

- 22 The question of Funding Agencies and their selection of projects according to their own criteria as influencing missionary activity will be the subject of a separate article.
- 23 We shall return to this point in the article proposed above in 22.
- 24 A theory which maintains that if we could only know the difficulties involved in starting a development project we would never undertake it in the first place, the hiding hand comes in unexpectedly to help us, just as things unexpectedly happen to obstruct the project. *Development Projects Observed*, Albert O. Hirshman, The Brookings Institution, 1976, p. 13.
- 25 Paolo Freire *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Seabury Press edition p. 85.
- 26 'One man no chop' John Kirby S.V.D. *Word USA Techny*, Ill. April 1978 p. 5.
- 27 T. R. Batten, *The non-directive approach in group and community work*, OUP London, 1967 pp. 27-28.
- 28 Jane Vella and Rosario Drew "Community Education for Development" *AFER* Feb 1977.

Reviews

THE WOUND OF KNOWLEDGE by Rowan Williams, *DLT* 1979 pp 193 £4.75

Rowan Williams' book will be welcomed by everyone who is concerned with teaching or studying the theology of christian spirituality. It offers a serious introduction to some of the essential topics raised in christian literature up to St John of the Cross, with fairly substantial discussion of some of the major writers in this period, and, unlike most histories of and treatises on spirituality, its perspective is theological, not phenomenological. It begins and ends with the scandal of the cross. The crucifixion of God by the people of God constitutes a rude datum to which we are brought back over and over again. Williams stresses the importance of accepting conflict, failure, incomprehension, dullness and so on as integral elements in the persistent oddity of christian belief and life, and he shows how various great theologians have borne witness, more or less faithfully, to this. Amongst others, he discusses Ignatius of Antioch, Eckhart, Luther and John of the Cross. His chapter on Augustine I found particularly good. Aquinas and Eckhart receive rather thin treatment, featuring, as they do, as appendages to the pseudo-Dionysius, but what is said about them is worth saying. The treatment of Gregory of Nyssa, though relatively brief, is very good. The final chapters

on Luther and John of the Cross are sympathetic and suggestive.

The major weakness in the book is its treatment of monastic sources. Evagrius is particularly badly treated. In the first place, he is dealt with simply as an appendage to Gregory Nazianzen, instead of being inserted into what is surely his most important context in the Desert Fathers. And what is said of him is, frankly, most unfair. He is accused of leaving "no room for Gregory of Nyssa's vision of progress into darkness; for him, as for Nazianzen, ignorance is bad – any kind of ignorance, at any stage" (p. 16). But what of the "infinite ignorance" which is inseparable from "infinite knowledge" (KG III 63)? It is far from clear that Evagrius' "imageless prayer" is any more of a stopping point (as Williams suggests) than Gregory of Nyssa's *arete*. The *De Oratione* seems more concerned to prevent us stopping anywhere at all, warning us particularly not to rest complacently in the vision of inner light. And since Evagrius is one of the great exponents of the view that our emotions, especially anger, have a natural and important part to play in christian spirituality, it is preposterous to accuse him of taking "extirpation, not integration" (p. 66) as the proper goal. It is also unfortunate

ate that Williams does not mention in his bibliography the important edition of the *Praktikos* by the Guillaumonts in *Sources Chretiennes*.

The chapter on monasticism from the Desert Fathers to the Cistercians is also unsatisfactory. In view of Williams' concern that we should take conflict seriously, it is odd that he fails to see how much conflict there is in our monastic sources. He does indeed interpret the flight to the desert as a protest against the church of the city, but he does not see how much monastic literature is a protest against other kinds of monasticism. He does not do justice to pre-Egyptian types of monasticism, nor does he advert to the evidence (usually negative) of its survival as a source of tension and conflict in Egyptian monasticism. He does not mention the tension there is between, say, the *Historia Monachorum* and the *Apophthegmata*, or the important (latently polemical) shift that there is between the Greek sources and Cassian. He assumes far greater continuity in the concept of monastic obedience, for instance, than can really be substantiated, failing to appreciate the colossal change that occurs as monasticism becomes more institutionalised. The baneful influence of the *Regula Magistri* on Benedict is not mentioned at all, nor is the conflict between the stable, rule-bound monasticism of the Benedictine tradition and the periodic resurgences of free-lance monasticism, culminating in the clash between monks and friars in the 13th century. The friars, incidentally, are not discussed at all, which is a pity. The section on Cassian and Benedict (pp 101-5) seems to be more influenced by modern communitarian Romanticism than by genuine history.

This is unfortunate, not only as a matter of history, but also as a matter of spiritual theory, as the conflicts within religious life highlight two essential dilemmas of christianity: (i) Which is more important, safeguarding one's own christianity or risking everything to help one's brother?

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One may wonder whether anything really useful can be said about social ethics and the Christian in 89 pages, but the pres-

(The apostolic forms of religious life involve a real risk, as Jerome pointed out, and remain a highly ambivalent feature of the religious scene throughout the period treated by Williams): (ii) How far can one trust people's own motivation and discernment? (This is a crucial point at issue between friars and monks in the 13th century, but is already patently a problem in Cassian – witness his reinterpretation of *discretio* as following the *instituta patrum!*)

In the section on Eckhart it is unfortunate that Williams depends on pre-critical editions and translations. The splendid texts cited on p. 134, so far as I can discover, are not genuine; at least, I cannot find them in Quint, either in the published parts of the *editio maior* or in the modernised *editio minor*.

No doubt most readers will regret the absence of someone or other from Williams' book. I should have liked to see something on the friars, particularly the Franciscans, and something more on the English mystics. And the monastic section could profitably have been stretched to include Barsanuphius and Dorotheus in Gaza. But Williams has rightly preferred to take the authors who illustrate, for him, the major doctrinal issues. Spiritual theology is always and should always be, I suspect, to some extent polemical, because the clash between different versions of what it means to be a christian is one of the most successful, if crude, ways of preserving the vitality and richness of catholic tradition. And inevitably different views draw on different sources, both for approval and for disagreement. It is most unlikely that, in such an underdeveloped subject as serious spiritual theology, any one writer will be able to do justice to the whole complex texture of christian spirituality. Williams is to be thanked for giving us his view, and his book will enlighten and provoke us to a deeper understanding of our faith.

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ent book is not intended as a definitive manifesto. The text is based on the 1978 Ferguson Lectures and is, as Professor