

KING'S THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

Volume V Number 1

Spring 1982

Christian Hope and Jesus' Despair <i>Grace M. Jantzen</i>	1
Theological Reflections on the Book of Isaiah II <i>Peter R. Ackroyd</i>	8
Religion and Reason in the Japanese Experience <i>Michael Pye</i>	14
Social and Political Issues in the Theology of Karl Barth <i>Alan Argent</i>	18
The Impotence of Agnosticism <i>Ian Walker</i>	24
BOOK REVIEWS	28
FACULTY NEWS Insert	

BOOK REVIEWS

Early Arianism – A view of salvation. By Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh. SCM Press. London 1981. xiii + 209 pages. £12.50.

It is time someone did something for Arius and his friends. This book promises to be the necessary attempt to understand the inward and Christian motivation of the doctrines which have been for centuries reviled and despised. In a bold thesis, the authors claim that to the early Arians the creatureliness of the Son of God was the key to man's salvation. His status as Son itself, and all his other glories, flow from his freely chosen obedience to the God who created him. His life in the flesh was one of moral advance culminating in the suffering of death, and as his reward he is crowned with adoptive sonship, which is also his by anticipation before the world existed. Christians illuminated by him travel the same road to the same sonship. It is precisely because he is **not** consubstantial with the Father that he saves us, being the created, changeable but undeviatingly virtuous Captain of our salvation. "This bold insistence upon the things 'common to us and the Son', which nettled the champions of orthodoxy from the outset of the dispute, manifests the deepest interests of the followers of Arius" (p. 68). The union between Christ and God is one of will, mutual favour and obedience. Athanasius' *Life of Antony* reveals a conscious attempt to challenge the appeal of the rugged Arian spirituality to monastic support. So in the early Arian period "ecclesiastics were confronted with the choice between an orthodoxy in which grace had come to be the entry into a stabilized order of redeemed creation and an Arianism in which grace empowered people for moral advance in a transactional universe" (p. 193).

Bold and attractive as it is, the thesis is also wrong. It depends on mistaken exegesis of crucial texts and on accepting the slanders of the Arians' enemies as representing their true position. Where the exegesis is concerned, one has only to look at the repeated use made of a couplet from the Thalia (Opitz, *Urkunde* 3, p. 242 lines 14-15). This text is interpreted "he (God) advanced him as a Son to himself by adoption" (pp. 23, 56, 73, 96). Yet the word translated "advanced" or "raised" is *enenken*, which commonly means "bore" or "produced" like babies or fruit. And "by adoption" stands for *tonde teknopoiesas*, which means "having given birth to *this* one" (*tonde* is emphatic). Rather than stating that Christ is a creature just like other men, which is what Gregg and Groh make him say, Arius is expressing in crude, almost violent, anthropomorphic terms the unique sonship of Christ. This extends to using active verb *teknopoio* which normally expresses the mother's part in procreation, the middle being used for the father's begetting. Arius said: "The Unbegun appointed the Son to be Beginning (or, Chief) of the things which he fathered (*ton gennematon*), and produced him as a Son for himself, giving birth to this one." But however often Arius said "A creature, but **not** as one of the creatures; begotten, but **not** as one of the begotten things", Athanasius was determined to fix on him the lie that he meant "a creature **just like us**". Gregg and Groh give the slander italics and take it as Arian Gospel. By a wry irony, their first page contains both statements, "implicitly or explicitly we all play Arius' songs in an Athanasian key," and "The Alexandrian bishops had it exactly right." Gregg and Groh have fallen into Athanasius' trap. He repeatedly poses the dilemma, "Either the Son is consubstantial with the Father, or he is a creature **just like us**, adoptive son **just like us**." The Arians, when allowed to get a word in, consistently argue, "The bible calls him created, but he is not like any other creature: begotten, but uniquely begotten from the Father alone, unlike all other begettings." Why do we not take them at their word?

There are other pieces of inaccurate and perverse exegesis in the book; I have cited only the worst, which exposes the weakness of the argument at its most important point. Two other topics deserve mention. First, the chapter on Antony promises much, but achieves little. Athanasius' hero comes out of the desert and denounces Arius, but only in conventional theological terms, never in terms of the alleged soteriology. The authors show that the *Life of Antony* contains some Athanasian soteriology, but that is not necessarily an anti-Arian soteriology. Secondly, the indexes are a disgrace to the authors and publisher. The first could be given to a novice to show how not to make an index of subjects (reams of references with no articulation). The second lists references to ancient authors without enabling you to locate the discussion of a particular passage. They are of little use to the reader.

I wish the authors well, believing that Arius is still the victim of Alexandrian episcopal misrepresentation. But they will have to start again. Surer foundations are laid in Christopher Stead's 'The Thalia of Arius' in *JTS* NS 29 (1978) 20-52, and the subtle study of Rudolf Lorenz, *Arius judaizans?* (Göttingen 1979). But if Gregg and Groh make us all think again about Arius, they will have done a good service.

Stuart G. Hall

Explorations in Theology: 9. By Ronald H. Preston. SCM Press, 1981. x + 182 pp. £5.95.

