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BOOK REVIEWS

The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics. Vol I: Seeing the Form

Hans Urs von Balthasar. Translated by Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis. Edited by Joseph Fessio, S. J., and John Riches. T.&T. Clark, 1982. Pp. 691. £19.95.

Hans Urs von Balthasar belongs to the very top flight of contemporary Roman Catholic theologians, but his work is not nearly so well-known to English-speaking readers as it ought to be. Now a beginning has been made toward providing an English version of this scholar's *magnum opus,* called in German *Herrlichkeit.* It is only a beginning, for although the present volume is a very large one, six more are to follow. The small team of American and British scholars who have undertaken such a heavy task are to be congratulated, as are also the publishers. The translation is very well done, and for the most part the reader is not conscious of its being a translation at all, it goes along so smoothly and naturally. Inevitably, in a work of this size and complexity, there are a few slips – for instance, on p. 534 a meaningless 'whereby' is used to translate *wobei,* signifying 'in connection with which.'

The first question to ask is: 'What does the author mean by "theological aesthetics"?' The question is perhaps best answered by distinguishing the aesthetic approach from other possible approaches. Thus, while philosophical theology is concerned with the truth of the Christian revelation and moral theology with its implications for the good life, a theological aesthetics is concerned with its beauty, and this means, in turn with its form. Of course, these approaches all impinge on one another. To perceive the perfect form of the Christian revelation, the fittingness and even the necessity of its proportions and structure, is at the same time to have a new perception of its truth and its meaning for human life. So within this book we find themes that are treated also by theologians, writers on spirituality, and biblical expositors, though all are treated here from the point of view of one who has a sensibility for form.

The lengthy introduction sets forth the fundamental problems of theological aesthetics. Dr von Balthasar is anxious that it should not be confused with the so-called 'aesthetic theology' of Schleiermacher and others, a type of theology in which feeling and experience were given a determinative role. A true theological aesthetics has been very much neglected by Catholic theologians and even more by Protestants. Already in the Introduction we meet the first of a series of rather sharp criticisms of Protestantism. In these days of ecumenical politeness, this may surprise us, but there is a refreshing honesty in our author, and we are reminded that many issues arising from the Reformation remain unsettled. Aesthetics has never been one of Protestantism's strong points, and it would be hard to dissent from the author's judgment that 'after [Christianity] had been denuded by the iconoclasm of Luther and Calvin, it had to take refuge in naked pietistic interiority' (p. 80). On the other hand, the eccentric Hamann receives some praise. He is the first in a series of thinkers of the past to each of whom Dr von Balthasar devotes a few pages of critical comment in his Introduction. The others are the Romantics Herder and Chateaubriand, and two later writers who are not likely to be known to most English-speaking readers, Gügler, described as 'the inspired theologian from Lucerne who died all too young' (p. 94) and Scheeben.

The decks having been cleared, there follows a long chapter on 'The Subjective Evidence.' This is an examination of the experience of faith, as seen from the human side. In faith we perceive the form of revelation, which points to an invisible, unfathomable mystery. 'Form is the apparition of this mystery and reveals it, while naturally at the same time veiling and protecting it' (p. 151). Not only seeing the form but the ultimate mystery and incomprehensibility have their parallels in aesthetic experience: 'The more a great work of art is known and grasped, the more concretely are we dazzled by its "ungraspable" greatness' (p. 186). The parallel emerges again in the claim that 'the aesthetic experience is the union of the greatest possible concreteness of the individual form and the greatest possible universality of meaning' (p. 234). The same might be said of the revelation in Jesus Christ.

An interesting part of von Balthasar's discussion in this chapter is his treatment of what he calls the 'spiritual senses.' He gives a brief history of a doctrine of the spiritual senses, tracing its beginnings back to Origen, then following its development through the Middle Ages, and ending with the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola. In these exercises, Ignatius bids the retreatment at the end of each day to 'apply his senses' to the mysteries of faith – an imaginative act in which he summons before himself everything from the sight of the glowing fires of hell to the sweet fragrance of the Godhead. These spiritual senses are said to be a mean between the physical senses and mystical apprehension. Like aesthetic perception, they take us beyond what is superficially visible or tangible to the form. 'The God who became man begins with the external senses and move back to the interior senses' (p. 403). This is not 'naked mystical sense' but is a 'supernatural and, at the same time, sensory perceptive faculty that can sense the specific quality of the divine Eassence because it is founded upon God's incarnation and upon the Eucharist.' These are large claims to make, but we must listen with respect, because they are made by someone who has obviously advanced far along spiritual paths. But the form is sometimes more, sometimes less, visible. There is an echo of the mystics in von Balthasar's remarks about the alternation of consolation and desolation, described as 'God's great educative process.'

There follows an even longer chapter on 'The Objective Evidence.' Jesus Christ himself is, of course, the great objective datum of revelation. He is the measure of all things, and cannot be measured by anything other than himself. At the same time, the form of Christ is mediated to us through certain agencies. Among these is the Bible, and the reader cannot help noticing that when von Balthasar mentions the historical-critical approach to the Bible, he almost always does so in a hostile manner. The reason for this hostility, however, is not a fundamentalist attachment to the words of scripture but his belief (surely not unfounded) that our concern with the factual data uncovered by the critical method have made us increasingly insensitive to the spiritual teaching. His treatment of the sacraments is interesting. It is the eucharist above all which mediates the form of Christ and 'impresses' it (a favourite expression) on the Church. Von Balthasar is considered rather conservative among Roman Catholics, so it is somewhat surprising to find him claiming the communion is the essence of the eurcharist – the 'transubstantiation' of persons rather than of the gifts.

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So he is critical of the RC requirement of attendance at mass, regardless of whether or not communion is made.

Many scholars, however, have held that the essence of the mass is the *anamnesis* – such was the view of the great Anglican liturgist, Bishop Frere. We may in fact wonder whether Dr von Balthasar is not becoming too subjective and individualist at this point, and the suspicion grows when we read what he says about baptism. For now we find him deploring infant baptism and, still more, the custom (now common in the American Episcopal Church) of giving communion to young children. These things, he holds, should not happen 'before the age of reason' (p. 580). The only other sacrament he treats in detail is penance, and he sees its advantage in the fact that the penitent must act for himself as a conscious, responsible individual! (ibid.)

