

nothing in the patriarchal-minded scriptures, about the ambivalence of Man vis-à-vis Woman (Master? Lover? Partner?). Secondly, he dismisses without enough discussion the disappearance of sexuality in the resurrection state – 'in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven' (Mt 22, 30). True, but the context indicates that the emphasis is on procreation of which there is no further need, and surely leaves

open the question of the physical and psychological distinction of the sexes.

It is a pity that the scriptural references have been given in the Douai version and the scriptural quotations in Knoxese. The translation for the most part is happy, though the translator might have found a better way of expressing 'Proto-plasts', on p. 125, and must, I think, have misused the sense of footnote 13 on p. 101.

Benet Weatherhead, O.P.

BUDDHIST DEVOTION AND MEDITATION by Pe Maung Tin. *S.P.C.K., 21s.*

Those who know Hinayana Buddhism only from the early Pali texts, which no doubt come nearest to the Buddha's original teaching, will find this little book extremely refreshing. The early texts, though the note of joy and triumph is never absent, often strike one as austere, with their emphasis of the pain of this world, the need for moral effort and the negative character of Nirvana as the 'extinction' of becoming, this book gives quite a different impression. It is a collection of texts of modern Burmese devotion, which, though partly based on early texts, is filled with quite a different spirit. Here the basic theme is devotion to the Buddha as well as to the Dhamma (the Law) and the Sangha (the Order). It has a warmth and beauty which are most touching. The Buddha is praised as the 'saint, supremely enlightened, proficient in knowledge and conduct, well-farer, world-knower, peerless driver of men to be tamed, teacher of spirits and men, the Buddha, the Blessed One'. Even more striking is the insistence on the compassion of the Buddha, which is usually associated rather with

Māhāyāna Buddhism. Thus it is said: 'What man can fail to love the Blessed One, Him who loves the unlovable, Who has compassion on all, Who gives happiness to all?'

The author of this book is a Burmese Christian and there is a Foreword by the Bishop of Rangoon, but he has not made any attempt to relate this Buddhist devotion to Christianity. He has been content to make an 'objective' study setting out this devotion in its simple beauty and this is certainly of value, as our first task is to get to know and understand the prayer-life of other religions. Yet one would have welcomed some attempt to show the relation of Christianity to this devotional Buddhism.

The last part of the book, which is much shorter, contains a summary of Buddhist methods of meditation. This covers much more familiar ground and does not add anything to what may be found, for instance, in Nyapnaponika Thera's *Heart of Buddhist Meditation*.

Bede Griffiths

THE KINGDOM OF GOD TODAY by Otto Karrer. *Herder-Nelson, 28s.*

The most notable thing about this collection of essays is its eirenic mood; it would be difficult to imagine Fr Karrer losing his temper with anybody. Whether he is writing on the relationship between the Church and other world religions, on the ministerial and general priesthood, on 'The Image of Mary' or 'The Reunion of Christians', he maintains a completely imperturbable serenity.

There is, however, the danger that the eirenic can deteriorate into the soporific. Those people for whom all theological things German are automatically suspect (and such people do exist) will not have their suspicions allayed by his failure to grapple satisfactorily with many of the problems he raises. It could be argued that such problems cannot be dealt with in depth in what

is professedly a 'popular' book, but it is hardly true, for example, that 'The question of exactly what relationship exists between the general and special priesthood is . . . a relatively subordinate one in theological discussion' (p. 149). The same mood produces several phrases that are misleading through sheer ambiguity: 'In the Church of Christ there is, from the spiritual point of view, strictly speaking, no "laity" in contrast with priests' (p. 123); 'We cannot doubt that the fundamental religious disposition of the Child's spiritual life flowered as much because of the human help he received, as because of his innate intimacy with the Father in heaven' (p. 207). Such statements are not untrue; but they are, surely, open to misinterpretation.

In view of his emphasis on the importance of the general priesthood of all the faithful, some of Fr Karrer's remarks concerning the laity seem a little strange: ' . . . when Christ himself praises brotherly admonition as a duty of love (Matt. 18, 15ff) . . . (this is a) manifestation in practice of the power which in more recent times Pius XI

described as "the participation of all the faithful in the hierarchical apostolate"' (p. 147). And when he lists the 'fundamentals for a Christian life in the world' he confuses, in a curious way, two levels of 'obligation': 'In general, participation at Sunday Mass and Easter Communion (when necessary with confession beforehand) is the minimum. We are enjoined too to pray in "our inner room", that is, in the family, and to read the Holy Scriptures' (p. 178). But surely in the sense in which the Christian is 'enjoined' to read the Scriptures, he is also 'enjoined' to communicate rather more than once a year!

There are far more good things in this book than these somewhat carping remarks (so unlike Fr Karrer's own courteous style) would suggest. But the standard of popular theological writing is rising rapidly and, whereas this would have been an outstanding book five years ago, today its lack of tautness, precision and sense of urgency prevent it from being in any way remarkable.

Nicholas Lash

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