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RE-REVIEW

Agape and Eros

Anders Nygren, S.P.C.K., 1983. Pp. 766. £12.50.

We have all been educated to believe that we should think of other people rather than ourselves. Indeed in the popular mind unselfishness and Christianity are almost synonymous. In so far as this attitude is part of the modern theologically trained mind it is attributable to the influence of the Swedish theologian Anders Nygren and his book *Agape and Eros*, described by James Gustafson as "a classic secondary work". Part 1 was published in England in 1932 and the two volumes of part 2 in 1938 and 1939. S.P.C.K. produced a revised edition in a new translation by Philip Watson in 1953. They have now produced a new edition of what is substantially the 1953 version.

Agape and Eros has had a major impact on all subsequent discussions of Christian love. Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr and Gene Outka are just some of those whose discussion has been related to and in part based upon Nygren's treatment. Nygren argued that eros and agape are two fundamentally different forms of love. Although in Christian history they have often coalesced and influenced one another they are basically opposed and cannot fit together. The word eros has for us become associated with erotic and it is easy to make the mistake of assuming that the contrast between the two kinds of love is that one is sensual and the other spiritual. This, however, is totally misleading. Eros too is a spiritual love. Nygren believed it to have the following characteristics. First, it is an "acquisitive love". It begins with a person's sense of need and the attempt to find satisfaction for it in a higher and happier state. This means that eros is always based upon a recognition of value. Secondly, eros is "man's way to the Divine". Eros recognises value and is drawn ever upwards, away from the world, to find its satisfaction in beauty itself. Thirdly, eros is an "egocentric love". It is concerned with the individual self and its search for lasting happiness.

In contrast to eros, which begins with man, agape begins with God; not with God's needs, for he has no needs, but with his nature as spontaneous, overflowing love. The agape of God, expressed in Christ and his cross, awakens in man gratitude and self-giving. There is no natural longing for God in man but in response to God's agape we respond to God and obey him by offering an agape love for our neighbour. In agape there is no place for self-love. In self-love Christianity "finds its chief adversary, which must be fought and conquered". One of the crucial contrasts for Nygren is that whilst eros is based on a recognition of value, agape is a spontaneous love, relating to enemy as well as friend, irrespective of their value.

Although eros and agape are two fundamentally different types of love they have, according to Nygren, become thoroughly mixed and confused in the course of Christian history. In particular he criticises the creative and highly influential synthesis of the two in St. Augustine's concept of *caritas* for being grounded in a Neoplatonic eros. It was only with Luther that the New Testament understanding of agape began to break through again. "Amor Dei non invenit sed creat suum diligibile, amor hominis fit a suo diligibili."

Anders Nygren was a man seized by an idea, an idea which he pursued through numerous Christian writers and expressed in 764 pages. It is an idea we cannot ignore. It is also an idea which is badly wrong. Nevertheless there are some books whose creative wrongness is so much more helpful than the stream of books which are insipidly right. Some of Simone Weil's writing falls into this category, so does that of Marx. Like Marx, Nygren put such a big hand on the idea he had seized that he managed to smudge the whole picture. Yet the idea itself continues to haunt and question us. Ten years ago Helen Oppenheimer began to struggle against Nygren and the result is her excellent *The Hope of Happiness* (S.C.M., 1983). She herself acknowledges a debt to John Burnaby's *Amor Dei* (Hodder, 1938), which is also a reaction against *Agape and Eros*.

It is easy to see how wrong Nygren was by reflecting on any loving human relationship. The fundamental fact about such a relationship is that we *want* the other person. We want to be with them and share their company. How odd it would be if someone said they would do anything to help us except actually want us or be with us. So Nygren's first point that Christian love, in contrast to eros, is not an acquisitive love, is totally wrong. So his second point that Christian love, unlike eros, is not a way to the divine. For how can we come to respond to God's self-emptying humility in the incarnation and cross unless we recognise value in it. Our response to God cannot be an arbitrary act of will but must be a response to something recognised. And it is only because we have some idea of the value of love and humility that we are able to see their sublime source and standard in Christ. The third characteristic of eros is that it is an egocentric love. It seems unreasonable, however, to dismiss the reflection "Most people live pretty futile lives, I will look for what will bring me lasting happiness" as the wrong starting point. On the contrary, although not the only starting point, it is a perfectly proper and mature one. Furthermore, if it is true, as it seems to be, that in one way or another we are all looking for happiness, we have to ask whether this is not how God has made us. The only alternative is to attribute this universal longing to the fall. Yet if God really is our lasting happiness, and he has made us, this seems a bit churlish.

At this point a protest is necessary about Nygren's language. He says adamantly that he is only comparing eros and agape, not asserting that one is superior to the other. Yet the whole thrust of his book is that agape, as he defines it, as set forth in the New Testament, lost in history and recovered by Luther, is the only properly Christian love. Furthermore the terminology he uses has a built-in evaluative element. Both the words "acquisitive" and "egocentric" have such overtones in English that they prejudice the question from the start.

Eros is present in any human love worthy of the name but is it a feature of God's love? First, is there anything corresponding to a need love? The doctrine of God as Trinity suggests that there is, in that the love of the Father is *received* by the Son, as the love of the Son is received by the Father. Within the Godhead there is mutuality rather than one-sided giving. Then, although God did not create the world to compensate for a personal lack he has, by the very act of creation, put himself in the position of being vulnerable to his creatures. A couple who adopt a child may have plenty of children of their own and they have no need

to adopt. Yet, having adopted, the child comes to matter very much to them. Their love is one that can be rejected, so they can be hurt. Their love is one that can be reciprocated, so they can be gladdened. As with us, so with God. We can hurt him and we can delight his heart. Secondly, does God recognise value or only create it? Yet this is a false antithesis. He recognises the value he has created. We matter by virtue of our creation not simply because Christ died for us. God's love is not like someone mentally holding their nose as they coldly hold out the soup. Beneath the grime and smell and squalor he recognises our human face, our "irreplaceable centre of minding" (Oppenheimer). Thirdly, is God's love an "egocentric love"? Yes, for it is an expression of what he wants. Difficult though it is to believe he wanted us in the first place or he would not have created us; and he wants us to be with him for eternity or he would not have come amongst us to take us to himself.

The characteristics of eros, as described by Nygren, are all part of the love we attribute to God. Yet there is a problem. How do eros and agape relate to one another? Perhaps we have to affirm, simply as a matter of experience, that they belong together. Love both wants the other person and wants their well-being. Both aspects can degenerate, the one into possessiveness and the other into the will to dominate that refuses to be vulnerable enough to receive. In God both aspects of love are present in perfection; in us grace is at work purifying both our eros and our agape. There is still much to be said for St. Augustine's synthesis in which the divine humility wins our eros and holds it steady on its proper object. In our eros, according to St. Augustine, there is a tendency to self-sufficiency. *Superbia* has entered in. But "to cure man's *superbia* God's Son descended and became humble. Why art thou proud, O man? God has for thy sake become humble. Thou wouldst perchance be ashamed to imitate a humble man; imitate at least the humble God."

