

experience ('a ready recital of his own religious experiences'); but the sermon he himself preached on several occasions to American congregations contains very little theology indeed: it is one of the most pathetic witnesses to the state of mind of a young German in 1930 that I have ever read.

Bonhoeffer's active participation in ecumenical work began at Cambridge in 1931. The letters and reports evoked by his responsibilities in this field add to our understanding of the growth of ecumenism in the 'thirties. This work was soon inter-related with the struggle to clarify the conscience of German Protestantism in face of the temptation of Nazism. Many Christians believed that it would be best to join the Nazis and to leaven the movement from the inside. Bonhoeffer did wonder at one point (1931) whether 'bolshevism' would be any worse than 'a liberal compromise'; but he denounced the *führerprinzip* in a broadcast two days after Hitler became chancellor (and got cut off before the end). He was never in doubt about the nature of Nazism. In October 1933 he accepted the post of pastor to two German congregations in London. He wrote somewhat anxiously to Barth to justify this – after he was already in England; and received a devastating letter in reply

('think of only one thing, that you are a German, that the house of your church is on fire, that you know enough and can say what you know well enough to be able to help and that you must return to your post by the next ship'). Bonhoeffer stayed on more than a year in London, but it is hard to think that these words of his old mentor were not in his mind when he chose to go back to Germany for the duration of the war: 'Such a decision each man must make for himself. Christians in Germany will face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilisation may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization. I know which of these alternatives I must choose; *but I cannot make that choice in security*' (letter to Reinhold Niebuhr, July 1939).

That refusal of security was not silly heroics. It was entirely consonant with Bonhoeffer's understanding of faith as participation in the existence of Jesus. Surely too, it was only in the purifying light of that decision that he came to develop the anti-religious Christocentrism which is his theological originality. Perhaps Mr Robertson's second volume will help us to understand that.

Fergus Kerr, O.P.

PAUL TILLICH IN CATHOLIC THOUGHT edited by Thomas A. O'Meara, O.P., and Celestin D. Weisser, O.P. *Chicago: Priory Press, \$5.59, paperback, \$2.95.*

In this age of oversimplifying, distorting popularizations (an almost inevitable outcome of our domination by the mass media) it is a pleasure to find a truly scholarly work such as the one under review which at the same time is not at all stodgy or uninteresting.

The editors are to be complimented on having achieved a true synthesis in this collection of essays, most of which were not written originally with this end in view. All the essays without exception are of a high standard of theological scholarship and there is surprisingly little overlapping, rare qualities indeed in a collection such as this.

The work is arranged within the general framework of Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology*. Dedicated to the memory of Fr Gustave Weigel, S.J., it fittingly begins with a brilliant survey by this author both of the importance (for Protestants and Catholics alike) and of the meaning of Tillich's theological system, an essay showing the deep insight we had come to expect from this sadly missed theologian. The substantial objectivity of this survey is confirmed by Tillich himself. The other fourteen essays which follow are all by well-known Catholic theologians and represent most valuable critical appreciations (critical while being fully appreciative and vice versa) of the

basic elements of Tillich's thought as outlined in Fr Weigel's essay. As Professor J. Heywood Thomas points out in his most generous Foreword, these critical appreciations are endowed with that complete fairness so characteristic of all Catholic criticism of Tillich. The work ends with an appreciation and reply by Dr Tillich himself, an afterword which provides important clarifications and which will take its place among Tillich's most valuable writings.

Fr Weigel, in his initial essay, points out that the importance of Paul Tillich lies in the fact that he has achieved an original, all-embracing system of Protestant thought and doctrine 'really bringing together all the elements of Protestant thinking, from the days of the reformers to our own time' and taking a formally ontological (existentialist) approach to the achievement of this system. The inwardness stressed by Luther and Calvin as well as their biblical preoccupations, 'the later Protestant corrective, namely the theological relevance of the continuous Church and of history . . . the antirationalism which was the heart of pietism and Schleiermacher's sentimentalism . . . the recognition of the legitimacy of contributions from historical-criticism and even empiricism', and the synthesizing force of existentialism: all these are to be found here in this 'brilliant fusion of all recent epistemologies', while not neglecting the elements of mysticism and scholasticism, so that in Tillich 'Kant and St Thomas walk in friendship'. All this is treated in greater detail in Part One – 'Paul Tillich and his theological system' – in essays by E. O'Connor, G. F. McLean, O.M.I., G. Tavard and K. Foster, O.P.

The criterion of Tillich's theology is 'the real under its formal and specifying dimension of relevancy to the ultimate ground of being; or put phenomenologically, the real in terms of ultimate human concern.' Theology is guided and limited in its work by 'the biblical message in its assimilation by the living, historical Church' with its 'climactic biblical message of New Being in Christ'. Tillich denies objective validity to natural theology, although he grants the value of its concepts as existentialist pointers to God, the ground of being and man's ultimate concern, to be found

only in immediate, existential and theonomous encounter of revelation unveiling the ground of being. Both these aspects – 'The sources and media of revelation' – are treated in detail, and compared with Catholic thought on the Bible and on faith, in Part Two in two essays by A. Dulles, S.J., and P. Smith, O.P.

