

which doing theology after Wittgenstein might call for changes; the concept of prayer, volition and intention in ethics, the status of the embryo and of the soul, Christology. Each is only lightly touched on, but enough to make the point that theology after Wittgenstein will not be a bringing of new arguments into old debates so much as a real 'change of the subject'.

Much remains to be developed. Kerr is better at criticising the modern self than in describing the 'Lebensphilosophie' which will free us of this ghoul—the phrase 'bustle of life' is underexplained for the weight it carries. The realism/idealism debate is discussed as though definitely over—Kerr notes but does not develop the attempts of some contemporary philosophers like Sabina Lovibond to develop realist arguments fully informed by Wittgensteinian concerns. The emphasis on bodies gives, to my mind, an impression of great physicality to what may be more modest observations about the kind of creatures we are.

It is a sign of the success of the book that the reader is left at the end feeling unsettled, feeling the need for more theological comment. (Rereading the first chapter at this point is worthwhile.) No doubt Fr Kerr has not said his last words on these subjects. In the meantime we may console ourselves with his barbed compliment:

Theologians have great scope for philosophical work inside the practice of theology. More than this, they are in an advantageous position to take part in excavating the foundations of a religious myth about the self that continues to imprison much modern philosophy. (p. 186)

JANET MARTIN SOSKICE

THE COUNTRY PARISH by Anthony Russell, *SPCK*, 1986. Pp. 296. £9.50

'For generations, people have tended to look upon the life of a country clergyman as quiet and uneventful, slow paced and undemanding.' So writes Anthony Russell in a book, the thesis of which is to explode many of the romantic suppositions about the English village and its parson—suppositions commonly held at the present time. The author, who has already made a useful contribution to studies on the work of clergy in *The Clerical Profession* (1980), speaks with the experience of running three rural parishes in Warwickshire. Nevertheless, only one-third of the book is devoted to the changes in village church life over the centuries. The author, as Director of the Arthur Rank Centre in Warwickshire, has interests which extend to the study of the village as a social entity rather than the church as an integral part of it and perhaps the centre of its identity.

What he has to say about rural life both in the past and the present is an excellent sociological review and constitutes the most fascinating part of the book. He shows the many fluctuations which have taken place in village life due to changes in agricultural economy and does not hesitate to point to the appalling poverty and dire social conditions which have frequently dogged rural life. Relatively new changes have been brought about by the introduction of the railways, the cycle, the motor car and tractor. It is easy for the non-rural person to have simplistic or idealistic notions of country life, especially as today many of the more affluent move in from towns and cities to convert cottages, build bungalows or erect palatial houses for the purposes of retirement, week-end relaxation or commuting. These invaders are not very sensitive to the older village folk and often take over the public affairs of the village. Farmers and locals who form different groups within the village react in an ambivalent fashion. On the one hand they resent the pushing, know-all, middle-class leadership and on the other, they see the benefits for the village of the new-comers. What the new-comers fail to see is that the village as a whole, divisive-free community they imagine it is or should be. Their concept of a village community is frequently very different from that of the local inhabitants and small though a village may be it is at best a community of communities, where each community pursues its own interests.

In the recent past, and indeed in the remote past, much has depended on the presence of the village parson or priest, who has been a central figure, able to transcend the various village groups. As great as any change which has occurred during the past few decades has been the virtual exit of the local parson. In the 'golden age' of village life at the turn of the century, there were 25,000 Anglican clergy in England. Today there are just over 11,000. Country parishes have suffered far more from this general decline than have urban ones. Now on a Sunday, a priest rushes by car from one service to another, arriving just in time for the service and leaving during the last hymn so that he can conduct worship in four or five or more contiguous parishes. He is no longer the *persona* of the village and the village is the poorer for it. Team ministries, grouped parishes and other solutions have very limited merit. Russell does not take, however, a pessimistic position that the rural church, once the heart-land of the Church of England, will be dead within a generation. Admittedly, it has undergone radical changes but he sees new life emerging in what some might view as being of doubtful theological value, such as a general support for the upkeep of the church building. He tends to be pragmatic and does not advocate one particular solution to the problem but supports all which appear to work.

For any servant of God, be he or she Anglican, Free Church or Catholic, lay or ordained, who is working in rural England, Russell's book is to be strongly recommended. Full of rich historical and sociological facts and insights, it is likely to endure far longer than any official report of church life in the countryside or indeed the inner city.

W.S.F. PICKERING

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY by Edmund Hill. *Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1965.*
pp. 193. £8.95.

The author declares his intention to demonstrate the 'moorings' of the doctrine of the Trinity in common and basic christian experience; and he describes this basic experience as receiving revelation from God. Some might be led to think of Schillebeeckx and other modern makers of christian doctrine, and to expect that contemporary experience of Jesus' real presence as the focus of God's own continuing power and presence in this world will be made the source of a more accessible (and intelligible) account of God as Trinity than traditional formulae and theologies seem to have managed to provide. But the reader is quickly told that this common and basic experience of receiving revelation from God need not be an immediate one, and the realisation slowly dawns that the road to a modern recovery of the christian awareness of God as Trinity is the very long and tortuous one through ancient theologies, controversies and formulae, to their alleged Scriptural supports and their medieval and modern elaborations. For the revelation received from God is now to be thought of as the revelation received by the first followers of Jesus (or by the Hebrew prophets), and preserved in their own interpretations of it by the authors of Scripture; and although Fr. Hill clearly believes that what he is describing in the rest of the book is merely a developing understanding of this Scriptural material, others have recently concluded that the kind of thing he is doing here is really *eisegesis*, reading into Scripture ideas of three 'persons' in one God, constructs of later theologies of which Scripture is in fact innocent. Whatever the rights and wrongs of this difference of view may be, the way in which the author 'proves' the Trinity, by assembling New Testament texts to show that Father, Son, and Spirit are (a) divine, (b) distinct, (c) a unity, does not differ much from scholastic text-books of the fifties and somehow clashes with the promise of the series to which the book belongs of a thorough investigation of Scripture and of our history and fresh guidelines for studying and reflecting upon the christian message (those words from the Foreword by the general editor of the series). Hence many college and university students, for whom this series is intended, will find much in the author's approach which is out of joint with the modern exegetical and historical methods they may also meet in the