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BOOK REVIEWS

Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study

John Barton, Longman and Todd, 1984. Pp. xv + 256. £7.95 (paperback).

The title of this book has been well chosen, for it is both a review of different ways of "reading the Old Testament" and, by implication, a plea that we should read it (and not ignore it, or simply seek to study, use or interpret it). In recent years the long-accepted historical and critical approach to the Old Testament (and the New) has had increasingly to compete with a renewed emphasis on the theological significance of the canon (particularly, but not only, in the writings of Professor Brevard Childs of Yale University) and with structuralist and other modern kinds of literary criticism. The book sets out to be a guide to these recent developments and a critique not only of them but also of some of the claims often made on behalf of historical criticism.

Dr. Barton suggests that the very varied aims and methods of these approaches, old and new, can best be comprehended by the idea of "literary competence", a term derived from structuralist writers but not used in any technical sense here. It is intended to convey a mastery of the conventions according to which the biblical writings are to be read, and it is taken to be equivalent to the ability to recognise different genres of literature. It is certainly reassuring to have an unfamiliar term equated with an activity which can be as simply identified as recognising the difference between apocalyptic and proverb literature. But the reassurance is deceptive, as becomes clearer when the equation leads to some rather far-fetched genre descriptions, such as composite narratives and canonical religious literature. Nor is it convincing to suggest that when early source-critics distinguished between the sources which we now call J and P in Genesis they were "really" trying to find a new way of defining the genre of that book, though it may well be true that they were proposing new conventions of competent Bible-reading. There is a danger of claiming too much for what is undoubtedly a vital part of our equipment in seeking to understand the Bible, but one that should be kept in its proper place, in the discussion of form-criticism. The vaguer term "literary competence", on the other hand, serves well to indicate the skill, variously defined, which all the various schools of interpretation are trying to inculcate.

It is not Dr. Barton's intention to drive a wedge between literary and historical-critical approaches to the text and to recommend the exclusive use of the former. His position is that all the different approaches have something to offer (though I think that he is, like Professor James Barr, unduly harsh on "canon criticism"), but that users of them should be more aware of their assumptions and their procedures – this is where the book's sub-title, "Method in Biblical Study" comes in. Even so, it needs to be recognised that definite limits to the discussion have been fixed from the start: "We shall be asking, in fact, how each of the methods familiar in modern study of the Bible is intended to help us in understanding the text, and we shall not spend any time on the uses that can be made of that understanding in writing about the theology of the Old Testament or the history of Israel" (p. 11) It would be a pity (and as I have said contrary to the author's intention) if this book were, in a period when literary studies have become very influential in biblical scholarship, to give the impression that "reading the Old Testament" was the only or even the ultimate way of approaching it. It follows that the advocates of the continuing value of the historical-critical methods would be mistaken, in my view, to rest their case solely on the claim that these methods are after all more fruitful for reading the Old Testament than those drawn from the comparative study of literature. Whether they are or not, that is not their primary function. Their main contribution is to different kinds of *use* and *evaluation* of the Old Testament, two tasks which are very firmly and deservedly established in biblical study, both scholarly and popular. A complete analysis of method in biblical study would discuss reading the Old Testament not in isolation but in its relation to these other tasks, which are arguably more fundamentally appropriate to the character of Holy Scripture. The Bible is after all not primarily (or even entirely) a work of literature, but a means of religious instruction.

My raising of these questions – and I have others, for example about the remarkable suggestion that canon criticism, if it is to withstand the critique of Barr and others, needs to move towards structuralism – is not intended to detract from the considerable merits of this book. It is the most enjoyable book about the study of the Old Testament that I have read for a long time. It constantly retained my interest, cast new light on topics familiar and less familiar, and made me think out afresh what we are or may be doing in employing different approaches to the Bible. It is a book that I look forward to reading again. It will be of considerable use where it began (as a course of lectures), in the teaching of second-year students, and it will have a particular appeal to the growing number of those who study theology, whether at school or at university, alongside or after a course in English literature.

G. I. Davies

Introduction to the Old Testament

Werner H. Schmidt. S.C.M. Press, 1984. Pp. xii + 368. £10.50.

The species of book known as "Introduction to the Old (or New) Testament" is well-known, yet for the unwary it is a very misleading title. This is not "introduction" in the sense of making acquaintance for the first time. Rather, it implies a discussion of specific historical and source-critical problems relating to the Old Testament as a whole and to its individual books in particular. The possibility of confusion is increased by the fact that the English term is used to translate two different German words: *Einleitung* and *Einführung*. Insofar as they can be distinguished, the *Einleitung* is the more technical, and will involve detailed discussion of earlier scholarship; the *Einführung* is wider-ranging, and may include reference to the history of Israel and to theological issues.

Here under review is a translation, by M. J. O'Connell, of the second edition (1982) of Schmidt's *Einführung*, which was conceived as a successor to a well-known handbook of the same title by Meinhold, originally published in 1919. The translation is clear, and appears to be accurate.

In accordance with the requirements of the genre, Pt. I is largely given over to an overview of Israel's history, with a tabular outline which may be useful to students, though no very clear indication is given as to when we may regard the historical foundation as securely based. A valuable feature of the historical survey is a recognition that Israel's social structure must be taken into account if its history is to be grasped. Somewhat surprisingly, however, the people's nomadic, desert origins are taken for granted, without discussion of the views of Gottwald and others that Israel's emergence in Canaan followed internal revolt rather than immigration from the wilderness.

There follows a fairly standard introduction to the Pentateuch, the most helpful feature of which may be the exploration of the tensions involved in different methods of historical-critical study. Different types of narrative are analysed, though "myth" is given a very cursory treatment of little more than a page. The discussion of Deuteronomy leads into consideration of the Deuteronomistic History, seen as the product of a school rather than of a single author as proposed by Noth, and of the Chronicler's History, of which Ezra and Nehemiah are regarded as an integral part. The prophetic books occupy Part III; they are dealt with in assumed chronological order of the figures after whom they are named, with the usual exception being made for Isa. 40-66; no serious attention is paid to the issue of the relation between different parts of the book of Isaiah. Part IV is devoted to "Liturgical and Sapiential Poetry". A two-page epilogue can only skim the surface of the argument "For and Against the Old Testament". Bibliographies are appended, for which the claim is made that they have been expanded and up-dated for this English edition. But the problem of the most satisfactory way of providing bibliographical information in a translated text-book has not really been resolved, and since the bibliographies are separated from the sections to which they refer, this may be one of the less satisfactory aspects of the book. The whole is concluded with a brief index.

This outline survey has drawn attention to various points which might have been treated differently, but this should not lead to the overall verdict being too critical. This is a book which comes helpfully between the general first study guide and the more technical introductions. A good deal of detailed information is provided, with useful summaries of the contents of most of the biblical books, and references to the work of other scholars are adequate without resort to overwhelming detail. For better or worse, however, it remains a very German type of book in its concern for precise detail. Whether British students are to be praised for their refusal to be tied down in detailed analysis, or condemned for their lack of application, can only be a matter for debate; this book will serve as either a reproach or a warning – a characteristic German example of exact and specific analysis.

Richard Coggins

Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World

David E. Aune. Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. xii + 522. £24.20

This book is a major scholarly achievement. Its merits are many. To start at the bottom, it is admirably indexed and footnoted, and an early misprint (on p. 4, Zech. 13:2-6) is emphatically not a sign of things to come. A wide range of learning, succinctly distilled, is applied to the whole field of prophecy in the Greco-Roman world, in the Old Testament and early Judaism, in the New Testament and in the church of the second century. The author is keenly aware that the phenomenon he examines is complex and multi-form, not always easy to define and liable to be misinterpreted through either too narrow or too broad an assessment of what is involved. Despite the complexity and the difficulty of definition, the book presents its material clearly, breaking it up into intelligible sections. Scrupulously fair to the proposals of other scholars, it avoids dogmatism and admits freely where more cannot safely be said. It has no theological axe to grind but is content to let the evidence, viewed historically, do just as much work as it can.

