

our initial awareness of the being and necessity of God, to account for the fuller mediated knowledge of God in experiences, of disclosure and presence, in which the being of God is throughout a regulative factor. Given this there is a much neglected evidential factor in the claims made in various religions, Christianity among them – a feature of apologetics of which a great deal more should have been made by those who press upon us today the question ‘what could count for or against?’ etc. . .

Mr Mackie’s book is not confined to the more familiar theistic arguments. The account of ‘the argument from consciousness’ is both provocative and illuminating. It is a temptation to comment upon it at length. My own heart warms to the insistence that the element which we find hardest to explain in terms of the ‘physical basis of awareness’ is ‘the possession of an experiential content’. I welcome also the insistence that ‘any theory has to tolerate a certain amount of sheer brute fact’ (p 131). I also fully share Mr Mackie’s difficulties over the attempt of Professor Swinburne to rationalize the case for theism more exhaustively than it allows by the extension of personal explanation, ‘the intentions of the agent’ etc, to all events, thus attempting ‘a reduction of all explanation to personal explanation’. The way to a sensible theism cannot afford the ‘short way’ of seeking to rationalize all that we find in the world around us and in ourselves to that extent. Unhappily Mackie himself hesitates also to take the full force of the ‘brute fact’ feature of the world as we find it and insists, a bit forlornly, that ‘the mind-body gap must be bridged somewhere and somehow’ (p 131), apparently along the lines of the complexities ‘of electro-chemical systems and awareness’. But to seek this kind of explanation, indeed the very demand for an exhaustive explanation, plays directly into the hands of the physicalist, as the recent literature

of the subject amply shows.

The main objection to the argument from consciousness again is that it owes its attractiveness to subtle importations from the cosmological approach. It would have helped here to extend the case to those curious procedures of T H Green and similar idealists who provided a double account of the unity of our experience, firstly as the experience of individuals and again as ‘an order of nature’ sustained by a universal mind.

The discussion of the problem of evil follows the lines made familiar in Mackie’s other writings on the subject. Attention tends to be centred again on the more exhaustively rationalist solutions. The suggestion that moral evil is due to misuse of our freedom is taken, rightly, to involve a genuinely open freedom of choice, the latter being, however, ruled out on the ground that it would require ‘an extra-causal self’ of the operations of which no account is offered. But such an account is in fact one of the main themes of the book to which Mackie refers particularly in examining this view of freedom. The line, on the problem of evil, which derives from the book of Job, extensively considered the most profound and given exceptionally fine presentation by Campbell, receives very short shrift.

The book closes with severe strictures on the notion of religion without belief. We are here ‘struggling helplessly in a bog’ (p 224) and swinging ‘from one alternative to the other, wrapping both in obscurity . . . a symptom not of depth but of incoherence’ (p 226). On these chapters I have no comment but to hope that those, theologians and philosophers alike, who indulge in these fanciful and evasive modes of apologetics will heed very closely indeed every word that Mr Mackie has to say about them.

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THE CROSS A PASTURE by John Dalrymple, *Dartman, Longman & Todd Ltd, 1983, pp 114 £2.95*

In present society there is a growing tendency for radical Catholics to steer

clear of devotional practices and for traditional Catholics to hanker after a devo-

tionalism which avoids engagement with social issues. This new book by John Dalrymple has something to say to both groups. He is able to relate his insights into the problem of suffering to the contemporary scene and presents a welcome fresh approach to the subject.

Dalrymple argues that a spirituality based simply on theology is inadequate. If we are to take Jesus seriously we must take into account the historical reasons why he was put to death. For the cross to be seen as creative we must go behind the later, developed theology of the Church. Christian assumptions that Jesus' death was for our sins and that his death and our lives are religiously linked have frequently resulted in portraits of Jesus which vividly depict his physical sufferings, but do not accord his mind the same human treatment. It is important to consider what Jesus was trying to do in his own society and how that society reacted to him.

Dalrymple says one of Jesus' key characteristics was that he was a 'disturber', preaching a religion of love and seeing beyond the accepted importance of the Law and the Temple. To do that in his society was to speak politically as well as religiously, but Jesus was a man of prayer and the social disturbance he caused was caused by love; it was he, not others, who paid for it. According to Dalrymple although the repercussions caused by his teaching were certainly political, Jesus was not responsible for starting a political movement. His movement was radically religious, demanding purity of heart and not merely political activity. It was the limitlessness of Jesus' love that led him to the cross. His aim was the pursuit of God's reign totally, without regard for anything else, and it is in this

single-hearted devotion to the will of God that the life of Jesus is to be imitated, not in a slavish, traditional manner, nor in pursuing the Kingdom in any lesser, external way.

Taking part in the suffering of Christ does not mean taking refuge in personal piety and the offering up of crosses. It does demand the ability to be able to discern the presence of God in the hidden as well as in the public dimension of life. Dalrymple points out that because of the changes in moral awareness that have led to the recognition of the existence of a communal as well as a personal morality, there has been development of the political aspect of Christianity. But in concentrating on world politics there is the danger of failing to see our own shortcomings and of becoming talkers rather than doers. For the radical Christian there is always the danger that unless he begins where Jesus began, with prayer and fasting and reception of the Spirit, his own prejudices will take over. Unless those who engage in radical questioning do it in love, their criticisms will not help; they may even be harmful. On the other hand the Church needs to be open to changes in the cultural climate and be willing to listen to those who question.

The Cross a Pasture raises queries about many traditional attitudes to suffering, but it also poses timely questions to those radicals who are so preoccupied with political activities that they risk neglecting the inner life of the spirit. For this it is to be commended.

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