departure for a reassessment of the nature of Christian prayer and spirituality. Naturally he pays great attention to the teaching of the Old Testament prophets and the definition of religion in James 1, 27.

For very many years Díez-Alegría has been interested in the social problems of wealth and property. He shows that the right to private property, including the means of production, is not something that derives from the natural law, rather it is due to a positive law, the *jus gentium*. The way the church's social magisterium has insisted on the right to private property is not in accord with either the New Testament or patristic tradition and is in fact erroneous. What has happened is that the church has sold out to nineteenth century bourgeois liberalism. *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II marks a return to a more correct way of speaking. His big complaint is that the church in her social teaching has not really become incarnate. She has multiplied her good works and services to the less fortunate but all the time she has kept herself aloof and not identified herself with the poor. This is reflected in vocations to the religious and priestly life. A great many of the vocations come from the working classes but they are taken from their origins, incardinated into an ecclesiastical world and then they proceed from this new position to minister to the world from which they have been taken. So much of our social programme is geared to a closer collaboration between the classes whereas it should be working towards the abolition of class. 'It is not true that Jesus did not wish to take sides between the rich and the poor, it is the church that does not want to take sides.'

His views on sex and marriage are dealt with very fully in a chapter on celibacy. Either you have a charism for celibacy or you have not. If you have not, it is no use trying to acquire it by rigorous ascetical practices. In analysing the nature of this gift he dismisses the utilitarian argument that it renders a man more available to the service of others. He is aware that the surrender of conjugal love can easily lead to the selfish egoism of the bachelor. It is not good for man to be alone. But the true celibate is not alone since he finds God in the void, in the absence of conjugal love. There is something very Spanish about this talk of the positive qualities of the void, the *nada*, and it is not surprising that the most moving part of the book is where he reflects on his own death. In the tradition of Seneca and Spanish stoicism, he remarks that at the human level a willing acceptance of death need not involve a belief in an after life. It could simply be a way of expressing gratitude for the gift of life and a desire to rest from labour. The peace that comes from the consideration of a job well done, rather than from the expectation of future delights. But when, in 1971, during a serious illness he was confronted with death and saw the sadness of his many friends, such a selfish view was seen to be inadequate. He began to realize that the Christian hope of something beyond the grave was not based on some apocalyptic vision of the future, but rather, rooted in an experience in this life. It is in his contact with working people and with university students rather than his being in an ecclesiastical 'state of perfection' that has taught him the meaning of Christian love. To be with the poor and the oppressed is to be with Jesus. The experience of brotherly love and knowing what it is to hunger and thirst after justice are the real grounds for his eschatological hope.

M. E. WILLIAMS

WHY NOT? PRIESTHOOD AND THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN. A theological study edited by Michael Bruce and G. E. Duffield. Marcham Books, Marcham Manor Press, 1972. 144 pp. (no price given).

When most readers today are alert for any instance of male chauvinism, it takes some courage to write on the issue of women as priests by attacking the feminist position.

The contributors to this volume dedicated to the case against ordaining women are not lacking in courage, though they are somewhat short of humour. This lack of humour is well illustrated in the review of feminist literature which starts the book. That there may be problems for Christians in accepting some of the implications of radical feminism is undoubtedly true, but these difficulties are not presented with any degree of clarity in Gervase Duffield's paper. Nowhere does he indicate that the contemporary feminist movement contains not one but a wide variety of perspectives and forms. Christianity and women in history are quickly dealt with (in one paragraph to be precise). We are told Margeurite of Navarre wrote 'high class mystical poetry' (sic). Possibly one or two of the women so quickly dealt with in this paragraph wrote 'higher class prose' than the contributor. The work of Mary Wollstonecraft is mentioned fleetingly, but instead of reviewing the contents of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Mr. Duffield appears to consider her 'chaotic life' a more appropriate object for attack. She is referred to by her first name only, presumably in consequence of this way of life. This perspective is unlikely to move a generation accustomed to discrepancies

between private and public life. After all, we are continually exhorted to remember the exemplary family lives in Long Island, the East End and so on, of those whose criminal activities are notorious. Similarly, the intellectual content of John Stuart Mill's work is not dealt with; he does, however, get the conventional usage of his name.