After a survey of current issues in the study of early Christian prophecy, the first major section is a presentation of the procedures and content of Greco-Roman prophecy. This is followed by an outline of basic features of Israelite prophecy, and then a full and positive account of prophecy in early Judaism. The falsity of the widely held belief (derived from a partial rabbinic standpoint), that prophecy was unknown at the turn of the eras, is amply demonstrated. The context for the prophetic aspects of Jesus' ministry is thus provided.

The centrepiece of the book is chapter eight, on the character of early Christian prophecy. Here there is a thorough analysis of the numerous strands that require notice under the heading of prophecy. But there is no ducking of the fact that they do not always have much in common. It is also clear that the persons in the early church who were engaged in what might be called prophetic activity were far from homogeneous, by no means all called "prophets", and related to other influential or authoritative figures in ways that were far from neat. Institutions and nomenclature varied greatly in early Christianity, even though certain recurring styles of life and work are not hard to identify.

The evidence that falls to be considered is, when compared with any other contemporary area of prophetic activity, rich in the extreme. It contains both accounts of people designated prophets (chiefly in Acts and the letters of Paul) and sayings or speeches which purport or may be thought to come from prophets. But the question of definition is inescapable. What sort of activity or speech may be considered prophetic? The basic feature is undoubtedly the claim or intention to speak on behalf of God or Jesus – to be the vehicle, in word or act, of an oracle. That said, however, the field must be left wide and cannot be tidily delimited. Words that emerge by this means are not to be distinguished in subject-matter from sayings that appear in other forms of writing. Prophecy may well contain apocalyptic statements, or else parenetic sayings, or bold judgements and assertions of authority; but all these may appear in quite other settings. In prophecy it is the source and the understanding that count: the Spirit is involved and, in early Christianity, the sense of the dawning presence of the new age.

Aune shows us the importance of prophecy in early Christianity not only within certain congregations (as in Paul's Corinth) but also in the vital business of linking congregations, providing external support and authority, by

dint of constant travelling. The prophets who appear in Acts and the seer of the Apocalypse of John come into view, as does Paul himself (though, like others who patently display marks of prophecy, he does not use the title). From a congregation's point of view, such persons required cautious handling, as the *Didache* makes plain, and there was need to have them under other kinds of authority. There was also the problem of discerning genuineness. It was a sign of danger when prophets set up in business independently, like others in the world of the time. Then the faithful had better steer clear.

A major issue is the degree to which the tradition of Jesus' teaching was affected, before the Gospels were written, by Christian prophets reckoning to speak in his name and so either inventing or developing sayings of Jesus. It is an easy subject for speculation, hard to provide concrete evidence. Aune is wisely cautious. It might have happened, it is virtually impossible to say where it did. He is able to show that the popularity of the idea in some quarters is not free of theological wish that fathers "fact".

J. L. Houlden

Origen. The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church

Joseph Wilson Trigg. S.C.M. Press, 1983. Pp. xv + 300. £9.50.

The first thing which has to be said about this book is that it is long overdue. Surprising as it may seem at first sight, there is no modern study in English, apart from this one, which attempts to paint a comprehensive portrait of Origen – by any account one of the leading figures of the Early Church. For that reason alone, the book will have a secure place in libraries and on many bookshelves, since it offers a full and highly readable account of the great man.

When we begin to read more closely though, we begin to appreciate why this book is alone in its field. In spite of Origen's great importance, not very much is known about him, not many of his works survive, and not a great deal can be reconstructed with certainty from the very diverse estimates of his achievement which have survived in other writers. To add to these difficulties, there was another Origen, contemporary with the theologian and sometimes confused with him, though Dr. Trigg distinguishes them carefully in an appendix to his book.

The result of all this uncertainty is that much of the book is not really about Origen at all, but is a fairly general reconstruction of life as it was in the Church and State of his day. Dr. Trigg is a reliable guide to the material which is available, but readers who are familiar with the period are likely to feel somewhat cheated. In a sense this is hardly the author's fault, since lack of information compels him to recreate probabilities where facts are lacking. On the other hand, we may legitimately wonder whether a biography based on chronology is really appropriate in the case of a man about whom so little is known.

These doubts become more serious when we realise that Dr. Trigg has sectioned off Origen's life thematically. Of the ten chapters, nine are concerned with different, successive periods of his life, but they have titles like *The Church* (c. 185-201), *Grammar and Gnosis* (c. 201-211), *Platonism* (211-15), *Christian Scholarship* (215-22) and so on. No doubt Origen did develop a teaching ministry over a number of years, but it is going a bit far to slot exegesis and prayer into the years 234-38!

It is difficult not to think that the chronological scheme is unnecessary, and that the book would have been quite successful if only the thematic approach had been adopted. Dr. Trigg gives us a useful summary of Origen's extant works, backing up his remarks with frequent quotations. He also dramatises what is known of Origen's relationships with the Church of Alexandria, and he gives a good acount of his Platonic background. At times he relies on speculation, but only when evidence is lacking, and his guesses are seldom implausible. Of special importance is the way in which Dr. Trigg shows that Origen combined religious fervour with intellectualism; indeed, the more intellectual Origen became, the more vibrant his faith was. As Dr. Trigg points out, this is not a combination which the modern world finds familiar or even congenial, and the message of Origen, even if it is dated in many ways, still has something important to say to our contemporaries today.

The bibliography and notes are useful and the index is well done, making it easy for the reader to find what he wants and to pursue his researches beyond the limits of this volume.

Gerald Bray

Music of the Middle Ages I

Giulio Cattin. Cambridge University Press, 1984. Pp. 246. £22.50.

The Italian series *Storia della musica* has right been judged a major contribution to the history of Italian musicology. Giulio Cattin's *Music of the Middle Ages I* is the first of two volumes covering the history of monophony and polyphony to the fifteenth century. Both volumes have been well received outside the Italian-speaking world and Steven Botterill's competent translation is, therefore, a significant addition to the Cambridge University Press music list. David Hiley (Royal Holloway College) and Keith Falconer (Corpus Troporum) have also appended impressive additional documentation in the form of footnotes and supplementary bibliography to each chapter. These accretions are up-to-date, concise, and greatly enhance the value of the work.

In around 200 pages, Cattin traces the development of monophonic music in Latin and vernacular languages up to *c.*1300, and discussion of Gregorian chant takes up nearly a third of the book. Problems of notation are critical here, but Cattin manages to present some rather dry tabular and prose explanation of neumes and their classification in a manner which in no way weakens the impetus of the previous two chapters; these had explained the elements of Jewish worship which find their way into the early Christian liturgy and the relationship they bear to pre-Gregorian Greco-Byzantine, Old-Roman, and Ambrosian chant.

The succinct definition of the contents of the earliest liturgical books is also extremely welcome, but unfortun-

ately, because the passage is included in a chapter on liturgy from the sixth to the ninth centuries, little indication is given of the musical contents of, for example, the various types of missal in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A further weakness is an opaque description of the mechanics of solmisation and mutation in the section entitled "From Oral Tradition to Neumatic Notation"; the table which accompanies Cattin's account of these techniques would leave the uninitiated reader no more enlightened. Nevertheless, the problems of time and rhythm in Gregorian chant receive an excellent and judicious treatment and Cattin, here at his most lucid, is an excellent guide to some treacherous terrain.

Scholars of sequence composition might be slightly dismayed by the sketchy nature of the section of the book devoted to liturgico-musical innovations of the ninth and tenth centuries. The explanation of Adam of St Victor's twelfth-century sequence text is perhaps helpful, but to follow this with an account of the sixteenth-century Council of Trent is a historical leap of faith which stretches the credibility too far. Tropes and ecclesiastical plays are also treated in a slightly terser manner than the scope of the opening chapters might suggest; contrarily, the metrical and dramatic offices are handled excellently as a preface to the discussion of liturgical drama.

