

stories often suggest that they reflect polemical tension between the later church and the synagogue rather than the realities of Jesus' ministry. But this only postpones the problem without solving it. Maccoby proposes that these stories originally involved Sadducees as Jesus' opponents, not Pharisees, but does not explain why the change took place, and, in any case, his study denigrates Sadducees so that they become easy scapegoats. We seem to be led to the inescapable conclusion that the gospels and the Christian communities they served were ignorant of Judaism and unreliable in their accounts of disputes.

Maccoby's concentration on Pharisaism and Rabbinic Judaism puts other first century Jewish groups in the shade. They are briefly described in chapters 1 and 2. In particular, he seems grossly to underestimate the influence of the priests during the period when the Temple was the central sanctuary of Judaism, visited by thousands of Jews at the pilgrim festivals and supported by all Jews through tithes or gifts of money. He even calls the Sadducees 'a heretical group' (p. 8), adopting the perspective of a period long after the Temple was destroyed. He notes that Josephus estimates the numbers of Pharisees as 6,000, but interprets this figure, without warrant, as the number of Pharisaic leaders, insisting that Pharisees were the only teachers of the whole people of Israel, i.e. of the 3–4 million Jews inside Judea and Galilee and a similar number in the diaspora (p. 11). He does not mention the research of Vermes and others which shows that there were probably no Pharisees in Galilee. He maintains that priests had solely a sacerdotal role, and he never wonders what these many thousands of professionals, learned in the Torah, did when they were not on duty in the Temple. In other words, his portrait of first century Judaism is coloured by second and third century developments.

These two books concentrate on different bodies of literature which together show us something of the varying interests of Jewish groups in the first century—Charlesworth's on apocalyptic literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Maccoby's on pharisaic and rabbinic literature. Neither, however, tells us much about the Temple, its priests and their importance before 70 C.E.

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**CHRIST OUR MOTHER: JULIAN OF NORWICH** by Brant Pelphrey, *Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1989. Pp. 271. £9.95.*

Dr. Pelphrey is lecturer in systematic theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong. He sees Julian as a 'frontier' theologian, holding together elements in Christian understanding which can all too easily fly apart, and being ahead of her time in that she speaks to some of the preoccupations of our own day, and even opens the door to dialogue with other faiths.

The author is familiar with the various critical editions, but he addresses himself to the non-technical reader, making his own modernisation of Marion Glasscoe's edition (Exeter 1976) of the *Long Text*—the version which was completed some twenty years after Julian received her Revelations in May 1373, and which includes her mature theological

reflections.

After placing Julian in the setting of fourteenth-century Norwich, and outlining some of the salient points of her theology, he says (p. 98) that Julian 'does not seem to have been able to relate the Revelations in any kind of theological progression'. He then gives his own digest of her teaching, counting from the 'one nature' of God in the unity of the Trinity, to the 'seven virtues' and the seven Sacraments (pp. 98–101, with 102–258). This raises a question of method. It is not really true that Julian lacks a concept of theological progression. In fact her book is built around the centrality of the Incarnation (First Revelation), Passion (Fourth – Tenth Revelations) and Resurrection of Christ (Eleventh – Twelfth), in which the Holy Trinity is disclosed, and with which the Blessed Virgin, we ourselves, and all those on the way to salvation—indeed, in some sense all creation—are intimately associated. The remaining Revelations are placed around these focal points. The suggestion (p. 109) that the vision of God 'in a point' follows the Incarnation, and has to do with the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb, is persuasive. The Thirteenth to Sixteenth Revelations relate to mysteries suggested by what has gone before: *Felix culpa* (Thirteenth); prayer and God's foreknowledge (Fourteenth), together with Julian's subsequent reflections on the two judgements, human and divine, and the Motherhood of God in Christ within Trinitarian theology; our own Resurrection (Fifteenth); and the indwelling of Christ in the soul (Sixteenth). Dr. Pelphrey's imposition of his own scheme always risks doing violence to Julian; for instance, she touches only lightly on the seven sacraments (Ch. 60), and she does not say that they correspond to the seven virtues which the author distills from her teaching (p. 101, cf. pp. 249–258).

