

the future fulness of the Church. The themes which must thus mark the ecumenical task are: renewal in holiness, the Church's given unity and future plenitude, and the unity of all peoples and all things. In this ecumenical endeavour we shall not equate unity with uniformity, but will maintain a creative tension between Catholic substance and Protestant principle in the other tension between the unity of origin and the unity of the end.

- 1 Don Cupitt, 'One Jesus, Many Christs?', *Christ, Faith and History*, ed. S. W. Sykes and J. P. Clayton, CUP 1972, pp 131-144.
- 2 Hans Kung, *The Church*, Search Press 1973. p 274.
- 3 George H. Tavad, *Two Centuries of Ecumenism*, London. New American Library N.Y. 1962 p 18.
- 4 Yves Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, London, Geoffrey Chapman Ltd. 1966. pp 95-96.
- 5 'Decree *De Ecumenismo*', Decrees of the Second Vatican Council, chap 5.
- 6 *Ibid* chap 4.
- 7 Michael Ramsey and Leon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens, *The Future of the Christian Church*, Morehouse-Barlow Co. N.Y. 1973 p 69.
- 8 *Advocate-News*, Barbados, Wednesday 18 May 1977. p 2.

Reviews

SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY by Jordan Aumann O P *Sheed & Ward*. 1980 pp 456. £11.50.

In this book the author, who is the director of the Institute of Spirituality at the Angelicum, attempts to respond to students' demands for a "complete and definitive" textbook on spiritual theology. It would plainly be hopeless to attempt any genuinely exhaustive survey of christian spirituality, if only because so much of the terrain is still covered by largely virgin forest, and it might very well have to be admitted that the more material we bring into the discussion, the more confusing the picture becomes and the more aporetic, accordingly, our theology of it all will have to be. Anyone who proposes to tackle spiritual theology seriously has no alternative but to reduce his scope in one way or another. Fr Aumann reduces his by confining himself essentially to the prevailing form or forms of spirituality of the western catholic church since the period of the reformation and counter-reformation. The sources of this spirituality are predominantly Jesuit and Carmelite. Fol-

lowing in the footsteps of great Dominicans like Arintero and Garrigou-Lagrange, Fr Aumann injects into the mixture a healthy dose of (more or less) Thomism. The result is a remarkably coherent picture of the basic pattern of christian development, and Fr Aumann's presentation of it is lucid and well-organised. And there is no doubt that the enterprise is worth undertaking, both because it charts a world in which many catholics are still living, and because it clarifies theologially what is generally taken to be the christian component in modern comparative studies of mysticism.

The Thomist element, it must be admitted, is not entirely at home in this kind of theology. Bits of St Thomas are brought in to undergird a structure which does not really reflect the shape of St Thomas' thought. But all the same the neo-Thomists brought some much needed correctives to catholic spiritual theology. They insisted on the importance of a proper

doctrinal foundation for the whole subject (this is indicated by Fr Aumann with admirable firmness), and they did a great deal to dispel the illusion that mysticism was primarily concerned with peculiar psychological experiences. Garrigou-Lagrange in particular showed how the highest possible union with God is no more than the full maturity of the life of faith and charity, so that in principle it must be possible within active as well as contemplative vocations. They also exposed the illegitimacy of any sharp dichotomy between asceticism and mysticism, thereby safeguarding the need for every christian to pass beyond a religion of mere effort and duty, into a life of friendship with God in which he is "led by the Spirit" and not just governed by human regulations and prudence. All of this is presented anew, brought up to date where necessary, by Fr Aumann.

But if his book shares in all the strengths of the neo-Thomists, it also shares in their weaknesses. There is a danger that we shall be so bemused by the very coherence and clarity of the picture that we forget how little it really achieves. It leaves out of account the vast bulk of christian experience and christian reflection upon that experience. All the richness of the christian east, for instance, is quite ignored, and almost nothing is retained from the patristic period or even (in spite of the Thomism) from the Middle Ages in the West. And it is extraordinarily difficult to see *how* all that extra evidence could be

fitted into the neo-Thomist scheme, and it is impossible to see *why* it should be.

The clarity and confidence which are such striking features of Fr Aumann's exposition are made possible only by taking for granted a mass of highly sophisticated jargon. And surely the student needs to be led into the use of such jargon, by being presented with the intellectual and, maybe, experiential factors which generated it in the first place. It represents a very particular way of seeing and analysing things, it cannot be taken without further ado as simply reflecting the way things are. And the student needs to be warned that many of the words which have acquired a technical sense within the neo-Thomist scheme mean something quite different in other texts. Words like "contemplation" for instance, or "union", in patristic and medieval texts, simply do not signify what later writers use them to signify. And their earlier usages reflect different (and not necessarily improper) ways of seeing and analysing things. There is an enormous job waiting to be done of charting the history of the terminology of christian spirituality. A great deal of confusion can be caused by overlooking the wild semantic inconstancy of words like "prayer" and "mystical".

So Fr Aumann's book falls far short of solving all our problems – which is hardly surprising. What it does do is nevertheless valuable, and it does it very well.

SIMON TUGWELL O P

NEW DIRECTIONS IN NEW TESTAMENT STUDY by Patrick Henry, *SCM Press Ltd*
1980 pp 300 paperback £6.95.

Professor Henry here gives us a readable survey of some recent talking points in New Testament scholarship. The questions and the authors cited are predominantly North American, and the book lacks the vast cosmopolitanism of Bishop Neill's *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861 - 1961* and the authoritative conciseness of Professor Fuller's *The New Testament in Current Study*, works with which it invites comparison, but in the end fails to equal.

The author appears to believe that existentialist analysis of the New Testa-

ment has had its day; he expounds this theme in the best part of three chatty and rather rambling chapters. The book boasts that it is no longer satisfactory in such a work to report the latest on Q or the authorship of Ephesians or the reliability of Acts. But it is in these areas, however tedious, that lasting progress or at least significant new directions could be reported. It is surely quite unacceptable to allocate only five pages to recent developments in form criticism, and only four to work in redaction criticism – the treatment of the latter is a particularly