

common point of reference. The only contributor to adopt a negative position is Nuttall who concludes that because imaginative insight claims something other than ordinary perception its arousal fails to guarantee reality. Keat's claim, therefore, that what imagination seizes as beauty must be truth cannot be substantiated. Warnock starts from where Nuttall leaves off. Citing Sartre's definition of imagination as 'the ability to think of what is not', she sees imaginative perception as the power to refer to what is past, absent, and yet to be; and citing Kant's 'all our knowledge of God is symbolic', Warnock argues that there is every reason to treat the aesthetic and the religious imagination as one, since it is the use of symbols that is central to the imagination. This argument has the congenial implication that to be taught to cultivate an aesthetic sensibility is to become predisposed to religious belief. Furthermore, Warnock argues, since a personal God must have a history, the story aspect of the Christian religion must be central.

Here is the nub—how, in the words of Dennis Nineham, do we mesh in our religious symbols with the rest of our sensibility? One obvious way is to bring our religious and literary studies more closely together. But, even here, the irreducible nature of symbolism seems deliberately to thwart a simple enmeshment. Symbols are like the untamed creatures of the wild wood who, for the enlightened tower dwellers of Academe, are as hard to understand and make sense of as a dance or a street party. It is the obstinately primitive form the God-question takes which it seems to be the function of imagination to preserve. The more powerfully emotive and expressive our religious insight, the more primitive and unenlightened its form in symbol and story. Socrates dies the death of a gentleman, Jesus that of a malefactor; and the last supper is not noted for its conversation. The story of the empty tomb will survive all attempts at its reduction.

To paraphrase Coleridge, what the imagination seizes upon is what, if we accept it, extends our consciousness: 'The truth is, we stop in the sense of Life just when we are not forced to go on—and then adopt a permission of our feelings for a precept of our Reason.' For Coleridge, the extenders of consciousness are sorrow, sickness, poetry and religion.

JOHN COULSON

**A HISTORY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL AND JUDAH, by J.M. Miller & J.H. Hayes
S.C.M. 1986. Limp, £17.50.**

This history of ancient Israel and Judah is enormously valuable for anyone wishing to understand what kind of sources are available for reconstructing what happened in and around Palestine from the Twelfth to the Fourth Centuries B.C.E., and how those sources may be used judiciously. It eschews the extreme positions of fundamentalism on the one hand and complete scepticism on the other.

An introductory chapter sets the scene chronologically and geographically, placing Palestine within its broader context of Middle Eastern history, a perspective which sheds light on every period under review. Black and white maps, photographs of artefacts and translations of relevant texts from non-Israelite cultures helpfully illustrate the points made in the history. Summary charts punctuate the narrative and focus the material.

The title of the book indicates that the authors regard the two groups of Israel and Judah as essentially separate communities, while, naturally exploring relations between the two in every period. The thesis is successfully maintained throughout. The book ends just before Alexander the Great's conquests because the history of Palestine before Alexander has to be understood in the context of the Fertile Crescent, whereas the subsequent events drew Palestine into the Mediterranean world, a change which brought with it major cultural reorientations.

Miller and Hayes have produced an ideal textbook for undergraduate and other courses of study.

MEG DAVIES