

categories in Marx. There is a tendency, fostered by among others Mandel and Martin Nicolaus, to make Marx's assertions historically specific to the point of incoherence. On pages 53, 57 and 94-5, on the subjects of 'production in general' and 'human nature', Dr Evans strikes just the right balance between the specific and those generalisations which are required to make any theory of history intelligible. He also makes some very good points about the need to read each of Marx's writings in its context, and not to quote without saying when the quotation was written. This leads him quite rightly to condemn Wagner and Strauss (*sic*) for interpreting the programme of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) in terms of an economic distinction which Marx had not yet evolved. One slip which he makes is of some importance: on page 93 he attributes to the capitalist an 'activity' of alienation when the text should read a 'state of alienation'.

A particularly good section is that, in the early part of the book, on artisanal Communism and Marx's problems in directing it towards the supersession of artisanal by industrial structures. But perhaps the core of the book's theoretical interest is to be found in the extremely able tying together of what Evans calls the 'structural concepts'—social formation, mode of production, forces and relations of production and so on—of Marx's theory. I would not agree with all of Dr Evans's arguments, particu-

larly where he points out (quite correctly) that besides 'determines' Marx also uses such verbs as 'conditions', 'corresponds' and so on for the relation postulated between the economic structure and the rest of society. Of course he does, but even if he had always used 'determines' most criticisms of the theory would not in fact be valid. Much of the time when Marx talks of 'determination' he is talking in terms of formal rather than efficient causation. In any case, whether thinking of formal or efficient causation, he never seriously suggests that *anything* could be said on its own to account for either the existence or all the characteristics of anything else. Thus the crux of Marx's theory will have to be not *whether* or 'to what extent' but *how* the economy determines the shape of society; the answer will lie in a notion of the functional priority of the 'first historical act' of material production, so that social structures will tend to come into line with economic requirements rather than *vice versa*. By the way, it is not true that 'A corresponds with B' is a statement of mere correlation devoid of further implications (p. 65): it matters a great deal whether you correspond with my wishes or I with yours. But my disagreement on such points is merely evidence of the fact that Dr Evans has managed to combine a good general account of Marx's thought with provocative and profound contributions to major theoretical problems.

JOHN MAGUIRE

PILGRIMAGE: An Image of Mediaeval Religion, by Jonathan Sumption. *Faber*, 1975. 302 pp. £6.95.

This could be judged either as a study of Mediaeval pilgrimages or of Mediaeval religion. As the first it is notably successful. The author deals with the cult of relics, the pursuit of the miraculous and the conception of the penitential pilgrimage and then with details of the journeys and the shrines. He has gathered a great mass of fascinating facts.

It is only some of the deductions that could be criticised. At times they are impregnable—notably on the effects of popular devotion upon official teaching: 'The laity accepted the efficacy of indulgences for the dead for many years before the Popes granted them in formal terms. No genuine letter of indulgence promised

the release of souls from purgatory until the middle of the fifteenth century. The earliest known example dates only from 1475' (p. 293).

On the other hand some generalisations seem simply untenable—for example, that 'Profound pessimism was one of the principal characteristics of Mediaeval religion' (p. 21). But *The Tale of the Incestuous Daughter*, *The Hermit and the Outlaw* and *The Vernon Miracles of Mary* all illustrate the infinite compassion of God coming in answer to a quite inadequate repentance. They represent a mass of popular literature from all over Europe. Few statements could be more misleading than 'Belief in a merciful God was even

occasionally regarded as evidence for heresy' (p. 19). In the light of Mr Sumpston's own research it would be more convincing to write 'Unwar-

ranted optimism was one of the principal characteristics of Mediaeval religion'.

GERVASE MATHEW OP

CARE OF THE CHILD FACING DEATH, edited by Lindy Burton. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, London, 1974. 225 pp. £4.95.

The sufferings of children whose lives are threatened by illness, and the sufferings of their families, are often aggravated by the insecurity and naivety of those who help them. This book brings these helpers enlightenment and the confidence to work together; the result must be an improvement in the quality of the care they give.

Seventeen chapters by various authors enable the reader to set his own limited experience in a broader framework, and to understand and correct his own attitudes. With few exceptions these authors write clearly and avoid the jargon of their particular professions; they do not intimidate the readers or waste his time. Dr Burton must take much of the credit for this achievement, and her own contribution on 'The family coping with a heavy treatment régime' is a model of conciseness and informativeness.

This is not a depressing book: its keynotes are hope, dignity and realism. In this respect it is also an excellent introduction to the pastoral care of the dying. Loneliness and a sense that our environing universe,

which is immediately painful and frightening, is also ultimately hostile or at least unfeeling are two of the chief trials of the dying and of those who love them. The kind of care described and urged in this book is better than any verbal consolation in fighting these fears—or rather, both our words and our sacraments are in danger of being incredible unless both patient and family find their loneliness softened by understanding and can feel honest caring love in and beyond their pains. How can we place ourselves or those we love into God's hands unless the realism, acceptance and reliability of those around us encourages us to believe that God has built these qualities into the larger context of our life and death? Here too we know God by analogy.

Doctors and hospital staff, school-teachers, clergy, Samaritans, and all who come in contact with very ill children and their families will profit from this book; so will the general reader whose compassionate instincts need and thrive upon the discipline of facts, scientific study and the wise counsel of experience.

MICHAEL SLUSSER