

mortem state. His penultimate chapter (to guide a cosmic DIY enthusiast?) tackles the problem of 'How to create the best possible world'!

This outline of some of its contents should indicate that Creel stirs a number of controversial hornets' nests. Although he considers (as, incidentally, does Hartshorne) that many of the fundamental problems are to be resolved 'by conceptual analysis', and while many of his arguments display such analysis, there is on some occasions an unfortunate tendency—as in the discussion of divine 'feeling'—to resort to more emotive and hence less convincing modes of justification. Indeed there are places where Creel seems to be frustrated at his inability to convince some of the opposition and exasperated with their views. It may be thought, that he comes near the truth about the issue when he wonders whether the disagreements over divine responsiveness express 'an emotional impasse—two people with different intuitions or emotional needs.' If so the conceptual analysis that is required to reach a credible solution may have to extend further than he has gone and investigate the *whole* story of theistic understanding and belief. On more specific issues, it is questionable whether talk about divine creativity is as clear and straightforward as Creel's use of it implies, whether we can be as confident as he seems to be about the applicability of our conceptual analyses to the divine, and whether any future compensation (*pace* American lawyers) can ever be a satisfactory recompense for some of the suffering which persons endure. Finally, I am confident that Creel will not have convinced all the process theologians and that they will come back with their defences. It is to be hoped that they display the same attempt at comprehensiveness and conceptual clarity that Creel does in his stimulating study.

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**UNDERSTANDING KARL RÄHNER—AN INTRODUCTION TO HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT** by Herbert Vorgrimler. Translated by John Bowden. *S.C.M. Press*, pp. viii + 198, £5.95.

Anyone hoping for a 'Rahner without Tears' in potted form would find only a little of that in this book. But there would be compensations, not least in finding out what sort of person Rahner was. Herbert Vorgrimler, his friend and collaborator, shows him to have been just as kindly and open as he appears on the cover photograph. We are told of a book published in 1982 containing 'letters from young people in Vienna on every possible problem of their lives and the answers of a man who was almost eighty'. He liked serving in the refectory because it gave him the chance to take a meal to a down-and-out in the parlour. He organised and typed out the whole of a diploma thesis for a psychology student who 'had such a "block" that she could not get it down in writing'. This sort of thing is not, indeed, extraordinary in Jesuit history, but it becomes staggering when we realize that Rahner's biography contains almost four thousand items—even though the same work may occur in the list several times under different headings. Vorgrimler mentions Rahner's 'characteristic dourness' and his reference to 'my Black Forest temperament... a degree of sceptical melancholy'. He was a restless person and regardless of landscapes. But we are also told of his cheerfulness, childlikeness and even playfulness. He got up very early so as to say Mass undisturbed. He was not in the least stuffy. It is not easy to make a composite picture of all this, but clearly he was a most lovable person. A typical incident concerns the black tie which Romero Guardini, his predecessor at Munich, had asked him to wear. When he was to have a private audience with the Pope in 1979, he thought poorly of the notion that he should put on a clerical collar, so that the usual photograph of the Pope with his visitor was cancelled.

Vorgrimler begins his account of Rahner's thought, which is scattered through the book, by emphasizing the importance of an *experience* of God as fundamental to it. This is certainly right, and, as he says, goes far to explain the value and extent of Rahner's

influence. In regard to Rahner's 'life with God', he speaks of 'a blind groping for the silent mystery, and yet, sometimes, a joyful immersion in the blessedness of this mystery'. The *incomprehensibility* of God is the standard topic in this area. It is bound up, I think, with his refusal to allow any mitigation of the problem of evil by referring to the effects of sin and with his Aristotelian epistemology. Vorgrimler does not touch on these things. Faced by the barrier of Rahner's unreadableness, he finds some encouraging passages to quote, but he cannot call them typical. A passage on nature and grace is quoted to show why Rahner had to write long sentences in order to avoid misunderstandings. But that is not the only way in which it can be done, and the sentence, difficult in itself, is left largely unexplained. A reader might give up at that point, which would be a pity, because anyone concerned with Christian belief at any level will find rewards from time to time. The story of Rahner's life and that of his writings are largely the same thing, so that alternating between the one and the other is a reasonable enough procedure. But it makes for rather heavy going. An Appendix of over forty pages containing letters from Rahner to the author while he was in Rome for Vatican II might have been shortened with advantage. The state of Catholic philosophy and theology when Rahner came on the scene is well described, and his effects upon it are summed up. I must now content myself with referring to a few points mentioned by the author on which Rahner has been specially influential: his view in regard to the Assumption that 'Mary would not have been an individual (unique?) case but every dead person would be taken up by God into a state of consummation which involved corporeality' (p. 89), the fact that those who die unbaptized 'are no longer thought to be destined to eternal punishment' and the statement that 'sacraments can be realizations, actualizations of the Church in particular central events of Christian existence' (p. 109)—the last point, left undiscussed, may mean little to most readers. I must add that the sad story of Urs von Balthasar's breach with Rahner is told by one closely concerned.

It could be the joint result of bad printing and bad proof-reading, but the state of the text is such that undue haste in the translating seems to be to some extent responsible. To take examples, the English translation of *Schriften zur Theologie* is called *Explorations in Theology*, also *Theological Explorations*, instead of *Theological Investigations*; occasionally sentences, as they stand, seem to make no sense, and there is a good deal of clumsy English: dogmatic theology ('systematic', if anyone prefers) is sometimes referred to as 'the doctrine of faith', the part instead of the whole.

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**A NEW DICTIONARY OF LITURGY AND WORSHIP ED. BY J.G. Davies. SCM Press. 544 pp. £19.50.**

The SCM *Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* was first published in 1972, one of a family of four dictionaries, the other members of which cover theology, spirituality and Christian ethics. Several factors have persuaded the publishers and editor that a thoroughly updated edition is now required. First, additions need to be made in the bibliographies, which are one of the *Dictionary's* most helpful features. Secondly, as Professor Davies explains, the last fourteen years have been the "harvest time of the liturgical movement", and have witnessed the promulgation of many revised rites in the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Free Churches. Thirdly, various movements in secular thought have had an influence on liturgical practice. Accordingly, increased sensitivity to the concerns of women has led to the inclusion of new entries on, for example, 'Feminist Liturgical Movement', 'Inclusive Language' and 'Ordination of Women'. Reflection on the bodily aspect of human nature has prompted the composition of articles on such subjects as 'Liturgical Dance'. Fourthly, the editor decided to devote entries to the liturgical needs of various groups of people who had been neglected in the earlier volume, such as children, families and the handicapped.

As a result the second edition is nearly half as long again as the first. The list of the