

Deist claim has long since been rejected, with the *Philosophical Investigations* helping in its demise.

Both of these questions (the first and third) can be adequately met from the resources of Wittgenstein's thesis. The most challenging of the three questions is the second: if it is possible for language-games to become obsolete, is the religious language-game redundant now? Hudson poses this question in the light of the growth of secularisation. He contains the attack by merely re-asserting the later Wittgenstein's view of language, thereby rebuffing what he takes to be the main enemy, Logical Positivism. This is the least satisfactory part of the book and it is sad that Hudson should see in *Language, Truth and Logic* the main philosophical challenge to religious belief. That he does so is an indication of the insularity of the English philosophical tradition. Any honest attempt to meet this challenge must at least face up to the radical humanist critiques of Feuerbach, Marx and Freud. The point of their criticism is that to indulge in religious language-games is to evade the full claims of our humanity. What the user of religious language has to do to meet their challenge is to

speak of the human conditions in such a way as to show that by using such a language he is embarking on an attempt to face up fully to the problem of what it is to be human. By using the religious language-game man is taking his existence seriously, by refusing to accept his present as his end. By entertaining a Wittgensteinian 'picture', the religious believer is holding his life under a constant and continuing critique, thereby fully facing up to the problem of his humanity. One may ask the further question (not done so by Hudson in this book though he does raise it in his smaller book on Wittgenstein): Is the religious language-game likely to become an outmoded one? Without trying to answer this question by crystal-gazing, one could say that any attempt to be human that does not subject itself to the critique that is at present offered by the Christian language-game would be a misunderstanding of the human condition. Whether the entertaining of different 'pictures' would serve as well as the Christian 'pictures' can only be the subject of a continuing critical examination, in one's attempt to grasp and discriminate among the possible meanings of the human condition.

JOHN IBBETT

**IDEAS OF ORDER: THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY RENEWAL OF ANGLICAN THEOLOGICAL METHOD**, by Hamish F. G. Swanston. *Van Gorcum, Assen, The Netherlands, 1974.* 244 pp. 38-50 guilders.

In 1861 F. J. A. Hort wrote to John Ellerton of the debate in the Convocation of Canterbury concerning the composite volume of liberal theology, *Essays and Reviews*: 'Surely this wretched paltering with great questions must soon come to an end, or else the Church itself'. It is Dr Swanston's intention to chart the emergence of a more serious and profound response to the great questions of theological truth than the mere conservative reiteration of old answers and traditional defences of an orthodoxy framed in an age remote from the challenges of evolutionary theory and the critical study of the Bible.

He does this by focusing on four rather different Anglican theologians of the nineteenth century: R. D. Hampden, H. L. Mansel, F. D. Maurice and Benjamin Jowett. As his subtitle implies, he looks to see in them a renewal of Anglican theological method, but the impression with which one is left is one of variety, if not of confusion. This is partly the consequence of the different theological stances of the theologians studied—Hampden ranged himself against *Essays and Reviews*, to which Jowett was a contributor; Mansel and Maurice clashed sharply on a number of occasions—but it also appears to reflect a certain lack of clarity in the author's intention in bringing together these four important

representatives of nineteenth-century Anglican theology, and a failure to argue thoroughly the case he wishes to make. The book is uneven, at times rambling, and in some places rather opaque. These deficiencies are not helped by the inexcusable number of misprints—sometimes involving the transposition of whole lines and phrases—for which it would seem the foreign publishers should bear full responsibility.

This having been said, it is fair to point out that Dr Swanston does make a number of important points. He stresses the way in which Paley's apologetic was replaced by that of Bishop Butler, and how Butler was variously used by different theologians, Newman and Maurice appealing primarily to his doctrine of conscience, Hampden and Mansel drawing more on the argument of the *Analogy*. He rightly insists on the importance of Mansel's turning his attention to the limits of the human mind, expressed in his dictum that 'the primary and proper object of criticism is not religion, natural or revealed, but the human mind in its relation to religion'. The awareness of the constraints placed on theological discourse by the fact that it is the discourse of limited, human minds, is of great significance in the pattern of development of nineteenth-century theology, though Dr Swanston

reminds us that Mansel, like Maurice—though for very different reasons—did not feel the full weight of the implications of biblical criticism. There are some interesting comments on F. D. Maurice, though surprisingly, in view of the importance attached to Maurice's family in the shaping of his theology, there is no reference to the work of Dr Frank McClain.

