

raised and its omission should be explained. As regards the content of the criticisms, it is fair to say that Cowdell produces a good selection from the writings of Cupitt's many critics and attempts to be fair to Cupitt himself, suggesting possible responses etc. But the discussion in general lacks depth (e.g. pp. 66–7), and one would like to have seen the author develop a firm line (or firm lines) of argument of his own rather than almost totally rely on others such that his contribution, as far as *content* is concerned, reads like a series of mini-appendages to the writings of the great as opposed to a seriously worked out programme of which he is the master. I think Cowdell missed a great opportunity here and hopefully he will take up such a challenge in the future.

The title of the book is 'Atheist Priest?'. Cowdell does not hold the view that 'Cupitt is no Christian and should give up the priesthood', unlike Hebblethwaite and Edwards. It is not the place of a reviewer to comment on the second matter here, but on the first Cowdell's book has helped me to come to a more definite view. In order not to prejudice the reader I shall not divulge it. Let me say, however, that I do not hold with Cowdell that 'Atheism is in the eye of the beholder'; if it were such then anything whatsoever would count as believing in God; but not anything whatsoever does.

The book is nicely produced and reasonably priced at £6.50.

MICHAEL DURRANT

MINISTRY AND AUTHORITY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH by
Edmund Hill OP. *Geoffrey Chapman*. London, 1988. Pp. 142.

Edmund Hill is an academic of considerable quality who has spent all his priestly life teaching theology within the Church, first, for a relatively short time in England, and then for a much greater time in Southern Africa. During this latter period in particular the humanity and the freshness of his thinking stands out. It is born of care for those who suffer—the poor of spirit—and experience of the living Scripture in the hearts of those to whom he has spent a lifetime preaching it. To this brew is added the inherited culture of an old-fashioned liberalism, now turned to radicalism, and a scholarly knowledge of the early Church used in much the same way and to the same effect. Out of all this as a living witness comes this book; out of all this comes an anger with those dimensions of Catholicism which tend to negate and destroy its inspiration, its life, its vitality—its fidelity to Christ's vision of the Kingdom expressed in his Sermon on the Mount.

The author's concern is with Authority, and its use and abuse, within the Church. He characterises two concepts of it which he calls *magisterial papalist* and *ministerial collegialist* and he makes it clear right from the beginning that he sees the latter as the authentic form of authority within the Church. Others have trod a similar path before him, for example Leonardo Boff with his exciting, but unfortunately fanciful, contrast between the Latin *potestas* and the Greek *exousia*. If the 18th and 19th Chapters of John had shown Pilate speaking Latin and Jesus replying in Greek this might have had some mileage! Hill's scholarship is much better founded and he uses the New Testament to devastating effect to show not only that God's authority in his Church is above all else essentially ministerial

but that what Christ founded is a Community—the on-going historical sharing by human beings of the love and life of God.

This part of the book is outstanding in its clarity and inspiration. A second section deals with the Church of the Fathers. We are shown their fidelity to its founder and their rejection of concepts of authority alien to him and which were beginning to develop and emerge within the Church and the Roman Empire. Again, Hill's scholarship is unquestionable and yet enlivens rather than destroys the vitality of his analysis.

The third section leads us up to the present day: the development of the concept of Papal Authority as we experience it. Here, perhaps inevitably, the presentation becomes heavier, even a little turgid. Authors dealing to a certain extent with similar material such, for example, as Peter de Rosa (*Vicars of Christ*) have tried to alleviate this with sensationalism and runaway 'theologising' (enough to make Philip Caraman SJ describe it, not unjustly, as a 'binful of garbage', but Edmund Hill does not fall to anything like this. His sober insistence on the principles which he has worked out and demonstrated earlier in the book carry him through and give his criticism of the current Church all the more weight and authority.

In a way it makes sad reading, but within it there is great hope. Perhaps the greatest hope of all is given by the way in which a book like this, so dedicated and so committed to Christ's Gospel and to the Church which continues to try and live it, can be written, published and finally assessed—not by 'them' but by us.

GILES HIBBERT OP

GOD, JESUS AND LIFE IN THE SPIRIT by David E. Jenkins. *SCM Press*. 1988. Pp. x + 147. £4.95.

This is the third collection of sundry bits and pieces that the Bishop of Durham has offered us in recent years. It is the most personal and religiously positive of the three. As we are told in the Preface, *God, Miracle and the Church of England*, and *God, Politics and the Future* were 'offered as finding God in and through problems. This book is meant to be about finding God because God finds us'. Jenkins is indeed, as his more substantial theological works had already shown, a God-intoxicated man, which is somewhat ironical, given the penchant of ignorant journalists and dreary Conservative MPs for portraying him as virtually an atheist.

The first three pieces were talks given to students at London University. Jenkins had been asked to 'cut to the heart of the matter', and he does so, trenchantly and vigorously, sketching, without 'religious verbiage', 'evasion' or 'unreality', a personal confession of faith in the resources of God, which men and women can draw on for the realisation of creative possibilities in themselves and in the public world. It is all good, sound, Christian stuff—a little crude and knock-about in style, but positive in theological substance and at the same time manifesting a strong sense of social ethical priorities. The only slight criticism I would make of these talks concerns a tendency to emphasise the resources of 'the biblical stories and the Christian tradition' rather than those of actual Christians, who tend to get disparaged. This is understandable in a radical prophet and reformer but a little irritating in one of our chief pastors.

Next come four talks on 'Rediscovering the Truth'—about God, about