

How is a dialogue possible if unbelief has to be regarded as sin, a rejection of God's graceful offer of himself? The answer given is that sinfulness must not be located just in the unbeliever, but in the believer as well. Doubt is to be inherent in faith, for God's revelation comes through man, and we all must have our doubts as regards the human representation of the divine revelation. For the professed unbeliever this doubt has turned into a rejection on account of the misbehaviour of the Christians, who have violated God's revelation in their theology and their institutions, and who, in addition, give very little evidence of God's presence in their lives.

So, if Christians would once again demonstrate the redeeming presence of God, and so proclaim how good faith in God is for the human condition, all will be well.

This may be so, but at the moment it looks as if secular man is finding the religious dimension

to existence quite independently of the Christian inspiration. This, of course, should not stop Christians finding the relevance of God in their own lives. But they may be a bit at a loss when they are backed up by a theology à la Reid. The split between God's revelation (from nowhere) and its appropriation in the human condition is incomprehensible. And so is Reid's concept of God. Had the author given more serious attention to the unbeliever's own analysis of the challenge of religious belief, he would have found that it was precisely *his* notion of God that was rejected because it renders religion meaningless. Reid's concept of the transcendent God creates a vacuum in which all religious aspirations will eventually evaporate. And so this lofty idea of God may hide a secularism which most of the unbelievers have left behind long ago.

ROB VAN DER HART

**A DREAM OF ORDER, The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-century Literature**, by Alice Chandler, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1971. 278 pp. £2.50.

Faced with the mechanist view of the world and with its capitalist application to social and industrial life, those who opposed it in the nineteenth century could still seek for the antidote in the past. They sought it in the medieval world and in feudalism in particular. Such is the argument of this book; and what has to be said at once is that the term 'medieval' is used rather too generally. *Tract XC* is referred to, for example, as 'medieval'; while the revival of the religious orders receives only a footnote.

The absence of a proper consideration of the religious element in what has equally loosely been called the Gothic revival is a serious weakness, since it could also be argued that all religions, and the Christian religion in particular, commit their believers to some kind of 'organic' conception of society. Christians are bidden to realize their beliefs in terms of their membership one of another; and since that membership is talked of in metaphors of the Body of Christ, then an expectation arises that the forms and structures of society are themselves alive—or can be made so. If this is so, then the post-medieval development of a society based upon new principles of financial and technological mechanism is bound to constitute a continuing challenge to such religious beliefs and their associated metaphysical pre-suppositions. These changes are still interpreted as 'putting an end to all

feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations', or as bringing in a new age of 'sophisters, economists, and calculators'. Of the preceding quotations, the first is from Marx, the second from Burke; but when 'the hardships of life' come by chance and with injustice, all seem to agree that 'it kills a man's love for his country', or, in other words, that a past moral order has been violated. What Marx, Burke, and Coleridge also have in common is their vision of the alternative society as one in which, when sawing down a tree, 'we shall discuss metaphysics, criticize poetry when hunting a buffalo, and write sonnets while following the plough'. This could be Marx in the *German Ideology*: it is, in fact, Southey; but the vision of Pantisocracy is confined neither to the Left nor to the Right bank of the Susquehanna.

Where what Miss Chandler calls the 'medievalists' (Scott, Disraeli, Carlyle, etc.) differed from Marx is the extent to which they failed to give sufficient weight to the uniqueness of the process which had occasioned the changes they lamented. Instead, they sought for a simple 'home-coming' to the past. Yet without this framework of medievalism or Gothic revivalism—call it what we will—it is difficult to see how old values could have been preserved—how without the Gothic chrysalis the socialist gadfly could have been born. The age of chivalry may be dead, but its conception of 'largesse' (or public wealth) has never been

more necessary. One does not easily turn one's back on Ruskin's remark that an employer is just only as he deals with a subordinate 'as he would with his own son'. And his conclusion 'that such paternalism is a mirror of the basic paternalism of the natural order' presses the question to what extent Christianity, with its talk of a Father and of the Body of Christ, is not, of its very nature, always committed to some kind of *organic* hope or intention for society.

Although the chapters on Ruskin and Morris are good, Miss Chandler leaves her best wine until last—and then it is only half a glass. Her concluding chapter on the failure of the medieval ideal, as it affected the life of the American, Henry Adams, ought to bring the implications of her argument to a head. Adams began by believing that the Middle Ages was the time when 'man held the highest idea of himself as a unit in a unified universe'. But, on his return to the United States, he discovered that this was merely the form taken by his love affair with Europe, and with a Europe already dead: modern man's conception of the First Cause was not merely 'mechanical' and self-determining, it was of a meaningless and uncontrollable force, which in its social and political form implied the inevitable decay of small and democratic institutions. This fear of bigness became more typical of Adams as he grew older; and it is associated with his vision of a megalopolis, in which degradation, not progress, is the law of history. It was Faith

alone that supported the Gothic Arch, and, 'if Faith fails, Heaven is lost'. This is what happened to Adams in the Land of Opportunity. Will it happen inevitably to us all?

The maxim—'increase the size and the quality of life goes down'—certainly seems to apply without exception—to breweries as much as to car factories. Yet we never seem to be more than 'on the way' to ensuring a higher quality of life. Are we any nearer a solution, therefore, than when Coleridge, writing in 1820 on the conflict in Scott's novels, identified 'the two great moving principles of social humanity', as 'religious adherence to the past... the desire and admiration of the permanent... and the passion for the increase of knowledge, instincts of *progression* and *free agency*'? One hundred and fifty years later a Soviet poet speaks of himself as 'like a train / rushing for many years now / between the city of Yes / and the city of No'. Does an 'age of transition' have to be forced to come to an end, therefore; or were the dreamers of order right, and 'transition' is the wrong metaphor?

Yevtushenko's answer is that I live only as I  
 'let my nerves be strained  
 like the wires  
 between the city of No.  
 and the city of Yes'.

JOHN COULSON

WINCKELMANN, by Wolfgang Leppmann. *Victor Gollancz Ltd*, London, 1971. 312 pp. £3.

The jacket claims that this is the first biography in English of Johann Winckelmann (there are some dozen in German), and it is a pity it is such a poor one. It fails in the first place as a biography of 'the father of archaeology as we know it' (p. viii); while there is much discussion of Winckelmann's development and work as an art historian (and most of what is good in the book is devoted to an exposition of Winckelmann's methods and conclusions in dealing with Greek and hellenistic sculpture) there is no systematic attempt at all to demonstrate that this in fact entitles Winckelmann rather than, say, Schliemann, to be rated 'father of archaeology as we know it'. In fact the author excuses himself the task of dealing with this question in the foreword where he says (p. vii) 'even the most enterprising among those [scholars] that deal with classical

antiquity, the archaeologists, tend to be forgotten nowadays unless they also excelled at something else, as Schliemann did at making money'. Not only is Schliemann in fact primarily remembered because he was a scholar, and one whose methods were much more closely related to present-day archaeological techniques than were Winckelmann's (who never actually did any field archaeology at all), but there is here, and throughout the body of the book, an insistence upon a dichotomy between a person's 'character' and 'work' which is both unsound and often positively irritating. This dichotomy (the second great weakness of the book) reveals itself in two ways. Firstly there is the avowed attempt to rescue Winckelmann from the obscurity due to 'incrustations of dead scholarship' by showing that, scholar though he was,