining at a meal table—the Jewish and Roman posture that corresponds to our sitting at table; and when we sit to receive the Sacrament today we are nearer to the original—we are reminded it is a meal. The early Bible Christians summed the matter up when they said in an early *Minutes* (1821):

> As we cannot approach too near to the original institution, in which our Lord used unleavened bread, and brake, not cut, it, and gave it to the disciples as they were sitting (not kneeling); we think it safest to follow His example; especially as kneeling was introduced with the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, a doctrine replete with absurdity, superstition, and idolatry.

Yet again, that service proclaimed that the minister is one of the Church. Some years ago, Conference unchurched, as it were, all our ministers, when it decided they should no longer have their names in a class book, nor receive membership tickets. But this service links him with the Church—he receives the elements along with the Church, and not on his own, before the Church, as the Book of Offices prescribes.

Finally, the service gave the Church the opportunity of considering the nature and meaning of the service, in that it always contained a brief address; the minister might speak of the service as an act of remembrance, or as a pledge of loyalty, as an expression of the Church's fellowship, as a looking forward to the time of Christ's final triumph, or as a symbol of the believer's receiving Christ into the heart by faith. But over the years, if the believer was paying any attention at all, it meant that he obtained a fuller insight into all the varied significance of the Sacrament than would otherwise have been likely.

The service was always designated the 'Sacrament of the Lord's Supper'—by far the most satisfactory name of the many that have been accorded it. The Romanists call it the Mass, which is often assumed to be a corruption of the word *'dismissa'*, from its being held at the close of the service when the preacher has pronounced *'congregatio dismissa est'*—the congregation is dismissed. If that be its derivation, then it is a remarkably colourless word. It may be, however, that it is a corruption of *'mensa'*—table—which in the army gives us the word 'mess'. There are those who speak of the service as the Eucharist—thanksgiving—in itself an unobjectionable word, except that it covers one aspect only of the meaning of the Sacrament (and that the attitude of the believer, rather than the act of God), and has in any case become associated with one party whose observance of the rite is least Scriptural. Among many folk, not only Anglicans of course, it is termed the Holy Communion—not a particularly apt term for the service, for the whole of the Christian life is communion with one's Lord and with one's fellow-believers. Perhaps it was for that reason that John Wesley himself dropped the term, and in the 'Sunday Service of the Methodists' called it simply 'The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper'. For that title tells us precisely what it is. It takes us back to the original institution. It sets

the rite, and us, firmly on the bedrock of history. And it reminds us that when we hold the service at the close of the evening service, we are following Christ's example and the example of the primitive Church; it was, after all, a *supper*, at the close of the day.

To share in the service at our traditional time does not only vividly take us back to the upper room in Jerusalem on that fateful evening. It gives us the opportunity of associating the Supper with the preaching of the Word, from which it should never be divorced. To hold the Supper on its own does serious harm to it. It sets it apart from the rest of the life and the worship of the Church; and Christian history is one long story of the damage that is done when it is so divorced—even though the divorcement be to the elevation of the rite. For when it is held on its own, when too great a stress is laid on it, superstition arises. From that elevation arise all the priestly pretensions, all the unscriptural notions and perversions, that have in some communions divorced the Lord's Supper not only from the preaching of the Word, but from the Last Supper. It holds no such place in the Scriptures as some have accorded it; and it is no disparagement of its real function to deny that it is the supreme or central act of the Church. The central act, as the whole of the New Testament bears witness, is preaching. It is time to call a halt to the habit of concluding every special service with it. To do so is not to honour it, but to dishonour it.

In all sections of Methodism the custom has been to hold it once a month as far as possible—an interval that is as satisfactory as any other. But is there any need for uniformity in this? Should it not be held as frequently as any company wants it? Is there any reason why a believer living in a large city should share in the Supper any more frequently than a believer living in a remote hamlet? This means that we must make it possible again for village or small societies to have it more frequently; which in its turn means that we must think again of the whole question of lay administration (for want of a better term). After all, why should a town in the South, or Conference meeting in London or Manchester, be affronted if a Yorkshire village wants an honoured local preacher to preside? Frankly, what concern is it of theirs? Once it is realized that it is a question of *the Church observing*, rather than an *official administering*, the matter of who should preside is of very secondary importance.

Ultimately, of course, no one *need* preside. It would not be difficult to imagine a service in which all shared equally in its conduct as all share equally in partaking of a meal at home. For no 'celebrant' is prescribed in Scripture, any more than any one form is prescribed. There is no particular merit in uniformity—it is one of the sadly-overrated virtues of the present age, if indeed it be a virtue at all. Let each congregation choose for itself in what form it finds the service most helpful. Why should any man—or body—presume to prescribe how a local company of God's people should observe the Feast? Without question, the imposing of an uncongenial form on a congregation is one of the reasons for the serious drop in attendance at the service in many places. At the moment a Conference Committee is examining the present Order of Service; but in one sense all such consideration is irrelevant, except in so far as it is necessary to clear away any phrases

that give rise to dangerous ideas, from a service for the optional use of Methodists. And the Book of Offices does not pretend to be any more than optional; it is '*authorized* for use in the Methodist Church', i.e. it *may* be used.

Kenneth Grayston has argued[3] that the Book of Offices is *not* optional; he draws attention to the distinction between the phrase 'authorized for use in the Methodist Church' (referring to the Book of Offices) and 'approved by the Conference for optional use in Methodist Churches' (applied to *Divine Worship*). But the contrast will not bear the construction he puts upon it, and that for a number of reasons: (a) the plain meaning of the word 'authorized' is 'sanctioned, permitted'; the sense 'set up as authoritative' has been obsolete since the early seventeenth century, and is not likely to have been in the minds of the Committee who drew up the Book of Offices in 1936! The Church, that is to say, is permitted to use the Book of Offices, but not compelled. (b) The difference in the two phrases may well do no more than reflect the taste in English language of the different committees which compiled the two books in question. (c) The second phrase may, on the other hand, indeed be chosen with the former in mind: it may have been deliberately selected, that it is say, to avoid an interpretation which some were already putting on the earlier 'authorized for use', as if to say, 'The earlier phrase was not chosen as carefully as it might have been; we must be less ambiguous'; in which case it is emphasizing that 'authorized for use' *does* mean 'optional'! We who were not on the committees do not know what was in the minds of their members; and at this stage of time it would no doubt be in vain to ask those members who are still with us; one thing is certain, that Mr Grayston's conclusion is a serious *non sequitur*. An undue concern for form, rubrics and the like is not far from superstition, if it is not superstition itself.

There is but one other aspect that in these days of Methodist-Anglican conversations requires consideration. Whom should we invite to the Table? Some sections of Methodism used to 'fence the Table', laying it down that only members of society, and others receiving special permission, should partake. Admission tickets to the service were issued.[4] But who are invited? Even according to the Book of Offices, based on the Book of Common Prayer, the invitation is to those that 'do truly and earnestly repent of their sins, and are in love and charity with their neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways'; it is *those* who are bidden to 'draw near with faith'. No question of membership; no question of being a Methodist; no question of being episcopally confirmed; no question even of 'being fit' to come to the Table, of being 'good enough' (to use the phrase so many use as their excuse for not partaking).

> All the fitness He requireth
> Is to feel your need of Him.

There is nothing in the gracious invitation that refers to one's *past* life; it is for those who repent, and *intend* to lead a new life, whatever life they have lived up to that moment. As John Wesley said, it is a converting ordinance.

To limit the sharing in the service to those of a particular Christian communion is the mark of a sect, whether that sect be Plymouth Brethren or Anglican. It is Christ's Table, not ours. It is significant that at the first Supper none was excluded. Peter was not excluded, though he was, as Christ knew, shortly to deny Him. Thomas was not excluded, though he was to doubt Him. Even Judas was not excluded, though he was so soon to betray Him. And yet some Christians will exclude their fellow Christians! And while Christ might not encourage a child, who knows little of the meaning of the service, to partake, would He ever refuse him if he presented himself?

All who love the Lord, and are prepared to come in penitence and faith—for them is the Lord's Table spread.

[1] 'To us there seems some confusion, though no doubt those who were accustomed to the rite knew by tradition what to do' ('Some Non-Wesleyan Service Books' in *WHS Proceedings*, XXXII, 147; cf. also p. 152, etc.).

[2] Opening paragraph, 'The Eucharist in Relation to the Total Worship of the Church' (*London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, July 1964).

[3] 'The Function of the Book of Offices' (*London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, July 1964).

[4] Dr Harold Roberts has dealt with this question at some length in his *Exposition and Summary* of the 'Conversations' Report, but an examination of the *Digests, Constitutions*, etc., of the sections of Methodism concerned, show that he has seriously overstated his case —in one particular, indeed, completely misunderstanding the situation.

