

**A DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY**, edited by Alan Richardson. *SCM Press*, London, 1969. xii + 364 pp. 70s.

As works of reference go, this is not a bulky one: it has been planned, in fact, to keep within fairly close limits, which the editor indicates, in his Preface, by referring the reader to three other dictionaries: his own *Word Book of the Bible* (1950), Cross's *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1957) and Macquarrie's *Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (1967); thus implying that this work will not be exhaustive on matters of Church history, biblical exegesis, or moral theology. Its special concern, Dr Richardson tells us, is 'with the theological issues of today'; and again, 'the main thrust of this Dictionary is in the interlocking areas of theology and philosophy'. That is clear enough: what we are offered is a guide to Christian *ideas* in the context of contemporary discussion; with the implicit proviso that ethics will be rather lightly treated; and with the understanding that a good deal of history must come in by way of 'the history of Christian ideas and of the words in which they are expressed'. The main interest, then, is with dogma; but the tone is not dogmatic. The thirty-six contributors represent various Christian traditions, and the manner is 'eirenic', particularly where Catholic/Protestant differences are touched upon (for example, in the article on Faith—otherwise a rather poor one, I think—and in those on Roman Catholicism, Merit, Apostolic Succession). But the basic Christian beliefs are treated from an orthodox point of view.

It hardly needs saying that this is an excellent work in many ways; full of sound scholarship and informed intelligence. It is also well arranged and the print is pleasing. The reviewer of a dictionary is not, I suppose, expected to have studied every article, but of those I have read the following seem to me particularly good: Atonement (J. Atkinson), Christology (G. S. Hendry), Eckhart (E. J. Tinsley), Evil (A. Richardson), God (N. H. G. Robinson), Eucharist (E. L. Mascall), Thomism

(G. Leff), Trinity (H. E. W. Turner), Vatican Council II (B. C. Butler). In two or three of these articles readers of my own tradition may well feel that relatively small space is given to Catholic positions; and in general it strikes me as a valid objection to the work as a whole to say that the Magisterium as such—the official *dicta* of Councils and Popes—is not sufficiently cited. Denzinger does not appear in the list of authorities commonly referred to (pp. xi-xii). This is a flaw in the documentation at least. A cursory reader might suppose it to be assumed that the most important witness to Christian belief is that of theologians, whereas for Catholics the witness of the episcopate has always more weight in the end. This lack of reference to the Magisterium is most evident in the more superficial articles, such as those on Faith, Grace and Love. The piece on Faith is curiously feeble, a mere two columns that tell one nothing about the New Testament notion of faith and where the only Catholic work referred to is a pre-war essay in the 'Treasury of the Faith' series! The lack of exegesis and analysis of so important a concept contrasts with the five closely reasoned columns given to Conversion. Thus, too, Eckhart gets three columns but Newman only one, and this gives no account of his thought. There is no article on Marx, Marxism, Communism, Chastity, Virginity, Body, Sin, Evolution. For Sin, it is true, we are referred to 'Man, Doctrine of' (quite a good article) and presumably for some of the other topics we are expected to turn to Macquarrie's *Dictionary* mentioned above. But it seems odd that Marxism doesn't appear among the more or less philosophical subjects that are shared out between Professor Hepburn, Dr J. Richmond and the Editor. The excellence of the work of these three contributors is in any case a notable feature of this volume.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

**UNFINISHED MAN AND THE IMAGINATION: Toward an Ontology and a Rhetoric of Revelation**, by Ray L. Hart. *Herder and Herder*, New York, 1968. 418 pp. \$9.50.

'The imagination then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former. . . .'

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*.

Ever since Coleridge wrote those words in or about 1816, both the literary and the theological imaginations have been fascinated by the possibilities suggested. Coleridge, of course, was following and transforming Kant, and in a way that only an English romantic could. Yet his distinction retains its power over much

critical endeavour since. Recently an American critic, Northrop Frye, has suggested that it is simply not possible for a literary critic, *qua* critic, to identify the logos of criticism with the *Logos* of traditional Christian theology, another suggestion of Coleridge's. Yet this too remains an exciting possibility in a time when theology has found it increasingly difficult to talk of God in any of the traditional ways with any confidence.

Ray Hart's book owes far more to Husserl and to Heidegger, and to Merleau-Ponty than to Kant or Coleridge, but a central claim of *Unfinished Man and the Imagination* has Coleridgean echoes: 'The claim advanced here is that this ontological structure of revelation is presented and actualizable in historical time in a way that is formally analogous to the presence and actualization of a work of art.' British readers should be warned in advance that they will find a lack of the fidelity to Scriptural exegesis and to linguistic precision and clarity that mark so much British theology. For those readers to whom these values are sacrosanct, Gerald Downing's more modest and less adventurous *Has Christianity A Revelation* is recommended. Downing rejects the use of 'revelation' because it does not appear '... as a major term (or even the sole adequate term) with which to convey the purpose of the life, death, or resurrection of Jesus ... in the New Testament', and because he feels that theologies based on this concept tend to be either gnostic or at least intellectualistic. No doubt Downing's painstaking analysis of the number of occurrences of cognates for 'revelation' in the Old and New Testaments is suggestive, and there is certainly a good deal of truth in his warnings about overly cerebral theologies. Yet in the end, his alternative of 'salvation' as a better way of understanding the Christian faith will not satisfy many readers not already disposed to accept at least some Christian claims.

Hart's work is more audacious, suggestive, and exciting in its suggestion that revelation is the *fundament* of theology in much the same way as the physical art object serves as the given reality which remains to be 'actualized' in the consciousness of the perceptor. Before attempting an analysis of this concept, however, it is fair to add that, in addition to a marked lack of Scriptural quotations, the book does suffer from a parenthetical style in which much that might be left to inference is spelled out and in which space within a complex argument may be given over to irrelevant asides.

