

doctrinal foundation for the whole subject (this is indicated by Fr Aumann with admirable firmness), and they did a great deal to dispel the illusion that mysticism was primarily concerned with peculiar psychological experiences. Garrigou-Lagrange in particular showed how the highest possible union with God is no more than the full maturity of the life of faith and charity, so that in principle it must be possible within active as well as contemplative vocations. They also exposed the illegitimacy of any sharp dichotomy between asceticism and mysticism, thereby safeguarding the need for every christian to pass beyond a religion of mere effort and duty, into a life of friendship with God in which he is "led by the Spirit" and not just governed by human regulations and prudence. All of this is presented anew, brought up to date where necessary, by Fr Aumann.

But if his book shares in all the strengths of the neo-Thomists, it also shares in their weaknesses. There is a danger that we shall be so bemused by the very coherence and clarity of the picture that we forget how little it really achieves. It leaves out of account the vast bulk of christian experience and christian reflection upon that experience. All the richness of the christian east, for instance, is quite ignored, and almost nothing is retained from the patristic period or even (in spite of the Thomism) from the Middle Ages in the West. And it is extraordinarily difficult to see *how* all that extra evidence could be

fitted into the neo-Thomist scheme, and it is impossible to see *why* it should be.

The clarity and confidence which are such striking features of Fr Aumann's exposition are made possible only by taking for granted a mass of highly sophisticated jargon. And surely the student needs to be led into the use of such jargon, by being presented with the intellectual and, maybe, experiential factors which generated it in the first place. It represents a very particular way of seeing and analysing things, it cannot be taken without further ado as simply reflecting the way things are. And the student needs to be warned that many of the words which have acquired a technical sense within the neo-Thomist scheme mean something quite different in other texts. Words like "contemplation" for instance, or "union", in patristic and medieval texts, simply do not signify what later writers use them to signify. And their earlier usages reflect different (and not necessarily improper) ways of seeing and analysing things. There is an enormous job waiting to be done of charting the history of the terminology of christian spirituality. A great deal of confusion can be caused by overlooking the wild semantic inconstancy of words like "prayer" and "mystical".

So Fr Aumann's book falls far short of solving all our problems – which is hardly surprising. What it does do is nevertheless valuable, and it does it very well.

SIMON TUGWELL O P

**NEW DIRECTIONS IN NEW TESTAMENT STUDY** by Patrick Henry, *SCM Press Ltd*  
1980 pp 300 paperback £6.95.

Professor Henry here gives us a readable survey of some recent talking points in New Testament scholarship. The questions and the authors cited are predominantly North American, and the book lacks the vast cosmopolitanism of Bishop Neill's *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861 - 1961* and the authoritative conciseness of Professor Fuller's *The New Testament in Current Study*, works with which it invites comparison, but in the end fails to equal.

The author appears to believe that existentialist analysis of the New Testa-

ment has had its day; he expounds this theme in the best part of three chatty and rather rambling chapters. The book boasts that it is no longer satisfactory in such a work to report the latest on Q or the authorship of Ephesians or the reliability of Acts. But it is in these areas, however tedious, that lasting progress or at least significant new directions could be reported. It is surely quite unacceptable to allocate only five pages to recent developments in form criticism, and only four to work in redaction criticism – the treatment of the latter is a particularly

serious weakness of the book. There is practically nothing on Johannine criticism, and no reference to textual criticism or source criticism.

The Jewish background to New Testament study figures prominently, but no connection is drawn between this and the chapter on Jesus, the complacent anti-Bultmannianism of which emerges from its title, "How much history do we need?" There are only two inconsequential pages in that chapter on Jesus' self-understanding. On the Hellenistic side, the author heralds a revolution in New Testament criticism in the wake of the discoveries at Nag Hammadi, but his prophetic powers desert him when it comes to specifying exactly the direction of the much vaunted new development.

There are, appropriately, chapters devoted to sociological method and the study of linguistic symbolism; in both areas much more could have been said if the net had been cast more widely.

The chapter most likely to interest – and perhaps also to irritate – readers of *New Blackfriars* – is the shortest, "The Apostolic Book and the Apostolic See". The author expresses his Protestant surprise at 'the sudden emergence of Roman Catholics into the front rank of biblical scholars since the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* of Pope Pius XII. In his account

of the modernist crisis, he chooses to ignore those scholars who, loyal to the Holy See, nevertheless went on producing under considerable strain, distinguished New Testament work. And his review of more recent work is an exclusively transatlantic paean of the Roman Catholic contribution. He seems not to know of the European greats, Schnackenburg, Schürmann, Dupont, not forgetting Schillebeeckx, to name but a few. The undercurrent of patronising approval in Henry's account appears to be decidedly out of date. The truth is that one of the clearest of the 'new directions in New Testament study' is that confessional distinctions between the practitioners of it are no longer relevant. More to the point would have been a chapter on the newly emerging isolationist group of fundamentalists, of whatever church allegiance, who do not accept the historical critical method.

The book is entertainingly written; bon mots and more or less appropriate anecdotes abound. But the author lapses frequently into journalese, skates over all the more complex exegetical questions, and has produced an even more ephemeral book than the subject required.

JOHN MUDDIMAN

**A THEOLOGY FOR A NEW HUMANITY** by Juan Luis Segundo S.J. and others:  
Vol 1 'The Community called Church' pp 172. Vol 2 'Grace and the Human Condition' pp 214. Vol 3 'Our Idea of God' pp 204. Vol 4 'The Sacraments Today' pp 154.  
Vol 5 'Evolution and Guilt' pp 148. Gill & Macmillan, £4.50 each, paperback.

Fr Segundo and his colleagues at the Peter Faber Pastoral Centre in Montevideo have produced some orderly volumes. Each question proceeds according to a statement of 'essential aspects', followed by 'clarifications and concrete applications', then by a treatment of some important detail, and lastly there are sets of notes and biblical references. All this is set forth in quite ugly phrases. At the start, for example, we are told in frightful operese that faith is now 'fraught with anguish', and, in a worse slang, that faith seems now 'incompatible with interpersonal relations' because 'we have reached a point in time when humanity has definit-

ively entered an era when acceleration is a permanent, constituent element of man's history'. Alas for modernity and the South American situation, all this may sound very like Tennyson's doubting, like Newman's being cut in an Oxford lane, and like Westcott puffing to Hart: 'How rapidly things move now'. But no. 'The faith of our contemporaries is a *faith-in-crisis* in the fullest and noblest sense of that phrase.' We are true revolutionaries. We feel 'a need not only to proclaim equality and fraternity, but also to achieve those goals in practice'. So 'here we find one of the differences with (sic) the apologetics of the nineteenth century'.