

helps to define the genre.

In general, my criticisms of the book amount to this. Professor Talbert ignores the importance of details. It is true that 'the parts can be understood only through the whole', but it is equally true that 'the whole can be understood only through its parts'. When an interpreter meets details

which are baffling in terms of the expectations of the genre thesis, he should wonder whether he has made a mistake. The main value of the book lies in the references to relevant literature.

MARGARET PAMMENT

THE KINGDOM OF LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE, the Encounter between Orthodoxy and the West, by A. M. Allchin Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1979 pp 214 £3.95

Looking first at the chapter headings the friends of Donald Allchin may be inclined to expect the mixture as before, persuasive but not convincing to anyone not already involved with the Christian East. Chapters are given to Symeon 'the new theologian', to Ann Griffiths and to Grundtvig. Then after four chapters on Anglican tradition we return again to personal studies of F. D. Maurice, Evelyn Underhill and Vladimir Lossky. The new character is Nathan Scott, a priest of the American Episcopal Church 'who has held chairs of theology and of English', important 'particularly perhaps as one who sees the world from inside a black and not a white skin'. He comes in the second chapter, 'The Fall of the "God-thing"', after 'Orthodoxy and the debate about God', as an interpreter of Heidegger, speaking of 'that which is transcendent of every particular being, yet present in every being as the power whereby it is enabled to be'. He is in sympathy with a 'minority tradition in Western religious and philosophical thought', reaching 'from Ruysbroeck through Angelus Silesius to Paul Tillich and from Eckhart and Boehme to Nicolas Berdyaev'. But he does not seem to be aware of affinities between this and the Orthodox East.

In the following chapters persistent attempts are made to persuade readers of the relevance of contemplative experience to theological understanding, and to meet objections made to the mysticism of Ann Griffiths, to the religion of the heart in Grundtvig, to the Platonism of F. D. Maurice, and to the style of Evelyn Underhill. Most of these are objections to taking seriously the development of the Christian religion after the New Testament. They are made to Roman Catholicism as well as to

Eastern Orthodoxy. In so far as Catholics continue to have reserves about the theological influences of spirituality, they are reserved against influences actually exercised at the present day and at all times in Christian history. What kept the Catholic religion credible in England in the eighteenth century were the spiritual writings of John Gother and Richard Challoner. But it may be significant that in this book while Western objections to Eastern Orthodoxy are treated as common to Catholic and Protestant, nothing is said about debate between Catholics, for instance in *Irenikon* and *Istina*, about the interpretation of the Greek Fathers by Lossky and other Orthodox.

This is a theological debate about spiritual experience. No doubt some contributions to it are coloured by scholastic approaches developed while spirituality and theology were kept distinct, but the separation has never been complete. There have always been complaints about the theological influence of the wrong pious books, and good theology in spiritual writings has constantly been commended. This book is a valiant attempt to involve Anglicans in a debate where their contribution is and could be of great use. It will be of use to Catholics as throwing fresh light on the Orthodox contribution to the present discussion of the nature of theology, as well as on what could be gained from F. D. Maurice and David Jenkins, but I do not think that Catholics need to be convinced that spirituality is a matter for theological discussion. Anglicans do, and I hope that this time Donald Allchin may convince them. I fear that the appeal to experience will be written off as not common sense.

GEORGE EVERY