Is this very long book worth the effort which it requires from the reader? The answer is surely Yes. Dr von Balthasar is not (like some continental theologians) repetitious or long-winded. He gives good value on every page, and new ideas keep coming till the end. The criticism must rather be that the book is too rich and too densely packed. An ironical consequence is that the reader may feel that it is extremely difficult to see the form of this work as a whole. He may feel that he is wandering through a forest of a million trees, each one beautiful and interesting, but that it is hard to see the shape of the whole forest. Perhaps the volumes still to come will help.

John Macquarrie

Christian Theism: A Study in its Basic Principles

Huw Parri Owen. T.&T. Clark, 1984. Pp. viii+152. £8.95.

"I have attempted", Professor Owen tells us in the Preface to this book, "to state as concisely as possible what I consider to be the basic Christian beliefs concerning God and his relation to the world." And he is quite explicit as to what he considers those beliefs to be. "God, who exists in the threefold form of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and who created us out of nothing, so loved us that he became man for us in Christ in order that we, by our free, consent, might share in the eternal life that Christ won for us by his victory over evil on the Cross. Interpretations of this substance differ; but the substance itself will always remain; and it differentiates Christianity from all other religions."

Such a conviction as this, so uncompromisingly stated, cannot be taken for granted among professional theologians today, but Professor Owen is quite deliberate in expressing it. "I am convinced", he writes, "that the theological substance of Christian tradition is no less rationally acceptable today than it was in previous ages"; and this book, written on his retirement from the chair of Christian Doctrine at King's College, is his vindication of this claim. The treatment is admirable, in both scope and execution. Creation, the Incarnation and the Trinity; providence, evil and salvation; and finally, grace, free will and immortality, are successively expounded and defended in less than one hundred and fifty pages, and this with a clarity and elegance which is all too rare in modern theological writing. The exclusion of certain doctrines, such as those of the Church and the Sacraments, does not imply that they are considered as of minor importance; they are Professor Owen insists, essential to Christianity (p. 3); they are secondary only in the sense that they presuppose and largely derive from those with which he deals. And he rightly stresses that the questions most prominent in theological discussion today are that of the status and nature of belief in the Incarnation and that of the relation between Christianity and the truth claims made by non-Christian religions. In an important appendix he examines Professor John Hick's proposal for "a paradigm shift from a Christinity-centred or Jesus-centred to a God-centred model of the universe of faiths" and shows in contrast that the uniqueness and specificity of Christianity as the only world-religion which asserts a genuine incarnation of a genuinely transcendent God make it the paradigm for the interpretation of all the rest.

There are a few matters on which I wish Professor Owen had written at greater length. The remarkable recent agreement of theologians of the "Chalcedonian" and "non-Chalcedonian" churches on the substance of orthodox Christology[1] and the equally striking, if less developed, convergence between Easterns and Westerns on the Procession of the Holy Spirit[2] are examples of topics on which his flair for discriminating between real issues of truth and falsehood and merely verbal or conceptual differences would have been highly illuminating. I find his discussion of grace (pp. 113ff) disappointing. The notion of grace as a *substance* intermediate between the Creator and the creature is indeed ridiculous, but that there can be a real and not merely a notional *relation* between them, however mysterious, is involved in the very notion of creation, as Professor Owen himself has made clear. I may perhaps mention the apprendix on "Grace and Nature in East and West" in my Gifford Lectures *The Openness of Being*.[3] Finally, I would suggest that a more explicit recognition that, in St Augustine's phrase, God created the world not *in time* but *with time*[4], so that time is a derivative from, or an aspect of, the existence of finite beings and is not an antecendently existing medium into which they are launched, would have been relevant to the chapter on the Soul and Immortality and in particular to the discussion of purgatory and hell. However, these comparatively minor criticisms do not in any way reduce my admiration for Professor Owen's splendid work. It should be made compulsory reading for all theological students and ordinands, but it will be of inestimable value to any thoughtful and intelligent Christian who, in this time of theological confusion and uncertainty, wishes to find a wider understanding and firmer foundations for his faith.

1. Cf *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?* (Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1981.)
2. Cf *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ* (ibid.).
3. London, Darton Longman and Todd, 1971, pp. 216ff.
4. *De Civitate Dei*, XI, vi.

E. L. Mascall

The Christian Experience of God as Trinity

James P. Mackey. SCM Press, 1983. Pp. viii+310. £7.50.

Since the publication in 1980 of Moltmann's book on the Trinity, the topic has begun to come to the centre of attention. In this study, which is by an author who knows the tradition well but is very critical of it, the doctrine is discussed in the light of the problems facing Christian theology in the context of both secular culture and the growing awareness of other religions. The whole book is dominated by a post-Kantian mentality which is deeply suspicious of any proposal to transcend in thought or doctrine that which is immediately given to experience.

Mackey is accordingly suspicious of any doctrines which attempt to conceive the doctrine of the Trinity as a proposal to say something about what God is in himself in distinction from what we experience of him in time. Thus Moltmann is criticised for failing to live up in practice to his own theoretical rejection of the distinction between the economic and immanent Trinity, in producing like Rahner a parallelism between persons and activities of God in himself and in the world.

The Fathers of the church come in for even more savage criticism. The weakness of the Cappadocian Fathers is held to consist in their having recourse to models of God which in their original usage were intrinsically sub-ordinationist. Torn from their old context, they appear to lack any intellible meaning: perhaps, therefore, Arius was nearer to the truth. Similarly, Augulstine is criticised – with some justification – for tearing apart the Trinity and the life and death of Jesus in this world, and for using desperate exegisis in an attempt to find scriptural justification for his characterisation of the Spirit as love and gift. These are perhaps the salient points to be observed in a varied and sometimes difficult terrain. (Those who wish to read a more sympathetic if also critical account of the same tradition are directed to Christopher Kaiser's recent *Doctrine of God* in the Marshall, Morgan and Scott Foundations for Faith series).

Mackey's conclusion is correspondingly sceptical. 'We may guess at self-differentiation in God, but it is not the business of trinitarian doctrine to describe this . . . Economic trinities or binities are the only ones we possess . . .' (pp. 241f). Your reviewer continues, however, to be one who believes this relativistic conclusion to be unjustified. The church may differ in the precise way in which in which its representatives at different times formulate the doctrine of the Trinity, but that is not to say that it is a matter of indifference whether and which 'binities and trinities' it chooses to affirm. We may not be in the business of describing what has sometimes been described as the social life of the blessed Trinity, but we are concerned with finding the concepts which are the most true to the God who makes himself known in Jesus, and therefore with drawing some kind of distinction between God as he is in eternity and God as he makes himself known in time and space. It is not merely a matter of our experience, but of whether we experience what is really there.