SCIENCE, RELIGION AND THE UNITY OF MANKIND

John Wren-Lewis

ALL DEVELOPED RELIGION concerns itself with unity, yet if one looks at the history of the world one finds religious influence going hand-in-hand with division, strife and war, to say nothing of sectarian squabbles of all kinds even within the boundaries of the religions themselves. On the other hand, experimental science, which has been a major influence on human affairs for only two centuries or so, concerns itself with splitting up and analysis; yet there is nothing which is more nearly truly international than science is today, more nearly creative of a world community of interest bridging the gaps of race, creed, class and language, and scientists the world over recognize each other as members of a brotherhood in a way that is rare even among members of a common religious allegiance. What is the meaning of this paradox?

It is of the utmost importance to understand it, because many people today are deceived by appearances and attribute our current national and international disunities to the decline of religion which has accompanied the rise of science. It alarms them that ours is the first age in human history in which a very large number of people no longer feel that they are part of a great plan running through nature. They see that this affects the whole of life, not just specifically religious affairs. In all societies prior to our own, practical work and the relationships between human beings could always be seen as aspects of the single universal pattern: work was the business of cultivating nature within the pattern, all of a piece with the rising and setting of the sun and the changes of the seasons, while social relationships could always be determined exactly by the duties appropriate to the 'station in life' of the persons concerned. Probably the classic statement of this view in the West is that made by Shakespeare's character Ulysses in the play *Troilus and Cressida*. 'The heavens themselves,' he says, 'the planets and this centre, observe degree, priority, and place, insisture, course, proportion, season, form, office and custom, in all line of order: and therefore is the glorious planet, Sol, in noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd amidst the other; whose med'cinable eye corrects the ill aspects of planets evil, and posts, like the commandment of a king, sans check, to good and bad.' And Ulysses goes on to prophecy the total break-up of life if the sense of plan or pattern should be lost:

> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And, hark, what discord follows! Each thing meets
> In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
> Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,

And make a sop of all this solid globe:
Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead:
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong
(Between whose endless jar justice resides)
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite:
And appetite, a universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce a universal prey,
And, last, eat up himself.

Shakespeare, let us remember, lived at the time when the scientific revolution was just beginning, and he was very much aware that all around him people were already beginning to lose the sense of being part of a general plan or pattern. Today, there are many people who feel that the prophecy he put into the mouth of Ulysses is coming all too grimly true. Has not the loss of a sense of authority in parenthood, somehow rooted in the nature of things, brought about a spread of juvenile delinquency, sometimes to the point where the rude son strikes the father dead? Has not the disappearance of what Professor Stuart Hampshire calls 'inarticulate respect for customary authority' brought near-chaos to economic and political life, to the point where the only way to avoid all parties meeting in mere oppugnancy is for totalitarian governments and private enterprise advertising men to work on the principle that strength shall be lord of imbecility? Does not the decline of the old sense of patriotism, which made people feel themselves first and foremost as cells in the body politic whose real life was concentrated in the head of society rather more than in themselves as individuals—does not the decline of this sense, and the rise of individualism, mean that international relations are no longer a realm in which people give themselves up to the greater glory of their countries without regard for personal consequences, but rather a realm where states have to misuse words like 'justice', 'right' and 'wrong' to gain people's allegiance? And has not modern technology, with its loss of reverence for the natural order, brought us almost to the point where a war, or even an accident, could make the bounded waters lift their bosoms higher than the shores and make a sop of all this solid globe?

It is because of things like this, as well as for purely evangelistic reasons, that many serious-minded people today try to make a reconciliation between science and religion, by arguing that there *is* a pattern in things after all, even though it may be more complicated than was imagined in earlier ages. But I believe this effort is doomed to failure. The loss of the sense of being part of a great pattern is not just an accidental result of what science has *discovered*—it is an essential condition of there being any science at all as we know it today. The reason why science has been making such progress during the last two or three hundred years is that scientists have come to rely on the *experimental method*, and experiment is diametrically opposed to accepting the pattern of nature as you find it—it means *messing about with nature* all the time. In the same way modern technology doesn't cul-

tivate nature within an established pattern, it uses nature as raw material for building new patterns of our own desire—and this doesn't represent an abuse of science, as is sometimes suggested: it is a logical extension of the experimental approach, which nowadays is used in the purest of pure science. Experiment means continually subjecting your theories to the possibility of disproof—but if you do that you simply cannot base your life on any pattern you might see in nature at any particular time.

So I believe the sense of pattern has gone for good—but I do not myself regard this as a disaster, because of the paradox which I mentioned at the beginning. Surely history ought to make us very suspicious indeed of the old religious idea of man as part of a universal pattern, and once we begin to reflect upon it I think we can see what was wrong with it. Empirically, the natural world is full of strife, bloodshed and violence, so if human beings try to live by adapting themselves to a pattern which they believe to run through nature, they are almost certain to find themselves thrown into conflict. What we want when we talk about the achievement of human unity is a kind of unity transcending anything to be found in the world of nature as we see it apart from man—and modern experimental science itself offers at least the first glimmer of a hope of such unity, precisely because in modern science man *does* transcend his involvement in the natural world. The social stability which comes from individuals adapting their lives to their appropriate 'station in life' in society, is a stability which goes hand-in-hand with conflict between the organized social groups—tribes, nations, organized churches, or whatever. The kind of unity we see in the world of practising scientists, on the other hand, is a unity of individuals who have transcended their various 'degrees' in society *and have risked meeting each other in 'mere oppugnancy'*.

I shall come back to this last point, for in some ways it is the nub of the whole problem of human unity. But first I want to look at the matter in another way. The paradox about science and religion of which I have been speaking is thrown up into the sharpest possible relief if we consider the implication of the statement I have just made, that the human unity we desire is a kind of unity transcending anything to be observed in the world of ordinary nature. Another way of putting this would be to say that we seek a *super-natural* kind of unity, and surely this is just what religion has always claimed to mediate: how does it come about that modern science, which is commonly supposed to be at best indifferent to, and often actually opposed to, any idea of the supernatural, is able to achieve the super-natural in practice (at least to a limited extent) while religion has so conspicuously failed to do so? The answer is to be found by looking still more deeply at the notorious 'conflict between science and religion', to see just why the idea of the supernatural has been at such a discount since the scientific revolution. *It is because religion has traditionally identified the idea of the supernatural with the idea of hidden causes or controlling powers 'beyond' or 'behind' the world of experience.*

This notion, which reduces the world of experience itself to a mere veil or screen for the occult controlling powers, was more or less taken for granted in every civilization prior to our own, and hence it was also taken

for granted that the purpose of life must be to divine the nature of the reality behind the scenes and adjust practical behaviour accordingly. This was the essential psychological root of the idea of finding a pattern in nature and fitting into it—men looked for the signs of design on the 'veil' as clues to, or partial revelations of, the order of the occult powers (or Divine Will) beyond. But as I have said, such a view of the world necessarily precluded the systematic use of the experimental method in the study of nature, and it is possible now to see the most fundamental reason for this. Experiment means being willing to subject any pattern you think you see in events to the possibility of disproof by experience, and such willingness implies that *experience is regarded as more significant than any interpretation that may be made of it.* In other words, modern science became possible because, and *only* because, there was a general revolution in people's outlook, and they began more and more to feel that the world of experience was real *in itself*, not a mere veil or screen. This was an important part of what Freud was getting at when he asserted that religion had been something like a universal neurosis of the human race, inhibiting mankind's creative life and thought from the beginning of history.

But although most people have assumed, as Freud himself did, that the modern outlook which has given birth to science leaves no room for religion or any sense of the supernatural, it seems to me that what it really does is the exact opposite. The occult outlook, as it might perhaps most conveniently be called, by identifying the supernatural with reality lying beyond experience, necessarily discounts the possibility of any real *sense* of the supernatural. It discounts, in other words, the possibility that transcendence of the ordinary order of nature may actually be *experienced*, so if religion is really meant to be based on a *sense* of the supernatural, our abandonment of the occult outlook may well mean the fulfilment rather than the destruction of religion—*in exactly the same way as it has meant the fulfilment rather than the destruction of natural science.* Modern science and technology in their own limited sphere do make possible, as I have said, a practical experience of transcendence of the ordinary order of nature, in the exercise of human creative activity, an exercise which was inhibited by the occult outlook: what I am now suggesting is that, while most people today (including most religious apologists) assume with Freud that religion is essentially bound up with the occult outlook, we ought to consider the possibility that it was really distorted by it, just as much as natural science was. I am suggesting that traditional religion was as much a distortion of what religion could and should be as ancient natural philosophy was a distortion of what we now know science can be—and, of course, that suggestion has only to be made for a number of obvious considerations to demand attention.