Professor Preston is almost the last (and certainly the most youthful, despite his recent retirement) of the little group of moralists who have given shape to the moral reasoning of English Christianity in the last thirty years: among them, Canon V.A. Demant, Bishop Robert Mortimer (following upon Bishop Kenneth Kirk) and Bishop Ian Ramsey: men who **changed** that shape from the moulds in which pioneers of a generation before had pressed it, notably Canon Peter Green of Manchester and Canon Lindsay Dewar of St Albans; with Canon Herbert Waddams of Canterbury and Canon G.B. Bentley of Windsor torn several ways in between. In this group Canon Preston's work has been distinctive: first, because he read Economics under R.H. Tawney at the L.S.E. before he read Theology, and he has never unlearned that discipline, enabling him to explore economic, industrial and some social issues as none other of us has; and secondly because he is the most travelled among us, the most journeyed with the World Council of Churches. In one essay in this book he describes himself as "a white, elderly, ordained priest of the Church of England, wholly English in my antecedents and career, though laced with a lifetime's concern for, and involvement in, the ecumenical movement." This collection of some of his occasional pieces, and the appended bibliography of his published writings, is a record of his attempt to escape from what he calls these "limitations".

But how can he escape? Whither shall he go? Not wholly to the W.C.C. or any of its constituent churches. While he can claim an authority for the deliverances of the Geneva and Uppsala gatherings of 1966 and 1968 as near infallibility as he dare go (chapter 2, *A Breakthrough in Ecumenical Social Ethics?*) and though he can defend the W.C.C. against the heavy artillery of Paul Ramsey of Princeton and others, yet he can criticize also, and that discerningly. He could not live in the Two Kingdoms with the Lutherans; nor in other-worldly if wealthy piety with the Southern Baptists; nor with the selective and tendentious misuse of Scripture with the Liberationists; nor with the facile isolationism of the situationists or the futuristic optimism of the theologians of Hope: "The more one emphasizes radical newness and discontinuity, the more useless it is in providing a guide to the present." (Chapter 5, *From the Bible to the Modern World*). If not Geneva, what of Rome? Could he lodge there, where he has many friends, from SODEPAX, from the Human studies in Lugano, and in the Association of Teachers of Moral Theology in which he is one of the few non-Roman members, and of them the most faithful? Alas, he could not live with the magisterial **method** in moral theology (he admires *Gaudium et Spes* for its content rather than for its magisterial status and conciliar authority); he could never live at ease with that distortion of the natural law tradition which made of *Humanae Vitae* the stone of stumbling and rock of offence it has become in the contemporary Roman conscience.

In short, nowhere will he breathe more freely – whether he like it or not – than in the Church of England which his work has so conspicuously adorned. Witness his handling of Scripture (chapter 1, *Ethical Criticisms of Jesus*; and chapter 5 again); he is good on Jesus (did he not edit T.W. Manson's posthumous *Ethics and the Gospel* (1960), a work omitted from the bibliography?), though hard on St Paul, from whose treatment of things indifferent and Gentile meats I believe he draws the wrong conclusions, forsaking moral reasoning for mere moralizing. He has, for all his overt iconoclasm, a healthy respect for tradition; witness his admiration for Kenneth Kirk's *Vision of God* and understanding of conscience. He knows the key-stone place of reason, in discerning the moral claims which arise when the facts of the case, the empirical features, are set out, studied and ordered in the light of Christian theology, of God's revelation of Himself through the Greeks, the Jews, and the Incarnate Son (chapter 7, *Anglican and Ecumenical Styles in Social Ethics*). His is the ancestral Anglican **practical** divinity, not speculative (chapter 3, *Middle Axioms*; chapter 4, *On the Theological Fringe*; chapter 6, his Introduction to William Temple's *Christianity and Social Order*). Above all, he remains a pastor and a priest. Who would expect to find, in a paper on Transnational Social Ethics (chapter 11), written in 1979 this answer to the question how the churches can help business executives in their ethical research: "the first thing the church can do for them is to help them to draw more fully on God's resources by public worship, private meditation, and study"? Canon Preston can do no other than to live thankfully with these his "limitations". In only one aspiration of his do I wish him no success: it is to make the Church of England less of what it is, in order to make it more like others which it is not. In the created order genetic diversity is an essential condition of evolutionary growth; it cannot be otherwise in the order of grace. If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

G.R. Dunstan

Dictionary of Medical Ethics (Revised and Enlarged Edition)

Edited by A.S. Duncan, G.R. Dunstan, R.B. Welbourn

Darton Longman & Todd 1981 £12.50

The first edition of this Dictionary, a pioneer work, was extremely well received. In this new edition nearly all the articles have been revised, some of them extensively, and a significant number of new entries and cross-references have been added. In addition two essays, one on medical science and one on medical ethics, have been included. Because of its Centre of Law, Medicine and Ethics, King's College London has a particular interest both in this subject area and in this book. Professor Gordon Dunstan, a Director of the Centre, is one of the editors and has contributed a number of entries to the Dictionary. Ian Kennedy (the 1981 Reith Lecturer) is another Director and, drawing on his experience both in the U.S.A. and in this country, has contributed the entry on the rights of the unborn child.

