Archbishop Errington to declare himself as late as February 1872 (he opens a letter to Clifford, through whom Rome approached him: "I am very much obliged to Cardinal Barnabò for the kind interest which your communication shews him to take in my welfare"). In 1875, at their Low Week meeting, the English bishops finally issued a collective pastoral, signed by Manning as well as by Clifford, together with six of the others who had been at the Council as well as old Brown of Newport; but it was simply a presentation of the famous Fulda declaration of 1875 by the German bishops, which affirmed episcopal as well as papal authority in the Church. It was a kind of victory for Clifford's theology in the end; but a century of Manning's interpretation has obscured that.

(To be continued)

Reviews

VIRTUES AND VICES by Philippa Foot. *Basil Blackwell,* **1979. pp. xiv + 207 £8.25**

Mrs Foot needs no introduction to students of moral philosophy; she has been a powerful voice in the subject for some years. In this book, which might usefully be compared with Peter Geach's *The Virtues* (Cambridge, 1977), she brings together a number of papers most of which are already in print. Altogether, the collection comprises the following essays: *Virtues and Vices, The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect, Euthanasia, Free Will as Involving Determinism, Hume on Moral Judgment, Nietzsche: The Revaluation of Values, Moral Beliefs, Goodness and Choice, Reasons for Action and Desires, Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives, A Reply to Professor Frankena, Are Moral Considerations Over riding? Approval and Disapproval.* Numbers I and XIII are the only items so far unpublished, but there are some new comments attached to some of the other papers.

Throughout her text Mrs Foot provides plenty of stimulating and solid argument. And it seems to me that on the whole her general approach is warmly to be welcomed. The kind of line she adopts in ethics (Aristotelian/Thomist as opposed to Humean/Intuitionist/Non-naturalist/Prescriptivist) has been heavily criticized in recent debate; but it still seems persuasive insofar as we can surely make out a case for saying, as Mrs Foot does, that moral judgments are true or false, that there are limits to what can count as a moral viewpoint or argument, and that moral conclusions can be defended by appeal to evidence that is, as many would tiresomely say 'factual', (see especially papers vii-x). It is also useful to be reminded by Mrs Foot of the advantages of approaching moral philosophy with reference to virtues and vices. Philosophers sometimes regard ethics as an enquiry into the nature and status of moral obligations which are taken to be independent of contracts or which are supposed to be discerned independently of what is needful to human beings as such. Sometimes, of course, moral obligations are presented in terms of doing what one decides one ought to do, the understanding being that almost anything can count as a moral obligation granted certain formal admissions concerning consistency, impartiality and so forth. The attempt to engage in ethics via the virtues can seem by contrast a salutary corrective to all this. By means of such an attempt one avoids the difficulty of talking as if the only significant evaluative terms worth discussing in moral philosophy are those like 'good' and 'ought' which are supposed to have a moral meaning or use independent of the situations in which they are used both morally and otherwise. One can also allow for moral argument in a way impossible for many

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alternative approaches. At the same time, of course, one can recognize the futility of stupidly trying to do moral philosophy while ignoring the obvious importance of the ways in which human beings function. Again we have a case for Aristotle and Aquinas. For if one's ethics are to be different from one's taste in clothes, if they are to be more than the systematic expression of one's varying or unvarying wishes, and if they are not to resort to a dubious, gnostic intuitionism, it seems, in fact, that they will inevitably have to be Aristotelian in character. Either that or unrecognizable as ethics or better regarded as a chapter in the history of ideas.

Having made these points, however, it also seems to me that many of Mrs Foot's statements can be questioned in various ways. A book review is not really the place for a detailed critique, and attacks on such papers as *Moral Beliefs* and *Goodness and Choice* are already available from writers like Hare, Phillips, Mounce and Beardsworth. But at least one difficulty can be mentioned here. It concerns the matter of abortion.

Mrs Foot suggests (paper II) that the doctrine of the double effect has more to be said for it than is sometimes allowed. For this conclusion she makes out a good and balanced case. But in concluding her discussion of the doctrine of the double effect she also declares that abortion is morally justifiable on certain occasions. And for this view she provides no good argument. She considers the alternative of either killing the foetus (age unspecified) or letting the mother and foetus die. With reference to this alternative she then observes that "it is reasonable that the action that will save someone should be done" and that "The Catholic doctrine on abortion must here conflict with that of most reasonable men" (p. 30). But why should we accept that what Mrs Foot recommends is actually reasonable? Is it ever reasonable to take an innocent life? Suppose I suggested that if one acted as Mrs Foot allows one would then unreasonably be endorsing the principle that one can take an innocent life precisely in order practically to defend the principle that innocent life should be protected? Suppose I suggested that if one feels justified in killing a foetus then one has no moral reason for protecting anybody, including the mother on whose behalf the foetus is killed? Such questions are certainly relevant in response to Mrs Foot's views on abortion, but Mrs Foot herself does not deal with them. And here the critic can seriously ask whether moral considerations might not lead us to conclude that certain kinds of action are strictly to be ruled out. The view that the right answer to this question is affirmative is, of course, one hotly defended by writers who are recognizably in the same moral tradition as Mrs Foot herself. And Mrs Foot would have improved the present book by somewhere tackling it head on. She is obviously aware of it, but I do not see that she really attempts to answer it with the philosophical rigour it evidently requires.

Points of detail aside, however, *Virtues and Vices* is an important work. It is definitely one of the best available collections of modern ethical essays. A pity that the book is so expensive. Hopefully a paperback version will soon be offered.

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EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY by Robert M. Grant. *Collins*, 1978 pp. xii + 221 £4.50

As Dr Grant says, this book "could rightly be viewed as an extreme answer to the extreme 'churchiness' of Eusebius". It is not meant to be another history of the early church; its aim is to explore, for the benefit of readers who are not professional church historians, some of the ways in which Christians in the early centuries were related to the civic and political world around them. He deals with such topics as their attitude to different kinds of profession, their views on private property, their tax situation. His treatment is sometimes rather too meandering; a more rigorously chronological exposition, for instance, and a sharper differentiation between different Christian attitudes, would have made for greater clarity. But his conclusions seem to be, on the whole and with one important reservation, to be fair. The early Christians were not, in general, socially or politically all that different

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