

in writing this readable book he has sometimes made new theology sound too easy.

The former Bishop of Southwell has written a book on *The Atonement* in the series *Knowing Christianity*, which is more informative on the old theology. Besides literature—more *King Lear* in this book than *Brideshead Revisited*—there is helpful illustration from psychological lore. As in the previous work there is no question of Jesus having done something which enabled God to forgive; the stress falls again on the

divine initiative to save. Instead of notions of penal substitution, Dr Barry has an instructive analogy from the patient's identification with the psychiatrist. Of course there are bogies from mediaeval atonement theory, and the account of St Thomas, though right in suggesting that he had no one atonement theory, misses his distinctive instrumental conception of Christ's humanity, the points of comparison with Abelard, and sees only an extension of Anselmian thinking. OSMUND LEWRY, O.P.

FAITH AND THEOLOGY, by M.-D. Chenu. Translated by Denis Hickey. *Gill and Son*, Dublin and Sydney, 1968. 236 pp. 35s.

This book, compiled from a number of studies written prior to and during the Second Vatican Council, provides a fine example of theological reflection which is thoroughly contemporary and progressive without ignoring or rejecting the great inherited tradition of Christian thought. As the translator points out, it shows quite clearly that the renewal in Roman Catholic theology was well under way before the convocation of the Council and he instances not only the name of Fr Chenu, but also those of Lagrange, Congar, Jungmann and Rahner, to which many others might be added.

Fr Chenu takes as his starting-point the apparent tension between the direct and mysterious encounter with God which is the heart of personal religion and the formalism of adhesion to truth which is involved in the acceptance of dogmas and formulas prescribed by authority. Having shown that, in spite of the limitations of human language and the imperfections of the Christian institutions, the tension is both inevitable and to be expected in view of the historical and embodied character of human existence, he goes on to consider a whole series of other dualities, in a way which progressively elucidates the nature of the theologian's vocation and function. Faith and reason, the Bible and systematic theology, truth and freedom, the dogmatic roles of the theologian and of the bishop are discussed in succession and the book reaches its climax in an exposition of the Christian doctrine of matter and of the relation of body and spirit in man. Here Fr Chenu is rightly critical of any tendency to deny or even to under-estimate either the essential goodness of matter as created by God or the importance of the body as a genuine constituent of human nature and not just a temporary and troublesome integument of the human soul. Here he passes a severe judgment

on the Platonic and neo-Platonic elements that have been prominent at recurrent periods in the Church's history; not only the pseudo-Areopagite but such great figures as St Anselm, St Bonaventura and even St Augustine himself do not emerge unscathed. As we might expect, the key figure for Fr Chenu is St Thomas Aquinas, but this is not just a matter of Dominican loyalty or of parrot-like reproduction of the *ipsissima verba* of the Angelic Doctor. His supreme value is seen to lie in his intrepid insistence on the legitimate autonomy of the temporal order and of the ultimate significance of matter as well as spirit. 'The choice lies between the pessimism of Augustine and the optimism of Aquinas.' More is involved than a passive acceptance of Aristotelian philosophy; Fr Chenu is emphatic on the need in missionary work of 'a genuine immersion in the spirit as well as in the language of the native races'. 'One cannot really say that the Gospel has been preached in a particular place until the people themselves have elaborated a native theology. The word of God can only be incarnated in terms of the thought-patterns of a specific culture. Until this comes about in a given civilization, the faith is nothing more than an imported product. A Catholic theology which cannot be taught in German, Russian, Chinese or Bantu is a contradiction in terms.' There is nothing romantic about Fr Chenu's assessment of the triumphs and failures of the Church's institutions; as examples of the latter he instances the attitude of Gregory IX to the Aristotelian movement of the thirteenth century and the unhappy experience of Père Lagrange in the twentieth.

