

historical Jesus' and the 'risen Christ', and the temptation is either to reject the former as irrelevant, or the latter as deceptive.

Barbour seeks a *via media*, which he finds exemplified in Käsemann's latest book, 'Jesus Means Freedom'. Käsemann sees that in the gospels, history and faith are so entangled that one cannot accept a polarization between Jesus and Christ, because we cannot infer an historical Jesus who can be put over against the portraits which the gospels present. But we can use our methods of traditio-historical criticism to understand the impact which Jesus' life, death and resurrection had on the early church, and help us to interpret the gospel portraits of Jesus Christ. Our faith statements will have historical implications, but this is a risk which every Christian must be prepared to take.

All this is fine, but perhaps Barbour leaves the really important questions unexamined. Käsemann clearly feels free to draw much more widely and uncritically on the gospel material than many other authors, but why? Is it

because as an historian he feels that we have been unduly pessimistic about the historicity of the gospel narratives, or is it because as a theologian he feels that we have been failing to respect the Canon of Scripture as inspired? If it is the former, then it is not clear that Barbour has shown us any real reasons for being more optimistic, but if it is the latter, then Barbour has not even begun to examine the crucial question, which is: What type of truth claim are we making for the gospels if we say that they are inspired? The real weakness of the second half of this book is that Barbour is trying to discuss what is ultimately a theological question in terms that are drawn from the philosophy of religion. These terms may be relevant, but they cannot provide us with our starting point. Perhaps it is unfair to judge Barbour too severely on the basis of such a short work; in which case one can only hope that he will find the opportunity to expound his views at greater length.

TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, O.P.

ISAIAH 1-12, by Otto Kaiser (Old Testament Library). *SCM Press*, 1972. 170 pp. £2.50.

This continuous commentary on the first twelve chapters of Isaiah is workmanlike but readable. It is intelligible to the general reader, informative and not overloaded with footnotes on obscure controversial matters of interest only to the expert (who would in any case find them more satisfactorily discussed in specialist monographs). A feature of this series, translated from *Das Alte Testament Deutsch*, is the refusal to clog the beginning with an introduction; this has advantages, but one does miss some statements of position, and especially discussion of such important points as the authorship of the book as a whole.

The central point of interest in a commentary on these chapters must be the interpretation of the 'Book of Immanuel', chapters 7-12. The author rejects all attempts to identify the child whom the maiden will conceive as a sign to Ahaz in chapter 7, and goes back behind the LXX translation 'virgin', rendering 'if a young woman, who is now pregnant, bear a son . . .'. The oracle is to be understood as a promise that before women (in general) who are now pregnant bear their sons the danger from the invaders will have passed. This interpretation is thoroughly possible linguistically, and does solve a lot of problems. The oracle continues with a prophecy of doom, occasioned by Ahaz'

refusal of a sign, which is a refusal to commit himself to faith: the land will eventually be devastated, so that prices rise astronomically and consumer goods become almost unobtainable; the remnant of the people will live on the nomadic food of milk and honey, considerably less attractive than it was to the wanderers in the desert. Kaiser does not remark that this food, though it has its drawbacks, is symbolically both a promise for the future and the pledge of a return to the days of primitive purity and sincerity in Israel's early life. In line with the uncompromising rejection of Ahaz, the 'Unto us a son is born' is interpreted not of the birth of the promised child, nor indeed of any child, certainly not of David's line; it is a promise of a future enthronement of a king, drawing (as *Ps* 2.7 does) on the Egyptian ritual of the new birth of the king as the son of god at his enthronement; hence the exalted titles which follow. This view is less commanding than the Immanuel-interpretation, though certainly attractive; as it stands, however, it hardly does justice to the dignity of the divine titles conferred on the prince in the same verse; these are, significantly, somewhat played down in the commentary. Consistently with the view so far taken of the bankruptcy of Ahaz' line, the sprig from the root of Jesse is

understood to stress that the tree must first be cut down before a new start is made and the spirit of the Lord guaranteed.