The experience of the 19th century shows that 'in many professions women can *in their own way* (italics added) do the job quite as well as men' (p. 12). To one of the most articulate exponents of radical feminism, Juliet Mitchell, it is conceded that she writes 'with youthful enthusiasm' (p. 14). However, the writer adds 'we wonder just what would actually happen if she ever got control of anything important'.

A number of surveys which apparently seek in Benthamite fashion to measure conjugal bliss are rapidly summarised to support Mr. Duffield's case that women are satisfied with marriage and motherhood. He does not consider a good deal of reputable sociological literature which indicates that the situation is considerably more complex. Nor does he deal with the situation of those women who do not seek marriage and/or motherhood. Christians are urged to appreciate that attacks on 'the family concept' are attacks on the foundations of Christian society. It does not seem that Mr. Duffield's incursions into sociological literature have done much to clarify his understanding of the many different cultural forms of the family or to help him grasp that those working within the Women's Liberation Movement are concerned with the kinds of exploitive relationships which many Christians consider to be fundamentally contrary to their conception of human justice.

Now this book aims 'to set out the theological objections to ordination of women to the presbyterate' (p. 6). There are distinct objections which can be advanced on theological grounds to the ordination of women and several contributors to this volume, notably the Anglican theologian, Professor E. L. Mascall (in a paper which has already been published elsewhere), do confine themselves to the strictly theological level.

If these theological objections to ordaining women are as strong as the contributors believe them to be, it should surely be possible to confine themselves to this level of objection. However, it is not only Mr. Duffield who wanders into non-theological areas. His fellow-editor, the late Michael Bruce (who considers feminism to have heretical aspects) argues in his contribution that there are inbuilt genetic differences. When he writes of turning to women saints 'not perhaps for the brilliant example of heroic struggles in which pride is abandoned and humility accepted, but for the steady light of continuous unfailing acceptance of humble dependence on God' (p. 52), he is drawing not upon an admirable theological tradition but upon an ideological system which had a distinct cultural function to perform.

Professor J. J. von Allmen of the Swiss Reformed Church is another contributor who moves into other fields. He draws upon the argument that 'human beings are not men and women by the accidental demands of reproduction, but are one or the other as part of their vocation, to the very depths of their being' (p. 127). Hans Cavallin of the Church of Sweden urges those who argue that men and women are equal 'in the family, in the community and in the Church' (p. 92) to recognize that this view 'is the one of Liberalism, not the one of the Bible, the New Testament, or the historic Jesus' (p. 93). His case is based on the notion that what he terms 'the Liberal Illusion' is not to be found in the Bible. You do not need to be a modern exegete to see that there might be another viewpoint on this interpretation.

I want to make it plain that I am not saying psychological, sociological or spiritual considerations are not relevant to the question of the ordination of women. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere (*Concilium*, December 1972) that the shift of the objections from theological to sociological grounds on the part of Roman Catholic theologians like Hans Küng, far from helping the case of the ordination of women, may well prove a serious obstacle to change. What I am suggesting is quite simply if you believe there are powerful theological objections to this question, you should be clear about when you move from that position to other perspectives.

I have already indicated that some of the contributors to this volume do not appear to have much sense of the ridiculous. More seriously, they do not seem to have much respect for women. I do not mean by this some ill-defined sentiment towards idealized qualities of womanhood. I mean that there is a serious case to be made for the ordination of women. After all, it is a sufficiently strong one for the men and women or more than 70 of the constituent churches of the World Council of Churches to have taken the step of admitting women to the ministry. There are within the other churches and denominations women who sincerely believe that they are personally called to serve God in this way. For many of them, this view was in no way inspired or motivated by current feminist writings. Whatever objections there can be raised by their views, they do have a right to have them treated with respect by their fellow-Christians.

