

THE MEANING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN PAUL. A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry, by J. A. Ziesler. Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series No. 20. Cambridge University Press, 1972. xii + 255 pp. £5.80.

The terms 'righteousness', 'justification', 'to make/account righteous', are words which in the past have been at the centre of a stormy debate in which opposing interpretations have been labelled as 'Catholic' or 'Protestant', and exegesis of the Pauline usage of the terms has tended to follow party lines. For a Methodist, asked to review the work of a fellow Methodist (from New Zealand) in a Catholic periodical, it is satisfying to find that the honours are divided: according to Dr Ziesler, neither side in the debate had a monopoly of the truth, but interpreted some aspects correctly, misunderstanding others. As in the Dodo's Caucus-race in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the judgment delivered is that 'Everybody has won, and all must have prizes'. Protestant interpretation has emphasized the 'relational' aspect of righteousness, and has tended to interpret the noun in terms of the verb, 'to account righteous'; Catholic interpretation has done the reverse, emphasizing the ethical meaning of the words, since it has tended to interpret the verb in terms of the noun. Both were right, argues Dr Ziesler—the Protestant with regard to the verb, and the Catholic with regard to the noun: but both were wrong to transfer the meaning of the one to the other. He concludes that the idea of 'righteousness', as used by Paul, holds together these two aspects, variously stressed by different exegeses.

This is a very careful and able study of terms which are central to Pauline thought, as well as to later theological debate. The fact that less than a third of the book is directly concerned

with the Pauline literature is an indication of the importance for this particular investigation which the author attaches to the way in which writers before Paul used the terms. Paul cannot be correctly understood in a vacuum, and his usage of these Greek terms is interpreted by Dr Ziesler in the light of the normal meaning given to them by Paul's Jewish predecessors and contemporaries. In his writings, of course, they take on new meaning, because for him the righteousness of the Law is replaced by righteousness in Christ, but they retain the forensic and ethical meanings which they have elsewhere; now, however, they are fused with Paul's basic understanding of the believer's union with Christ: it is in him that men are declared righteous before God, and also become righteous through their renewal in the new humanity. Much of Dr Ziesler's interpretation is illuminating: he is certainly right to link his understanding of righteousness as a two-pronged idea, referring both to man's acceptance by God and to his moral renewal, with Paul's central doctrine of being-in-Christ, for we find precisely the same polarity in the usage of 'in Christ', a phrase used by Paul both of what God has done for man (in the death of Christ) and of what is now being done in terms of 'sanctification', or renewal in the image of Christ. Dr Ziesler points us away from the theological wranglings of past centuries to the central themes of Pauline theology, and his book is a solid contribution to a clearer understanding of Paul's thought.

MORNA D. HOOKER

AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH, by J. Paul Sampley. C.U.P., 1972. 177 pp. £4.60.

As the sub-title tells us, this is a study of traditions in Ephesians 5, 21-33, and it arises from the hypothesis that Ephesians is a unique, syncretistic, collection of a variety of traditions extant in the early Church. The hypothesis was first suggested by Ernest Käsemann, and is taken up as the working hypothesis of this study. Only as the author writes on page 3: '... since Ephesians stands out so clearly as a mosaic of traditions current in the early Church', we see that the hypothesis has rapidly become established fact.

However that may be, this 'new phase in the study of Ephesians' (p. vii) provides us with an

introduction to the problem and perspectives, followed by an analysis of the whole epistle, and a discussion of the author's knowledge of his readers. Then comes the identification and study of traditional materials in 5, 21-33, with an examination of three passages from the homologoumena which seem specially relevant. Hermeneutical problems are dealt with, so too the movement and thought in 5, 21-33. The thoroughness of this investigation appears in the verse-by-verse analysis which follows, and this leads to the concluding observations which cover such points as the implications of 5, 21-33 for the remainder of the *Haustafel* and also for

the remainder of Ephesians. This last leaves us ill at ease with the notion of 5, 21-33 as a key or nodal text. Surely no portion of a *Haustafel* can fulfil this role. The so-called dogmatic sections of the Epistle would furnish great texts about the supereminence of Christ, or of God, the mystery of whose will is 'a plan for the fullness of time'. Such sections would more convincingly provide texts which relate to the overall design of the Epistle. Though no doubt where there is consistent density of thought, any part can be illustrated by reference to any other.

