

impact in this area is rather restricted—a greater force *within* contemporary theology than as a meeting-ground of modern minds as a whole.’

Most important of all, in my opinion, is the remark that, ‘So it is that literary, rather than philosophical, investigations carry the major burden of metaphysical consciousness in modern Britain. . .’. Dr Stein places a great responsibility on literature, and in particular, I would say, upon poetry. Thus, he gives modern literature an astringent touch, and says, ‘After all, the author of *The Waste Land* is also the author of *Four Quartets*. Whatever, “touched by emotion”, underlies these two poems, they can hardly both be *equally* decisive, or decisive in the same sense. . . .’

The author goes on to consider the philosophical, as well as literary, value of Yeats and Brecht. Always he is searching for a synthesis, but the one weakness of his book is to weld, too forcefully, philosophy and literature. He goes on to question whether there is such a thing as ‘Christian criticism’ and concludes with some wise remarks about F. R. Leavis. Dr Stein says, ‘Dr Leavis is at pains to distinguish this irreducible function of “the intelligence and sensibility together” from the neighbouring activities of the sociologist, philosopher, or theologian’. And the answer which this author finds is this: he declares boldly, ‘The first duty, then, of the Christian in criticism is to be indeed nothing less than a critic’. This I applaud.

It is now that Dr Stein ceases to theorize and starts to consider particular works of literature: ‘Unless we are content to leave the deepest creative thinking of Hopkins and Yeats, Lawrence and Eliot, suspended as unco-ordinated forces within “tradition”, or in our own minds, we must put our trust in procedures however hazardous, designed to bring them into dialectical relation. Assuming that *King Lear*, *Three Sisters* and *Waiting for Godot* all have some claim on our attention . . . may it not be profoundly relevant to question them. . . .?’

This is surely true, and every work of art is a dialectic, a response between the creator and the reader or critic. Dr Stein is sensitive to literature, whether poetry or prose, and, in the midst of his philosophical argument, can say, ‘Samuel Beckett is, in many ways, the exact antipode of Lawrence. . . . He (Lawrence) would *not* have appreciated the endlessly clowning cosmic belly-aches in *Waiting for Godot*. . . .’

I think the most subtle and interesting criticism in this book lies in the author’s consideration of *King Lear*, in particular, and in the closeness of tragedy to the absurd. He compares *Lear* with some of Chekhov’s plays and discovers that ‘the “criss-cross of tears and laughter” that makes up *The Seagull* or *Three Sisters* is certainly among the most significant inventions of modern art; but it is as far removed from the criss-cross of *Lear* as Dr Dorn and his valerian drops are from the unavailing medicine of the Fool.’

Of Eliot and his later plays, Dr Stein wisely declares that ‘Failures, among the works of a great writer, have to be taken seriously’. This is, in the most literal sense, a terribly important truth. We love *Four Quartets*, but we do not perhaps (I speak personally here) greatly admire *The Cocktail Party*, *The Confidential Clerk*, or *The Elder Statesman*. This is, I am sure, not because Eliot’s gift had gone but that he was using a medium, drama, which, despite *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion*, was not really suited to his genius.

In *Criticism as Dialogue*, Dr Stein considers many important literary matters, such as the relation of Christian belief to tragedy. But, finally, I think that his *particular* comments, his sensitive appreciation, are more important than his major thesis. Theorizing about literature can be very sterile or, perhaps worse still, a kind of clever game. But this writer and critic has important things to say and he should be read and appreciated.

ELIZABETH JENNINGS

**THE ORIGINS OF MODERN ENGLISH SOCIETY 1780-1880**, by Harold Perkin. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, London, 1969. 465 pp. £2 16s.