Colin Gunton

The Church and the Bomb. Nuclear Weapons and Christian Conscience

The Report of a working party under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Salisbury. Hodder and Stoughton, 1982. Pp. xii+190. £4.50.

The Church and the Bomb remains a valuable piece of work, despite the inevitable criticism made of it, beginning with the 'first strike' remark that it leaves a number of important questions unanswered – as useful a disabling tactic as one is likely to find. Such a criticism could probably be made of other reports produced by interdisciplinary groups hard pressed for time to assimilate the details of their topic as well as to think constructively from those details to a series of proposals. No report on a problem requiring attention to different intellectual skills and a variety of political and military matters and the relation between all these could possibly be regarded as 'final', nor would its authors expect it so to be regarded. They are to be commended for expending considerable stamina and courage to see it through, since the matter at stake engages those who take it seriously at the deepest levels of their being. Here, if anywhere, one has to pay attention to where one's trust ultimately lies, and ask the question as to whether and how that trust can engage with hideous possibility and shift us to a focus on peace and life.

The writers of the report could not be sustained by working within a shared tradition of theological ethics. A group that included a Quaker, as well as an Anglican pacifist, a Roman Catholic expert in moral theology, and a lecturer in war studies, working with other Anglicans lacking a shared theological perspective were not likely to find it an easy matter to struggle through to a set of recommendations. Yet they could well have been supported to some degree by the knowledge that the Churches as an international group of institutions have rediscovered a common cause here, despite deep cultural and political differences. The cause, after all, is not whether, if, in what circumstances *nuclear* weapons might be used, but the elimination of *war* from the human agenda (p. 163). One of the problems associated with the debate about nuclear weapons is that it may encourage people to suppose that 'conventional' weapons are somehow 'all right' to use – but hardly, if one looks at the gross figures, say 10M people killed since 1945, with some 20M wounded, and the ghastly range of armoury available, from polystyrene napalm, phosphoros grendades, dum-dum bullets, 'Agent Orange' and so on. We are faced with indisputable evidence of our own ferocity to other species as well as to our own, and need all our resources of instinct, emotion and intelligence to find the balance to solve the problem of how to cope with it.

The question is how to move out of the apparent impasse to face a future in which children can be born, and political and other institutions provide an environment in which those children will flourish, an environment which conceivably mediates divine reality to us. (An important expression of this view is currently associated with Canon Peter Selby of Newcastle upon Tyne Cathedral, and a former pupil of Christopher Evans at King's College). The writers of the Report wanted to show that 'the Christian gospel sets those who can accept it free from paralysing fear and commits them to the complex task of bridge-building and peacemaking in the midst of security' (p. 74). Notoriously, the Report proposed the unilateral renunciation by the UK

of its independent nuclear deterrant, though not enough attention has been paid to the point that this was a means of encouraging *multilateral* negotiations, and of restraining nuclear proliferation. In response, General Sir Hugh Beach (in *The Cross and the Bomb* 1983) has made the point that to propose unilateral renunciation of the Polaris/Trident programme, for instance, was to miss an opportunity to drive a hard bargain, obtaining a keen 'price' for the scaling down of comparable weaponry on 'the other side'. Argument about what will or will not contribute to effective negotiation, to the instability or stability of the overall system, remains a matter of political and military judgement where the stakes are indeed high.

To one feature of the debate, however, the closest attention needs to be paid, to what seems to be the central element of moral argument in its interconnections with those military and political judgements. John Langan, SJ of the Woodstock Theological Center in Washington D.C. has recently argued (*Modern Churchman* New Series 25:3, 1983) that whilst it may well be the case that the USA would hardly be distressed by the British renunciation of nuclear weapons, neither the USA nor other governments in NATO could tolerate a renunciation which called into question the basic legitimacy of the deterrent *as such* (see the Report, pp. 126-142, using the analogy of the conscientious objector; and pp. 150-154). Langan suggests that the Report overlooks the morally central task of renegotiating the western alliance *before* unilateral disarmament, since there is a question to be asked about how firmly British and other European states want the USA to be committed to their defence and *how* this would be carried out. As the Report says, British policy has been determined to emphasise its 'deep and durable intimacy within the Americans' (p. 37) but it is unclear as to how this intimacy could be sustained in the presence of such a question about the basic legitimacy of the nuclear deterrent. In the UK, Gerard Hughes SJ has been the most considerable exponent of the view that the morality of deterrence cannot be settled by moral logic alone but in interrelationship with a complexity of beliefs about the results of possible policies. On the other hand, Roger Ruston OP is an advocate of the view that we will never find a way out of our present predicament without renouncing a moral justification of deterrence. And Donald MacKinnon's Boutwood Lectures (*Creon and Antigone,* 1982) will not let us escape from this issue which perhaps runs even deeper than morality. He has drawn attention to the metaphorical character of 'deterrence', which has its home as it were in the discussion of punishment in the context of a framework of law, having to do with the sorts of conditions which inhibit human action, in accordance with law. In its location in the debate about nuclear weapons, it is a metaphor for a kind of check or restraint exercised by a profoundly unstable system, and of crucial importance, a metaphor which becomes a source of 'profound degradation' to us in that it has to do with the willingness to perpetrate horrors of a sort prohibited by any ethics.

What is left of an 'acceptable' expression of a 'deterrence' may well be the position now associated with the present Pope but which appeared at least as early as the publication of the 1981 Evangelical Church in Germany Bulletin on *The Preservation, Promotion and Renewal of Peace* – that deterrence may be morally acceptable in the context in which major political efforts are directed towards reducing the causes of war. This view may ease the predicament of those professionally engaged in one way or another in the defence of their countries. Further, both the Report (p. 82, p. 160) and the USA Catholic Bishops' statement on (*The Challenge of Peace* 1983 paras. 311-314) draw attention to the issue of what is and is not permitted in *existing* military codes. It may well be, as in Holland, that some military personnel will decide that to refrain from participating in nuclear weapons training programmes is an act of courage and patriotism. In the meantime, we can forget the illusory comfort of a 'no first use' proposal in case it encourages a supposed enemy to imagine that really determined aggression will pay off, whatever that might mean. Nor is there comfort to be found in judgements about the likelihood or not of escalation. As MacKinnon has drawn attention to the metaphorical quality of 'deterrence', so Beach has to the methaphorical quality of 'escalation' – it presumably depends upon how fast the moving staircase is going *up* (minus emergency stop button) as to whether one can get back down and off it relatively unscathed, apart, perhaps, from a torn garment or shoe. What this might mean in a war context is again (perhaps mercifully) debatable though no doubt the sane course is to fear the worst.

