

resurrection must be as an 'objective' and 'historical' fact about Jesus, because only so can it be a fact about Jesus at all. And it is about Jesus in the sense that it is an answer to the question: 'how did it go with this man and what is the sense of his ending?'. In another paper he speaks of Easter faith as 'interpreting his death as resurrection' (p. 196). The position he adumbrates here seems to me to be basically right, and one of the many things that make me claim to be in fundamental agreement with him. But in view of his criticism of Harry Williams, it is surely legitimate to ask about the 'status as history' of the resurrection stories themselves. They are not, of course, the whole of the Jesus story, but they are a part of that story as we have it. He himself describes that part of the story as 'an invitation to construe Jesus' history ... as a story the sense of whose ending is given by the incomparable power of God's transforming grace'. He doesn't argue the case for such a treatment of the resurrection stories and dismisses any consideration of their particular status as history as the product of false empiricism. The words 'objective' and 'historical', in which the question might most naturally have been posed, have already been hijacked for another higher purpose, from whose standpoint all particular 'historical' (if I dare use the word) questions may be grandly dismissed as improper. He has an important point to make, but in my view he makes it less effectively than he might have done because he fails to take seriously the possibility that those he disagrees with might also have an important point to make, however unsatisfactory the form in which it is raised. Like the Johannine Christ, who in one sense but only in one sense is the most 'historical' of all, he floats a few feet above the day to day detail of our earthly history and its historical records.

I have concentrated disproportionately on one paper. What I have said about it will almost certainly convince Professor Lash that his guess that I had not properly understood him is right. I hope it will also have convinced potential readers that they will find much in all the papers, whether they find themselves in agreement or disagreement with their substance, that will stimulate them in the direction of constructive theological thinking.

MAURICE WILES

**SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR: ROME, CANTERBURY AND ARCIC** by Hugh Montefiore. *S.C.M. Press, 1986, £5.95 paper.*

When the Bishop of Birmingham last uttered upon ARCIC, in *Theology*, a long standing member of that Commission, Henry Chadwick, remarked that it had been written in 'the excitement of rapidly composed polemic'. Taking that bull by its horns, the author simply says that this too has been rapidly composed 'against the remorseless headwind of an episcopal diary' and that he has found this too exciting, though not polemical. Only prayer and rigorous thinking will move Churches into union. So, is this rigorous or hasty thinking? Is a bishop's between-times thought worth publishing? Should the author not have waited until he had handed over his large diocese on last April Fool's Day, and then gone deeper? He surely will, in other books.

Bishop Montefiore is meanwhile to be taken seriously. Before he became Vicar of Great St Mary's, he was a Fellow and Dean of a Cambridge College and Lecturer in New Testament studies. During 1967–76 he was a member of the Archbishops' Commission on Christian Doctrine. He has edited or contributed to a number of books and theological journals. His avant-garde interests have included *God, sex and war* (1963), *Remarriage and mixed marriage* (1967), *Doom or deliverance?* (1972), *Yes to women priests* (1978), *The Probability of God* (1985), and writings on nuclear crisis. He has, as now, liked to be up with the debate: does that make him a respected journalist or a religious leader?

A slight chapter, 'The miracle of convergence', opens the argument; in it, 'absolutely null and utterly void' is misquoted, but the case for avoiding precipitate intercommunion while orders are in doubt is well put. The main engagement begins with the chapter on 'The Church and its sources of authority', a right place to begin. The Bishop turns for his

evidence to Synod documents, the Report *Christian Believing*, the ARCIC Agreed Statements and for the Roman Catholics the Decrees of the Second Vatican Council. As to Rome, *Dei Verbum* 10 had this to say: 'Sacred tradition, sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the other, and all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.' The Bishop objects that there no licence is given to scholars to search out the truth: the aim is maintenance of purity of doctrine. The Church of England is much freer, less bound by definitions and formularies. Liturgical books play their defining part. Sound reason is a source of authority in the Anglican ethos. Ambiguity plays its coordinating part: at one stage the Bishop writes of the latest Doctrinal Commission Report, 'without this ambiguity it is unlikely that the Commission, right at the start of its life, would have been able to produce a unanimous report.' (*Christian believing* contained 42 pages of agreed statement and 113 pages of individual essays, which show how hard it is to achieve consensus.) Any limits to comprehensiveness? Academic theologians seem to set the standard, and their beliefs range from ultra-traditional to very radical. (The Bishop's last chapter returns to that question.)

Anglican comprehensiveness has been justified on the grounds that it represents a *via media* between extremes—'but the *via media* is not a principle that bears much theological weight', for extremes of view are not complementary but contradictory. It has been justified through a distinction between essential and secondary doctrine: for instance, Professor Root speaks not of the Nicene Creed but of the 'Nicene Faith' as essential doctrine—but how must be the faith expressed today if the Nicene Fathers expressed it as they did in their day? How much essential doctrine has changed? Are secondary doctrines indispensable? (Yes, says the *Doctrine* Report). A great difficulty in Anglicanism is that, unlike Rome's 'straight line from Scripture through tradition to the magisterium', it has no court of appeal or rather too many. Church government is not subject to General Synod; for it is accountable also to royal supremacy (in Parliament), to the bench of bishops, to the ecclesiastical courts and the Church Commissioners...

