

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST? by A. O. Dyson. *S.C.M. Centrebooks*, London, 1969. 8s. 6d.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? by Victor de Waal. *S.C.M. Centrebooks*, London, 1969. 8s. 6d.

Both these books serve a very useful purpose in 'opening up' the questions with which they are concerned and trying to find a fresh approach so that the reader is forced to deepen his own understanding of both the questions and the answers. I think in fact that these are the two most provocative books to appear so far in this series and this is especially true of Anthony Dyson's contribution. In it he stresses that there can be no short and definitive answer to the problem of who Jesus is. On the contrary he says that this is a deeply serious question which must vex every generation of Christians. Both writers treat conciliar and other official statements as points of departure, as valuable contributions to the debate rather than the end of the affair as has been the tendency in theology in the past, and both of them quite consciously raise questions and issues which they do not attempt to 'answer' but which are thought round and explored; and this is why I think that they will be very useful in sixth forms and amongst students generally who are genuinely interested in and captivated by an 'open-ended' theology.

Anthony Dyson's book will be useful from many other points of view also. His is a treatment which attempts to give full weight to the contributions of modern philosophers, theologians and thinkers, including Troeltsch's treatment of the problem of history and the bearing this has for historical statements about Christ, Bultmann and the criticisms advanced against him by Jaspers, and lastly Teilhard de Chardin himself. The use that the author has made of these writers, which includes a clear exposition of their views, enables him to present us with a very good analysis of the problems which a contemporary Christian

faces in considering the person of Christ. It is a stimulating book but I have two criticisms: the reader will not find much discussion of the actual text of the New Testament; this seems to me to be an opportunity missed in a book like this which should be directing the reader always back to the evidence. Secondly, the stress on contemporary difficulties leaves little or no discussion of the more traditional ones which I suspect are more with us under other guises than one might expect. But these are small reservations about a very good book.

Victor de Waal's book is interesting both as a contribution to ecclesiology from an Anglican and for what it has to say in its own right. He shows a good knowledge of the history of the Church and has many illuminating things to say about the primitive structure of the Church and the transition this gradually underwent, the liturgy and the sacraments and the purpose of the Church. This last point could have been given more edge, I feel, if the author had made more explicit use of the themes of discipleship and personal commitment to Christ with a more extended analysis of the Church as 'revolutionary' in character. The thought that tends to be in the back of a Catholic reading this kind of book is, 'What is he going to say about authority?'. He has many good things to say about this, echoing and developing some of the thought of the Vatican II Decree *De Ecclesia*. I mention this because what emerges from this book is that it seems clear that there is a growing common feeling about what the Church might be and a willingness to explore on all sides what shape the authority of the Church should have. This is a useful contribution to the debate.

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CATHOLIC ANGLICANS TODAY, edited by John Wilkinson. *Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1968, 254 pp. 25s.

This book is perhaps more significant than would at first appear. At a first glance a collection of essays on the present position of Catholic-minded Anglicans might seem of rather limited appeal. This is particularly so, when one notices that surprisingly there are no laymen amongst the contributors, and that social questions receive little place in their

work. It seems as though Christian socialism, which for one hundred years had an honourable history in the Church of England, and especially among Anglo-Catholics, has in the last decade gone underground and come up on the other side of the fence. The interests of these writers are predominantly theological and ecclesiological: They take up again subjects