Have not all the great religious traditions of the world contained powerful 'prophetic' strains which have attacked the majority of ordinary religions precisely for being a distortion of what religion could and should be? The term 'idolatry' was not used only to abuse 'other people's religion', or crude forms of primitive cult: the prophets who used it were prepared to apply it to people who used all the same religious words and phrases as they did themselves. Idolatry was seen as a disease which could distort religion into

a mockery by diverting it from its true purpose—and when we enquire what the prophets saw as the essence of this distortion, we find many indications that they were indeed referring to the occult outlook. To take just one example, it has often been remarked by Biblical scholars that the Hebrew 'second commandment' was understood by the Rabbis to condemn the making of images of the Supernatural in a psychological as well as a physical sense—yet the Rabbis certainly had no intention of confining their religion to intellectuals capable of high abstract thought. The real purpose of the commandment must therefore have been to condemn, as an idolatrous distortion, that very process of 'projection' of images on to a supposed occult realm 'behind' experience which Freud pinpointed as the mechanism by which the universal neurosis operated: small wonder that Freud, in spite of himself, acknowledged a feeling of kinship with the prophets of his race!

Moreover, if we go on to enquire what the prophets—in the Jewish and in other religious traditions alike—believed religion *should* be about, we find plenty of evidence that they based their belief in the Supernatural on *experience*. That was why they themselves were prepared, at the very moment of insisting most strongly on the condemnation of idolatry, to use quite crude images in their own descriptions of the Supernatural without the slightest embarrassment (the 'arm of the Lord' and so on): they were in no danger of taking these images too seriously as representations of the Supernatural, because they were using them in exactly the same way as the modern scientist uses his more restricted images, namely *as useful terms for communicating truths about something that is actually known in common experience*. I want to insist upon the term 'common' here, because a lot of efforts are made today to underpin the traditional approach to religion by appeal to so-called 'mystical experience', but this is a term which will cover a multitude of sins, including indulgence in the very same sort of fantasy-construction which Freud showed to be a means of escaping from the impact of *real* experience. My contention is that when the prophets invited people to 'taste and see' the goodness of the supreme Supernatural Reality, they were referring to a *common* experience of transcendence of nature in ordinary human life—at least as common as the transcendence of nature that takes place in the sort of creative activity that science and technology foster. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the great religious prophets included this latter form of transcendence of nature in their basic religious appeal: the Book of Genesis actually asserts that man achieves his religious destiny by exercising dominion over the whole of the rest of the natural world (an absolute contrast to the traditional religious view that nature displays a great divine pattern to which man should adapt himself). But the central religious appeal is to an experience of an even more fundamental human character—the experience of free, spontaneous relationships between persons. One ancient Rabinnic saying makes this quite clear when it declares that God 'dwells in our togetherness', 'between man and man': another says that the glory of God is to be found between husband and wife in marriage: and in the New Testament we find St John prepared to assert that *everyone* that loves knows God, *for God is love*.

We are so used to seeing religion in its traditional distorted form— which,

as Freud showed, is above all an attempt to *avoid* the experience of spontaneous relationship with others—that we fail to take this last expression seriously at its face value: we assume it to mean something much more obscure, such as that God, the supreme Will behind the scenes of experience, must be believed to have our best interests at heart, so that whatever horrible things happen to us must be adjusted to stoically. But a serious examination of the literature of the world's great religions seems to me to suggest that its real meaning is very much more obvious—namely that love is indeed, as young romantic people are sometimes supposed to say, 'bigger than both of us'. Freud himself was in fact so impressed with the importance of the creative role of love in personal life that he used a religious metaphor to refer to it—he spoke of 'eternal *Eros*': and in speaking of humanity's traditional 'religious' escape from the experience of spontaneous personal relationship (which, of course, involves avoidance of genuine spontaneous love) he used the term 'universal neurosis', which is remarkably like the religious notion of universal alienation from God, commonly called 'original sin'. Here, it seems to me, Freud's sense of kinship with the prophets of his race asserted itself and he spoke far truer than he knew. The real, original purpose of religion was indeed to call the human race to just that adventure in the discovery of Love which Freud himself opened up, in a small way, in the practical procedure of psychoanalysis—an adventure which involves facing up to the experience of 'mere oppugnancy', in the faith that in free, personal relationships the reality of Love will transcend nature and overcome conflict in a truly human unity. All the doctrines and practices of religion were originally meant to be empirical, as scientific theories and practices are empirical: for example, as I have described at length elsewhere,[1] the doctrine of the Trinity is an experimental statement about the threefold character of genuine love, which is an excellent practical way of guarding against substitutes for love. Traditional religion, on the other hand, by 'projecting' the images of the supernatural into a fantasy-world which was supposed to be 'beyond' experience, had the practical effect, as the prophets always recognized, of conforming man's ordinary life to the sub-personal world of 'nature' —conforming him, in other words, to that very alienation from true humanity which religion was originally meant to cure—an alienation in which conflict cannot be overcome, but must be fought out exactly as it is in the sub-human natural world.

So for those who are really concerned with human unity, I believe the 'irreligious' character of our scientific and technological civilization is a cause for hope, not for despair. The fundamental belief of our civilization, that theory is made for experiment, not experiment for theory, is of exactly the same order, psychologically speaking, as Jesus's statement that the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath (which, considering the importance of the Sabbath in Jewish religion of that time, was equivalent to the assertion that true religion finds its justification in empirical facts of human experience, not in the adjustment of experience to some supposedly 'greater' pattern). Our age is one in which, for the first time in history, mankind as a whole has begun to break free of the compulsion to idolatry, *and this compulsion is the fundamental root of the conflict between organized*

groups who have adopted different idols. Is it a coincidence that the revolution in human outlook which has produced this age came in the wake of the one prophet in all the world (Jesus himself) who claimed to have won a decisive victory over man's universal alienation, a victory which would go on spreading underground, silently, like the leaven, even though the professed followers of his message would try to bury it under the usual idolatrous distortion? Perhaps Jesus's promise, that He had at last really opened up a way whereby 'they may all be one', was not an idle promise, and the sense of international, interracial unity between scientists is the first sprouting of that mustard seed.

[1] See my article, 'The Doctrine of the Trinity' in *The Listener* for 11th May, 1961, based on a talk given on the BBC Third Programme.

MORE THAN SIGNS?

John S. Roberts

IN A RECENT article on 'Historicity and the Gospels', T. T. Rowe[1] has treated the overall structure of the gospels' accounts of the ministry of Jesus as a structure imposed by Jesus Himself. Not only does this interpretation[2] do justice to the congruity of the gospel parables and miracles, but the pattern is extended by Mr Rowe to comprise a number of important events in the gospels that he describes as having been 'staged' by Jesus.

Thus at the beginning of St Mark's Gospel the narratives of the Baptism and the Temptations are seen as part of the 'poetry of action' of Jesus, who knew how deeply symbolic these actions would appear. Similarly, the Entry into Jerusalem and the preparations for the Last Supper are seen as 'staged events'. (Perhaps 'acted parables' is a happier description.) These events were not shaped by the primitive Church in the search for prophecies to fulfil, but were shaped by Jesus Himself, just as the teaching of Jesus was memorably shaped[3]—the teaching was the poetry of our Lord in more than the literary sense.

The prominence in this pattern of the Baptism of Jesus and of the words of institution at the Last Supper seems to demand a questioning of much of our theology of the sacraments. Ought we to insist upon an objective 'something more' in the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion or ought it to suffice us to describe the sacraments as acted parables,[4] without destructive analysis of the poetry of action?

The Methodist Statement in the Conversations Report[5] is not content to describe the sacraments as signs:

> The sacraments are signs. But they are more than signs. As P. T. Forsyth taught, they are more than souvenirs or keepsakes. They are *conveyances*. And what they convey is the gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

It seems unfortunate to devalue 'signs' by equating them with words which have associations of triviality or cheapness nowadays. Perhaps it is significant, too, that the word 'conveyances' takes us back to the world of legal metaphor.

The section on Baptism in the Report, after very rightly exploring the meanings to be attached to Baptism in the light of the New Testament, concludes: 'Baptism, then, is the sign and seal of the new life in Christ.'

If it is not sufficient to describe Baptism as a sign, what is gained by calling it a seal—apart from introducing yet another legal metaphor?

