

each other and with God" (p 2). He lays down essential principles for any pilgrim: "Community is the place of forgiveness", (p 15); "the beauty of man is in fidelity to the wonder of each day" (p 68); "contact with people who are weak is one of the most important nourishments of our lives" (p 138); "a community is always built around people: people should not be shaped to suit community" (p 157); "to welcome is not primarily to open the doors of our house: it is to open the doors of our heart" (p 197).

But he does not ignore the practical difficulties of a journey shared so closely with others – the section on meetings and chairmanship should be required reading for all members of committees (p 212ff). Again and again the surest guides are the weak and the poor. For Vanier understands that every human being is handicapped, hiding a deep wound of loneliness and inadequacy – and the special grace of the "handicapped" is to help us see, understand and accept this essential part of our being: "The most precious gift in com-

munity is rooted in weakness" (p 192).

For anyone living in community this is a book to be dipped into constantly, savoured and pondered. But Vanier would agree with Aristotle that man is a "zoon politicon" – 'made for community'. Much that he writes has a relevance beyond L'Arche. On freedom, he comments "the important thing is not freedom for its own sake but freedom to love and serve better" (p 179). On marginalisation, he warns "a community which allows unemployed members to exist within it will perish because of them" (p 29). And he is only too aware that a world dominated by ideals of productivity and efficiency needs communities of hope and forgiveness. For Vanier community is essentially missionary. It shares Christ's mission for the poor, the Church and society. For in community we discover that the wound of loneliness we carry can become sacrament and "this sacrament is purification and presence of God". (p 247).

AIDAN TURNER

A NEW CHRISTOLOGY by Karl Rahner and Wilhelm Thüsing, trans. David Smith and Verdant Green. *Burns & Oates*, London, 1980. pp 239 £7.95.

To get biblical scholars and systematic theologians to collaborate to such an extent that they would subject their work to each other for real criticism might seem a pipe-dream. Nearly ten years ago now, however, in an attempt at just such an "interdisciplinary lecture course", Karl Rahner gave his usual set of lectures on Christology at Munster but invited his New Testament colleague, Wilhelm Thüsing, to reflect on his "results" as an integral part of the course. This gave rise to an extremely interesting book, published in 1972, in which Rahner's course, reduced to pemmican, provided the theme for much more extensive reflections by Thüsing. In a nutshell, while Rahner sought to show that classical Chalcedonian Christology can be secured against monophysite and mythological misunderstandings only by something like his own "transcendental" approach, Thüsing suggested that a retrieval of the diverse New Testament

Christologies would provide an even richer starting-point. Given the scrupulous fidelity of the two authors both to the classical tradition and to the exigencies of modern exegesis and reflection, not to mention the internal dialogue within the book, it constitutes one of the most distinguished Catholic contributions to the recent wave of studies in Christology.

The book under review consists of a less than felicitous translation of Thüsing's reflections, preceded by three essays by Rahner which date from the period 1976-77 and have been included in volumes XIII and XIV of his *Schriften zur Theologie* (and presumably will eventually appear in the English series). This change, about which we are not informed directly, appears to have been made on Rahner's initiative or at least with his consent. One of them, devoted to how the Church derives from the death and resurrection of Jesus, although of course as interesting as

Rahner always is to anybody with a critical concern with traditional systematic theology, tilts away from the main theme. Thüsing's regular references to Rahner's text are either muffled or elided. While a fair enough account is offered of Rahner's "transcendental Christology", it is altogether more in the genre of haute vulgarisation in contrast with the professionalism of the text upon which Thüsing is actually commenting.

This somewhat bizarre procedure of publishing an extended commentary by Thüsing on a text by Rahner for which another has been substituted is compounded by some careless translation, e.g. on page 61 for "Christ" read "Christian", on page 67 for "mortal sin" read "original sin"; on page 84 for "succession" read "discipleship".

FERGUS KERR O P

THE LIFE OF MOSES by Gregory of Nyssa. Translation, Introduction and Notes by Abraham J Malherbe and Everett Ferguson. Preface by John Meyendorff. SPCK London 1978. pp xvi + 208. £5.50.

AN EXHORTATION TO MARTYRDOM, PRAYER, FIRST PRINCIPLES: BOOK IV, PROLOGUE TO THE COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF SONGS, HOMILY XXVII ON NUMBERS by Origen. Translation and Introduction by Rowan A Greer. Preface by Hans Urs von Balthasar. SPCK. London 1979. pp xvi + 293. £6.50.

These two volumes in the Classics of Western Spirituality series form a distinctly unmatched pair. Each is devoted to the work of a key figure in the broad tradition of highly Platonized, Greek spirituality, but there the similarity ends, for the compilers have adopted very different methods and have achieved very different results.

Malherbe and Ferguson offer a careful study of one central text, Gregory's *Life of Moses*. It is the first time this important work has appeared in its entirety in English, and this very welcome translation is here buttressed by a useful introduction and valuable notes.

The introduction runs briskly through the background to the treatise and looks at some of the central themes of Gregory's theology and spirituality. Malherbe and Ferguson apparently first prepared their manuscript as far back as 1967 (p x), and the Macarian problem (p 14) might look rather different if they were treating it afresh today.

The notes are quite full. The editors make a general acknowledgement (p 22) of their debt to Daniélou's notes in his Sources Chrétiennes edition of the *Life of Moses*. In fact, the bulk of Daniélou's material is incorporated in Malherbe and Ferguson's notes, often in a word for word translation, but they also present a great deal of new material of their own. Refer-

ences to works appearing after 1967 are, however, few and far between. It seems rather churlish to cavil at Greek misprints, but where Greek words have been incorporated in the notes, errors are almost as common as correct spellings. In particular, the compositor's perverse insistence that epsilon and rho are the same letter is rather disconcerting.

All in all, this edition of the *Life of Moses* makes a real contribution to the study of Gregory and constitutes an excellent introduction to his thought. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Greer's treatment of Origen.

Instead of translating one substantial work, Greer offers a selection of short treatises or excerpts: the *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, *On Prayer*, Book IV of *De Principiis*, the prologue to the commentary on the Song of Songs, and the twenty-seventh homily on Numbers. While Malherbe and Ferguson provide quite full notes, Greer has chosen to give very, very few, and where the introduction to Gregory is crisp and workmanlike, that to Origen is longer (37 pp) and, I would argue, more tendentious.

The decision to present an anthology of Origen's spirituality is probably justified, for it is, admittedly, quite difficult to select one chunk of Origen's vast output that can be regarded as 'typical', in the