

present sovereignty of the risen Christ in his Church. The crucifixion and the resurrection are one and the same "hour", in which the one who is lifted up on the cross is lifted up to divine glory.

Henry Wansbrough separates himself completely from the whole Bultmannian approach, and "the characteristically Lutheran position that the more our faith is a leap in the dark, and the less evidence there is to make it reasonable, the higher is the quality of that faith" (page 97). As he says, there is a great cleavage between those who hold that the resurrection is an expression of an already existing faith, and those who say it is the cause. He is firmly among the latter. Those, like Bultmann and Marxsen, who lay all the stress on pure faith, and make resurrection language the product of a faith that was already restored (or perhaps never really abandoned) in the crucified one, come very close to eliminating the resurrection as any kind of event independent of subjective consciousness. There is no need to fall into the opposite trap of thinking in terms of meeting a miraculously resuscitated corpse. The Easter faith was caused by an event that imposed itself on the disciples as intelligible only in familiar apocalyptic language as the dawn of the expected general resur-

rection: Christ, the first fruits of the harvest of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20).

While insisting on the fact of the empty tomb, Henry Wansbrough finds no particular theological problem that would arise if the flesh and bones had in fact decayed as ours will do (page 103). If he means that God could have raised Jesus as it is promised that we are to be raised that is fair enough. But then the tomb would not have been empty. On the other hand, it is surely correct, against those who say that if the resurrection of Jesus is the prototype for our resurrection it is essential that his body did corrupt for ours certainly will, to remark that, since the medical criterion of death is irreversible damage to the brain-cells, by which their structure corrupts within two minutes of the cessation of the flow of blood to the brain, the body of Jesus did indeed "see corruption". Anything else would have been only suspended animation. But such metaphysical questions lie beyond the scope of this book. Within its prescribed limits—"to follow out the doctrine of the resurrection as it develops in the New Testament" (page 7) —this is a splendid essay: critical, serene, and concise.

FERGUS KERR O.P.

LOVE'S ENDEAVOUR, LOVE'S EXPENSE by W. H. Vanstone. DLT. 1977. pp. xiii + 120 £2.95.

This is a powerfully and passionately argued exercise in theology. Starting with a felt conviction that the Church is important (the author is a parson and the son of a parson), and that this remains true even when the church is not in any important way meeting people's urgent social or economic needs (the church is not a "church of the gaps"), Vanstone takes us on a voyage of discovery which was plainly exciting and convincing for him, and his conviction, served well by an excellent prose style, cannot fail to impress the reader that something worthwhile is going on. The model which dominates the whole book is that of creative devotion. The artist who is involved in what he is creating is at the mercy of his own creation; his whole enterprise is vulnerable, and may go wrong: the test of his creativity is his ability to redeem the unforeseen occurrences which might well destroy the whole

work—the rash stroke of the paintbrush, the awkward consistency of a piece of marble. But it is precisely the artist's involvement in what he is making that gives it value, at least for him. It is a work of love.

This leads Vanstone into a more general discussion of "the phenomenology of love", personal as well as creative, in which he singles out three marks of authenticity—or rather, three symptoms of inauthenticity, which enable us to surmise, indistinctly, what true love must be. These are: limitation (the difference between kindness and love is that kindness is specific and defined, but love must set no limit to what will be given, endured or done); control or possession (the activity of love is precarious, it is shown up as false if it seeks to *secure* its own success); and detachment (love is revealed in the vulnerability of the lover to the object of his love).

This is taken up into an account of the “kenosis of God”, which reads back from the poverty and vulnerability of Christ an essential quality of the whole act of God in creation: God makes himself vulnerable and even dependent on the response of his creation. (Certain important reservations are made: Vanstone distinguishes between the “vulnerability of God”, which it is probably meaningless to assert, and the “vulnerability of the act of God”; and he is quite explicit that the doctrine of the Trinity shows that God is not incomplete in himself: it is precisely his love that empties out his own fullness, making him in a sense consequently dependent on his creatures, as a result of his own unconditioned choice). If God is love, according to Vanstone, this precludes certain conventional views of God; he cannot be seen as effortlessly bringing all things to a predetermined goal. The act of love is by definition precarious, it waits on a response—and it is precisely love that makes itself dependent. (Vanstone explicitly rejects the idea that God’s creativity is conditioned by anything he has not created). The next chapter then analyses the response of being to this kenotic love of God: things can go right or wrong at three levels, making love either triumphant or tragic: at the level of nature (the seed may grow into a fine oak, or it may just rot), of freedom (men may choose against God’s love), and of recognition (men may or may not recognise God’s love in his works—and it is essential to love that it does not coerce or extract recognition or appreciation).

The value of the church is then discovered precisely in this third area: the church exists essentially to celebrate the recognised and accepted love of God.

There is a very powerful thesis here, which deserves to be taken seriously, and which can enlarge and deepen our understanding and appreciation of God and of the Church. But all the same, it does leave certain very crucial questions in suspense. The most important of these concerns eschatology. Is it enough to say that our faith is in the “possibility of triumph”? Is there really no end to the precariousness of the enterprise of love in creation? Is it tolerable to suppose that the ultimate outcome of it all might be, in fact, tragedy? C. S. Lewis was surely right to insist that Hell must not be allowed to hold heaven

to ransom. Vanstone’s model of the artist making deeper and more wonderful beauty out of the tragedy that looked like ruining everything is very helpful; but Christian faith gives us the assurance not only that this might happen, but that it will happen in fact, the eventual outcome will in fact be triumph, God’s creativity will in fact not be thwarted. The dialectic between freedom and creative love sheds light on salvation history, but it is the dialectic between freedom and omnipotence that guarantees, however paradoxically, the triumph. In some sense, therefore, we must say that God *does* control the issue. Even St Thomas never adequately explained how this leaves contingency intact; but the issue must not be shirked, for beatitude is at stake.

One must also put in a plea for the imagery of effortlessness which Vanstone finds so unattractive. The sovereign and easy control ascribed to God by certain passages in the Old Testament is not (as Vanstone suggests) only intended to safeguard monotheism by making God more powerful than all the other powers we might be tempted to worship. It is meant to indicate something of the way in which God operates: his omnipotence is not just a kind of brute force wrestling with recalcitrant material, coercing it into shape; it disposes all things *suaviter*, and it does so precisely because it operates *within* secondary causes, even within created freedom wrongly exercised. For St Thomas, at least, this metaphysical view is necessary if we are to understand either providence or grace, and both of these are essential christian beliefs. Vanstone’s account makes no mention of grace, and it is difficult to see how it could, and his providence is, not surprisingly, precarious.

And this is the main weakness in his ecclesiology. The church as the place of praise needs to be complemented by the church as the place of salvation, and the sign of eschatological hope.

There are other criticisms too that one could make, which would all involve a claim that the one model used by Vanstone should not be allowed to invalidate other models. It is far from evident that a view of creation as God’s “play” is, as Vanstone claims, “an almost explicit repudiation of the possibility that the creation is the work of authentic love”. I

suspect that being taken seriously is itself being taken too seriously! Also the venerable tradition of our unnecessaryness to God would seem to be a very valuable one. There is a special joy in knowing that one is needed, and this Vanstone elucidates admirably; but there is also a special joy in the sheer gratuitousness of things, ourselves included—caught especially well by Charles Williams in his Arthurian poems—and this Vanstone rather tends to disallow. Nor can one simply write off the approach

to God by the *via eminentiac*; that too corresponds to a fundamental human instinct. It is, I suppose, the constant temptation of positive theology to take one model too exclusively, and Vanstone has scarcely even tried to resist it. What he says positively is often extremely rewarding, but he denies more than he needs to, and omits more than he ought to.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.

THE RENAISSANCE OF WONDER by Marion Lochhead. *Canongate* 1977
pp. viii + 169 £4.00

This is a friendly, chatty book, whose purpose is to trace the re-awakening of the sense of wonder evident in children's books during the past hundred or so years. This is equated, without further ado, with the element of 'faery', and Miss Lochhead values especially that kind of faery which yokes holiness with the magic, a combination she finds in George Macdonald and obviously in Lewis and Tolkien, but which she fears may be lacking in some of the most recent books of this genre. Quite a large amount of literature is surveyed, but most of it so allusively that I suspect it will only be illuminating to readers for whom the material is already 'old friends'. In fact, some of the brief outlines given by Miss Lochhead are rather misleading. For instance on p. 99 she summarises Lewis' *The Last Battle* as ending with a victory for the loyal Narnians, who are then said to "gather" in the shed, whereas they are actually driven into it by their triumphant enemies. Also it will puzzle readers who have any feel for the power of names to be told that in *The Tombs of Atuan* the mage is "now bearing his true name, God" (p. 149); in fact he is doing nothing so foolish, and it is a gesture of confidence when he reveals his name to the bewildered priestess of the tombs. But those who know enough about the books discussed to be able to fill out and, where necessary, correct Miss Lochhead's résumés, will find it not disagreeable to wander with her while she comments, sometimes on the biography of the authors, sometimes on the morality or charm of characters and episodes. Anyone looking for a solemn his-

tory, however, will be disappointed. So will anyone looking for serious literary criticism. Little of this is offered, and of that little, even less is enlightening. It seems rather inadequate, for example, to comment on Susan's loss of interest in Narnia that "it hurts us; it is bewildering, like the sudden disappearance, in *The Princess and Curdie*, of the Queen. It seems to indicate a loss of heart in the author." On the contrary, it is one of the very few places where Lewis allows his essentially black and white world to become a little more complex, and indicates that there may be other kinds of failure than utter wickedness. This is just as important as the demonstration in *The Last Battle* that a genuinely devout worshipper of Tash is in fact a worshipper of Aslan (and this too is unclearly reported by Miss Lochhead). Miss Lochhead's requirement of holiness with the magic is important and often illuminating; but her concept of it seems to lack a certain quality of toughness, which makes her sometimes unappreciative. The 'Franciscanism' she commends in Macdonald has perhaps rather too much of Michael Fairless and not enough of St Francis in it. Maybe this is why she seems not really to respond to Ursula le Guin. But for all that there is a quality of faery about this book, a quality perhaps best described as guilelessness, which makes it, not exactly a good book, though there is goodness of many kinds in it, but more than a merely pleasant book. I am glad to have made its acquaintance.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.