There is even more to be said for St. Bernard of Clairvaux, to whom Nygren devotes only two pages. According to St. Bernard there are four stages of love. First we love ourselves. Then we come to love God for the benefits he bestows on us. From there we go on to love God for his own sake and delight in him simply for himself. Finally, in a state achieved in its fulness only in heaven, we come to love even ourselves for his sake. It is a view that does justice to human nature as we know it, to the psychology of the spiritual life and to our understanding of love both human and divine. Nor need we think of eros as a stage that is kicked away when a higher platform has been reached. Eros, purified and perfected, has its proper place in relation to the platform as a whole. For divine grace refines and intensifies our wanting just as it brings about the miracle of self-transcendence in which we come to delight in God, and others, for their own sake.

Richard Harries

BOOK REVIEWS

Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah

George W. E. Nickelsburg, S.C.M. Press, 1981. Pp. 332. £10.00.

Most Biblical students confine themselves to a study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament; at best they only cast a sideways glance at the literature of the intertestamental period. This omission is a great pity since these writings are of fundamental importance for an understanding of rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. For this reason, George W. E. Nickelsburg's *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* is to be warmly welcomed as an invaluable guide to the literary treasures of this period.

In the introduction to this volume Nickelsburg elaborates his approach and method. Theological concepts, he argues, do not rise in a vacuum; rather they are a response to historical events and circumstances. Thus, his study is arranged historically; each chapter is presented with an historical introduction. Within this framework, the subject matter is treated as literature. 'We are interested,' he writes, 'not simply or primarily in ideas or motifs or in contents in some amorphous sense but in literature which has form and direction.'

Nickelsburg begins his study by outlining the historical background to the catastrophic events of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. In this context he surveys various tales of dispersion such as Daniel 1-6, Tobit and the Epistle of Jeremiah. Chapter 2 concentrates on Palestine in the wake of Alexander the Great and includes discussions of such works as 1 Enoch 1-36 and Ecclesiasticus. In the next chapter Nickelsburg turns to the period of 169-64 BCE in which writings such as Jubilees exhorted Jews to stand firm in the face of persecution. Chapter 4 deals with the Hasmoneans and their opponents and treats such works as Judith, 1st and 2nd Maccabees and the Qumran Scrolls. In Chapter 5 six texts of Egyptian origin, written between 140 BCE and 70 CE, are presented.

In Chapter 6 Nickelsburg focuses on the period 67-37 BCE in which Palestine was subjected to Roman authority; important material from this period include the Psalms of Solomon and the Psalms of the Righteous and the Pious. The exposition of the Bible, as found in such writings as the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, is considered in Chapter 7, and is followed in Chapter 8 by a depiction of the events in Palestine in the second half of the first century CE and relevant literature. Finally in Chapter 9, Nickelsburg concludes with a discussion of the second revolt.

The five centuries that gave rise to the literature surveyed in this book were times of crisis, transition and creativity; fundamental changes shook the Jewish community and shaped the course of Jewish history. Nickelsburg's introduction is a lucid and readable reference work. It is not intended as a substitute for the actual texts themselves; its purpose, which it admirably achieves, is to serve as a supplementary handbook to these literary riches.

D. Cohn-Sherbock

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D. Cohn-Sherbock

The Living Utterances of God. The New Testament Exegesis of the Old

Anthony Tyrrell Hanson. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983. Pp. 250. £9.95.

During recent decades there has been a great increase of interest in the way the New Testament writers use the Old Testament, which to them were simply the Scriptures. Professor Hanson has been one of the leaders in this. But it is not an easy subject to come to. The student must possess extensive knowledge of the Old Testament, both in the Hebrew and the early versions, particularly the LXX. He must also know a great deal about Jewish exegesis as it is seen in the writings of the rabbis, the Qumran Community and Philo of Alexandria. This essential background is set out in the first chapter of this book, with a large number of examples. *Halaka*, *haggada* and *pesher* are explained and illustrated. Much is covered in the limited space, but I felt that a fuller discussion of some of the reasons lying behind the 'mistranslations' of the LXX (e.g. Aramaic meanings, possible 'lost' meanings, translating with words of similar sound) would have helped the reader to see that the translators were not incompetents.

The main part of the book consists of a survey of the way the New Testament writers use the Scriptures. The reader's interest is held by the many concrete examples. We see exactly how scholars chip away at the quotations and allusions to reveal the pre-Christian background and the Christian interpretations. Some passages are familiar to New Testament students but all are presented freshly and as part of a well-structured argument. Other passages have not attracted the same attention from scholars, and the chapters on the Pastoral Epistles, the Catholic Epistles, and the Revelation to John are of special value because new material is now made available. He finds four categories of scripture references in the Pastorals: unconscious quotations, where the writer uses a source that contains quotations of which he is unaware, deliberate citations, the use of *haggada*, and the use of scripture to provide the structure of a narrative, as in 2 Tim. 4:16-18 (cf. LXX of Ps. 22) and 1 Tim. 2:3-5 (cf. Isa. 45:21-22). The writer of the Revelation stands apart from the rest of the New Testament writers in his application of the language and images of scripture to Christ and to the church, rather than making direct quotations.

So we are presented with a good description of the methods used by each of the New Testament writers. Hanson denies that they accepted anything as Scripture beyond that found in the Jewish canon - even Jude's quotation from 1 Enoch is not from an unknown apocryphon, may not have been thought of as Scripture, and is rejected by 2 Peter. In particular he stresses interpretation derived from existing Jewish exegesis, typology, the idea of salvation history, and the belief that the pre-existent Christ was present in Old Testament incidents.

As a Christian teacher of the New Testament, Hanson then turns to his second question: What sense can we as Christians today make of the New Testament interpretation of Scripture and how are we to understand the relation between the Testaments? He asserts that to refuse to answer this question would be a betrayal of the New Testament and

that if we cannot find any common ground we can hardly claim to hold the same faith. A fascinating discussion of Matthew's use of Isaiah 7:14 opens up the theme, which develops into a consideration of the nature of the Old Testament and the place it should have in the Church today. Hanson is honest and forthright. He denies that we can accept the concept of divinely guaranteed prediction, and argues that much New Testament interpretation fails for us because we cannot regard as history events which were so accepted by the writers. (Abraham is 'about as historical as King Arthur', p. 186). Typology can stand, but only if it is understood as showing that God acted in the same way in the Old Testament as in the New, not in its New Testament form. Allegory is impossible for us, as is the idea of the pre-existent Christ in the Old Testament. Yet we cannot understand the New Testament without the Old. We value the Old Testament primarily for its account of salvation history which leads up to Christ, and we should read it as a developing revelation. This is a sensitive discussion. Restrictions of space prevent a fully adequate consideration of the nature of the Old Testament. Not everyone will accept the centrality of salvation history. And some will no doubt question whether Hanson's hermeneutic fully links our 20th-century faith with that of the first century. The critical reader might have been more surely convinced of the importance of the Old Testament for the Christian if Hanson had allowed the neo-Marcionite case to be displayed more forcefully. Someone will certainly say: It may well be true that 'without Paul's strong conviction that the scriptures are full of references to Christ, the Christian church might have set off on its career in history without a bible' (p. 62), but it would have been better that way; to which Hanson might reply that without this conviction there would probably be no Church either.

This is an excellent book. It is the best introduction to recent study of the New Testament interpretation of Scripture available, and makes a valuable contribution to that study. It also contains a helpful discussion of the use of the Bible in the modern Church. For these two reasons every student of the Scriptures should read it.