I considered the Dictionary mainly from the point of view of its interest to parish priests and the general reader. Such people need clear, factual information about what is happening in various fields of medicine and an idea of what the ethical dilemmas look like from a doctor's point of view. Herein lies the great strength of this book. For example, a reader aware of the current controversy over the treatment of severely mal-formed babies can find a two page article on **spina bifida** in which a consultant paediatric surgeon shows what the present situation is and how it has arisen and gives the criteria for deciding whether or not to operate on babies suffering from a severe form of this disease. Professor John Lorber of Sheffield, whose analysis of 524 cases of babies who were not selected for operation has been influential, and who is at the centre of the particular dilemma, contributes an article on **congenital malformations**. The reader might then look of *Life, Prolongation of: Ordinary and Extraordinary Means* by Professor Dunstan.

The book is wide-ranging in its scope and contains articles on such subjects as Chinese medicine, the problem of drugs in sport, marriage counselling (by Dr. J. Dominian), homosexuality, and animal experiments. Most non-medically qualified people will find the entries in this Dictionary educative. The general public now has to think about questions of medical ethics and this book puts people in touch with the medical facts and current practice. Will the Dictionary be equally educative for medically qualified people who need help in philosophical and theological areas? If I have less confidence it is primarily because of the allocation of space. For example, the article on abortion has four pages by Dame Josephine Barnes and hardly two pages on general ethical considerations by Professor Dunstan. Partly it reflects the fact that the majority of contributors to this book are medical practitioners. I would like to have seen more articles from people with a philosophical background.

The ethical standpoint from which most articles are written is reasonably uniform and clear. It is that which has been characteristic of much Anglican ethics as practised in recent years, careful, questioning, and undogmatic. Where the issues are complex, this is recognised and false over-simplification is avoided. For example, the article on abortion suggests that there may be a 'justifiable feticide' analogous with 'justifiable homicide'. "The Western ethical tradition does not place an absolute value on human life – for that would imply that no life might ever be taken, and that every life must be prolonged so far as possible by every available means. It places a very high value on human life, with a presumptive right to protection so strong that anyone who violates that right, or fails to protect it, has to justify his action or non-action before appropriate legal tribunals." In some entries, for example that on Euthanasia, the two main viewpoints are stated but are regarded as irreconcilable.

Nearly all articles have up-to-date references to the relevant literature. The publishers are to be congratulated on bringing out a revised and enlarged edition after only four years. But it sets a precedent and I suspect that with new research and quickening public interest a new edition will be needed at least every decade.

Richard Harries

The Church Struggle in South Africa. John W. de Gruchy SPCK, 1979. £4.95

The South African government claims that it is a Christian government, defending a piece of Western civilisation against a Marxist conspiracy to overthrow it. At the same time, most of the world church condemns the policies and the action of this same government. How can this be? What is the history and the position of christianity and the churches in South Africa? In this book, John de Gruchy, a South African minister in the United Congregational Church, and a lecturer in the University of Cape Town, attempts to chart the stand of the Christian Church in South Africa during the last 100 years, and particularly since the Nationalists gained power in 1948.

It would be fair to say that this book is based very firmly on documents and statements of the churches in South Africa, and of its leading theologians. It is not a study of the sociology of the churches (although he recognises the gap that so often exists between the official, synodal, statements of the church, and the faith and action of the individual members). It also barely touches the life of the African churches which are not in the main stream, i.e. the Ethiopian and independent African churches which have grown up in South Africa as in so many parts of the continent. However the author does point out that there are far more African church members of the main churches than there are European members.

The book is arranged chronologically. He firstly deals with the foundation of the church in South Africa, and particularly, in the last century. The Dutch Reformed Church was the church of the main group of early (Dutch) colonists. The Church of England (to be slowly followed by other English denominations) was the church of the imperial power which took over the Cape Colony after the Napoleonic wars. Although both groups of Europeans were clear about the subservient position of the Africans, the position of the church was different. For example, in 1829 the synodal of the Dutch Reformed Church stated that according to the "infallible Word of God", Holy Communion was to be administered "simultaneously to all members without distinction of colour or origin". But thirty years later, the synod was suggesting that it might be permissible "as a result of the weakness of some" to meet and worship in separate buildings. One eventual result was the formation of separate African branches of the Dutch Reformed Church, which were to bring Africans to positions of prominence and leadership on their own. De Gruchy also carefully chronicles the exceedingly close cultural ties between the Dutch Reformed Church (and also the more extremist "Gereformeerde Kerk" or Reformed Church) and the Afrikaan nation. These links were born of the fight by the Afrikaaners to keep their national identity in a hostile physical environment, surrounded by an overwhelming number of alien people. This feeling was intensified by the hostile attitude of the British imperial power, which finally resulted in the "Great Trek", and later (and more bitterly), the Boer War in which 27,000 Afrikaaner women and children with many black servants died in British concentration camps.

De Gruchy deals with this history of struggle against colonial domination because it is a significant factor in the present problem. It explains why the Afrikaaners are able to say, and believe, that they are as African as the blacks. It also explains the historical roots of the identification of the DRC with Afrikaaner nation.

