

TO AND FRO ON THE EARTH, Maisie Ward. *Sheed and Ward*. 176 pp. £2.75.

Memory has a curious habit of ignoring the recent past and delighting in the earlier period of its existence. This may account for the enthusiasm for the early Church among current liberated liturgists; and it certainly explains why many elderly people retain vivid, even if inaccurate, memories of their youth while their late years are dimmed by a thickening mist. So Maisie Ward rightly subtitled her recent work 'A Sequel to an Autobiography'. Her autobiography 'Unfinished Business' took her to 1964 when she was already 75, so it is little wonder that in the almost incredible journeyings from that date until 1972—New York, the Snowy Mountains in Australia, Madras, not to mention short stops in the Philippines, Japan and Hong Kong—the reader is left with no impression of how this indomitable old lady handled such extensive travel. Nor is it very clear what she did in these distant places. But the mists of the recent past hide only factual history in order to leave memory greater power to recall the great crusading ideas which should inspire posterity to progress to modes of life far more lasting than that of a long-distance traveller. This 'Sequel' might well be the triumph of peace through non-violence. For this is the seed Maisie Ward sows throughout the book. With the heroic people of the *Catholic Worker* movement in New York, Washington and elsewhere she comes to the conclusion that 'there *must* be a revolution, but that revolution must be non-violent—at least on the side of the revolutionaries' (p. 23). And this revolution must begin from the roots of poverty—'One cannot live in places that eat up an entire income of which some part belongs of right to the dispossessed'. In Australia she finds an application of these principles not only in the outback 'homesteads' but also in the

groups of the *Recovery* movement working in the cities helping the ill-adjusted to help themselves back to happy living—another form of poverty prevalent in urban society. A gleam of hope for the untouchables and city poor in India is to be found in the co-operative movement and the student camps—a small 'revolution' when one considers the vast needs of that continent, but all her interests lie with the small movements that suggest the ethos of the very early Church. And the reader is reminded that 'amid the horrors of our civilisation today it is important to stress that when Christ said 'Blessed are the poor,' he was not saying it is blessed to be desperate, dehumanised, brutalised. One startles and shocks old-time conservatives by telling them that the Church's moral law states specifically that a starving man has the *right* to take food—it is *not* stealing. He has the same right to food that he has to air and light' (p. 89).

There is a moving chapter about the effects of prison life on those Americans who have chosen gaol for the sake of peace. It is sad that the final chapter of this 'Sequel' should dwell on the mad fringe of Satan worshippers, drug addicts and murderers, but it adds a sharp point to the claim for peace through non-violence and poverty. But Maisie Ward concludes the first chapter of the book on the theme of hope. 'If these last years of my life have a theme running through them it would be that of hope dawning despite of, through, the well-warranted near-helplessness . . . Creation is at work everywhere—on a large scale occasionally, but more significantly in small-scale achievements by the score, the hundreds, the thousands. All over the world I have found small groups who are building a new world in the shell of the old'.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

INCARNATION AND IMMANENCE, by Helen Oppenheimer. *Hodder & Stoughton*, 1973. 242 pp. £2.75.

In *The Character of Christian Morality* Lady Oppenheimer suggested that 'Christian morality begins with a fact which engages one's personality completely', and promised to address herself to 'this transcendent fact'. In that earlier work there was something incomplete in her exploration. This time she has set out from *person* rather than *personality*, and the result is impressive mapping of the area.

I like F. D. Maurice and H. L. Mansel, Lady Oppenheimer is concerned with the reconciliation of talk of God as personal with talk of the divine as immaterial. And, like Maurice

rather than like Mansel, she has composed a very personal piece of work, one which properly comes close to autobiography—'Of course we experience God's grace in our lives, if we claim to be Christian at all—and whose style is that of an easy and sophisticated conversation. Forster might have supplied herself with an epigraph: 'It is private life that holds out the mirror to infinity; personal intercourse, and that alone, that ever hints at a personality beyond our daily vision', but I am not so sure that Lady Oppenheimer would have so readily distinguished 'private life' from 'public