One task that seems inescapable for contemporary theologians is undertaking a definition of theology as a starting point. For Hart, theology is a 'hermeneutical spiral'; 'Thinking is protected against sterility of the given and infertility of response only when it honours the relation between being and knowing as a relation which can be envisioned by a *helical spiral*. . . . Every spiral involves an enriched cognition of the field of the something-given, and every expansion of the field furnishes impetus for another cognitive circuit: thus an expansion of the knowing mind and of the given itself. . . .' (p. 61.)

Revelation, as theology's '*fundament*' is '... (a) that which incites the spiral and also (b) this "that which" taken into human understanding, the movement of the hermeneutical spiral itself' (p. 99). It is important for Hart that revelation is theology's *intentional* fundament, and for a full understanding of intentionality and its relationship to the positing of consciousness, the reader will need to refer himself to Husserl's definitions on which much of Hart's argument depends. All consciousness is consciousness of something, and Husserl understood consciousness as an act, not a faculty. In Hart's use of this concept, man is seen as unfinished in that he is caught between a sense of positing and being posited. He is presented with both the actuality and the possibility for his finished manhood in revelation. It is an actuality in the historical and physical sense, just as a work of art was created at a specific point in time and occupies a certain volume of space. But revelation is also potential in that it holds out to man a possibility for actualization, although Hart is not clear how on the level of *praxis* this is to take place.

The major advance constituted by these allusive suggestions is a move away from an understanding of revelation as either reducible to a series of static, scholastic propositions, or to an event of existential importance but not, perhaps, of historical value. Hart is really attempting to take up where Tillich left off in his profound symbolical analysis, steering a course between the legacies of Barth and Bultmann. As is well known from criticisms of Tillich's own work, it is not an easy course to steer; it may, however, be the only course worth attempting if one considers the shipwrecks of the Death of God or the inner storms of existentialist-depth psychology approaches.

The entire second part of the book, and the appendices following, are attempts to deal,

respectively, with the analogies between relation and imagination, and with some historical aspects of the problem of imagination. Perhaps the most valuable suggestion here is the idea of the closeness that both imaginary and revelatory rhetoric have, or attempt to have, to that which they carry: *intensive* closeness, which emphasizes the particular and emotional valence, as opposed to rational/critical discourse which attempts a distance from that which it discusses, and hence a more universal and non-emotional nature. Tillich once called revelation 'reason in ecstasy', and this seems to be what Hart is suggesting. For Hart, the 'hermeneutic spiral' that is theology must attempt both possibilities: it must not forget the immediate, gripping character of the revelatory data which excite the process, nor must it forget the critical distance that is necessary for thought to have any integrity. 'It is the inverse relation between extension and intension that makes the spiral move. What this means is that the more we have of a datum's immediate presence (its internal unity) the less we have of its character ('whatness') in relation to the field in which it is presented (its external range), while the more we have of its character in relation to the field in which it is presented the less we have of its immediate presence' (p. 62).

Hart borrows his ontology of revelation from Husserl and other phenomenologists, and his rhetoric of revelation from a detailed and penetrating study of imaginative discourse. The book ends with a summons to first a phenomenology of the symbolic tradition (undertaken

in part by Tillich and outlined by Hart): an assessment of the way in which tradition (Scripture, cultic acts, theological reflections) possess potency for 'revelatory intentionality'. There follows a second call to a 'systematic theological symbolics', which would be concerned with the cognitive value of tradition, and its power to illuminate our existence in the present. It is a challenge which we can only hope Professor Hart himself will more fully answer.

It is difficult to evaluate a book as complex as Hart's without considerable reference to the mass of detailed thought that lies behind it. At the base of the entire enterprise, however, lies a sense of the wonder of Being, the backbone of any attempt at ontology. If Heidegger had not already proved that ontology need not be a static discipline, Hart certainly accomplishes this much in his book. Whether he is also convincing about the compelling need for ontological understanding as the primal avenue to man's selfhood must remain an open question. Certainly this would be denied by many 'secular' theologians who are more interested in pragmatic than in ultimate questions. Yet it is difficult to see what meaning art might possibly have without an openness to wonder; not as a sentimental or vague emotion, but as a readiness to allow that reality may hold more than the common senses tell. Hart is surely right to link the future of theology, and of religion, with the rhetoric of imaginative discourse, which may, after all, turn out to be 'a repetition on the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'. DAVID FISHER

#### THE LABYRINTH OF LANGUAGE, by M. Black, *Pall Mall Press*, 30s.

The purpose of this book, writes the author (pp. 18-19), is 'to extract, from what is already known and what can plausibly be guessed about language, some productive *concepts* and controversial *issues*. In short, to develop a tentative linguistic perspective, a way of looking at men, their activities, and their relations to each other and to the universe as they perceive it, *sub specie linguae*.' Professor Black gets his perspective by blending certain of the principles and procedures of modern Linguistics with various ideas extracted from the philosophical literature about language. As far as I am aware, this is the first time the disciplines of Linguistics and Philosophy have been brought face to face in an introductory way; and the result here is an extremely illu-

minating book. The linguist will benefit from the concise introduction to philosophers' views about language, and will surely become more aware of the broader implications of his subject; the philosopher will benefit from the terminological precision and awareness of language complexity, which is the keynote of modern linguistics; and the general reader, who knows little of linguistic philosophy, and less of linguistics, will find in this book an extremely lucid exposition of the tangled issues underlying the field as a whole. The relevance of the book to religious studies should be obvious from the topics covered in the various chapters. There is an introductory chapter dealing with such general characteristics of human language as its perception, acquisition, and transmission,