What of the structures of authority? A chapter knocks it around, with varying degrees of reverence. Cardinal Ratzinger of the Vatican SCDF is quoted at length: 'the importance of (the Cardinal's) comment is twofold. In the first place, it implies a rejection of the whole method of ARCIC; and secondly it implies an ignorance of the Anglican Communion'. The Bishop asks, what authority on matters of doctrine do provincial or national meetings of Anglican bishops possess? The answer is long and vague. The Bishop observes that Anglicans have been given episcopacy as a sign of unity and an instrument for the Church's wholeness, while Rome looks to a universal primate acting in union with the bishops. But the Bishop asks whether there is any need for universal *episcopo*, or any guarantee that the Church will thus be preserved from error by the Holy Spirit, or whether even Scripture is guaranteed infallible. A temperate view of *episcopo* in ARCIC is compared with stronger views from the decrees of Vatican I and Vatican II, from which the Bishop concludes: 'Anglicans have no such experience of councils in which it is claimed that pronouncements are kept free from error by the guidance of the Holy Spirit': an Anglican Primate is treated with respect by his fellow bishops, but to him 'it is not fitting to give submission of mind or will'. So there are three structural views afoot: actual Roman (Vatican II), an ideal (ARCIC), and actual Anglican. They have not been reconciled. Another question then arises; cut off from Rome 'in 1570, just over four hundred years ago, by the Bull *Regnans in excelsis*' (that is the Bishop's perspective), does the Anglican Church lack something that made it a Church? ARCIC gives the 'ideal' answer, no: the realities on both sides are far from ideal. Political motives mingle with religious conviction: reconciliation should not rake the past.

A chapter on the laity ('at least 99.5% of the Church') begins by reminding us that the

perception of God's will for his Church is shared by all its members. Reception by the laity, while not legitimising clerical decision, is the final indication that that has fulfilled the necessary conditions for it to be a true expression of the faith. But what is it—unanimous approval, or approval by the majority (and how is the majority ascertained?)? Rome sees the role of the layman, nourished by sacramental and other graces, as to glorify God in his world, to consecrate the world of home and work, to win people for Christ in the Church. This is ever more so when priests and religious have recently come in such short supply; many continental parishes are now run by lay folk. (Lyons being twinned with Birmingham, the Bishop has seen at first hand). Anglicans see the role of the layman more directly, as participating in Church government: by 1920 there were 387 lay members of the Church Assembly, including 34 women. The equivalent of jobs in the Curia are held not by *monsignori* but by lay folk. General Synod has a lay house. Lay theologians abound. 'The role of the laity is not exhausted by reflection, reception and assent' (General Synod 1985): so for Anglicans the ARCIC proposals require modification.

A welcome chapter on 'The Mother of God Incarnate' tells us how little modern Anglicans know of the veneration in which Mary was held not only in the medieval but in the primitive Church. The Bishop deals with both the 1854 Immaculate Conception and 1950 Assumption definitions, finding that they go beyond the evidence of Scripture and early tradition. He notes that, compared with the past, the language of *Lumen Gentium* 8 is 'very cautious and restrained'. Anglicans have, in worship and study, been even more cautious: 'as for the doctrines of the perpetual virginity of Mary, her Immaculate Conception and her Assumption, no mention is made of them in official Anglican documents...they cannot be said to be requisite or necessary to salvation (Article VI)'. Much Roman mariology seems not to conform with sound learning, but only to definitions resting on the Pope's authority. Though the formularies of the Church of England clearly state belief in the virginal conception, its members are accorded liberty to be agnostic about it. (Footnote 10 discusses the Bishops' Statement of June 1986 apropos Dr David Jenkins—amazing in a book produced in August!) There is the dilemma in reunion negotiations: Rome has gone perhaps too far, despite our modern understanding of a hierarchy of truths; and Anglicans have gone not far enough. The gap has not been negotiated.

The book concludes with a pair of chapters on ethics and sexual ethics, a necessary chapter on the limits of pluralism, and a long study with an Appendix (p. 107—20, 131—47) on 'Women and the ministerial priesthood', reminding us that the Bishop has been forward in that recent and still current debate. He believes that Anglicanism will accept women priests, and Rome will accept an accommodation to this. He wants reunion, and that is his prayer.

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**RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION**, edited by James P. Mackey, *Edinburgh University Press*, 1986, 217 pp., £12.95.

This book offers a rich diet. Some eleven distinguished contributors have been asked to focus on the question—is there a cognitive role for imagination in the specific area of the god-question? Produced to mark the retirement of the very revd. John McIntyre from the Edinburgh Chair of Divinity, the book is in three sections, the first of which is historical—from classical times to Kant. The second section is more strictly philosophical, the truth claims of imagination being challenged by A.D. Nuttall, and asserted by Mary Warnock. The third section has contributions on the prophetic, evangelical and mystical imagination.

There is an excellent introduction by the editor, Professor James P. Mackey, who in the interest of unity has asked the contributors to use *Imagination* by Mary Warnock as a