

depth. The other will appeal more to those who wish to know only as much about the scriptural problems as is necessary to understand the text and who wish then to reflect and

think about the passages in a prayerful way and need a book to help them do it. There is a need for more books of this kind.

MERVYN DAVIES

**RELIGION AND CHANGE**, by David L. Edwards. *Hodder and Stoughton*. 1969. 383 pp. 50s.

Contemporary man swings uneasily between hope and despair. The changes which have been wrought in and around him by the unprecedented developments of science and technology in the twentieth century at one moment awaken in him the vision of a world which he can transform into a human paradise, at the next threaten him with the prospect of a hell on earth in which in grasping everything he has lost his own soul. The trouble lies not in chance or fate so much as in himself. His newly-won powers offer him both a blessing and a curse. There is no turning back. He has no choice but to go forward into the daunting world which beckons to him. He must work out his own salvation. This applies at all levels of human life. Individuals, societies and the whole human race are bound together by this challenge. There can be no salvation which he does not make his own, none that is less than universal. The world is one and the world has come of age. How man can attain to an adult maturity is the question.

Where does religion come in this situation? Is it a feature of man's childhood which will now vanish away? Are psychological and social developments destined to loosen its hold on man's thought and imagination and finally to destroy it? Or does religion contain within itself something essential to man's understanding of himself and his world, even though it may also contain features which belong to a bygone age and which will be radically transformed or even outgrown? Is it a childish dream or an adult reality? What will the twentieth century look like from the standpoint of the twenty-first—always supposing that there will be a twenty-first? We may be disposed to answer that only time will tell and to leave it at that. But any such answer is ruled out of court by a proper sense of human responsibility. Man makes history; history does not make man. Consequently he dare not leave the future to provide its own answer to his present questionings. He must take a hand in fashioning his own future. And in so doing he must come to terms with religion. Here and now he must assess its claims, make a stand and be counted among the believers or the infidels.

This is a colossal and frightening task. It is the distinction of this book by the Dean of King's College, Cambridge, an extended version of the Hulsean Lectures which he delivered in 1968, that he sets about it with sensitivity, understanding and insight. He describes the scene and suggests the next act.

To the first task he brings a range of learning which many must envy. More than that, he has the rare ability to communicate to his readers not only this or that particular feature of the scene in comparative isolation, but the interlacing pattern of the contemporary situation in all its depth and complexity. He draws together the findings of separate disciplines and covers a large canvas, thus enabling us to view the scene as a whole. In a sense this is an impossible task. Clearly we are dependent on the author's critical powers of selection and assessment. But the result has nothing superficial about it. It is possible to recognize the world which he describes as the world in which one actually lives, and the recognition is enriched by an enlarged understanding and appreciation.

The contemporary world is one of increasing secularization. Whatever the roots of religion, its worldly manifestations must be seen in this humanistic context. Mr Edwards is right, therefore, to pay especial attention to the social and psychological aspects of religion. Marxian and Freudian analyses of religion are of far-reaching, if not of determinative, significance. However, Mr Edwards claims that neither our new social nor our new psychological insights dispose of religion as such. There is no clear sign that man is outgrowing religion. It continues to survive, if not to flourish, in all sorts of unexpected places. The signs of the times are ambiguous. There is more than one road stretching away into the future. Technological culture, secular state, pluralist society may still provide a suitable setting for the renaissance of religion. 'A renewed Christianity would still have a chance.'

When it comes to the intellectual content of Christianity Mr Edwards agrees that we have witnessed the decline and fall of Christian dogmatism. Underlying the change in the way

in which modern man views the world is a change in the way in which he understands authority. The only essential authority which he now recognizes is that provided by the appeal to experience—not in any narrow sense of the word, but in a sense which renders it impossible any more to appeal to an authoritative past, whether enshrined in a book or in a community, to provide unquestioned and unquestionable premisses for religious argument and reflection. Everything must be made to reveal its credentials. On the other hand there is no sound reason to believe that the future of religion lies with a non-dogmatic East. Eastern religion lacks the dynamism necessary for containing and embracing the forces of technological culture. Nor is there any reason to look optimistically to the new religions which are appearing in the secular West. There seems to be no viable alternative to the renewal of Christian faith if religion is to flourish again. Obviously the author's views on these points will be contested. For example, the ardent Marxist may counter his rejection of Marxism by alleging, not without some justification, that he has depicted Marxism at its dogmatic worst, and that if he is prepared to envisage a chastened and less dogmatic Christianity he ought equally to envisage a chastened and less dogmatic Marxism. However, Marxism leaves no room for the reality of God, and belief in God's reality is the nerve-centre of Mr Edwards' own faith.

When he turns to prophecy he suggests for our consideration a new shape for the Christian Church and a new statement of Christian belief. On both counts he is guardedly optimistic. He explores a number of ways in which it may be possible 'to keep the mystery of God present to men' and discovers growing-points even in the midst of the present over-organized and over-centralized ecclesiastical structures. Together with the reality of God he emphasizes the centrality of what he calls 'the credible Christ', and from the revelation of God in Christ he draws out a double theme of hope and patience. There is much in life that is inexplicably tragic, and the prophetic emphasis on redemption by Christ's sufferings is the message which speaks strongly to this condition. But tragedy has not the final word: 'the last word is joy', and 'the cross of Jesus, seen in the Easter light, reveals the inexhaustible patience of the transcendent, and in the end victorious, God'.

In many ways Mr Edwards is a traditionalist. He is not the Dean of King's for nothing. His prophecies will be insufficiently revolutionary for some, insufficiently gloomy for others. But it would be a mistake to dismiss them simply as soothing balm and soft comfort. They reveal a sturdy faith which is unafraid of the truth and are evidence of the sources and resources of a living tradition which contains among its treasures things old and new.

PETER BAELEZ

**MARXISM AND BEYOND: On historical understanding and individual responsibility**, by Leszek Kolakowski. *Pall Mall Press*, London. 1969. 240 pp. 40s.

The films of Polanski and Munk, the poetry of Zbigniew Herbert, even the criticism of Jan Kott, have made many aware of the cultural revival in Poland since the 1956 'October'. The accompanying philosophical mutations are less recognized. Before 1939 Poland was famous for its logical and analytical school, flanked by the phenomenology/aesthetics emphasis of Cracow and the Neo-Thomist inquiries of Lublin. Those strands continued their conversation under the blanket of official Marxism from 1949-56, and their offspring is clearly Leszek Kolakowski. Trained by Tadeusz Kotarbinski, deeply engaged in debate with Catholic philosophy in his early career (*Essays on Catholic Philosophy*, 1955), and himself a playwright and critic, Kolakowski not only symbolizes but partially provoked the Polish October.

The three earliest essays in this collection, 'Intellectuals and the Communist Movement', 'Permanent and Transitory Aspects of Marxism', and 'The Concept of the Left', were influential prompters in 1955, moving from a plea for renewed theoretical bases of Marxism to a critique of 'Office Marxism', and thence to an attempt to spell out the criteria of a true 'Left'. The second essay in particular shows Kolakowski applying to the Party a critique previously developed in relation to the Church; Catholic readers can easily re-translate. At this stage many Polish thinkers were 'living in a perpetual translation' (cf. Brandys's *Memories of the Present Time*). After Gomulka's accession, debate was far more open. The four linked articles from 1957 that, under the title 'Responsibility and History', make up a quarter of this collection, reflect immediately