

INFALLIBILITY IN THE CHURCH, An Anglican-Catholic Dialogue, by A. M. Farrer, Robert Murray, J. C. Dickinson, C. S. Dessain; foreword by M. D. Goulder. Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1968. 80 pp. 9s. 6d.

This welcome volume consists of papers read at a course sponsored by the Extra-Mural Studies Department of the University of Birmingham. Austin Farrer, in possibly his last published work, examines the control of Saving History upon the Church's faith. The Church's faith rests upon historic facts. But the Church has no right to be a 'fact factory': and yet for any living authority to be infallible it needs the charisma 'for miraculously knowing historical fact over the heads of the evidences, or, indeed, in default of any' (p. 12). In such a case the infallible interpreter of events 'is enlightened with regard to a fact for which he has no justifying evidence, by a direct fulguration of deity' (p. 13). Many things are said in the course of a rigorously honest examination, but the inevitable conclusion is that 'Catholic dogmatic thought about the saving facts is corrigible; and what is corrigible cannot be called infallible' (p. 22). As the foreword notes, this point is not taken up again. But Dr Farrer thinks this not the 'most vital' part of the infallibility idea. He then propounds a view of infallibility as 'an expression of the faith that God will effectively guide his Church in the way of truth and salvation'. This finds considerable response from a Congregationalist whose Church life has been patterned upon such a belief, yet who is convinced that he has much to learn from Orthodox, Catholics and Anglicans about that very truth.

Fr Robert Murray's magnificent contribution can be summed up in the form: Christ is infallible; the Church partakes in the nature of Christ; the Church therefore partakes of infallibility. He recognizes that the recognition of the Church's infallibility has not come about like that! but he does tellingly cite early Church witness to it. Even the definition of Papal infallibility at Vatican I was intended to be the first identification of the organs of the Church where the character was manifested. Vatican II has associated the College of Bishops as another organ with the exercise of infallibility. Fr Murray has made an immense contribution in his exposition of the body of the faithful as a third organ for the exercise of infallibility. The old idea of the *magisterium* of the Church having

an active, and the laity having a passive, infallibility is quite inadequate. Even when the Pope speaks infallibly, his words come to the believer not 'merely as a messenger to instruct him in his ignorance, but also as a mirror in which he "recognizes" the faith he holds' (p. 39). So 'What Roman Catholicism is painfully moving towards is a renewed vision of the Church as an organic unity, with functional organs in whom are concentrated, on occasion, the powers, priestly and prophetic, which Christ has given to the whole body' (p. 46).

Mr Dickinson has written a historical background to the debate about infallibility in the primitive, medieval and reformation Churches. Fr Dessain has provided a well-documented study of Newman's contribution to the problem in the days of Vatican I and in the Church where Cardinal Manning's influence was dominant. It is plain that even then there were many whose understanding of infallibility was, in the Warden of Keble's terms, 'God's guidance of his Church in the way of truth and salvation'.

Two comments from a Congregationalist reviewer. It is encouraging to think that if Vatican I defined the role of the Pope in the exercise of the Church's gift, and that if Vatican II placed alongside that the role of the College of Bishops, then it may well be that Vatican III will complete the task by defining the role of the body of the faithful. Congregationalists ought to feel at home in such a Church—unless their separate congregational experience of the guidance of God has so distorted their vision of the universal that they find other organs of authority strange. Moreover, if Rome may be said to have brought to this time the contribution of the first 'bishop', and the Anglicans the contribution of each bishop in his diocese, it may not be improper to suppose that Congregationalists (and their like) may have preserved some practice of the solidarity of bishops and laity in finding the way of God that does not lead to deception or unreality. But we shall not find the richness of our own traditions without being able to learn from all the others.

JOHN MARSH

A GUIDE TO RELIGIOUS TEACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE AND LITURGY, by a Group of Educationalists. Sands and Co. London, 1968, 374 pp. 30s.

This is a first translation, from the French, of a book which I found to be a most refreshing

approach to what has long been a difficult subject, especially from the teacher's point of view.

For too long the Old Testament has remained remote from the child's angle, and its connexion and essential link with the gospel and the modern world has been far out of grasp.

The Bishop of Strasbourg says in the Introduction: This is by no means an easy task, for he (the teacher) has to deal with a text composed in an oriental style and certainly not intended for children. But since in the progress of civilization, so many avenues of knowledge have been opened up for children why should we not make the necessary effort to open up at least those passages of Holy Scripture which the Church has integrated into the liturgy? This is the aim of the Book.'

Now, in this edition, the teacher can discover for himself a clear and concise method of integration between the Old Testament and the New: each lesson is concluded with a practical and apt application to the child's spiritual and actual life.

The book is principally divided into three scholastic terms: and therein divided into the following sections: the last weeks of the Liturgical Year; Advent; Christmas and Epiphany; Septuagesima; Passiontide; Easter and Pentecost; Pentecost to the end of the School Year, and concluded by a study on the Beatitudes which contains some excellent and clarifying matter, especially: Blessed are the Peace-makers, p. 358.

There is an index of scriptural references, p. 367, and also another, at the very end of the book, on the subject matter contained within, p. 371.

The scriptural quotations are taken from the Jerusalem Bible.

There is a thorough and comprehensive introduction by the Bishop of Strasbourg, in which he states the purpose of the translation and the aim of its co-authors.

Each lesson is divided up into five sections: Introduction; Religious Content; application of the lesson to the life of the child; extension of the lesson to prayers and activities. Each

section is planned clearly and compactly, taking in every aspect of the religious lesson. The age range is principally between 11-14; I would venture one criticism here. I feel that several of the approaches and exercises expected from the children do not quite measure up to the majority of today's 14-year-old's attitudes towards life. In my experience they mature earlier than the book allows, and therefore the lessons would in some cases have to be adapted accordingly.

An example of this is to be found on p. 116, where the children are asked to fill in spaces in a text, with appropriate words listed above. Whereas on the other hand, I found the exercise on p. 310, concerning episodes in the New and Old Testament when God miraculously fed his own, is most absorbing and purposeful.

The actual texts used are normally taken from the gospel of each Sunday in the Liturgical Year, and this certainly enables the children to make each lesson their own. I found also that this method makes the Mass more real, and brings the children closer to its actuality and understanding.

Every new question and idea pertaining to the particular gospel in question, whether in the New or Old Testament, is well indexed for reference thus enabling the teacher to read round her subject matter.

One more aspect of the book which I found most constructive was the broadening of the child's mind to prayer. Hardly ever are the conventional, and sometimes (from the child's point of view) meaningless, prayers used, but instead they are encouraged and stimulated to bring their prayers from the heart and soul, as well as from the head; thus achieving a more personal and spiritualizing contact with God.

Altogether, I found this book well worth reading, and would most certainly class it as one of the essential handbooks a religious teacher should possess; a most valuable addition to modern catechetics.

VERONICA MITCHINSON

EXPERIENCE AND GOD, by John E. Smith. *Oxford University Press*, New York, 1968. 209 pp.

EXPERIENCE DU MONDE: EXPERIENCE DE DIEU? by Philippe Roqueplo, O.P. *Les Editions du Cerf*, Paris, 1968. 409 pp.

RELIGION IN A TECHNICAL AGE, by Samuel H. Miller. *Harvard University Press*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968. 146 pp.

Do we have any experience of God? Both philosophers and theologians are likely to be interested in this question. One might expect a philosopher to be concerned with such general features of experience as contingency, or

causality, and a theologian to concentrate on specifically religious experience. These three books reverse this expectation.

The first concern of Professor Smith, of Yale, is to refute the narrow empiricism which ends