A section on vernacular song precedes a discussion of musical instruments and a final chapter on the *ars musica,* which many will see as the best part of the book. Definitions of *musica, musicus,* and *cantor* are critical here and Gattin puts these explanations in a context of theory from Boethius to Guido d'Arezzo. Boethius' proposed division of *musica* into *mundana, humana,* and *instrumentalis* is examined in the light of the thirteenth-century scholasticism of Vincent of Beauvais, Roger Bacon, Bartholomaeus Anglicus, and Michael Scot. A distinction is drawn between these four "academics" and "theorists", and it is well demonstrated that, whilst thirteenth-century "theorists" might preface a discussion of mode, rhythm, and polyphony with a more-or-less elaborate discussion of patristic writings on music, their academic contemporaries are almost completely silent on what today might be viewed as "practical" matters. But Cattin shows, in his final paragraph, that by 1300 there had been a collision of two traditions, "academic" and "theoretical", in the work of the Parisian writer, Johannes de Grocheo.

The strengths of Cattin's approach are manifold. The discussion of every musico-liturgical issue begins from the standpoint of liturgy. This is perhaps not such a rarity in the accounts of Gregorian chant but, in such a concise exposition, it is valuable to have, for example, a comparative table of mass items in the Roman, Gallican, and Mozarabic rite and similar comparative explanation of the Roman and Ambrosian office. Cattin's view of liturgical priority permeates almost every word of the book and, indeed, may be responsible for the comparatively brief treatment of secular and paraliturgical genres.

Music of the Middle Ages I has to encompass fields of inquiry which have generated more controversy than many others in the history of music. It is the quality of Cattin's judgement, when faced with several conflicting points of view, which is so impressive. His chapter on Old-Roman chant begins with the contrasted views of, on the one hand, Stäblein and his followers and, on the other, Huglo and Hücke. In the course of drawing up these two battle-lines, Cattlin explains the tactics and the weapons in a way which results in a clear understanding of the relevant issues. He expresses appreciation of recent attempts to side-step "the sterile contrast of two contradictory opinions" and offers suggestions of profitable areas of research. A similar discriminating approach is taken to the problem of rhythm in the French secular song of the *troubadours* and *trouvères.* However, no attempt is made to explain the problems of the relationship of content to typology, particularly in the *trouvère* lyric. But Cattin's chapter on the Italian *lauda* is one of the best treatments of this genre in English.

Cambridge University Press have produced an attractive and useful book. As well as the added notes and bibliography, there are translations of selected passages from St. Augustine to Gill da Zamora and these make a welcome addition to the already-published readings in English of these authors. A glossary and an excellent index complete the volume. It is perhaps too patchy to use as an introductory textbook but the light it throws on some particularly dark corners warrants its place on any scholar's bookshelf alongside larger, blander, music histories.

Mark Everist

The Path to Perfection: an Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection

W. E. Sangster. Epworth Press, 1984. Pp. 211. £5.50.

Dr. Sangster died twenty-five years ago, and a recent lecture commemorating his life and ministry underlined his lifelong concern with the quest for sanctity. A convert to Methodism, he was fascinated with Wesley's teaching on holiness, Christian Perfection. This book, first published in 1943, is reprinted without alteration, and exemplifies Sangster's search. It was written, says the author, "during the period in which I forsook my home to share the life of bombed-out people in a public air-raid shelter", in wartime London. That fact, together with Sangster's pastoral concern, helps earth the study in the lives of men and women who know themselves "called to be saints". The style is orotund, for Sangster wrote as he preached, but he is seriously committed to what the Puritans called "practical and experimental divinity".

Not that the book lacks scholarship. Far from it; it was indeed the author's thesis for his London doctorate, and reveals a thorough knowledge of the primary source material. The key text is, of course, Wesley's *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection,* supplemented by this *Journal, Sermons,* and *Letters; The Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers,* and the *Arminian Magazine.* Somewhat surprisingly, Sangster nowhere draws on the voluminous *Christian Library,* whose fifty volumes give ample evidence of Wesley's theological predilections.

Wesley believed that the doctrine of Christian Perfection or Entire Sanctification was the "grand depositum" of Methodist faith and practice. He taught that, as justification was instantaneous, so was sanctification. In the first, a man knew himself cleansed from the guilt of sin; in the second, from its power. He urged his followers to seek the gift of entire santification, now in this life, so that they

might be able to love God with all their heart and soul and their neighbour as themselves, and confess, "I am freed from all sin".

This teaching was strong meat, and most Methodists, in Wesley's day and since, have found it hard to stomach. Dr. Sangster sees great virtue in Wesley's emphasis on pressing on to perfection, but is critical of his doctrinal formulation. He finds Wesley's definition of sin ("a voluntary transgression of a known law"), far too circumscribed, weak on sins of omission, and open to Pharisaism. He cannot accept Wesley's view of sin as a kind of rotten tooth, which can be extracted in one swift, decisive operation of divine grace.

Sangster also criticizes Wesley for using the term perfection for a state of grace belonging to this life. Perfection is an absolute or it is nothing. Yet Wesley, having used the term, qualifies it by disclaiming any "absolute and infallible perfection" and pleading that perfection be "not set too high"! He rejects the Calvinist doctrine of perseverance, and holds that "perfection" can be lost, and then recovered. All this was to invite confusion, and Sangster is surely right to argue that Wesley should have forsworn the term "perfection" and simply urged his followers on to growth in "perfect love".

On the positive side, Wesley's great strength is that for him the essence of Christian Perfection is *agape*, the Christ-like love extolled in 1 Corinthians 13. It is his great preservative against fanaticism and undue reliance on feelings. Sangster aptly cites Wesley's letter to a follower:

> You never learned, either from my conversation or preaching or writings, that "holiness consisted in a flow of joy." I constantly told you quite the contrary: I told you it was love; the love of God and our neighbour; the image of God stamped on the heart; the life of God in the soul of man; the mind that was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ also walked.

He might have quoted, to even greater effect, a passage from the *Plain Account of Christian Perfection,* which brings a salutary corrective to some modern holiness and charismatic movements.

> It were well you should be throughly sensible of this –the heaven of heavens is love. There is nothing higher in religion – there is, in effect, nothing else; if you look for anything but more love, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, "Have you received this or that blessing?" if you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent.

It is a striking fact that, though Wesley encouraged the Methodists to claim the gift of Christian Perfection, he never claimed to have received it himself. His practice was here surely sounder than his theory, if only because of the *unselfconscious* nature of true sanctity. The point has never been better made than by Bishop Edward King, speaking at a commemoration of St. Botolph in 1909:

> . . . surprise is the true motto of saints. Good people do not know what they are doing. Good people, as a rule, differ from us ordinary people. Most of us ordinary people know how to be a great deal better than we are, but really good people are generally a great deal better than they know how to be; they are not conscious at all of being what they are. They are simply what they are, good people, and so they are surprised when the result of their lives at all comes out into view.

Much work has been done on Wesley in the forty years since Dr. Sangster wrote. Yet it is good to have his thesis in print again, since it gives a useful critique of Wesley's teaching, and brings before us the thought of a Methodist preacher who notably exemplified that quest for holiness of heart and life which John Wesley urged upon all his followers.

John A. Newton

Faith and Ambiguity

Stewart R. Sutherland. S.C.M. Press, 1984. Pp. xii + 113. £5.95.

Professor Sutherland argues that too many theologians prefer to remain outside the central province of our intellectual environment, meaning by intellectual "a capacity and inclination to serious and critical reflection" on what one believes to be important. He himself chooses in this book to engage in a relocation exercise in the course of exploring the borderlands between belief and unbelief, taking five different philosophers and writers and seeing whether or not they can be fitted neatly into one or other of the two categories into which we habitually put them.

To take his first example, Dostoyevsky, Professor Sutherland writes of him that "his genius is the expression of the spiritual pain which comes from simultaneously inhabiting the worlds of belief and unbelief". The argument uses examples from three of Dostoyevsky's novels, not least *The Brothers Karamazov,* about which Professor Sutherland has written an independent and finely illuminating book. Unlike Myshkin of *The Idiot,* Alyosha is turned out of the monastery to the pressures of life outside it, where belief needs to survive and define itself if Ivan is to receive an adequate answer to his atheism. Yet Dostoyevsky's exploration of the possibility of a "resurrected life" remained incomplete, for his writings reject all mere theories of human nature and selfhood.

