

ULTIMATE CONCERN, a Dialogue with Students, by Paul Tillich. Edited by D. Mackenzie Brown. S.C.M. Press Ltd., 25s.

This book is a record of a seminar comprising eight dialogues between students of the University of California and Dr Tillich. Among the topics discussed are the problems raised by the encounter of the major religious systems: Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism and some Eastern religions. The relation of what Tillich calls 'quasi-religious' movements such as Nationalism, Socialism, Fascism and Communism to what he calls 'religion' in the broader sense (ultimate concern) is also treated. In the course of the discussion various aspects of Christian theology such as 'dogma', 'the church', and 'the uniqueness of Christ' are brought into focus.

As will be expected, Tillich has a number of provoking things to say; what he has to say about dogma, especially, is likely to be of interest. He attacks both organized religions and social or political systems which try to make their own symbols and values the objects of man's ultimate concern, but he has much to say about how a concern with the ultimate can be manifest through political, social or religious commitment. His Ecclesiology and Christology as presented here are nevertheless disappointing; he seems to think of the Church as a purely human and social institution with the

function of providing symbols for man's approach to the ultimate (Tillich's term for God as unknowable, which he likes to distinguish from the God of dogmatic formulations). What seems to be lacking is an appreciation of the Church as Christ's presence in the world, in a different way, for example, from the way in which a great reformer might be present in the social or political institution he has founded.

All this is partly because, in this dialogue, Tillich is not allowed to develop his full range of thought on any of the topics raised. The tone is set by the students rather than by him, and the result is that less than justice is done to the richness and subtlety of his thinking. The students involved in the discussion are pursuing various disciplines, 'ranging from philosophy, religion, and psychology to mathematics, biology, and political science' (p. xi, D.M.B.); and this system of enquiry (the seminar takes the form of question and answer) does not enable him to treat any of the questions raised in a sufficiently systematic way for him to discuss them at any great depth. For this reason, the book is likely to disappoint anyone already acquainted with his work.

VICTOR BEDANI, O.P.

THEOLOGY IN RECONSTRUCTION by T. F. Torrance. S.C.M. Press 1965 45s.

Professor Torrance is one of the few Theologians in the classical tradition writing today. Most of the books one reads are either essays in spiritual autobiography or reflections occasioned by immediate contemporary problems. What makes Professor Torrance's work so refreshing is that it rests on a deep knowledge of traditional sources (which means that he writes within a perspective wider and deeper than is possible if one's view is restricted to a particular historical moment) but it does not remain there; he attempts to relate what he has learned from the past to the kind of thinking that characterises the contemporary world. Even if one feels that he is perhaps more successful in stating traditional themes than in relating them to analogies drawn from the scientific world, his whole treatment is a good example of hard theological reasoning, at

times brilliant and challenging. It is perhaps a little tiresome that so distinguished a theologian should so persistently confuse the tradition of the Roman Church with the opinions of individual theologians, but this is no doubt a reflection of the much greater importance of the Rabbi in the Reformed world.

In the latter part of the book two Essays are of great distinction; that on the doctrine of St Athanasius and St Basil on the Spirit and the very stimulating one on The Roman Doctrine of Grace from the point of view of Reformed Theology. It is, however, the first part of the book that is of the greatest interest. In it Professor Torrance is concerned with the problem of the relation of language to being as it affects the theologian. He argues that there must be a shift from *seeing* to *hearing* and that the relation one is concerned with is acoustic. God bears