So much for the plan and content which is worked out with considerable erudition, yet sometimes at the cost of surprisingly poor English, and some redundancies.

More important is the part played by references to the homologoumena (pp. 36 and 77-81) in the text of Ephesians. We can agree to a common tradition behind the homologoumena texts and those of Ephesians. We can equally well argue that both stem from St Paul's writing, in which there was no arrested development but a constant living progression which faced up to new ideas and contacts. Thus when our author speaks of something without parallel in the homologoumena (p. 92), e.g. the specification of the *content* of the 'mystery' or how the Gentiles are to be fellow-heirs, etc., we are more inclined to see there a farther stage in Paul's thinking. He has spoken enough

about 'mystery' in general (six times in 1 Corinthians); now in Ephesians we have a further precision about the *content* of the 'mystery', simply an explicitation in the same line of thought.

Returning to the hypothesis that Ephesians is 'a mosaic of traditions current in the early Church', we ask first how a syncretistic amalgam of tradition could result in a sublime piece of writing which has animated Christian thinking through the centuries. Certainly the traditions are there, and they must be investigated. Yet more important is the work of a consummate author who has woven all together with his ardent faith and creative mind. Synoptic studies have passed from form-criticism to redaction criticism with its emphasis on authors. Pauline studies are seemingly still anchored at a stage corresponding to form-criticism—or so the present work would seem to suggest. We could invoke Pascal's *esprit de géométrie* and *esprit de finesse*. Scholarly and detailed investigation of traditions there must always be. But they correspond to the *esprit de géométrie*: they are not the be-all and end-all of the study of Ephesians. There remains a more essential grasp of the Epistle seen as a unity issuing from a mind who could see the gospel of Christ gradually transforming a 'world twisted out of its true pattern'.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY, by Jaroslav Pelikan, *Hutchinson*, London, 1971 xxiii + 228 pp. £4.00.

This is rather a fine book. It is an attempt to resolve the methodological difficulties involved in writing a full-scale history of Christian doctrine at the present time. The key problem, among many others, in this project is that of reconciling doctrinal change with the continuity of Christian teaching, and Professor Pelikan examines the solutions proposed to this problem by Origen, Peter Abelard, St Thomas and Luther up to the nineteenth-century writers of dogmatic histories, notably Harnack, to see whether their solutions are adequate for the task today. Pelikan identifies the continuity of doctrine with the ecclesial context in which historical theology is carried out, recognizing that doctrine can no more be separated from the Church than the New Testament can be separated from the Christian community which produced it. The author insists that a provisional Catholic ecclesiology is necessary for doing historical theology so that past doctrinal developments can be judged by the community

which continues at the present time that historical tradition which links us with the original Gospel, but Professor Pelikan, as a Lutheran, does not identify this ecclesiology with that of the Roman Catholic Church. By insisting on this ecclesial context for doing historical theology, Pelikan is seeking to avoid the historical relativism of Schleiermacher and Troeltsch who accepted all past theologies as collections of ideological data with no relevance for contemporary theology: all those theologies—heresy and orthodoxy alike—were examined, labelled and consigned to the archives. All past theologies were judged worthy of equal relevance—or irrelevance: Justin and Marcion, Athanasius and Arius, Augustine and Pelagius. On the other hand, Pelikan wants to avoid the dogmatic prejudices of some nineteenth-century histories of theology, where the facts of history were put into a strait-jacket by doctrinal presuppositions, a tendency best illustrated by that frivolous remark from Cardinal Manning: