

of man today the authors press forward to see the mission of the Church in the modern world as 'a liturgy of the Son of Man'. The twentieth-century Church needs all this and can hardly have too much of it. But, although they stress par. 2 of the introduction to the Constitution on the Liturgy, which says that liturgy 'is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ', they do not appreciate the clause about the eucharist which precedes it, nor the sentences about the supernatural nature of the Church which follow it. There is throughout the book a tendency to take liturgy and sacrament together, as if the second were the same as the first; and the chapter on 'Liturgy and Christian Unity' shows considerable confusion. It may be true that liturgy is what we make it, but for the Catholic, sacrament is

not. It may be true that 'the eucharistic services, whether called the Mass, Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper, should be shared by the whole Christian community'—but only if they are the same thing. It is certainly true that Catholics at the same altar rails may hold different opinions about many matters, but what unites them there is not opinion, but recognition. Deeply aware of the unity of Christians through baptism and witness, and pleading for general inter-communion, the authors ask, 'Is not faith the basis on which order must rest?' Yes. But the dimensions of the Catholic faith, and of the Catholic understanding of God's love, may not, by their nature, be reduced. This is our ecumenical problem, and the problem of all who would unite with us. Unfortunately the authors of this good book have not grasped it. AGNES YENDELL

**THE LIVING GOD AND THE MODERN WORLD**, by Peter Hamilton. *Hodder & Stoughton*, 1967. 256 p. 42s.

Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy has been taken seriously by a number of American theologians, but has had little influence on British theology, apart from certain themes in Temple, Thornton and Raven. It is not inappropriate that Cambridge, where Whitehead lectured for twenty-five years, is now the scene of new interest in the theological relevance of his ideas. Norman Pittenger, who now lives in Cambridge, has recently written *God in Process*, and Peter Hamilton is one of several men exploring Whitehead's thought. In this book, Hamilton outlines the contribution which a process metaphysics can make to Christian theology, and develops with considerable originality its implications for Christology.

After an introductory chapter on the contemporary crisis of Christian belief, two chapters are devoted to the central ideas of Whitehead's metaphysics, which are presented with a minimum of technical terminology. Hamilton then suggests several areas where 'process philosophy helps Christian belief'. He maintains that the traditional idea of divine omnipotence has jeopardized human freedom and left God responsible for evil and suffering. On the other hand Tillich, Bultmann and the existentialists have in effect relinquished the idea of God's activity in the world. By contrast, Whitehead's 'God of persuasion rather than coercion' is a real influence on the world without determining it absolutely. Moreover in this temporalistic metaphysics, God and the world affect each other. On the issue of immanence

and transcendence—which the *Honest to God* debate has brought to popular attention—Whitehead preserves a balance; he delineates a role for God in the coming-to-be of every event, and yet both God and his creatures preserve their separate identity as experiencing subjects.

Hamilton makes a few explicit criticisms of Whitehead, but he is willing to accept a number of the modifications proposed by Whitehead's interpreters, with whose writings he is thoroughly familiar. He agrees with Charles Hartshorne and John Cobb that God is a series of occasions, comparable to a 'living person' rather than to a single event. He agrees with Daniel Williams that the divine initiative may sometimes be more coercive than Whitehead allowed for. But he rejects Hartshorne's 'panentheism' in which God is spoken of analogically as the cosmic mind of which the world is the body. Although there is no discussion of methodology as such, it would appear that Hamilton's project is a synthesis of Whiteheadian and biblical thought. In most cases he adheres to both, but at certain points his biblical loyalties require him to part company with Whitehead (e.g. in his defence of the special role of Christ), while at others the demands of the Whiteheadian system evidently prevail (e.g. in his abandonment of individual immortality).

Hamilton's most original contribution is his development of a process Christology. He argues that Whitehead's analysis of God's

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activity in the world allows one to express the conviction that 'God was in Christ', without denying either Christ's full humanity or His unity—of which one or the other has been compromised in traditional formulations. Throughout, Hamilton stresses Christ's continuity with other men. Unless Christ's knowledge of God was of the same kind as ours (i.e. through prayer and self-commitment), His humanity would not have been complete. Christ made 'exceptional use of the normal channels of communication between God and man', rather than some unique channel. Compared to other men, 'the difference is of almost immeasurable degree and not of absolute kind'. Yet Hamilton does not, with many of the earlier liberals, try to account for Christ's uniqueness in purely human terms, such as His 'radical obedience' alone. He uses Whiteheadian categories to defend God's prevenience and initiative; the divine indwelling, God's presence through Christ's prehension of Him, did not exclude Christ's free response. His life is 'the chief exemplification' of God's universal indwelling, not a unique kind of occurrence totally unlike any other.