And Professor Sutherland's treatment of the mature Hume restores Hume's "borderlands sympathies" in his complex response to the question, "What is it to believe in God?" Belief is identified as "a thin verbal skin attached to experience of the world" and religious sentiments could be consigned to "the recreation ground of experience".

The chapter on Kierkegaard is perhaps the most distinguished in the book, because Professor Sutherland here offers his readers a masterly introduction to this very subtle thinker, whose position as "an outsider" is not at all uncongenial to Professor Sutherland himself, one suspects. Kierkegaard quite properly protests "at the mistaken applications of certain specific patterns of reason within the area of religion". Kierkegaard develops a whole style of *indirect* communication to express the ultimate significance of religious belief for human decision and action *without* its being used as a foundation for morality. Picking his way through the Kierkegaardian minefield, Professor Sutherland presents Kierkegaard's intention to defend Christianity in its true form, independently of his own subjective relation to it. "Not only may the non-believer come to an understanding of what Christianity is, he can help others to do so as well". This coheres with the point that "since faith is a matter of an individual's inner life, the hiddenness of faith seems at times compatible with, and at other times almost to demand, an outer appearance not discriminately different from that of unbelief". Kierkegaard thinks of human life as a process of movement, having less than completion, fulfilment, eternal happiness, so that the *manner* in which the individual apprehends this truth is decisive, though "this does not rule out the possibility that in times different from his own, it might have to be stressed that the 'what' of belief is a *necessary* condition of faith correctly called Christian". This is important, given some twentieth century interpretations of Kierkegaard, who is dominated by the conception of a transcendent and sovereign God, though again, this needs qualifying by drawing attention to the sense in which ambiguity is of the essence of faith.

The final chapter takes Camus and Simone Weil together, since Camus had engaged in a dialogue with her posthumous writings, a dialogue which turned out to be "a model of intellectual and spiritual exploration". Professor Sutherland again displays his sympathies to us in his lively remark that "Even in the tight, clipped suspicious times of economic retrenchment Meursault can briefly re-kindle the soused embers of rebellion in the human spirit". Apart from showing us Camus' intellectual, moral and spiritual humility, Professor Sutherland rescues Simone Weil from the sugar of semi-secular hagiography not least by reminding us of her attack on the notion of a "personal Providence" in her effort to retain some of the language and thought forms of religion. She shifted her focus in an original and extremely painful way to make "cosmological considerations" central to her account of religious belief. Those who gag at her argument that fulfilment will be found in love of the order of the world may find themselves with Camus, speaking in the accents of protest and rebellion, or of course, dozing with many so-called theologians who engage with neither of them.

In his postscript, Professor Sutherland introduces his readers to the category of pilgrimage, the provisional and exploratory character of their styles of life which these five writers have in common despite their considerable differences. In his concluding remarks he lobs a verbal grenade at his readers: "Perhaps the phenomena which we have been examining will appear excessively intellectual to those muscular souls for whom issues of belief or unbelief are clear and unambiguous. To these there is little else to say other than that thinking always includes the possibility of thinking again."

Enthusiasts for Professor Sutherland's work will now reach for his other published work to which this is in its way a succinct introduction. Those new to his writing will not find the pilgrimage easy, but it may kick them awake.

Ann Loades

The Nature of Doctrine

George A. Lindbeck. S.P.C.K., 1984. Pp. 142. £10.00.

This book is based on a threefold distinction between different ways of understanding doctrine. According to the first way, the cognitive, doctrines "function as informative propositions or truth claims about objective realities" (p. 16). According to the second, the "experiential-expressive" way doctrines are "non-informative and non-discursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes or existential orientations" (ibid). The author, who here acknowledges the influence of Wittgenstein, supports the third, "cultural-linguistic" or "regulative" way, that rests on a comparison with languages and their correlative forms of life. "The function of church doctrines that becomes most prominent in this perspective is their use, not as expressive symbols or truth claims, but as communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude and action" (p. 18). According to this view, the permanently valid core (or "categorical framework") of Christianity consists, not in dogmas or experiences, but in "the biblical narratives interrelated in certain specified ways" (p. 80).

In chapter five Lindbeck applies his theory to christology, Marian dogmas and infallibility. Obviously the crucial case is the first. He maintains that Nicene and Chalcedonian formulations must be understood, not as first order statements about objective reality, but in terms of second order statements of rules for christological discourse. Thus the affirmation of the Son's consubstantiality with the Father must be seen "in terms of the rule that whatever is said of the Father is said of the Son, except that the Son is not the Father" (p. 94). In the next paragraph Lindbeck states three regulative principles of a general kind that operated in the evolution of patristic christology. "First, there is the monotheistic principle: there is only one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Joseph and Jesus. Second, there is the principle of historical specificity: the stories of Jesus refer to a genuine human being who was born, lived, and died in a particular time and place. Third, there is the principle of what may infelicitously be called christological maximalism: every possible importance is to be ascribed to Jesus that is not inconsistent with the first rules".

Lindbeck is surely right in affirming that we must not regard doctrinal statements in isolation solely as affirmations of fact or expressions of attitude. We must place them in the total context of the Church's life and worship. Nevertheless I am dissatisfied with his formulation of this truth (which has been widely held in other forms) for these closely connected reasons.

1. I am unconvinced by his reduction of Christian doctrines to linguistic rules. I can best illustrate this by his treatment of Nicene christology. It seems to me historically false to say (as Lindbeck says on p. 94) that Athanasius considered the affirmation of Christ's deity to be, not a first order proposition with ontological reference, but a second order rule of speech; and that "it was only later, in medieval scholasticism, that the full metaphysical import of the doctrine was asserted". In any case the question whether doctrinal statements can be (and, if they can be, must be) given a first order sense (that is, whether they can be and, if they can be, must be held to embody truth claims concerning God's reality) remains. Lindbeck's answer is unsatisfactory. On p. 66 he writes that "there seems to be no reason why cultural-linguistic theories of religion need exclude, even though they do not imply, the modest cognitivism or propositionalism represented by at least some classical theists, of whom Aquinas is a good example". Yet Lindbeck has imperilled cognitive objectivity on the previous page by writing that "a religious utterance acquires the propositional truth of ontological correspondence only insofar as it is a performance, an act or deed, which helps create that correspondence". Moreover, on p. 106 he asserts that the affirmation of theistic (specifically trinitarian) truth claims is not "doctrinally necessary" and ought not to be made "communally normative for the way Christians live and think".

2. Although it may be possible to construct second order rules governing the affirmation of first order truth claims in doctrinal thinking, I doubt whether Lindbeck's three principles are christologically adequate. They could be taken to imply that Jesus was only a human creature standing in a special relation to the Creator. In fact in a note on p. 109 Lindbeck concedes that doubts may be expressed concerning the number and character of the principles he has described.

3. The status that Lindbeck assigns to biblical narratives as a "categorical framework", a continuing basis for fluctuating doctrine, is questionable. What exactly are these narratives? Are they doctrinally sufficient? Lindbeck admits that "even those who doctrinally agree that the story of Jesus is the key to the understanding of reality are often in fundamental disagreement over what the story is really about" (p. 119). And so there is no universal agreement concerning either the story or its "grammar".

H. P. Owen

The Moral Psychology of the Virtues

N. J. H. Dent. Cambridge Studies in Philosophy, CUP, 1984. Pp. ix + 223. £20.00.

This book is a detailed story of an area of philosophical enquiry that lies between ethics and the philosophy of mind. It seeks to describe and delineate those states of character (such as kindness and courage) we know as "the virtues" and to explain what the human self must be like if such states are to exist. Though it does touch in important ways upon questions relating to the nature and justification of morals, greater space is devoted to discussing questions in the philosophy of mind concerning the nature and varieties of desire and the function of reason in directing, quelling or initiating desire.