Most of the familiar questions arising from our theories about Baptism (problems about the change in status of the baptized person, about infant baptism, about definition of membership, about regeneration) sometimes seem all too similar to the question put to Jesus about the woman and her seven husbands.[6]

If the description of the sacraments as signs could never satisfy us, do we need to go further than to say 'Not only signs but symbols'? The meaning of a symbol has been most helpfully expounded by A. C. Bridge in *Images of God*. A symbol is defined[7] as something in which there is a coming together of a material thing—a sensible phenomenon—with an immaterial and transcendent reality; a symbol denotes and represents (makes present) an invariable reality. So expressions such as 'just a symbol' or 'mere symbolism' are to be deplored. If we want more than a symbol we do not know what we are asking for.[8] From this deep understanding of the meaning of a symbol it is shown how the New Testament presents Christ as the symbol of God—no 'mere symbol' and no low Christology—but a symbol in a sense that conveys 'all the fullness of God' and the Word made flesh. In *Images of God* there is also a profound chapter on the Church as it is presented in the New Testament as the symbolic image of the risen Christ.

When we ask what 'actually happens' to a child at baptism, to an adult believer at baptism, to the elements of bread and wine, we miss all the poetry of action, we lose the wholeness of the symbol and become either spiritualistic or materialistic—we fail to discern the sign of the loaves and fishes.[9]

After St Paul has recorded[10] the tradition about the institution of the Last Supper, the 'tradition that came from the Lord Himself', he adds his own comment: 'For every time you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until He comes.'

We proclaim the gospel, set forth, represent, re-present the acted parable —the effective symbol of God in Christ. There is no more objective reality.

[1] T. T. Rowe, *London Quarterly & Holborn Review*, January 1963, p. 46.
[2] Following E. J. Tinsley, *The Imitation of God in Christ*.
[3] Luke 21^{33}.
[4] On the sacraments as 'enacted prophecy', see H. McKeating, *Expository Times*, Vol. 73. November 1961, p. 50.
[5] 'Conversations Report', p. 29. It should be emphasized that all the rest of Chapter 4 of the Report (including the whole of the sections on Baptism and on Holy Communion) appears to be a Methodist statement; the layout of the Chapter does not make this obvious.
[6] Mark 12^{18-27}. Is there a connection between this story and the acted parable of John 4^{1-42}?
[7] A. C. Bridge, *Images of God*, p. 24.
[8] John 14^{8-9}.
[9] Mark 8^{16-21}. See R. Dunkerley, *London Quarterly & Holborn Review*, January, 1963, p. 61.
[10] 1 Cor. 11^{26}.

OUT OF THE DEEP

Phyllis Hartnoll

A prayer to St Luke, patron saint of the sick,
to deliver us from our present evils.

(Note: This poem was awarded the Oxford University Prize for a Poem on a Sacred Subject in 1947. In accordance with the terms of the award, a small number of copies was printed by Blackwells for distribution to Heads of Houses and other University officials.)

Was there peace once? and were there lonely valleys
  Whose standing waters winked at heaven's eye?
And did the guardian mountains tower proudly
  Through ragged skirts of cloud into a sky
That knew no greater noise than sudden thunder,
  Or beat of eagle's wing, as from his high
And solitary eyrie downward swooping
  He saw the sunlit fields in splendour lie?

Was there peace once? were sun and moonlight welcome,
  Spilling across the warm, receptive land,
Touching the edges of the waves that flooded
  With lazy stealth the smooth, untrodden sand?
Was there a time when trees maturing slowly
  Could like great patriarchs in meadows stand,
Or when the scattered seed to harvest ripening
  Offered its bounties with a spendthrift hand?

Such times have been; and still the earth is lovely,
  But like a fever in her veins there runs
The madness that is man, the subtle poison
  That has destroyed so many of her sons;
War, and the lust for power, and the raucous
  Cry of the beast whose maniac clamour stuns
The shrinking spirit, while the air is riven
  With bursting bombs and monstrous noise of guns.

This is the swift corruption of our manhood,
  The unseen evil eating life away;
This the miasma that enshrouds our cities
  And hides from us the lovely light of day.
What cure have we for such a foul contagion
  That rises like the pestilence from clay?
As sick in mind as body, foetid, rotting,
  How shall we dare to hope, where turn to pray?

And so we come to you, beloved physician,
Humbled, ashamed, forcing ourselves to kneel;
Raising these hands that, carrying lethal weapons,
Have learnt to kill, and lost the power to heal.
'God has forsaken us,' we cry in anguish,
'How should He know the terror that we feel?
'Death on the cross were easier than bearing
'The mounting horrors that our wars reveal.'

Have we not seen the children torn and bleeding,
The pregnant women dying in the street?
Dug the young girls from ruined homes, and shrouded
'Their piteous beauty in some tattered sheet?
Have we not seen the old, their white heads muddied,
Shot down and trampled by the conquerors' feet,
And over all the countryside of Europe
The bestial rage of armies in retreat?

And what of those, the unsuspecting thousands,
Who in an instant's flash, too swift for prayer
To any god they owned, were blown to pieces,
Disintegrating on the shaken air?
Or through the weeks accumulated slowly
A load of pain too great for life to bear?
Their fate we hardly guess, yet in their passing
They leave a bitter guilt in which we share.

Remembering this, how can we ask for pardon,
Or bring our griefs to His all-seeing eye
Before whose open and impartial judgement
The hidden sins of men discovered lie?
Even as we plead for solace in bereavement
Do we not know already the reply?
'God is not mocked, be certain, and the peoples
'Who forge these weapons, by these weapons die!'

But oh, our human hearts, so lost, so wayward,
Weary with watching and with weeping spent,
Cry out for greater comfort in the darkness
That hides from us the tangled way we went.
How we came here we know not, by what weakness
We stumbled into deeds we now repent;
Only we still dare hope that in such moments
For our reprieve the saints of God were sent.

And you, dear Luke, friend of the great apostle,
Sharing his ministry, and witnessing
The power of the Word, with two-fold ardour
You toiled among the people, practising
Your hard-won skill upon the body's anguish

Even as you laboured ceaselessly to bring
The troubled soul to Christ; in double danger,
Now to that double hope of help we cling.

We bring no noble wounds to you for healing,
No clean-cut thrust of lance or stroke of sword
Whose scars we might show proudly, but the jagged,
Unsightly places where hot metal scored
Across the shrinking flesh, the ravaged faces
Of men who writhed in streams of flame that poured
From riddled petrol-tanks, the sightless, senseless,
Limbless relics of war, set apart, abhorred.

And worse than this, the warped and twisted creatures
Who in their infamy bent human wills
To deeds of shame, so foul that in the telling
Minds are deranged and mounting anger kills
All thoughts of pity; when those names are spoken—
Belsen, Lidice, Dachau—horror fills
The shamed and stricken air, the dead men's curses
Echo again from the reverberate hills.

And in the accusing clamour we distinguish
Voices we know that will not speak again,
Rising from shallow graves, or from the sea-bed,
Whispering from the wrecked and rusting 'plane;
Murmurs of frightened children, women screaming,
The crazy babble of the unhinged brain,
And clear above them all one voice so cherished
Oblivion seeks to work on it in vain.

How often in the early days of battle
When in the night we heard the steady hiss
Of water meeting fire, the shrilling whistle
Of bombs so near it seemed they could not miss
The flimsy house, how often then returning
To encircling arms and reassuring kiss,
We strove to keep from harm the beloved body,
While the heart cried 'Not this one, Lord, not this!'

Too frail a bulwark—in the final counting
Death marked the one most loved, most closely held,
To swell the grisly harvest of his reaping.
As in the forest when the trees are felled
The noblest crashes first, and brings destruction
To lesser lives that in his shadow dwelled,
So he first fell, and left a world in ruins,
An empty heart to sacrifice compelled.

Yet not in vain he died if from his ashes
A better world shall, phoenix-like, arise,

Where wars shall be unknown, and harvests ripen
In sun and rain from unpolluted skies.
But still, alas, we see no dawn impending,
And dull inertia seems to paralyse
The hands that should be building for the future,
The tongues that should be preaching paradise.

Oh, we are sick; our soul's complaint is heavy,
And yields not to the nostrums of our age.
Bred up for war, to war we give allegiance,
Snarling like mangy lions in our cage.
Lost is our freedom, and in our despairing
Upon the innocent we vent our rage.
Peace is indeed beyond our understanding
And has no place in this grim war we wage.

And yet we hunger for the quiet places,
For tranquil corners where the hours go by
Like silver-footed fawns, while in the silence
Our ears can hear again the leafy sigh
Of wind through trees; or, in the busy city,
Where none now fears to live nor dreads to die,
Catch the contented murmur of a people
Peaceful and proud, with hope and courage high.

Have you no medicine, Luke, for our distemper?
Gladly we'll take it, bitter though it be.
The time for easy miracles is over,
No more by faith alone do blind men see.
Yet were the lepers cleansed; and we, all leprous,
Tainted with self, foul with hypocrisy,
Long for the healing hand, the gentle presence,
The quiet voice that spoke in Galilee.

More devils lodge within our tortured bosoms
Than ever were cast out to herd with swine,
More evil are our thoughts than those of satyrs
Crazy with lust, and maddened with new wine.
Yet in their sloth the adulterous generations
Still, as of old, demand from God a sign,
And still would not believe though One arising
Fresh from the grave before their eyes should shine.

