

group of problems, which provide particularly delicate work for a Catholic. What is at issue is nothing less than what it is to be a Christian.

It remains to lodge a protest against the translation. Neither of the translators appears to be English, whence incorrect usage occurs repeatedly. Long and obscure sentences occur very frequently, and they should have been divided. Indeed, the obscurity is such that it was not possible for the printers fully to rectify

an accident which seems to have happened to the type shortly before printing. Instead of pages 103 and 107, the first printing as circulated to reviewers contained two pages of an entirely different book, and had to be withdrawn. The printers deserve every sympathy: so obscure were the sentences leading across to the incorrect pages that even the serious reader could not at first be sure of the discontinuity! SWITHUN M'CLOUGHLIN, O.S.B.

MODERN MAN AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, by Max Thurian. *Lutterworth*, London, 1968. 80 pp. 5s.
THE JOURNEY INWARDS, by F. C. Happold. *D.L.T.*, London, 1968. 12s. 6d.

Of the making of practical handbooks to Christian living there is no end. These two paperbacks are a further addition to the pile. Each is the work of an author, already distinguished for more weighty books, who now produces a popular version for practical living. Max Thurian, the monk, takes the general line that prayer is possible in the modern world only as an attitude in day-to-day living. F. C. Happold, the layman, encourages the reader to set time aside for prayer. Both are anxious to help 'modern man'. Neither, however, says anything new about the spiritual life.

Thurian has written what amounts to a competent survey of traditional themes of the Christian life—unity of man, simplicity in prayer, suffering, liturgy, community—in modern language and in an attractive way. Happold's book is a book on prayer. He knows a lot about it and is conversant with non-Christian approaches. It is useful to read his helpful short descriptions of non-Christian

techniques and aids. Some will criticize his book for being, in fact, insufficiently Christian, savouring rather of the 'perennial philosophy' standpoint. My own criticism would be that the author concentrates too much, for a short book, on techniques and not enough on God. This is always the danger with books on prayer—they tend to be about means and not about the end. Prayer is rather like riding a bicycle. You do it best when you don't go too much into how it's done. Happold has not entirely escaped this pitfall, and throughout gives the impression of a cultivated headmaster discussing with his sixth form the various experiences of prayer that men have had. The living God into whose hands it is dangerous to fall is not central to the book.

Readers of *New Blackfriars* will look in vain in either book for recognition of the socio-political commitment which is inherent in following Christ. This *genre* of book has not yet taken cognizance of that. JOHN DALRYMPLE

FREEWILL AND DETERMINISM—A Study of Rival Concepts of Man, by R. L. Franklin. *Routledge & Kegan Paul*, London, 1968. 340 pp. 45s.

Professor Franklin has written an important book which clarifies the dispute between Libertarian and Determinist by means of a careful study of a wide range of relevant concepts, and suggests that it is based, in the last analysis, on fundamentally divergent concepts of man and his place in the universe.

The so-called problem of freewill arises from the apparent incompatibility of two commonly cherished beliefs: (1) that we can often decide freely, and that this is presupposed by moral praise or blame; (2) that there must be a sufficient reason why one event should occur rather than another. The Libertarian maintains that in the process of deliberation, decision, and consequent action, there is at least one point of time when the total situation

is not a sufficient condition for the immediately subsequent one. The Determinist maintains that every total situation is a sufficient condition for what follows it. The hard-line Determinist draws from the principle of Sufficient Reason the conclusion that we are not free to choose in any significant sense. The soft-line Determinist takes an intermediate position seeking to reconcile Libertarianism with Determinism by giving a Pickwickian sense to freedom of choice. The Dissolutionist stands apart, claiming that the whole dispute is a pseudo-problem resting on conceptual muddles.

The author examines these positions and shows that they may shade into one another. He rejects Dissolutionism. He considers the question whether Determinism and Libertarian

ism are empirical or conceptual doctrines, and shows that this is not as sharp a dichotomy as it seems. But he rejects both the phenomenological argument of the Libertarian that no man can see his choices as determined at the moment when he makes them, and the Determinist's logical argument that if a choice could not be explained in causal terms it would be fundamentally inexplicable. He maintains that practical reasoning about what to *do* takes quite a different form from theoretical reasoning about what *happens*, and that there is a corresponding distinction between 'personal' and 'physical' language. A Determinist account of action cannot be offered in personal language, and the personal language of practical reason is not concerned with determinist-type explanations.

Any form of Determinism which suggests that our wills can never influence our decisions, or that our decisions can never alter the future course of events, is dismissed as absurd. The only challenge to Libertarianism that needs to be taken seriously is that our wills and decisions are themselves determined by influences which are hidden and which therefore cannot be taken into account in reaching decisions. The author interprets this challenge as the assertion that 'any precisely similar agent in a precisely similar situation would always go through precisely the same chain of reasoning and reach a precisely similar conclusion' (p. 112). The Determinist, he thinks, is essentially concerned to apply the principle of Sufficient Reason to human action as it is applied to physical events, i.e. in terms of nomically necessary *regularity*; while the Libertarian essentially needs to deny this.

It is surprising that Professor Franklin should see the dispute as turning on this notion of regularity. For the Determinist's claim, when put in these terms, is surely quite untenable. If I am in a situation, then any precisely similar agent in a precisely similar situation would surely be *me* in *this* situation. The point is not the purely logical one of the identity of indiscernibles: that can be guarded against by the qualification 'precisely similar in all relevant respects'. The point is rather that the relevant respects seem to be just those that serve to identify the agent and the situation. To put it another way, no man could be a precisely similar agent in a precisely similar situation on some later occasion in his life history. For he would be that much older, and the weight of additional experience would

make a difference that could not be dismissed as irrelevant. This is the very essence of the radical discontinuity between man and the material universe on which the Libertarian insists. You can rely on water always boiling at a certain temperature in constant atmospheric conditions because water is always water; but John Doe is never again, in the same sense, John Doe.

