

rational belief and in acknowledging that there are circumstances in which religious belief would be properly basic.

Although Kenny writes as an agnostic, theists of a traditional (and above all Thomistic) persuasion will find themselves in sympathy with a lot of his discussion. Here I think of his account of the nature of faith (p. 46 f.); his scepticism about the idea that we might know God by means of something akin to sense perception (p. 38 f.); his affirmation of the importance of natural theology (see again his criterion of rational belief); and his reluctance to see God as a member of our moral community (p. 87). However, it seems to me unfortunate that in his discussion of faith (which he distinguishes from belief in the existence of God), he fixes exclusively upon the account according to which faith must be "certain". It is this assumption in particular which leads him to conclude that faith is (very likely) vicious, since it makes claim upon our adherence which is out of proportion to its real epistemic standing.

However, Kenny's agnosticism on the question of whether God exists is tentative. He observes that he does not know whether his position is more rational than those of the theist and atheist. In part this is because he acknowledges the importance of firm belief in such matters (p. 60). But he suggests that the agnostic need not be separated altogether from the practice of religion; in particular, prayer presupposes only the possibility that God exists (p.120). One is left wondering how far the author is willing to make his own the plea of the poet Arthur Hugh Clough whose words he cites in concluding the book:

Be thou but there,— in soul and heart,
I will not ask to feel thou art.

MARK WYNN

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY IN THE MIDDLE AGES by G.R. Evans. London; *Routledge*, 1993 x + 139 pp.

Readers might well fear that a book with a title so general and weighty as *Philosophy and Theology in the Middle Ages* will be long, technical and forbidding—especially when they discover that it was originally part of a series published in German! Yet Gillian Evans has produced a slim volume, written with elegant verve; an easy afternoon's reading. Wisely, Dr Evans chooses not to follow a chronological plan (which, in the space allowed, would have become a gallop through the centuries). Rather, she divides the book into two parts: the first examines the aims, sources and techniques of medieval philosophers and theologians, whilst the second examines some of the main topics they discussed.

Evans is at her best in setting out the context of medieval thought in

a brisk, no nonsense manner. A chapter on the 'idea of philosophy' and the 'idea of theology' helps the reader to avoid anachronism and makes use of some quite unusual and very apposite material, such as Gilbert Crispin's *Dialogue of a Christian and a Gentile* and Gerson's *On the Consolation of Theology*. There are, however, some strange slips. Evans writes (p. 7) of Abelard's *Dialogue between a Christian, a Philosopher and a Jew* that 'the main topic in the part of the dialogue between the Christian and the Jew is the Incarnation': in fact, the two dialogues which make up the work are between the Philosopher and the Jew, and the Philosopher and the Christian; and the Incarnation is not discussed. In the next chapter, Greek and Latin sources for medieval philosophy are competently described, although the treatment of arabic sources is very cursory and of Jewish sources non-existent. By ordering the second half of her book according to topics, Evans has left herself free to consider a wide range of both major and minor thinkers. The price which readers must pay for this variety is a certain disorientation, both chronological and qualitative.

It is hard to gain from her account any clear idea of the different periods of medieval thought, or any firm impression of which thinkers are usually regarded as the most original and influential. Both difficulties are exacerbated by Evans's strong emphasis in favour of the period up to 1200. Perhaps this is a useful corrective to the traditional tendency to see 1250-1300 as the one Golden Age of medieval philosophy, but Evans takes it to an extreme. The two medieval writers she is most inclined to quote are Anselm and Alan of Lille. Both lived before the age of the universities and, whilst Anselm was certainly a great theologian, Alan was a versatile and innovative writer rather than an original thinker: it is hardly justifiable to give him more space than Aquinas. Henry of Ghent (strangely gallicised into 'Henri de Gand') and William of Ockham receive cursory mentions, and Duns Scotus—perhaps the central thinker of the later Middle Ages—is given a couple of vague comments (not, incidentally, on the pages listed in the index).

The topics Evans chooses are comprehensive: God, the cosmos and man. The problem is that each subdivision of these areas is itself a vast topic, so that Evans sets herself an impossible task of compression: the nature of the soul and its relation to the body must be discussed in three pages, the problem of evil in two, divine omnipotence in a paragraph. Her solution is to avoid, in general, explaining arguments, and often merely to state the questions which various thinkers posed without even giving their answers. This may leave readers rather unsatisfied and, at times, produces some very odd results. Why, for instance, mention Boethius's discussion of divine prescience and human free will but give not even a hint of his well-known solution, based on the atemporality of God's knowledge?

Evans's topics and the emphases she makes within them do, however, reflect accurately a set of distinctions, relations and priorities shared by many thinkers of the time. This may make her account a little less immediately appealing to some readers, but it increases its value as an historical introduction. Yet there is one important respect in which Evans's cast of mind differs greatly from that of most medieval thinkers. Medieval philosophers and theologians were highly trained in logic, and they engaged in rigorous and complex philosophical discussion. Their language, presuppositions and aims may have been very different, but the manner of their enquiries was close to that of modern philosophers. By contrast, despite the title of her book, Evans demonstrates almost no interest in philosophy as opposed to theology, if by 'philosophy' is meant (and can there be any other meaning?), not a list of questions or conclusions, but philosophical argument and debate. Her very decision to range over so wide a set of topics rules out the careful, precise presentation of the stages of an argument. And, on the one topic which she chooses to examine in more detail—the eucharist and real presence—Evans avoids the more philosophically complex discussions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, offering a conspectus of the various positions taken by the earlier controversialists but little in the way of analysis. On the most strictly philosophical area she discusses, cognition and universals, Evans is desperately muddled and inaccurate. For example, she writes (p. 41) that from the fact that there can be mental images of things which do not exist Abelard infers 'that there is no need to postulate real existence for universals either'—a patently ridiculous inference which has nothing in common with Abelard's genuine views.

In short, Evans's work is a lively and well-written, learned but quirky, astonishingly wide-ranging though occasionally unreliable introduction to medieval thought for those who have an interest in ideas, but little inclination towards philosophy.

JOHN MARENBNON

DIVINE HIDDENNESS AND HUMAN REASON, BY J.L. SCHELLENBERG. CORNELL STUDIES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, *Cornell University Press*, 1993. Pp x + 217. No price given.

The title of this book might attract those who feel that a decent philosophical study of divine ineffability would be welcome. But Schellenberg proposes something quite different. If God exists, he asks, why does He not make His existence more obvious? In fact, assuming that a loving God would initiate relationship with human beings, and that belief in such a God is a necessary condition for anyone to experience such a relationship, Schellenberg suggests that the very fact that God's