

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

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

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

W. P. WITCUTT

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

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

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

A.R.