

BOOK REVIEWS

Prayers for Sunday Services. The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1980. Pp. viii + 136. Paperback, £2.50.

This is the companion volume to the *Book of Common Order* (1979), and it assumes the order of service recommended in that book for the main Sunday Service when the Lord's Supper is not celebrated. These two books together invite some comparison with the *Book of Common Order* (1940) and *Prayers for the Christian Year* (1935), for the 1940 book provided for non-eucharistic services, and the book now under review corresponds as to two-thirds or a half to that of 1935. This comparison shows a considerable development in liturgical taste: the recent volumes are much less verbose; some might think that *Prayers for Sunday Services* is distinctly skimpy.

The first part of the book provides sixteen non-eucharistic services (there is said to be little demand for help for evening services). Each service has been prepared by a separate author, so that together these orders reflect "the style and idiom of their different contributors". The Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion justifies this deliberate lack of editing and standardising on the ground that it believes "that there is no longer any one language of public prayer familiar and acceptable to the whole Church". One understands the difficulty; and it is a sense good that a certain variety is evidently welcome. Yet not all is gain; and the unevenness of the result detracts from the value of the book. The more serious point, however is this: does the Committee exist merely to reflect what at present happens? Or, is it supposed to set a standard to which those who lead worship should aim? It is certain that the ministers of the Kirk will very properly adapt whatever is provided to the particular needs of their parishes and congregations: would it not, therefore, have been better (though much more difficult and certainly more courageous) to have undertaken the exacting task of editing and so providing something more like a standard? Leadership consists in being at least somewhat ahead of the average.

It is perhaps the disappointing feature of these services that they are so *average*. They are correct, formal, even business-like; but do they encourage and evoke that sense of awe without which worship easily becomes a mere formality? That is a

difficult question to answer, since the forms of prayer, like a printed sermon, may not adequately convey what happens in the event; but I confess to being left with the question.

In the section Prayers for the Christian Year, the first item consists in proper prefaces for Christmas, Easter and Pentecost to be used in the Third Order for the Lord's Supper in the *Book of Common Order* (1979). By comparison with the prefaces provided for the first and second orders these are very long indeed; undoubtedly, one would have thought, too long. Their theological content may be admirable; but however welcome their orthodoxy, it should not overload liturgy.

From Advent to Trinity appropriate material is provided in very uneven quantities; and it is not easy to perceive on what principles the Committee was working. The Sundays of Advent have material which can be fitted in to whatever other prayers the minister may be using, presumably from one or other of the sixteen previously mentioned, and much the same applies to what is provided for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This is followed by Christmastide (? including Epiphany), for which more material is supplied, though this would be easier to use if clearer directions had been given. For Lent some general prayers are provided; and when we come to the Fourth Sunday (Transfiguration) not a lot is given. What is offered for Passion Sunday and Holy Week is so meager that it might have been better to have left a blank. Maybe the 1935 book was overdone at this point, though there can be two opinions about that; but at least it was adequate where this is not. We are better served for Easter, though it would have been better for full services to have been suggested for Easter and Ascension. Pentecost has more adequate treatment, as also does Harvest. St Andrew gets rather short measure; and it is not easy to see what one is to do with what is provided for St Paul. There are welcome prayers for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. No doubt those who have to dedicate church buildings or their furnishings will be glad of the suggestions made for such occasions.

All in all, one is puzzled to know what the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion supposed it was required to do in this section on the Christian Year, just as it is difficult to assess its theological priorities. Is Palm Sunday less important than Harvest? Or Good Friday than Remembrance Day? Somehow the proportions of this section have gone badly askew; and it looks as if the Committee became weary in well doing, ran out of steam, and/or had little time or even inclination to complete its task.

It may well be that liturgical style is now under question; but *New Every Morning*, the BBC publication, has somehow managed to get it right, whereas this book has failed; and as far as the Christian Year is concerned much more adequate provision should have been made, or the task abandoned.

JOHN HUXTABLE, Newton Abbot, Devon.

Theological Foundations for Ministry: Selected Readings for a Theology of the Church in Ministry. Ed. Ray S. Anderson. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, and Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979. Pp. xii + 776. Paperback, £3.95.

Scots presbyterians are much given to priding themselves on "getting their theology right", and are not beyond sly digs at Anglicans and others on account of the anti-intellectualism which is reputed to be rife in the Church of England. This kind of theological arrogance is commonly quite good humoured, and might be accounted relatively harmless were it not for one thing; it encourages a curious complacency which obscures the fact that Church life, worship, and patterns of ministry are singularly unaffected by most of the theologising that goes on. To take the most obvious and glaring example; the theology of worship which has been generally taught and widely accepted for several decades now seems hardly to have affected more than the incidentals of the worship of the Church of Scotland. It seems as if theology had become segregated from the life of the Church in such a way that it is not expected in any real sense to criticise, challenge or shape the practice of the Church.

