

and finally submitted to a printer who added a few contributions of his own (e.g. 'lasts' for 'last' on p. 84).

The first chapter is the transcript of a television discussion between Anthony Bloom and Marghanita Laski, in which, essentially, they are talking about totally different things throughout. As so often, polite and slightly forlorn (even jealous?) pious atheism meets the wild and devastating world of the gospel and does not even notice. And the archbishop, in turn, has (as he admits) insufficient philosophy to be able to respond with any particular cogency or relevance.

This lack of philosophy, in fact, spoils a good deal of the book. Three of the remaining four chapters are talks originally delivered at Birmingham University, on 'Doubt', 'Man and God' and 'John the Baptist'. The last of these is very good indeed, and the authentic voice we expect to hear from Anthony Bloom comes over. 'The will of God is madness . . . you cannot adhere to the will of God for good reasons.' The austere, exotic figure of the Baptist, who is nothing but a 'voice crying in the wilderness', who must decrease so that Christ may increase, emerges with a strange power and urgency.

But in the other chapters there is little that rings true, except for odd flashes, where the archbishop, as it were, plays truant and talks from the heart and right off the subject. There is some powerful teaching on intercession as a stepping into the breach, into the total serenity of God which is *in* and not apart from the

storms of the world. Involvement in one without the other is not prayer, whether it be involvement in God without the storms, or the storms without the serenity of God. There is an incisive remark about a faith that pretends to be in heaven without its ever having been on earth.

Then there is a long chapter on 'Holiness and Prayer', reproducing a talk given at Louvain, which repeats a lot that is already familiar (on the prayer of stability, for instance), or that occurs elsewhere in this present book, with only one or two new thoughts—though these are important. 'One of the reasons why holiness is unsteady and why the holiness of the Fathers and heroes of the Spirit in the early days often seems so remote is that we have lost the sense of combat.' You have only to look at the new breviary to see how true that is. And I think Anthony Bloom has put his finger on one of the crucial issues of our time. We don't believe, really, in the power of evil, and we have lost our grip on the weapons of good that are given to us. We have forgotten (extraordinarily) that there is a war on, or at least, we have forgotten what kind of a war it is and who the enemy is (Ephesians 6, 12). And in this way we have lost the incentive to faith and holiness.

All told, I don't think there is enough in this book to sustain its 125 pages. Admirers of Anthony Bloom, amongst whom I am happy to count myself, will find it, on the whole, disappointing.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.

TRUTH, by Alan R. White. *The Macmillan Press Ltd*, London, 1971. 150 pp. £1.95.

It seems that truth is mysterious, or quite unproblematic. Academic discussion has tended to focus on the field between these extremes, and it is to this field that Professor White introduces us. His book will occupy a felt gap on academic shelves; it is workmanlike, well-organized, and has an excellent bibliography (which would, however, have profited from revision since the first publication of the book in the United States in 1970). The book is divided into two parts: the first discusses 'characteristics of the notion of truth', contributing to discussions of truth-value gaps and of necessary truth, *inter alia*. The second part discusses six theories of truth. This part is the more satisfactory, and the more useful, although the account of Tarski (whose theory is said to add 'a discordant note to our search') is

poor: semantic paradoxes are not, any more than set-theoretic paradoxes, due to 'abuse of language'. However, wider horizons, such as the significance of Tarski's theory, seem to escape Professor White. Even the problem of his book nowhere receives clear formulation, surely a serious deficiency in an introductory work. It is, therefore, not surprising to read that what we are really looking for is the 'meaning' of truth. But what does the author mean by 'meaning'? It is quite on the cards that truth does not have the kind of meaning for which he seems to be looking. This possibility is nowhere seriously discussed, and the author seems too busy deploying his lists of arguments to spare the time to help us understand. Moreover, I must protest against his use of trivial and ill-considered grammatical

remarks, such as the footnote on page 4 that ‘“true” indicating “in line” seems to be used only predicatively’.

Professor White proposes a refined correspondence theory of truth. The three terms of his theory are ‘what is said’, the relation of ‘corresponding to’ and ‘the facts’. Let us take each in turn. ‘What is said’ is distinguished from the saying of it, from what is used to say it, and from what it is the content of. The status of these distinctions is left unclear. How does one individuate ‘what is said’? This, and related epistemological difficulties, are not discussed. What is said is ‘embodied in, though not identical with’ what is used to say it. Professor White is over-fond of metaphor. Let us turn to facts. Facts, we are told, have causal effects: ‘It was the fact . . . that the train was diverted which made me late for my lecture’ (p. 83). I have seldom seen a cruder appeal to ordinary language. We might

suppose then that facts are ‘in the world’, but this is not clearly asserted. Facts are said to be ‘what the world is like’, but this is merely to hypostatize an idiom. Nor is the correspondence of what is said to the facts any happier. Professor White is careful to point out the inadequacies of ‘corresponding with’, of ‘picturing’ and of ‘fitting’. He uses the term ‘corresponding to’ and offers in explanation: ‘an entry in a ledger may correspond to a sale and one rank in the army to another in the navy’. I suppose that we are to imagine a list of facts and a parallel list of truths—both expressed in the same words, as is admitted on page 84! Such a theory lacks that ‘feeling for reality’ which Russell thought so important. It certainly does not explain anything. Professor White has, I fear, added to an already long tale of confusion.

DAVID PHILLIPS

AUGUSTUS TO CONSTANTINE: THE THRUST OF THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT INTO THE ROMAN WORLD, by Robert M. Grant. *Collins*, London, 1971. 415 pp. £3.15.

Professor Grant announces a major theme: ‘to set the Christian movement in its Graeco-Roman context and try to assess how much the direction of its development owed to its environment or environments’; he seeks to complement the classic studies of Nock (*Conversion*), Dodds (*Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*) and Chadwick (*Early Christianity and the Classical Tradition*) with an approach less specialist and more comprehensive than theirs, ranging over the history of the first three centuries of Christianity not only where it interacts directly with the Roman state, but also with reference to the changes in its own internal life and organization brought about by its developing position in the world. The book is inevitably a summary of a mass of material, yet it remains a well-organized and clear presentation of a complex process—the product, as the author demonstrates in his notes, of extensive and up-to-date acquaintance with recent contributions to this prolific area of study.

It is a welcome feature of the book that Professor Grant is concerned not to over-emphasize the significance of the persecutions. Such periodic confrontations with the Roman authorities were no more than isolated outbursts against the background of the more patient and lasting process of accommodation with the empire which occupied the main

body of Christianity from the second century onwards. Grant is also rightly sceptical of the ‘persecution decrees’ which some recent writers have pinned on to sundry emperors with little appreciation of the genuinely popular origin of most anti-Christian disturbances; in this book these so-called ‘persecutions’ of Septimius Severus and Maximinus Thrax, to take two instances, emerge in their proper perspective—the former a series of local incidents, the latter not a ‘persecution’ at all. Moreover, Professor Grant sees correctly that it was essentially the religious issue which divided the Christians and the Roman authorities: this is as clear from the consistent concern for the maintenance of the traditional worship expressed by Roman officials like Pliny in Bithynia or Aemilianus in Egypt, as from the uncompromising refusal of Christians to worship at the altars of the state. The concern for the *pax deorum* was heightened in the critical situation facing the empire in the middle of the third century, and some assessment of this (it is a pity that Professor Grant does not find space for it) is essential to the understanding of the measures of Decius and Valerian. It needs to be emphasized that the edict of Decius was not a ‘persecution’ aimed directly against the Christians—as Grant’s narrative tends to present it—but, in Norman Baynes’ phrase, an ‘Act of Uniformity’.