

From 'the eternal in the temporal', the flower and strength of which is Christ, comes the creaturely capacity for lasting love, having its cause in 'God, the already fully extant and operative eternal beauty, truth, love and goodness, infinite Personality and Spirit . . . ; and Jesus, who actually lived in the flesh . . . , the lowly servant'. This demands an uninterrupted service of others, 'a persistent faithfulness'. The joy of 'God-near' should arouse 'tip-toe expectation'.

There are 220 pages of text, fifty pages of notes, and an index. So there is much more that could be said. 'The most fundamental need, duty, honour and happiness of man is adoration.' He explains a necessary part of it—'Be very faithful in your service of the poor', both in prayer and in practical secular matters. And ourselves? 'For the rich development and full purification of our own personality, and our consequent increasingly worthy conception of his, we shall want work and recollection, the visible and the invisible, science and morals, nature and grace, a true self-dying and a true self-finding.' No wonder Maisie Ward, puzzling over his goodness and his part in the Modernist affair, remarked, 'There are quite simply two von Hügel's, one of faith, the other of history. He was called the Pope of Modernism; yet he was never condemned. In *Insurrection versus Resurrection*, p. 512, Miss Ward wrote, 'Surely since Tertullian he stands alone in being at once almost a heretic, yet almost a doctor in

the eyes of some of the Church's leaders'.

Evelyn Underhill thought him the most wonderful personality she had ever known. She recalled how he aroused awe and passion in his hearers 'when he uttered the name of his God'. And Abbot Cuthbert Butler remembered long walks on Hampstead Heath: 'We always returned home by the little Catholic church in Holly Place—it was his daily practice—and went in for a long visit to the Blessed Sacrament; and there I would watch him sitting, the great deep eyes on the Tabernacle, the whole being wrapped in an absorption of prayer, devotion, contemplation. Those who have not seen him so know only half the man.' In spite of his enormous learning, perhaps because, partly, of it, he emerges as one of 'the simple faithful'; it was very important for him not to lose touch 'with the devotion of the people'. So, long quiet reflective prayer, but short morning and night prayers; frequent confession and Mass, and a daily decade of the Rosary—'after over thirty years of this mixed *régime*, I am profoundly convinced on the penetrating sagacity of this advice'.

I shall want to keep this book and try to get to the bottom of it. For von Hügel, being a Christian meant having 'an unshakeable, because creaturely, strength, a deep joy, and a steady homely heroism, a gentle flowing love and service of your fellow-creatures in, with and for God, the Infinite, our Home'.

BEDE BAILEY, O.P.

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH UNDERGROUND, 1917-1970, by William C. Fletcher. OUP. £3.75.

This valuable book fills a gap in our knowledge. It has long been known that there were underground church movements in the Soviet Union, but information about their character and the extent of their influence was impossible to verify in detail. Some of it was Soviet anti-religious propaganda and some of it came from émigré sources that have sometimes now been proved to be extremely accurate but could not be checked at the time. However, in the last decade or so a mass of information about religion in the Soviet Union has become available. It would be a whole-time job to read and digest all the religious protest literature which reaches the West every year. To sift this evidence is a vast task but it is now possible to get a much clearer picture of many aspects of religious life, as it has evolved since 1917. Dr Fletcher has assembled the evidence from

all sources for those underground church movements which stem from the Orthodox tradition. He is a reliable guide, and his book is readable.

'The phenomenon of underground religious organisations constitutes the primary factor which, so far at least, has inhibited the State from simply eliminating the churches from Soviet society.' If you close churches, people do not cease to believe in God. Religion simply goes underground. For this reason, during the relative toleration of the Church in the mid-'fifties I personally made the mistake of believing that there would be no renewal of religious persecution. It was clear that renewed persecution would drive religious people to find secret ways of expressing their faith and that these would be harder for the secret police to control than the overt activity

of legal churches. The authorities cannot be pleased with the results of persecution, since religion shows no sign of dying out and, indeed, is now quite strong where it used to be weakest, namely among the intelligentsia. But nowhere does the fact that a policy is unlikely to work ensure that it will not be tried.

Underground religion takes various forms, some of them extreme. There are, or have been, those who never speak; it may be doubted, however, whether this can properly be called an underground movement; such a strange custom could hardly escape notice; moreover, some of the 'silent' have families and it is hard to believe that anyone could try to bring up children without speaking to them; the evidence about this movement comes mainly from Soviet attacks on them, and it seems clear that the information we have is incomplete. Indeed, my only major disagreement with Dr Fletcher's interpretation of the evidence is that he accepts too easily Soviet accusations that various sects cut themselves off from the life of society. No doubt some do, but it is one of the aims of Soviet propaganda to pin violent and anti-social views upon those who may only be protesting against a particular manifestation of the State's power in the affairs of the Church.

The Communist Party's hostility to religion was clear from the start, but it took some time to organize Stalinist power. So the believers

had time to work out secret ways of expressing their belief, before the full rigour of the régime was manifested. In the 1930s we hear of 'a secret village led by a Bishop M., which had links with other underground groups all over the U.S.S.R.' And Dr Fletcher has not assembled all the evidence that could be found for this sort of thing.

It is clear, however, that the distinction between the legal Church and the underground Church is not absolute. When so many actions are forbidden, it is impossible to live without breaking the law. We know from Svetlana Alliluyeva that priests of the legal Church conduct secret baptisms, and Dr Fletcher gives much evidence of a similar kind. Moreover, when believers of the legal Church and of the underground find themselves together in prison or in concentration camps, all distinctions vanish. Personally I suspect that the differences are even more blurred than Dr Fletcher shows them to be.

How widespread is the underground Church? Dr Fletcher is inclined to think that at present the various movements 'consist of a scattered few adherents here and there throughout the Soviet Union'. But no one knows; and how do you count? Are the congregation of a church an illegal group, if they meet secretly simply because their repeated requests to have their old parish church opened remain unanswered?

JOHN LAWRENCE

THE CONCEPT OF MIRACLE, by Richard Swinburne. *Macmillan*, London, 1970. 76 pp. 65p.

This book is one of the new *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion* edited by W. D. Hudson. It is brief, clear, and sensible. It concerns itself principally with two problems set by Hume. Can there be such a thing as a miracle, defined as a violation of a law of nature by a god? If so, can we ever have good reason to believe that one has ever occurred?

Swinburne shows convincingly, against the arguments of some modern Humeans, that there is nothing self-contradictory in the notion of a miracle as a non-repeatable, counter-example to a law of nature. He deals effectively with the objection that any alleged violation of a law of nature would at best be evidence that the law had been mis-stated. Though he has a number of interesting observations to

make about the weighing up of historical evidence, he is less persuasive in his attempt to deal with Hume's objection that a miracle-story should only be accepted if its falsehood would itself be something miraculous. In conclusion, Swinburne rightly points out that the question of the creditability of a particular miracle-story cannot be altogether separated off from the evidence from sources other than miracle-stories for or against the existence of gods. It is a pity, however, that he was not able to develop this point at greater length since there is a disappointing vagueness about his final conclusion, that the acceptance or rejection of a miracle must depend on one's *Weltanschauung*.

A. J. P. KENNY