

problems of burning concern at Corinth, but transferred here by Paul with heavy and rather lifeless borrowings from his letter to the Corinthians. To Dr Minear chapters 14–16 provide the key to the letter, for there he discerns most clearly five groups in the Roman churches (for from chapter 16 it appears that there are at least five or six different house-churches to whom the letter is written). Paul's purpose in writing is to reconcile these five groups, three of which are at loggerheads with each other. Basically it is, as at Corinth, a matter of the weak in faith who feel the need to retain Jewish observances against those who claim that they are so strong in faith that they do not need such observances; some in each of these two groups condemn the opposing view; some are unsure, and are brow-beaten into acting in bad faith; and some of the strong and of the weak have the balance and maturity to let those of the opposite view go their own way unmolested. According to the author it is Paul's aim to secure peace by drawing members of the three former camps into the two latter ones.

Dr Minear makes no claim to investigate the theology of the letter as a whole; indeed (p. 57) he explicitly contradicts that this purpose of reconciling the parties exhausts

Paul's concern; he holds only that in this way we can 'notice how his wide-ranging thought came to a focus upon definite situations'. It is, however, doubtful whether Minear is convincing. Certainly the observers of the Law addressed early in the letter must be Christian rather than non-Christian Jews. Certainly in churches composed of convert Jews, attached to their traditions, and Gentiles such problems must have arisen. But, useful as the analyses of chapters 14 and 15 are, I do not think that it is successfully shown that the same groups are envisaged earlier in the letter. Paul's complaint is that the Jews do not observe their own Law, not that they are too observant; and one cannot really accept that he calls them adulterers because they condemn adultery (p. 50). The attempt to reconstruct the beliefs and positions of those to whom and against whom Paul is writing in his various letters is a fascinating one, but it constantly runs the risk of reading too much into Paul's statement of their positions, assuming that he gives a sober and objective account of the point of view he is rejecting. One of the reasons why Dr Minear's interesting attempt fails is that Paul's mind is too creative, too full and too subtle to be confined by his interlocutors.

HENRY WANSBROUGH

GROUNDWORK FOR UNITY; Plain Facts about Christian Ministry, by R. P. C. Hanson. *S.P.C.K.*, London, 1971. 60 pp. 55p.

PRIEST: PERSON AND MINISTRY; Papers of the Maynooth Union Summer School 1969, edited by Gerard Meagher. *Gill and Macmillan*, Dublin. xi + 169 pp. £1.25.

Reading through these two books on the ministry out of Ireland (Dr Hanson became Bishop of Clogher last year) one is struck by the lack of contact between them. This is symbolized in the bibliographies and in the Maynooth footnotes: the only books they share are one by Daube and another by Schweizer. It is to be seen above all in that Dr Hanson is really only interested in bishops and the Maynooth men only in priests. This is disconcerting since both do, in fact, spend a fair amount of time discussing the same New Testament texts.

There are reasons which do go some way towards justifying these two very different approaches to the ministry. Dr Hanson is writing against the background of the Anglican-Methodist reunion negotiations, and is concerned above all to commend the 'historic episcopate', though shorn of apostolic succession and of 'the Catholic doctrine of priesthood'. This leads him into a one-sided reading of

history: 'When the monarchical bishop emerges in the second century, he clearly is, and clearly remains, the key-man in the permanent form which the Christian ministry has now taken. He is not significant simply because he is the summit of a pyramid whose base consists of presbyter and deacons. He is the central, representative, essential ministerial figure.'

The Maynooth team, on its side, is speaking against the background of Vatican II, which some priests believe to have exalted bishops and lay-people at the expense of priests. 'Between those two forces, the hierarchy and the people, he is in serious theological and practical danger.' (p. 2, Fr McDonagh's essay.) Anxiety of this kind may possibly account for two serious examples of theological fumble, as it seems to me, in the essays by Frs Meagher and Ratzinger.