Cyril S. Rodd

The Origin of Paul's Gospel

Seyoon Kim. Eerdmans, 1982. Pp. xii + 391. No price given.

Students of Pauline theology have become comfortable with a number of conceptions about his thought and how best to understand it. Thus, for example, it is seen as having developed over time, as being conditioned largely by the theologies of Paul's predecessors or opponents, as having only the most tenuous connection (if any) with the teaching of Jesus, and as being decipherable above all in relation to parallel ideas from 'Hellenistic Judaism'. In terms of method, the Acts of the Apostles, Ephesians and Colossians are frequently excluded from consideration.

Each of these approaches is controverted to one degree or another by Seyoon Kim in this scholarly monograph which is a revised version of his doctoral thesis written under the supervision of Professor F. F. Bruce at the University of Manchester. Kim's main point is that the key to understanding Paul's gospel and self-conception as

apostle to the Gentiles is to be found in his repeated claim to have witnessed a Christophany on the Damascus road. Without suggesting that prior to his conversion experience Paul's mind was a theological *tabula rasa* – and Kim devotes his second chapter to an account of Paul's upbringing in Jerusalem and career as a zealous Pharisee (probably of Shammaite inclinations) who knew the primitive Christian kerygma but violently opposed it – Kim argues that both the constitutive and distinctive elements of Paul's theology and apostleship were derived from that revelation. Of course, appeals to the Damascus experience run the risk of psychologising or romanticising Paul, but Kim resolutely avoids these options. Instead, in case after case, he shows how the 'logic' of Paul's Christophany experience corresponds with and expresses itself in the 'logic' of his Christology and soteriology.

Let me illustrate Kim's approach. First, Paul's eschatological doctrine that the Last Days had come and that the New Age had already begun derive from the 'revelation of Jesus Christ' (Gal. 1:12) to Paul on the Damascus road, an apocalypse which showed him that the general resurrection had begun with the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. Second, Paul's doctrine of justification by grace through faith and apart from works of the law derive from his own experience of divine grace when God called him to be an apostle even though he 'persecuted the church of God' (1 Cor. 15:9). So justification is not a doctrine developed by Paul in the context of polemic with Jews and Judaizers even if it finds particular application there. Third, Paul's re-evaluation of the law was forced upon him both by the revelation to him of the one whose crucifixion had placed him under the curse of the law (Dt. 21:23) as the exalted Son of God, and by the realisation that his zeal for the law had brought him into direct opposition to God.

In the area of Christology, Kim argues, fourth, that the revelation to Paul of the exalted Jesus not only made him recognise the truth of the primitive Christian confession of Jesus as Messiah, Lord and Son of God but also led him to develop those conceptions much further. Drawing on Old Testament and Jewish epiphany traditions with their visions of divine beings revealed from heaven in man-like (or 'son of man'-like) form, of exalted men revealed in the form of sons of God, and of God revealed to men through bearers of his image such as Wisdom and Torah, Kim shows how intelligible is Paul's description of the epiphany to him as the revelation of God's Son and how appropriate is his description of Christ as the 'image of God' (2 Cor. 4:4). Furthermore, because the revelation showed him Christ as the Son of God and image of God, Paul was led to identify Christ with the pre-existent, divine Wisdom. Not only so, for Christ as the image of God also provided Paul with the basis for his Adam-Christology: the 'last Adam' bears God's image just as the 'first man Adam'.

Clearly, these points show the book to be an important contribution to that most lively aspect of contemporary theological debate, the development of Christology. Kim proceeds by painstaking historico-philological exegesis and also provides useful summaries of relevant scholarly research. He is not afraid to controvert the authorities either, and in his discussion of soteriology argues against Morna Hooker in saying that Paul understood Christ's death as being both representative and substitutionary (p. 276 n. 3).

Nevertheless, several queries are in order. First, Kim is clearly arguing for the priority of an experience of revelation in the formation of Paul's theology and mission. However, because this 'revelation' (*apokalypsis*), together with its description and interpretation by Paul, are thoroughly indebted to the language and world-view of Jewish apocalyptic, one wonders if Kim goes too far in claiming that so much of Paul's thought can be traced to his Damascus experience. May not Käsemann's view of apocalyptic as 'the mother of all Christian theology' be nearer the mark? Second, Kim's position would be stronger if he could be less ambiguous about the nature of Paul's epiphany experience itself. But he seems to equivocate: 'This objective, external event had a soul-stirring effect on the very centre of Paul's being (2 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:16). It was for Paul an experience of an inner illumination . . . Thus it was a moment of decision to give up his own righteousness . . .' (p. 56). Third, although Kim is aware of J. H. Schütz's work on the sociology of Paul's authority, he makes no attempt to ask what part (if any) Paul's claims to a Christophany experience may have played in his relations with the churches and his rivals. For it is at least possible that social forces influenced the form and content of those claims.

Such questions aside, however, Kim's work is to be welcomed and will be so especially by those (like J. D. G. Dunn) who are convinced of the creative power of the earliest Christians' religious experience.

Stephen Barton

Sacrifice and the Death of Christ

Frances Young. SCM Press, 1983. Pp. x + 150. £3.50.

That brilliant thinker Vigo Demant, whose death at an advanced age the Church had recently reason to lament, once described how he had seen in a shop window in Richmond, Surrey, a notice announcing "These trousers will be offered at a Great Sacrifice"; and he remarked that he had been wondering what this would have signified to a Jew in Jerusalem before the destruction of the Temple. A similar reflection may have lain behind Dr. Frances Young's statement that "Sacrifice does not appear at first sight to be a potential 'growth-point' for interpreting the gospel now" (p. 3); but the whole of this admirable small book of hers is devoted to removing that impression. She quotes tellingly from two contemporary novels – John Steinbeck's *To a God Unknown* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* – to illustrate how radically and ineradicably the concept of sacrifice still resides in the human subconscious, and then makes a detailed study of the nature of the sacrificial background of first-century religion, both Jewish and Gentile, and in particular of the variety and significance of the developed Jewish sacrificial system; and from this she goes on to discuss the way in which, both in the New Testament and in later Christian writings, the Church has made use of the multiplex and fertile concept of sacrifice in interpreting and commending the saving work of Christ.

The second part of her book is on "Some consequences for Theology and the Church today". Posing frankly the question "Can sacrifice mean anything to us?", she answers that "we may have to consider the possibility that a

courageous and imaginative revival of the old symbolism may be the only way of bringing the realities to the consciousness of this generation", while adding that "it must be informed by a proper appreciation of the wider implications, the layers of meanings and overtones, the variety of significances of the symbols we try to use" (p. 103). And again she makes impressive reference to the contemporary media, and specially to the BBC drama *Judas Goat* and Nikos Kazantzakis's novel *Christ Recrucified*. However, the reader may well wonder, does this mean in the last resort more than that dwelling on the idea of sacrifice can have a beneficial psychological effect – inspirational, cathartic, and so on – upon the person who is its subject? What has it to do with the death of Jesus of Nazareth *sub Pontio Pilato*? The answer is given, briefly but effectively in the final chapter, on "God and sacrificial worship", in the assertion that sacrifice is not just a nostalgic idea but an act in which Christians take part today. "The central act of sacrifice performed by Christians is a fellowship-meal, through which believers share in the redemptive sacrifices of Christ by commemoration, a symbolic meal shared in his presence with fellow-believers, a meal in which the actions of breaking bread and drinking wine enable us to feed spiritually on his 'virtue' and vitality. In fact all types of sacrifice are summed here" (p. 137). And again: "The place of Christ's continuing sacrificial work is in the sacrificial worship and sacrificial living of the Christian community, and in involvement like his in the sufferings of his world" (p. 138).

