

COMMUNITY, CHURCH AND HEALING, by R. A. Lambourne; Dartman, Longman and Todd, 18s.

'God himself shall come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free' (Is. 35. 4). 'Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear . . .' (Mt. 11. 4). Can there be any doubt that the Church is a therapeutic community, that healing is central to the core of the Christian ministry—to the restoration of that 'wholeness' which we call redemption. It is strange that the agnostic psychologist or social worker is often more ready to see the role of the Church as a healing community than the Christian himself, who through an over-spiritualisation sees the Church as concerned with 'sin' and the National Health Service with 'sickness'. But healing by no means begins and ends with official, scientific medicine—restoring to the harassed mother her sense of being able to cope by taking the children for a few hours and doing the shopping; being ready to listen with sympathy and to absorb something of the anxiety neurosis of the man down the road—such mundane matters are at the heart of the local community ministry to the sick. Very many of the cases which reach 'official medicine' only do so because of a failure of this ministry and yet many Christians do not see the Church's healing role here because they are looking for 'spiritual' healing or for healing methods not available to the non-Christian. These are essentially community matters for no man suffers without, in some sense, the local community suffering and no man achieves 'wholeness' except as a member of a community; yet how few parishes get beyond general exhortations to neighbourliness and take their communal responsibility to the sick among them seriously, say by making this part of the general running and planning of parish life.

These are some of the themes discussed in a most penetrating and practical way in this book by an Anglican doctor who took time off from general practice to take a degree in theology, and they take him into a discussion which is thoroughly biblical and therefore of immediate relevance to the ordinary life of every Christian. A consideration of the Hebrew concept of 'community' leads to a discussion of the sense in which Christ is Representative Man (Man Healing and Man Suffering) whose works of healing were public effective signs of the Kingdom—public dramas in which the witnesses as well as the sick man were participants who faced a crisis of faith, and according to their response moved either toward or away from 'wholeness'. The Church then must take seriously its ministry to the sick and according to its response to the sickness-crisis in its midst, the local community moves towards or away from wholeness; remembering Christ's works and his assurance that in performing the ordinary deeds of mercy and healing 'you do it unto me'. The conclusion is that, for the local Church, a careful assessment of the needs of the neighbourhood and a plan for their amelioration which includes an imaginative correlation of secular administra-

tion, practical measures, prayer, witness and sacrament is no optional extra but is the very ground of that church's being'. There are places where these corporate concepts are taken seriously (one such is the 'Neighbours Unlimited' scheme operating so effectively in Abingdon, but it is a sober thought that it took the ecumenical movement and the formation of the Abingdon Council of Churches to achieve it) where Christians are by acts of love, what they are called to be by baptism, brothers to all men, especially those who carry heavy burdens. 'This movement has come to be known as the Liturgical Movement—a name which is liable to be misunderstood by those who think of Liturgy as complicated procedures of a High Church kind'. And the author may well say that to some of us Catholics.

If one is to be critical it is that some parts of the book are too sketchy and that one wants to cross-question the author about the precise meaning of some of his terms (especially so in matters of sacramental theology) but this is a small price to pay when one encounters so much deep theological insight and such practical wisdom within the compass of 170 pages. Dr Lambourne has taken his practical experience as a healer to the Bible and has come out refreshed and with new insights; all who take seriously the church's ministry of healing would do well to benefit from his experience.

PETER ANDERSON

ZEN CATHOLICISM, by Dom Aelred Graham; Collins, 25s.

*Zen Catholicism* contains Dom Aelred's reflexions on the many points of contact between the insights and techniques of oriental and Christian meditation, a sequel to his first book *The Love of God* written twenty-five years ago. His concern is to show how the use of Zen teaching and Zen terms can illuminate and deepen our understanding of the corresponding tendencies of Christian mysticism. 'To be reconciled, not blindly but with a mind enlightened, to the inevitable—that, if I have rightly understood, is the heart of Zen Buddhism. But this also, in its depths at least, is the message of Catholicism.' Central to this concern is the distinction between the two senses of our use of the word 'self': the separative and the unitive, the self as object, the 'me' to which things happen, and the self as subject. The two are not, of course, to be described as separate entities, for they have, to use the Buddhist term, a non-dual relation to one other, being substantially identical though cognitively distinct. 'Whenever we think or act it is I who think or act, but when we think of ourselves acting or thinking, the subject of our thought is "me".' The importance of the self-conscious me is often denied or belittled in Zen literature and the author applies a useful corrective to this imbalance in stressing that without it our self-education would be impossible and that we would be unable to organise ourselves in relation to other people and the world around us. At the same time, though, this self-consciousness is the root of our distress, our alienation from our neighbours, from nature and from God. The