What is the interest of these technical, detailed analyses in the philosophy of mind to the student of theology or religion? The answer lies in the manner in which Dent focusses them upon a conception of human nature. This is one which accepts as possible, indeed recommends as the ideal of an achieved humanity, an integration of desire and reason, feeling and intellect, emotion and thought. The arguments for this conception are in turn directed towards showing the implausibility of the opposing dichotomous picture of man on which so much bad and harmful thinking about human nature is based. Theology, though it does have in figures like Aquinas representatives of the sounder view of the human person, has been as much bedevilled by the falsely divisive account of man Dent attacks as any other branch of Western thought.

The reason why Dent's target is as stated comes from his clear analysis of what a virtue, like kindness, consists in. The person who is kind helps others in need or distress neither because he merely takes pleasure in so doing, nor because he merely thinks it right to do so. In the first case his interest in others would be too accidental and impermanent to say he possessed the virtue of kindness; in the second case he would be doing outwardly kind deeds out of conscientiousness, not because he was genuinely kind. Rather, to possess such a trait of character is to achieve union of desire/feeling *and* the recognition of what is right and fitting: ". . . it is in a certain integration of these that the possession of such virtues consists" (25). Moreover, we see in Dent's illumination of the nature of virtue that this integration of desire and reason must be expressed *in action.* Thus another dichotomy comes under fire: that which separates reason from conduct. The work becomes an argument for the possibility of something we could genuinely call "practical reason" – reason which controls and is expressed in conduct.

In the detailed analyses of desire, passion, reason, etc., that support these general conclusions, Dent frequently seems to be calling in the old to defeat the modern. The targets of criticism are Hume (who thinks that reason is always the slave of the passions) and, less explicitly, Kant (who contends that reason expresses itself in conduct independently of all "inclinations"). The positive arguments are drawn from Plato and Aristotle (and to a much lesser extent Aquinas), who preserve an integrated account of virtue and of the human self. One wonders what philosophical/theological developments might be responsible for this apparently genuine historical fall from grace. Is it – as MacIntyre has suggested in various places – the re-emergence of Pauline-Augustinian doctrines of depravity in the Reformation?

The Moral Psychology of the Virtues is not an easy book to read; the philosophical ground it covers is too detailed and complex for that. And because it covers a wide range of questions to do with the nature of human desires, passions and emotions, readers are bound to find points of detail that they will wish to question. (For example: my first reading provoked me to object to the account of anger in Ch 6. Dent writes as if it is always a self-regarding passion, one that is unreasonable in nature because based upon too high a regard for one's self-esteem in the eyes of others. Whereas, anger is often other-regarding, and not to feel or display anger at some of the evils done to others would seem a kind of failing). There is, in addition, one important aspect of Dent's general conclusion that some will wish to question. The integration of sense-desire, passion and reason that Dent finds in a life that gives expression to the virtues is in the end achieved through the *dominance* of reason over the non-rational sources of affection and action. The influence of Plato's conception of the relation between desire, passion and reason is strong throughout, as Dent's definition of living according to the "true self" indicates: ". . . . it is through ordering and shaping his life by his practically rational judgement that someone is his own master, possesses his own self and makes his life the active expression of that self" (p. 213). I find this kind of view of the importance of reason congenial, but one can imagine those who would favour an integrated account of the self which places greater emphasis than Dent's upon the sense-desires and particularly the passions as sources of valuation and stability in the self. They will wonder whether sense-desire and passion get a good enough run for their money in Dent's argument.

Despite these qualms, I hope to have indicated why the argument of this book is of interest to all students of human nature, and why all just reasoners on these matters should wish to join in defence of its general aim.

Peter Byrne

The Quest for Eternity. An Outline of the Philosophy of Religion

J. C. A. Gaskin. Penguin, 1984. Pp. 197. £3.50.

Undergraduates doing a course in the subject need short surveys of the current state of the philosophy of religion. There is also a need for books which will present this to the general reader (or to the person who is studying only theology). Anglo-Saxon philosophy as a whole has changed since the 1930s or 1950s. Philosophers now are inclined to see structures of metaphysical belief underlying ordinary practices, and there is room for arguments for and against these beliefs. Such arguments are bound to feel remote from the experience of carrying on the practice. The philosophy of religion has fallen into line: in the work of Swinburne (*The Existence of God,* 1979) and Mackie (*The Miracle of Theism,* 1982) arguments for and against the existence of a non-embodied mind which created and sustains all other things are back at the centre of the subject.

But general readers may wonder why they need to engage with arguments which are so distant from what religious believers, as such, think about and do. Theologically educated readers may take a lot of convincing. Professor Gaskin's first chapter aims at doing this, but it contains little more than the assertion that the content of some theological views is not how religious belief has traditionally been understood. This seems like an atheist philosopher's complaint that his target will not stand still while he shoots at it. Cupitt, in particular, should agree that he is not offering the product formerly sold under this label, but insist that the new product should be considered on its own merits, especially as (he would say) the traditional product is no longer available. We need a sympathetic explanation that, since "ultimate concern" presupposes that things are a certain way (on some accounts of how things are, it would not be appropriate to take anything that seriously), it cannot be *basic,* and of what is really wrong with Robinson's theological phenomenalism, and of the errors of Cuppit's moral psychology.

On the standard arguments, Gaskin does not consider whether the theist may liken the world's dependence on God to the relation of a mind to its contents. Thus, he sees great difficulties in creation (as opposed to making a thing out of pre-existing stuff). For the same reason, he finds no room for us to request an explanation of the existence of the universe with its persisting properties if it has existed for ever. At least, the theist is allowed to propose an explanation of the laws of nature. Surprisingly, Gaskin does not mention Mackie's argument that the atheist must concede a "basic law of emergence" which attaches consciousness to physical properties. Over religious experience, Gaskin is perhaps too brisk in assuming that there is a fully satisfying naturalistic explanation of the basic types of such experiences. He certainly would not sway someone who thought there was a serious point lurking within Swinburne's "Principle of Credulity".

Gaskin discusses these arguments within what seems in general a sane conception of the relation of conclusions to evidence and arguments. But one point in particular is difficult. He concedes that an atheist has fewer motives to the practice of morality, and inhabits a bleaker world. He also says that atheism has led to an impoverishment of the moral vocabulary. (We may question whether it is atheism that has led to this). He goes on to propose that, there being *some* ground for theistic belief, we may properly be led to choose it by its advantages for morality and comfort. But is it sane to suppose *so much* freedom in the conclusions one arrives at? And will not the theistic belief itself lead to a greater devotion to holding only true beliefs? The policy Gaskin would tolerate may not cohere with the world-view it would adopt.

Gaskin's chief contribution to the literature is in memorable examples and labels. (I particularly liked the example of the ghost in the garden (pp. 26-7), the use made of the common cold as an instance of trivial, pointless, misery (pp. 127-8) and the "social-democratic" view of freedom and foreknowledge (pp. 134-5).

His greatest defects are defects of style. Signposts to what is being said are provided: these are helpful to a lecture audience, but clear writing should mean that a reader does not need them. Names are dropped, in a way that cannot advance understanding. Points are arrayed in lists, and we lose the sense of how opposed positions develop by responding each to the other. And the book appears unfinished: it does not matter in itself, but seems significant, that in succeeding sections Gaskin says *both* that there is no difference between pantheism and classical atheism (p. 113) *and* that the pantheist has a meaningful (albeit outrageously speculative) proposition to advance (p. 116).

Robert Gay

Why Believe in God?

Michael Goulder & John Hick. S.C.M. Press, 1983. Pp. 117. £2.50.