Fr Meagher's paper is one of a pair on the biblical tradition of priesthood, one dealing

with the ministry of the word (Fr Freyne) and his own dealing with worship. There is some tension between the two papers, the second being the more 'priestly' of the two: Fr Freyne thinks that the New Testament is silent about the priesthood of Christian ministers out of respect for the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood, Fr Meagher that it is to avoid giving support to the judaizers. He adduces some persuasive pointers to a ministry of the eucharist on the part of the apostles: Paul established the tradition of the eucharist at Corinth, the apostolic tradition of the passion shows clear signs of a liturgical setting, and it would have been natural for the administrators of the new covenant to bless the cup of the new covenant in the Lord's blood. He believes that the apostles handed on the ministry of the word and of the eucharist to presbyters. The argument is definitely skimmed at this point and would not satisfy Dr Hanson for a moment. The real fumble, though, comes at the next step. Instead of going on to ask how presbyters turned into priests, Fr Meagher turns back to the Old Testament for support: 'The statement that the Old Testament priesthood was abolished with the coming of Christ can lead us to underrate—and grossly underrate—the values of that priesthood. Priesthood, as ministry of word and worship, is linked to covenant both in the Old and in the New Testament.' (p. 42.)

Fr Ratzinger's paper is built upon the concept of mediatorship. He first, and very usefully, establishes a fundamental convergence between Galatians, which will not use mediatorship of Christ, and Hebrews and I Timothy, that do. He then goes on to establish, or claim to establish, a christological foundation for apostolic mediation and an apostolic foundation for presbyteral mediation. Even here much of what he has to say seems to me to be rightly said. His discussion of the speech attributed to Paul in Acts 20, for example, is more persuasive than Dr Hanson's: 'Luke' provides us there with a conscious paradigm

of the apostolic succession. Unfortunately, throughout this section Fr Ratzinger over-emphasizes the continuity of mediation from Christ through the apostles to presbyters. But only Christ can mediate between God and men (I Tim. 2, 5), only Christ can establish the wholly new relationship, covenant, between God and men (Heb. 12, 74). Therefore when Ratzinger comes to his conclusions he must suddenly go into reverse: '... the priest is only a "mediator" as a servant of Christ... the idea of mediator ought to be avoided.' (p. 59.) '... the priest is unqualified to tell the people that he is their mediator before God. Christ alone is the mediator.' (p. 62.)

I have singled out these two papers and their weaknesses, as I see them, because they seem to me to be crucial. Are Christian presbyters literally priests, that is, sacerdotal mediators between God and men, exercising their mediation through a sacrificial cult, after the pattern of the Old Testament priesthood? Such a conception comes dangerously close to Dr Hanson's rather loaded description of 'the Catholic doctrine of priesthood' given on page 45 of his book. Dr Hanson's own positive account of ministerial priesthood I find acceptable: 'a priesthood central to, and representative of, the Church, not external to it, a priesthood which concentrates and expresses within the Church the priestly function which the whole Church corporately possesses because it is united with Christ, the High Priest *par excellence*. In whatever sense the Eucharist may be said to be a sacrifice this priesthood offers this sacrifice along with and in the midst of and representatively for the whole Church.' (pp. 47–48.) I would want to affirm the sacramental unity between the Eucharist and the Cross and to emphasize that Christ is the true offerer of the Eucharist. Fr McGoldrick of the Maynooth team seems to hold a similar theology of ministerial priesthood (p. 66); it is in keeping with what Fr Ratzinger finally says. Here at last the two books find a meeting point. JEROME SMITH, O.P.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF LORD ACTON AND RICHARD SIMPSON: Vol. 1, edited by Josef L. Altholz and Damian McElrath. Cambridge University Press, 1971. 228 pp. £5.

This volume, the first of three to be devoted to the correspondence between Lord Acton and Richard Simpson, which contains 200 letters dating from February 1858 till August 1859, is edited in a workmanlike manner and beautifully produced. Parts of Acton's letters, discreetly and sometimes misleadingly edited

by Gasquet, have already been printed, but here we have them complete and unaltered. Most of Simpson's have only recently been discovered, in one of those legendary trunks in the attic. Consequently this publication should interest all students of liberal movements in the Church, though it cannot be said that