This excellent little work was first published in 1975 by SPCK and is now reissued by the SCM Press. Between those dates (in 1977) Dr. Young contributed two essays to the highly controversial symposium *The Myth of God Incarnate*. Those who know her only from her earlier work may well find themselves asking with some surprise, *Qu'allait-elle faire dans cette galère?*.

E. L. Mascall

Foundations of Dogmatics Volume 1

Otto Weber. Eerdmans, 1981. Pp. 659 + xvi. £21.90.

The sheer scope and scholarship of this volume makes reading it an unsettling experience. This unsettling is aggravated by the nature of the 'dogmatic' method and also by the original date of the book's publication. It first appeared in Germany in 1955 and the subsequent delay in translation means that it effectively by-passes so much of recent theological history. The 'death of God' controversy led to some extent by disillusioned dogmatists, albeit Barthian, had not yet happened. Then also, the christological debates of the 1970s were still some way ahead temporally. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, Weber's reflections precede the immense changes wrought in Roman Catholic thinking by the Second Vatican Council. He writes at one point, 'Whoever is in agreement with the Reformation in this decisive question (*that of justification and ecclesiology*) can certainly accord the Roman Catholic interpretation of dogma all due respect, but must reject its basis categorically. It is interesting that particularly in the area of ethics (an area overlapped by Weber in this volume), James Gustafson, firmly from within the Reformed tradition can now speak so eloquently of the convergence of Catholic and Protestant

theological traditions in recent years. None of this invalidates Weber's monumental work, but it does require us to put significant emphases and judgements within carefully drawn parentheses.

Weber begins with a useful and fairly technical discussion of the nature of dogmatics. In his foreword he acknowledges his debt to Karl Barth, but refuses the appellation of Barthian for himself. The reader must ultimately make up his own mind on this matter. Certainly the Barthian bulwarks seem to hold the main structure firmly in place. God's utter transcendence is there, as is the centrality of revelation, and thus the crucial significance, in doctrinal method, of the person of Jesus Christ. Mysticism is abjured as an appropriate starting point for Christian theology and religious experience.

Having set out the structure of his edifice Weber moves on to a masterly historical outline of the dogmatic method in theology. Here he is equally at home in the Patristic period, as he is in the time of Reformation and Protestant Orthodoxy. Origen is taken to be one of the founder (albeit misguided) of the dogmatic approach, with his roots in the Hellenistic *Logos* philosophy. From here we are taken with care on a detailed tour of the Fathers, from the whimsically titled Theodotus the Cobbler and Theodotus the Money Changer, to the mainstream figures of Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine. The only obvious error of fact I stumbled upon was the apparent confusion of the date of Augustine's death with that of Gregory the Great (p. 86). Following this, we are steered with great facility through the Middle Ages noting carefully the work of the schoolmen, Aquinas being tagged as the greatest dogmatician since Augustine, albeit once again, ultimately found wanting. His scholarship is naturally most compendious and detailed in the period of the Reformation and Protestant Orthodoxy, after which we are moved on to modern dogmatics, where Schleiermacher is rightly given pride of place. The book is of considerable value for this historical element alone.

At the end of this fairly rapid but detailed journey we are moved on to the questions of revelation and epistemology. Almost expectedly, with the increasing dominance of Holy Scripture in Weber's argument, natural theology comes under considerable fire. This is the beginning of an argument that ever gains momentum, centring all methodologically on God's revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. This requires him to spend nearly one fifth of the total volume on the nature of scriptural authority. This is a two-edged sword. It does provoke a subtle and useful discussion of these questions. It does also, however, rather overbalance the material in one direction. This difficulty is compounded by his natural lack of acquaintance with further developments since the writing of this book in biblical criticism. The problems and insights raised by redaction criticism were only beginning to be unveiled by Conzelmann, Bornkamm, Marxsen and others at the time when Weber was writing.

Finally, the last two fifths of the book are devoted to the implications of all this preliminary work for three areas of Christian doctrine. The areas covered are the Trinitarian nature of God, creation, and the doctrine of man. Little need be added to what has already been noted. Suffice to say that the implications of Weber's revelational, christological methodology are now worked out in practice.

It is difficult to give a summary critique of such a compendious work. Its sheer comprehensiveness makes it a significant reference work and also a methodological marker-buoy, although it is probably of more use to the seasoned theological traveller, than to recent embarkees. Its radical christocentrism does leave one with some crucial questions. These are effectively those posed continually by non-dogmatic theologians to their dogmatic colleagues. For example, is it really possible to be as dismissive as he is of contemporary thought? He writes: 'God as Creator cannot be spoken of in the context of the major forms of contemporary human self-understanding' (p. 472). It may be that he is here dismissing earlier reigning forms of existentialism and positivism. If so, much water has flowed since the early 1950's.

Almost certainly some of these criticisms reflect the thought of an Anglo-Saxon temperament and background – it will be interesting to see what is the response north of the Border to the effects of the passage of years before the completion of this translation.

Stephen Platten

The Great Debate on Miracles: from Joseph Glanvill to David Hume

R. M. Burns. Associated University Presses, 1981. Pp. 305. £12.00.

This is an interesting and timely book. It surveys and analyses the debate on the credibility and evidential value of Biblical miracle narratives between 18th century deists and their orthodox protagonists. The debate provides the background to Hume's essay 'Of Miracles' incorporated in his *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. Over 100 pages of the *Great Debate* are devoted to a critical examination of the content and origins of Hume's essay. We have before us the fullest treatment yet of Hume on miracles against the relevant historical background and the first full-length treatment of the 18th century controversy on miracles since Sir Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the 18th Century*. Because Hume's essay remains one of the central points of argument in contemporary philosophy of religion and because the miracles debate was of vital importance in the development of German Biblical criticism (as acknowledged in recent discussions of Reimarus) the appropriateness of my opening comment will be apparent.

In the course of his discussion Robert Burns argues for many conclusions that will surprise and challenge contemporary assumptions. Thus he contends that the debate on miracles was initiated by the defenders of the literal truth of the Biblical record; that they, and not their deistic opponents, were associated with the scientific revolution in England and its intellectual presuppositions; that Hume's arguments on miracles, including his general thesis on the evidential value of testimony, had all occurred in the debate before and been answered by orthodox theologians. Despite praise for its style, a decidedly low opinion of Hume's essay emerges. It contains, Burns alleges, little that is original, ignores the more sophisticated arguments of the orthodox and its author does little by way of countering the strong objections raised against his arguments after first publication.