The whole complex of issues has been raised to the level of 'status confessionis', the equivalent of a spiritual emergency for some of West Germany's Protestants, members of the Reformed Calvinist Church. It is held that one's view about both the possession and the use of nuclear weapons has a direct relationship to one's fidelity to or betrayal of the gospel. In the USA, though not alone in its stance, the Mennonite Church has found a powerful theological voice to speak independently of official ecclesiastical pronouncements in John Howard Yoder. The Mennonite Church informs Christians that they must renounce the false god of nuclear weaponry, and some of the things allegedly secured by the arms race, such as business opportunities, consumer goods, the imported wealth of other nations, and religious freedom. Yet it is also worth noticing the proposed statement of the Lutheran Church in America (*Peace and Politics,* 1983, para. 3.16) which advised that it was preferable to minimize the deliberate linkage of weapons and other issues, since there is no neat, readily phased way of addressing the variety of international questions. There can be an aggravation of tensions within alliances as well as between rivals through such linkages, and political prudence remains an important norm. As Yoder insists, the central focus of the gospel remains the point of contention, and N. American critics of the Report see as a major defect what others have seen as a merit, that is, that the Report's conclusions rest not only on an acknowledged ignorance of the possible prospects (pp. 12-14) necessarily shared even by the best informed, whoever they may be, but on a *non*-theological assessment of the complexities (though see pp. 104-118).

American Catholics and others can recall their Dorothy Day as summarised by Daniel Berrigan in his introduction to her *The Long Loneliness:* 'into the fury of the murderous crosswinds went her simple word: no'. One of Yoder's Protestant colleagues in the Theology department at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, is Stanley Hauerwas, the writer on theological ethics, who makes the point that the Report provides no argument why the 'just war' tradition should be normative for Christians, allowing only that some who do not subscribe to that tradition may be legitimately pacifist (pp. 119-125). Hauerwas readily acknowledges that the Report properly appreciates the point of the 'just war' tradition (pp. 82-84), that it has to do with the defence of the innocent, or the re-establishment of

violated justice, and is only acceptable *as an evil* if it can contribute to such a goal. The developed tradition may remain an important set of principles to discipline war. Yet it is not evident that there are connections between the tradition and specifically Christian belief, whereas in his view, agreeing with R. Yoder, there are undeniable connections between that belief and the total renunciation of reliance on the weapons of modern war. To consider the case of Pilate v. Jesus is both to acknowledge the immense cost of siding with the latter, and to have to make up one's mind, if one can, about the origins and disposal of the power which may extricate us from our present impasse. (And see Roger White's essay in B. Hebblethwaite and S. Sutherland, *The Philosophical Frontiers of Christian Theology,* 1982, essays presented to MacKinnon). Hauerwas sees that the issue is not merely moral and political but theological and spiritual, thus, to his discomfort as an American Methodist, making common cause with Archibishop Stuart Blanch at the Synod discussion. Despite his differences with them, Hauerwas agrees with the writers of the Report that 'We need to be continually on our guard against the unthinking and unfounded phrases and attitudes that bolster our own self-value by dehumanising our opponents' (p. 156) and that we need to keep firmly before us 'our duty to the whole human family whom God took as his own children by coming among us and sharing our life in Jesus' (p. 164). Hauerwas fears the murder of our fellow creatures in the name of false ideologies, fellow Christians defined for us as enemies, at whom our missiles point. At the very least, we can refuse to begin to entertain that definition.

The United Presbyterian Church in the USA in *Peacemaking: the Believer's Calling,* 1980) has been particularly eloquent in attempting to remedy the disastrous lack of a tradition in Christianity about the convictions, processes and styles of life that must underlie the positive task of peacemaking. The Report offers only an indication about the obligation of the Christian community here (p. 158) as compared with the American Presbyterians, though does usefully mention the importance of learning 'crisis management' (pp. 30-31). The USA Catholic Bishops' *The Challenge for Peace* also contributes usefully to the task, arguing for reverence for life as opposed to the dulled sensitivities which take violence for granted (paras. 284-289); the practice of prayer, including contemplative prayer and attendence at Mass (paras. 290-296); and the practice of penance, charity and service (paras. 297-300). Anyone not a Christian, and not totally overwhelmed by the gravity of the matter could still work for an important political change, to which the Catholic Bishops (paras. 279-283) and the Report draw attention (pp. 155-157). Both urge the necessity of accessible information and debate in public about defence policy so that everyone can understand the issues better, with exploration of the way in which emotion and imagination can be manipulated by government – a task easily overlooked, but not without significance for those seeking an enlightened if not a quietened conscience. We could already do with more information about the fate of those who live in the neighbourhood of the Nevada desert, of unprotected Australian aboriginal people, and inadequately protected servicemen, if we are to begin to comprehend something of what it is to be a victim of the human arrogance that has brought us to our present pass. Where is the enemy, and who can be the victors? The Report remains an important challenge to self-examination and to right action.

Ann Loades

A Model of Making

Ruth Etchells. Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1983, 124pp., £7.95

Miss Etchells proposes a search for a specifically Christian, theological, method of literary criticism. She recognises the pitfall of such an enterprise. Such a criticism, she says, must attempt not 'the inferring of Christian belief or theme in writers who will in most cases be non-Christian', but, rather, 'the exploring of the creative laws under which writers operate' as these may be peculiarly appreciated by a Christian theologian. She has no intention of accommodating others' writing for her Christian purpose. No one is to suffer like shock with the King of Sodom when he heard to what use John Carmel Heenan had turned *Da mihi animas.* Miss Etchells' delicate proceeding with writings and writers is not, however, always paralleled by her consideration of general matters of literature and literary theory.

'It has become increasingly clear', Miss Etchells says, 'that the insights of modern theologians could be particularly important for an understanding of the craft of writing and its attendant criticism, at the present time'. Her primary suggestion is that from the contemplation of God as 'maker' of heaven and earth, we may be able to appreciate what is meant by our saying that the poet is the 'maker' of the poem. It must be a surprise to most readers, pleasant or otherwise according to a reader's temperament, that Miss Etchells should be confident that theological usage elucidates aesthetic usage, rather than t'other way round. But Miss Etchells goes bravely on. 'If such a theological grounding of the writer's creative act is available and proves itself able to accommodate such questions as the new radical critics, or the "formalists", are raising, then we have here a way of approaching literature exposed by the shaking of foundations they have caused, but in no way dominated or over-ruled by them'.