So many centuries of wealth and power,
So long a time when greed and gold divide
The earth between them, while the weak are trampled
Down in the gutters where they sought to hide;
So many sins unpunished, so much slaughter,
So many hopes betrayed for which men died,
What wonder that the heart of man is sickened
With surfeiting of vanity and pride.

Come, Luke, with surgeon's knife to cut this canker
Out of our body where it battens so
We have no strength to fight it, and no courage
To check the monstrous evils where they grow.
With desperate remedies and nauseous physics
Fetter the beast in us and bring us low,
Till, broken, vanquished, at your feet we cower,
While from our eyes the tears of healing flow.

Then take us up, like children that, repentant,
Confess their faults and are at peace again.
Yet not for us so easy is the penance,
Nor shall we soon forget the years of pain.
Be near us then, dear saint, to lay the devils
That haunt the dim recesses of the brain.
Still shall we start from sleep in sweaty terror
Like guilty men that see their victims plain.

When we have shed the grossness of our nature,
And learnt our kinship with the meanest clod
That once we spurned, when we have looked with horror
Upon the shameful path our feet have trod,
Then, in our weakness, fearing not correction,
We shall be strong enough to kiss the rod
That checks our faults, and follow our physician
Out of our prison-house, into the love of God.

SHORTER SURVEY

John T. Wilkinson

TWO IMPORTANT VOLUMES concerning the nature of history are to hand. The first, *History Sacred and Profane* (S.C.M. Press, 35*s*.), contains, in expanded form, the Bampton Lectures delivered before the University of Oxford in 1962 by Dr Alan Richardson (now Dean of York) whilst he was still Professor of Christian Theology in the University of Nottingham. It is a work of immense scholarship and almost overwhelming erudition, covering a vast range. For a thousand years history was divided into 'sacred' and 'profane' (or secular); the one revealed in Scripture and not open to question; the other, though not without value for moral instruction, yet open to conjecture. This dual view of history broke down during the Age of Reason, and the nineteenth century brought a revaluation into the realm of historical thinking. This book is a permanent contribution in our time to this new understanding. Following a comprehensive review of the changes through the centuries, Dr Richardson discusses the delicate balance between 'facts' and 'interpretation' in historiography, and proceeds to show that the 'disengagement from history' represented in the work of some of the theologians of our time—Tillich, Barth, Brunner and Bultmann—is unjustified, and that there is 'involvement in history' from which theology cannot escape. By close-knit argument he deals with the impact of this upon the miraculous —in particular, the miracle of the Resurrection. 'The Church did not create the belief in the resurrection of Christ: the resurrection of Christ, historically speaking, created the Church by calling faith into being' (p. 200). The final chapter is on the witness of history, and the conclusion of the whole book is that 'it is the nature of history itself to raise questions rather than to supply answers, for history is a never-ending process of reappraisal' (p. 272). There are three valuable appendices on the Deistic controversy, classical history, ancient and modern, and the philosophy of history, together with an extensive bibliography. This book is timely and illuminating upon a subject of primary importance. In *Towards a Theological Understanding of History* (Oxford University Press, 42*s*.), Dr Eric C. Rust, Professor of Christian Philosophy in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, attempts to evaluate human history in the light of the Incarnation. It forms a development of his earlier work, *A Christian Understanding of History* (1947). The opening chapters deal with history as a process of nature and as evolutionary progress. An examination of history in relation to religion and myth is followed by a discussion of secular history and fallen man, who is under divine providence and judgement. The rest of the work deals with 'salvation history' arising from 'the mighty act in Christ'. There is an interesting consideration of the relation between eternity and time, and the eschatological framework in which 'salvation history' is set. The last

chapter is concerned with the Church as involved in this divine design. An epilogue deals with the final consummation and its symbols, though (in less than five pages) rather inadequately. Written from a somewhat conservative approach to biblical interpretation, the main thesis of the book is sound, and, despite certain omissions, it is the work of a scholar and forms a useful contribution to the modern concern for an understanding of the relation of God to the historical process.

The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman, edited by Charles S. Dessain, of the Birmingham Oratory, and Vincent F. Blehl, S. J., Vol xiv. pp. 555. (Nelson, 70*s*.) The correspondence in this volume (July, 1850-December, 1851) is largely concerned with Newman's attitude to the furore over 'papal aggression' which arose following the appointment of a Catholic territorial hierarchy in England, and reveals the pivotal importance of Newman as one of the main targets of attack in this crisis. The sense of excitement is conveyed by these letters, together with the calmness of Newman in the midst of it. Realizing the importance of the laity Newman began a series of *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England*, in the fifth of which he denounced the ex-Dominican Giacinto Achilli, who was exciting English essemblies concerning the Roman Inquisition by which he had been condemned for crimes of immorality. Supported by the Evangelical Alliance, he brought a libel action against Newman, and these letters reveal the suspense of the months prior to the trial in most moving terms. The volume contains illuminating appendices on the trial itself. These letters are also concerned with the preliminary stages of the founding of a Catholic University in Ireland and the erection of a Church at the Birmingham Oratory, and throughout they reveal Newman's pastoral care, his power of subtle argument, his mastery of satire and a certain sense of humour. The work bears the same stamp of accuracy which has marked earlier volumes, and more are eagerly awaited.

For nearly a quarter of a century, the volume entitled *A Companion to the Bible*, edited by Dr T. W. Manson, has proved invaluable to many readers. Since its publication in 1939, new knowledge about the Bible has been opened up and new theological emphases have developed. Under the same title, a second edition, amounting to almost an entirely new work, has been produced (T. & T. Clark, 35*s*.) under the editorship of Dr Manson's former colleague at Manchester University, Professor H. H. Rowley. In form it is similar to the earlier edition, and the impressive list of contributors reflects the growing co-operation between British, American and Continental scholars. Recent researches in biblical fields, find a place, and the hope of the Editor that 'this new volume will be found of service to lovers of the Bible' is more than likely to be fulfilled.

From the pen of Dr Norman H. Snaith comes a valuable study of the Penitential Psalms, under the title *The Seven Psalms* (Epworth Press, 5*s*.), a fitting theme for the Methodist Lent Book for 1964. Based upon a scholarly study of the Hebrew text, it is a devotional and theological exposition of the experience of those who were faced with the deep problems of human existence. The book is a verse-to-verse commentary, and its theme finds repeated orientation in the light of the Work of Christ for human redemption.

We must welcome a reprint (now available in the Fontana Library) of *The Divinity of Jesus Christ: A Study in the History of Christian Doctrine since Kant* (Collins, 6*s*.), by the late Dr J. M. Creed, Ely Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, and based on the Human Lectures, 1931. It was regarded as 'one of the few creative christological studies of our time in which a fine balance is struck between the traditional formulas and the demands of contemporary philosophical thinking and religious experience'. Also welcome is a reprint in a paper-back edition of *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, by W. D. Davies (S.P.C.K., 18*s*. 6*d*.), first published in 1948, a work which seeks to show that Pauline Christianity is not the antithesis of Rabbinic Judaism but its fulfilment in Christ. Of *The Parables of Jesus*, by Professor Joachim Jeremias, of Göttingen, the late Professor T. W. Manson wrote: 'The importance of this book is out of all proportion to its length: it is closely packed with acute critical observations going into the minutest detail and with exegetical insights of deep understanding.' First published in 1947 (translated into English in 1954), it is now reissued in a new and extensively revised edition, translated by Professor S. H. Hooke (*The Parables of Jesus*, S.C.M. Press, 30*s*.). The recently discovered parables in the Gospel of Thomas are examined, and this book is essential for all serious students of the Gospels. We note also *Eschatology and the Parables* (The Tyndale New Testament Lecture, 1963) by Dr I. H. Marshall (Tyndale Press, 2*s*.), a former pupil of Professor Jeremias, and now minister of the Bondgate Methodist Church, Darlington. Admittedly conservative in approach, this monograph is the work of one of our younger scholars who shows good promise for the future.

In *Philosophers and Religious Truth*, (S.C.M. Paper-back, 6*s*.) Professor Ninian Smart, an Anglican layman who teaches philosophy and theology in the University of Birmingham, deals with the central issues raised by the claims of religion to interpret the world. Willing to examine the achievements of those who in earlier generations have wrestled with these problems, each subject is here presented in association with the thought of a major figure in the history of philosophy and religion: Hume and Miracles; Kant and Human Freedom; Aquinas and God's Existence; Otto and Religious Experience; Tennant and the Problem of Evil. Lucidly written, this is an excellent book for serious study-groups. In *Models and Mystery* (The Whidden Lectures, 1963) (Oxford University Press, 9*s*. 6*d*.) Canon Ian T. Ramsey, Nolloth Professor of Philosophy of Christian Religion at Oxford, claims that just as scientists use models there is also a valid place for such use in theology, but with a difference. In contrast to the 'scale-model' he opposes the 'disclosure-model' and this difference is due to the element of mystery inherent in personal existence and in theological concepts. He gives careful examination to metaphor in theological discussion. 'Models, whether in theology or science, are not descriptive miniatures, they are not picture enlargements: in each case they point to mystery, to the need for us to live as best we can with theological and scientific uncertainties' (p. 21). This is a stimulating book.

