

their parents (who often differed anyway), religious leaders, and other respected elders. Many, including 'secular' children, made a clear distinction between superficial religious observance or 'goodness' and real attitudes of concern towards God and other people.

Reading this book, I had the very strong impression that Robert Coles is uneasy with expressions of religious feeling and has little sympathy with organized religion of any kind, which contrasts very strongly with the natural and intensely involved way in which the children he recorded themselves viewed such matters. He seems well aware of this, and describes at length how he came to embark upon this particular book, armed with a self-avowed tendency to psychologize almost anything, and with a standard grounding in broadly Freudian views about the functioning of children's minds that did not help very much in understanding religious feeling. It is a tribute to the compelling strength of the children's narratives that constant intrusive reminders of the author's own unease don't seem to matter too much. Indeed, the reader is given occasional glimpses of an incipient thaw in Coles's attitudes, and a few of the children seem to have tackled him very effectively when he refused to commit himself when challenged about his own opinions.

Many more questions are raised by such a book than even begin to be answered by it. What is the relationship between the religious sense and morality, which are so constantly connected in children's minds? Or between religious/spiritual and psychological perspectives? It may be a hopeless task to try to reconcile classical Freudian psychoanalysis and spirituality without denigrating the latter, and I think this is implicit in the way the whole issue is left hanging in this book. Object-Relations psychoanalytic ideas are less difficult to integrate with it, but are foreign to Coles's way of thinking—there is, for instance, an impressive degree of conceptual congruence between the experience of God as described by Christian/Jewish/Moslem children in this book; what the Hopi children described as Spirit, what secular children experience as promptings of conscience, and what Object Relations psychoanalysis would describe as experience of a Good Object. There is much undigested food for thought in this very worthwhile book.

DAPHNE BRIGGS

BULTMANN by David Fergusson, *Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series*, editor Brian Davies OP, *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1992. pp. xxi + 154.

This introduction to Bultmann's life and thought admirably meets the editorial intention that books in this series should provide clear, authoritative and critical accounts of what great Christian thinkers have said and whether they provide a vision to live by, make sense, and can be preached.

It opens somewhat unexpectedly with an extensive bibliography of

primary and secondary sources in English and German, which reveals how much of Bultmann's work was scattered in articles and essays, besides his weightier volumes. His different roles, as Lutheran preacher, radical New Testament critic, and existentialist philosopher add to the seeming complexity of his thought. Yet by unravelling the threads, Fergusson is able to draw them back into a systematic pattern not always apparent in the original.

The opening chapter on the legacy of liberalism would serve on its own as a valuable introduction to nineteenth and early twentieth century theology, with its succinct account of key figures (Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Dilthey et al.) and themes in the emergence of liberal theology since the Enlightenment. Its immediate purpose is to provide the necessary preunderstanding for Bultmann's own theology insofar as it arose out of difficulties he saw in his liberal ancestry.

There follow chapters on the main themes addressed by Bultmann on faith (what it is existentially, and what it is not), the hermeneutical task, New Testament theology, and demythologization. Along the way, Bultmann's debt to his teachers and contemporaries is explored - notably Herrmann, Kähler, Barth, and of course Heidegger. What emerges as a recurring and unifying theme is his determined opposition to any objectification of God, since that must result in the loss not only of the reality of God as subject who calls our whole being into question, but of the true nature of faith as encounter with God. The appeal of Heidegger's existentialist theology and also Barth's crisis theology can be understood in this light (though Bultmann's path would subsequently diverge from the latter, and not enough, perhaps, from the former). The later call for demythologization is entirely consonant with the same concern.

In the course of this study, Fergusson underlines Bultmann's pioneering work in New Testament studies, in the development of form criticism and existentialist exegesis. Here as elsewhere he includes his own brief critical comments and draws attention to others, not excluding in the final chapter the critical reaction of some of Bultmann's own students to the 'reduction of the historical Jesus to the single event of his death'. Though Bultmann's emphasis on the individual self apart from social, economic or political forces has been criticized, we are reminded that he was opposed to the Nazis and signed the Barmen declaration.

Debate continues over many aspects of Bultmann's work, not least on whether his use of existentialist categories reduces theology to anthropology, but the fact remains that directly or indirectly he has had immense influence on theology. The contextualized, sympathetic yet critical account of it given here makes this volume an excellent introduction not only to Bultmann but to theological development this century.

TREVOR WILLIAMS