Basil Blackwell

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Burns's detailed critique of Hume's strictures on miracle narratives is at the same time a defence of the epistemology of those, such as Locke and Butler, whom Hume was attacking. It was the orthodox who had the sounder theory of probability and evidence and the sounder conception of the status and character of natural law. Burns is thus at one with those recent writers who have argued that belief in miracles and respect for scientific method are quite compatible. Hume emerges as one of the fathers of the false view of science which has blurred this truth.

A surprising paradox arises from Robert Burns's conclusions. It is that whilst the moderate defenders of the credibility and evidential value of miracle narratives were not mistaken on any important matters of principle or method, they were none the less in error about the historical view of the Bible: "Modern biblical criticism has made clear that the Deistic and Humean assessment of the historical value of the New Testament writings was in many respects justified" (p. 241). The *entire* error of the orthodox in this regard, it is implied, flowed from their disregard of the irrational and bizarre character of the *details* of the miracle stories in the New Testament (see p. 80). I find this not altogether plausible as a sufficient explanation of Locke's and others' over-regard for the literal truth of these narratives. I for one, wish to cling to the idea that there is an important component of proper historical method which demands a stringent, if not quite absolute, scepticism as to the literal truth of miracle narratives, especially when these come from the ancient past. Leaving aside Hume's sensationalist and crude theory of knowledge, present knowledge may be given power to judge narratives from the past, if by 'present knowledge' we refer to that new body of information about the powers and capacities of natural objects (including man) established since the scientific revolution. We shall want strong evidence to question the scope of these scientifically established truths, and how could it come from the ancient past? The knowledge of what was physically possible was not present to anything like the same extent then, with the consequence that reporters and compilers of miracle stories could not have exercised the requisite critical capacities when passing them on or setting them down. Do we have here a strong reason of principle for withholding our assent to such narratives?

Robert Burns's book challenges all those like me enamoured of such beliefs about 'the presuppositions of scientific history' to re-state their case and provides strong arguments against looking at Hume's essay for the basis of such a re-statement.

Peter Byrne

From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background

Frances M. Young. SCM Press, 1983. Pp. x + 406. £10.50.

Dr. Young has produced a handbook of background for the student of early Christian doctrine. She presents "a series of essays on a number of significant literary figures, laymen, bishops and heretics of the fourth and fifth centuries, essays which offer biographical, literary-critical

and theological information" (vii). She begins with the church historians, Eusebius naturally enjoying pride of place, and follows his continuators as far as Theodoret. It at once becomes apparent that she intends the reader to appreciate the ancient writers as interesting characters in their own right, pursuing their own goals and principles, which do not necessarily conform to the dogmatic stereotypes in which popular textbooks seem (perhaps inevitably) to present them. Arius, Athanasius and Didymus are presented with sympathy and astute criticism, then the Cappadocians in their diverse skills and interests, literary, ascetic, controversial, pastoral. A miscellaneous chapter gives splendid sketches of Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, John Chrysostom, Nemesius (barely on a level with the others, but useful background for the last chapter) and Synesius. Finally the literature of the Christological controversies is set out from Eustathius of Antioch to Theodoret. In all these chapters the works of each writer are considered, with lucid accounts of the literary problems and the modern scholarship which attempts to elucidate them. With this is associated a racy account of the life of each writer and his contribution to theology. Two points are especially commendable. First, Dr. Young presents a rounded view of each author. With several of them that includes expounding their methods in biblical exegesis, and what she writes on Didymus, Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret is particularly good. Secondly, she writes with warm appreciation of the Christian concern of writers whose faults she is well aware of. Students often think that the crimes of Athanasius or of Cyril disqualify them as saints and theologians. Dr. Young knows better. She also admires the Christian conduct of Nestorius and Theodoret, and sympathizes with Antiochene theology. Her opinions here make an interesting comparison with those of L. R. Wickham, a confessed Cyrillite, in his recent edition, which unfortunately was published too late to be included in Dr. Young's account (*Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*. Edited and translated by Lionel R. Wickham. Oxford 1983 [Oxford Early Christian Texts]). In addition to thorough and precise documentation in backnotes, there are two valuable bibliographies. One is a beginner's guide to the principal texts and studies in English. The other is an attempt at a complete bibliography of foreign works since 1960, the date of Quasten's *Patrology* (though articles in encyclopaedias and other reference works are not set out in detail). Finally there is a subject-index and a select index of Greek terms.

To students and teachers of matters patristic this will be a valuable book. On several of the writers she presents there is nothing comparable in English, or nothing in so compact a form. The scholarship is exemplary, the historical presentation vivid, the theological analysis mature and confident. If it is to be criticized, it must be chiefly in terms of its scope and of formal points, one of which is serious. As to scope, the incautious reader may easily and wrongly assume he has a balanced account of the church from Nicaea to Chalcedon. He has not. The obvious absentee is Latin Christianity in all its forms. Dr. Young will rightly rejoin that that would require another book at least as long. More to the point, some readers will soon come up against terms and ideas they have never met. Not only Origenism and docetism, but Messalianism, Eutychianism, homoiousianism and the like appear unexplained. The reader might have been given more consideration. The perils become apparent when the book's own indexer assumes that all references to Eustathius should go under one entry, making St. Basil's friend the

same as Eustathius of Antioch! Taken together the section on the "Tales of the monks" and that on the Cappadocians constitute an admirable introduction to early monasticism, and the untangling of the literary problems of the early Egyptian material is excellent. But the evidence of Cassian is not included, and the gap for English readers on the Messalians and the literature of Macarios/Symeon remains, in spite of its importance for understanding both what Basil was doing and what has happened in the East of Christendom since.

The serious formal problem concerns the indexes. A book as wide-ranging, selective and (in some respects) advanced as this requires a good index, and it can only have one if the publisher puts it high in his priorities. In this case the pagination was shifted by a few lines *after* the index was complete, and presumably no one bothered to think it would matter. Nor, apparently, was the subject-indexer aware of the elementary principles of indexing, accessible in a pamphlet from the British Standards Institution, *The preparation of indexes to books, periodicals and other publications*, London: BSI 1976 (BS 3700:1976). Even the Greek index is not satisfactory. The selection is arbitrary. Why include *anakephaliosis* for one slight reference, when the English *recapitulation* is not indexed? And why are Didymus's technical terms in exegesis, discussed head-on in pp. 86-88, excluded from the Greek index? Was it that the indexer was so foxed by the numerous typographical variants that she gave up the attempt to get the spelling and accents right and tore up the cards? Academic authors are simply not competent without training, much less the research students, greenhorns in publishing offices, and even schoolchildren, to whom index-making is often relegated.

But I would not leave a bad taste in the mouth. Dr. Young's book is a great boon, and should be bought and read.

Stuart Hall

Yesterday and Today. A Study of Continuities in Christology

Colin E. Gunton. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983. Pp. 228. £9.50.

This is a book of great competence, academic rigour and constructive thought which takes seriously the historical and epistemological questions of Christology, without yielding to the temptation to play about with surface patterns of thought in deference to transient cultural fashion. The aim of the author is to face up to the basic difficulties for human understanding that arise from the 'co-presence' of the eternal and the temporal, the divine and the human, in the New Testament presentation of Jesus Christ. At the same time he seeks to show that the Church's historic teaching about Christ has a consistent inner dynamic which in spite of all diversity allows the real substance of the Christian Gospel to be expressed in its own intrinsic rationality in different ages, cultures and perspectives. He finds that only by deepening the possibilities inherent in Christology for our understanding of God can theology be truly radical, reaching down to the roots of the Christian tradition to let it flower more abundantly. Thus the renewal of Christology is to be sought not in rejecting the teaching of tradition but in

taking it further. The problem has been that Christology has not been orthodox enough, or that its lessons have not been learned.