A useful anthology for students is *Basic Readings in Theology*, edited by A. D. Galloway (Allen & Unwin, 45*s*.). Representative extracts cover some

twenty authors, and most major doctrines of Christianity are illustrated, though the main thread is Christological. The material is arranged historically: (1) The early formative period. (2) The period of Catholic consolidation from Augustine to Aquinas. (3) The Reformation. (4) the Period of Experimental Theology. (5) The new beginnings which formed the starting points for recent development. There are brief notes to introduce each theologian.

The Roads Converge (Edwin Arnold, 30*s.*), edited by P. Garder-Smith, Dean of Jesus College, Cambridge, is a collection of essays written by his former pupils. Covering a wide range of biblical and theological studies, the themes are related directly or indirectly to the idea of Christian reunion. As Professor Dodd declares in the Introduction: 'All Christians take their stand on the *same* gospel, enshrined in the *same* Scriptures. In theory, therefore, the closer they come to a true understanding of the Scriptures, the better they should understand one another.' These important essays are offered as a contribution to such ecumenical understanding.

The *City of Oxford Handbook of Religious Education* (Oxford University Press, 17*s.* 6*d.*), which breaks new ground in this field, provides information about the nature of Agreed Syllabuses, describes the pattern and content of the Bible as a source-book, offers suggestions for effective conduct of 'collective worship' and material for two most vital aspects of religious education—Church Membership and Worship beyond the confines of the school itself. The last chapter outlines the history of Christianity in and beyond Oxford, as a model of the way in which local history may be used in religious teaching. The work is the result of united efforts of representatives of the Anglican and Free Churches, together with those of the Local Authority and the teaching profession. It should be in the hands of every teacher of this subject.

Finally we would recommend a careful reading of the series of *Conversation Booklets* (Epworth Press, each 2*s.*) listed in 'Books Received'. These present both sides of the case in the present movement for Anglican-Methodist unity, and are written with courtesy and understanding.

RECENT LITERATURE

Edited by John T. Wilkinson

Men of God: Studies in Old Testament History and Prophecy, by H. H. Rowley. (Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 42*s.*)

Any book written by Professor Rowley is certain to be a work of great scholarship. This book is no exception. A series of lectures, it consists of eight chapters dealing with some well-known Old Testament problems, and Professor Rowley handles them all with his usual insight and skill. He brings before us the views and opinions of other eminent scholars, past and present, and after careful examination of their arguments, gives his own verdict, which in every case it would be difficult to dispute. Sometimes he gives a completely new interpretation and supports it with convincing arguments. He writes lucidly and always with great reverence. The book has a wealth of footnotes—always one of the features of Professor Rowley's writings—and these references will prove invaluable for those who wish to make a careful and thorough study of these problems. The topics dealt with are Moses and the Decalogue; Elijah on Mount Carmel; the Marriage of Hosea; Hezekiah's Reform and Rebellion; the Early Prophesies of Jeremiah on their setting; the Book of Ezekiel in Modern Study; Nehemiah's Mission and its Background; Sanballat and the Samaritan Temple. Perhaps the most valuable chapters are the first—Moses and the Decalogue—and the sixth, Ezekiel in Modern Study, where Dr Rowley comes down heavily in favour of an entirely Babylonian ministry. The chapter on Elijah and Mount Carmel is very illuminating. The book as a whole is a work of the finest scholarship, and although the price—two guineas—may seem costly, it is worth every penny of it. This book should be read and carefully studied by all teachers and theological students, and should be in all college libraries. The great debt we already owe to Professor Rowley is further increased by this latest contribution. KENNETH V. EVANS

The Faith of the Psalmists, by Helmer Ringren. (S.C.M. Greenbacks, 10*s.* 6*d.*)
Thirty-six Psalms, an English Version by Frank Kendon. (Cambridge University Press, 25*s.*)

Psalms 1-72 and *Psalms 73-150*, by Cyril S. Rodd. (Epworth Press, 12*s.* 6*d.* each.)

Interest in the psalter was never greater and books on it of every kind have been published during the last year. The books listed above are all useful and interesting, yet they have little in common. Professor Ringren begins by recognizing that much modern study of the psalter, erudite though it is, fails to do justice to the faith of the Hebrews. Yet for the minister and the Christian who uses the psalter as a book of devotion, this faith is the most significant element in it. Ringren's aim, therefore, was to produce a book that summarized the beliefs and ideals of the people who first sang the psalms in public worship. He is no reactionary, however. He does not eschew the work of Mowinckel and his own former colleagues at Uppsala in order to write in a different key. On the contrary, he begins where they leave off. Taking the psalter as it emerges from form critical and comparative studies, he examines it to show forth its great dogmatic themes. The corner-stone of his work is the belief that the cultic treatment of the psalms and the pietistic treatment are complementary. To pursue one to the exclusion of the other (as

does G. Quell) is to falsify the whole. Mowinckel's work on the cult is summarized sympathetically. Most of the psalms belong to the festivals of the pre-exilic cult. There is a chapter that establishes this with arguments that Mowinckel's readers will find familiar. Ringren naturally hesitates over the more extravagant notions of the Enthronement festival, but he stresses that in the cult the Hebrew could *see* God's mighty acts, and not simply a commemoration of them. The festivals both stimulate piety and express it objectively. Far from being an irrelevance, or even an obstacle to piety, the cult is the centre of it. There are some excellent, ensuing chapters on the beliefs of the worshipping Hebrew, including a lucid account of the relation of cultic myth to history. The book is deceptively learned. Only minimal technical knowledge is needed and, for the most part, it avoids the dangers summarizing brings. There are copious quotations from R.S.V.

Thirty-six Psalms is expensive, but it is one of the most handsome volumes that has come my way. Frank Kendon was involved in the translation of the *N.E.B.* His particular task was to work over the draft provided by the translators of the psalms to ensure that the poetic quality of the Hebrew was recreated in English. He died with only a quarter of the work done. This limited edition is, in part, a memorial. The psalms treated (1-34 and 40-41) are not revisions in any sense. They are new poems. It is interesting to compare them with the English 'Gelineau' psalms published by Fontana. Kendon's work is more gentle, less rumbustious, more suited to reading than to singing. It would be good to find this volume in some of our pulpits.

There is just space to add a note of appreciation of Cyril Rodd's two volumes in the *Preacher's Commentaries.* Rodd follows the same path as Ringren, but goes further. His aim is to make the Christian preacher feel at home with the psalter. This work must be judged not simply by the way the great themes are treated but also by the skill with which passages, normally passed over by preachers, are shown to be redolent of Christian truth. The fuller vision of the Christian is constantly born in mind, and one cannot escape the underlying conviction that all revelation, including the revelation in this unique book of devotion, is fulfilled and summed up in Christ. W. DAVID STACEY

The Old Testament and Christian Faith, edited by Bernhard W. Anderson. (S.C.M. Press; *The Preacher's Library Series*, 35*s*.)

