

new world-view of contemporary science. There has taken place a revolution in our conception of the physical universe, so that the old dualisms have been overcome. Professor Torrance believes that since Einstein there has emerged a way of conceiving the world that is much more hospitable to belief in God's action in it than was the nineteenth century view. He makes the interesting point that Athanasius too was open to some new scientific insights of his day.

The first essay in the book is a long history of the ecumenical movement, with some reflections on its present state and future prospects. The essay is marked by its fairness. Both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are criticised for their tendencies to absolutise their respective positions, and a good deal of attention is paid to the part which cultural influences have played. Important in this essay—and, indeed, throughout the book—are the author's reflections on God. Like many other contemporary theologians, Professor Torrance is seeking to show the closeness of God to his world. He believes we are still suffering from the deistic separation of God and world—a separation which left God presiding rather uselessly in a vacuum, while the world became a self-contained "godless" mechanical system. Both contemporary science and classical theology expose the shallowness of such a view.

There are important essays on baptism and the eucharist, and then a long discussion of worship. The treatment of worship is one of the most important contributions of the book. Impressed by Jungmann's thesis that in the early period liturgical prayer was always addressed to the Father through the Son, and that it was in reaction to Arianism that there grew up the

practice of addressing prayer directly to Christ in the pulpit liturgy, Professor Torrance claims that the true place of Christ in worship has been progressively lost, and we have fallen into a kind of Apollinarianism. It is necessary once again to pray *with* Christ, to let our prayer participate in the human mind of Christ. The implications of this teaching for meditative prayer are obviously important.

There is a masterly study of Athanasius before we come to the last essay, which is also the most controversial. It was given originally as a lecture to a conference of British church leaders at Birmingham in 1972, and the present reviewer well remembers its electrifying impact on that occasion. Professor Torrance's critique of the present state of the Church is wide-ranging, and he touches on a number of the points already mentioned in this review. But the essence is that 'our modern mind lacks ontological depth' so that 'even the Christian religion seems to be trivialised among us'. Instead of combatting these tendencies, the Church seems rather to be determined to take part in 'the sickness of society'. In the name of 'involvement' the Church is in peril of losing its identity in the service of every passing political and social current.

One might raise many questions about this book. Does the author present us with a clear alternative to the social activism which he criticises? Is he quite fair in his severe references to empiricism and existentialism? Does he attribute too much to cultural factors in the divergence of Protestantism and Catholicism? But however one may answer these questions, one must acknowledge that this book constitutes a major contribution to contemporary Christian theology.

JOHN MACQUARRIE

YES TO GOD, by Alan Ecclestone, *Darton, Longman & Todd*, London, 1975. 133 pp. £1.85.

It is probably a measure of how far many of us are from a real integration of our 'religious' life and 'secular' experience that such a gentle book as this continually brought me up short. Not that it acts like a series of hammerblows—the 'gentle plucking' at the reader's sleeve of which Alan Ecclestone talks in his introduction is immeasurably more effective. 'It is the job of

prayer to assimilate the stuff of all experience and to look beyond'. This is precisely what the author attempts to do as he explores the directions contemporary spirituality must follow.

The book is an attempt—and an effective one, I believe—to highlight the crisis of modern Christianity. The theme which runs through it is the sterility which Christians are likely to

encounter if they continue to allow their prayer to be divorced from human insights and the world of today. The key for the author is that prayer is not some self-contained 'problem to be solved', but rather is the *whole* of life—a 'venture to be lived out'. Engagement and Passion are the words he uses—what matters is what men are passionate about, what they are really engaged in. The Incarnation and Passion of Christ are taken as the context within which Christian prayer must work—in other words, *within* the world to which Christ is passionately engaged. That is, that we must be convinced that God *can* be found in the world made continually new; that we can accept, without being scandalised, Christ's total engagement and have the courage to follow. Only then can we really pray.

As Alan Ecclestone says, only in a kind of poetry can we penetrate the human process and see God's engagement in its midst. *Yes to God* in fact has a lot to say about literature and art, and poetry in particular, for it is artists and poets who can help in awakening the Spirit, enabling us 'to see and to touch with new innocence of perception'. The various literary examples on which Alan Ecclestone draws are used, gently but effectively, to lead us to free ourselves from the 'seeming appearances of things'—to perceive a real 'revelation' in the world around us. It's a pity that Newman's adage: 'with Christians a poetic view of things is a duty' has been largely ignored and that as a result the Church finds itself impoverished and removed from wide areas of human experience.

Not that the author's poetic vision leads him to ignore the reality of a world which is often unattractive. His prayer, as he says, 'means finding ourselves somewhere between living in a runaway world and running away from life'. Christians are not an untouched or untouchable elite—the Passion of Christ in which we must share is also here and now in the world of today and all its troubles. I particularly liked the book's attempt in two of its chapters to come to terms with 'prayer and the world of men' and 'spirituality and sexual love'. The need is to discover again what being 'Corpus Christi' means and that love, human and divine, has one face, not two—for all love is sacred, is sacrament.

I don't think there is much point in detailing what Alan Ecclestone has to say—the book is too rich in language and ideas to do it justice in this way. It is a poetical book, not to be skipped through—ultimately not to be ticked off as 'read', but pondered over. What is so refreshing is that it does not use the language of 'bringing Christ to the world' (by implication a world from which he is absent), but rather pleads for a reinvigorated search for the Christ who is already in the world—committed in his continual incarnation. And when *we*, the Christians, have discovered him again, our job is to show him to those who do not see—the persecuted, those in prison, the underfed, the misunderstood.

PHILIP SHELDRAKE SJ

Editorial note: Since this review was written this book has won the Collins Religious Book Award.

HEGEL, by Charles Taylor. *Cambridge University Press*, 1975. 580 pp. £12.50.

Despite the continuing misdirection of every new generation by Karl Popper's vituperative travesty of Hegel in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, so readily available in paperback and seeming so temptingly authoritative to minds permeated with British liberal empiricism, we are not badly off for intelligent studies in English to help us approach that formidable corpus of writing which marks a watershed in subsequent Western thought. Apart from reprints of an old stand-by like Stace, and recent translations of Kojève and Hyppolite, the former far too unaware, and the latter much too redolent, of Hegelian veins of thought particularly open to Marxist

and existentialist exploitation to provide satisfactory points of entry, we have attempts at complete interpretations by Herbert Marcuse (a Marxist of the Frankfurt School working in the State Department at the time), by Walter Kaufman (who demolishes Popper), and by J. N. Findlay (a disillusioned Wittgensteinian gone over to Husserlian transcendental phenomenology). More recently, Ivan Soll has provided a short introductory exposition (1969), and there is a particularly noteworthy essay by Raymond Plant (1973), important for the connections he makes with theology as well as with political theory. The famous study of 'the young Hegel'