

key to liberation, therefore, lies in 'non-attachment to whatever enhances our separative self'.

This is the major theme of the book to which the author constantly returns. While he makes a number of illuminating points, particularly in his interpretation of *satori*, Zen enlightenment (pp. 127-134), and while it is encouraging to find a writer of Dom Aelred's reputation sympathetically examining the oriental tradition, one wonders if he is not devoting too much effort to what is, after all, almost a commonplace of mystical thought. The repetition and multiplicity of approaches to the I-me relationship may help to deepen our understanding of this essential point of departure for all meditation, but the diffuse and rambling nature of this enquiry suggests the expansiveness of a leisurely discourse rather than any original or perceptive contribution. This book may provide a useful introductory stimulus to further reading for those who suffer too great a suspicion of oriental thought, yet in 200 pages it contains little that could not more fruitfully be gained from an intelligent direct acquaintance with any of the readily available Zen texts. One wishes that instead of applying himself to a fairly well-worn track the author had pursued some of the more penetrating problems raised by his predecessors in this field, Fr Heras and Fr Mascharenas for example. Similarly, there is a tendency to assume liberation from the separative self too easily without pursuing very far the more difficult and relevant question of what this means in practice and how it is to be achieved. The crucial Buddhist teaching here on 'renunciation of the fruits of action' is not mentioned, nor is Vinoba Bhave's *Commentary on the Gita*, where this teaching is extensively developed.

There are three supplementary discussions on yoga, monasticism, and St Thomas Aquinas which provide agreeable comments on these subjects, and also, as a postscript, a critique of the American philosopher, Walter Kaufmann, which seems a little out of place in this context. In using the word 'agreeable' one catches the tone of the whole book, its charming lucidity and its definite limitations. This is a book to be borrowed and dipped into rather than bought.

ADRIAN CUNNINGHAM

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, by Eric Hayman; Faith Press, 25s.

This attractively-produced monograph represents a well-considered attempt to make contemplative prayer intelligible to the modern Christian, irrespective of confessional loyalties. It is therefore in the best sense of the word ecumenical. Eric Hayman is an Anglican who may conceivably have written with an eye chiefly to his own co-religionists; but whatever about this, the *Hidden Life of the Body of Christ* may be profitably read by anyone who believes in God, be he Jew or Muslim, Christian or Honest-to-God agnostic.

This judgment may sound exaggerated, but if it does the only remedy is to read the book with the mind full open and with a sincere readiness to have pre-

judices and misconceptions corrected. So to be disposed is to approach this or any other subject with humility; for humility is ever ready to see facts as they really are, rather than as we would like them to be. Humility, thus understood, is a form of obedience—obedience to truth; and those who love truth are ready not only to acknowledge it but also to act upon it. Once we have understood that the essence of contemplative prayer lies precisely in this readiness to do whatever truth God may require of us, be it never so difficult or disagreeable (visions and ecstasies from this point of view being irrelevant), our objections to the contemplative way of life are found quickly to melt away. By disobedience sin gatecrashed into the world and obedience alone can show it the way out; on this principle St Benedict drew up his rule for contemplative religious. This is in fact the teaching of the gospel where Christ's saving action is seen as perfect obedience to the Father. Such has ever been the doctrine of scripture, of the Old Testament as well as of the New, and also of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church both East and West; while as for authorities closer to our own day like Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, or more recently still, authors like Père de Caussade, they are emphatic that progress in prayer is impossible without advancing in obedience to the will of God; in fact, the two things are so closely knit that you might say that fundamentally prayer is obedience and obedience is prayer, so long as it is never forgotten that this kind of obedience is an expression of love. All this is clearly brought out, and is well supported by illustrations taken from scripture and from Christian tradition as a whole, including that of the Orthodox East.

What seems to me the most significant feature of the book is the section dealing with the spirituality of Judaism as it developed after the national rejection of Christ. These chapters are invaluable as indicating where Christian and Jewish spirituality meet. And where should they meet? Just where each is at its most authentic—in its teaching on obedience to the will of God. 'The true mark of the hidden life', he writes on p. 32, 'is never mystical intensity, but a quality of response to the present moment and to its demands upon them'; to be followed by the comment: 'It is here . . . that the teaching of the Jesuit de Caussade and of the orthodox Jew Martin Buber speak almost in identical terms of a truth they share'. And if at present the prospect of Jewish acceptance of Christ seems depressingly gloomy, we may with Eric Hayman grasp at what he calls the nearest point of contact, the concept of *Tikkun*, which he describes as the purpose of God in a redemptive reparation, which fills the thought of the religious Jewish mind, unable as yet to join his Christian brother in accepting the Incarnate Word as Messiah.

There are two criticisms I would venture to offer. The first has to do with St Peter's restoration to his office as Rockman. We read (p. 103): 'The command "Follow thou me" produces a mood of undisguised jealousy'. With respect, I would venture to question this. Would it not be more objective to describe it as curiosity? Such, at any rate, is the view put forward by William Temple in his *Readings in St John's Gospel* (London 1961), p. 389. And on Peter's persistent refusal to put a higher value on his love for the Master than that of friendship, Dr

Temple is just as illuminating. Peter, after his boastful profession of loyalty in the garden and the ensuing humiliation of the three-fold denial, is a humbler man now and a wiser, who may safely leave to his all-knowing Lord the exact estimate of his love; for him to put it any higher would be to fall back into his old fault of presumption.

Eric Hayman's comments on the teaching of St Teresa of Avila on the 'Our Father' is the subject of my second criticism. St Teresa claimed that in the 'Our Father' the Lord has taught us the whole method of prayer and of high contemplation; but the validity of this claim is questioned on the ground that in her teaching she is drawing upon her own knowledge. Of course she drew upon her own knowledge and I think she would expect us to take this for granted; and it is a well-attested fact that the 'Our Father' was the instrument the Lord used to raise her to contemplation.

There is a useful index; printer's errors, though numerous, are not serious enough to mar the value of this excellent book.

ROBERT HODGE, O.C.R.

CONTEMPLATIVE NUNS SPEAK; presented by Bernard Bro O.P.; Geoffrey Chapman, 30s.

The first reaction of contemplative nuns to the idea of this book will probably be one of antipathy, since nuns in general, though only too willing in most cases to adapt themselves in modern conditions, are suffering from a surfeit of dissertations on the way they should go about it. Their minds, when they try to consider the matter, are afflicted by a confusion of objections to long skirts and ancient customs; by exhortations on the one hand to move with the times and on the other to return to the primitive spirit of the rule.

What a joy it is therefore to find in this book the 'authentic cadence', the deep meaning that makes sense of the cloistered existence, the quest for God which after all is what our lives are all about, whether we are in the cloister or outside it. For the Church, for all those who are inclined to ask 'Why was this ointment wasted?', and for contemplative nuns themselves, Fr Bro has done a great service, with tact and delicacy combined with the clear-cut realism of the Frenchman. His questionnaire, sent to 320 monasteries and convents, brought 1,827 replies from six contemplative orders, touching on many problems—the encounter with God, the rôle of Christ, the influence of the Bible, anxiety for the future, mental distress in the face of divine punishment, the liturgy, the renunciation of human love, etc.

In these replies it is evident that contemplative nuns, far from being escapists, have allowed themselves to be catapulted into a face-to-face encounter with themselves in all their human paucity and with God in his bewildering plenitude. The ensuing conflict on its different planes, in all their periods of light and darkness, pain and joy, richness and aridity is here expressed with vigour, frankness