This book deals with a basic theological question, namely, the relevance of the Old Testament for Christian faith, and one, as Brunner points out, which is more vital for our age than any. The remainder of the book is a discussion of an essay which appeared first in 1933 in Vol. I of Bultmann's *Faith and Understanding.* This essay was so radical and disturbing in its implications not only for the unity of the Bible but also for theology and philosophy that the editor, in agreement with Bultmann, invited world-renowned scholars from different nations, Alan Richardson, Carl Michalson, Eric Voegelin, Wilhelm Vischer, John L. McKenzie, S. J., Oscar Cullmann, James M. Robinson, John Dillenberger, G. Ernest Wright, Claus Westermann and Emil Brunner, to express their views on Bultmann's essay. This they have done with the thoroughness and scholarship expected of them. More are they who are against him than those who are with him. Bultmann's name spells 'demythology' and in this case it is the Old Testament. In line more or less with the Gnostics, Marcion, Schleiermacher and Harnack (although this is repudiated by some of the writers), he would amputate the Old Testament and especially the Old Testament proof texts in the New Testament, with the consequence that G. Ernest Wright, for example, concludes that Bultmann is putting Old Testament study in peril. According to Bultmann, the

Christian Church uses the Old Testament only for pedagogical reasons. Such are his views that for anyone within the Church, the Old Testament is a closed chapter. Jerusalem means no more to him than Athens. He sees in the Old Testament a picture of man in his concrete selfhood, but the image of the ideal personality, seen, for example, in the Greek heroes and others, does not develop in Israel. This question of idealism as deriving from Greek influence (with its power even over modern scholarship, in particular German scholarship) is answered in the essays. Bultmann's interpretation of eschatology is the crux of his thinking. In Jesus Christ God has performed the eschatological deed hoped for. 'The judgement has taken place, the new age has dawned.' For those in this new age, and thereby in the Church, the Old Testament is a closed chapter. For Christians Old Testament history is not much different from Greek history and only in an indirect way can the Old Testament help in the understanding of existence. Bultmann's statement that what matters is man's decision in the crisis which occurs when he hears the preaching in which Christ is presented in the Word is one of his main truths. This 'new docetism', as it has been called, is but a logical consequence of nineteenth-century Liberal Protestantism. This thought-provoking book should be in the possession of every serious Biblical scholar, for, as is remarked in one of the essays, 'our understanding of the Old Testament is always, especially today, decisive for our understanding of the New Testament' and this book says why this is so. GWYLFA H. MORGAN

THE PELICAN GOSPEL COMMENTARIES
St Mark, by D. E. Nineham (7*s.* 6*d.*)
St Luke, by G. B. Caird (6*s.*)
St Matthew, by J. C. Fenton (7*s.* 6*d.*)
(Penguin Books)

This series recognizes that the Gospels convey a message and demand a decision that is religious and that the approach to them, whether by Christian or non-Christian, should be to enter sympathetically into their understanding of Christ's ministry. Each commentary has an adequate introduction but the one on Mark is much the longest and is intended to serve the whole series. The section on the unit structure of the Gospel together with the footnote on the form critics is admirable, but perhaps the most valuable sections are on St Mark's purpose in writing, and the historicity of the Gospel. The commentaries use the RSV text. Short sections (not necessarily the RSV paragraphs) are taken and after an exposition of the thought of the section and its relationship with the rest of the Gospel, points of special interest or difficulty in the verses are taken in order. Some readers of the commentaries may be surprised to be told that the setting of Peter's confession is of crucial importance in the dramatic development of the Gospel but that this should not necessarily be taken to correspond with a 'watershed' in the actual ministry of Jesus. It is to be hoped that such readers will not be discouraged by this critical approach for the treatment throughout is both reverent and illuminating. A 'definately' on p. 35 of St Mark has escaped the eye of the proof reader, and the comment on the words 'upon the green grass' Mk. 6^{39} which states, 'it is probably over-subtle to interpret them symbolically as meaning that the miracle took place at the time of green grass', leaves one surprised at this use of 'symbolically'. But the quality of the books is such that any criticisms seem trivial. These commentaries represent excellent value. VINCENT PARKIN

The Science of Smell, by R. H. Wright. (George Allen & Unwin, 30*s.*)

This is an admirable account of work on this particular subject which also pro-

vides an excellent illustration of scientific method. The author covers a wide field with chapters on subjects such as fish migration, smell signals for insects, and tracking by dogs, but the information is so presented that it is not only of interest to the scientist but is also intelligible to the layman. VINCENT PARKIN

Pity my Simplicity: The Evangelical Revival and the Religious Education of Children, 1738-1800, by Paul Sangster. (Epworth Press, 30*s*.)

This book, which is delightfully written, is the outcome of a thesis approved by the University of Oxford for the degree of B.Litt. The work is well annotated, shows careful and wide reading and forms a valuable piece of social history. Much has been written about the eighteenth century in its various aspects, but this feature of its social life has never been so thoroughly investigated as in this volume. It presents an interesting perspective of the Evangelical movement. John Wesley's attitude to children is carefully evaluated and we see Charles Wesley in a light very different from his contemporaries. Here is one member of the Wesley family who made a really happy marriage. A dedicated man, he never sought to impose his views upon those of his children who survived infancy. He hoped that 'by the happiness of their home-life they would want to find the way to God that he had found', though it does not appear to have worked out like this. The Evangelicals brought up their children in the strictest atmosphere and seemed always to be looking for precocity in spiritual experience. The rigidity of theological outlook allowed for nothing in the way of natural theology. Yet these Evangelicals were kindly enough and loved children. This book should have a wide circulation. It is an interesting study of an age that has passed completely away from us and yet one from which something can be derived in the way of single-mindedness. Nothing would have given greater delight to the late Dr Sangster than this excellent piece of social history from the pen of his son. LEONARD EMERSON

Heirs of the Reformation (S.C.M. Press, 37*s*. 6*d*.)

This book is by Jacques de Senarclens, dogmatics professor at Geneva. It has been translated and edited by Professor G. W. Bromiley of California: one can't help regretting the editor's 'slight compression of some of the discussions of French Swiss theologians whose work is not quite so significant on the British and American scene'. As a fuller introduction to the neglected world of non-German theology on the Continent the translation would have been more valuable. Professor T. F. Torrance of Edinburgh has contributed a foreword in which he says that Professor de Senarclens 'appears as a thinker of outstanding freshness of mind and independence of judgement'. It might have been kinder to suggest that de Senarclens is yet another of those Reformed theologians for whom the ghost of Schleiermacher is never finally laid: refutation follows refutation, but he still shakes his gory locks at them. The author's aim is to show by a discussion of sixteenth-century and nineteenth-century theologians that obedience to the divine self-revelation is the true note of the Reformers and of sound modern theology: all dogma must be Christological. Traditional Roman Catholicism and nineteenth-century Protestant Liberalism, however, shared the false view that true religion is grounded on human piety and rationalism. The weakness of the book is one characteristic of the school from which it comes: Professor de Senarclens lacks historical sympathy; he knows what Kant and Schleiermacher said, but he doesn't really know why they said it; he is satisfied to describe Kant's ethical position as 'pelagianism', for instance, and to talk about the 'subjective spirit' of Schleiermacher's dogmatics. He insists as tirelessly as Karl Barth him-

self that in Neo-Protestantism as such there is 'a systematic exaltation of man'. The word 'exaltation', of course, draws its meaning from the context of the author's theology; one mustn't overstress it. But one feels, as one always does with writers of this school, that Professor de Senarclens sees Liberal Protestantism too much from the outside; he has not lived long enough with the greatest Liberals to understand their criticisms of classical orthodoxy. And so at the end, despite all his learning and his argument, the ghost still walks. JOHN KENT

The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century, by Nicolas Zernov. (Darton, Longman & Todd, 35*s*.)

Dr Zernov, Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Culture at Oxford, begins with the story of the emergence of a Russian intelligentsia in the latter days of Tsardom. In the process of this story a good deal of interesting information emerges about the state of the Orthodox Church in pre-revolutionary Russia, about its immense problems and its movements towards reform. The Russian artistic and philosophical revival in the early years of this century led to a most fruitful encounter between the intelligentsia and the Russian Church which was mutually beneficial. Dr Zernov details the history and thought of four leading Marxists (Struve, Bulgakov, Berdyaev and Frank) who became Christians in 1917. Bulgakov told the story of his own conversion in language which is a striking synthesis between Catholic and Evangelical experience: 'The next morning at the Eucharist I knew that I was a participant of the Covenant, that Our Lord hung on the Cross and shed His blood for me and because of me; that the most blessed meal was being prepared by the priest for me, and that the gospel stories about the feast in the house of Simon the leper and about the woman who loved much, were addressed personally to me.' The years 1917-25 saw the conversion of many Russians to the Orthodox Church, and a parallel movement took place in the West, now the home of many who had fled from the new régime. Dr Zernov speaks movingly of their great problems in establishing their Church in Western Europe. Especially crucial was the politico-religious issue of the right relation of these emigrés to the Russian Church itself; was it anti-Christ, or could its jurisdiction be accepted in religious matters without approving the political régime in which it was having to learn to live? The ecumenical influence of these emigrés (among whom was Dr Zernov himself) was, and is, considerable. This influence was mediated in part through existing institutions like the Anglican and Eastern Churches Union (founded in 1906), the Y.M.C.A. and the W.S.C.F. They took part with increasing effect in the formative years of the Faith and Order movement. The foundation of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius in 1928 meant the creation of a body which has done so much to foster close relations between Christians of East and West, especially between Orthodox and Anglicans. Western Christians, mostly for the first time, encountered a Church which transcended many of the familiar divisions between Catholic and Protestant. Orthodoxy was both hierarchic in structure and deeply sacramental in theology, yet it had largely escaped that clericalism which had so constantly and so characteristically divided the Western Church over questions of the Ministry. Many of the Orthodox theologians, for example, are laymen. Dr Zernov writes, 'the ministry is not the controlling factor of the (Orthodox) Church but only one of the manifestations of its corporate and life-giving life'. Western Christians learnt of the thorough-going sacramentalism of the Orthodox (which so influenced Chardin), of that longing, so Pauline, for the recreation and transfiguration of all things, already actualized in microcosm at every Eucharist. 'Matter was conceived as spirit-bearing, as a living and responsive partner in the great drama of the fall and redemption.' The Orthodox with their

profound experience of the *sobornost* (unity in corporate love) of the Church had therefore some unusual contributions to Christian sociology. The book ends with sixty pages of short biographies and bibliographies of the leading figures of this remarkable renaissance, and there is a large general bibliography as well. It is written with all the verve, devotion and wide ecumenical understanding that characterize all Dr Zernov's many books designed to interpret Orthodox Christians to their fellow-Christians in the West. It contains some very arresting portraits of the figures around whom this book is written. ALAN B. WILKINSON

BOOKS RECEIVED

ALLEN & UNWIN: Jean Decarreaux, *Monks and Civilisation: From the Barbarian Invasions to the Reign of Charlemagne*, pp. 397, plates, 50s. Ahmad Kamal, *The Sacred Journey, being Pilgrimage to Mecca*, pp. 109 + pp. 168 (Arabic Text), 25s.