The argument begins with an analysis of the contrast between what has been called a 'Christology from below' and a 'Christology from above' in which special attention is devoted to the thought of Rahner, Pannenberg, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Kierkegaard, as well as to ancient theologians like Origen, Arius, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria. With the delicate analytical probing of a surgeon's scalpel Dr. Gunton lays bare the anatomical structure of Christologies that operate with approaches from below or from above, and shows how they inevitably slip over into one another, for their underlying assumptions, in some form of cosmological and epistemological dualism, are the same. Whereas ancient thought tended to abstract Jesus Christ from history by eternalising him, modern thought tends to abstract him from eternity by making his temporality absolute. 'A Christological method that is excessively from above runs into the first risk; one excessively from below, the second. One makes eternity absolute, the other time. Both methods, made absolute, determine the content and falsify the subject-matter.' The solution to which Dr. Gunton's argument steadily forces the reader is to be found in the search for elements of 'intrinsic intelligibility' in the biblical portrayal of Christ enabling time and eternity, immanence and transcendence to be brought together. There is no doubt to this reviewer that such an approach does far more justice to the truth and ontology of biblical and traditional Christology than those which Dr. Gunton criticises and which, when compared to the line he has taken, are found to be self-contradictory and methodologically rather superficial.

The general argument of Dr. Gunton falls into line with other recent analysis of the problems of dualism in ancient and modern culture, in science and philosophy as well as religion, as Dr. Gunton is clearly aware in the way he draws support from writers like Michael Polanyi. This relates not least to the resurgent interest in 'contingent rationality' and the restructuring of modes and patterns of human thought and expression that this requires of us. Such a stress, however, far from detracting from rigorous scientific and ontological modes of thought, reinforces and deepens them in a way that makes for greater consensus across the spectrum of human knowledge.

Many will find the last chapter of the book rather intriguing and challenging, and even (as I do) very timely, in which Dr. Gunton discusses the relations in ancient and modern thought of Christ to Christendom – from Eusebius of Caesarea to Don Cupitt. Thus in his examination of what is called 'the political Christ', so fashionable in many quarters today, it is shown rather incisively that those who play down the understanding of Jesus Christ as God incarnate, God himself savingly at work in the midst of human violence, guilt and suffering, fail to appreciate the real logic of God's love, and end up with rather authoritarian notions of the relation of God to humanity in Church and in society. Here in the practical implications of the Christian Faith, as in the 'docetic' and 'adoptionist' approaches to Christ, the false dualisms on which one-sided views rest make them pass over into their opposites – as Colin Gunton easily shows by making Cupitt's strange ideas stand on their head! It is very different, however, when the historical man

Jesus Christ is never construed apart from his meaning as the presence of the eternal God in time, and Christology is never separated from soteriology – although it is readily admitted that the biblical teaching about the reality of God and his freedom to involve himself in the world, without loss to his or the world's reality, runs against the philosophical assumptions which dominate both ancient and modern culture. Far from abandoning the classical tradition in Christology, however, we must learn, like the ancients and by standing on their shoulders, to rethink the Christian message by joining with others in rethinking the foundations of modern culture, as they rethought the foundations of classical culture and science with such immensely beneficial results for the whole of subsequent history.

There are some minor points of disagreement which I have with Dr. Gunton, such as his interpretation of Kierkegaard, and there are other points where I would like him to give a fuller account of the NT presentation of Christ to controlling Old Testament conceptions, or of the Trinitarian structure of the Faith embodied in the Apostolic Tradition which inevitably came to the surface in the Nicene clarification of evangelical belief. But I wish to express my admiration and gratitude to Dr. Gunton who has provided us with a work of really major importance for today which carries us past the confused and superficial thinking of many of our contemporaries, not least those who scurry back into 19th century ideas in their inability to face up to the profound thought of Karl Barth. May I be allowed to point Dr. Gunton and his readers to the important work of Hans Frei (whom Gunton cites from another work), entitled *The Identity of Jesus Christ. The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology* (Philadelphia, 1967), in which a highly original argument is developed in seeking to overcome the damaging effects of an underlying dualism in tearing apart image and reality in our understanding of Jesus Christ? These two books by Frei and Gunton deserve to be studied together, for they complement one another, each having learned in its own way from insights offered by Karl Barth, and the deeper appreciation of Nicene and Chalcedonian Christology to which they lead.

Thomas F. Torrance

A World to Gain. Incarnation and the Hope of Renewal

Brian Horne. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983. Pp. 96. £2.75.

'It is meant,' says the author, '... to be a book about the world' (p. 2): not, that is, primarily a book 'about' Christian doctrine, but about the context (or contexts) of contemporary questioning within which Christian doctrine may become intelligible and – even more important – interesting. Why should incarnation and deification matter in the late 20th century? Because only in these central dogmatic images are both the hopefulness and the impotence of human beings taken seriously, resolved and held in fruitful relation, not *dissolved*. As the second chapter makes plain, the political interest of Christians derives not from obedience (or as some would have it, disobedience) to the teachings of the founder, but from reflection on the implications of incarnation as an event. God's involvement speaks of the

possibilities of sanctifying and making meaningful even the complex and sometimes sordid business of 'ordering the relationships between individuals in community' (p. 35). The path to involvement is opened up without any capitulation to a new legalism – because the authority invoked is not a scheme of prescriptions, but the form, the event, of God's humanity, in Jesus and, embryonically, his church. Chapters 3 and 4 interlock in their relating of the Christian vocation to the transfiguration of matter: to refuse the vulgarized Protestant-North Atlantic attitude to nature as object and instrument is, again, to take incarnation (not just creation) seriously. And good, transforming art of any kind is 'Christian' in that it is a witness to Christ as the focus of beauty – 'splendour of form' within the limits of damaged creatureliness (72-73).

This is an attractive and very rich essay. Each chapter could easily be a lot longer, but Fr. Horne is content to suggest a discussion rather than to pursue it relentlessly to a – perhaps premature – conclusion. This is excellent in a book of this scope; but I hope there will be fuller developments to come. Especially in the last chapter, the reader has the sense of a very fresh and sophisticated argument coming to birth. A fuller engagement with Adorno's critique on the one hand and Maritain's (now so unjustly neglected) writings on aesthetics on the other – with perhaps some help from a native practitioner and interpreter like David Jones in his magnificent 'Art and Sacrament' – this would be an absorbing and very worthwhile project.

However, there is nothing more annoying for an author than to be told what he ought to do next! Enough to say that this is a welcome book: clear and judicious, based on strikingly wide reading, imaginative and hopeful. Theology can always do with such reminders that it is an evocative as well as a problem-solving style of discourse.

Rowan Williams

Ministry

Edward Schillebeeckx. SCM Press, 1981. Pp. 176. £4.95.