It is good to find theologians who, with great energy, have prepared a thoroughly readable book for what is sometimes pejoratively referred to as "the popular market". Such books are important, for how else can the fruits of the theological endeavour be made available to a wider public? It could also be recommended as introductory reading for a course in Philosophy of Religion. It deals briefly with many of the central questions to be discussed in such a course: religious experience, epistemology, prayer, providence, miracles, the design argument, and so on. Hick and Goulder, both of whom contributed to *The Myth of God Incarnate,* here represent two sides of the religious divide. Goulder has come to see himself as an atheist, and in the first chapter he describes how he came to this position, and the resulting resignation of his orders as an Anglican priest. One has to admire the honesty with which he has set this out, as well as his obvious integrity. Hick represents liberal theology, "driven snow theology" as Goulder refers to it, seeking to preserve the notion of the reality of God in the face of modern scepticism. In the final chapter he makes it clear that this enterprise forms the basis of the Hick corpus, and cannot be explored fully in so small a book as this.

It is the second chapter which forms the basis of the discussion, and Hick's case finally comes to rest on his idea of the trustworthiness of religious experience. Obviously the discussion is not exhaustive, but two things need to be pointed out. First, Hick's view of religious experience is one not shared by many who are engaged in work on mysticism. It is based on the idea that religious experience is in some sense universally the same. Whilst it may be described differently in different cultures, it is grounded in the same fundamental experience of God, a view shared by authors such as W.T. Stace (*Mysticism and Philosophy*). Steven Katz (*Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*) has, to my mind, convincingly challenged this idea of a core religious experience independent of historical and religious context, and Goulder touches on it indirectly in his critique. Second, and this follows from the first point, one wonders to what extent, if at all, the great mystics such as John of the Cross or Meister Eckhart would be able to find much common ground with John Hick? John of the Cross seems to deny the validity of such experiences, and advises his disciples against seeking them. Hick has chosen to adopt a fairly stereotyped view of religious experience; by adopting this view, I wonder whether he is doing justice to "religious experience" in the sense that many of the mystics might have referred to it? Mysticism is in any case a very pluralistic phenomenon. Hick's view seems to concern itself with phenomena rather than what others have described as the "movement of the heart towards God". The result is that he has laid himself open to the accusation that his view of "religious experience" amounts to little more than the temporary suspension of the rational faculties. It seems to say there there is one world for the religious and quite another for the non-religious and no possibility of a meeting between the two.

Michael Goulder stands for the "common sense view", if I may put it that way, but this is a view which tends to see black and white perhaps *too* clearly in a grey world. For him experience of the sort described by Hick will not do, unless it can be "publicly observed". That is to say that he requires evidence and will not allow intensely personal experience to stand on its own. He also charges Hick with predestinarianism, a charge one feels he does not quite escape, despite a denial of it in Chapter 4. Hick's fundamental critique of Goulder, with which I am inclined to agree, is that he has rejected an over-simplified view of God and of Christian faith. Goulder may be right to reject "red-blooded theology", and there are certainly criticisms to be made of Hick's propositions, but it cannot be satisfactory simply to leave it at that; as it were, to pack up our books and go home.

In Chapter 4 we are presented with a concise view of Hick's eschatologically based theodicy. Readers of his other works will recognise this view of the world as a "creation/salvation" process, which goes on in worlds beyond this one – an almost never-ending "vale of soul-making". During this process we are free to make our response to God, Hick argues, but it is not made clear why the postulation of a God is necessary, other than for the reasons given elsewhere. Why cannot the world be internally coherent? How many explanations for this world are needed before we can be satisfied, and why do we need to explain this world always in terms of some other unknowable world? Perhaps Hick has concerned himself too much with a desire to preserve some of the traditional theology and not enough with our knowledge of the world we live in? This approach to theodicy I find unsatisfactory, partly because it seems to ride rough-shod over the sufferings of the present age, especially

those resulting from natural causes. The postulation of a supplementary existence beyond this one is fraught with problems, which presumably there was not the space to to into here, and which he deals with elsewhere.

The book is its own best criticism, for each chapter makes its assessment of what has gone before. It is very much an introductory work, giving one some insight into the problems which make theology and philosophy so difficult and so fascinating. In the final chapter Hick leads his reader into the wider God debate (which is wide indeed), by outlining the views of others who have taken up the challenge, such as Don Cupitt. His assertion throughout is that religious experience is the best basis for any postulation of God. This may well be so, but his own statement of it is for me inadequate, as it is for Michael Goulder. In the end we are left with the question whether the dismantling of Christian doctrine leads one to the rejection of God himself, a question which Goulder has answered in the affirmative. The results of such discussions as these may be painful to many, but we can ill afford to give them up.

Peter Wibroe

People of God. A Plea for the Church

Anton Houtepen. S.C.M. Press, 1984. Pp. 208. £7.95.

The year 1983 saw the publication of at least two important books on the Church by Roman Catholic authors: one, the massive *Codex Iuris Canonici,* the other, the much briefer volume under review here. Selective quotation from these two works could produce an almost comic divergence of tone and discrepancy of method. It would not be difficult to present the *Code* as the exact embodiment of what Dr Houtepen sees to be the peril of ecclesiology, presenting " 'the church' as something cut and dried, an object to be described, an independent entity or hypostasis". In that case the church is a "fossilized entity, overwhelming people, that even speaks to them as an authority" (p. 22). Perhaps it is unfair to press the comparison too far, for while canon law should indeed be informed by ecclesiology, and must constantly be subject to revision, its task still differs from what Dr Houtepen sets himself. His is a *plea* for the Church, the Church that is still to be; and to him, all present institutional forms of the Church are but preliminary schemes or sketches for such a body: "the Church is a provisional organization", he writes on p.26, "because it lives on longing". That longing, according to Dr Houtepen, "is the desire of those who seek the Kingdom of God"; and that is the definition of one of his chief concepts, "ecumene". "Ecumene" is both "the kingdom of God in the human world" (p. 35), and the desire that draws men and women into that kingdom. It is the longing that both brings the Church into being, and keeps it in an unfixed and unfinished condition.

It need scarcely be said that the subject of Dr Houtepen's essay is not simply the Roman Catholic Church; both the range of his knowledge of the contemporary Church and his treatment of the subject are impressively ecumenical. The middle part of his book is a wide-ranging and deeply scriptural reflection upon current ecumenical treatment of the doctrines of God and of Christ, of the use of the creeds and sacraments, of the Christian ethic and the Christian ministry. He seeks to demonstrate that a proper consideration of each of these *must* be ecumenical. With regard to baptism, for example, he quotes the Dutch Council of Churches: "Reflection on the nature of baptism irrevocably forces us to the need to overcome the division in the churches" (p. 98). Of the eucharist, he concludes that "the very nature of eucharistic communion calls for the visible unity of the Church as a *communio* of sister churches" (p. 122).

There is nothing introverted about Dr Houtepen's "plea" for the Church: that, indeed, would be a denial of what he means by "ecumene". His plea is no plaintive attempt to patch up the sinking ship. From his opening chapter, a careful analysis of the decline (both real and apparent) of the Western Church, he combines a truly pastoral (and at times passionate) understanding of those whom the Church has failed or disappointed, with a joyful affirmation of what the Church can be. A richness of human sympathy, and a realism about the world, pervade this book; indeed, were it not for a density of theological technicalities, and an untidy style which at times approaches shorthand, it would be an admirable one to recommend to the general reader.

In his final chapter he sketches an ecumenical approach to the idea of a single, visible Church, in which his treatment of the papacy is even further removed from any trace of ultramontanism than the *Final Report* of ARCIC(I), or the work of J.R.M. Tillard, recently reviewed by Professor Hanson in this journal. This, however, is done without any attempt to grasp the nettle of infallibility: he offers the prospect of a universal primacy of the See of Rome, towards which the Churches might indeed have moved, had the First Vatican Council not taken place. One is tempted to feel that the only Church which would find difficulty in accepting Dr Houtepen's notion of papacy is the Church of Rome! For the main part of his book he quotes no Anglican theologian, and although in his final chapter he does consider the Lambeth Quadrilateral as representing one search for the basis of organic unity among the Churches, he does not apparently regard the Anglican experiment of a Communion of self-governing provinces as worth considering as an instance of his preferrred model of unity, a fellowship of "sister churches".

