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# Editorial

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## *Great Christian Centuries to Come*

THIS is the intriguing title of a book published recently (Mowbrays, 1974, 198 pp., £4.50), which is a collection of essays in honour of Bishop Ramsey on his retirement edited by Christopher Martin. The phrase used in the title came from a sermon preached by Dr. Ramsey at Iona in 1964 at celebrations marking the 1400th anniversary of the arrival of St. Columba. While anyone who takes the world situation and the doctrine of the second coming seriously must allow that there may not be any more centuries to come for the human race any more than for the Christian church, it remains a worthwhile exercise to try to look ahead and see the way in which certain trends which have been developing during Dr. Ramsey's primacy might further develop. The contributors are wise to disclaim any special skill in 'futurology' but some interesting pointers to the future emerge from their assessment of the Ramsey era.

In the first chapter on 'The Gospel and the English Church', David Edwards shows convincingly how Dr. Ramsey himself changed in the 1960s and how he was able to combine sensitivity and simplicity in keeping in touch both with the call of God to devotion and holiness and the call of men for social justice. Kenneth Greet in his essay on 'The Union of the English Churches', shows how Dr. Ramsey strove for the success of the Anglican-Methodist scheme but after its failure was prepared to consider new ways of proceeding, while A. M. Allchin deals with his approaches to the Eastern and Roman churches. A chapter on religious television interrupts the flow of thought before the next chapter on the future of the Anglican Communion, in which Bishop Howe shows the way in which the primate was able to understand what was going on under the surface throughout the world-wide church. John McQuarrie in asking 'Whither Theology?' sees Dr. Ramsey's greatest achievement to be in adopting 'a stance which was

certainly open to the new ideas striving to find expression in the sixties, yet at the same time critical, and profoundly attached to and respectful towards the tradition. This is a stance much more balanced and much more difficult than either that of the man who thinks he has discovered the true meaning of Christianity for the first time or that of the man whose mind is utterly closed to any novelty or development at all'. The volume ends with an amusing and perceptive chapter by Martin Thornton on 'The Cultural Factor in Spirituality'.

It is the ability to keep a balance in the fast changing world of the last quarter of the twentieth century (and beyond if there is a beyond) which must be the crying need of the church. Establishment status, and inherited resources may dwindle, charismatic and other enthusiasm may wane, the academic study of theology may decline, leadership may pass away from the west but Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today and forever will provide for the needs of his church if we will only let him.

### *Reconciliation and Hope*

ANOTHER *Festschrift* which will be of interest to our readers has recently been published: *Reconciliation and Hope*, New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology, presented to L. L. Morris on his 60th birthday, edited by Robert J. Banks (Paternoster, 1974, 317 pp., £4.00). Dr. Morris has seemed for so long to be the pre-eminent New Testament scholar in the conservative camp after F. F. Bruce that it is interesting to note that his first important work, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, did not appear until 1955 when he was over forty. Since then books and articles have poured from his pen and he has applied his early scientific training with great effect to the thorough and painstaking exegesis of Scripture. That he has done so much while being Principal of Ridley College Melbourne for the last ten years, as well as taking an active part in wider church life, is truly remarkable. It is fitting that he should have been both the first Australian New Testament scholar to be elected to *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* and the first to have a *Festschrift* dedicated to him.

Leon Morris' most enduring academic memorial will be his work on the vocabulary of atonement but he has also written a certain amount about eschatology and it is appropriate that these two themes should be treated by the contributors to the volume. Most of the essayists are scholars of the conservative school (some of them younger men with Australian connections) but it is praiseworthy that the editor has also included a contribution by the leading German New Testament scholar, Günther Bornkamm. Many of the essays are written at a high academic level and scholars will find this a book well worth referring to at a number of points. The publishers are to be com-

mended for producing an important volume like this, with Greek type, at such a reasonable price.

