

the chapter on the Trinity, where Charlton repeats an argument first presented in *New Blackfriars* 78 (1997), that the three-fold way we are motivated 'by egoism, by duty, and by altruism' can provide a model for the three persons of the Trinity.

The six chapters in which the author addresses the reader in his own voice are delightfully supplemented by three dialogues in the tradition of Plato and W.H. Mallock: at a meal, on a railway journey, and on the banks of a river. They feature a crusty Oxford don called Eddie Dodson, a hospitable spinster who lives in Northumberland and who has a cousin in the Iles des Nuages, newly married, and a nephew with a girlfriend who has absorbed some philosophy from a former boyfriend. In the last of the dialogues they swim in the river, and talk, and drink, and draw philosophical pictures in the sand. Mr Dodson pays a tribute to the vivid demonstration by the Polynesian cousin and the nephew that beliefs are ineluctably teleological: 'I think there is some marvellous causal property in the water of that pool. [Mr Dodson does not swim.] To be a match for you I should have to baptise myself in it. But I shall stick to that wine... Could you spare a glass, please, for a silenced but unconvinced atheist?' The scene is depicted on the cover in a watercolour made by the author himself.

A book to read, enjoy, and re-read.

J.C. O'NEILL

RETRIEVING THE TRADITION AND RENEWING EVANGELICALISM: A PRIMER FOR SUSPICIOUS PROTESTANTS by D H Williams *William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1999. Pp. ix + 243, £9.99 pbk.*

I hesitated before agreeing to review this book on two counts. It did not, from its title, sound as if it would be of much interest to readers of this journal and I am not a Protestant who is deeply suspicious of the patristic tradition and uneasy at embracing catholicity — I come from the mainstream Reformed tradition that has always prided itself on taking the Fathers seriously.

The worst thing about this book is its title, which is bound to limit its readership, and in a few places makes what is in essence a very attractive, scholarly and balanced elementary introduction to the Fathers a manifesto directed at mainly American Protestant churches which have a very narrow understanding of the *sola scriptura* and attach no importance at all to apostolic and ecclesial continuity.

But there is another reason why this book deserves a wider readership. It is not only on the wilder shores of Protestantism that Christians, and others, sit easy to tradition today, and are amazingly ignorant of the riches of the Christian past. 'Neophilia' has penetrated deeply even into the Christian community, bringing with it a devaluing of history and of the past, and a dark suspicion combined with a profound ignorance about the development of the Faith, particularly in the Patristic age. Williams' book could be a useful corrective, although the title should be changed.

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