The main part of Miss Etchells' book consists of a sequence of quotations from authors and critics, each quite interesting in itself, and each accompanied by an intelligent comment that forwards Miss Etchells' thesis. The cumulative effect is rather wearying. Especially by the time we reach Mr Solzhenitsyn's talk of art offering 'a single system of evaluation' for our actions, and a means to 'straighten the twisted paths of man's history'. And there is some danger that the reader will suppose Miss Etchells has abandoned her original investigation of the 'maker' and the general theory of literature, for at the close of her catalogue of authorities, Miss Etchell is found examining the use of a particular theory of language in the exegesis of a particular piece of writing.

From Saussure's analysis of linguistic units, through Jakobson's account of language disorders, and Professor Lodge's exposition of metonymy and metaphor, Miss Etchells comes to an account of the parable of the 'Prodigal Son'. 'Metonymy', here, is a means of displaying the coherence within a single situation. 'Metaphor', here, is a means of identifying 'essential similarities' between disparate situations. 'Lodge points out, for instance, that the "realistic" novel is largely metonymic while drama is largely metaphorical'. In the telling of his story of the younger son, Jesus builds up an instantly recognisable picture of a contemporary farm, and then, in order to suggest what in the farm is 'like'

the Kingdom, appropriates a language from the quite different cultural context of myth and ritual: 'this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found'. Miss Etchells sees a way, in this metaphor's intrusion upon metonymy in the story, into talking of Christ as the metaphor of God in the metonymy of our existence. It is too late in her book, however, for even a reference to that great and still unresolved nineteenth-century question about 'the Christ of Faith' and 'the Jesus of History'. Miss Etchells has time only for some statements about the metonymy of our dereliction and the crucifixion as a metaphor of judgement, before making a quick return to her original topic.

The crucifixion is a putting right, an ordering, a making. It is, therefore, a realisation of that divine creativity in which 'the literary maker's highest art' finds its 'proper basis'. The Creator is revealed as essentially a giver whose giving enables the creature's making. All this is managed, and this is another of Miss Etchell's surprises, without any reference to Pauline talk of a 'new creation' or philippian celebration of the Lord who did not think divinity consisted in grabbing. But perhaps such scriptual texts would have spoilt the impression of sweet theological reasonableness, and might even have set the reader wondering whether Miss Etchells, having noticed the pitfall, had not deliberately fallen into it.

Hamish F. G. Swanston

The Prophets. Vol. 2. The Babylonian and Persian Periods

Klaus Koch. English translation by M. Kohl. SCM Press, 1983. Pp. vi+217. £7.95.

This second volume on the Old Testament prophets from Professor Klaus Koch of Hamburg covers the figures from Jeremiah to Zechariah and Malachi, finishing with a short, and interesting, treatment of the book of Jonah. An opening chapter sets out the main teaching of the book of Deuteronomy and the way in which it contributed an ideal of Law which had a significant bearing upon the subsequent development of prophecy, especially in the book of Jeremiah. A concluding chapter, all too brief on account of the number of interesting points that it raises, provides what the author describes as a "Retrospect and Prospect" in the study of prophecy.

The two volumes together are evidently designed to provide a student text-book, and they are thoroughly commendable on this score. Koch's writing is clear, well set out in short sections, and provides a thoroughly readable combination of historical background, literary introduction to the individual books, and a brief outline of the main religious ideas. The work, viewed as a whole will undoubtedly claim full attention as an up-to-date introduction to the Prophets. Yet they do not contain very much which is particularly new, at least so far as specific contentious issues of interpretation. By and large Koch adopts a rather cautious and conservative line, for instance over the "Deuteronomistic" material in the book of Jeremiah, or over the preaching of a "Deutero-Isaiah" during the Babylonian Exile. No doubt this is justified in a work that seeks to give expression to some sort of scholarly consensus, rather than to opt for more idosyncratic positions which might quickly forfeit scholarly confidence. Yet the study of the Old Testament prophetic literature is undergoing a very considerable change, as Koch's own comments in his concluding chapter show. In expressing a good deal of caution over whether scholars have not been too confident of their own abilities in locating the historical setting of each prophecy, this is nonetheless the main feature of the approach that is set out.

Koch himself, who has written on the rise of apocalyptic, recognises that prophecy ultimately experienced a kind of exotic "final fling" in the contribution that it made to Jewish apocalyptic. Yet he expresses great caution over whether very much of lasting theological gain accrued from this. Rather he avows his own greater sense of theological gain regard for, and enlightenment from, the work of the great prophets of the Old Testament. In this many will certainly follow him, even though it raises some very deep issues about the Bible and the history of its interpretation. Koch's own assessment of what those features are in prophecy which deserve our continued attention have a strikingly modern, and even abstract, ring about them. It must also be questioned whether the prophetic writings would have retained their place in the biblical canon were it not for the apocalyptic interpretations which came to be derived from them. Yet this is simply to raise questions which move beyond the limits of what is in all respects a very useful student text-book.

R. E. Clements

The Origins of Christianity. A Historical Introduction to the New Testament

Schuyler Brown. Oxford University Press, 1984. Pp. x+169. £3.95.

Part of the Oxford Bible Series, this volume is intended as an introduction to the history of Christian Origins. It succeeds admirably. With clarity and simplicity, Brown describes both the story of the sources and the story in the sources. He shows very well how the history of Christian Origins is the history of the tradition.

The book beings with a chapter on what is involved in approaching the New Testament from the viewpoint of modern historiography. We are made sensitive to the normative and legitimising features of stories of origins and their canonisation; to the problems created by asking the kinds of historical questions the sources were not intended to answer; and to the hermeneutical, literary and sociological influences which affected the formation of the tradition. Along the way, we are provided with a critical response to Bultmann's 'extreme historical scepticism' and an excellent account of form criticism and the Scandinavian alternative proposed by Riesenfeld and Gerhardsson. At several points in the book, the author delineates the limits of historical investigation as well as its possibilities. In particular, the limits of form criticism are shown to be: its focus on the typical and recurrent rather than the particular, its concern with the communal product rather than the individual effect, and its assumption that the dynamics of oral transmission directly correspond with those of literary tradition.