The underlying principle in all this is the 'Protestant principle', 'a protest in the name of the Lord God against all idolatry', allowing nothing to take the place of God's 'definitive and unique lordship . . . whether it be the society of the Church or the letter of the Bible or the insights of philosophers or the formulae of churchmen and divines'. Tillich sees the essence of Christianity (as announced in the Scriptures and explained in Christian theology) to be 'New Being', i.e. existentialist being, expressed in symbols pointing – by participating in it – to the transcendent reality, but without any conceptual content and taken simply in their pointing potentiality arising out of the union of content with existentialist apperception. This aspect of Tillich's thought is given more detailed treatment and evaluation in the light of Catholic thought (especially on analogy, myth and Christian root-terms) in Part Three – 'The knowledge of revelation' – consisting of essays by G. F. McLean, O.M.I., G. Weigel, S.J., and E. Przywara, S.J.

This term 'New Being' brings together God ('the matrix of reality'), Jesus as the Christ (man accepted by God and accepting God, and thus a New Being), the Church (the 'transhistorical fellowship of New Beings', recognizing Jesus as the Christ, the liturgy and the sacraments having symbolic value to the extent in which they open the door to this encounter) and the Christian life (the eschatological aspect of Christianity; the Christian experiencing the absolute meaninglessness of existence and accepting in love and trust the unseen meaning, existence and love). All these aspects of the 'New Being' are dealt with at greater length in Part Four – 'Final Revelation' – in essays by G. Tavard, M. B. Schepers, O.P., C. Kiesling, O.P., and T. A. O'Meara, O.P.

It would seem on analysis that Dr Tillich's theology is really a 'naturalistic theology' (or as he

himself says 'self-transcending or ecstatic naturalism'), and perhaps not even a theology at all, but rather a 'religious anthropology' or 'phenomenology of religion'. For Tillich's ultimate guide is not his formal ontology; rather he leans on an 'epistemology' and an epistemology which proves most unsettling. For with its emphasis on symbolism rather than analogy, and value judgments rather than truth judgments, it leaves him open to the charges of subjectivism and relativism which, as Professor Thomas points out, he will find it hard to refute. All these criticisms are dealt with by Dr Tillich himself, both in his reply to Fr Weigel's initial essay and, more extensively, in his 'Afterword' to the whole volume. At the same time there are many valid insights in Professor Tillich's thought, insights which can be (and to some extent already have been) brought to fruition within Catholic thought, which already contains them in germ.

If Paul Tillich's systematic theology is of fundamental importance for Protestants and Catholics

alike (an importance hardly to be denied to it after reading this work), and if this importance consists precisely in its all-embracing incorporation of all Protestant thought and doctrine, then it confirms the basic questions which must be discussed in our dialogue done 'in listening love' (to use Professor Tillich's own words). The fundamental question would seem to be that of symbolism versus analogy, both in the ontological and phenomenological order. In short, it would seem to consist of the questions concerning the extent of the possibility of objectively true knowledge of the divine (i.e. faith, dogmas, and natural theology) and the extent of the union of the divine and the human (i.e. the Incarnation together with its ecclesiological and mariological implications). Any dialogue must be done in clarity and charity, for without absolute honesty there can be no true love. Both these qualities are abundantly manifest in the present work and so it cannot but prove most fruitful reading for anyone who loves the Truth.

Karl-H. Kruger

THE TRUE WILDERNESS by H. A. Williams. *Constable, 16s.*

The spoken word does not always appear well when it goes directly into print, and the style of these addresses to undergraduates by the Dean of Trinity College, Cambridge, a little too eager to appear 'with it', is undeniably not attractive. But one's objection to this book goes much deeper. With all the riches of contemporary theology to draw on – Protestant and Catholic – what excuse is there for reducing the Christian faith to something purely subjective? Every reference to the Church, and I mean the Christian people as a collectivity, is derogatory. And one is left wondering who is this Christ who has no Body.

Then there is the familiar attack on 'God out there'. But this is not good enough. Christianity, if it is anything, is man discovering himself in a

world made new where once again 'the morning stars sing together and all the sons of God shout for joy'. As Mr Williams himself says of the *Agnus Dei*, 'That is the joy of the everlasting gospel and the joy is the worship'. Precisely. But we can never know that joy if the God who wells up within us, and within all creation, does not introduce us into the company of the Blessed before the throne. And here even Mr Williams's lovers are no help. They do make some attempt to escape from their own psychoses by gazing into each other's eyes; but, as Denis de Rougemont taught us, two people in love are not two people looking at each other, but two people looking in the same direction.

Basil de Winton, C.S.Sp.