

earthly justice and is God's gift of victory over sin and death, which it is beyond human capacity to attain in its fulness (*Gaudium et Spes* 39).

The aim of seeing how social teaching is received in the secular world is a good one, but this imposes obligations upon contributors and editors. To be fairly interpreted an encyclical must be read in the light of earlier teaching. Tabb seems unaware of Paul VI's challenge to the presuppositions of free trade and international financial manipulation. Interdisciplinary scholarship demands care in the handling of unfamiliar sources and concepts. Hobgood completely misunderstands John Paul II's remarks on solidarity and charity, seeing solidarity as isolated acts rather than as the systematic practice of a virtue (S.R.S. 38–40) and construing charity as the cold, unfeeling act of one disdainfully discharging a mere duty, instead of being the summit of Christian moral life and the virtue which embraces all others.

All in all, the book is a little disappointing. Material ranges from the theological to the sociological, from the global to the regional. It lacks cohesion and direction. The offerings are perhaps too disparate and some too uncritical of their own assumptions. They need to be read with discrimination. The title promised more. A more rigorous analysis of the concept of solidarity in its origins and in its content might have helped. Suggestions for the concerted implementation of the encyclical's proposals for effective solidarity, based not on ideologies of materialism, but on the Gospel, would have been useful. The underlying vision of development from the standpoint of Christian anthropology has been captured and sketched out by some of the contributors noted above and this will be helpful to anyone seeking to understand the contribution of this important encyclical.

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TIME AND ETERNITY, by Brian Leftow. *Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1991. Pp.xii + 377. £32.75*

When the hymn-writer Isaac Watts wrote the lines

Nature and time quite naked lie
To thy immense survey,
From the formation of the sky
To the great burning day

Eternity, with all its years,
Stands present in thy view;
To thee there's nothing old appears—
Great God! there's nothing new!

he was expressing what was then the common Christian understanding of God's relation to time. According to this view God exists in a timeless eternity, and the events of time are eternally present to him. This timeless eternity

stands in contrast to the eternity of the years of creation, (the 'eternity' of Watts' second stanza.

The idea of God's timeless eternity, held by Boethius, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin and other luminaries, has of late fallen into disfavour, though its stock is showing signs of rising again. This revival may be dated from the publication in 1981 of an article by Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (now conveniently reprinted in *The Concept of God* (ed. T.V.Morris, Oxford, 1987)). They argue (*inter alia*) that God's eternity is a timeless duration, and that problems about the simultaneity of eternity and time can be met by relativising events to time, or to timeless eternity, as appropriate.

Much of Brian Leftow's large book on time and eternity may be regarded as an extended philosophical commentary on the Stump and Kretzmann paper. After certain preliminaries, the first half of the book is a set of studies of the views of Augustine, Boethius and Anselm from which the author draws a critique of Stump and Kretzmann and develops his own view, that a timeless God is durationless, and that the whole of his temporal creation is *with God in eternity*, a view which he derives from Anselm. The durationless eternity of God's life has order, and parts, though not temporal order or parts; and temporal events occur in eternity, though not as temporal (p.230). (Why should a theory of God's timelessness require that events *occur* in eternity?)

The second half of the book, which is devoted to trying to convince the sceptic that God's timeless eternity ought to be accepted as true, is the more plausible of the two, apart from the unsatisfactory attempt to derive God's timelessness *a priori* from the concept of perfection; confidence in this dubious move is not increased by Leftow's later cavalier treatment of the concept of perfection (p.324). Leftow's persuasive accounts of a timeless God's person-hood and knowledge do not, as far as I can see, depend upon the details of the concept of timeless eternity which he advances earlier.

Space does not permit a detailed consideration of the very many arguments advanced. But it is possible to suggest that both Leftow's exposition of the duration concept of timelessness, which he finds in Boethius, and in Stump and Kretzmann, and which he rejects, and the defence of his preferred view, that timelessness is a durationless point, suffer from a similar defect of approach.

What is at fault is the confidence with which Leftow anatomises the concept of eternity. This leads him to consider, and advance, many statements whose meaning is far from clear.

Consider this small selection of expressions from his exposition of the Boethian view: 'A life with QTE (Quasi-Temporal Eternality) is more like a duration through tenseless time than it is like an extension through space' (p.121). 'A QTE-being occupies its full duration at once' (p.121); 'Even though such a life (*viz.* with QTE) is extended, its whole extension must be lived at once or not be lived (and so not be of that life) at all. One may well wonder how segments of a life can be genuinely earlier and later and yet simultaneously lived' (p.122); 'A thing's temporal parts compose not the thing itself, but its duration or its life' (p.135). What is it to enjoy duration through

tenseless time, or to have one's full duration at once?

Or consider the following, from the exposition of Leftow's own view: 'Eternity is logically a date. If eternity is the date of God's existence, God's existence is the sort of thing that can be dated, and so it makes sense to speak of God's existence as simultaneous with God's existence. This simultaneity is not the simultaneity of any temporal frame of reference' (p.234). 'Thus there is a distinction to be made between being located in eternity and being eternal....(If we held that a timeless being had QTE, we could not say that a timeless being's duration did not involve earlier-later relations. But a timeless duration would still differ from a temporal being's duration in being partless and from the "duration" of an instantaneous temporal event in being extended). Thus even if temporal events occur in eternity, they differ significantly from truly eternal beings. All of this seems quite conceivable, and so appears possible' (p. 237). All these statements are meant to be taken literally, I think, though on one occasion at least Leftow refers to the 'extension' and 'point' understandings of eternity as 'models', a term which he does not define (pp.148-9).

If one were to hazard a reason why such statements figure so largely in the argument of this book it lies in a tendency to reify time, including events that occur in time, and to reify eternity on the model of time, despite the favoured view of eternity as durationless. So events occur in time, and in eternity (e.g. 232). Beginnings are temporal yet immutable kinds of entity (p. 77). See also pp.114,,151,236.) But is eternity, and are beginnings, entities?

This is learned and sophisticated treatment which those who are interested in its topic cannot afford to neglect. One hopes that philosophical attention will be given to testing the meaning of many of Leftow's statements. But one cannot avoid the feeling that Professor Leftow has taken on more than is wise within the covers of one book. At his best, e.g. his discussion on the relation between divine eternity, simplicity and uniqueness (p. 70ff..), and his reconstruction of Augustine on eternity as truest existence, Leftow is very good, but he is often much harder on those that differ from him than he is on himself; can it really be true, as Leftow claims, that yellow, the number 3, and any other entity without spatial location are spatially contiguous with all spatial things (p. 225)?

PAUL HELM

BELIEVING, UNDERSTANDING THE CREED by Gerald O'Collins
S.J. and Mary Venturini *Harper Collins*, 1991 Pp.178. £7.95

The Christian gospel is not just a set of precepts or counsels to be followed. It is also a faith to be believed. Christians are those who have heard and believed the good news. Of the many summaries or articulations of Christian belief, the Apostles' Creed stands out. Composed in the second century it became, and remains a classic statement of the faith. It is the Apostles' Creed with which the present book is concerned. And the articles of this creed give the book its structure.

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