The book then goes straight to the victory by the Nationalists in 1968. A series of consultations and meetings took place between the churches, including the DRC, about the work of the church. In the meeting in Pretoria in 1953, the official statement included the shrewd comment that the conference was divided into three groups: "those who sincerely believed in a righteous racial separation in the church based on the Scriptures; secondly, those who made no such confession but never the less practised some form of separation because circumstances demanded it although such separation did not correspond with the ideals of the Christian Church; thirdly, those who were convinced that separation in the church was wrong and stood condemned according to Scripture". (The author comments that not a single one of the 107 delegates there was an African – today quite unthinkable). But the Cottesloe consultation, shortly after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, was a crucial turning point. The DRC were present, and also the very conservative Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK). The final statement included a range of, for South Africa, radical statements which clearly stated the equality of all people, and did so in specific terms (e.g. by showing the disastrous effects of migratory labour on blacks). The NHK delegates rejected it, but the DRC delegation – which included a number of the top leaders and theologians of the church – accepted the statement. However the DRC as a whole was later to reject it – with the support of the Prime Minister and the more conservative elements in the church.

The author deals with the DRC with great understanding. Calvinism is not in itself the conservative force that it has often been thought to be. The idea of a church continually reforming itself is revolutionary in the extreme. But the essence of the problem, and for the African theologians and churches as well, is exemplified in the quotation from Roland Bainton. "If there is no accommodation (to culture) Christianity is unintelligible and cannot spread", but "if there is too much accommodation it will spread, but it will no longer be Christianity". Theological support by the DRC for apartheid is based on an interpretation of the

bible. Although the scriptures “teach and uphold the essential unity of mankind and the primordial relatedness and fundamental equality of mankind”, ethnic diversity is also a fundamental reality in the bible. Only at the final coming of the Kingdom of God will the real unity of God’s people be experienced. Apartheid is not according the DRC, a fundamental principle, but a reality which is not necessarily wrong. And, as de Gruchy points out many others (such as J.H. Oldham, one of the founders of the World Council of Churches) have said the same thing. But this “reality” has to be critically examined – is the separation a way of sharing in a truly equal manner, or is it a way of ossifying the status quo to the advantage of one group only? Clearly it is the latter, and it is a sad fact that the DRC is not accepting its revolutionary roots, but has become too culturally identified with one group, with one ideology.

The rejection of the Cottesloe statement by the DRC as a whole, and the resignation of that church from the World Council of Churches showed that agreement at the top was not sufficient. The Christian Institute therefore, was set up with the aim of education and fellowship at the grass roots. In some respects, it was inspired by the Confessing Church in Germany before the last war. It was an attempt to disassociate Christians from a “national” church, which had become the religious promoter of the official political ideology. The Institute was led by the Afrikaaner DRC leader, Beyers Naude, a delegate at the Cottesloe meeting, who was later to be expelled from the DRC, and eventually was to be a banned person. The Programme to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches (announced, the author shows, in a most unfortunately inept manner in 1970) resulted in a demand by the South African government that the other South African churches get out of the WCC. In fact, they did not, though they are forbidden to send money to it.

But, inevitably, the story and the Christian leadership begins to pass to the majority of the country, the Africans. The Soweto riots have introduced a new stage in the development of the conflict, and the rise of Black liberation theology has brought a new group of thinkers on to the Christian stage. What is more, the words of the black theologians are very direct. Speaking in 1973, Manas Buthelezi pointed out that (1) as Africans were by far the majority in the population the Gospel had to be relevant particularly to them; (2) because the society in South Africa was one that was almost exclusively designed for whites, it was no good whites being missionaries, and talking about blacks as brothers; (3) the black has to take the initiative – it was no good being passive; (4) the African had to see his blackness as a gift from God – and not as a means of white rejection; (5) the black theologian therefore had to form a theology which was independent of white institutions. Bishop Desmond Tutu, the black General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches declared that “the white man will never be free until the black man is wholly free”. Other black theologians have gone on to emphasise this point – that in many ways the physical imprisonment and exploitation of Africans is reflected in the spiritual and psychological imprisonment of the whites. And only Africans can make them free. But the author also warns against the danger that the black theologians will fall into the same trap that the Afrikaans theologians and churchmen have. The Christian faith must be relevant to the Africans – but must not become bound to their present dilemma and fight.

This book is relevant, not just because Southern Africa is one of the trouble spots of the world – a possible spark for a third world war. Not only because of the situation – an off-shoot of our own history – is crucial in itself. But also because it is a study of the Christian Church in circumstances where the church has had to make a political stand, like it or not. Our own society is in travail. What Christian thinking at official and at other levels is going on to face up to the challenges that we face? A year after the Soweto riots, the South African Church leaders attempted to provide a “true interpretation of the riots”. They stated: “We urge all our members to listen to the anguished plea of Black people which has so often gone unanswered and has now resulted in violence”. Will our church leaders be considering the riots in Brixton and in Toxteth? Will the churches be able to bring a healing but a courageous and incisive word to assist our politicians? The issue in South Africa is literally black and white. But there are many similar problems in today’s Britain which claim the attention of Christians and the Christian church.

