Catholic prelates in England, Ireland and Wales have distinguished careers as academics behind them. Apart from Dr Connell, I can only cite the example of Cathal Cardinal Daly, who played an enormous part in the development of the Department of Scholastic Theology at Queen's University, Belfast in the time when he taught there. So this book is unusual on at least one front.

But it is also unusual on another front. It is intended to mark Desmond Connell's sixty fifth birthday. As the editor notes, "that is the occasion when a philosophy professor is normally rewarded with a life of leisure as the crowning of his labours". Yet the person celebrated in this *Festschrift* has clearly not embarked on a life of leisure. At a time of life when most of us would hope for a graceful retirement, Dr Connell in engaged in a new and demanding career.

The volume is divided into five sections, reflecting the interests of Dr Connell. They are entitled: "Classical and Medieval Thinkers", "St Thomas Aquinas", "Philosophy of Religion", "Modern and Recent Thinkers", and "Philosophy of Man". There are twenty six essays. The volume also includes a profile of Dr Connell and a select bibliography of his writings.

A notable feature of the book lies in the fact that its contributors come from many different quarters. As one might expect, a majority write from Irish contexts. Thus, there are essays by Andrew Smith (Dublin), John Cleary (Maynooth), Eoin Cassidy (Dublin), Dermot Moran (Dublin), Gerard Casey (Dublin), Maurice Curtin (Dublin), Gerald Hanratty (Dublin), Michael Nolan (Dublin), Patrick Masterson (Dublin), Joseph McCarroll (Dublin), Colm Connellan (Dublin), Richard Kearney (Dublin), Patrick Gorevan (Dublin), Fran O'Rourke (Dublin), Brendan Purcell (Dublin), and Liberato Santoro (Dublin). But there are also essays by Gerard Verbeke (Leuven), Wolfgang Kluxen (Bonn), Fernand Van Steenberghen (Louvain), Georges Van Riet (Louvain), Timothy Mooney (Essex), James McEvoy (Louvain), David Walsh (Wahington), and Josef Pieper (Munster). And the essays by these writers make for a most distinguished volume. Its scope is impressive. And its individual contributions are uniformally of very high quality, as one might expect from the list of authors just given.

A brief book review is not the place to try to comment on or engage with the many articles in this volume (a lengthy and commendable review article on the book by Hugo Meynell is due to appear soon in the *International Philosophical Quarterly*). Suffice it, therefore, simply to say that *At The Heart of the Real* can be highly recommended and is a most impressive text to present in honour of Dr Connell, who will surely approve of it and be grateful for it.

BRIAN DAVIES OP

THE PLAN OF GOD IN LUKE-ACTS by John T. Squires. *Cambridge University Press*, **Cambridge, 1993. Pp. x + 233. £30.00.**

Over the past fifteen years, steady progress has been made in locating the literary character and religious purposes of the New Testament's longest composition, Luke-Acts. From one side, a series of intratextual

analyses have shown that Luke appropriates from Torah the symbolism of prophecy and vigorously exploits it for his narrative. In Luke's story, Jesus appears as the "Prophet like Moses," and his designated apostles also function as prophets. Throughout the narrative, prophetic signs and wonders are performed, and prophecies are at every turn spoken or fulfilled. From another direction, intertextual studies comparing Luke-Acts to other ancient Hellenistic writings have reached a broad consensus that although this narrative has some resemblances to ancient Biographies—and for that matter, to ancient Novels—the best generic placement for Luke-Acts is as a species of apologetic historiography. Squires' monograph on *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts*, which began as a 1988 Yale University dissertation under Abraham Malherbe, fits comfortably within this convergence, and works to support it.

Squires begins his study with a number of discrete textual observations concerning the theme of the "plan of God" (*boule tou theou*): the way Luke makes God the main actor; the way God intervenes with miracles; the way the story is guided by various forms of epiphanies; the way prophecies are spoken and fulfilled; and the way in which "necessity" seems to characterize the story. Squires' hypothesis is that these strands fit best within a dominant preoccupation of Hellenistic historiography found also in Luke-Acts, namely the role of providence (*pronoia*) in history.

