

study theology and allied subjects at university level. Perhaps it is because the millennium is approaching, but people do seem to be arguing more intensely about matters theological. Gerald Priestland's radio series, and, even more, Don Cupitt's television one, must both reflect and prompt this interest. Bishops with more evident social conscience than Tory politicians may even suggest to people that theology has some relevance after all. For those, and other obvious reasons, the climate may very well be favourable for a journal that explicitly starts with the problems created by the Reformation and the Enlightenment.

It is a special pleasure to find old friends in the first issue of the new journal. Indeed, the editor himself, Kenneth Surin, will be remembered for his remarkable, and profoundly theological, study of *Sophie's Choice*—the novel, rather than the film (*New Blackfriars*, July/August 1983). Theological journals, at this level, are not like newspapers. No one should expect to understand every article at first go. Future issues—the journal is to be quarterly—will carry 'critical studies of books'; but, for the moment, *Modern Theology* has started promisingly.

FERGUS KERR OP

FREE IN CHRIST. An introduction to Political Theology, by Paul Lakeland.
Kevin Mayhew Publishers, Leigh on Sea. 1984. £3.00.

Suppose I say 'This is a good introduction to political theology': what would readers of this review expect to find? They might be disappointed if they were looking for a bluffer's guide to the big names in liberation theology with some short and lucid synopses of what they are saying. (As it happens there is enough bibliography on Latin America, other Third World and European political theology to lead the bluffer further, but it is not the point of the book). They would feel more rewarded if they wanted an initiation into the business of *doing* theology the way liberation theologians think it should be done. If someone has read the book carefully they may well find that their understanding of the scope and method of theology has changed; there are challenging treatments of the relation between theology and politics, the bible and the contemporary world, faith and ideology, openness and bias. (On this last point, while Paul Lakeland rightly insists that Christian commitment cannot be simply collapsed into any other sort of commitment, and while he stresses that our motivation has to be indignation and our bias has to be to the marginalised, he seems to be too even-handed in his approach to the capitalist/socialist option).

Since the book is written for a mainly British and North American readership (and perhaps Irish too, though not so you would notice), it is a pity that it does not pay more attention to topics such as militarism, nuclear weapons, ecology, the evils of the nation-state, etc., etc. — not in the sense of giving a systematic treatment of each of them, but of indicating that they have to be part of the agenda. And since the book has a Catholic publisher it is a pity that the major scandal of the Church's sexism is not confronted. (Women do at least rate the second half of the book's penultimate sentence; and it is good to report that the language is carefully non-sexist).

As an act of communication this book could be bettered; Paul Lakeland is an experienced journalist, and the fact that his language is not always accessible is a reflection of the less than lucid way political theologians tend to express themselves. (Odd, because liberation theology is, surely, about giving people access to language as a means of possessing their world).

Nevertheless, the book is not only a challenging introduction but a useful contribution to the debate, and will I hope stimulate creative theological thinking in many places.

COLIN CARR OP