

complain about omissions! My special plea would be for a separate essay on Bahaim and more on Jainism. The greatest fault of omission is related to Judaism. Section 2, dealing with 'Judaism and Christianity', contains two essays on Judaism (23pp on 'Israel before Christianity' and 31pp on 'Judaism', Israel after Christianity!) compared to eleven separate essays on Christianity. This is unbalanced and oddly not given justification in the section editors' otherwise excellent introductory piece. A. Friedlander's essay on Judaism, fine though it is, cannot compensate for this problem.

I would like to conclude with a few random and specific points. Byrne writes a good piece in the first section defending and explaining the phenomenological approach. He mentions Cantwell-Smith in the bibliography, but does not discuss his radical interpretation of 'religion', the subject of the essay. Anders, surprisingly, has no discussion of the Frankfurt School or Bloch in an essay on 'Religion and Ideology'; although what he has to say is most interesting, it suffers from this neglect. Richards, in an essay on 'Modern Hinduism', mistakenly conveys the impression that modern Hinduism ends with Gandhi! Something should be said of important contemporary Hindu groups—only some of which are briefly mentioned in the section on New Religious Movements (and categorizing some of them thus, is very misleading). These and other minor points apart, this book is a thoughtful and rewarding adventure for the reader.

GAVIN D'COSTA

**UNEXPECTED MESSIAH. HOW THE BIBLE CAN BE MISLEADING**  
by Lucas Grollenberg, *SCM*. 1988. Pp viii + 199. £6.95.

Fr. Grollenberg writes 'as a result of feelings of irritation and amazement' which came to a head during a service voicing the frequently made claim that 'Prophets foresaw and prophesied' the coming of Jesus the Messiah; for we know that prophets did not 'prophesy' for the distant future, and the claim ignores the fact that the Jews of Jesus' time totally failed to recognise him as the Messiah supposedly thus clearly presented in their own Bible. Yet in the same service the living Jesus was truly proclaimed in the sharing of the bread and wine. Indeed, 'How did it come about that a pious Jew who lived two thousand years ago ... was crucified as a criminal, ... still brings people together now ... people for whom he is still alive, and has to do with the depths of their existence?'

This book is a completely honest and lucid effort to deal with these and many related matters. Recognizing fully the necessity of asking about the books of the Bible, 'by whom?', 'for whom?', 'with what purpose?', 'from what thought world?', and, to quote the author, 'how did all this become one book and how did that collection of writings function over the centuries?' The subtitle is itself 'misleading': it might have been, 'How to understand the Bible'; for a distinguished Dominican scholar who thus candidly accepts the necessity of a historical approach, lamenting that 'unfortunately the circulation of Bibles goes on, as zealous as it is thoughtless', leads us to expect positive as well as critical virtues.

We are not disappointed; Fr. Grollenberg has the rare ability to address even minds for whom the whole Bible is alien, seeking to make clear the extent to which we can place the gospel story in the context of history

intelligible to these new generations. The main answer to the original questions is that Jesus was Messiah, but with one difference, indeed an 'unexpected Messiah'. To explain what is meant and implied by this the history which lies behind the New Testament events is summarized and the main religious themes are described in their historical contexts—Wisdom, belief in life after death, 'apocalyptic' and 'Messianic' expectations; the reader is thus given a panoramic view rather than a few tendentious 'stills'. The intelligent and willing, though inexpert, reader is thus led to understand such useful truths as that 'gospel truth' is not 'fact historically certain'; for the gospel—the good news—is that Jesus 'lived in God' and by the resurrection lives with his followers in a new way.

The extent to which the 'new Scriptures' are anti-Jewish, and the manner in which their composition was influenced by the ancient scriptures, are painstakingly explained in chapters which produce some attractive phrases, including this brilliant simile in connexion with the Gospel of John: 'The situation of the author and his readers determined his account of past events. It is rather like having two slides in the projector at once: a photograph taken recently superimposed on one taken long ago, with the more recent one much easier to see on the screen'.

Some details invite critical comment: on Jesus as a teacher, the author goes perhaps too far when he says that 'Jesus simply expressed his own thoughts and never referred to any authority.' He appealed to the Torah in the matter of divorce, and his belief in eternal life was founded on a formula about God taken from it. 'You do not understand the scriptures nor the power of God' suggests that it is truer to say that Jesus saw God's teaching embodied in the Mosaic law, but also extended visibly into his creation, out of which also his word may be read, and be formed into parables. It is disappointing also to find no finally satisfactory exegesis of eschatology. There is reference to Flusser's remark that Jesus is the only Jew to have taught that the day of the kingdom of God had actually dawned, but no explicit discussion of the great problem which this raises. It is true that 'Jesus had been taken up into the life of God's own world, in which death has no power. Another term for this world was the Kingdom of God,.... That kingdom has now been realized in him, for ever.' But there still remains the cardinal question of Judas not Iscariot in John 14:22, 'Lord, what has happened that you are going to show yourself to us and not to the world?' What has become of the 'coming on the clouds of heaven'?

If this expectation is to be abandoned, the fact ought to be clearly stated, as is so much in this book; its abandonment would cause a stir among more than fundamentalists but perhaps lead to more acceptance of the gospel than we think. For example, a child's prayer in *Network* ends, 'As the world is coming to an end, help my family and me to have faith in you, even unto the end of the world.... Finally, when time shall be no more, save us.'

These criticisms are intended to be sympathetic and constructive; for this is an excellent book, providing a very readable summary for the beginner of what the best kind of believing scholar wants to get across to as wide a public as possible, believers, non-believers, and perhaps especially would-be believers who do not know that the 'acids of modernity' have cleansed and not destroyed the Christian tradition.

A.R.C. LEANEY  
357