Kees Maxey

From Hiroshima to Harrisburg: The Unholy Alliance, Jim Garrison SCM London 1980, £5.50

Like Garrison, I oppose both military and civil nuclear power; unlike him, I consider that the two issues should be kept separate. They are morally different and to conflate them is impolitic.

Deterrence is inescapably the conditional intention to wage indiscriminate and disproportionate nuclear war. It cannot be bluff because, as all strategists agree, ‘crisis management’ – going to the brink of catastrophe – is an essential part of deterrence. If morality inheres in intention as well as action then deterrence is grossly immoral. All those engaged in it should desist. How we should withdraw from the current morally untenable position is a subject of legitimate and at present anguished debate. (I argue for deep unilateral cuts by the West, aimed at starting a process of disarmament independent of the paralysing numbers game of negotiation, in *Ethics and Nuclear Deterrence* ed. Geoffrey Goodwin, Croom Helm London 1982.)

Garrison does not essay moral judgement of deterrence. He discusses at length the invention of the atom bomb, its use against Japanese cities, the psychological impact of this use as analysed in Robert Lifton’s excellent Penguin *Death in Life: the survivors of Hiroshima*, and some postwar nuclear weapons developments. The difficult and complicated question of how the origins of the cold war relate to the bomb is seen off with vague accusations of American failure to ‘show bold initiative and trust’ in 1945 (69). The complicated and vital concept of deterrence gets only 2½ pages (87-90). What we must do about deterrence, it appears, is to get rid of the nation-state which is anachronistic in ‘the Age of Overkill’. ‘Tragically’, this cannot be done (121-8). In short, Garrison has no practical proposals on military nuclear power.

I know of no argument of **principle** against civil nuclear power; the objections are **prudential**. It seems unwise to proliferate throughout the world a power system which is one (not the only) route to nuclear weapons, a ready and charismatic target for terrorists (whom Garrison surprisingly ignores), productive of waste that remains dangerous for far longer than man can reasonably expect to recall its precise location, and (as Garrison emphasises) prone to lethal accidents. One might add that now, with the world in recession, is the time for a massive effort to have ready renewable energy sources for the time when we will again be told that there is an energy gap which only civil nuclear power can fill.

Garrison draws no distinction between principle and prudence; he seeks to tar civil nuclear power with the bomb's blackness. He favours the energy policy espoused by Amory Lovins of Friends of the Earth. How is this excellent policy to be commended to governments, electorates and industry? If Garrison has an answer to this question it is 'nonviolence' which 'I would define . . . here as the path each of us is challenged to take to resensitize ourselves with our emotions, our bodies, our connections with each other and the earth. Nonviolence is the reconnection each one of us feels between his or her **individual** life and the **source** of all life' (245-6, his italic). Nonviolence is not 'conducive to [sic] monolithic or centralized definition' but 'certain principles . . . can be suggested as guidelines'. These are: to become aware of 'the full dimensions of the nuclear weapons/reactor complex in society and the degree each of us is affected by it'; to refuse to divide the world into them and us; and to avoid cooperation with the evil of nuclear power. This avoidance may involve 'insulating one's home, installing a solar panelling system or conserving energies in existing systems; . . . writing to your government representative [sic] about your concerns, actively joining in protest marches and occupations of nuclear weapons/reactor sites or merely informing friends of the problem' (252-3). This *ad hoc* list, with illegal action casually included without discussion of the morality and prudence of such action, hardly amounts to a set of guidelines.

To conflate military and civil nuclear power as Garrison seeks to do is impolitic as well as a confusion of principle with prudence. Political action requires the patient building of effective consensus. Different allies may be forthcoming in respect of opposition to military and to civil nuclear power. One's scope for action is diminished if one insists on eliding the two problems.

Barrie Paskins

Marx Against the Marxists, Jose P Miranda, SCM Press 1980
xiii + 316 pp, £5.50 (limp edition)

Marx continues to fascinate and horrify modern intellectuals, and political systems shaped by his thought are seen by some as man's greatest hope for freedom and by others as his greatest contemporary form of bondage. Within the thought and writings of Karl Marx – perhaps like his main philosophical influence, Hegel – there is a basic ambiguity and lack of clarity. This is one reason for the widely differing evaluations of Marx, each finds it not difficult to read into Marx their own particular interpretation.

This is manifestly what Miranda has done with this latest book. Subtitled "The Christian Humanism of Karl Marx", the book sets out to prove that "at the height of his maturity Karl Marx was a Christian and believed in God". This thesis, quoted on the cover of the book, proved impossible for this reviewer to pin down in the text, and it may be that the revision that occurred between the 1978 Spanish edition and the 1980 English translation accounts for this discrepancy. It has to be said that Miranda's book, while it has all the trappings of scholarship with extensive quotations from Marx's writings, is frustrating and misleading as either an exposition of Marx's thought or a discussion of the alleged "Christian humanism" of Marx.