In a recent letter to *The Times*, a retired Anglican bishop, comparing the situations of the Liberal and Social Democratic parties on the one hand and the Church of England on the other, expressed his regret that "the leaders in each case cannot agree". He attributed this to their several failure to pay attention to what he ingenuously called "grassroot" opinion. I don't expect he would have much time for Fr. Schillebeeckx either except perhaps in agreeing with him that there is "A case for change". And if Anglicans tend to agonise about what the change should be, at least they show a growing regard for its necessity. Indeed the Convocation of Canterbury has before it a motion "That this Convocation believes that the formularies of the Church of England, while allowing degrees of freedom of interpretation regarding the nature of the ordained ministry, so provide a coherent doctrinal understanding of it." Theological sophistry could scarcely improve upon that!

Schillebeeckx provides in this book a scholarly study of ministry which should be compulsory reading for all those who take part in the Convocation debate. Looking at the

evidence for the earliest church he concludes that ministry is an attribute of leadership, not the other way round. The Apostles were the natural leaders, but not the only ones. Those who headed up local communities of believers presided as well over their liturgical assemblies, and underlying it all was the principle of the apostolic tradition. This, he claims, rather than the structures of ministry as such, was the original form of church life. The good news was what was handed down from person to person, not a succession or an unbroken chain. Indeed the first few centuries witnessed the refining of the tradition out of which process emerged an ordered concept of ministry. As time went on this became something imposed, given, from above, from the hierarchy, rather than emerging from leadership at what the bishop would call "grassroots". "The prime concern is with an unbroken succession or continuity, less in the ministry than in the apostolic tradition or content of the faith" (p. 34).

The middle ages however – and are we even now vigorously engaging the legacy of the Schoolmen? – turned the original formula on its head. Instead of leadership of a community issuing in ministry, it became accepted that the minister deserved to be recognised as leader and indeed ministry was divorced even from the natural community to the artificial one of monastery and benefice; the new concepts of law soon buttressed new fashions and developed the novel – for Christians, but certainly not for pagans – idea of sacred power. The character of ordination became a thing one could recognise (on legal grounds) and declare

indelible. Schillebeeckx sums the process up in the sentence "circumstances . . . have taken a fundamentally different direction: a priest is ordained in order to be able to celebrate the eucharist; in the ancient church it is said that he is 'appointed' as a minister in order to be able to appear as leader of the community; in other words, the community called him as leader to build up the community, and for this reason he was also the obvious person to preside at the eucharist" (p. 58). The last chapter "Some perspectives on the future" is an interesting and well documented study of recent Roman Catholic thought and pronouncement – especially upon celibacy of the clergy which has had recent adaptation by the decision of the Roman hierarchy in England who have moved away from post tridentine absolutism. As an Anglican, I am tempted to ask "So what?". As a study of the subject of ministry, there is little in such short compass to compare with Fr. Schillebeeckx. He opens up lines of thought which will frighten the faint-hearted. So is it better to forget it all, and trust that as (presumably?) providence has brought us to the state we are in, it would be churlish not to accept the status quo? Clearly, our problems, as Anglicans, are not the same as theirs – the Roman Catholics. But are they in fact all that different? If the recent ARCIC considerations have revealed unsuspected agreement, then our own view of ministry needs looking at again. Certainly that is a need for the Church of England, and one which it has constantly evaded. An evasion which Convocation seems set on making orthopraxy. What's happening meanwhile? New forms of ministry are being invented and experimented with. Industrial mission, sector ministries,

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auxiliary ministries, women's ministry, the diaconate and/or women deacons, all these are things which are happening in the church today. To say nothing of the multiplication of suffragan bishops and, in lesser degree alas, dioceses. The bureaucracy of Church House tightens its grip (like that of the Church Commissioners) by means of floods of paper, committees and so called synodical government. But what about the nature of ministry itself? Is there really no time to discuss it?

Peter Moore

A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality

Edited by Gordon S. Wakefield. SCM, London, 1983. Pp. 400. £15.00.

The upsurge of interest in Christian Spirituality in recent years has produced a great need for a clear and concise tool of high standards such as this dictionary provides. It is of course not so detailed or scholarly as the great multi-volume *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, but it will be of inestimable use as a basic reference tool for academics, clergy, students and laity who are looking for brief introductions to persons or topics relating to prayer, mysticism, spirituality, and pastoral care. This publication is the first of its kind in English in recent years. The articles are brief but full of information; cross references and bibliographies increase their value. The list of contributors (well over 100) is impressive, and includes specialists in the field, like Rowan Williams and Sr. Benedicta Ward, as well as some surprises: Antony Flew, for instance, might at first be thought to make strange company with those writing on spirituality, though his article on ESP is useful and entirely appropriate. On the whole the balance is good, and the choice of entries shows realism and good sense: it is refreshing, for instance, to find an entry under Humour (though Joy comes in only under Fruit of the Spirit, not in its own right!). On the whole bibliographies point to the standard works in the field, and the number of very recent publications cited is impressive. There are occasional bibliographical disappointments: under "Merton, Thomas" the only citation is Monica Furlong's biography, for instance, and under "Communes, Communities" the author lists only his own book, though the article would clearly call for mention of Clark's *Basic Communities* (SPCK, 1977). But these lapses are occasional in a volume which will be much consulted, and is welcome indeed.

Grace M. Jantzen

Windows Onto God

Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury. SPCK, 1983. Pp. 232. £6.25.

Far from exhibiting the 'fatal facility of continuous utterance' which one article diagnosed as an occupational hazard for archbishops, this collection of lectures, speeches and sermons on a variety of occasions enhances our admiration for an archbishop who can speak so often and so well on topics ecclesiastical, social and political and so movingly on occasions that are personal and intimate. We

are grateful to have his addresses on the occasion of the Queen Mother's 80th birthday and the wedding of the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer. Whether he is addressing the General Synod, the National Society, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the House of Lords or an audience at the Palais des Congrès in Brussels, the Archbishop speaks from a reiterated refrain that we 'live in a world of rebellion against its own best interests'. These talks collected here are not so much concerned with the inner core of Christian credibility or spirituality as with the demands made on all who call themselves Christian in times such as these. Belief and Witness, Christian Education, The Third World, the Pursuit of Justice, the Church and the Bomb are issues that flow naturally from the principles that the archbishop enunciated in his enthronement sermon with which this collection opens. The ecumenical issue is the subject of Byzantine Conversations, Rome and Canterbury and the Covenanting Proposals. Whatever the occasion and the content the Archbishop presents himself as a teacher, informing as well as interpreting. How does one man achieve content of this quality on such a variety of issues? I suspect that the Archbishop has perfected the art of using a devil – as lawyers understand that word! How essential and how wise! Whoever reads this collection will emerge better informed about matters on which he knows something and better educated into issues about which he knows little or nothing. We can only be grateful to the author that he has found time to make these speakings available.

