

Catholics, we are told (p. 173)—and, strangely, Purgatory, here plausibly described as an aspect of encounter with God, for even more.

Finally, in spelling out the consequences, the author brings us back to present concerns. He makes a plea for a medical ethic informed by a Christian sense of humanity, sickness and therapy, allowing death with dignity but rejecting euthanasia. He conjures up a new way of living, responding to Marcuse's dreams of the '60s and the current policies of the Green Party: not Heaven on earth but out of a belief in what is ultimate, stripping away illusions about the self, an initiative of freedom to make the earth more human and habitable. Heine may say "The heavens we can safely leave / To the angels and the sparrows", but Küng finally holds to a solid correlate to those biblical metaphors of hope that speak of justice, freedom, love and salvation, in a word 'eternal life', and to a Hell that imposes no limits on the mercy of the God who wills all to be saved.

OSMUND LEWRY OP

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT by **Werner H. Schmidt**, *SCM*, London 1984, pp. xi + 368, (limp) £10.50

This introduction is based on the premise that the once agreed consensus concerning the origins and institutions of ancient Israel can no longer be accepted. The theories of those Germanic giants von Rad, Noth and Alt which established the framework against which the Old Testament material was to be interpreted have given way not to new theories but uncertainty. Indeed it has become increasingly difficult to say anything of Israel's theology before the late monarchic/exilic period. Old Testament scholarship, once broadly united, is now deeply divided: 'What previously seemed more or less obvious and indisputable has become doubtful'.

Schmidt's Introduction does not however make a complete break with past scholarship. Indeed he acknowledges as its precursor Johannes Meinhold's *Einführung in das Alte Testament* (1919, 1932³), though he orders his material differently. While Meinhold structured his work on historical lines, Schmidt largely falls back on the Biblical order, claiming that dating the material is now too uncertain to justify any other method. So he groups the material in three sections, the Pentateuch and Historical books, the Prophets (in chronological order) and Liturgical and Sapiential Poetry.

Noting that an *Einführung* must be made up of three thematic areas: (i) 'history of Israel'; (ii) literary criticism; and (iii) 'Old Testament theology', Schmidt begins his book with a survey of the Old Testament and its history, including a chapter on aspects of social history. He recognizes that his treatment of the issues raised by current scholarship inevitably results in a certain subjectivity: this is a risk that cannot be avoided. While articulating the complexities of current criticism, which asks more questions than supplies sure answers, Schmidt gives emphasis to majority views which he attempts to justify. The result is a very readable treatment of contemporary Old Testament scholarship whose translation into English only five years after its original publication is much to be welcomed.

Since it is always a minority who seek to change established positions, Schmidt's adherence to majority views gives his Introduction a conservative stance. But this is right in a book which will be widely used by students. It is particularly to be seen in the author's maintenance of the Pentateuchal sources J and E with their traditional dating. Indeed Schmidt believes that the classical Pentateuchal source theory will continue to hold the field despite sceptical predictions to the contrary. Yet while it would seem premature to surrender all the sources to a late monarchic/exilic/post-exilic date, for the present reviewer doubts still exist about the meaningfulness of the traditional designation of an E source, while the theological creativity of the so-called Proto-Deuteronomists needs greater consideration. Yet for all its uncertainties, Schmidt rightly defends literary criticism as not only a worthwhile exercise but a necessary one if

we are to discover the theological intention of the author. In the face of so much pseudo-fundamentalism, this is something the student needs to grasp, and grasp early.

Schmidt's cautiousness is again to be seen in his defence of the traditional dating and association of Deuteronomy with Josiah's reform, and in his treatment of Ezra and Nehemiah. A considerable merit of this Introduction is the way in which the books are analysed, particularly the prophets. Although his introductory chapter on prophecy raises questions in the contemporary study of the prophets, these tend to get submerged in the subsequent treatment of the books. For instance, more attention might have been given to the near absence of 'covenant' in the eighth century prophetic works. Proper caution is again exercised over cultic theories concerning the Psalter and the contrasting stances of the wisdom books are well brought out.

The danger of any Introduction is that it presupposes knowledge which then makes its title a nonsense. Schmidt succeeds in avoiding this pitfall with the result that his book can be unreservedly recommended to the novice who will not be seduced into the more esoteric theories of current Old Testament scholarship, but given a sound base from which to proceed to more detailed study of the material.

Schmidt concludes with a brief note entitled 'For and against the Old Testament'. He cites three objections to the Old Testament: (i) particularism or nationalism; (ii) legalism; and (iii) this-worldliness. His comments hardly do justice to the issues raised. It should, for instance, be remembered that anyone could become a member of Israel whose vocation was to bring *torah* (that is the complete expression of God's will) to all nations leading to peace (Mic. 4:1–4). Law is not opposed to love, but as the Psalmist knew (119:97) the very expression of it. Nor does the Old Testament require man to make a choice between God and the world, but rather summons him to affirm both and together with his Creator order the creation. Man's vision is not to be in rewards hereafter but in working for the coming of the kingdom for which Christians daily pray. The Old Testament is not an optional extra for the Church, but part of Christian heritage, to be appropriated and embraced.

ANTHONY PHILLIPS

DARWIN AND THE SPIRIT OF MAN by Alister Hardy, *Collins*, London, 1984, pp. 245, £9.95.

I enjoyed reading about two thirds of this book very much, and I learned a great deal from it about biology and about the development of evolutionary thought. Sir Alister Hardy writes with great simplicity and clarity, as well as with a deep passion for life and its mechanisms. His mastery of his subject is such as to enable him to communicate its importance and its findings to the non-specialist. I would very much recommend this book to anyone who wants to know what Darwinism is, what its basis is, and what its standing is in the light of subsequent developments in biology and genetics.

Hardy shows how Darwin's insights into the evolutionary adaptation of species were foreshadowed by earlier writers, and how they were paralleled by his contemporary Alfred Russel Wallace, as well as how Wallace in a way remained more Darwinian than Darwin himself, when the latter flirted late in his life with the Lamarckian view that the increased use of a particular organ in a particular way during the lifetime of an organism could lead to the transmission of relevant differences to its off-spring. Hardy follows Wallace in rejecting any such suggestion, and shows, in a beautiful chapter on colouration in the natural world, how only the selective retention of random variations could explain the extraordinary matches of colour and camouflage we find in nature. Hardy shows how Mendelian genetics explains the non-dilution of new variations in a population (the problem that had led Darwin to his brush with Lamarckianism), and how modern molecular biology has enhanced our understanding of the mechanisms of heredity, and also how, in a sense, the same genes perpetuate themselves through the lives of succeeding generations of individuals.