

ULTIMATE CONCERN, a Dialogue with Students, by Paul Tillich. Edited by D. Mackenzie Brown. S.C.M. Press Ltd., 25s.

This book is a record of a seminar comprising eight dialogues between students of the University of California and Dr Tillich. Among the topics discussed are the problems raised by the encounter of the major religious systems: Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism and some Eastern religions. The relation of what Tillich calls 'quasi-religious' movements such as Nationalism, Socialism, Fascism and Communism to what he calls 'religion' in the broader sense (ultimate concern) is also treated. In the course of the discussion various aspects of Christian theology such as 'dogma', 'the church', and 'the uniqueness of Christ' are brought into focus.

As will be expected, Tillich has a number of provoking things to say; what he has to say about dogma, especially, is likely to be of interest. He attacks both organized religions and social or political systems which try to make their own symbols and values the objects of man's ultimate concern, but he has much to say about how a concern with the ultimate can be manifest through political, social or religious commitment. His Ecclesiology and Christology as presented here are nevertheless disappointing; he seems to think of the Church as a purely human and social institution with the

function of providing symbols for man's approach to the ultimate (Tillich's term for God as unknowable, which he likes to distinguish from the God of dogmatic formulations). What seems to be lacking is an appreciation of the Church as Christ's presence in the world, in a different way, for example, from the way in which a great reformer might be present in the social or political institution he has founded.

All this is partly because, in this dialogue, Tillich is not allowed to develop his full range of thought on any of the topics raised. The tone is set by the students rather than by him, and the result is that less than justice is done to the richness and subtlety of his thinking. The students involved in the discussion are pursuing various disciplines, 'ranging from philosophy, religion, and psychology to mathematics, biology, and political science' (p. xi, D.M.B.); and this system of enquiry (the seminar takes the form of question and answer) does not enable him to treat any of the questions raised in a sufficiently systematic way for him to discuss them at any great depth. For this reason, the book is likely to disappoint anyone already acquainted with his work.

VICTOR BEDANI, O.P.

THEOLOGY IN RECONSTRUCTION by T. F. Torrance. S.C.M. Press 1965 45s.

Professor Torrance is one of the few Theologians in the classical tradition writing today. Most of the books one reads are either essays in spiritual autobiography or reflections occasioned by immediate contemporary problems. What makes Professor Torrance's work so refreshing is that it rests on a deep knowledge of traditional sources (which means that he writes within a perspective wider and deeper than is possible if one's view is restricted to a particular historical moment) but it does not remain there; he attempts to relate what he has learned from the past to the kind of thinking that characterises the contemporary world. Even if one feels that he is perhaps more successful in stating traditional themes than in relating them to analogies drawn from the scientific world, his whole treatment is a good example of hard theological reasoning, at

times brilliant and challenging. It is perhaps a little tiresome that so distinguished a theologian should so persistently confuse the tradition of the Roman Church with the opinions of individual theologians, but this is no doubt a reflection of the much greater importance of the Rabbi in the Reformed world.

In the latter part of the book two Essays are of great distinction; that on the doctrine of St Athanasius and St Basil on the Spirit and the very stimulating one on The Roman Doctrine of Grace from the point of view of Reformed Theology. It is, however, the first part of the book that is of the greatest interest. In it Professor Torrance is concerned with the problem of the relation of language to being as it affects the theologian. He argues that there must be a shift from *seeing* to *hearing* and that the relation one is concerned with is acoustic. God bears

witness to himself; representations can only have meaning within the frame of reference of his gracious dealings with man. The purpose of theology is not to describe God, its language is persuasive and ostensive. There is an analogy of being but it must rest on the analogy of grace (even our knowledge of ourselves involves our grace relation to God). This is comprehensible if it be noted that though Professor Torrance

will have nothing to do with Theology as a science of abstractions he does think, with Calvin, that we have a direct intuitive knowledge of God in his Word, not a seeing but an intuitive audition. By this he means that all true knowledge of God arises out of obedience in that through it we are thrown upon the objective reality of God himself.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

A PRIESTLY PEOPLE by Karl Hermann Schelkle, 7s.;

EVERYDAY THINGS by Karl Rahner, 6s.;

THE CHURCH AND FREEDOM by Hans Küng, 6s.;

Theological Meditations, edited by Hans Küng, published by *Sheed and Ward*.

These are three of a set of attractive looking publications by Sheed & Ward of Theological Meditations, edited by Hans Küng. *A Priestly People* is a very fine meditation, by Karl Hermann Schelkle, on the manifestation and activity of the Spirit in the People of God. He develops and explores his theme with a wealth of scriptural quotations from both the Old and the New Testaments. It is a short (57 pages), but very concentrated work and each page should provide the reader with many fruitful meditations on the nature and the workings of the Spirit.

In *Everyday Things*, Karl Rahner offers us a series of reflections on those aspects of our lives which are not normally classed as theological. Such activities as working, getting about, sleeping, laughing, sitting down, may appear as trifling or common things, but they, 'form part of man's ultimate personality and as such are, or ought to be, integrated into his life . . . little things too, have unutterable depths . . . (they are) heralds of eternity' (p. 3). The short meditations on 'Work' and 'Grace in everyday life', both have some useful insights which would help one to view Christianity as something integral to and permeating the whole of human existence, but the overall feeling about the book, is one of disappointment. I sometimes had the feeling that Rahner was groping for things to say. This disappointment is not helped by the fact that we are offered 41 rather small pages of not all that exciting Karl Rahner, for six shillings.

Hans Küng was one of a few people who, several years ago, helped me to see that Christianity could be something vital, relevant, even exciting; thus I cannot claim to be objective in recommending this short work, *The*

*Church and Freedom*. It isn't enough to try to whitewash with glib apologetics, accusations brought against the Church that she betrayed the gospel of Christ and the freedom which the gospel has brought. Rather isn't it a proof of Christian freedom to confess that, 'there have on innumerable occasions been sins committed against the children of God committed in our Church, and that they are committed to this day? . . . Every manifestation in the Church of lack of freedom . . . contributes towards making the Church less believable in the eyes of the world and of men in general; and that is a miserable disaster' (pp. 7 and 8). The Church proclaiming the gospel of Christ, is the dwelling place of freedom and is meant to bring true freedom. But this true freedom lies, 'not in man himself, . . . but in the freedom of God, in the freedom of his grace setting us free in Christ' (p. 13). If the Church is the dwelling place of freedom, then this freedom should 'shine out everywhere through her institutions and constitutions, her ministries and ordinances' (p. 19). But he is not advocating some sort of anti-nomianism; thus, 'Just as there can be no true order in the Church without true freedom, so there can be no true freedom in the Church without order' (p. 25). In the final chapter, he cites instances in which freedom in the Church should be manifest, but, alas (and scandalously) has not always been so. These are, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech and freedom of action.

Küng always gives the impression that he is passionately committed to what he is writing and that he is in a state of excited agony to make his point. The result is always for me, stimulating and refreshing.

ALBAN WESTON, O.P.