There are eleven short articles in this book and the aim has been to draw contributions from different theological traditions; they come from five different countries. It is worth noting that some are also drawn from different times: Professor von Allmen's contribution, for example, was published 10 years ago. The editors have not done much to draw the contributions together, nor have they stated the contemporary issues with any clarity.

The book has been set up in three distinct types of print, explained—in my opinion inadequately—as being due to the fact that some contributions were set up earlier than others.

JOAN BROTHERS

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND AND WALES: a short history, by E. E. Reynolds. Anthony Clarke Books, Wheathampstead, 1973. 376 pp. £3.50.

This book, always reliable in its data, often heroic in its dullness, is worthy of notice as an object-lesson in how difficult it is, even with a wide competence in at least the secondary materials, to write a living Christian history. The author, best known as a biographer of Thomas More, rightly discerns a need for a continuous history of the Catholic community in England (Welsh Christianity should be allowed its proper autonomy, not made an appanage of English—and especially not dismissed in eight scattered references occupying less than four pages of text); but this need, if it is more than an unpleasing lacuna in a bookseller's catalogue, can only be met by an historical statement of a Catholic *tradition*, a particular stream of confluent meanings that men found in the events and movements that shaped their consciousness. It is on this level, the level of significance for the church's life, that Catholics today 'are' their history. Mr. Reynolds has given us, rather, an administrator's narrative, relieved occasionally by flickering shots of individual figures.

The temptation of a history of this sort is to accelerate into a breathless recitation of names and dates free-floating from the contexts where they are intelligible. Mr. Reynolds does not always resist the allure. The opening chapters on the Anglo-Saxon Church, for instance, do not exhibit clearly in their materials that varied contact, resistance and fusion of cultures without which the data, say Bede's account of the synod of Whitby, are quite opaque. The larger perspectives on the doings of earthly kings and bishops are feebly etched: no sense reaches us of that peculiar coherence of decorative art, poetry and historiography which justifies us in speaking of an 'interpretatio anglo-celtica' of the gospel in the constantly recurring notes of dominion over cosmic powers and destiny they display. The outstanding theological mind (and heart) of Bede is not evaluated, even though the *Historia Ecclesiastica* is permeated with the same concerns as Bede's scriptural commentaries, the urgency of preaching and establishing God's priestly service in view of the coming parousia. Aldhelm's work in laying the foundations of a written culture to support biblical theology (in accordance with Augustine's programme in the *De Doctrina Christiana*) is passed over in silence. Figures like Cuthbert and Guthlac remain unintelligible without some sense of the meaning of the monk in the polis (or, rather, on its borderland with chaos) as classically set out in Athanasius' *Life of Anthony*, a mediaeval best-seller. And, in general, the influence of Eastern monastic christianity on the Irish and English churches stays decently obscure.

A sound, straightforward account of the struggle between regnum and sacerdotium in the high mediaeval church in England follows on; but again, there is the same curious indifference to the element of self-reflection by a community on its faith and experience. The crucial shift of feeling between Lanfranc, a typical Cluniac reformer in Charlemagne's succession, and Anselm, with his revolutionary Hildebrandine vision of things, could usefully be more explicit. Quite ignored are Anselm's role as a recaster of Christian devotion in a fresh mould of loving attention to the humanity of Christ and his significant passion for the rational organizing of theology. Aelred of Rievaulx, our supreme monastic theologian, receives a single, derisibly inadequate mention à propos of the disputed election of an archbishop of York. No sense of the twelfth century renaissance of theandric humanism, to which Aelred belongs, comes across at all. A rather uninspired use of literary sources (mainly Chaucer and Langland) and mere registration of suggestive artefacts like the Wilton Diptych (Richard II's badge on the angels' robes is instructive for the changing fortunes of a sacramental view of kingship) give the text at times the ploddingly pedestrian quality of a museum catalogue. The problems of due demarcation from 'secular' history resolve themselves, in these chapters, into an alarming cursoriness about complex social facts: such notions as the feudal 'system', the rise of the commons, the new monarchy (Henry VII? or is he including, as he should, Edward IV?—there is some highly inconsequential writing here) are bandied about like counters.

Discussion of the Reformation period pro-