The greatest departure from traditional Christianity comes in the rejection of personal immortality. Where Cobb argues that individual life after death is at least compatible with Whiteheadian assumptions, Hamilton follows Whitehead himself in maintaining that the individual is preserved only in God's memory. 'The book of our life is not destroyed but it is closed' (p. 138). He points out difficulties in the traditional notion of eternity and argues that our lives can have a permanent effect through their contribution to God's life—an idea which he believes may give us a higher motive for action than any expectations of reward and punishment.

Hamilton's Christology is indeed able to express much of what earlier generations meant by 'God was in Christ'. But because he has denied immortality, his interpretation of Christ's continuing presence seems further removed from classical assertions. Perhaps the chapter on 'The Livingness of Jesus Christ' should have been entitled 'The Living Memory of Jesus Christ', since it is only through the Church's memory and God's memory of His past life that Christ continues to influence the world. 'Jesus so "prehended" God, so opened His whole being to God, that God was indeed powerfully present in Him and in His total action, which fact we in turn prehend today'

(p. 233). To be sure, Hamilton says that our recollection of events in which God was once present are especially effective in transforming our lives today; and Christ's life, as it contributed to God's 'consequent nature', is 'particularly accessible to us'. But perhaps it needs to be pointed out that this represents a considerable departure from the traditional idea of 'the living Christ', rather than a reinterpretation of it in new conceptual categories.

The book is clearly organized and its style very readable. There are a few minor inconsistencies which might be challenged. For example, it is dubious that 'a stone has feelings' (p. 74); it is, in Whiteheadian terms, a 'corpuscular society' which is not the scene of any unified events. An appendix comparing brains

and computers concludes that the mind uses the brain as an 'operator' uses a computer; this would surely be incompatible with Whitehead's objections to all mind-matter dualisms. But on the whole the consistency and clarity of the volume are commendable. Since I find that his interpretation of Christ, rather than his doctrine of God, constitutes the most novel section—and one which will be controversial—I can only express the hope that he will make it the subject of further more detailed exploration. Perhaps questions of methodology might also be treated; for example, how does one reconcile Whitehead's insistence on the universality of metaphysics with the Christian understanding of revelation in unique events? I look forward to Hamilton's next book. IAN G. BARBOUR

**SCIENCE AND FAITH IN TEILHARD DE CHARDIN** (Teilhard Study Library, Vol. 1), by Claude Cuénot. *Garnstone Press*, London, 1967. 109 pp. 8s. 6d.

**EVOLUTION, MARXISM AND CHRISTIANITY** (Teilhard Study Library, Vol. 2), by various contributors. *Garnstone Press*, London, 1967. 110 pp. 8s. 6d.

Contributors to volumes on Teilhard, and reviewers of the same, have as their first temptation the urge to make assessments of the importance of Teilhard's Thought. Few succeed in overcoming the temptation and consequently lapse either into straight hagiography or into diatribe. In the first volume of this new series put out by the Teilhard de Chardin Society of Great Britain M. Cuénot barely escapes the former. If only the Teilhardians would leave this kind of writing behind they might find a yet wider audience for the genuinely important aspects of Teilhard's thoughts. When M. Cuénot does at last get round to the difficult questions which appear at the borderline of science and theology he unfortunately does little to inspire confidence in the Teilhardian position. It is, for instance, one thing to demythologize the biblical aetiology of original sin but quite another virtually to throw out the doctrine because 'grave sin, the rejection of the prevenient grace of God, presupposes an enormous progress in human reflection. . .'. If a fulness of reflection is a necessary precondition for the love of God or the rejection of God it would be difficult to escape the conclusion that God is more interested in intellectuals than in anyone else. Whatever we say about evolutionary preparation we ought to maintain that the appearance of man with the ability to love was the appearance of something really new. And with the ability to love comes the ability to sin. But it does not seem necessary to believe that the perfection of our parents was anything but the perfection of

being fully human at the beginning of things, with all the boundless possibilities of development which that implies. Fortunately, it seems possible to say that the catastrophe of original sin was the rejection of possibilities rather than of an actual perfection. This would, moreover, give an absolute importance to the Incarnation and Redemption—i.e. that of restoring the possibilities which the human race had forfeited—which does not seem to be given with any consistency in the writings of the Teilhardians. If there is any merit in this book, it lies not so much in any real clarification of Teilhard's writings as in the vigorous profession of faith of the author who clearly hopes for the appearance of really new things in history. The chief enemy of all Teilhardians, as of this reviewer, is the conservative whose only conception of human unity is that the first principle of conduct is to 'look after number one', whether it be one's self or one's nation, and that nothing else can be expected in view of the fact that 'you can't change human nature'. If the Teilhardians make this attitude less easy to take they will have achieved something.

The second volume in the series is of uneven quality and of uneven relevance to the subject of its title. The first three papers—on the origin of life, the question of orthogenesis and on human embryology—may be of some interest to the beginner, but they add nothing either to biology or to Teilhard. A number of papers on various subjects filled out with risky generalizations does not make, nor does it contribute to, a synthesis. In this case they do