

bine a strongly subordinationist view of women with repression and horror of male homosexual practices." All I can say about this is that he shouldn't believe everything he reads in books, especially books by G. Rattrey Taylor. (He must also have read somewhere that St. Thomas taught that all sexual pleasure is sinful, but it certainly wasn't in the text of St. Thomas.) A moment's independent thought should have reminded him of the male-dominated, woman-repressing pederastic culture of ancient Greece and the widespread tolerance of male homosexuality in Moslem lands, not otherwise known for their liberality towards women. There is a good deal to be said for exactly the opposite view. The New Testament evidence is dealt with far less ably. It is not at all certain that St. Paul was condemning only 'perversion' and not true 'inversion' among the sins "against nature" in Rom. 1:26. But it needs a proper exegete to decide the truth about that.

The outstanding moral question is to do with the legitimacy of sexual union between homosexual partners in a stable relationship. In McNeill's opinion people should abstain if they can, not because there is anything intrinsically evil in it, but because of the difficulties in which the active homosexual will find himself in our society. Otherwise, "if true christian and human love can exist equally in a homosexual or in a heterosexual context, then there is no *a priori* basis for a moral choice between these contexts." What matters is what is unique in human nature, not the sexual difference which so easily relapses into stereotypes, but the personal response of love. I can only agree that it is the recognition of uniqueness that is the specifically human element in love. But this is a general requirement of love and not confined to overtly sexual love. I don't nec-

**THE CRUCIFIED IS NO STRANGER** Todd, 1977. pp. xii + 116 £1.95.

The cover of this book described it as drawing out the implications of a "new kind of discursive but urgent Christology" present in the author's earlier work *No Exit* (London, 1968). The claim to novelty is an exaggeration and 'implications' promises a precision which is often hard to find. The book is diffuse and impressionistic; insofar as I am clear about its import

essarily want sexual intercourse with someone because I perceive his or her personal uniqueness. Usually there are all kinds of reasons for avoiding it. It would simply not be an expression of love. Let us not try to make out that personal uniqueness is a modern discovery and that it somehow makes sexual communication appropriate. Indeed, it is those in our modern society who put most emphasis on sexual activity as the only 'honest' expression of love who are most liable to lose any sense of the uniqueness of the other confronting them. This danger underlies the traditional suspicion of sexual pleasure—it so easily overlooks individuality. The real question is, under what circumstances does sexual intercourse and the activity which leads up to it count as a genuine expression of love? There must be some other factors which determine when it is right. My doubts about this personalist viewpoint put forward by McNeill is that it gives way easily to a dissociation of love from every other dimension of human life so that it is in danger of becoming an autonomous value without any reliable guidelines as to its modes of expression. There is no love without the acceptance of limits. Hence the importance of the old concept of nature in moral thought. It is not good enough to dismiss it because of its supposed Stoic origin, as McNeill does. Demonstrating the origin of an idea doesn't enable us to do without it. But McNeill's is a brave attempt to provide an alternative moral assessment of homosexuality and he has written a book not to be missed by those with any concern for the problem. However, the situation is still one of confusion and uncertainty, even over the facts. The main work has yet to be done.

ROGER RUSTON O.P.

by Sebastian Moore. Darton, Longman and

my feelings are mixed.

According to Fr. Moore, the crucified (Christ) is no stranger because he is somehow *myself*; the crucifiers are really the crucified attacking their real selves of which they are afraid. The crucifixion is a message of forgiveness because it announces and helps to realise the fact that the crucifier is loved and lovable. "Jesus is,

most intimately and without the aid of any vague pious rhetoric, the victim of sin, because he is the symbol of the true self, of that which we allow evil in us to neglect, ignore and crush. His is the heart that I have refused to myself, to you, and to God ... The crucified enables me to see the self I destroy in the self I neglect. He enables me to see that to neglect is to destroy. And so I come before the crucified as a non-person, seeking to be awoken to the person I am." (pp.76, 78) It is good to be reminded in this way of the need for and possibilities of meditation on Christ crucified. Moore's persistent attempt to explore such meditation is satisfactory in that it illustrates how the effort can be neither platitudinous nor anti-intellectualist. On the other hand, it often seems to regard the crucifixion as part of God's plan in the sense of being inevitable. This, I suggest, is unacceptable. According to Moore, "The scholastic distinction between an 'antecedent' will of God, that does not contain the cross, and a 'consequent' will of God that does, misses the enormity of what the cross reveals of God. Christ's blood streams in the firmament of the beginning as the sign of the universe it is to be." (p.16) Perhaps it is true that there is only one possible universe; in that sense I would agree that the Incarnation was never a contingent affair. But it is exclusively as the source of value that we know God; never as the origin of wrongdoing. It follows that however difficult it

is to imagine an unfallen humanity, and regardless of the good that can be brought out of evil, it is only as productive of the good that we can intelligibly conceive of God. The distinction between antecedent and consequent wills is far from redundant. Sin is a tragedy and the idea that it springs from what God is should, I think, be avoided at all costs. So should the suggestion that "The message of the guiltless one is precisely that I am not guilty; that the charge against my freedom was falsely pressed and mistakenly accepted." (p.108) The fact of the guiltless one only serves to highlight the basic problem of being merely human. Not only must we maintain the absolute goodness of God; the reality of our fallen state also needs to be stressed.

What is the status of Christ crucified? Moore rightly declares that it is that of sinless victim. As he also maintains, Christ is human nature going its proper way and so, in a sense, Christ crucified is also ourself. But we are not God and Christ was. There is therefore an inseparable gulf between us and him. "The difficulty of the Incarnation is not in the dogmatic realm. It is the difficulty in a commanded self-acceptance that goes far beyond the limits of our self-acceptance." (p.6) This remark illustrates a stopping-short which is present throughout Moore's account. The crucified really is something of a stranger and the fact must be remembered in any Christology worthy of its name.

BRIAN DAVIES O.P.

**ON TEACHING CLASSICS**, by J. E. Sharwood Smith. *Routledge & Kegan Paul*, London, 1977. 93 pp. £3.75

This book is part of the Students' Library of Education, designed for 'students of education ... and practising teachers and educationists'. For education students it provides in fewer than a hundred pages a remarkably complete view of John Sharwood Smith's ideas on Classical Studies, the Classical Languages and Literature and Ancient History. To teachers, particularly of Classics but also of English, History or general Humanities, who are sufficiently open, it may give the confidence they need to launch out into the kind of teaching advocated by the 'Copernican Revolution in Classics' of the last fifteen years. Yet there will be teachers who will, if they get as far as opening the book, merely

glance through the pages and then close it, with, I suspect, resultant catastrophe for their subject within the next few years.

Mr. Sharwood Smith has done what I have always thought all teachers in colleges of education should do: he has gone back to the classroom. This gives his work an authority and realism which should commend it even to anti-Classics head teachers. He does not go for what is new simply because it is new, nor throw out the old without discrimination. When he deals with the earlier supposed value of a classical education, he demythologises pretty ruthlessly but when he comes to the new, he points out the pitfalls with equal clarity as, for example, with 'story-