Such is the interesting perspective of these crucial prophecies. In this thoughtful and sympathetic book there are other frequent points of interest: the effect of the canticle of the vine is intended to be to harden the people so that they will not be converted (p. 62). At the inaugural scene in chapter 6 Kaiser produces

the attractive, but (it seems to me) unjustified, theory that Isaiah clutches at his mission to prophesy because his life is forfeit for seeing God (p. 82). It is a pity that he does not discuss more the form of the revelation, especially here, and the psychology of prophecy.

The translation is very satisfactory, though 'the mastersingers' on page 125 is surely a reference to the Wagner opera *Die Meistersinger*.

HENRY WANSBROUGH

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTOLATE, by F. X. Durwell. xi + 180 pp. *Sheed & Ward*, 1972. £2.50.

Over ten years ago Fr Durwell helped to change the whole spirit of theology in the English-speaking world with his book *The Resurrection*. He placed the Mystery of the Risen Christ at the centre of theological preoccupation and made us realize how impoverished dogmatic theology becomes if it is not steeped in biblical exegesis and biblical theology. A few years later, he produced his second book, *In the Redeeming Christ*, which was a superb effort to write a biblical theology of the spiritual life. Once more, of course, its central theme was the Paschal Mystery. Both books were best-sellers which is a difficult thing to achieve in religious publishing. Then followed a long silence probably enforced by his unforgivable appointment as a major superior in his religious order! Now at last he has given us another eminently worthwhile book. Once again, it is about the Glorified Christ and it should also make the best-seller list like its predecessors.

Although all three books have the same central theme they are very different from each other. This one has a dimension that the others could not have had, namely, the spirit and teaching of the II Vatican Council. His first book was a blessing for theologians, the second for retreat masters and this one for all who are engaged in the Apostolate (which should be everyone), especially missionaries who have longed for a serious theological, biblical and spiritually inspiring study of their vocation in these post-conciliar years.

Fr Durwell writes about the nature of the Apostolate in relationship to the Mystery of God, Creation, Redemption and the Church. I started jotting down passages I thought would be worth going back to but they multiplied too quickly and I realized this class of book must be read completely again and again. Most of his conclusions are familiar ones but they come alive with a sense of newness as we see them emerge from their biblical and patristic roots.

He expertly explains old truths such as: 'The Christian privilege is not a monopoly from which other men are excluded, a principle which would divide humanity: this grace is given to some in order to gather together all men in the same grace.' (p. 91); 'In Christianity there are only personal and vital values; there are no others. The apostle is so tied to the existence and life of the church, to her holiness, that the very effects of apostolic action are both immanent to the apostle and salvific for others.' (p. 100). He especially insists that the Apostolate is not a separate stage in the drama of salvation: 'Here we must recall what has already been said: apostolic activity is not a second act in this drama of salvation. It does not presuppose any intervention of God other than that of the glorification of Christ or any activity of Christ other than that of his pasch. God's intervention is final plenitude: in his death and his resurrection Christ is salvation in its total realization (Col. 1: 19); nothing is added to it, but God's action in Christ reaches only gradually the limits of men's history, through the church which is created in this action. There is no second act, for the Christian reality is not a mere juxtaposition of things, the structure of its mystery is concentric; the church does not succeed to the work of Christ, accomplished once and for all; God's action as it is in Christ, salvation as realized in Christ, is propagated by the church.' (p. 102.)

Perhaps the most interesting chapters in the book are the ones on 'The Need for Evangelization' and 'Evangelization by Presence'. In these chapters Fr Durwell critically examines the widely accepted theory of 'Anonymous Christianity' and its applications to the non-Christian religions. This is the first major attack on this theory by an internationally known and respected theologian. Perhaps theologians will disagree with his understanding and formulation of the theory, particularly the conclusions