

I think, however, that the categories of narrative and metaphysics, in opposition to one another, are far too narrow to do justice to what is happening. They are also, used in this way, incompatible with the starting point: Scripture. Treating Scripture as the *given* from which doctrine proceeds, fails to allow for the way in which the beginnings of 'doctrine' affect the emergence and formation of Scripture itself. As a defined formula in 'Hellenistic' metaphysical terms of course the doctrine of the Incarnation is not in Scripture; but what is happening, for example, in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel or the beginning of the first Joannine Epistle? If ever there was a good example of the literary mode shifting within Scripture itself it is to be found throughout the Fourth Gospel—for all the reasons which McGrath himself would seem to imply elsewhere throughout this book. It is, of course, tempting to go back, rather than to the so-called 'narrative', to the kerygma, but surely even here it must be realised that something akin to the idea of doctrine (or at least something which you cannot ignore as unconnected with doctrine) is taking place.

The 'Community Tradition' which McGrath talks about (pp. 188–192) does not simply go back to the *narrative* of Christ's life and ministry, but to Christ himself, those who believed in him and their living context; Scripture and Doctrine emerge within this tradition. If the author were able to accept this, and I suggest it is backed up by his own understanding of 'doctrine' throughout the rest of this book, the real casualty would be seen to be, not this theory (however inadequately developed it actually is in parts,) but his understanding of and/or commitment to the *sola scriptura* principle as 'ultimately an assertion of the primacy of the foundational scriptural narrative over any framework of conceptualities which it may generate.' (p. 64, with a very interesting footnote.) A tough nut to crack, perhaps, but the further consideration of this is where this interesting and stimulating book inevitably leads us.

GILES HIBBERT OP

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF THEOLOGY by David A. Pailin. Cambridge University Press, 1990. Pp. 290. £30.00 Hb.

This is an impressive work both in regard to the degree of scholarship exhibited and intellectual honesty. Pailin leaves no stone unturned and doggedly pursues objections, presenting us with a thorough going, if in parts somewhat tortuous, study. In his own words (p. 198) what the study tries to do 'is to identify and investigate some of the basic problems for theological understanding which arise from the anthropological features that condition it'. This identification and investigation is claimed to have a certain practical result, namely that of showing the implausibility of the view of theology apparently assumed by many of the critics of its recent developments. The academic study has practical teeth in it. How strong the teeth are will have to be assessed by the individual reader in relation to the array of arguments presented in each chapter.

The basic presupposition, illuminated in each of the chapters, is that since theologians are human, theology is conditioned by the nature

of human understanding. After some preliminary remarks about the nature of his inquiry and a further chapter which aims to clarify what is meant by faith, belief, theology, and reason and the relations that exist between them, Pailin proceeds to identify six ways in which theological judgements are conditioned. We first have an investigation of Feuerbach's view that 'theology is anthropology' since theism expresses humanity's cosmic projection of its nature—the 'God as Cosmic Projection' view. This is followed by a consideration of how the concept of God is governed by our ideas of what would provide ultimate and self explanatory completion for our search for understanding. Next we have a consideration of the extent to which theological insights supposedly divorced from human experiences and revelation are conditioned by the culture and the structure of thought of those who apprehend them. Discussion of 'Theology and Human Need' follows—how theological understanding is influenced by what people consider to be their fundamental needs and by how the divine is envisaged to provide 'salvation' for those needs. In the final and most difficult chapter an attempt is made to explain in what sense theology is 'the queen of the sciences' and yet is conditioned by the various ways of understanding which it is to investigate and make sense of in a meaningful whole. It is unfortunately not clear to this reader exactly how theology is to be 'the queen of the sciences'. In that it supposedly integrates and makes sense of the various ways of understanding by uniting them into a coherent whole, then, even granted success in this venture, it can hardly be 'the queen of the sciences' for there has to be at least one further 'science', namely that which determines that theology has been *successful* and what would *constitute* 'being successful' in this integrating and unifying procedure. I venture to suggest that it is Philosophy which, if anything, is the 'queen of the sciences'. Further it is singularly unfortunate that the introduction to Chapter 8 contains a sentence which to this reader makes no clear sense. Having commented (rightly) that with the growth of knowledge it would be impossible for any one person to satisfy Stackhouse's requirement of a theologian, Pailin continues: 'On the other hand, as we are to consider in this chapter, the current state of knowledge conditions any theology which is intended to be taken seriously as a way of understanding, since it provides data which it must take account of, if not actually incorporate.' (p. 163)

In spite of the unclarity in sense of this particular passage and the presence of other passages which may be held to reveal a lack of philosophical sophistication, depth, or pressure, there are a large number of passages in which considerable philosophical sophistication and good argument is present and which are exciting, suggestive and fruitful. To illustrate the former. (i) What grounds are there for holding that there is an i.e. one, single, ultimate reality whose nature can be understood? (cf. Pailin's account of the question theology seeks to answer, p. 21). (ii) Why should we assume that there is a single ultimate which makes sense of all reality? A single ultimate *what*, we may ask? (cf. the account of the aim of theological understanding, pp. 196–7). (iii) How can theology be tentative, indeed inescapably

tentative (cf. p. 3; p. 28) when this claim is based on the premiss that *all* forms of understanding are, to some extent, uncertain, because they are human products? I do not see how this claim can be made precisely because on the *author's* thesis there can be no such thing as 'getting outside' our human conditioning. A parallel worry may be expressed in relation to the comment on p. 85: '.... we can never decisively determine where our ways of understanding are correct in their application of the divine ultimacy...'. To illustrate the latter: (i) The reply to the charge of anthropomorphism pp. 49 ff. (ii) The whole discussion in Chapter 4 on how the concept of God is governed by our notion of what is ultimate (cf. especially p. 69). (iii) The case for holding that theology is not a second order activity parasitic on and judged by conformity with the beliefs of a religious system.

This book is one which needs to be read especially by theologians of a conservative ilk and which will be appreciated by a wider academic audience in spite of certain 'misfires' as the late Professor J.L. Austin would have put it.

MICHAEL DURRANT

A PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH by Damian Byrne, OP. *Dominican Publications, Dublin. 1991. Pp. 143. £5.75.*

This characteristically modest paper-back was written by the Master of the Order of Preachers. It consists of a short introduction by Simon Roche, OP, assistant to the Master for Asia and the Pacific, and then eleven chapters, seven of which were letters sent to all the friars of the Order, two addresses to the National Conference of Priests of Ireland, and two articles previously published in *Dominican Ashram*. They are the fruit of a Dominican's experience of working in Ireland, the West Indies, Mexico, Argentina and, for the last eight years, in Rome and all over the world. Most of the book is about how the Dominican Order functions. The seven letters to the friars are about the Constitutions of the Order, and the changes in them and the commentaries on them contained in the Acts of General Chapters. But no one should be put off by that; it is all easy reading.

I must confess that these Letters are new to me. They shouldn't be. They were addressed to me and thousands of Dominicans like me. But somehow I have missed them. So, by reading the book, I have been enlightened and made to understand better what has happened in the Order since the General Chapter of 1965. Certainly there have been immense changes; here they are put in context. We are reminded of the necessary part of devoted scholarship for those who are able; of some sort of study for all Dominicans; of prayer, liturgical and private; of, if at all possible, the achievement of unanimity in decision-making. All Dominicans, the forty thousand Sisters, the four thousand nuns, the seven thousand Brothers, could learn much from reading and reflecting on this book.

BEDE BAILEY OP