EPWORTH PRESS: Eric Baker, *To Clear Misunderstanding: Methodism, the Free Churches and the Future* (Moderatorial Address of the 1964 National Congress of the Free Church Federal Council), pp. 12, 1s. Jaques Courvoisier, *Zwingli, a Reformed Theologian*, pp. 101, 7s. 6d. J. H. Collins, *Basis and Belief*, pp. 162, 25s. B. Drewery, *Oxford Sermons*, pp. 163, 15s. R. P. Martin (ed.) *Vox Evangelica: Biblical and Historial Essays III*, pp. 88, 6s. E. N. Jackson, *Guidance in Grief*, pp. 62, 4s. 6d.. Max Warren, *The Functions of a National Church*, pp. 43, 5s. B. E. Jones, *Honest to Goodness*, pp. 30, 2s. Epworth Press Conversations Booklets: each pp. 24, 2s. (1) R. Kissack, *How can these things be?: The Historic Episcopate and Open Communion.* (2) Leslie Scrase, *The Conversations: A Dissenting Commentary.* (3) Richard G. Jones, *The Dissentient Mystery.* (4) Rupert E. Davies, *The Service of Reconciliation.* (5) Donald Hughes, *A Layman's View.* (6) Paul Ellingworth, *Listening to the Conversations.* (7) H. Morley Rattenbury, *Episcopacy.* (8) Vincent Parkin, *Priests in the Church of God.*

INDEPENDENT PRESS: *A Declaration of Faith: Third Interim Report*, pp. 44, 2s. 6d.

INTER-VARSITY FELLOWSHIP: Leon Morris. *The Abolition of Religion*, pp. 111, 4s.

MARCHAM MANOR PRESS: G. E. Duffield, *Admission to Holy Communion*, pp. 43, 3s. 6d.

METHUEN: P. F. Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (University Paper Backs), pp. 255, 12s. 6d. Henry Clark, *The Philosophy of Albert Schweitzer*, pp. 241, 25s.

OLIVER & BOYD: Duncan Shaw, *The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, 1560-1600*, pp. xii + 261, 42s. T. A. Smart (Translator), *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Calvin's Commentaries), pp. 410, 30s.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS: Austen Farrer, *The Revelation of St John the Divine: A Commentary on the English Text*, pp. xii + 233, 30s. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration*, pp. xii + 268, plates, 42s. Bp. E. R. Morgan, *The Ordeal of Wonder: Thoughts on Healing*, pp. 166, 25s. Stephen Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1961* (The Firth Lecture, 1962), pp. vi + 360, 45s.

PRENTICE-HALL: Contemporary Perspectives in Philosophy Series: each pp. viii + 114, 18s. V. C. Chappell (ed.), *Ordinary Language.* N. Pike (ed.), *God and Evil.* G. Pitcher (ed.), *Truth.* A. R. Anderson (ed.), *Minds and Machines.* Vincent Tomas (ed.), *Creativity in the Arts.*

S.C.M. PRESS: F. Gerald Downing, *Has Christianity a Revelation?* (Library of Philosophy and Theology), pp. 315, 35s. D. R. Jones, *Isaiah 56-66* (Torch Bible Commentaries), pp. 190, 16s. J. N. Schofield, *Introducing Old Testament Theology*, pp. 126, 9s. 6d. C. H. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, pp. 224, 22s. 6d. B. W. Anderson (ed.), *The Old Testament and Christian Faith* (Preachers' Library), pp. 271, 35s. C. W. Westermann (ed.), *Essays on Old Testament Interpretation* (Preachers' Library), pp. 363, 45s. A. N. Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric* (New Testament Library), pp. 143, 25s. J. Macdonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans* (New Testament Library), pp. 480, 60s. Hans von Campenhausen, *The Virgin Birth in the Theology of the Ancient Church* (Studies in Historical Theology No. 2), pp. 92, 12s. 6d. Stephen Benko, *The Meaning of Sanctorum Communio* (Studies in Historical Theology No. 3), pp. 152, 16s.

S.P.C.K.: G. Vaughan Jones, *The Art and Truth of the Parables*, pp. xiv + 250, 35s.

SUTTON COURTENAY PRESS: G. E. Duffield (ed.), *The Complete Works of William Tyndale*, pp. xl + 406, 36s.

WORLD DOMINION PRESS: P. Beyerhaus and H. Lefever, *The Responsible Church and the Foreign Mission* (paper-back), pp. 199, 10s. 6d.

NOTABLE ARTICLES IN PERIODICALS

The Expository Times, April 1964.
Theologians of our Time: XIV. Thomas Walter Manson, by Matthew Black.
Important Moral Issues: V. Nuclear Weapons, by A. R. Booth.
Theological Education by Degrees, by A. P. F. Sell.
Alan Richardson's *History: Sacred and Profane*, by C. H. Dodd.
The Expository Times, May 1964.
Threefoldness in the Teaching of Jesus, by C. L. Mitton.
Theologians of our Time: XV. Reinhold Niebuhr, by J. C. Bennett.
Towards a Reformed Liturgic, by G. G. Scott.
Concerning the Ministry: Three Addresses to Ordinands: I. Vocation, by W. David Stacey.
The Expository Times, June 1964.
Second Thoughts: V. The Jesus of History, by William Neil.
Concerning the Ministry: Three Addresses to Ordinands: Ordination, by W. David Stacey.
The Way of Prayer, by Olive Wyon.
Important Moral Issues: VI. Investment, by Canon R. H. Preston.
The Harvard Theological Review, April 1964.
Barth on Feuerbach, by J. Glasse.
Matthew Arnold and the Poetics of Belief: Some Implications of *Literature and Dogma*, by Epifanio San Juan, Jnr.
Notes on Patristic Philosophy, by H. A. Wolfson.
International Review of Missions, April 1964.
The Church's Responsibility for the Missionaries it Receives, by Jean Kotto.
The Christian Colleges in India Today, by J. R. Macphail.
Religion in India according to the Last Census, by K. Baag.
The Church in the Changing Pacific World, by F. W. Coaldrake.
Towards Church-Mission Integration in Germany, by Th. Muller-Kruger.
Interpretation April 1964.
The Virgin Birth: The Meaning of the Gospel Accounts, by Otto A. Piper.
Towards a Greater Agreement: Intellectual and Religious Factors in Biblical Interpretation, by D. T. Rowlingson.
Condemned to Die: The Logion on Cross-bearing, by D. R. Fletcher.
Expostulation with the Divine: Contrary Attitudes in Greek and Hebrew Piety, by U. Milo.
Interpretation in Contemporary Theology: II. Giovanni Miegge on Jesus as a Martyr, by T. A. Langford.
Studies in Philiology, April 1964.
Mythological Imagery in Du Bellay, by J. C. Lapp.
Art, Rhetoric and Holy Dying in the *Faerie Queene*, by Katherine Koller.
Guyon and the Bower of Sloth, by Maurice Evans.
Astrophel and Stella, 'Why and How' by Ann R. Howe.
Greville's 'Poetic', by H. N. Maclean.
Henry IV: Shakespeare and Holinshed, by Charles Fish.
Scottish Journal of Theology, June 1964.
Towards a Theology of Nature, by W. A. Whitehouse.
The Place and Limit of Wisdom in the Framework of Old Testament Theology, by D. W. Zimmerli.
Apologetic Aspects of the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, by John Wilkinson.
The Covenant in the Theology of Karl Barth, by J. L. Scott.
Confessionalism and Ecumenism, by R. S. Louder.
History and Tradition in Old Testament Studies, by D. E. Jones.

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