

work in the general growth of Augustine's mind. Indeed although some of the works translated took some while in composing, there is little real dispute about the date of *The Happy Life* (386) or the *Confessions* (396–398). One final remark on the choice of texts. The learned editor may have her own very good reasons for her selection, but there are two omissions, apart from the one already alluded to. It might have been helpful to have at least the end part of *De Quantitate Animae* in translation, especially since reference is made to it on page 26 of the Introduction. Secondly, perhaps the most powerful evocation of the mystical ascent in Augustine comes in 41st *Homily on the Psalms*, yet this is not translated; which is a pity.

The Introduction itself is lengthy and helpful. Sr. Clark clearly is in favour of a general coherence between Neoplatonist and Christian mysticism, though whether she would go as far as Abbot Cuthbert Butler in the appendix to his *Western Mysticism* in granting true mysticism to Plotinus is not altogether clear. My own impression is that she could have made more of the challenged presented to the mystical ideal of contemplation by the demands of charity in the later writings of Augustine, especially in the splendid 124th *Tractate on St. John*. She devotes a long time to the discussion of whether or not we should call Augustine a mystic (pp. 35–42) and gives a useful compendium of the various views that have been held, some of them passionately by the rival parties. I am not at all clear that Sr. Clark actually makes her mind up on the subject. Naturally a good deal turns on the way you define mysticism, but if the experiences described in the 7th and 9th books of the *Confessions* are not mystical, I should like to know what are.

The ungrateful work of translating is hard to achieve satisfactorily, but though I have detected few errors I must confess to having found the translation a little flat, and in one case certainly there was a strong similarity between the versions offered of the 19th book of the *City of God* by Classics of Western Spirituality and by W.C. Greene in the Loeb Classical Library. There is a persistent assignation of the text 'The just man lives by faith' to Hebrews 2:4, where the reference should be to Habacuc 2:4 (cf. *The City of God* 19: 18;23) — a mistake also made by the Loeb translator and a good example of common error!! There is an extraordinary error on page 307, whose cause I am unable to account for. The translation reads 'It (sc. love) is somehow cruel without bitterness, in the way of the dove rather than the snake'. Where does the snake come from? The latin of Homily on the First Epistle of St John reads at this point (= 7.11) *corvino*, which should translate 'crow'. But these are trifles and anyone who wishes to have a deepened understanding of the profound synthesis of doctrine and life offered by Augustine will find much in the volume of help. There is a useful bibliography and index of topics but no footnotes.

ANTHONY MEREDITH SJ

**RATIONALITY AND RELATIVISM. IN SEARCH OF A PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY** by I.C. Jarvie. *Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley. 1984. Pp. xiii + 157. £15.00*

For some years Professor Jarvie has been a strident critic of anthropology and the positions certain anthropologists adopt in their work and in the moral stands they take. He has seen anthropology to be an incoherent discipline when philosophically explained and the aim of the social sciences, 'to enlighten, and improve the lot of, mankind', is not generally supported. In his latest, and as one would expect, provocative book, he is remarkably autobiographical and laments that as a former graduate in social anthropology in the L.S.E., and now a professor of philosophy in York University, Toronto, he has never been taken into the anthropological fraternity. It is hardly surprising. He refused to do field work for a higher degree and preferred arm-chair analysis of those who had. He is a thorough-going rationalist, an atheist to boot, who wants anthropologists to come clean and to take sides with him in rejecting tendencies to epistemological and ethical relativism. In the

rationalist-relativist debate which is now in full swing in academic circles, he stands firmly on the side of Popper and Gellner and sees the only way to break the threat to objective knowledge which comes from such thinkers as Winch, D.Z. Phillips and Wittgenstein (in some of his phases) is to place all one's eggs in the basket of the method and findings of the hard sciences. This is at the heart of his concept of rationality which he sees as man's capacity to apply reason to selected tasks. Such an idea of course goes back to Max Weber.

Jarvie, who seems to have more faith in anthropology than current anthropologists have, holds that the two fundamental tasks of the discipline are to make sense of societies and to compare societies. The first calls for the application of scientific canons by which universal truths can be discovered and which transcends the accounts and concepts of particular societies. The other implies more than just describing the religious, and more particularly moral systems of various societies. In the last analysis it means making an evaluation and ranking the various systems.. Humanist ethics cries against cruelty and injustice which according to the western mind can so often be found in pre-literate societies. So, out of the window flies the ideal of a value-free social science. Jarvie goes on to relate the two tasks of anthropology and tries to show with not a great deal of logic that the rational unity of mankind has to be wed to the moral unity of mankind. Science on its own premises is to be allied to moral absolutism (humanism). This is much the same position which Durkheim took about a hundred years ago.

Those who are concerned with the continuing challenge which is centred on the sociology of knowledge, where often the data that is employed comes from anthropological sources and which may give rise to epistemological and moral relativism, will find this a vigorous book. One regrets that the work of the most compelling advocates of relativism, Barry Barnes and David Bloor, receives no airing whatsoever. Such is dogmatic rationalism?

W.S.F. PICKERING

**OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: ENGLAND AND GERMANY** by John Rogerson. *SPCK* London 1984. Pp xiv + 320. £15.00.

'Forschungsgeschichte' (that is, the study of the history of scholarship) would seem to be attracting more attention of late and this is good news indeed! Some will say that an Old Testament scholar like John Rogerson should 'stick to his job', narrowly defined as the study of ancient texts. However, this would be a short-sighted view; in biblical studies, as in all other walks of life, it is vital that we should know where we have come from if we are to have a perceptive sense of the way forward.

As well as helping us move forward with an enhanced sense of historical perspective, cautious work of this kind can hopefully also enable us to avoid the folly of looking condescendingly upon the efforts of earlier generations of scholars; Rogerson reviews a number of the earlier histories of Old Testament criticism, some of which, in a rather triumphalistic manner, judged as though from on high those who have been proved 'wrong' by subsequent developments. Whilst it is the case that we may perhaps speak of certain findings of biblical criticism as now 'assured', this book is a salutary warning against simplistic models of one-way progress in biblical studies. As Kuhn and others have shown with regard to the enterprise of scientific research, we have to do not with an accumulation of accepted objective facts contributing to an ever upwards march towards 'Truth', but rather with a succession of 'paradigm shifts': progress in research is often a rather haphazard business, a complex social phenomenon in which cultural, philosophical and even political factors all have their place.

The present work is a long and detailed study of two important questions: How did the critical method (in Old Testament study) arise in Germany in the nineteenth century, and