

REVIEWS

THE SACRED BRIDGE. The Interdependence of Liturgy and Music in Synagogue and Church during the First Millennium. (Dennis Dobson; £4 10s.)

This stout volume represents the first attempt at a comprehensive survey of a vast and important field. Nowadays the importance of Jewish origins in the development of Christian liturgy and chant is a commonplace of liturgical and musical scholarship, but, as Dr Werner points out in his introduction, 'notwithstanding the individual efforts of some scholars during the last two or three centuries and their meritorious, but necessarily limited studies, *comparative liturgy* is a rather virginal field and has not been treated comprehensively as yet. This must be stated in view of the tremendous output dealing with the strictly theoretical side of our problem, especially the theology of Early Christianity and its relations to Rabbinic Judaism. A. Baumstark's attempt towards a *Liturgie comparée* was a first approach, but fell considerably short of its aim, due to its limited scope and the author's lack of Jewish knowledge' (p. xx). These deficiencies are indeed the chief pitfalls in this field: the first is easily accounted for in that few men have the range of talents necessary, but the second has long been inexcusable. Dr Werner, professor of liturgical music at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, where he succeeded Abraham Idelsohn, the great pioneer of the study of ancient Hebrew chant, is admirably equipped for his task by reason of his musical and ethnomusicological studies and his familiarity with a large number of languages, ancient and modern. If his book did no more than to dispel ignorance about Jewish liturgies and to correct the errors of previous scholars, it would still be of the greatest importance, but its wide and far-reaching synthesis opens up new vistas of enquiry that will ensure that it will remain a necessary tool for all scholars working in this field for a long time to come. At the same time it can be, and is intended to be, read by non-professional music-lovers, who will find all musical terms explained, and, if they make the effort, will be rewarded by a vastly enriched understanding of Christian chant and worship.

The book is not primarily a history of liturgical development but an examination of the inter-relations of Christian and Hebrew music; nevertheless, as 'no liturgical music is fully understood without profound appreciation of the liturgy itself, its structure and ideas, every piece of liturgical music is to be interpreted in the light of its textual background, and its function in the framework of the service'

(p. xv). Therefore Dr Werner devotes his first 329 pages to historic and liturgical matters; far too often, as he gently points out, Christian scholars have erred simply through ignorance of Jewish ritual: even the greatest, such as Jungmann, Peter Wagner, Gastoné, and Edmund Bishop. He commences with a description of the Jewish liturgy at the time of primitive Christianity, its structure, categories of prayer, and the liturgical differences between weekdays, Sabbath, and festivals, and proceeds to examine the evidence for liturgical practices in the earliest Christian communities. This leads to a consideration of common elements in temple, synagogue, and Christian ritual, involving examination of Armenian, Syrian, Byzantine, Nestorian, and Western liturgies; biblical and post-biblical Hebraisms in Christian liturgical texts; and a most interesting excursus on the primitive Armenian church and its affiliations with the Ebionites and Paulicians, whose tradition has preserved many Jewish features.

A detailed study of the scriptural lessons in Jewish and Christian worship provides some important general principles. 'One may formulate the law of preservation as follows: in Judaism and Christianity basic traditions are retained, even under changing circumstances, provided two conditions are fulfilled: (1) The traditions must have their roots in liturgically important seasons and must be traceable to their very beginning; (2) they must have grown in the mother soil of ancient custom, belonging to an older system of pre-Christian or pre-Jewish culture, in which they were originally rooted' (p. 82). The author sums up this part of his investigation as follows: 'Under certain conditions the synagogal traditions were preserved in most of the Churches. Christological, calendaric and dogmatic reasons were the chief causes of their changes, shifts, and their deviations. Once the transposition of the calendar was accomplished, the chief points in the liturgical year carried on the old lessons, originally assigned to them in Judaism . . . the Latin, the Nestorian and Armenian Churches preserved most faithfully the traditions of ancient Judaism' (p. 93). Occasionally one may think that the author's enthusiasm for finding correspondences takes him a little too far: some of his quoted 'parallels' exhibit very little resemblance. A few details are puzzling: thus in the table on page 87 showing the lessons for the Easter Vigil, those of the Roman rite are mixed with the Good Friday lessons without comment. Christian scholars will also, inevitably, have reservations about some of Dr Werner's interpretations of liturgical developments. These small points however do not invalidate his general thesis.

