footballers, the golden mist and the appellant moon. In fact the Forster letter also casts light on the extraordinary self-consciousness of all Lawrence's writing, particularly that of the *Seven Pillars*. Was Lawrence, after all, the last pale literary heir of Oscar Wilde? The circumstances which produced *The Mint*, on the one hand, *De Profundis*, on the other, were dissimilar; yet the same tone of self-pity runs through both, and many passages in both are tainted with an almost identical sweetness of style.

JAMES POPE-HENNESSY

THE LIFE OF DAVID HUME. By Ernest Campbell Mossner. (Nelson; 42s.)

'Awakened after a very agreeable dream that I had found a Diary kept by David Hume, from which it appeared that though his vanity made him publish treatises of skepticism and infidelity, he was in reality a Christian and a very pious Man. He had, I imagined, quieted his mind by thinking that whatever he might appear to the world to show his talents, his religion was between God and his conscience. (I cannot be sure if this thought was in sleep.)' So wrote Boswell in his journal some years after Hume's death. His perplexity, faced with what seemed to him so paradoxical a character, is revealing. So good a man as Hume, Boswell thought, surely must have been a Christian; and his contemporaries, though not always so simple-minded, bear witness to the complexity of character which defies summing up. 'The great infidel', 'Hume the sceptic'—such were the names they called him, side by side with '*le bon David*', or even, in affectionate banter, 'St David' (an appellation which Hume refused to disown, with the remark that 'many a better man has been made a saint before').

Professor Mossner's biography does full justice to this man who has always refused to be pinned down by no matter what neat formula. It is vast, both in scope and in wealth of scholarship; it is sumptuously produced, equipped with portraits and illustrations; above all, it is, from first to last, carried along by a fascination he feels for Hume, a fascination which communicates itself to the reader. There is little unity in Professor Mossner's biography beyond that imposed by its subject himself. If there is a thread running through the book at all, it is the tenuous one of Hume as a 'man of letters'; but it may well be that no more precise and more limiting description would convey the unity underlying Hume's work. His life-long concern to find a clear and convincing language in which to embody his thought is heavily stressed. And little though there is of philosophical reflection in the book, here surely is something of first-rate importance to Hume's philosophy. For his procedure is not systematic and speculative. Even his large-scale philosophical work is like a series of essays bearing a

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family likeness to one another, each of which aims at complete clarity and carries conviction as much by the light, almost playful yet incisive probing into its topic, as by formal argument.

This is why Hume the philosopher always remains elusive. It is now nearly fifteen years ago since Professor Norman Kemp Smith taught us that we cannot get near to Hume's mind without appreciating the decisive moral concern in his thinking, and its far-reaching results. The traditional estimate of Hume's work—typified, at its best, by T. H. Green's introduction to the *Treatise*, at its worst by Beattie's attack on Hume during his lifetime—becomes almost irrelevant in this perspective. His work may be described as a *reductio ad absurdum* of his predecessors' mistakes, as a radical challenge to the rationalist tradition in philosophy, or as a springboard for Kant. There is, of course, truth in all these views of his work; but it is not the truth about it. This was perhaps best seen, in his own way, by Rousseau, when he observed that 'He (Hume) has seen from all points of view what passion has let me see only from one'. Professor Mossner's biography is welcome for its insistence on the range and many-sidedness of Hume's interests: for these are the concrete background of the key-concept of his philosophy, that of human nature.

R. A. MARKUS

SCIENCE AND RELIGION: A CHANGING RELATIONSHIP. By C. A. Coulson. (C.U.P.; 2s. 6d.)

OXFORD'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ORIGINS OF MODERN SCIENCE. By A. C. Crombie. (Blackwell; 2s. 6d.)

MAN ON HIS NATURE. By Sir Charles Sherrington. (Penguin Books; 2s. 6d.)

Professor Coulson's Rede lecture for 1954 may disappoint admirers of his earlier work. Too much has been left out in these arguments for the similarity of religious and scientific activity; they do not convince as did his Riddell lectures, where differences were not minimized. It is true, for instance, that a theoretical physicist resembles an artist in his need of trained imagination, for otherwise he would not hit upon the theoretical explanation of his observations. But it does not follow that he does 'just what the artist and the poet and the saint are doing'. A scientific theory and a work of art are called 'true' in different senses, since verifying the one is not very like appreciating the other, and this difference is no less important than the similarity between the activities of those who produce them. Even greater caution is needed before trying to assimilate religion. Professor Coulson speaks of having to introduce the 'concept of God' in order to 'do justice to feelings of awe and worship', without realizing that for a historical religion this is not

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