His method combines close analysis of the Lukan text with comparison to writings in the same genre. From Greco-Roman historiography, he uses the *Bibliotheke Historike* of Diodorus Siculus and the *Romaike Archaiologia* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus as central texts around which he can organize a rich collection of other pertinent evidence from historians and philosophers. Josephus, especially in the *Antiquities of the Jews*, provides an example even closer to the symbolic world and preoccupations of Luke.

Squires' procedure is straightforward. For each of the topics isolated in his initial discussion, he moves through the Greco-Roman material and Josephus, then turns to a thicker description of this element within the Lukan narrative. He therefore considers in turn: "The Programmatic Role of Providence in Hellenistic Historiography" (ch.2); "Providence: God at Work in Human History" (ch.3); "Portents: Signs of Divine Action in Human History" (ch.4); "Epiphanies: Inspired Indications of the Plan of God" (ch.5); "Prophecy: Foretelling and Fulfilling the Plan of God" (ch.6); "Fate: The Necessity of the Plan of God" (ch.7). Each of these chapters contains a wealth of primary references, on this count alone making the book a valuable resource for other scholars. Equally noteworthy is his careful dissection of the various sources. Squires does a particularly good job of showing how, in each category, Luke-Acts works out shared cultural concerns in a distinctive fashion.

The result is a comprehensive framework for placing both Luke-Acts' prophetic and historical character. The elements of prophecy (predictions, epiphanies, signs and portents, necessity) can be seen to

function within the overarching concern of an apologetic historiography, namely to show that in *this* history, God's providence was at work.

Given the strength of his analysis, Squires' conclusions (ch.8) are less sharp than might have been expected. Throughout, he ably demonstrates how Luke is concerned above all to show that the death of Jesus and the Gentile mission—the two most shocking *paradoxa* in a context shaped by Greco-Roman and Jewish sensibilities concerning divine action—were providential, key elements in "God's plan." But when he comes to the question, "Why does Luke write apologetically?" Squires does not state as clearly as he might the pertinence of this precise emphasis.

He could have followed up more vigorously the implications of his (correct) premise that apologetic works as much for insiders as for outsiders (p.53), and that Luke was writing to provide *asphaleia* (assurance) for Gentile readers. In this light, what needed defending above all was God's paradoxical workings in history. Luke-Acts was less an "apology" for the Christian movement directed toward outsiders than an "apology" directed to insiders for the God who, while seeming not to, nevertheless kept his promises.

There is a wealth of learning here made available to other scholars by an important study that makes a genuine contribution to the understanding of Luke-Acts in its cultural and religious context.

LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON

POSTMODERNISM, REASON AND RELIGION by Ernest Gellner. London. *Routledge.* **1992. Pp. 108 + ix. £9.99.**

In what is really an extended essay, Gellner offers an interesting and unapologetic defence of modern scientific rationalism—what he calls "*enlightenment rationalist fundamentalism*"—against the claims of two rivals for the soul of late twentieth century man, *viz. religious fundamentalism*, represented here by present day triumphalist High Islam, and relativism as that is currently urged upon us by the advocates of *postmodernism.*

The latter is very much the evil suitor, disingenuous, hypocritical and certain to bring ruination. Although Gellner attacks religious fundamentalists' uncritical acceptance of supposedly self-validating sources of revelation, he admires the believer's commitment to an absolute truth transcendent of human opinion, and even accords (to Judaeo-Christian fundamentalism) a necessary historical role in the development of the secular rationalism he himself favours. He also recognises that religious fundamentalism usually offers an ennobling vision of humanity and its final end, and thereby is a source of inspiration and consolation unmatched by secular alternatives.

By contrast he has to struggle to find any good at all in postmodernism. At the very close of the book he remarks that if its ambiguities help minimise the risk of conflicts between holders of