

significance is to remain undiluted? Houlden's suspicion that the 'poetic' language of the prologue to the Fourth Gospel was misinterpreted by later theologians reflects an apparent conviction that metaphysical discourse is wholly inappropriate when it comes to describing a historical episode. Yet it is arguable that the centrality of Jesus demands the very use of such discourse, and that without it the central conviction of the Christian faith cannot be articulated. In this respect, the juxtaposition of different modes of discourse is a vital feature of Christian confession, rather than the anomaly that Houlden suggests. (p. 117)

These queries, however, should not be allowed to conceal the quality of the essays nor the many probing questions that Houlden raises. He is a scholar who stands on the inside of the Christian faith but who insists that uncomfortable questions must be faced. In this respect, his work has a certain prophetic quality. These essays will stimulate and enrich the thinking of all those who believe in the theological necessity and relevance of New Testament studies but who are concerned by the increasing detachment of professional biblical criticism from mainstream Christianity .

DAVID FERGUSSON

THE IDEA OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY: A CRITIQUE OF SOME CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTIONS by Gordon Graham, *The University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN and London, 1990.*
Pp xiv + 190.

In this book, Gordon Graham uses the tools of analytic philosophy to unpack a conceptually adequate account of the Christian virtue of charity. Graham's intention is that his arguments will '... put an end to a lot of well-intentioned but woolly-minded talk. . .' on these important issues. (113)

The structure of Graham's well-articulated yet sometimes difficult to follow argument goes something like this:

a. A Christian ethic cannot be constructed independently of the theological concerns of the New Testament. (Chapter 1)

b. 'a' entails an analysis of charity as a necessary Christian virtue.

c. Two contemporary accounts elucidating what counts for charity are inadequate conceptually and in direct opposition to the tenets of Christian theology:

1. The attempt to identify the exercise of charity, especially through pastoral counselling, with 'psychological healing.' (Chapter II)

2. The reduction of charity into the seeking of political and social justice, especially as spelled out in contemporary liberation theology. (Chapter III)

d. A conceptual elucidation of the virtue of Christian charity, Graham suggests, is 'an expression of the repentant's gracious response to God's grace.' (Chapter IV)

Graham concludes his book with a brief appendix offering an analysis of the conceptual relation between Christianity and Marxism.

This is a broad yet tightly argued analysis of several concepts accepted almost as 'politically correct' by some mainstream theologians, especially in the United States. Graham wants to at least clear up the conceptual muddles, of which he thinks there are many, and to offer his own analysis of what might be necessary for a conceptual analysis of Christian charity. As a political philosopher, Graham is in the line of liberal thinkers following Locke: Dworkin, Rawls and Nozick. Graham writes that 'broadly, I think that the liberal state with its heavy emphasis on individual liberties and equality before the law is the state most compatible with Christian theology. . . .' (p. 171) That this is in direct opposition to much contemporary liberation theology is obvious. Graham argues that liberation theology, with its principles flowing from Marxism, is conceptually muddy and theoretically inconsistent.

This is a philosophically interesting and challenging book. As a philosopher, I found Graham's clever use of Parfit's analysis from *Reasons and Persons* suggesting that a Christian theology might 'exploit' successfully a physicalist philosophy of mind fascinating. This is an interesting non-Cartesian attempt to save the concept of an immortal soul. Whether it will work is another question, but the argument is indeed clever.

A few observations regarding Graham's conclusions:

a. In the chapter on pastoral counselling, Graham criticizes the value theory of Carl Rogers as incompatible with a Christian ethic. Graham seems to assume that Rogers's theory lacks any cognitive content. While Rogers at times is himself woolly on these matters, nonetheless in several articles he put forward an ethical naturalism structurally similar with the arguments found in Aquinas's *Commentary on Aristotle's Ethics*. If Aquinas developed a naturalistic ethic compatible with Christianity and if Rogers's argument has strong affinities with Aquinas, then Graham needs to re-think his argument rejecting Rogers's theory of value.

b. At times when Graham considers Kantian ethics, it appears that he has Rawls in mind more than Kant. While Kant certainly argues for the autonomous individual, he would not accept, it seems to me, the conclusion involving justifying almost any thought-out free choice, which one finds Rawls justifying. That Graham is in the camp with liberal political thinkers is obvious throughout the book. This is not my quibble here—but rather that he uses Kant to justify what I think is really a Rawlsian account of freedom and choice.

c. It is not evident that the almost libertarian society Graham suggests really will meet the needs of the poor through charity. At times, Graham sounds like Ronald Reagan calling for voluntarism to

compensate for the conservative slashing of social program budgets in the United States. Reaganomics certainly has not helped advance 'God's kingdom.'

This book is part of a new series published by the University of Notre Dame Press, 'The Library of Religious Philosophy,' under the general editorship of Thomas V. Morris. Philosophers interested in religious concepts can look forward to additional challenging books in this exciting series from Notre Dame. The assumption is that clear thinking is always better than muddled thinking, especially on religious matters. This is a lesson from analytic philosophy which theologians always need to remember. Graham has helped foster this lesson throughout this important book.

ANTHONY J. LISSKA

GOD AND HISTORY. ASPECTS OF BRITISH THEOLOGY 1875-1914
by Peter Hinchliff. *Clarendon Press, Oxford*. Pp. 267. 1992. £32.50.

Here we have a solid survey of 'British' theology, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Church, which covers the forty or so years before the outbreak of war in 1914, a period during which our island theologians took themselves rather seriously but wrote little that is still read today. Peter Hinchliff takes as a guide through the maze of publication the whole range of problems raised for theologians 'by new ways of understanding history and its relationship with faith'. He starts from Newman, whose theory of development he describes as having died with him, and Jowett, whose Liberal Protestant individualism he regards as a cul-de-sac. Then we have, as we are bound to do, an essay on 'The essays in *Lux Mundi*', followed by a chapter on the 'British' idealists, who are criticised on the ground that 'a purely metaphysical Christ was no real substitute for a historical one, for the Christ of christian tradition needed to be related to the Jesus of history'. From the 'traditional' point of view this is self-evident, but the source of idealism's appeal was that both the Christ-of-theology and the Jesus-of-the-New-Testament were increasingly seen as ambiguous human productions. Hinchliff echoes the usual dismissal of Hegelianism—'the dominant philosophy in Britain until as late as the 1940s'—as though the theological problem had disappeared, but if it has one suspects that it has vanished in an idealist direction. From this point of view it is strange that in his chapter on Catholic Modernism Hinchliff gives little room to Tyrrell, who in his later writing exalted a Christ of present experience and virtually dismissed the religious significance of any historical Jesus. There follow a chapter on A.M. Fairbairn, which will interest specialists, and another on R.J. Campbell, of whom enough has been written before. The book ends with an excellent discussion of B.H. Streeter and of theology in about 1914.

This is inevitably a familiar cast and 'Faith and History' is a familiar drama, which, when directed by a theologian, usually ends with Faith