The remainder of the book's first part discusses in similar detail the origins of ephonic notation in relation to the scriptural lessons; the forms and growth of psalm-singing; melismatic forms, hymns,

acclamations, and doxologies in their textual and liturgical aspects; and the ethical evaluation of music. Of the many interesting questions raised there is only space here to mention three: the Jewish origin of the ambo (p. 130); the joint Hebrew and Latin etymology of *jubilus* (p. 169); and the Jewish use of the *Ter Sanctus* wherein Jungmann is conclusively shown to be gravely in error (p. 285).

The second part of the book deals with 'Musical Comparisons and Studies'. The first steps towards providing a scientific basis for the examination of Jewish and Christian musical inter-relations were taken by Idelsohn, who recorded thousands of chants in the isolated Jewish communities of Babylon and the Yemen. These communities had had no contact with Palestine or each other for nearly two thousand years, yet their liturgical music shows many similarities with Gregorian chant both in melodic patterns and psalm tones (though neither community has anything resembling the Solesmes method of rhythm); thus it was impossible not to assume that they had a common origin in the Jewish synagogal chant of the first century A.D. Much work has been done on the many problems raised, but without reaching very definite conclusions. Dr Werner suggests that 'some most important aspects have been overlooked', and by enlarging the search to include a wider section of the ancient Orient and the gnostic sects he shows the existence of material which, properly evaluated, may clear up many questions if subjected to further research. Thus on the origins of the modal system he demonstrates that 'the conception of an eightfold musical modality dates back at least to the beginning of the first millennium B.C. It originated in Mesopotamia. . . . The principle of the *octoechos* originated not in musical but in cosmological and calendaric speculations. . . . While the existing ecclesiastical modes must be considered *post factum* constructions of the theorists, the conception of an eightfold modality was an *a priori* postulate of a religio-mythical nature to which theorists had to adjust the various systems of modes.' His examination of psalm tones, lesson intonations, melismatic chants and hymns cannot be adequately summarized here without musical quotations and a great deal of musicological detail which by reason of compression could not be anything like as lucid and interesting as Dr Werner's closely-packed argument. There are plenty of surprises: such as the fact of Jewish borrowings from Christian chant, or that *Credo III* of the *Liber Usualis* has close resemblances to a Hebrew chant for feast-days. Such occasional resemblances, as Dr Werner continually insists, are inconclusive for any demonstration: only by analysing melodies into their basic formulas are firm grounds for asserting common origin or development discovered. His pages are copiously illustrated with such analyses that speak for themselves. His main

conclusions summarized at the end of the book are these: (1) 'apart from the Cantic, Response, and Refrain forms which Christian worship inherited from the Temple, most of Christian musical substance, if at all Jewish in origin, came from the ancient Synagogue'; (2) 'as in the literary, so in the musical liturgy, the form conceptions of dichotomous psalmody, of scriptural cantillation, and of extended cantic chant, are basic and lasting elements of the Jewish heritage. They remained a substratum common to all derivatives of Judaism and Christianity' (p. 577).

It is perhaps to be regretted that the author accepts so much of Dom Mocquereau's views on Gregorian chant without question: many scholars today would disagree with, or demand qualification of, the assertion that 'Gregorian chant is almost without exception based upon oratorical accent and evolved an oratorical type of *melos*' (p. 561). It is also regrettable that he sometimes uses his theological terms wrongly: thus the Trinity is described as God's 'attributes' (p. 560).

Musicologists will inevitably have many points to raise, for a pioneer venture of this sort is liable to pitfalls in matters of detail as Dr Werner candidly acknowledges; however, the pages of BLACKFRIARS are not the place for musicological argument. But whatever differences of opinion and interpretation may later appear as future scholars continue along the lines the author has suggested, nothing can diminish the magnitude of his achievement or our indebtedness to him.

ANTHONY MILNER

MOVING INTO AQUARIUS. By Michael Tippett. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 18s.)

This collection of articles and broadcast talks covers many subjects: the relation of the artist to society; the problems of the modern composer; opera; Shaw's music criticism; Schoenberg; and modern art. Yet, as Tippett says in his introduction, 'the bewildering variety arranges itself round a central pre-occupation. All the material is concerned in one way or another with the question of what sort of world we live in, and how we may behave in it.' This pre-occupation is also found in his compositions, particularly in the oratorio *A Child of our Time* and the opera *The Midsummer Marriage*. The book has the same drawbacks as these works. So long as Tippett merely composes music or discusses it *qua* music, he produces original and compelling art (by which he has become one of England's leading composers) and acute criticism; whenever he attempts to mirror 'world-issues' in his music or discuss them in prose the result is an unsatisfactory mixture of vague statements and doubtful conclusions. He regards himself as 'a disciple of Jung', but, while he is obviously remarkably well-