Miranda writes against two groups of Marxists. He is against the revisionists (presumably the whole Social Democratic tradition, although this is not made clear), and also against the "Neo-orthodoxy of Stalin and Althusser" (29). Like many contemporary expositors of Marx (e.g. McLellan), Miranda wants to distinguish between Marx's original thought, and the later developments. With a wide series of quotations from Marx (and Engels), he seeks to show that Marx was not the crude materialist he is often portrayed as, that his economic determinism was nothing like the 'iron law' of Marxist-Leninism dogma, and that there is within his thought a genuine moral and even spiritual humanism. If this was as far as Miranda went, the book would be saying nothing very new to those who have moved beyond mere polemics in their reading of Marx. But his thesis is far wider, namely that Marx was a Christian and that the incompatibility between Christianity and Marxism professed by both sides is just not true.

This thesis can only be maintained by falsifying both the content of Christianity and Marx's thought. Marx's thought developed as part of the Young Hegelian movement, with Engels, Bruno Bauer, Strauss, and Feuerbach, and their attack is their desire to overthrow religion, Bauer and Strauss in terms of a radical criticism of its foundations, Feuerbach in terms of a "resolving the religious world into its secular basis" (Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"), and Marx and Engels in terms of an explanation of religion as the 'false consciousness' of an alienated humanity. The writings of the early Marx, i.e. 1843-45, are crucial here, yet Miranda pays little attention to them, or to this historical situation. He recognizes in chapter 9, "Marx's Thought as a Conscious Continuation of Early Christianity", that Marx does attack Christianity (how could he do otherwise), but maintains that "the God of the Bible is incompatible with religion" (224). In other words, what Marx attacked was not authentic Christianity but a radical falsification of the faith. There is some truth in this, the religious establishment did little to alleviate the sufferings of the industrial workers, but this fault they shared with the rest of society by and large. But Miranda goes on to maintain that not only was Marx baptized but "did in fact hold the Christian faith" (226).

Miranda's thesis is unconvincing. He writes that he has proved that "Marx and Engels saw their communism as a conscious continuation of authentic Christianity" (240). Whether they did think that is a moot point, the more important point is that Miranda so reduces Christianity in its content that it is no more than a vague post-Christian humanism. Such a secularized religion may well be a legitimate interpretation of Hegel and the Young Hegelians, it has very little to do with authentic Christianity. In a sense Miranda gives the game away in the English Preface: "The Christianity of an author does not consist exclusively in his or her affirmation of the existence of God . . . if Marx's fundamental and thoroughgoing criticism of capitalism centers around the fact that capitalism does not respect human beings as persons, as real subjects and agents, then that analysis turns out to be eminently Christian. And that is far more substantial and important than explicit professions of faith . . . Christianity means solid, unequivocal humanism." (xi) Wading through Miranda's Hegelian and Marxist "science" (see p.293) convinced me that here is neo-Marxism written in Hegelian lack of clarity, with a very idiosyncratic Christian label on the cover.

Raymond M Vince

Constantine Versus Christ by Alistair Kee. SCM Press, 1982, pp. 186, £5.95.

Alistair Kee's book is written with verve. He has the zest of a propagandist and anyone inclined to sympathize with his cause will read with delight, as will anyone who likes to see a scholarly case presented with clarity and vigour.

The question concerns the nature of Constantine's religion. Opinion still divides between those who believe his Christian conversion was genuine and those who hold he was (in Burkhardt's words) 'essentially unreligious'. Dr Kee goes carefully through the evidence and finds ample support for a third view: that Constantine was religious but his religion was not Christianity. He was a monotheist of a generally Platonist colour, who found in such a faith the numinous providential backing needed for the fulfilment of his political purposes. His overriding purpose was the unity of the Empire under his own unshared rule. For its attainment, he was clear that the Church, which persecution had failed to eliminate, must be wooed and won. On the side of belief, monotheism provided a sufficient basis. On the side of practical life, the Church was only too relieved to be quit of persecution and to enjoy the novel pleasure of acceptance at court.

But could such an attenuated faith satisfy the Christian leaders? The evidence here presented points to something close to intellectual and spiritual corruption. Not only does it emerge that Constantine's own letters and speeches are virtually devoid of specifically Christian content, but Eusebius' Oration in Praise of Constantine, delivered in the Emperor's presence, and his Life of Constantine give no solid indication that the Emperor's own faith contained any place for Jesus. The Logos indeed appears, but as the heavenly archetype in imitation of whom the Emperor 'pilots affairs below with an upward gaze'. True, the Emperor is no longer counted divine, but his policies have the fullest divine support, reflected in the loyalty of the Church on earth; it comes to much the same thing. There is a biblical flavour in Eusebius' adulation, but it is all derived from Old Testament examples – heroes, like Constantine himself, who have the backing of God and who often, like him in his receiving the labarum, could point to some sign which made God's favour plain.

So much is historical investigation. But, says Dr Kee, the long arm of Constantine stretches right down to our own day. The Church has never recovered from its take-over by the religion of Constantine. For three centuries, it stood by (and bled for) the values and the faith of Jesus, who eschewed power, worldly position and wealth. Then, almost overnight, it colluded with the quite contrary values of Constantine, transforming Jesus, enthroned in the apse of his churches, into the heavenly emperor – and never, as an institution, regained its soul. For, as we can now see so clearly, what Constantine (encouraged by Eusebius and his like) was doing was to provide an ideological justification for his policies – which were those of any power-hungry monarch. Officially, 'monarchy exists in imitation of the rule of heaven . . . But this argument tells us nothing about heaven. It simply gives *carte blanche* to the Emperor to rule as he rules and call it just'.

