

DOMINATION OR LIBERATION: THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN SOCIAL CONFLICT,
by Alistair Kee, *SCM Press, 1986, pp xiii + 126.*

This short book, the expanded version of a lecture course, covers principle areas of recent political theology: Feminist, Black, Liberation and New Right theologies. Alistair Kee thinks that the era of liberation in theology, as in Western Society at large, may now have come to an end, so in some respects these chapters read like postmortem reports. The theologies of liberation—with the probable exception of the Latin American—do not have the critical weapons with which to cope with the entrenched patterns of dominance over women, black and poor people, which the religions of the New Right are busy reaffirming. He thinks that feminist theologians, although they have done much excellent scholarly work on the historical oppression of women in Christianity, have weakened their case on three counts: by making ordination a central issue, they reinforced the clerical ethos which oppressed them in the first place; by looking to the New Testament evidence (always ambivalent), instead of to present injustices, in order to legitimate their claims; and by supposing that male domination will die of shame once it is exposed, instead of subjecting it to hard critical analysis. Despite his criticism, a few bad jokes and the occasional use of 'man' when he means human being, Kee gives a fair and approving account of feminist scholars such as Ruether and Fiorenza. Black theology comes off worst. Kee thinks it is largely a product of the relatively privileged black culture of North America and that it reproduces some of the worst features of white Western Christianity. The black religious leaders he most admires—Martin Luther King and Alan Boesak—are not doing 'black theology' at all, but analysing the structures of injustice from a black perspective and in a practical way. Only Latin American Liberation Theology survives Kee's critical tests: largely because it has been willing to take on board Marxist critical tools. It has been able to demonstrate in both secular and church society that domination is not simply caused by evil men, but usually by worthy and sincere servants of bad structures serving class interests. The final chapter deals with the rise of New Right Christianity in Brazil, North America and Britain. It is shown to be a counterfeit gospel, owing less to the Bible than to the espousal of certain rightwing causes and ideologies, including that of the free market and 'civil religion'. His analysis in this chapter is informative and illuminating. It presents a chilling picture of a coming dark age for the cause of liberation. Although there are plenty of good Evangelicals and Catholics around, they need to mobilise in the cause of the gospel as efficiently as the right wing does in its own pseudo-Christian causes. This book is well worth reading. It is marked by Kee's usual tough critical approach, unafraid to point out a dead end in radical theology when he sees one, but maintaining his commitment to the women and men who work for the gospel of liberation.

ROGER RUSTON OP

THE NEW EVE IN CHRIST by Mary Hayter. *SPCK, London, 1987, £6.95.*

The last five years have seen a synthesis of the research on women and the church carried out over the preceding twenty-five years. One of the most useful of such recent studies is Mary Hayter's *The New Eve in Christ*. While it could not have been produced without the scholarship and intellectual climate provided by such as Ruether, Daly, Schillebeeckx and Fiorenza, all of whom are acknowledged in the comprehensive bibliography, Hayter's book is far more than the sum of its parts. Her study of the use of the bible in the debate about women's ministry recognizes and addresses all the different viewpoints expressed along the spectrum of christian and feminist polemic, while making its own very original contribution to scriptural scholarship relevant to theology far beyond the question of ministry.

The book is divided into two main sections. The first, 'Sexuality in God and the Nature