**LIBERATING GOD—PRIVATE CARE AND PUBLIC STRUGGLE by Peter Selby (New Library of Pastoral Care).** *SPCK.* **1983. pp. xii +111 £3.95**

The New Library of Pastoral Care reflects the growing influence of secular disciplines on the work of the Christian minister or 'pastor'—a term that is chosen precisely to embrace clergy and laity alike. The aim of the series is to maintain the distinctiveness of the Christian message while paying full attention to recent developments in the fields of social work, community care, psychotherapy and, especially, counselling. Most of the titles so far have been practically orientated towards one or other group of particular need—the dying, the bereaved, the lonely the physically handicapped, the married... Peter Selby's book, however, takes a more theoretical look at the assumptions of pastoral care, and he is critical of much that he sees.

We are all familiar with the accusation that Christianity neglects urgent social and political reform while urging its followers to content themselves with the way things are and place their hope in heaven alone. Now Peter Selby sees a similar tendency in the implicit aims of much counselling: 'They transmit the assumption that the best a distressed person can hope for is to acquire the ability to adapt with less distress to circumstances that cannot be changed.' (p.35) In either case we make an idol of individual peace and personal harmony, and ignore the gospel's call to action.

It is not the first time that the politically dismissive temptations of counselling have been pointed out (cf. *The Faith of Counsellors,* Paul Halmos, Constable, 1965). But what is valuable from Peter Selby's work is that he speaks from the inside. His training has been largely through counselling in the Carl Rogers school. His committment as a Christian priest is basic to all he says. It would be absurd to represent him as either anti-counselling or anti-Christianity.

Rather, from the very heart of this work in 'pastoring' (a term that sounds at first like a cross between 'plastering' and 'pasteurising', but perhaps is not a bad one for the work of Christian caring) he can see dangers and false tracks. In pointing out that 'salvation' and 'psychological health' are not synonomous he is not attacking the importance of psychological care, but helping it find its right place in Christian ministry.

To get stuck on the internal landscape, whether through spiritual self-examination or psychological analysis, results in a 'sense of scratching where it does not really itch, but where ... perhaps it ought to and where, if we scratch hard enough, perhaps it will' (p 47). Pastoral care should lead naturally onwards, from the individual to the world and from prayer to action. As true pastors 'we are not to listen less or attend less, but to listen and attend to the cry of the world as those whom we care for pastorally express it' (p 98).

MARGARET HEBBLETHWAITE

**TIME, CREATION AND THE CONTINUUM, by Richard Sorabji.** *Duckworth, London, 1983.* **Pp. xviii 2 473. £29.50.**

Professor Sorabji, already well known for his work on ancient philosophy, has here taken on the enormous task of tracing and commenting on views about the topics in his title from the earliest period of Greek thinking right through to the Middle Ages and beyond. He even manages to say a lot about Patristic and Islamic writers, whose work will be largely unfamiliar even to those readers who have already worked through classical texts on Sorabji's area of inquiry. Questions considered in the book include the reality of time, the nature of time, the relation between time and change, the relation of time to eternity, the beginning of the universe, creation and causation, the reality of atomic magnitudes, motion, and mysticism. There are expositions and discussions of authors such as Proclus, Parmenides, Plato, Augustine, Iamblicus, Gregory of Nyssa, Plotinus, Boethius, Philoponous, Ghāzāli, McTaggart, and many others. A particular

feature of the book is its attempt to challenge the customary disparagement of the Athenian Neoplatonists working in the period leading up to 529 A.D. The overall result is a splendid and fascinating work which must certainly be reckoned as a major contribution to scholarship and as compulsory reading for anyone seriously concerned with the philosophy and theology of time and creation. This is not to say that the book has no blemishes. It is somewhat uneven since while some of the ideas it touches on get a lot of discussion others are passed over very rapidly. In addition to this, Sorabji's philosophical conclusions or suggestions (he can be remarkably undogmatic) are sometimes arrived at too quickly, as is the case with his treatment of God and time, in which he comes down against the tradition represented by writers like Aquinas without taking up some obvious questions raised by his own remarks. To give one example: he finds it hard to see how a timeless God could act (pp.256 ff.), yet he does not consider to what extent God's action is in created things and is not a matter of successiveness in him. But this is not the place to quibble about details. Sorabji has written a fine book, and I know of nothing to rival it.

BRIAN DAVIES OP

**LUKE--ACTS by Donald Juel.** *(London: SCM Press)* **1984. 138 pp. pb. £5.50**

Donald Juel's book is yet another simple introduction to the reading of the two parts of Luke's literary work. It begins fairly conventionally with a broad survey of the themes adumbrated in the birth narratives and developed in the Gospel and Acts and treats these in a simple and effective manner. It becomes much more exciting in the second half when the author begins to develop an understanding of Luke in the light of recent studies by N.H. Dahl, J. Jervell and D.L. Tiede: The reader may ponder whether it is significant that all of them are Lutherans. Juel insists that Luke is the most optimistic of the NT writers with a view of the world as an open place in which despite opposition the power of the gospel is effective. With Jervell he insists that Luke does not describe the growth of a new Israel composed of Gentiles (but did anybody ever seriously suggest that there was no room for Jews in the new Israel?) but rather a process of division within the one Israel between unbelieving and believing Jews and the accession of Gentile believers. Within this Israel the law continues in force and even Gentile Christians are required to keep the parts of the law appropriate for Gentiles—an interpretation which is independently questioned by S.G. Wilson in *Luke and the Law.* Like the Gospels of Matthew and John Luke's work is to be seen as intended for Jewish Christians in the period after the fall of Jerusalem, cut adrift from their heritage as a result of the rejection of the Messiah; he wrote a pastoral work which tells a story by means of which his readers might locate themselves as the true heirs of Israel's heritage. Here Juel comes from a rather different angle to a position not unlike that of R. Maddox in *The Purpose of Luke-Acts.* Despite its apparently simple beginning, therefore this book will take the reader into some of the crucial issues of current Lucan scholarship. These issues are still matters of keen debate, and we can be grateful to Juel for presenting one of the possibilities in such a clear and attractive way.

I. HOWARD MARSHALL