

## Reviews

**THE GLORY OF GOD** by Rex Chapman. *SCM*. 1978. pp. 88 £1.10.

**CHARISMATIC RENEWAL** edited by Edward D. O'Connor. *SPCK*. 1978. pp. xv + 218. £2.95.

In this little book of meditations on God, the author seeks "to give a personal impressionistic rather than systematic view of the nature of God". The result is in many ways good, but is rightly concerned to play off forgiveness against judgment, elusiveness against intelligibility, experience of inner peace against moral decision and action, and he does it well. But at the end, perhaps, we may feel that his God is just a bit too well behaved, a God for those who have begun to lose the taste for wildness and adventure. It is probably not accidental that the most unconvincing chapter is the one which gives the book its title, "The Glory of God": or that this chapter is largely, in effect, a polite warning against the excesses of theology and of dogma. Civilized man, after all, for all his winter sporting, is rather afraid of the cavernous, craggy, elemental mountains of the mind.

*Charismatic Renewal* is an English edition of a collection of essays originally published in the USA in 1975, under the slightly less misleading title *Perspectives on Charismatic Renewal*. Apart from a survey of "the literature of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal 1967-1975" by the editor, none of the contributions deals directly with the modern "charismatic movement", and some of them are only very tangentially related to it. The survey of literature includes a very thorough bibliography, and is far and away the most useful part of the book, though the reader should be warned that the "supplement" of recent publications prepared for this

British edition is so perfunctory as to be hardly worth the trouble. The other contributions are in general disappointingly trivial, failing to discuss or even to mention some of the serious and important issues involved in the topics of which they treat. Thus Stuhlmueller, in his essay on "Prophecy in Israel", appears to be blissfully unaware of the anthropological context for Israel's early ecstatic prophesism; Chroust, on "Inspiration in Ancient Greece", makes a disastrous confusion between belief in inspiration as underlying ratiocination, and belief in inspiration as an alternative to ratiocination; Laporte, in his account of ante-Nicene pneumatology, ignores the important ambiguity between human and divine *pneuma* which is such a puzzle in Hermas, and which Irenaeus exploits in quite an interesting way, and also the apparent confusion in some sources between Christ and the Spirit; on Kritzel's "The Holy Spirit in Islam" I am not competent to comment, except to say that even if his presentation is correct, very little seems to emerge from it; O'Connor on "Mysticism" displays an unfortunate bias against theological or metaphysical mysticism, and he does not appear to regard Anselm Stolz's important attack on the identification of mystical theology as the theory of Christian subjectivity as being worthy even of a mention. He seems to take it for granted that theology is not and cannot be a spiritual activity, and leaves as "the proper subject of the academic disciplines" only the background to spirituality, not spirituality itself, which is surely a

dangerous principle. Bouyer on "Some Charismatic Movements in the History of the Church" is the least unsatisfactory contribution, but even he tries to cover too much ground in too little space, so that, for instance, the ecclesiological dif-

ficulties in Symeon are skated over very inadequately, and the problems of Messianism and Macarian spirituality are barely touched on.

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**ANSELM AND TALKING ABOUT GOD** by G. R. Evans. *Clarendon Press, Oxford* 1978. pp. xii + 211.

It has long been a philosopher's vice to zoom in on some particular chapter of Anselm and to erect thereon a disembodied superstructure claiming to represent "what Anselm really meant" about the matter in question. Quite often such efforts led into areas which were quite remote from anything Anselm could ever have thought about. This applies particularly in the region of the famous (or notorious) "ontological" argument for the existence of God. However, both they and any others who may be tempted by this sort of unwarranted extrapolation on either the philosophical or theological plane must take account of the present work, which with patience, diligence, and sensitivity, examines what Anselm actually thought of his thought, his own assessments of what he was doing, and his presuppositions concerning the nature and status of his possible audiences. As a result we have, among other things, a literary history covering almost the whole of Anselm's output. Hence whatever one's sphere of interest (historical, philosophical, or theological) the book has something important to say to all who are concerned with his thought, and who are willing to take note of the saint's own observations on what he was about. The consequently close and sympathetic scrutiny of Anselm at work eliminates the threat which might appear to be embodied in the title: the book is definitely not yet another effusion on the purely philosophical aspects of Anselm's contribution to the perennial problem of how to speak of the ineffable, or on the relation between faith and reason. True, these aspects are touched upon, and we get more than mere reporting. Nevertheless, the aim throughout is to look at topics in Anselm's own terms as evinced in his own works and in their

concrete settings. The result is most refreshing, illuminating, and should deflate any claims to deduce what he *ought* to have thought.

In Part I "What can we say about God?" we have the working out of the Anselmian-style thesis that "the study of language will tell us about God, and the study of God will make us aware of the functions and purpose of language" (p. 14) by means of a journey through *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. This journey keeps so close to the actual text that the present-day philosopher of language will be tempted to comment further, and in detail, at almost every point, e.g. on the sense and role of "image" in Anselm's talk. Yet it is a worthwhile journey, reminding us as it does of what must be made intelligible if ever we are to really understand Anselm's God-linked theory of language. Among other things we have here a treatment of that mental word and mental "speaking" which are to figure prominently in later medieval logic. The complementary functions of *Monologion* and *Proslogion* are traced, with interesting speculations as to the effect of the former's theory of language on the "ontological" argument contained in the latter. We also have a linking of all this with the content of the three early dialogues (*De Veritate*, *De Libertate Arbitrii*, *De Casu Diaboli*) and of the *De Incarnatione Verbi*.)

In Part II "The Receptive Mind" the binding thread is that of the change of emphasis in Anselm's style—a change which pervades his *Cur Deus Homo* and its appendix *De Conceptu Virginali*. This change shows forth Anselm's increasing awareness of the needs of his readers. Not only the slow, but also even the misguided and the