Professor Perkin’s book illustrates how over a long period of radical economic and social change, which inflicted great suffering, and also corrupted by proffering great material temptations, at every level, Christianity had a humanizing effect. In nineteenth-century England Christianity made a remarkable advance

on a wide front, while on the Continent it lost ground to secular and explicitly anti-religious forces. Professor Perkin confirms the validity of an old and unfashionable view of Victorian England, that is, of England *before* she began to register the influence of ‘socialism’ under its several aspects. ‘Between 1780 and 1850 the

English ceased to be one of the most aggressive, brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel and bloodthirsty nations in the world and became one of the most inhibited, polite, orderly, tender-minded, prudish and hypocritical' (p. 280). This was the outcome, firstly, of a more thorough Christianization of the upper and middle classes and of the better-off workers than this country had experienced since the Reformation, and, secondly, of growing affluence, the fruit of industrial revolution, which enabled the propertied classes to discharge the corporal works of mercy and finance every kind of improving activity on a scale hitherto impracticable. It is well known how Mr Gladstone spent a large slice of his fortune on the rehabilitation of prostitutes: but it is not always realized that this generosity, if not his field of endeavour, was very far from being untypical. Here, it is arguable, are the

reasons why modern English history affords only glimpses of class hatred. The collectivist measures of the 1880s and afterwards thus represented, not the triumph of 'class legislation', as Lecky, an embittered Irish landlord, maintained, but rather the reconciliation of conflicting interests after a fashion that has become classical.

This reviewer questions whether Professor Perkin has given sufficient space in a very large book to the socially unifying factors in nineteenth-century England, which, on his own showing, are considerably more important than the socially divisive factors. The book is to a great extent based on monographs by other hands, but is not less valuable for that. It is strongly recommended to Catholics who preach a social, instead of a spiritual, revolution.

E. D. STEELE

**ITALY IN THE MAKING** (Vol. 1: 1815–1846; Vol. 2: 1846–1848; Vol. 3: 1848), by G. F.-H. Berkeley. Cambridge University Press, 'Library Edition'. £11 the set.

The three volumes that compose this history of the Risorgimento were first published in 1932, 1936 and 1940 respectively. They are now reissued, as the publishers tell us, in 'a series . . . of out-of-print standard works from the Cambridge catalogue'. They are well printed and bound, and hence rather expensive; and neither the texts nor the bibliographies have been revised; nevertheless there are good reasons for welcoming their reappearance in this 'library edition'.

I know nothing about Mr Berkeley (or his wife, whose name, as co-author, is on the title-pages of Volumes 2 and 3) apart from what may be gathered from this work, but it is clear that he possessed at least three qualifications for the task: a long familiarity with Italy, and not only with the libraries and archives up and down the peninsula, but with a wide variety of Italian people and points of view; then a clear idea as to what was essential to his purpose ('to make clear', as he says, 'only the main lines of development of the Italian Risorgimento') and what could be left out; and finally, a remarkable freedom from prejudice. These last two advantages will come home to anyone who reflects on the fact that the 'making of Italy' involved the welding into unity of half a dozen States, each with its own distinct problems and traditions; and that the ruler of one of these States was the Head of the Catholic Church. Nowhere else in Europe in the last century did the movements for change

stemming from the French Revolution so directly involve the Church; and the Church in this case means above all Pius IX, than whom no Pope, probably, has been at once more detested and admired. Berkeley, however, is neither clericalist nor anticlerical. He writes as a non-Catholic, but his account of Pius's attempt, and failure, to be a Liberal Pope in 1846–48 is not only just, balanced and lucid, it shows a fine understanding of the peculiar difficulties of the Pope's position.

These difficulties took a political (in the ordinary sense of the term), not a doctrinal or ecclesiastical shape. This is the main difference between Pius's 'liberal' effort and that of John XXIII a bit more than a century later. The question of an intrinsic reform of the Church did not and perhaps could not arise in the 1840s; but only of the Papal State; but that State had existed for more than a thousand years, and the attempt to give it something of the character of a constitutional monarchy, with laymen helping to run it, seemed revolutionary at the time. The attempt failed, as we all know; but few realize how far it had been taken. The failure had one basic cause, the impossibility, for a Pope who was also a King, of separating his religious and civil functions. There were plenty of people to tell Pius of this impossibility while the attempt was on, and to remind him of it after the failure; what he did was to *prove* it. The whole story is profoundly interesting for the questions of principle it so