The book ends by noting that Marxism has provided a just critique of the perverted Christianity stemming from Constantine's victory, and by showing how easily 'the thin line of protest within the Church' has found itself diverted and institutionalized.

Such a wide-ranging case raises questions of many kinds. Has the historical discussion quite taken us to the heart of the matter? Was Eusebius so much the bedazzled time-server, and was Constantine so deliberately outside specifically Christian faith? Or was it a case (there are countless parallels) of a man who meant to be on the Christian side but saw the implications only imperfectly – or who (true on any showing) was keen not to provoke new disunity in the Empire by full-blast hostility to paganism? After all, if his public pronouncements (and those of a Eusebius speaking in his presence) avoid clear Christian content, they are not inclined to popular paganism either. In other words, is the language, so clearly presented in this study, that of a non-Christian or a careful diplomat who needs to stand somewhat about the fray? These questions do not receive all the discussion they deserve.

On the wider issues, of course it is true that developments under Constantine produced a major shift in Christian status and the Church's place in society. But Dr Kee's contrast between 'before' and 'after' is too sharp, and the resulting picture of Christian identity through history has a certain naivety. To take one topic: it is claimed that after Constantine the Church came to a new concern with property and wealth, wholly alien to the preaching and life of Jesus. But the fact is that the Church began to rely on the wealthy as early as the early establishment of congregations in places like Corinth. Their stability depended on the support and hospitality of the richer members, who were exhorted not to self-improvement but to almsgiving. The *poverello* existence of the Synoptic Gospels (in John even Jesus and his disciples have a common purse) testifies to something confined to Jesus' ministry and perhaps to certain elements in the early Church, but within a very few years it was not the norm. The pastoral Epistles witness to speedy adaptation to new habits in the area of church order, as the model of the servant, claimed by Jesus as the Christian pattern of authority, gave way to that of the ruler, and Ignatius caps them by seeing the bishop as the image of God the Father, with the humble deacons left to reproduce Jesus in the congregation. The invasion by worldly values began long before Constantine.

And was this the start of perversion, or was it inevitable adaptation to circumstances? And by what criteria is the propriety of such adaptation to be assessed? This is the hard question which this book leaves untouched. The Church lives always on a knife-edge between adaptation and travesty as far as the heritage of Jesus is concerned. With persuasive force, Dr Kee reminds us how strong is the case for not letting Jesus our critic be silenced by Jesus the Church's (all too easily domesticated) lord.

The modern Anglican bishop may barely recognize himself as the heir of the shift of power and Christian sensibility produced by Constantine. But it is salutary to recall that the Church of England (to go no further afield) has lost large parts of the Constantinian heritage (in power, influence and wealth) only by the movement of 'social forces' and Act of Parliament, never at any point by voluntary acts of imaginative obedience to the spirit of Jesus. True, it has gained much control over its own resources and government, but that it is a game Constantine would have understood well, even if he would scarcely have approved.

J.L. Houlden

Disciples and Prophets. A Biblical Model for the Religious Life. 1980. xiii + 225pp. £7.95

Free to Love. Poverty – Chastity – Obedience. 1981. xiv + 96pp. £2.95

Both books by F.J. Moloney S.D.B., published by Darton, Longman and Todd, London

Free to love will be found helpful by members of Anglican as well as Roman Catholic religious communities, and to some extent, as its author hopes, by others too. Its theme is simple. Far from meaning 'no money, no love, no decision-making', the three traditional vows are for all of us 'our way to authentic humanity'. For 'through such a life-style we follow the poor, chaste and obedient Jesus along a path which leads to the ultimate answer to the deepest longings of the hearts of all men and women: resurrection' (p.90). Reworking and supplementing a section of the earlier and longer book, *Disciples and Prophets*, Fr Moloney presents each of the vows as a way of living out our relationship with Jesus. Poverty is expounded, in a way which Franciscans may find a little oblique, in terms of Acts 4.32-35 taken as indicating the community aspect of life 'in Christ'. Thus understood, poverty should 'announce to the world, not the evil of possessions, but the value of a shared life inspired by radical faith' (p. 25). Chastity and obedience are interpreted a little differently. Jesus himself was celibate 'because of the overwhelming presence of the Kingdom in his life': 'he could do no other than give himself entirely to it' (p. 51). Similarly, his obedience to the Father was total. In both respects, Christians are to base their own style of life on his. Thus, 'the poor, the chaste and the obedient are freed to love and for love' (p. xiii).

Much of the book is 'devotional', and, within the inevitable limits of that *genre* fairly well done: some will find the focus somewhat less than sharp, others will nevertheless find themselves addressed on this page or that. Perhaps, in a book like this, the loyal attempt to make everything applicable both to members of religious communities and to others is bound to leave readers in the latter category dissatisfied. Do not our actual needs, in relation to family responsibilities and to work — to take the most obvious examples — demand a different starting-point than these gospel 'imperatives' (as Fr Moloney calls them, p. xiii)? What is said (or not said) about work reflects — surely — one inescapable contrast between the religious life and that of the rest of us. 'Our work points to *the reason why we exist as a consecrated Christian community*' (p. 27, the author's italics). This view of the relationship between work and membership of a Christian community is, at least, highly discussible for those not living under the vows of the religious life. And the attempt to present as 'parallel' the commitment to love on the part of the celibate and of the married (p. 53f) must inevitably leave a very great deal unsaid.

