

gradually came to realise, as the decades passed, that for all his tireless trumpeting of Latin culture he had made a fundamental, colossal mistake; he had backed the wrong horse. Had he not sunk most of his youthful energies into the unfinished and unfinishable Latin *Africa*, he might just have written an extended-narrative masterpiece in his native Italian.

DAVID WALLACE

A DICTIONARY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, edited by J.M. Sutcliffe. *SCM Press*, London. pp. xviii + 376. £14.95.

In association with the Christian Education Movement, SCM have added a dictionary of Religious Education to their previous dictionaries of Christian Ethics, Christian Theology, and Liturgy and Worship. One might wonder whether the comparative narrowness of the field (religious education is considerably less extensive than Christian theology, for example) might lead to an overblown compilation lacking in substance. While this book does not entirely overcome this charge, in general it gives an admirably detailed coverage of all aspects of religious education. The dictionary is unashamedly written for an English readership—there are no entries on England, Great Britain or the United Kingdom; but there are entries on Wales, Scotland and Ireland, together with many other countries—and it contains contributions from many who are foremost in religious education in England, and a sizeable number from outside England. The entries generally give information not easily available elsewhere, followed each time by a short bibliography. It is, then, an important book for those involved in teacher training in the subject, but otherwise it is for the library shelf rather than personal possession by the student or the general reader.

The editorial process seems to have been admirably performed by John Sutcliffe, but inevitably in a work of this kind the quality of entries varies considerably. The entry on Israel, for example, has been written by an Israeli Jew who tells us about Jewish religious education in Israel but nothing about Christians and Muslims. Similarly and less understandably, the entry on Italy begins by telling us that 'substantially religious education in state schools is under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church' but then proceeds to tell us a great deal about the Waldensians and Italian Protestant groups but virtually nothing about Catholic religious education. Occasionally an entry reflects the obsession of a contributor who has carried out his own research, rather than surveying the field. A number of entries are rather vacuous: it would be invidious to list these, but some of the contributors have my sympathy, for how can you write anything of substance on religious education and 'Artefacts' for example? Contributions which are excellent as *dictionary entries* include David Konstant on 'Catechetics' where, however one estimates catechetics, we are told succinctly and clearly what the subject is; and 'United States' by Gabriel Moran who, as a Roman Catholic, outlines the religious education of *all* major religious groups in that country, inside and outside schools.

One of the contributors has told me that he was given very little guidance on what kind of entry was required and this has allowed many writers to be discursive and evaluative, which has in turn led to many valuable insights, but also some waffle. Among the more valuable entries for those working in schools are 'Management of RE in the Secondary School', 'Moral Development', 'Skills' and 'RE: Nature of'. Other articles which proved problematical for me included the one on 'Science and Religion' which presupposes at the outset a radical disjunction between the natural sciences and religion, a viewpoint which is reminiscent of Schleiermacher and which I am reluctant to accept. Certainly it would be hard to teach a course on 'Science and Religion', as I have in fact done in the past, if there were not some connection between the two.

David Jenkins, I was disappointed to see, perpetuates the idea shared by John McQuarrie and others that 'Theology' is the study of religious belief and practice within a particular religious tradition by those who are committed to those beliefs. This implies

that only a minority of children in schools could ever be students of theology, a view reflected by John Hull in 'Theology and RE', who suggests that theology enters into religious education only occasionally and obliquely. By contrast I am committed to the view, not to be found in this dictionary, that theology as an open, critical, investigative and hermeneutic "science" should be available for all school pupils regardless of their particular religious commitments and non-commitments. For such a line of argument readers will have to consult the papers of the last Downside Symposium recently published by the Epworth Press and edited by James Barnett under the title *Theology at 16+*. It is noteworthy, however, that several entries in the dictionary suggest that a move is about to take place in the teaching of religious education away from the objective observation of religious phenomena towards a more theological approach, though it will be essential to avoid a move which favours a conservative shift to a methodology which encourages attempts at the formation of children into specific beliefs.

GEOFFREY TURNER

THE RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF REBELLION: Christians in the Central American Revolutions by Philip Berryman. SCM Press, London, 1984. Pp 464. £12.50.

Latin American liberation theologians, such as Sobrino and Gutierrez, make much of the fact that all theology is "contextual", that it arises from the need to follow Christ in particular economic, social and political circumstances, a particular historical context. Unfortunately, while this is a point that can not be too heavily stressed in a theological project whose aim is to make a real difference to the way people live, these theologians often tend to write as if their readers were already quite familiar with the "context" in which they are writing. While this may be true of those readers of the Spanish original texts who happen to live in Latin America (and for whom these works are perhaps, primarily written) I suspect that many of us who read only the English translations are considerably less well-informed. In the first 270 pages of this book we are offered some understanding of the historical background to the present situation in Central America, and the development of the economic and political context of a theology that has led many Christians to struggle and to take up arms against their rulers and oppressors.

This historical survey offers only a general discussion of the regional situation in Central America, but a much more detailed discussion of three countries (Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala) where governmental repression has been the harshest, where popular opposition has been most organised and effective and, in the case of Nicaragua, where insurrection has been (at least for the present) successful. However, though the discussion centres on these three countries, the issues brought into focus by this section will help us to understand much of what is going on throughout Latin America.

Particular attention is paid to the role of the Church in these developments, both as an ideological ally of the ruling elites, and as an agent of change in opposition to oppressive regimes. Though the Church has never found herself entirely on one side or the other, there has been a profound change among both laity and hierarchy, a change expressed by the bishops of the Medellín and Puebla conferences in their "option for the poor"; by the Nicaraguan bishops' declaration on the "just insurrection" that overthrew the Somoza tyranny; by the preaching and death of Oscar Romero, and so on.

The second half of the book is a series of reflections on some of the ethical and theological questions raised. It begins with a well-argued case for the need for radical change, the revolutionary "proyecto", which makes good use of John Paul II's encyclical of 1981, "Laborem Exercens", on relations of production and socialisation of the means of production. Berryman goes on to argue convincingly that western forms of democracy are not entirely suitable for Central America, and that the revolutionary forms of local and "economic" democracy such as have appeared in Nicaragua may