The strictly theoretical discussion comes to its climax in the chapter on 'The Human Situation: Corporality and Temporality', which provides the basis for the extremely concrete

and practical argument in the latter half of the book. Corporality and temporality are seen as basic for any theological inquiry into the secular pursuits of man. 'The corporality of the human being is the ontological foundation of his sociability. Angels do not constitute a society, just as they cannot be said to be individuals or to exist in time. . . . We have gone beyond the anthropology of Aristotle who had no sense of history; we have borrowed some of the Christian personalism of Augustine. But it is from Aristotle that we get *the sense of the concrete human situation* which the neo-Platonic spiritualism of Augustine ignored—and still ignores wherever it dominates Christian thought. Augustine does have a sense of *temporality* but he regards it as an evil (symbolized and realized by senile decay) from which Christ will free us; Thomas Aquinas recognizes the meaning and the value of the *corporality* both of man and of the cosmos. It is on this basis, on the philosophical level at any rate, that St Thomas finds his optimistic vision of man and of the world.'

Hence the discussion passes to consider the freedom and involvement of the Christian. He is *free*, because for him God is not just the first cause of the world but the living being with whom he lives in personal encounter and communion; he is *involved* because his freedom is tied up with the common good. Christian sanctification is thus 'not a mystical evasion of the social' but an entry into 'an increasing socialisation in all human activities'. 'The whole man, all his capacities and all his activities, is assumed by grace. . . . And the social structure of man is fundamental to his development. . . . If the social dimension is not assumed by Christ a basic element of man is rejected and lost.' The vastly increased socialization of man in the last century permeates the highly realistic investigation in the next three chapters of the three burning contemporary issues of economic organization, class structures and the moral issues of war.

The final chapter deals with the condition of man in a technological civilization. Technology, with all its dangers, is welcomed. 'Technology

involves man frankly in the making of the universe. Man assumes this power of world-making; he gives the universe its meaning, and in it he experiences and affirms his own autonomy.' This, however, does not mean that 'death of God' of which we have heard so much recently. 'Does God then lose his *raison d'être*? Certainly not! Nor is his presence diminished. But in this decidedly technological civilization, a true religious perception accepts and bases itself on the autonomy of the profane.' Nevertheless, 'this immanence in the world does not affect the transcendence of the spirit'.

Fr Chenu avoids any facile prophecy about the immediate future: '*Technological civilization is a stage in human history, an area on an unknown continent. . . . It is virtually blasphemous to think of the faith of Christ and the success of the incarnation as bound up with a pre-technological civilization. . . . The 'religion' of progress, on the other hand, is an unworthy substitute for real religion, and the right reaction against this perversion is to give faith its full scope so that we see Christ as the completion of all things at the consummation of history. We do not know, of course, in what manner the kingdom of God will assume the content of our earthly history in the final salvation; we do not know how the ultimate beatitude will bring together the fruits of the various stages of civilization. But that we must accept as a mystery. . . . The power of man coming to light in the course of history is the necessary domain for the manifestation of the Church.'*

This is an inspiring and at the same time a realistic book, both readable and erudite; it avoids both a superficial optimism and the mannered pessimism, despairing equally of God and of man, which characterizes much present-day theological writing. The translator describes Chenu's language as 'sometimes awkward, often belaboured'. If this is true of the original it is certainly not true of the translation. Chenu's thought is admittedly condensed but it is hardly ever obscure, and this book of his could hardly be bettered as an example of the way in which real theology is relevant to real life.

E. L. MASCALL

FOUR LETTERS OF PELAGIUS, by Robert F. Evans. *Adam and Charles Black*, London, 1968. 134 pp. 25s.

PELAGIUS: INQUIRIES AND REAPPRAISALS, by Robert F. Evans. *Adam and Charles Black*, London, 1968. 171 pp. 42s.

Pelagian studies are in an unsatisfactory situation, from which it is hard to see a way out; the fundamental difficulty confronting anyone who wants to write about Pelagius is that of

discovering what his standpoint really was. A number of special factors make the quest a difficult one: only a very few works that are indisputably by Pelagius have survived and the