

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

anything remarkably new emerges in the present volume. The *Rambler* episode has never been other than sadly clear, though a knowledge of the details adds the piquancy of everyday actuality. But just because these letters are concerned with the minutiae of buying and running the magazine there is not much here of general interest. Acton and Simpson knew each other well and met frequently, so that they were able to take each other's political and religious views for granted; consequently, there are no discussions, though there are occasional shrewd or amusing comments on the current scene. As to history, Acton sends Simpson lists of sources, useful quotations and so on, but little more. They corrected each other's articles, vying in modesty, and laboriously translated foreign contributions, adding notes of almost equal substance. Because the purpose of their correspondence at this date was thus restricted and practical, these letters have little of the fascination of Newman's, whose hastiest scribble remains alive and breathing.

Both Acton and Simpson, however, are interesting persons, Acton, of course, being of more general interest as one of the foremost of the new breed of scientific historians which emerged during the nineteenth century, and the founding father of the *Cambridge Modern History*. Recently there was published in *The Times Literary Supplement* an interesting article on Acton and the *C.M.H.*, and views of history, which one hopes will not vanish into the limbo of departed journalism. In spite of some recent writing on Acton there remains a need for a thorough study of his whole life, no holds barred. We have much to learn from his life, not only about historians' attitudes to historical writing, but also about actual history, since Acton was actively involved in the intellectual and political issues of the second half of the nineteenth century, both as a Catholic and as a liberal. It is interesting that Acton thought that the religious situation in England was more like that in Germany than in France—the main attack on Christianity was intellectual rather than political. Hence the importance to Acton of an intellectual forum of opinion, such as he intended *The Rambler* to be.

Acton was only twenty-four when he took on *The Rambler*, but he already sounds far more elderly than Simpson, his senior by fourteen years. Many will look forward to the long-promised biography of Simpson by Fr McElrath, one of the editors of this work.

Richard Simpson has so irrepressible a sense of humour that funny remarks pop up in every other letter. He was an Oxford-trained married clergyman, converted at twenty-six, who had difficulty in finding a suitable lay vocation for himself. He had both theological and literary interests and the collapse of *The Rambler* finally moved him more towards the latter; he became a good Shakespearian scholar and wrote perceptively on Jane Austen. As co-editor he was full of fight on issues which he thought important, but so good-humoured that one cannot imagine how anyone could mind such gay battling. People did, however, principally Cardinal Wiseman, who was the real power behind the opposition to *The Rambler* and the cause of most of its difficulties. Simpson was treated very badly by 'the C' and his associates and took it very well. Possibly Fr McElrath exaggerates the fears of a *layman's* theologizing; nobody objected to W. G. Ward's doing so. Ultramontane theologizing was all right, whoever did it; other views, even when put forward by bishops, were not. Again, it was not a fear of converts; Ward, Faber and Manning were all converts. It was a true division of opinion, which, though it has always existed in the Church, was at that time, more than any other, regarded as shocking, inappropriate and incompatible with unity.

The history of *The Rambler* is depressing, partly because we never seem to have done with such cases. English Catholics, at last emancipated, desperately needed a good periodical to deal with the intellectual, political and literary problems of the day; Acton and Simpson were the ideal editors—though Newman, during his brief editorship, drew praise from both of them, as much for his handling of the practical business as for his judicious judgment. Simpson, who referred to him affectionately as Old Noggs, would have continued to work under him with content, but it was not to be. Newman was forced to resign and all he got out of his attempt to help them was secret delation to Rome for his article 'On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine'. Acton calls him the only real theologian the Church had in England. After the Papal Brief directed at the Munich Congress Acton felt it necessary to close down, early in 1864, an event which falls outside the scope of this volume. Nothing has ever taken the place of *The Rambler* and the Catholic *ethos* has, in my opinion, suffered because of this. Ultramontanism, enthusiastically em-

braced, had a cramping effect and sealed up too many windows into the world. Perhaps Vatican II has opened a few of these, as Pope John hoped. At any rate I think both Acton and Simpson would have welcomed the

declaration on Religious Liberty (freedom of conscience), which perhaps gets less publicity than other conciliar decrees because it was so long overdue.

MERIEL TREVOR

**THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF RELIGION**, by Betty R. Scharf. *Hutchinson University Library*, London, 1970, 190 pp. £1.65 (hardback); 70p.

In the last few years the massive American literature on the general discussion of approaches to religion has been added to by a number of British books. The fact that the latter have very little empirical work available in this country on which to base their discussions sometimes makes one's reactions to the widow's mite rather ungracious. The student and the professional sociologist of religion have to read the lot; the general reader is going to want to know what will give him best value for his money and effort. Fortunately, in spite of an overlap which is repetitive rather than refining in relation to certain themes (church, sect and denomination typologies, for instance), these books do basically try to do different things. Bryan Wilson and David Martin have each taken the available evidence on British religion and come to fundamentally different conclusions about the degree of secularization which can be determined; the latter writer, indeed, in a subsequent collection of essays, attacks the usefulness of the concept altogether. Roland Robertson's recent *The Sociological Interpretation of Religion* is a brilliant, uneven exposition of a particular type of sociological approach which will stimulate those who accept it (or at least find it meaningful) and leave others cold.

Mrs Scharf's book is a more pedestrian one, but no less worthwhile for that. Her aim is to provide a general summary of theories and approaches to religion, and as such her book will be very useful to those students of sociological theory who complain that they can't put the right names under the right schools of thought.

Sociologists have often used the analysis of religious beliefs and phenomena to illustrate how certain key concepts and themes can be used: social cohesion and solidarity, for instance, social control, or the relationship between ideas and social structures. This illustrative aim is another of the goals which

Mrs Scharf has set herself. She also attempts to extend the discussion considerably beyond the area of North American and Western European literature.

All these goals are important, and her book will probably help many to see sociological themes more clearly. However, the book is a much more ambitious one than it seems at first sight. Moreover the density of style, presentation (there are no sub-headings in the chapters) and the width of scope leave one gasping for air at times. The concern for synthesizing theories, for which students will bless her, does lead to stretching some parallels too far, as in the chapter on functionalist theories of religion. Like the classical sociologists from whom she draws her fundamental approach (in taking religion as one area which can be used to demonstrate basic themes), she uses analyses from the work of anthropologists on primitive and peasant societies as well as that of sociologists on industrialized societies. In general this strengthens very considerably the basic structure of the book, but at times it can deteriorate into a collection of bitty items. For instance, the author includes in her eclectic discussion of the roles of religious specialists the religions of Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Catholic and Protestant Christianity in half-a-dozen pages.

It would be a pity, however, for anyone with a serious interest in sociological approaches to religion to be put off by the author's immediate plunge into central issues. There is much valuable synthesizing in this inexpensive volume. It does tell you more about sociological thought than about religion, but that is precisely what the author intended it should do. And a good deal more thought and effort has gone into this book's construction than into some of the pretentious writing on the sociology of religion that has appeared recently on both sides of the Atlantic.

JOAN BROTHERS