The chapter on Jesus of Nazereth is brief but suggestive. Brown rejects the criterion of dissimilarity as unhelpful: 'Since the historian claims nothing beyond probability for his reconstruction, he will prefer to make use of all material which is probably authentic, rather than to exclude what is possibly inauthentic' (p. 47). He also plays down the creative influence of community controversies on the formation of the Synoptic controversy stories. Similarly, the creative influence of Christian prophecy is restricted to instances where the post-resurrection character of a dominical saying is indicated explicitly. Instead, Brown, argues that 'the Jesus tradition originated in the impact made on Jesus' followers by his person, his teaching, and his actions. It is quite untrue to say that the historian is interested in who Jesus *was* but the Jesus tradition is only interested in who he *is*'. (p. 690).

The origins of the Christian mission are sought in the resurrection appearances and in the experience of the Spirit at Pentecost. There is no mention here of Gager's use of cognitive dissonance theory which Brown, I think, would find reductionist. Instead, emphasis is placed on the common, ecstatic nature of these experiences and on the claim that these were experiences of Jesus and his Spirit.

An excellent chapter on the factors involved in the formation of a distinctive Christian identity takes as case-studies Paul, the Matthean community and the Johannine communities. The radical relativisation of the law by Paul, the reinterpretation of tradition in the direction of mission to the Gentiles in Matthew, the experience of hostility from synagogue leaders reflected in Matthew and the Fourth Gospel, and the increasingly high christological claims reflected especially in John – these are described quite convincingly. The important effects of the Jewish War on Jewish and Christian self-definition is a recurring theme also.

The book ends with a chapter on NT ecclesiology and, in particular, the quest for authority and continuity. Brown makes some noteworthy points. For example, claims to apostolic foundation (as in Matthew and Ephesians) are often no more than that. Further, the NT contains a variety of conceptions of apostleship itself. Again, the attempt to limit the number of resurrection appearances may reflect a polemical effort to counter Gnostic claims to continuing revelations of the risen Christ. The author also traces developments in the second generation. Especially interesting is his suggestion that the Johannine community was distinctive in appealing for authority, not to an apostolic figure of the past, but to the Spirit to whom the true believer had direct access. The schismatic tendencies of this approach are reflected in the corrective attempt in 1 John to strengthen community ties and in the efforts of the 'ecclesiastical redactor' of the Gospel to provide a more adequate sacramental basis for community life.

We have, therefore, a study modest in size – and price! – and yet wide-ranging, imaginative and up-to-date in content. It would be ideal for introductory courses in Christian Origins and would inform a more general audience on recent developments in scholarly study of the New Testament.

Stephen C. Barton

Priesthood and Ministry

Max Thurian. Mowbrays, 1983. Pp. 195. £3.75.

The importance of the position occupied by Max Thurian in the field of ecumenical dialogue and, in particular, his involvement in the preparation of the Lima document of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches make this a significant book. It has threefold value. First, it provides a careful historical study of the biblical and post-apostolic foundations of ministry. Second, it provides an exposition of at least one theology of that ministry. Third, it sheds light on Brother Thurian's own theology and suggests why it has been so influential. The source of its power is its apparent understanding of diverse traditions, theological positions and church structures. This book sheds light on the process by which 'substantial agreement' and 'doctrinal convergence' are reached. And it remains valuable for ecumenists and theologians despite the fact that it is now thirteen years old; the translation of a book first published in French in 1970. As such, it cannot be expected to take account of the liturgical and theological developments of the last ten years or so which have accompanied the preparation of new prayer books in the major churches. It cannot be expected to take account of the diversification of ministry and the emphasis on charisms and lay participation in all aspects of ministry. Now with these far from minor reservations, we must ask the more significant question: does this study actually contribute to the current development of an ecumenical theology of ministry, priesthood and ordination? I fear that the only answer is that it has come too late and lost much of its relevance and its importance stems only from the status and subsequent contributions of its author.

In the same way that churches receive ecumenical reports, we might ask also if Thurian's eirenical position presents a theology of a ministry – in this case, priesthood – that is recognisable as mine and, if so, whether this presentation makes it easier to understand that priesthood both for me and for those of other minsterial traditions. To answer this, one must read this book – like all carefully-worded ecumenical statements – several times. Here the problem is linguistic. It has seemed helpful to ecumenical dialogue that the participants should avoid polemic and polemical language. They have therefore made an attempt to get behind the fixed lines – historical and doctrinal – by using a neutral language. Rooted, according to the claims of its advocates, in biblical and patristic thought (and not in Greek philosophy and scholastic theology), its fundamental terms, when dealing with the Church and the ministry, seem to be *koinonia, presbyterum,* and *episcope.* Certainly, in developing (or retrieving) this language, ecumenical theologians have performed valuable service in retrieving what Rahner would call 'forgotten truths'. Yet they can also create a superficial agreement that conceals significant disagreement.

A study of the theology of priesthood as found in the several ordinals, e.g. of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, would be very valuable. It would surely show that, even where the title 'presbyter' is used, it is still the intention that 'priests' should be ordained. Thurian's theology of the presbyterate does not do justice to his high doctrine of the priesthood. Personally, I do not find that he represents the order of ministry into which I was ordained (using the experimental Ordinal of the Anglican Church in

Wales), that is the priesthood, in a way that does justice to its component parts. I cannot agree with him, or incidentally with Jean Tillard, in his denigration of the Christian *sacerdos.* The description found in the Lima text, a description with which both Thurian and Tillard seem to agree, of presbyters as those who 'serve as pastoral ministers of Word and sacraments in a local eucharistic community', even after careful unpacking, fails to do justice to the full ecclesial and sacramental nature of Christian priesthood. It is not sufficient for the ecumenical theologian to cite points of apparent agreement between different traditions. He must grapple with real doctrinal problems. Thurian's failure to do that, with regard to priesthood leads him into other difficult situations. Even after stressing the special relationship between presbyteral ministry and eucharistic celebration, he suggests that deacon monks should preside at the community eucharist. He finds it impossible, it seems, to make sense of the doctrine of ordination character. He confuses Calvin's sacrament of laying-on of hands with the Catholic sacrament of Orders. It appears that agreement in ecumenical dialogue is reached, at least occasionally, by jettisoning the difficult and unpalatable.

The fully developed Catholic theology of priesthood may have been somewhat lopsided, stressing too much the priestly, and not nearly enough the prophetic and pastoral. Ignoring the priestly, or ruling it invalid, according to some contemporary theological criterion, will not redress the balance. There is some evidence that this book represents an interim expression of Max Thurian's theology. Whilst it has theological and historical value, it lacks the power that a more recent statement must have. What we should look for is something from his pen that deals effectively with the problems and questions mentioned here, and others, in the light of ecumenical advances.

