

that society. There are at present no grounds for saying that contraception notably injures the public good.

In fact, Mr St John-Stevas considers the promotion of family planning and population control as much a Christian imperative as the requirement that the 'developed' countries—the 16 per cent of the world's population enjoying 70 per cent of its wealth—should disgorge some of their wealth. (There is support enough for this view in official Church documents; disagreement, after all, is only about contraception.) Oddly, he emphasizes the responsibility of the West for the present situation, not by reference to past or continuing exploitation, but by reference to the way Western medicine has stimulated the population explosion by reducing infant mortality and disease. The international aid programme is discussed, then, without any special reference to its political and cultural implications for the 'underdeveloped' countries. The perspective found here is one in which it is possible to say that traditional British trade policy has been of great help to underdeveloped countries.

Plenty of facts and figures about aid are given, though. This approach is characteristic of the book as a whole. Indeed, in some places it more or less consists of collected information about birth control. A considerable amount of ground is covered this way, but there are dis-

advantages in it. If the particular information provided is found uninteresting, then this invites the thought that something else would have been preferable—that it would have been more useful, for instance, if the section on English and American law had considered the development of family law over the years rather than just providing a summary of the Family Planning Act, 1967 (permitting local authorities to provide facilities) or, in the case of America, a state-by-state account of the relaxing of contraception prohibitions. Sometimes, too, 'information' is not enough—the summary, for example, of Augustine's views was bound to be inadequate, for Augustine's views are only comprehensible when their historical context is also fully provided.

What holds the book together is the story of Mr St John-Stevas himself, as he tells it in the Introduction and as he appears in the pages: writing letters, articles, attending meetings. For embedded in the book is an impressive account of his move from total opposition in 1950 to birth control (which caused the fall of the Greek and Roman Empires) to his present view that Catholics are free to decide according to their own consciences what method of birth control to employ. He hasn't just written *The Agonising Choice* to discuss *Humanae Vitae*, but to help Catholics who do not accept it.

ANTHONY ARCHER, O.P.

**ANGLICAN VISION**, by Emmanuel Amand de Mendieta. *S.P.C.K.*, London 1971. 153 pp. £2.25.

There is always for an Anglican a special fascination in seeing his own tradition from the point of view of someone who can look at it from continental Europe. One of the more illuminating books about the Oxford Movement, for instance, came from Sweden, Brilioth's *The Anglican Revival*, another from France, Louis Bouyer's *Newman*. In the case of Canon de Mendieta, the interest is still further enhanced in that the writer is both a continental and an Anglican, one whose Christian experience has been remarkably ecumenical; 'baptized, confirmed, and ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church', led by his scholarly work into a deep and sympathetic study of the Greek Fathers and Eastern Orthodoxy, living and ministering in the Church of England for the past fifteen years.

It must be said at the outset that Canon de Mendieta's vision is that of a scholar and historian, a man of tradition, with a clear and analytical mind, rather than that of a specu-

lative or a radical thinker. The purpose of his book is to try to discern what is peculiar to the Anglican vision of the wholeness, the Catholicity of Christian faith, and how that Anglican experience may be at the service of the unity of all Christian people. He starts his book with a brief survey of the history of the Church of England since the reformation, and a description and analysis of the present spectrum of views commonly held among Anglicans. Although the brevity of this section inevitably makes the treatment sometimes over-generalized, much interesting information and observation is contained here.

It is, however, the second part of the book which will probably gain most attention both from Anglicans and members of other Churches. In it, the author sets out his view of 'the fundamental distinction between faith and theology', and of the further distinction between 'theological principles, and theological theories and systems'. Here, too, there

is an interesting attempt to see how the basic principle of Protestantism, defined in terms of the search for purity, and of 'a vivid and demanding sense of priorities', may be reconciled with the basic principle of Catholicism, seen as that of wholeness and balance.

Canon de Mendieta makes a strong plea to his fellow Anglicans to take the varying tendencies within their Church beyond the stage of peaceful co-existence to that of active and theological dialectic. What he is saying here is of course applicable to the whole dialogue which should be developing between Catholics and Protestants in general. One point in his treatment deserves particular attention, his conviction that the purely

Western discussions of the faith, need the presence of the often forgotten third partner, Eastern Orthodoxy, if they are to be fully fruitful.

This is a book which raises more questions than it can resolve. But they are exactly the kind of questions which the Anglican-Roman Catholic statement of Eucharistic doctrine should be leading us to ask. How is it that by coming together in a new and deeper vision of our common faith, our powers and energies may be released for the new tasks which confront the Christian people in the present day?

A. M. ALLCHIN

THE AWE INSPIRING RITES OF INITIATION, by E. J. Yarnold, S.J. *S. Paul Publications*. xii + 292 pp. £2.75.

The title of this book—*The Awe Inspiring Rites of Initiation*—is evidence not of the publisher's desire to attract attention, but of the accuracy of a scholar. For, as the Master of Campion Hall makes clear in his book, the rites of Christian initiation in the fourth century, surrounded with a veil of secrecy and taking place in darkness before dawn on Easter Day, were rather eerie and awe-inspiring events: this was intentional and is repeatedly drawn attention to in the baptismal homilies of the period. Chrysostom speaks of the 'awesome mysteries about which it is forbidden to speak'; other writers speak similarly.

The book itself consists of those surviving baptismal homilies of the fourth century that give an account of the ceremonies of initiation into the Church: baptism, confirmation (not always regarded as a distinct rite) and the first Eucharist. So we are given translations of most of Cyril's Mystagogical Catecheses, and Ambrose's *De Sacramentis* (the parts omitted from these are their commentaries on the Lord's Prayer), John Chrysostom's second Baptismal Homily, and most of Baptismal Homilies II, III, IV and V of Theodore of Mopsuestia (Theodore is excellently abridged). All of these have succinct notes and introductions. There are two appendices giving the relevant part of Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* and the new Roman Rite of Infant Baptism.

There is also a long general introduction. In this introduction Father Yarnold discusses what the ceremonies of initiation actually consisted of, also the *Disciplina Arcani*—a feature of the fourth century—and the problem of the relation between these Christian rites of initiation and the contemporary pagan mystery cults. There is a broad similarity among the various known rites of Christian initiation; there is also plenty of variety. Father Yarnold handles this with impressive clarity, making clear the underlying pattern, without having recourse to oversimplifying generalizations. His discussion—in the sections on the *Disciplina Arcani* and the Mystery Religions—of the element of secrecy and awe surrounding these rites also manifests this clarity and balance.

Many of the texts presented are difficult to come by—especially in translation. This is particularly true of Theodore of Mopsuestia—easily the most impressive as a theologian in this book—compared with the others who rather use their theology for effect. Indeed, this translation of his baptismal homilies is probably the only readily available translation of many of his works *in extenso*. This book will be welcomed not only among liturgists, but also among those interested more generally in patristic theology—or, indeed, interested in theology at all.

A. LOUTH