

lieve that it is preferable to try to do better in a second or third attempt than to live out the realities of a first marriage in a mood of disappointment and frustration.

Against the despair of this mood, Dominican offers, in his final section, a Liturgy for marriage. The Christian family is to become a little Church, living and growing by those same insights as the Body of Christ itself, and he provides a selection of biblical passages which might be offered to married couples four times a year as a kind of in-service training course. Like the opening chapter, this material is so compressed that it could probably best be used in a parish as study notes for group work.

Dominian assumes throughout that

many marriages will need expert help at various crisis points and this raises the obvious question where is such help to be found. It is one thing to deplore the conspiracy of silence, with which so many couples seem to shroud their problems until events make reconciliation and growth together impossible, quite another to suppose that there yet exists trained resources within the Church which are both locally available and yet sufficiently detached and independent from our authority structures to be approached in confidence and privacy. More than in any of his previous writings, Dominican makes clear our need for such provision.

PETER E COLEMAN

JESUS IN THE FAITH OF CHRISTIANS by Hywel D. Lewis.

Macmillan 1981 pp viii + 114 £15

Four recent lectures with some incidental pieces of writing added to them make up this short book, which is principally concerned with resisting denials, especially ambiguous denials, of the divinity of Jesus Christ (£15 is a lot for such a collection). The first, 'Religious Experience and Truth', puts Professor Lewis's views on the basis of religious belief into a convenient form. He writes of 'radical antinomies that compel us to recognize some more ultimate reality in which all that we can, in principle, comprehend is rooted, but which is not itself comprehensible beyond the recognition of its inevitability', whereas religious experience 'properly comes in at the point where we ask how we go further than the sense of some ultimate all-encompassing mystery' (pp 4-5). When he goes on to allow that 'the "insight" into there having to be God. . . is itself an experience', he adds at once that 'it is so in the sense that all cognition is experience', referring immediately, by way of example, to the apprehension that twice two is four. This, then, is a knowledge *that* something is so, not a knowledge *of* it. And it is not a matter of logical necessity. Those who adopt another point of view, which may be conveniently labelled Blondelian, would agree that one has commonly to accept God in a sort of darkness

before a personal relationship with him can be established. But this does not mean that recognizing the duty of accepting him is not itself a genuine experience of him. For Lewis 'religious experience' arises when 'the sense of ultimate being . . . has a distinctive impact on other formative features of the total experience in which it occurs' and 'becomes a closely intimate articulate presence in the very core of our essentially finite awareness. . . . God puts his own imprimatur on certain insights and sensitivities' (pp 8-9). Some who might be rather chary of making special claims of that kind would want to say, more generally, that we can gain some faint awareness of God himself, of *who* he is. Otherwise what does this talk of a 'presence' amount to? They would accept the next point that Lewis makes: 'One feature of exceptional importance in the process whereby our understanding is extended in the enlivened sense of the involvement of our lives in a supreme and transcendent reality is a refinement and deepening of moral awareness'. Here again this 'sense' might seem to be a mental contact with 'transcendent reality'. But Lewis goes on to state his well-known antipathy to any suggestion that moral obligation is not explicable unless God, although often unrecognized as such, summons us in it to himself. He thinks, ap-

parently, that this 'dangerous doctrine' leads to subjection of the moral consciousness to religious dogma. 'Ethics', he repeats, 'has no more direct dependence on religion than mathematics or science.' It should be unnecessary to say that there is nevertheless much in this first chapter, in particular about the misunderstanding of juristic metaphors in the Old Testament, which ought to do much good.

The body of the book can now be discussed in less detail. In his second chapter Lewis writes appreciatively of Iris Murdoch's work as exemplifying a proper frankness in making clear what one does not believe and pays a tribute to the usual honesty of unitarians before turning to modern forms of monism or fideism and 'the ambiguities of the new Christologies'. He makes particular reference to Dr Michael Goulder whose paper in *The Myth of God Incarnate* 'accords a unique role to Jesus and one for which he was especially destined by God' – but is Goulder, Lewis asks, a unitarian? 'It would help to make that more explicit' (p 38). This is fair comment, but I doubt whether readers of the paper, given the general context, are likely to be misled about the writer's position. The chief targets of the next chapter, 'The Christ Event', are naturally Professor Maurice Wiles and the late Professor Geoffrey Lampe. Notoriously their writings are not orthodox about Christology by any standard of orthodoxy, Catholic or Protestant. Lewis highlights Wiles's vagueness about 'our response to an overall purpose at work in the world', to which nothing in particular seems ascribable, and about the relevance of the historical Jesus to Christian faith, on which Lampe is shown to be at least equally unsatisfactory. Professor J P Mackey's book, *Jesus, the Man and the Myth*, is also discussed. At critical points in it Lewis is unable to decide what Mackey believes or does not believe about Jesus

Christ; so am I, although not always at the same points. For now Lewis's own Christology emerges or rather the fact that he disapproves of anything that could be properly called a Christology. He asks: 'if the evidence, in our sensitive appreciation of the figure who comes to us out of the available New Testament records, leaves us at the point where we can only say, reverently but firmly, this must be God himself, not just truth about him, in this 'lived life', this individual consciousness, should we draw back, can we honestly do so, because we have no understanding of how this could possibly be?' (p 61). Is the doctrine of the Incarnation, then, a contradiction? So, again, God 'had the experiences of Jesus as Jesus, in fully human form, had them' and 'these must be an absolute identity of the being of Jesus with God' (p 73). Any attempt to reduce the paradox is ruled out – '*we defeat ourselves if we try*' (italics in text). 'Kenotic' language is commonly used in the tradition (in his first chapter Lewis speaks of God as able to 'limit' himself), but we have always to ask what this means, since the doctrine of God's immutability is not being jettisoned. Karl Rahner, who had maintained, puzzlingly, that God changes 'in the other' although he is changeless 'in himself', has written recently that 'in classical Christology the "is" in statements of communication of idiom such as "Jesus is God", "God is man", does not mean identity between subject and predicate . . . If we hold the contrary to be true, we should be denying the "unmixed" character (of the human and divine 'natures') asserted by the Chalcedonian view and should be holding a heretical opinion' (*Theological Investigations*, vol XVII, p 37). To end with an expression of gratitude to a writer who has done so much for us, in the final chapter ('Christ and other Faiths') Lewis gives us a fine lesson in ecumenism.

ILLTYD TRETHOWAN