Sydney Evans

Christians and Religious Pluralism

Alan Race. SCM Press, 1983. Pp. 169. £5.95

The Christian church began in Judaism and rapidly spread into the Gentile world, meeting many religions and cults. From the seventh century came the great challenge of Islam which lost Christianity most of north Africa, and much of the Near East and southern Europe for centuries. In return, Christian missionaries ventured far into Asia, the Nestorians reaching China, and made renewed and widely successful efforts from the 17th century onwards. But western Europe remained virtually untouched by any other religion, Judaism being ignored, and although our forefathers paid for missionaries to go to the 'heathen' there was little knowledge of or contact with people of other faiths. Now all that has changed, the comparative study of religions has amassed great detail about Asian and African religions and, even more significantly, many of their followers are here in our midst. There are over 200 Muslim mosques in Britain, 50 Sikh temples, 150 Buddhist societies and so on. This situation brings many problems, to theology with its claims for Christian uniqueness and to pastoral work with requests for use of church premises for non-Christian celebrations, demands for revision of R.E. curricula in schools and more generally the relations of Christian communities to the strangers in their midst.

Alan Race raises these problems but he is particularly concerned with the theology of religions: is Christianity "the one true absolute religion intended for all mankind?" What about the claims to revelation, or mystical experience, in other faiths? "Are Hindus saved?" Is it by the unknown

Christ or do they need the known Christ? Is there still a place for missions and of what kind? The Anglican chaplain at the University of Kent considers practical matters in passing but he is chiefly concerned with the theological task of relating Christianity to other religions, as important today as the relations of religion to science were in the 19th century. His book is short but important for its wrestling with almost insoluble theological questions.

Three possible attitudes are suggested: Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism. Exclusivism may be seen in verses quoted to all speakers on comparative religion, the words attributed to Christ in the Fourth Gospel, "no one comes to the Father but by me," or the claim by Peter in Acts, "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved". The Roman Catholic church long cherished the words of Cyprian, "Outside the church no salvation" and in Protestantism Karl Barth has stated "the most extreme form of the exclusivist theory". From the standpoint of the revelation of God in Christ 'religion' is dubbed unbelief and 'the religions' are sinful blindness. Although Barth in this part of his *Church Dogmatics* does not deal with the relation of the church to other faiths, yet there is "something disturbing" in his rejection of non-Christian faith, and even his missionary disciple, Hendrik Kraemer, seems to have found Barth's emphasis "artificial, somehow unreal, convulsive and overdone".

Inclusiveness is "both acceptance and a rejection of other faiths", it recognizes and welcomes spiritual power and depth but it rejects them as insufficient for salvation apart from Christ. The greatest impetus for an inclusivist theology of religions came from the Second Vatican Council, with its guarded recognition of virtues in other traditions. This also can be traced back to the Bible, with Paul's words at Caesarea and Athens, though curiously Race refers to Luke's "own Jewish religious past". Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and many others down to Karl Rahner's notion of "anonymous Christians", illustrate a widening of theological attitudes while attempting to hold on to Christian supremacy. Not all would follow Raymond Panikkar in claiming that "it is through the sacraments of Hinduism . . . that *Christ* saves the Hindu normally".

Panikkar perhaps belongs more properly to the Pluralism which sees "a range of other possible options" in the reconciliation of Christian charity and doctrinal adequacy. Having examined several writers, from John Hick to R. C. Zaehner, Alan Race boldly introduces the central problem of "incarnation and the Christian Theology of Religions". However, it turns out to be an application of the Exclusivist, Inclusivist and Pluralist positions, showing little except the "fierce particularism" of the first, the "pre-judgment" of the second and the likely "reductionism" of the third.

A short final chapter on a "a question of truth" selects the pluralist position as seeking "to draw the faiths of the world's religious past into a mutual recognition of one another's truths and values". This seems to be recognizing the parallel existence of various religions and saying *vive la différence*. But perhaps there has been too much concern with the past and with dogmas taken out of context, and too little encounter with the people, the living believers. It may be that inter-religious problems are too great to be solved in one generation but in the often-quoted words of Max Warren: "Our first task in approaching another people,

another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on men's dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God was here before our arrival."

Geoffrey Parrinder

Through a Darkening Glass: Philosophy, Literature and Cultural Change

D. Z. Phillips. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1982. Pp. x, 196. £10.00

Professor Phillips's usual depth of insight is applied in this volume of essays to the way in which literature, both ancient and modern, can sharpen our moral perceptions in a way which, too often, philosophy fails to do. Rather than discussing the issues in abstract terms, he enters into investigation of significant literary works ranging from Sophocles to Edith Wharton and Ingmar Bergman and the Welsh poet R. S. Thomas. One need not have read all the works discussed to see the point of Phillips's remarks, since he presents just enough of the content of the original to set his comments into a context – and to send one to the nearest library to read the works from a new perspective.

Although each of the nine essays stands on its own, half of them having been published before, there are important common themes. One of the most important of these is the way our preconceptions can blind us to values and beliefs other than our own, and how careful "waiting on the novel" (or poem or play) can reopen us to these alternative horizons. Sometimes the preconceptions are anachronistic. In "What the Complex did to Oedipus", Phillips argues that reading Freudian conceptions back into Sophocles's play precisely reverses its point: on a Freudian analysis, Oedipus does what he has (unconsciously) wanted to do all along, whereas what Sophocles was trying to show is the curse upon a man who has done the very last thing he ever wanted to do – hence the tragedy of it all. Such presuppositions can have blinkering effects also upon literary critics. Phillips shows how a literary critic can use his own moral opinions as the criterion by which a novel is judged, when in fact the point of the novel was to present alternative views. Thus Speir, commenting on Tolstoy and Chekhov, finds Chekhov's work superior because it does not present any final answer to the problem of death, whereas Tolstoy tries to do this in *The Death of Ivan Illych*: but this is not a fair judgement about the literary worth of the works, since it is based upon the critic's view of death rather than by criteria internal to the novels. Similarly if we were to follow the critics who dismiss the writings of Edith Wharton as innocent and naive we would fail to see that what she is portraying is the now often lost value of just those attitudes.

Most damning of all may be the preconceptions of professional philosophers. In "Some Limits to Moral Endeavors", Phillips accuses moral philosophers like Hare, Meldon and Philippa Foot of presenting a distortion of reality, as though morality and rationality coincide neatly to give shape to a well-ordered life. But the disorder of life makes the best and most rational intention turn into a disaster, at times, and it is sometimes better to settle for the lesser of evils, with all its attendant remorse, than pretend that if only we are rational and mean well we will never be

participants in tragedy. It is not use doing moral philosophy "in the air"; and literature can present us with concrete moral and psychological insights more helpful than admirable theories of an unattainable good.

This realism of Phillips is much to the fore in the treatment of religious themes. In his analysis of Ingmar Bergman's films, he displays the decline of the concept of God, the contemporary failure to find any meaning in a divine order and reduction to an inarticulate longing that somehow things were different. He shows in his discussion of Faust how Faust's pact with the devil is a rejection of patience: alienation from his studies because he does not patiently give himself to them but desires them for his own egocentricity, inability to love because of a romantic idea of a love which can be "possessed in an instant" rather than one which "suffers long and is kind", incapacity for freedom, because he sees it as freedom from the necessity of penitence instead of freedom through penitence. A foreshortening of these qualities turns them into something demonic, whereas accepting them and their suffering is one form of waiting on God, of "seeking the poem in the pain".

The book does not make comforting reading. There are those who will say, with some justification, that part of the discomfort is at the caricature of rationality and moral philosophy which lurks behind some of the essays. Let that be an incentive to produce a work without such caricature, which nevertheless shows the moral seriousness, humanity and sheer readability of Phillips's book.

Grace M. Jantzen

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