

The remaining chapters deal with liturgy, dialogue and the authority of the Magisterium on political matters. (This last is already available in *Concilium* VI, 4.) It is a deeply

thoughtful book, and, thanks mainly to N. D. Smith, the English reads well.

NIGEL COLLINGWOOD

LA RESURRECTION DU CHRIST ET L'EXEGESE MODERNE, by P. de Sury and others. *Les éditions du Cerf*, Paris, 1969, 191 pp.

THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST, by P. Benoit. *Darton, Longman and Todd*, London, 1969. 342 pp. 50s.

There was a time when Bishop Barnes caused a sensation by roundly asserting that the resurrection never happened. But those relatively simple days are over. He would now be met with the interminable questions: 'What never happened?', and 'Anyway, what do you mean by happened?'. So complex is the question now that a large number of exegetes met at Angers in 1967 to try to think it all out. Paul de Sury subsequently collected the papers read and has now published them as volume 50 of the *Lectio Divina* series.

As the essays are by exegetes, they do not go into the philosophical problems of what events or facts are. But there are plenty of other problems left over, as Pierre Grelot makes clear. He outlines the main difficulties for any reader of the Bible in the first essay on the '*arrière-plan biblique et juif*'. He shows how Christians have traditionally thought of resurrection in general according to the categories of soul and body, and are therefore at one remove from biblical thought at the very start. Moreover, many people have subconsciously thought of the resurrection of Christ as 'a coming back to life', ultimately on the same plane as the raising of Lazarus from the dead. A close study of the Bible and its presuppositions is necessary to exclude this approach. Grelot complains that while most intelligent people now see the inadequacies of patristic and medieval exegesis on this point, they are still culpable of neglecting literary and historical criticism (p. 52, note 82).

The challenge is taken up by M. Carrez in his essay on what St Paul means by resurrection. He states emphatically on page 61 that for the apostle resurrection does not mean '*revivification*' but '*transformation profonde et définitive de l'être*'. This leads to the special problem of what Paul understood by the resurrection of Christ. In the famous passage of 1 Corinthians 15, 1-18 he is not acting like an historian objectively examining the facts. But neither is he thinking purely subjectively.

As Carrez puts it (p. 68), the resurrection of Christ is, for Paul, a fact independent of his own being, because he explicitly states that other people, like Cephas and the twelve, are witnesses of it.

Still the Western mind wants to know what really happened. A. George and J. Delorme, therefore, get down to examination of the earliest Gospel accounts of the resurrection. Delorme's essay is the most complete and interesting. It confines itself to the earliest account of all in Mark 16, 1-8. Delorme insists that we can only get from this story what Mark wishes to tell us. We should like to know what actually happened at the tomb, what the women really saw and did, and in what order. But Mark was not interested in this. The women are his *dramatis personae* for the drama of faith, not history. Delorme pertinently asks (p. 138) whether any account of the burial and tomb was ever given which was not seen in the light of the resurrection faith? 'Brute facts' dear to older historians are difficult to come by in this case. The resurrection was unique and not actually seen by anybody. The only objective fact the historian has to go upon is the coming of the women to the tomb and finding Jesus was not there (p. 144).

A useful summary of the main points is given by Léon-Dufour in the final essay. Among other things he tries to find a satisfactory middle term between 'objective' and 'subjective' to describe the apparitions of the risen Christ. He insists on the active part taken by Christ, which proves that the accounts wish to make it clear that the resurrection is '*non-subjective*'.

Pierre Benoit's book is meant for a much wider audience. In fact the colourful dust-cover says it is for the 'non-specialist' reader. The passion narrative is examined in a series of chapters, with the four gospel accounts given in parallel columns at the beginning of each. This makes for easy reference. Although the discussion of what each Gospel says separately, seems at first awkward, one

soon falls in with the idea; and in fact Benoit closely connects the synoptic accounts so that a general picture emerges. The notes are first rate, just enough to give the necessary authorities and explain important issues, without saying too much to confuse the non-specialist.

At times Benoit does seem to go into too many details. Especially with the trial of Jesus he seems to become entangled in his own arguments and not explain fully enough to general readers such curious things as Jesus' silence before Pilate. He also seems to

find difficulties where non-specialists may not think they exist. He is anxious to explain the exact meanings of 'javelin' and 'hyssop' (p. 197), whereas it might seem that the evangelists were non-specialists themselves and not likely to be too exact in their use of words.

In general the discussions are illuminating and interesting, even racy. Part of this is due to the smoothness of the translation, but Benoit is to be congratulated on the overall success of his attempt to reach the general reader.

ÆLRED BAKER  
JOSEPH TURTON

**THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS OF NAZARETH**, by Willi Marxsen. *S.C.M. Press*, 1970. 191 pp. 40s.

This book stems from a pamphlet published by the author in 1964 which aroused passionate discussion. The author then expanded and popularized his view in some general lectures at the University of Münster in 1967-8, which are contained in this book. It is a fascinating attempt to explain the New Testament accounts of the resurrection in terms of existential commitment. 'Jesus is risen' is a statement of involvement, an assertion that Jesus is still living and important for me, which could (p. 141) be equally well expressed by the sentence 'Still he comes today'. Marxsen feels passionately that if faith is to have any value it must be a venture, a leap in the dark. A faith which demands the evidence of signs and wonders is precisely a barrier to real faith (p. 153). Our faith is a miracle, the result of the preaching of the gospel today, and Peter's faith—the rock on which the Church is founded—can have no other quality than ours. Furthermore, resurrection of the body is only one particular philosophical way of expressing the Christian hope for the future (it is, in fact, not specifically Christian, being shared by Jews and Muslims). At the time of Christ hope for the future was expressed in many other ways, as deliverance of the soul from the bonds of the body, as coming with Christ at the parousia (early Paul), as a transformation which has already occurred (John, then the Gnostics). It can be equally well expressed in the words of the dying Heinrich Rendtorff, 'I shall be safe' (p. 188).

Marxsen accepts freely that much of his interpretation of the evidence is hypothetical; but he insists that the traditional interpretation is no less hypothetical. The resurrection

accounts in the gospels cannot really be harmonised, for the authors are using different parts of the tradition with quite different interests from ours. Were they in Jerusalem or Galilee? To whom were the first appearances? What was the quality of the risen body of Christ? Why is the missionary charge to the apostles given so many times by the different authors and in such different circumstances? Did it in fact occur several times? Marxsen's solution is that in the pre-gospel tradition these stories were independent units, each expressing in its own way that Christ is still living and of vital concern; they were structured into a set pattern only by Matthew and Luke—Mark still has only one story, that of the empty tomb, a story which concerns only one particular aspect (and that not the most important) of what is being asserted by the resurrection. Other stories are 'legends' teaching various truths of Christianity: Matthew 28, 16-20 expresses the understanding that faith involves mission; John 21 (later projected back into Jesus' lifetime in Luke 5, 1-11 and Mark 1, 17) expresses Peter's realization when fishing after the death of Jesus that Jesus still lives and calls him to be a fisher of men; the story of the disciples at Emmaus (much expanded by Luke) originally taught that Jesus is present in each eucharistic meal. Similarly the story of the empty tomb shows merely that Jesus did not remain among the dead and that he sends his followers out to call others to faith. The great mistake was to link into a series pictures which are really different expressions of the same reality; this was forced on Matthew by his method of apologetic against the assertion that Jesus was not risen at all. Even in the