

well laid-out, with clear and informative diagrams and many photographs. Its emphasis on the vital importance of proper preparation for liturgical celebration, with instructions on how this may be achieved, are entirely to be welcomed. It is one of a series of 'How to Understand ...' books, on the Bible, Church history etc., and if the rest are up to this standard they are worth seeking out.

It is strange that a book such as this, imbued with the spirit of Vatican II and informed by so lively and modern an understanding of the meaning of the liturgy, should have as its cover illustration a photograph of a celebration at Brompton Oratory which could mislead one as to its contents.

Lebon's account of the historical background of the eucharist is brief indeed, but his whole thrust of radical liturgics is based on a thorough understanding of what the eucharist has been and can be for the church. Warren's book may seem purely an academic exercise, but it is from the basis of such objective scholarship that the work of modern liturgists such as Lebon has sprung, enabling Christian worship to be experienced subjectively as a living and objective reality.

JILL PINNOCK

BEYOND DECLINE: A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCHES by Robin Gill. *SCM Press, London, 1988. Pp. 146. £5.95.*

THEOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY: A READER, edited and introduced by Robin Gill, *Geoffrey Chapman, London and Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, 1987. Pp. 424.*

Can the sociologists save us? Robin Gill thinks so. Perhaps not save us so much as offer us hope. And who are the 'us'? We who are committed Christians, lay and ordained, who are concerned about the decline of institutional church life. Gill is an Anglican priest who has worked for some years in country parishes on the Scottish border: he also lectures full-time in pastoral and ethical subjects in New College, Edinburgh. His book, *Beyond Decline: A Challenge to the Churches* is a declaration of how he sees the churches should deal with institutional retreat. His optimism which some might find admirable, is related to two axioms. One, the churches must adopt a creative appreciation of the religious pluralism in which they are now set. And pluralism exists in each denomination at every level: unanimity or dogmatic uniformity are no longer to be found in their midst. The second axiom is that the churches should proceed according to the principles of praxis—a close integration of theology and religious action—and with it the rider that critically examining such an integration stands the master, sociology. It means too, according to Gill, that there should be no gulf between academic theology and the person in the pew. Nowhere must there be anti-intellectualism. The laity must be told all. Whether his concept of praxis is theoretically tenable is open to serious question. Whilst it might be said to appeal to pragmatists and might also to be held to be in keeping with some aspects of Christ's teaching, it is without content. Precisely what kind of theology is to be wedded to what kind of practice? No clear answers emerge.

Sociology can offer hope because, according to Gill it encourages us to take a *via media* between two, for him, undesirable positions: the attempt of a church to make official pronouncements on ethical and social issues, pretending that they are consensus positions; and siding with radical theologians, who appear to abandon prayer, sacraments and worship in favour of political pronouncements and involvement in movements for social amelioration.

Gill, taking what some might see as an old-fashioned view, has an interest in numbers and outreach and wants to keep the traditional parish structure and church order. His best chapter is on these issues where he places his hope for the church in rural Britain on a flexible, non-paid, part-time priesthood. It obviously works out well for him, for he is a hard

working dedicated and disciplined priest, but what of the chances of its success being applied widely? Are there many more like him ready to do as he does? He wants the rural parishes to hand over some of their finance and full-time clergy to urban churches. Logically and ideologically the solution might seem to be correct but whether it will mean the survival of the Church of England or churches with a similar immediate policy is questionable.

This is a provocative book for Anglican study groups and raises interesting questions for those of different denominations.

The other book which appears under his name is clearly not for parish groups, although from what Gill says about anti-intellectualism he might recommend it to them. Clearly those readers of the *Reader in Sociology and Theology* are likely to be theological students and professional theologians.

Since sociology is primarily concerned with analysis and method and theology is more a matter of substance involving widely different methodologies, the points of contact between the two disciplines are many and varied. A Reader should reflect the fact and this is achieved by Gill's selection of 28 items which cover such subjects as methodology, the sociology of knowledge, the Old Testament, the New, the early church, secularization, ministry, pilgrimage. But ritual does not get all it deserves and popular religion, so much on the lips of clergy these days, is not at all popular with Gill. His chips from the classics might well have been omitted, for such an approach never does justice to writers like Durkheim, Weber, Marx and Troeltsch.

It is assumed that those who read the book know what sociology is all about. That is questionable. Rather than give a résumé of the items in the introduction, it might have been devoted to the nature of sociology and its alleged godlessness.

The introductions by Gill to each section are good and the presentation by numbered paragraphs of each item has much merit for teaching purposes. However, the referencing to ch. 27 falls down badly.

In brief, the *Reader* is quite unique and is to be much commended.

One can put these books down at least convinced that if sociology cannot save us; it certainly makes us think. Indeed, that is its role.

W.S.F. PICKERING

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE by Brian Gaybba *Geoffrey Chapman Theology Library, London, 1988, pp. 290. £12.50.*

This is the sixth volume in a series that started life about five years ago as 'Introducing Catholic Theology'. The object of the series is to provide up-to-date text books for readers who are seriously interested in Christian, and specifically Catholic, theology—whether or not they are formal students of theology. The general editor in his foreword to this volume also stresses the ecumenical dimension which is desired for the series.

Professor Gaybba succeeds completely in meeting these requirements. He has provided a really excellent text book, full of all the necessary information, in continuous dialogue with the theology and experience of other traditions, particularly of course in this sphere, of the Pentecostal Churches and the whole charismatic movement, and equipped with a very full bibliography and useful indices.

I hope I won't be misunderstood; Gaybba has written a book on the Holy Spirit, not an encyclopedia or a dictionary. His own theology of the Spirit is clear and simple (a simplicity that does not eliminate profundity or mystery, and even in its historical development all sorts of complexities). It is given in his title, *The Spirit of Love*. His basic text, applied in the best Augustinian tradition, is 'God is love', and the book ends with a brief meditation on that passage (1 Jn 4:16).

The book is in two parts, the first devoted to the historical development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the second to a systematic theology of the subject. This inevitably involves