These observations, however, do not touch the substance of his essay. A more fundamental defect, that flaws his otherwise impressive argument, is the way in which he does not articulate a notion of God as actively and providentially guiding the future of His Church. It is, admittedly, the attraction of his thesis that he refuses to identify too closely the existing institutions of the Church with the act and will of God. In Dr Houtepen's view, it seems to be enough to say that God first calls the Church into being, and is her destination in the end; but is it no longer possible to speak of God as presently shaping and shepherding his people? A great deal of liturgical speech, both ancient and modern, is apparently beyond the scope of Dr Houtepen's ecclesiology. No doubt this indicates rather the extreme difficult of articulating any appropriate idea of divine activity in the Church, than a lack of ability on Dr Houtepen's part; but in an essay devoted to the *provisional* character of the Church under God, some such treatment is surely needed. A provisionality based upon human frailty rather than upon divine guidance will not be enough to deter those who would always seek to tidy up ecclesiology into canon law.

Peter Atkinson

Theology at 16+

Edited by James Barnett. Epworth Press, 1984. Pp. 181. £5.95.

Of the series of twelve papers from the eleventh Downside Symposium as compiled in this book, two have been selected here for review. The underlying unity of the various papers is best described in relation to the terms of reference of theology, and the way in which those terms of reference are understood by the contributors. But within this "unity" there is an apparent divergence of outlook.

For example, Bishop Christopher Butler, speaking on Doctrine and Theology, examines the relationship between theology and doctrine in the light of the teaching authority of the Church, a distinctly Roman Catholic position. He reviews the Education Act of 1944 which he says one may suspect can be held responsible, in its effort to work out an agreed religious syllabus for the teaching of religious doctrine in the schools, for the reductionism which turned religious instruction to scriptural exegesis rather than doctrinal information. He claims that the problem is even more acute today when the classrooms are filled with a mixture not only of different forms of Christianity but of a variety of different religions. Hence, he questions the tendency today to substitute for the old agreed syllabuses something which is hardly distinguishable from a watered-down and dangerously sketchy sort of "comparative religion". As a result, since each religion has its own identity, the Bishop is concerned that such so-called religious instruction will become not the presentation of the doctrinal content of a religion but a non-committed exercise in human history. He states that he would prefer that school children be given the opportunity of rejecting religion which they have been accurately and religiously taught at school than left to drift around in a morass of half-baked history of man's uncontrolled sallies into the alleged unknown. From this, Bishop Butler argues his theological point that since theology, as an exercise of understanding, depends upon the data that it proposes to understand, it is obvious that it cannot create its own data. If, therefore, it is to be Christian theology, as distinct from the sociology of religion, comparative religion, and religious philosophy, it can only accept data provided by the church; and if it rejects such data or any intrinsic element in such data, it ceases to be Christian theology.

Brenda Watson would endorse Christopher Butler's thesis, but as Director of the Farmington Institute for Christian Studies in Oxford, she is concerned with the need for properly trained teachers. In relation to this she questions the appropriateness of the present examination system, suggesting that the greater part of the lesson time available in school should be used in such a way as to make in-depth enquiry and investigation an integral part of the R.E. course. This she connect with consideration of the appropriateness of theology to the school. She points out that discrimination in the schools against R.E. as a subject has relegated it to a Cinderella status which has resulted not only in the lowering of standard in the training of religious education teachers but in the opting out of that area by a large percentage of trainees. She points out that recent government documents bemoan deficiencies in the sciences, modern languages and so forth, but express little concern for or understanding of religious education. Hence, even among those who advocate religious education vociferously the case for the inclusion of theology has to be fought. She expresses the same concern as that of Bishop Butler when she points out the pitfall in the phenomenological approach, the result of a relativistic attitude towards Christian beliefs resulting from the acceptance of or the belief in the desirability of a pluralist society. In this, the *human* dimension is placed in the forefront, while any real engagement with the content of what people believe *for its own sake,* and serious questions as to its truth are evaded. The legacy for all this is the avoidance of theology even by sincere educationalists. Brenda Watson also points out that another stroke against taking theology seriously is that it does not comply with the required standard of "relevance". She offers a number of challenging suggestions in reference to the individual teacher with regard to A level examination work within the present system. She claims that a serious listening to the children's questions, a variety of teaching techniques, the willingness to develop topics in depth and, above all, the teacher's own continuing wrestling with theological problems, refusing to take refuge in theological jargon, can all contribute to overcoming obstacles to the promoting of theological thinking among the young.

In the Appendix to her paper, Brenda Watson explores the *Value of "Seen" Examinations* as a viable alternative to the present system, for she contends that if religion is controversial at its very roots, and if indoctrination is to be avoided on the one hand, and a watering-down which fails to give pupils any adequate awareness of religion, on the other hand, it is essential to enable candidates to enjoy,and to explore, the vital issues of interpretation and opinion, together with the possibility of serious commitment on their part. To fail to provide an arena for such responsible thinking cannot be termed educational.

In the final *An Appraisal,* Brenda Watson's observations of some of the views expressed in the various papers are incisive and thought-provoking. To conclude she challenges the view presented by two or three contributors that religion is itself peculiarly an adult activity. A book such as *Mister God, This is Anna* suggests it is possible to underestimate the capacities of children. Therefore, a case for the theology of 5+ (or 5-) is only to underline the necessity of it at 16+.

Donal O'Leary

Planetary Theology

Tissa Balasuriya. S.C.M. Press, 1984. Pp. 282. £6.95.

Tissa Balasuriya is Chaplain to the Asian Catholic Student Federation and Director of the Centre for Society and Religion, Colombo. In *Planetary Theology* he argues that over the past few centuries a world system of unjust relationships has been set up, to which the churches have contributed, not least as a result of some unexamined aspects of their theology. Many features of traditional theology prevent its helping Christianity to play a liberating role in modern human life. Traditional theology, according to Balasuriya, is culture-bound, church-centred, male and age dominated, pro-capitalist, anti-communist, over-theoretical and unrelated to the social contexts in which it is developed. In its place, Balasuriya sets forth the outline of a planetary theology which takes account of the spiritual and physical needs of the whole world, seen in terms of North

and South as well as East and West. He looks at the background to this theology particularly in his native Asia, and then outlines the "radical conversion" to which the churches are called in worship, teaching, mission and social action.

Because it is a *cri de coeur,* one should not look here for an impartial, objective analysis which carefully weighs up both sides of the argument. In the same vein as James H. Cone's *Black Theology and Black Power,* the provocative, polemical tone of *Planetary Theology* may lead some readers not to take Balasuriya's books seriously, and to see it as little more than an emotional outburst, dominated too much by a mood of profound dissatisfaction with the capitalist west, and riding too self-consciously on the crest of the liberation theology wave that seems to be sweeping all before it. But this would be to misunderstood profoundly the function and the power of such a book. Yes, it is heavily biased against the West; yes, it does contain some apparently absurd ideas, such as the suggestions that "all the whites in New Zealand should move to Australia over two decades, to allow New Zealand to be settled by Bengalis", and that "West Canadians could easily be settled in the US West so that the area from Alaska to Vancouver and east to Winnipeg could absorb millions of Chinese who would doubtless make better use of the land" (at this point I wrote in the margin of my review copy "this is madness!"). One does get tired of the seemingly endless list of complaints that a given system or approach is "ageist", "sexist", "castist", "classist", "racist", "tribalist" *and* "feudalist" (often all at the same time); not to mention a certain *naiveté* regarding the world of *Realpolitik* and the great difficulty encountered there daily by men and women of goodwill whose responsibilities force them to grapple with the complexities of a world system that is real and solid and will not go away just because we do not like it. Yet this is completely ignored in some of the questions Balasuriya asks (e.g. "How was it possible for an American Bishop to visit the US forces in Vietnam at Christmas and encourage them to fight the poor Vietnamese in the name of the Prince of Peace?"). Is this the language of propaganda – or of prophecy? If it is propaganda, then, as George Orwell reminded us, such sloppiness in the handling of words and arguments is the first step on the road to tyranny – religious and political. By over-simplifying their case and failing to recognise the intricate web of contributory causes, that go to make up any given political or religious situation, liberation theologians such as Balasuriya put at risk their right to be taken seriously as prophets.