All in all it is the section on Jowett, who was critical of both Butler and Paley, which is the most interesting, perhaps because by a judicious selection of quotations Dr Swanston is able to show how frequently Jowett anticipated many of our contemporary theological concerns. One can instance his appreciation of the need for Indian Christianity to be expressed in Indian thought forms; his awareness of what the Christian theologian has to

learn from an understanding of the theological tensions in other religious traditions; his awareness of historical change, of the importance of context for theological meaning, and of the dangers of a constricting systematisation of the New Testament; his attention to the importance of New Testament words, and his sensitivity to the limitations of language: his recognition that theology has to be fashioned anew to meet the questions of a new age.

These things are all valuable, but it is perhaps unfortunate that Dr Swanston did not reflect a little more before writing this book, for then he might well have been able to draw out more fully the significance of the changing presuppositions of Anglican theology in the period from Hampden's Professorship to Jowett's Balliol. GEOFFREY ROWELL

**PROPERTY AND RICHES IN THE EARLY CHURCH.** by Martin Hengel. *SCM Press*, London, 1974. viii + 96 pp. £1.25.

It has its shortcomings, but this little book should interest anybody who thinks Christianity has something vitally important to say above social justice and the development of new ways of living. Too many politically committed Christians have relied on a handful of 'proof texts', drawn mainly from St Matthew or the early chapters of Acts, to hold together their Christianity and their socialism or their communitarianism. Here the author of *Judentum und Hellenismus*, the major study of Judaism's and Hellenism's interrelationship (recently translated into English for SCM Press), swiftly surveys attitudes to property and social justice in ancient Israel, in Jesus's preaching and in the church of the first three centuries. Dr Hengel says he was spurred into writing the book primarily by a conviction that 'in today's discussion of theology and ethics there is a need to rethink completely the fellowship and self-understanding of the early church in the earliest period', for even in a much altered world such a reassessment 'could be of exemplary significance for a Christianity which does not know which way to turn and which, in a minority status, must again reflect on its particular spiritual calling. Only by reflecting on its origin will it achieve sufficient authority also to be able to give convincing answers in social and political questions'.

How far, in fact, are we able to reflect on that 'origin' without reflecting on the total Christian witness through all the centuries between those beginnings and our own day? Catholics and Protestants still give different answers to this question. However, Hengel certainly cannot be accused of planting before our eyes a vision of life in the early church and commanding us uncritically to imitate it.

Admittedly, against those scholars who have attempted to spiritualise the bible's harsh comment on the human condition (by, for example, underlining the fact that the term *anawim*—'the poor'—had acquired a religious rather than an economic connotation in late Judaism), he produces abundant evidence to show that vigorous and at times radical social criticism recurs constantly both in Judaism's prophetic and apocalyptic strands and in primitive Christianity. But he is emphatic that 'an abyss separates us from the early church', an abyss we cannot ignore. Not only is it impossible to 'extract a well-defined "Christian doctrine of property" either from the New Testament or from the history of the early church', but his survey reveals starkly the differences both in outlook and in economic structure that separate the biblical world and ours—differences we must constantly hold in mind when we are interpreting biblical texts. The NT writers are solely concerned with consumption, with the fair distribution of what was available; the very idea of being able to control 'the means of production' was inconceivable to them. The profoundly different contemporary situation, when 'all over the world economic power and control is concentrated in the hands of a few "functionaries" or élite groups', clearly in Hengel's opinion obliges us to temper the radicalism of some of the gospel commands, which were addressed in the first place to people living in a society in which it was very much easier to keep oneself unspotted from the world, to 'be separate' and conform to the theonomous community ethic of one's local church. Quite a number of the readers of *New Blackfriars* will feel that, on the contrary, the structure of modern indus-