Differences in interpretation of Julian are bound up with different appreciations of the theology of her day, and of the resources available to her, in conjunction with different assessments of her own learning. Frs. Colledge and Walsh have argued that she was a distinctly learned woman. Without accepting all their identifications of her sources, I find their arguments convincing—against the views of this book—that Julian knew some Latin, and that she was well able to absorb and reflect on the commonplaces of technical theology. No doubt she was helped by competent advisers; Norwich was a centre of theological learning.

The book is marred by generalisations about the religion of Julian's day which would need to be documented and discussed much more fully. If there are 'certain ideas' in the *Revelations* which 'were not strongly asserted (or ... not held at all) until the Protestant Reformation' (p. 45), we may ask from where Julian derived such ideas. In fact, fourteenth-century theology is increasingly perceived as a many-faceted and many splendoured thing, in which, within the one Church, a variety of emphases which could appeal to traditional authority, and especially to Augustine, existed side by side, if not always in complete harmony.

Julian often shows novelty; yet this is a novelty with roots in tradition. Of course, Augustine is only one of those whose insights were a point of departure, together with her own experience, for Julian. But it will not do to minimise her debt to him and to his expositors. For instance, Dr. Pelphrey says (p. 122) that 'while using Augustine's basic language, Julian stressed that all three Persons are always at work in every "work" of God', as if there

were here some radical departure from Augustinian theology. But what Julian says in this respect is wholly in accord with Augustine's perspective; an article in *Downside Review* (1982) on Julian's Trinitarian theology gives some orientation, and the matter could be carried very much further.

Julian is indeed notable for her emphasis on the dignity of the order of creation and of the body. In emphasising this point, the author is unduly negative about the attitude of Walter Hilton, Julian's near-contemporary, to the body (p. 169). Hilton should be read with care, and the connotation of his Augustinian psychology studied. If it is fair to say that Hilton does not display the same warmth as Julian when he speaks of the body and of its functions, he does speak of the body with respect and compassion, and in his careful and sensitive pastoral teaching is opposed to excessive bodily austerities.

In dealing with Julian's approach to the mystery of sin and evil, it needs to be pointed out that Julian, for all her optimism based on the victory of God's love in the Cross and Resurrection, refuses to assume that all men will be saved, regardless of the choices that they have made. Even in the vision of the Servant (Ch. 51), where Adam is 'All-man', she qualifies her optimism by referring to 'all mankind that shall be saved.'

Julian's teaching on prayer—'an alternative to the way in which prayer was generally understood by her contemporaries' (p. 226), 'available to every Christian soul, whether young or old in faith, because (it) is a gift of God' (p. 229), is contrasted with the 'ladder' concept of prayer exemplified in Hilton. But Julian and Hilton are not addressing precisely the same questions here. Julian is not concerned to describe 'stages' of progress in prayer, any more than she is concerned to describe the sacraments and disciplines of the Church, which she must have practised herself and which she assumes that those for whom she writes will practise. In chapters 41—43 she is concerned to discuss the *nature* and *function* of prayer; her account owes much to monastic and Augustinian theology which Hilton would recognise as entirely consistent with his own approach. Hilton himself is quite clear that all prayer is a gift of God! True, Julian differs from Hilton—and from the *Cloud*—in not being concerned to sunder sharply interior and spiritual union with God in Christ from sensible devotion engaging the imagination. Partly this is because she is not engaged in the controversy with the 'enthusiastic' followers of Rolle; partly, no doubt, it is because of her unwillingness, shown in other areas, to sunder the body (with its senses) from the spirit. Julian emphasises that God wills that we approach him through 'means'—supremely through the Sacred Humanity of Christ; but she converges with Hilton when she says that it is more pleasing to him when we are united to him by love without the deliberate use of means (Ch. 6).

This book is written with great love for Julian. The fact that the author's judgements evoke some disagreements will encourage us to read Julian with greater attention, and to look afresh at the theological problems which she poses.

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