There is, however, another sort of simplicity of style and clarity of message evident in *Planetary Theology* that has the hall-mark of genuine prophecy. That is why this is such an important, disturbing, uncomfortable and maddening book to read – much of what it says strikes home. We in the West do not like to be told by an Asian that "the prevailing world system cannot be understood in depth if the long history of the rape of the rest of the world by European peoples is ignored" (and he makes out a strong case for this). It is disturbing to be reminded that even in the political realm "the unique criterion of God's judgement is that of loving service to the neighbour in need", and that "the 'I was hungry and you gave me food . . .' passage from

Matthew 25 is the criterion for judging every human being who has ever lived or will ever live on earth". Here are the same questions being asked, with equal effectiveness, by an Asian theologian as were recently being asked by Bob Geldof in connection with his Live Aid appeal. The political expediency of the usual answers provided by governments in the West are made to sound just as hollow by the direct approach both men.

Most challenging of all is Balasuriya's analysis of goals and methods towards a fundamental re-structuring of personal values and social structures, in order that a new world order based on a spirituality of justice may be established. He categorises the difficulties and risks to be faced at each stage of the process as: low risk/low yield; high risk/high yield; very high risk/uncertain yield; no risk/no yield. While many of us shy away from the third of these, "the do-or-die methods related to physical overthrow of an existing regime; systematic sabotage; insurrection" (although no doubt happy to have supported a war against someone like Hitler, thereby ensuring the overthrow of *his* regime), it is to our shame that we are still all too often unable to support even the high risk/high yield activity of the type popularised by Ghandi. Instead we prefer to remain firmly locked in the no risk/no yield syndrome of "indifferent social goals such as personality development, debating, novenas and pilgrimages". It will take the searing attack of a man like Balasuriya to awaken us out of our deep sleep of indifference.

Christopher Brice

Moderated Love. A Theology of Professional Care

Alastair V. Campbell. S.P.C.K., 1984. Pp. 160. £4.95.

An explanation of the meaning of the title of this book (originally the 1983 Edward Cadbury Lectures) may serve as the best way of introducing a discussion of its contents. Campbell's thesis is that those engaged in the professions of medicine, nursing and social work are, when being true to their profession, carrying out their calling in a way which manifests love (agape) and friendship (philia). This love is, however, moderated, first, in the sense of moderation or temperateness, implying that a subtle balance between involvement and detachment is maintained. Second, like the Presbyterian Moderator, professional helpers represent more than human attempts to care in that they symbolize the impossible ideal of *agape* which restores full value to every individual, however damaged. There is therefore a religious dimension to professional commitment, although the givers of moderated love need not necessarily see themselves as believers.

This being the theme of the book, Campbell examines the three professions chosen for scrutiny to try to identify those aspects of medicine, nursing and social work which are most characteristically loving. A chapter is devoted to each in which various popular stereotypes are demolished (generally "men of straw", tilting at which is a simple matter), and the loving core of each profession is identified. The love of the medical person consists in brotherliness which is an act of getting close to the individuality of the patient through an awareness of fellow humanity and mutual dependence. A nurse's love is identified as skilled companionship, which conveys notions of physical closeness, expresses mutuality and requires commitment within defined limits. The social worker's love is prophetic in that it sees a dimension of hope which transcends the despairing picture of what is visualised at present. Throughout these chapters, Campbell's analysis is stimulating, thought-provoking and clearly aware of current literature relating to the professions' development. He has succeeded in identifying a facet of *agape* in each profession which is truly characteristic of that calling (while not absent from other professions). Thus, although the hopeful dimension is present in nursing, it is more specifically to be found in social work; likewise social work involves companionship, but not to the same degree that nursing does. This is, then, a most perceptive description of the subtle qualities of caring love.

Since he uses the expression "love" frequently, Campbell attempts a discussion of precisely what, in theological and practical terms, he means by the word. He examines the ideas of Erich Fromm, Paul Tillich and Max Scheler; the former two have helpful insights, particularly Tillich's distinction between *epithymia, eros, philia* and *agape,* but it is in Scheler's description of love as the risking of self in order to enhance the value of another that Campbell finds the most adequate expression of the altruistic love shown by professional carers. The final three chapters are devoted to a working out in theological terms of the implications of the ideal that the carers' loving actions will enhance the value of others. The doctrines of creation, incarnation and resurrection are related to the risk-taking, limitation-acknowledging and yet hope-inspiring aspects of a professional's care. The sacramental nature of care as a tangible manifestation of love which points to transcendent realities is examined, and finally the political dimension of transforming love is explored as an aspect of the work of the body of Christ as an agent for structural change. Campbell's thinking here is at once profound and yet easy to follow. He expresses a fear in his "Preamble" that his tendency to "expropriate and reinterpret major theological themes with a minimum of scholarly justification" (pp. 2-3) may appear to systematic theologians to be "somewhat cavalier", but the skill with which he fills traditional doctrinal forms with ideas so directly relevant to those involved in the caring professions makes his fears groundless.

Particularly satisfying is his finding in the mundane physical necessities of care the "sacrament of the cup of cold water" (p. 99). To those who, in the nursing profession particularly, are regularly giving heavy, unpleasant, often distressing physical care, it is refreshing to discover that it is not only nurses who are concious of the sacramental aspect of their labour. Less helpful is Campbell's tendency to undervalue the qualities specific to the gender of the giver of care. He speaks of the sensuousness involved in physical caring, but seems eager to disallow the entry of male or female characteristics into the caring relationship. To do this is to try to introduce an unnatural division of personality: as caring professionals, we care for people with our whole selves, and this includes channelling (perhaps by sublimation) our gender-specific attributes and energies into a therapeutic interaction.

The book is a fine work of practical theology, and as its author hopes, "opens some interesting new vistas on the transcendent character of human caring" (p. 3). Its scope is such that it will be of vaue not only to those, whether Christian or not, engaged in the caring professions, but also

to those whose religious work brings them into contact with those professions.

Nicolas Clough

BOOKS RECEIVED

Allen, D. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology.* S.C.M. Pp. vi +287. £9.50.

Cranfield, C.E.B. *The Bible and Christian Life.* T. and T. Clark. Pp. vii +248. £6.45.

Crawford, R.G. *The Saga of God Incarnate. UNISA* (available from T. and T. Clark). Pp. xii +106. £7.95.

Gunton, C.E. *Enlightenment and Alienation. An Essay towards a Trinitarian Theology,* M.M.S. Pp. ix +166. £5.95.

Harvey, A.E. (ed.) *Alternative Approaches to New Testament Study.* S.P.C.K. Pp. x +144. £4.95.

Israel, M. *The Discipline of Love. The Ten Commandments for Today.* S.P.C.K. Pp. 107. £3.95.

Lang, B. (ed.) *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament.* S.P.C.K. Pp. xii +175. £3.50.

Lewis, H.D. *Freedom and Alienation.* Scottish Academic Press. Pp. x +159. £10.50 (hb), £6.75 (pb).

Lohfink, G. *Jesus and Community. The Social Dimension of Christian Faith.* S.P.C.K. Pp. xii +211. £4.95.

Martin Soskice, J. *Metaphor and Religious Language.* Clarendon Press. Pp x +191. £17.50.

Mascall, E.L. *Jesus: Who He is – and how we know Him.* D.L.T. Pp. 64. £1.95.

Moloney, F.J. *Woman, First among the Faithful. A New Testament Study.* D.L.T. Pp. 124. £3.50.

Montefiore, H. *The Probability of God.* S.C.M. Pp. 195. £6.95.

Newlands, G. *Making Christian Decisions.* Mowbray. Pp. x +127. £4.50.

Rendtorff, R. *The Old Testament. An Introduction.* S.C.M. Pp. xi +308. £12.50.

Vance, N. *The Sinews of the Spirit. The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought.* C.U.P. Pp. x +244. £22.50.

Winstanley, M.T. *Come and See An Exploration into Christian Discipleship.* D.L.T. Pp. xi +148. £3.95.