The German students who are coming in increasing numbers to study theology in Scotland surprise their Scottish contemporaries in many ways. For instance, they tell us that many in Germany today regard theology as the most radical and relevant of all studies within the Universities. The theologian is not just the friendly critic of the Church, but theology must also scrutinise and assess the social and political orders in the light of the Kingdom. And, as a further surprise, it appears that theological positions which in the Anglo-Saxon world are used to support ecclesiastical, social, and political conservatism, are in Germany understood as the most radical of all theologies. The contrast in ecclesiastical, social and political attitudes between

Gollwitzer and contemporary Anglo-Saxon Barthians is both fascinating and perplexing.

There is, surely, a need for a radical and questioning theology of ministry. A theology which never engages with questions of ministry is radically deficient as a *Christian* theology. Ministry which derives its real sustenance not from theology but from psychology or sociology instead is in danger of becoming indistinguishable from social work or therapy. But a theology of ministry which does not engage with sociology and psychology is impoverished *as theology*, and sinfully disregarding of the contemporary context of ministry. Worst of all, perhaps, is a theology which narrows the vision of ministry and in effect confirms inherited patterns of ministry in every detail, encouraging rigidly and archaic and irrelevant responses to the needs of the day. A theology of ministry must be a theology which helps and prods and provokes renewal of ministry rather than ministerial complacency.

This book is to be welcomed because of its emphatic conviction that ministerial formation is a theological matter, and that it is vital both for the health of theology and the effectiveness of ministerial education that this should be recognised. It is fatally easy for a gulf to open between ministerial formation on the one hand and the biblical, doctrinal and historical disciplines of theology on the other — a kind of compartmentalisation which has disastrous results on both sides, but is resolutely opposed by the whole tenor of this weighty tome.

But does the term “foundations” in the title get the relationship right? Is it not too static a term, in an age of the shaking of the foundations? Is it good to suggest that theology is the basis and ministry the superstructure? Is not the relationship between the two a far more dynamic interaction? Must we not recognise that good theology not only flows into praise and prayer and service, but also flows out of these? My point is not a mere verbal quibble about the title of the book; almost everything within the covers is capable of being understood by a student as suggesting that *first* you get your theology right and *then* you are equipped for ministry, rather than seeing theology of ministry as ministry seeking theological understanding, something that must be done *in ambulando*.

The readings are arranged in four main parts, each introduced by the editor. These are:—

1. A Theology for the Church in Ministry.
2. Jesus' Ministry to the Father on behalf of the World.

3. Jesus' Ministry in the Spirit for the sake of the Church;
 - (i) The Upbuilding and Upholding of the Church for Ministry.
 - (ii) The Ordering and Equipping of the Church for Ministry.
4. The Church's Ministry to the World on behalf of Jesus:
 - (i) Incarnational Ministry.
 - (ii) Kerygmatic Ministry.
 - (iii) Diakonal Ministry.

Of the total of 28 extracts, eight are from Karl Barth, six from T. F. Torrance, and four from the editor's *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God*. Others who feature include Bonhoeffer, Thielicke, James Torrance and W. A. Whitehouse.

As readers will realise from the outline of contents and the names of the contributors, this book makes no attempt to cover the range of theological discussion of ministry today, but presents one fairly coherent understanding of ministry by choosing extracts from theologians who share many fundamental assumptions. There is, no doubt, a case for such a procedure and Dr Anderson argues it in his preface. But to the present reviewer it seems unlikely that this procedure is pedagogically wise. Certainly many students, and all the ablest, find that theology in dialogue and controversy is the more stimulating and productive and resist anything that smacks of indoctrination. Where this book is used, steps should be taken to remove the impression that Dr Anderson brought it down engraved on tablets of stone from the summit of Mount Sinai!

There are a lot of very good things here, but together with the unduly narrow selectiveness of the editor, a good number of the extracts seem rather dated. Despite one or two attempts to enter into contemporary discussions, such as Ignacio Ellacuria's piece on liberation theology and T. F. Torrance's well-known lecture on The Church in the New Era of Scientific and Cosmological Change, the majority of the extracts, and the most significant, come from the 1950's and 1960's. This might not matter too much but it does seem a little quaint to suggest that foundations for ministry which were felt to be adequate in the 1950's are still to be built on in the 1980's as if nothing had changed, nothing been learned, and nothing forgotten in the intervening decades. The problems of datedness are shown at their starkest in the extract on "The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching" from Barth's *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (1928). This is not only early Barth, but it perpetuates a critique of the Roman Catholic position which is

(as Barth himself would have been the first to admit) quite inapplicable to the post-Vatican II Church, and is likely to encourage a kind of preaching which may well have been necessary when Barth wrote, but is now of questionable value.

All books of readings have their drawbacks. It is the nature of the beast to wrench passages out of context, and an editor's selection is always open to criticism. This is a book to be welcomed and to be used with discrimination by all those who are convinced that a continuing dynamic interaction between theology and the making of ministers is necessary for the good of both, even if they cannot share the editor's enthusiastic advocacy of the finality and sufficiency of one particular theological stance.

DUNCAN B. FORRESTER, Edinburgh.