The author's final conclusion is that the Libertarian is right in maintaining that in the context of human choice there is a moment when the total situation is not a sufficient condition for what follows. He locates this point by reference to the agent's ability to direct his attention to this or that feature of the total situation. It is here, if anywhere, that it would often be right to maintain in retrospect not merely that the agent in that situation had the capacity to direct his attention elsewhere than he did, but that the capacity could have been exercised in a different way.

The author does not claim that any conclusive argument could be brought forward to prove this contention, nor does he rule out in principle the possibility that advances in neurophysiology might disprove it. His own position as a Libertarian rests in the last analysis upon his view of man as a creature with a radical ability to grapple with and transform, rather than merely in the last resort to manifest, the total influences of his heredity and environment. The acceptance of total Determinism would, he holds, be inconsistent with such a concept of man, and also with traditional morality based upon an ethic of intentions and respect for human personality. These objections to Determinism are persuasive rather than conclusive. For the dispute between the Determinist and the Libertarian is axiological as well as ontological. The notion of reality, as the author says, straddles fact and value, being concerned with significance or importance as well as with existence, and a man cannot rest content with an ultimate explanation which does violence to his values. The Determinist's insistence that there must be a sufficient condition for every human choice reflects his conviction of the illuminative and value-preserving features of the Law of Causation interpreted as the Principle of Sufficient Reason. The Libertarian's denial of the possibility reflects his conviction of the illuminative and value-preserving features of the insistence on human freedom. Such arguments tend to go round in

circles: the Libertarian rejects a nomological explanation of choice because it is incompatible with human freedom in his sense: the Determinist rejects the Libertarian view of freedom because it would allow no nomological explanation of choice. The author ends with a

plea for philosophical dialogue in such disputes, directed at uncovering fundamental differences of value, which would perhaps lead to a deeper understanding by both parties of the issues involved.

JOSEPH COOMBE-TENNANT, O.S.B.

LORD ACTON AND HIS TIMES, by David Mathew. *Eyre & Spottiswoode*, London, 1968. 70s.

It is fortunate that Dr Mathew is not inhibited from writing by his immense knowledge, whereas the subject of this book so clearly was. A mass of reviews, a volume of lectures, the respect of contemporary scholars, attest the enormous erudition of Lord Acton; he has some claim to be the greatest historian who never wrote a History of anything.

His erudition does not exhaust the interest he still inspires, a remarkable phenomenon, for his surviving works make very difficult reading and his one memorable statement, about absolute power involving absolute corruption, is nearly nonsense. But this remark affords a clue to his magnetism; his thought was prophetic. Power was, indeed, misused by the world he knew so widely, but it was for the twentieth century to exhibit the fullest consequences yet seen by mankind of power divorced from that Christian moral rigidity which was the *daemon* of this Catholic nobleman, politician and scholar.

No wonder that his Catholicism puzzled the Mannings among his co-religionists, the Creightons among his separated brethren. In the world of Hans Küng and Karl Barth, he would have found minds of his own Teutonic thoroughness, equally informed by the spirit of Faith. He would have shared with many learned Catholics in a doctrinal and sacramental certainty and indifference to the outcries of less mature minds. He belonged to the climate of Vatican II, not that of Vatican I.

Dr Mathew has fairly entitled this book *Lord Acton and His Times*, for he has sought primarily to illuminate the varied worlds in which Acton moved, while allowing the historian to speak for himself. It is in this that we are most fortunate, for the Archbishop's interests and insights are multiple and exact and, above all, articulate. We are therefore enriched by a whole gallery of portraits, landscapes and interiors, John Morley and Queen Victoria, de Tocqueville and Edward Creighton, the Bavarian lakes and the Shropshire marches, the Board of Admiralty and the Vatican. A noble landowner in England and

Germany, a sometime Member of Parliament and Lord-in-Waiting to the Queen, a power behind Gladstone's throne, Regius Professor at Cambridge, Acton moved among a number of the then centres of world-power.

He belongs, therefore, in time to the titans of the Victorian period; as a writer he moves few imaginations by his actual words, for, as Dr Mathew acutely observes, his use of English, especially of its adjectives, is curiously muffled and unappealing; he was more fluent in German. But his significance is great and contemporary. He was a cradle and a lifelong practising Catholic, despite the suspicion engendered by his attitude after Vatican I, and he did not find this incompatible with his immense knowledge of history, including ecclesiastical history, nor with an intense devotion to truth as revealed by historical research. He was a rigorous moralist; to him murder for political motives was still a sin against the Decalogue. He was a Liberal and planned a History of Freedom. Here, one would value his own monumental ability to distinguish between concepts, for Liberalism and Freedom are not synonymous though both, it would seem, demand definition by negatives. Despite this, the claim to be a Liberal denotes a positive attitude, a confidence in the triumph of truth and goodness, unjust restraints being removed. Acton, in fact, displays a massive confidence parallel to that of his great Victorian contemporaries. For them, perhaps, it was the material progress made during their lifetimes that inspired optimism. Acton, for his part, would seem to have possessed deeper and more unshakeable reasons. His affinities appear to lie with the outgoing assuredness of John XXIII that the core of the Church's teaching will always harmonize with the valid aspirations and discoveries of man. This, one surmises, is the secret of the historian's apparent imperturbability as he moves through the corridors of power and learning, here brilliantly depicted, towards his grave by the Tegernsee.

PAUL FOSTER, O.P.