

must also be able to find his way about English Literature with insight, able to choose poems, for instance, which will help and encourage the child. In some entertaining and persuasive chapters ('How to be a Good Parrot', 'Processed Unloading', 'A Training in Insincerity') he shows that the present system does not do the work it should do. Then, in the best section of the book ('Meeting in the Word') he outlines what his own approach would be. It is full of good sense. For instance, he takes *The Ancient Mariner* and shows how the poem can help wonderfully in exploring the inner perplexities of a growing child. He then shows from some fine children's poems how their experience is very similar to Coleridge's more mature insight. In a good chapter on seminars he explains how the creative discipline of teaching can be taught in this open exchange of views where people really say what they feel instead of trotting out well-turned phrases about what they 'should' feel. There is nothing vague about this sort of discipline although examiners may feel uncomfortable at the sound of the word 'creative'. In a seminar critical terms can be worked out and learnt in discussion and these are terms which must be

known if literature is to be taught with any clarity.

There is an appealing moral urgency about Holbrook's demands. He has no scruples about saying what is right and what is wrong, what books are worth reading and what books must be left for private reading. He is sure to annoy many people in his provocative chapter, 'Questioning Fashion'. He has, it seems to me, the right sort of confidence. One of the troubles of the present system of teaching English is a lack of the right sort of confidence. The staff feel secure with the old type of essay, answer and mark down original ideas, the students find there is no time to respond to the real words and so do not trust their own judgment, and finally the children are infected by the same disease and are just bored. Holbrook provides in the section 'Essential Resources' a great deal of helpful material to guide teachers. In the rest of the book he has given a very sensitive account of how to use this material. It might do much to restore confidence and encourage teachers to try these less 'secure' methods. This book will be rewarding for any teacher; for the English teacher it is indispensable.

DAVID SANDERS, O.P.

ON THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE, by John Henry Newman. Edited with an introduction by J. Derek Holmes and Robert Murray, S.J. *Geoffrey Chapman*. 21s.

Fr Wilfred Harrington has written that 'many, in the face of modern biblical studies, are genuinely perplexed'. A great deal of this perplexity can be traced to confusion over exactly what it is that makes the Bible different from other writings. The difference is, of course, that God is the author—the Bible is 'inspired'. Incredibly, this doctrine has in recent times often degenerated into a rigid belief in the literal truth of every word and fact in every book. Even Catholics have fallen for this, although they get little support for it from fathers, Councils or popes. Today, one suspects, years of neglect have left large numbers of Catholics uneasy and confused. It is vital that the Bible be read widely and intelligently. For this to be done, one basic requirement is an acceptable theory of inspiration which can be understood by the generality of people and which will convincingly explain the Church's official teachings in the light of related historical and other circumstances. A tremendous amount has been done in this century to this end, and of writings available in English, those of Frs Rahner and Benoit are most important. The two essays by

Newman on inspiration have been rather neglected since he wrote them in 1884, the reasons being their comparative inaccessibility and the misunderstandings of his contemporaries, which relegated them to the list of theories rejected by the Church. Now they are republished with a long introduction by the editors who convincingly show that the Constitution on Divine Revelation of Vatican II substantially bears out what Newman was trying to say.

The problem of biblical inspiration has been approached in various ways, each of which tends to complement the others. Benoit gives a modern exposition of St Thomas's theory which is based on causality and is concerned with the relationship of God as author with the human authors. Rahner places the authenticity and formation of the canon of scripture firmly with the community of the early church. The Bible is a constitutive element of the apostolic church, willed by God in his foundation of the Church within salvation history and eschatological in character. The apostolic church is the permanent ground and norm for everything that is to come and the Bible is this self-definition reduced

to writing. Newman's basic quest when he approached this topic was: in what respect and for what purpose are these writings inspired? To this he answered that they are inspired in relation to matters of faith and moral conduct. Matters of fact are inspired, too, if viewed as having God for their author and in relation to faith and morals. There are often higher and lower senses to be attributed to the text, and *obiter dicta*, contradictory chronological sequences, and various readings of the text all exist. These essays have not the direct relevance for the present day as others like his 'On consulting the faithful in matters of doctrine'. Newman's main task was to face up to contemporary criticism which was that the text of scripture contained manifest errors and therefore could not have been written by God as claimed. Much has happened since then. Pioneer though he was, and now superseded in many respects, the refreshing thing about his approach is his common sense, based, nevertheless, on deep learning which leads him to give full weight to the reality of the human authorship. God acts not on the books but on the writers and scripture is therefore in the nature of a sacrament. The books show the effects of the human minds through which they have passed. They are often composed from pre-existing documents which therefore require an inspired editor. Until infallible authority has spoken we can, subject to the usual precautions, interpret scripture as we like.

Dr Healy, a professor at Maynooth, wrote a strong but careless attack on the first essay, and so provoked the second. Newman's words were open to some misunderstanding. The editors admit that Healy was right in pointing out that Trent's use of the phrase 'faith and morals' was intended in a wide sense and not restrictively as Newman thought. Vincent McNabb showed that Newman did not recognize the distinction between inspiration and revelation so profitably made in more recent times. Thus, when he says that *obiter dicta* are not inspired he really means that they are not part of revelation. The concentration on *obiter dicta* is itself less useful than the exploration and understanding of literary genres, the potentialities of which

were pointed out to Newman by his friend Bp Clifford. He did not follow this up.

The republication of these essays completes the rehabilitation which has already been canvassed for them by people like Fr McNabb. They cannot have the same impact on us now as they did on contemporaries because of the great strides made on the problem in the twentieth century, but they retain a freshness and a freedom from technical jargon which makes reading them a pleasure. And we can understand the effect they must have had, coming at a time when scientific criticism was panicking Christian scholars into defending many an untenable position. Meriol Trevor quotes the editor of *The Nineteenth Century* in which the essays were published as saying: 'I am frankly amazed . . . to see how open a man's mind may be under the Catholic system, upon matters which I had supposed were close shut up against all liberty of thought'.

Newman's troubles over these essays raises the whole question of the sort of language used in discussing inspiration. As Ward pointed out in his biography of Newman, 'the recognized technical phraseology denies all "error" to scripture rightly interpreted'. Nevertheless, in popular language 'errors' certainly do exist in the Bible and one cannot help feeling that much confusion has been caused by a failure to distinguish the popular from the technical use of the word error and its qualification. It is hardly surprising if people have misunderstood such statements as this in Leo XIII's *Providentissimus Deus*: 'By its very nature inspiration not only excludes all error, but makes its presence as utterly impossible as it is for God, the supreme truth, to be the author of any error whatever'. The Vatican II Decree on Divine Revelation was able to put it much better: 'the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation'. Newman was a great pioneer also in bringing clear and plain language into the controversy.

GEOFFREY PONTON,

WESLEYAN AND TRACTARIAN WORSHIP: An oecumenical study. By Trevor Dearing. *Epworth-S.P.C.K.*, 1966. 27s. 6d.

As long ago as 1913, Fr Vincent McNabb spoke of the 'great Wesleyan movement which was the prototype of the Oxford movement'. Since then, studies such as Fr Maximin Piette's monumental

and scholarly 'John Wesley in the evolution of Protestantism' (1937) and John Todd's more accessible and popular 'John Wesley and the Catholic Church' (1958) have shown how cer-