Martin Dudley

The Hope of Happiness

Helen Oppenheimer. S.C.M. Press, 1983. Pp. xi+208. £5.95 (paperback).

The authoress defines her purpose as that of taking 'a fresh look at the place of happiness in the Christian gospel.' She has no doubt that its place is central. She writes with the intention of giving her readers a sense of the *importance* of happiness. Her aim may, I think, be taken as twofold – theoretical and practical. On the one hand, she writes as a moral philosopher and, in that capacity, seeks to present, from the Christian point of view, a convincing teleological account of morality. On the other hand, she speaks as a contemporary believer and, in that capacity, tries to quicken the pulses and lift the hearts of her fellow-Christians in these gloomy times. To have combined these two objectives in one book as clearly and gracefully as Lady Oppenheimer has done seems to me to be a considerable *tour de force.*

Within moral philosophy there has been something of a revival of teleological – or as it is often called, Neo-aristotelian – ethics in recent years. A. C. MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1981) is an impressive example. The basic idea is, of course, that, if you wish to know what people ought to do, you must first consider what they are *for.* What, in Aristotelian terminology, is their *telos,* or 'final end'? This functional conception of human nature may find religious or secular expression; but it is not surprising that it has, in recent times, proved particularly attractive to religious believers. Basil Mitchell, in his *Morality: Religious and Secular* (1980), tentatively puts forward a version of it. Helen Oppenheimer is working in the same vein. A word which frequently recurs in her book is 'fulfilment'. The Utilitarian goal of the greatest happiness of the greatest number needs, in her opinion, to be enriched by the Christian hope. In a scholarly, elegant and persuasive manner this book spells out what such fulfilment amounts to. 'The fulfilment of human beings . . . is wanted by God' may be said to sum up its message. Every kind of sympathetic reader from the wisest to the most simple will find here insights into the blessedness of Christian fulfilment which enlarge and enrich his understanding of it.

Lady Oppenheimer is perhaps a little hard on the Church. She thinks Christians have an irritating habit of suggesting that happiness is not important. This, she feels, can only be for two reasons – because they 'have lost the art of expressing our faith in a way that gives people anything to be happy about'; and because they are afraid of 'forgetting that Christianity is supposed to be about self-sacrifice.' Perhaps she is thinking of the Church's official representatives. As for its ordinary members, what strikes me, in the provincial university where I work, is how much happier those of my colleagues or students, who are Christians, seem to be than the others. However, that is not a point of much substance; I make it only to assure Lady Oppenheimer that church people will find what she has to say more congenial than she might imagine.

There is a point about teleological conceptions of morality which ought perhaps to be made. Namely, this. It is one thing to say that moral judgments do not make sense, or have any meaning, unless they are logically deduced from some beliefs about man's final end; but it is another thing to say that if anyone has some beliefs about man's final end, these may well give a force and liveliness to his moral judgments which they would otherwise lack. If the latter of these two hypotheses is taken for a *psychological* point, then I would have thought it indisputable. But if the former of them is taken for a *logical* point, then I would say that one must still have some anxieties about it. Two, in particular, viz. (i) we may all have some beliefs about man's final end, but have we any way of knowing whose beliefs about this are correct? and (ii) even if we knew that, would any moral (ought) judgments necessarily follow from any teleological (is) beliefs? These two questions are, of course, familiar troublemakers. It would be too much to expect one book to get rid of them once and for all. However, I am sure that this book will succeed in its practical purpose of giving those who already believe the Christian account of man's final end a deepened appreciation of the place of happiness within it. And if it has not altogether succeeded in the theoretical purpose of showing that teleological ethics (in a Christian version) is logically viable, I am sure it will make some readers wish that such a view were logically viable. Perhaps among them there will be a young philosopher who can, in due course, convince us all that it is.

W. D. Hudson

Consent in medicine. Convergence and divergence in tradition

Edited by G. R. Dunstan and Mary J. Sellars. King Edward's Hospital Fund for London and OUP, 1983. Pp. 128. £8.50.

The granting or witholding of personal or proxy consent to medical treatment has in recent years become an important factor of the relationship between patient and doctor. And the place of consent is also a sensitive one in the areas of experimentation, organ-transplatation and *in vitro* fertilisation. This study, then, by a multi-disciplinary group on the ethics of consent in medicine is a timely contribution to a subject which is today increasing in importance and beset by medical, psychological, emotional, religious, legal and ethical difficulties. The group began its enquiry five years ago, to enquire into possible differences between the Jewish and other approaches to medical practice, and to explore their implications. Representing as it did the Jewish and Christian faiths, medicine and philosophy, it no doubt derived from its meetings a mutual enrichment of its several views, and it has also produced for the public a selection of six of its working papers in revised form, a legal note, and an editorial commentary siting the papers within the group's orientation and deliberations.

The core of the work comprises a historical study by Professor P. E. Polani, which might have come earlier, showing the emergence of consent only in this century as an important constitutive factor in medical work and practice, and three other chapters in which the Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth and Father Brendan Soane expound the views on consent held in their respective religious traditions, and Mr Peter Byrne analyses and contrasts these views against the backcloth of the classical European philosophical tradition. Polani shows, in a richly documented essay, that from earliest times until only a few decades ago the relationship between a patient and his doctor was characterised by the patient's trust and the doctor's devotedness. The importance of consent as a crucial factor developed only with the political emergence of the autonomous individual and his rights since the seventeenth century, growing (as Professor Ian Kennedy shows in an interesting legal note) through legal actions since the nineteenth century applying the law against 'unconsented touching', to encounter in this century, on the one hand, a diversity of medical options and increased expectations, and, on the other, a rapid, and sometimes inhuman, expansion in medical experimentation.

Byrne, in an equally satisfying contribution, shows how, from Plato onwards, the intrinsic worth ascribed to the human person and his moral integrity (as in the death of Socrates) has established a priority over his sheer physical existence, and how this gives grounds for an indepenence of personal judgement where simply bodily wellbeing is at stake. It is this view of the person which enables Byrne, in an earlier chapter on patient-expectations, to require 'a genuine adult relationship' (p. 29) between doctor and patient, with corresponding implications for both, including that of communicating the truth. And it also leads him to suggest that the Catholic tradition of qualifying the importance of physical wellbeing, as expressed by the need for consent, finds its origin in this classical philosophy, by contrast with the stress in Judaism on the supremacy of physically embodied existence and the correspondingly dominant role of the physician in regard to his patient.