### *Other Literature*

A NUMBER of important works have been recently reprinted or reissued in a new edition. David Winter has produced an abbreviated paperback edition of Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Four Gospels (Hodder, 1974, 662 pp., £1.00). It can be safely assumed that few people nowadays read the full commentary and the editor has done well to offer in a form acceptable to this generation one of the great spiritual treasures of the past. *Creeks of the Churches*, a reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present, edited by John H. Leith, was first published in 1963 but comes now in a revised form with some material from Vatican II and two recent statements of the faith (John Knox Press/Blackwell, 1974, 597 pp., £2.25). It is an extremely useful handbook for anyone interested in historical or contemporary Christian doctrine. We also welcome a reprint of *The Prayers of the New Testament* by Donald Coggan (Hodder, 1974, 190 pp., £0.60), in a special paperback celebration edition to mark the author's enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury. In times when many find prayer hard, it is most important to be turned back to the New Testament to find out how men of its generation prayed and Dr. Coggan gives us a great deal of help in this field.

In days of great difficulty for publishers it is a pleasure to welcome well produced and illustrated books, which might be suitable for presents. Among such is *The Christian Calendar, A Complete Guide to the Seasons of the Christian Year* by L. W. Cowie and John Selwyn Gummer (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 256 pp., £4.75). In this case however the welcome is somewhat tempered by the excessive deference paid by the two Anglican authors to some of the less acceptable Roman Catholic observances and the tendency to trivialise some of the great theological festivals. There are a number of errors and misprints in the text. *The Life of Christ* by Michael Watts (Pitkin Pictorials, 1974, 32 pp.) comes in the 'Treasures of Britain' series because the superb pictures are found in British museums. Of a rather different nature is *The Encyclopaedia of Bible Stories* retold by Jenny Robertson (Scripture Union/Purnell, 1974, 272 pp., £2.95). Many of the famous stories of both testaments are put into a vivid and readable form and the problems of, for instance, Daniel and Jonah are cleverly dealt with. Two well-produced books on parish churches have also recently come to hand. *Parish Churches, Their Architectural Development in England* (Faber, 1974, 255 pp., £1.40) is a paperback reprint of a book published in 1970 in which Hugh Braun explains how different types of churches came to look as they do. It is a pity that his photographer does not

seem to have gone any further north than Lincolnshire! A good complement to this is *English Parish Churches as Works of Art* by Alec Clifton-Taylor (Batsford, 1974, 272 pp., £3.00). His coverage of the country is much more comprehensive though here we may regret that most of the photographs were taken before the great government-aided clean up of buildings in 1972/1973 !

### *Liturgical Publications*

IN an effort to rationalise the present confused situation in which so many rites have been authorised for use in the Church of England, the Liturgical Commission has proposed a draft form of Holy Communion which combines Series I and Series II in one form with frequent alternatives (SPCK, 1975, 29 pp., £0.35). From Grove Books comes the extremely useful *Supplement for 1973-1974 to Recent Liturgical Revision in the Church of England* including the Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure, by Colin Buchanan (24 pp., £0.25). The sheer amount of material which this survey shows has led the publishers to produce from January 1975 a monthly sheet entitled *News of Liturgy*. They have also given us *Series 3 For Children*, a very simple illustrated booklet in a hard cover costing 60 pence. *In His Presence* Series 2 and 3 Edition (Religious Education Press, 128 pp.) is a revision by Denis E. Taylor of a well known booklet for confirmation candidates in particular in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. It is a pity that it hardly reflects any of the newer Anglo-Catholic thinking about the Eucharist.

### *Reference Works*

OF considerable value to anyone interested in New Testament study at a deep level will be the new edition of *A Bibliographical Guide to New Testament Research*, edited by R. T. France, published by the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research (45 pp., £0.30). In addition to the list of different types of books and journals, it provides notes on library facilities and on the learning of modern languages. *RIC 1* by Marie Zimmermann (Cerdic, Strasbourg, 418 pp., 180 francs) is a complicated account of a computerised study of religious publications and institutions, the English part of which has unfortunately been very poorly translated.

R.E.N.