CATHOLIC THEORIES OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION SINCE 1810. A Review and Critique, by James Tunstead Burtchaell, C.S.C. *Cambridge University Press*, Cambridge, 1969. 342 pp. 70s.

During the nineteenth century, the development of scientific and historical criticism raised fundamental questions for understanding biblical inspiration and the inerrancy of scripture. Father Burtchaell discusses those Catholic writers who, since the foundation of the Tubingen school in 1810, have attempted to reconcile traditional belief with the findings of science and history, and he concludes that many contemporary ideas about inspiration are simply moderate suggestions of the more advanced views of the last century. It needed a great deal of courage and industry to cover the wide area of research which this work demanded and any weaknesses will only come to light when others have been able to study some of the details to the same extent. Consequently, this reviewer can comment only on Father Burtchaell's treatment of Newman, Ryder and, to a lesser extent, von Hügel.

Father Burtchaell understands Newman's theory of *obiter dicta* as it was condemned by former commentators. But others would now argue against this traditional interpretation of Newman's thought, and claim that Newman did not necessarily endorse the view that inspiration was partial or limited to matters of faith and morals (p. 76). It is perhaps significant that in his *Letter to Ryder*, von Hügel should have quoted Dausch who included Newman among those holding *Freer Conceptions of all-pervading Inspiration*. It is also possible that Father Burtchaell has ultimately exaggerated the differences between these writers on the subject of inspiration at this time, though Ryder did not really give 'eventual support' to Newman (p. 78) and was originally criticized by von Hügel for giving comfort to Newman's opponents. Von Hügel himself believed that Newman 'with the intuition and prescience of genius, has seen . . . what will be the commonly accepted solution of the future' even if he did not quite go far enough. At the same time, Ryder did not write a 'long, conservative treatise' on inspiration (p. 193), but a lengthy paper which was modified as a result of his correspondence with von Hügel who then described it as a 'manly and upright paper' which was 'the best I have yet seen by a Catholic, in its explicit concessions: so at least I think, I, member of the Catholic left or Protestant Centre!'.

The important division which von Hugel himself emphasized at the time was between those who adopted an *a priori* view of theological notions, confusing what is with what ought to be, and those who were willing to subject such concepts to an *a posteriori* examination. Von Hügel, therefore, found it easier to deal with Ryder's views than those of conservative theologians such as Franzelin precisely because Ryder recognized the significance of *a posteriori* critical considerations, while Franzelin's views were based on *a priori* expectations rather than evidence. Furthermore, according to von Hügel, the important points were a recognition of plenary inspiration and biblical error; once Ryder accepted these, von Hügel considered that their differences were of degree rather than kind, whereas Father Burtchaell would seem to imply much more.

There is a tone of irritation and even flippancy throughout the book which some will find entertaining and others infuriating. I suspect that the author would not have lost the interest of his readers without it, while his undoubted industry and obvious ability would be more immediately and widely recognized. There is also a use of language and vocabulary which, again unfortunately, might confuse his readers even if it does not offend them.

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THE BEGINNING. A study in the Greek philosophical approach to the concept of creation from Anaximander to St John, by Arnold Ehrhardt. With a memoir by J. Heywood Thomas. *Manchester University Press*, 1968, 212 pp. 42s.

GOD THE CREATOR. On the transcendence and presence of God, by Robert C. Neville. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1968. 320 pp. No price.

Dr Erhardt has provided a work of considerable erudition, but so far as I can see of little else. Learned footnotes flower from page to page, as we pick our way duskily from the luxuriant growths of Presocratic philosophy, through Plato and Aristotle, to humbler soil of the hellenistic and Roman periods where philosophy and magic and superstition grow intertwined. Unfortunately the constant preoccupation with detailed reference to ancient texts and scholarly discussion (in itself, of course, most admirable and desirable) seems to have