As Soane makes clear in his wide-ranging chapter, the Catholic attitude in such matters is based upon 'the respect due to the freedom and dignity of the person' (p. 37) called to co-operate with God in his personal decisions. Thus, while the doctor in prescribing or suggesting treatment may reasonably be expected to have weighed up all the objective factors 'only the patient can appreciate the subjective ones' (p. 42). And indeed there is a strongly subjective element to be recognised in applying the now standard distinction between ordinary and extraordinary, i.e., obligatory and voluntary, means of preserving life. For Jakobovits, however 'human life enjoys an absolute, intrinsic and infinite value' (p. 32), with man only the custodian of his body and having a duty to preserve his life, which devolves upon others in default of the individual's acknowledging and respecting this. In some cases, then, suppression by the doctor of the truth of the patient's condition is entirely justified, while in others the patient's own judgement of what is positively life-sustaining for him must be respected. Generally, however, 'the patient need not be consulted' (p. 34), and he has 'no right to refuse medical treatment deemed essential by competent medical opinion' (p. 35).

In a concluding chapter on 'Considerations governing a doctor's advice to his patient' Dr E. S. Johnson and Mr E. E. Philipp rapidly but comprehensively survey a variety of situations in which doctors may be involved, and offer pieces of practical advice as well as pointing to the moral dilemmas which may arise. And in his introductory chapter Professor G. R. Dunstan not only provides a useful guide to all that follows but also at times reinforces points made by the other authors, and introduces fresh considerations, to indicate that editorial work is not simply a matter of arranging and dovetailing.

Jean Guitton wrote somewhere that an author should not try to say everything, but should always leave something for the reviewer to add. And the observations are offered in that spirit. It is salutary for Christians to be reminded, and occasionally warned, that elements of their religious moral tradition originate elsewhere, and that the Churches are not particularly noted historically for having been in the forefront of moral perception or social improvement. And Peter Byrne does well to illustrate the influence of classical philosophy on the Catholic tradition of the autonomous dignity of the individual. Gordon Dunstan, on the other hand, brings to this a necessary corrective, or at least a qualification, in showing the New Testament witness to human dignity and personal moral autonomy in society. And, in deed, more might have been made of this by a chapter on the Christian, rather than just the Catholic and humanist, tradition. The Christian concept of man's stewardship of life, which appears more creative than the Jewish idea of man as custodian of his bodily life, allots to man a measure of responsible choice – what Aquinas called a sharing in God's providence; and this in turn gives positive scope, within a holistic view of the moral agent, for individual alternatives in response to an adjustable scale of values. Such an approach, it may be noted, is not just subscribing to a fashionable fidelity to conscience, but asserting the duty and the right to react loyally to truth as perceived. Nor does it, of course, of itself solve moral dilemmas, whether social or individual; but it does accord them reality and respect, not simply dismissing them, or the agent-steward, as simply erroneous or misguided.

It is respect for the individual, both patient and doctor, in their full humanity, which appears to underlie the occasional description of their relationship as one of covenant rather than contract. And it would ill befit a Roman Catholic whose Church has recently expressed a preference for covenant language as doing full justice to the

marriage relationship to depreciate the richness of that concept. But I think its mainly biblical richness is largely its undoing in medico-moral discourse. Popularised significatly by Paul Ramsey in his 1970 *The Patient as Person* (Yale), it is the expressed preference of Polani (p. 80), and despite some acknowledged difficulties it is developed by Dunstan as a term which the group found 'more ample' than 'contract' (p. 23). Yet it is not used by Jakobovits, Soane or Byrne; and when the Medical Defence Union replied to Philipp's query on the subject it gave short shrift to 'covenant' in its judgement, 'we do not think the word "covenant" would be at all appropriate in the context of relations between doctor and patient' (p. 111).

No doubt such an answer might be expected from a legal body, but my sympathies in this case are with the MDU. I see no difficulty in supposing that the doctor, on qualifying, has given an implicit undertaking to society to help individuals in need whever possible, and that in specific cases he enters into a contract to focus his skills upon particular individuals or groups of individuals. To describe this as a covenant is to theologise and to incur the risk of imposing that theology upon others on pain of their bewilderment. Moreover, to appeal to it on the ground 'it can express much when considered in the light of theological tradition', as Dunstan does (p. 23), is to ignore that Judaism took an originally political term to invest it with religious significance, and that in Scripture its primary significance, and therefore the *analogatum princeps,* is the relationship betwen God and his people. And that relationship is one of radical inequality, however gracious, long-suffering and patient the superior party may prove to be. I suspect, in other words, that the emergence of personal consent as crucial and the advantages of covenant language to describe the doctor-patient (or should it be patient-doctor?) relationship are in inverse proportion, and that 'covenant' language today may on occasion be a religious cloak for discreet and residual paternalism. Admittedly, contractual language may be arid and impersonal, missing the delicate texture of essentially intersubject transactions, but it need not be. If the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* can define 'covenant' as, inter alia, a compact, bargain, or '*contract* under seal', then in medical discourse it would prove more beneficial to explore the implications of 'contract' in the provision of medical services than to impose a laboured religious term.

Many of the contributors stress the standard considerations that for consent to be genuinely personal it has to be free and informed, while acknowledging that the complexities of modern medicine, its very richness in remedies of perhaps limited success, make the provision of relevant information both increasingly difficult and subject to the doctor's own perception of the patient. So far as it goes, this analysis of consent is one which calls for frequent repetition to those who are busy, preoccupied and powerful. What I miss in the book as a whole, however, is a sustained study of what I would call the fringes of consent. As mentioned, the final chapter surveys various of the dilemmas and conflicts in modern medicine and experimentation in a manner which shows their difficulty and which appears tantamount on occasion to throwing up its hands in despair at their moral intractability. One occasion the comment is made, 'each case has to be decided by the doctor on its own merits' (105). True, but *entirely* on its own merits? If so, then a general study such as this is otiose. And if not, the challenge is to identify in 'each case' what more general reflection might be helpful and to what moral analysis even its 'unique' features might be submitted. It is to these sorts of areas today, when at least fairly general lip-service or general agreement is accorded to the canons of consent, that multidisciplinary resources most need to be directed: in treatment and experimentation on the incapable, in fetal and embryonic research, and in the prerequisite of ignorance for successful experimentation. Had this thoughtful book or the group producing it begun with its agenda drawn from the last chapter, the work would have been quite different. Those who, like the reviewer, have read it with interest and appreciation would welcome a sequel.

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