

**FEMINIST THEOLOGY, A READER**, edited by Ann Loades. London and Louisville, KY: *SPCK-W/JKP*, 1990, 340 pp. £9.99 Pb. **AFTER EVE: WOMEN, THEOLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION**, edited by Janet Martin Soskice, London: *Collins/Marshall Pickering*, 1990, 178 pp. £5.99 Pb.

Differing in size and character, these anthologies are remarkably congruent in their objective and accomplishment—to explore the theological frontiers opened by the emergence of a critical, highly literate feminist movement in the Christian community.

All of the 22 articles in Ann Loades' volume have been previously published. Foundational contributions by women, they cover a wide range of subjects arranged in three sections: biblical tradition and interpretation; Christian history and tradition; and practical consequences, particularly bioethics, environmental issues, and ecumenics. Contributors include Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Protestants, 13 of the total being American, 9 British (including Loades, whose introductions and commentaries amount to a fair-sized article), and 1 Australian. While overwhelmingly academic, some of the articles are by free-lance writers. The overbalance of American material will be of value to British readers who may not have had previous access to important material. Not every essay bears equal weight; some may be found disagreeable; all, however, are exemplary. Outstanding contributions, in my view, include those by Elizabeth Schüssler-Fioranza, Eleanor McLaughlin, Gail Ramshaw, Beverly Wildung Harrison, Letty Russell, Margaret Farley, Sally McFague, and Ursula King.

By contrast, the 10 articles in Soskice's collection are previously unpublished. Of varying lengths, six are by males and four by females, with an all-too-brief introduction by Soskice herself. All the contributors are British, but similarly represent Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Protestant viewpoints. All hail from university settings, or (in the case of the Bishop of Ely and Timothy Radcliffe, orbit comfortably within that system). Grouped in both a thematic and chronological sequence, the essays concern themselves with scripture, history, and doctrine. Some of the articles are cursory, such as the hermeneutical surveys by Paul Joyce and Robert Morgan. Others seem rather hard-pressed to make a case, including the otherwise excellent study by Sr. Benedicta Ward of Hildegard of Bingen and Teresa of Avila, and Paul Fiddes' noble effort to redeem Karl Barth. Bishop Sykes' excavation of the thought of Richard Hooker is especially interesting because of the contrast it provides with the medieval approach of Aquinas in particular. Of singular importance, to my mind, are the essays by Leonie Archer and Sebastian Brock, each of which substantially advances the argument for women's equality from solidly anthropological and exegetical perspectives. Timothy Radcliffe's summary and development of Jerome Murphy O'Connor's exegesis of 1 Cor. 11:2–16 is laced with wit and common sense (and contrasts sharply with that of Barth-Fiddes). Jane Barr's exposure of St. Jerome's exegetical misogyny and its baneful

influence on scripture studies and theology is also of more than antiquarian interest.

It has been said (by a male, if I recall correctly), that the women's critique of theology in our time is the most important event of the century. These essays are critical in both the classical and Kantian senses. Theologically and spiritually, the Christian church is at a turning point which requires insightful analysis and interpretation. This crisis is largely the product of the rising expectations of the poor and oppressed, most eloquently and accurately articulated at present by womankind. The resulting dialectic can and, if the authors in these volumes are correct in their diagnosis and prescription, should eventuate in the emergence of a saner and more loving humankind. I recommend both volumes highly.

RICHARD WOODS OP

**THE WORKS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE. A translation for the 21st Century, Part 111, Sermons, Volume 1: Sermons 1–19, ed. J.E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill OP. T & T Clark, Edinburgh. Pp 399. £4.95**

Cardinal Michele Pellegrino's lengthy introduction to this first volume of the series deals in workmanlike fashion with matters of content, style, and occasion. I would only to have wanted him to make more of the circumstance that whilst the congregation stood through these homilies, Augustine sat. He found the north africans disturbingly restless in the heat, shifting too noisily as he explained that if *salvare* were not good old latin it was new christian usage, or that it was the Son and not some angel who appeared to Moses in the burning bush. It must have been pleasant sometimes for the faithful to hear that, as so few of them had turned up for church that morning, and as he himself was feeling tired, he would only say a few words

Father Edmund Hill translates lots of Augustine's words into a language that is indefatigably modern. In Sermon 15a, Augustine is voicing every patient's reaction to an intern's diagnosis: 'Perhaps this guy's got it all wrong'; in 16a he's worrying about parents being 'beaten up by their mentally disturbed children'; in 9 he is grumbling that the sensationalist Chusans 'turn a blind eye to the interior battle' but cannot stop watching exhibitions of 'exterior battles'. It is perhaps a little odd that an 'Augustinian Heritage Institute' should be so uneschatologically certain that there is going to be a twenty-first century, but if there are to be women and men of such a time, they will doubtless be pleased to learn that Augustine, however so much more generous in his intelligence, spoke so like themselves.

HAMISH F.G. SWANSTON