In both these books, the author writes — partly — as a New Testament scholar (his *The Johannine Son of Man*, an Oxford doctoral thesis supervised by Professor Hooker, is an important study). In at least three cases, he offers a new exegesis of texts traditionally used in the rationale of life under the religious vows. Mt 19.16-22 yields no basis, we are told, for either the 'double standard' — generally deprecated now, in any case — or for a general call to poverty. The requirement to be 'perfect' derives from Matthew's theology of discipleship and of a righteousness exceeding that demanded by the Law of Moses (*Disciples and Prophets*, pp. 10ff). Less convincingly, in the same passage, Moloney distinguishes — by implication — between an individual command to one person to give his capital away and the disciples' having left their possessions behind; surely this is, effectively, a renunciation of ownership in both cases. Earlier in Mt 19, the passage about eunuchs at v. 12 is interestingly and attractively discussed in *Free to love* (pp. 48ff). This saying was Jesus' riposte to critics of his failure to marry: he takes up the very word, 'eunuch', that they had chosen as a term of abuse. In this kind of writing, especially in the second book, Fr Moloney is at his best. Wisely, in the same work, he has omitted altogether the passages of popularizing biblical theology which occupied so much space in *Disciples and Prophets*. That work had, indeed, its own significance. The attempt to provide a largely new rationale for the religious life was a bold one (though he drew extensively on recent predecessors). Members of religious congregations are called, in Fr Moloney's view, to discipleship to Jesus as that is set out in the New Testament. Further, they have a vocation of witness and protest analogous to that of the Old Testament prophets: the quality of their corporate life should hold up before the institutional church, and before urban society, a reminder (or promise, as the case may be) of what it means to live as a community. Much of this has evidently been found valuable, or so the author tells us in *Free to love*. But some religious — especially, perhaps, Anglicans and members of the pre-reformation Orders — are likely to think that Fr Moloney has done more than propose a new biblical basis for the religious life: he is presenting a highly twentieth-century understanding of the purpose of that life, in which personal consecration in prayer is decidedly under-emphasized if not neglected. *Free to love* is not only a much cheaper book than *Disciples and Prophets* but also a more satisfactory one.

C.J.A. Hickling

Foundations of Christian Faith. An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity by Karl Rahner.

Translated by William V. Dych. Darton, Longman and Todd 1978. xv + 470 pp. £14.00

Until the publication of this book Karl Rahner's work has appeared chiefly in his *Theological Investigations*, a long series of works in which his theology was set out in temporal as much as systematic order. There is a selection which attempts to present an ordered arrangement of themes, but it is here for the first time that we have a one volume systematic theology in which all the main areas of his thinking are developed. It is not exactly bedside reading, but a book that has to be worked at. The difficulty is partly due to Rahner's laboured and obscure style, partly to the fact that it is serious systematic theology, in welcome contrast to the occasional writings that often seem to pass for theology in this country. Reading is not made any easier by the tough philosophical work that the reader is expected to do, and in an idiom that is not very familiar this side of the North Sea.

The base upon which Rahner builds his structure is a philosophical anthropology, which, despite its existentialist derivation, surprisingly parallels that of Schleiermacher. One difference in Rahner is that to the anthropology, in which he expresses the self-transcendence and orientation to the future of all human life, there corresponds, answering and enlarging it, a more sturdily

objective theology of a fairly traditional Roman Catholic form. This more firmly objective side is revealed particularly in Rahner's discussion of the Trinity, which is far more determinative for his theology than is Schleiermacher's.

The longest chapter, taking up a third of the book, is that on christology. Here we see the real meeting point between transcendental anthropology and orthodox christology 'from above' as it has come to be called. Transcendental anthropology is here developed into transcendental christology, by which Rahner seeks to show how a view of human self-transcendence provides the grounds upon which we come to understand how God might incarnate himself in a human being. Despite the Hegelian overtones of some of Rahner's statements here, he is very careful to show that he is not simply developing a speculative 'natural' christology. 'Transcendental christology allows one to search for, and in his search to understand, what he has already found in Jesus of Nazareth' (p.212). Despite the care, however, the overall appearance is one of ambiguity, for the two approaches will not quite tie up. It is sometimes doubtful whether self-transcendence is itself a sufficient explanation of Jesus' salvific reality, or whether (the more likely) the 'descent' of the Word is given the greater substance.

All in all, the book is a good demonstration of how a Roman Catholic theologian faces up to the challenge of modernity, drawing on modern philosophical insights and, while not conceding Roman claims to represent authentic Christianity, taking a basically irenic stance towards Protestantism, other religions and the various forms of modern culture. There is throughout the book a dialogue between the liberal and the conservative in Rahner himself, particularly perhaps in his treatment of ecclesiology. The question that arises is common with respect to all philosophical approaches of this kind to systematic theology: and that is whether the various forces at work are really compatible with one another.

Colin Gunton
