

ously and respectfully.

Part III is set out in the form of a number of brief theses. It is to be hoped that Dr Hengel will expand them into a book. He is aware of danger on two sides, On the one hand there are those who acclaim "the historical-critical method" (as if there were only one!) and suppose that this is the only treatment the New Testament calls for. On the other hand there are those, both radical critics who think that there is no history in the New Testament and conservatives who will not even discuss questions of historicity, who are interested in

nothing but "theological interpretation". Against both, Dr Hengel says "Theological exegesis', which thinks that it can 'interpret' the New Testament without the application of the relevant historical methods, is not only deaf to the question of truth but is also in danger of distorting what the texts say and falling victim to docetic speculation" (p 134f). With this, and with practically everything else in Part III, I agree heartily.

No one, I think, is likely to read this book quickly; the time taken in reading it slowly is well spent.

C. K. BARRETT

CATHERINE OF GENOA: PURGATION AND PURGATORY AND THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE trans and ed by S. Hughes with an introduction by B. J. Groeschel (*The Classics of Western Spirituality*). SPCK 1979 pp xvi + 163 £4.80.

Although she died in 1510 and did not write any books, we can get unbearably close to St Catherine's tormented life. Her mysticism emerges from immense natural and spiritual tensions and dislocations, all somehow held together in God as her being was dismantled and purified, detaching her from whatever fulfilment she might reasonably have expected. An aristocratic woman trapped in an unhappy marriage, even the conversion of her dissolute husband and the subsequent self-sacrifice of their care for the sick and wretched of Genoa brought no easy resolution.

The *Spiritual Dialogue* is in three parts, compiled by more than one person and it is an uneven blend of dialogue, meditation and narrative. In a curious way, the defective literary structure conveys something of the fragmented human experience involved here. The multiplicity of intentions and styles, as well as the dialogue-form expressing the various facets of St Catherine at odds with one another ('soul', 'body', 'human frailty' etc.), vividly render her struggle for Christian wholeness without imposing a false or premature coherence. Dennis Potter once remarked that despair made elegant cannot shake the mind with the brute force of the orig-

inal scream. With St Catherine, both Body and Soul waited to see the workings of God, which increased their joy and suffering. Fittingly it is St Catherine, or rather the work drawing on her and entitled *Purgation and Purgatory*, that offers what is easily among the best accounts of Purgatory, that troubled moment of purifying love in the soul's journey to God. Only those familiar with the other expositions of the doctrine can fully appreciate, by way of contrast often, the merits, beauty and dignity of her insights into the bitter-sweet reality of purification after death, whereby God's forgiving love integrates a penitent's disjointed life.

The translator has done well, except that he frequently omits or telescopes phrases. The introduction will not replace the classic studies by von Hugel and Umile Bonzi, either in terms of scholarship or of sympathetic penetration, and they are at their weakest when explaining St Catherine's teaching on Purgatory or locating it in tradition. But then for such a task, contemporary Christian culture provides few resources and little incentive.

ROBERT OMBRES O.P.

SONS OF THE PROPHETS: EVANGELICAL LEADERS OF THE VICTORIAN CHURCH by Michael Hennell SPCK, 1979, pp 147, £7.50.

Mr Hennell's book deals with six of the more or less 'liberal' (in theological out-

look) leaders of Anglican Evangelicism in the generation after Simeon and Wilber-

force. His thesis is that this group's reputation has suffered by being associated in general estimation with the more hard-line fundamentalist party grouped around the *Record*, and he is on the whole convincing in demonstrating their concern to distance themselves from these extremists. The picture, however, remains a fairly depressing one. Only James Stephen, whose commitment to Evangelicalism in his mature years was a matter of emotion and ethos rather than theological position, showed any intellectual liveliness. On the whole, Hensley Henson's unkind characterisation of the Evangelical party at a slightly later date as 'an army of the illiterate generalised by octogenarians' has still enough truth about it to hurt.

Most of Mr Hennell's subjects have already been exhaustively biographised; his competent essays add little to what we already know of Buxton, Bickersteth, Shaftesbury, Henry Venn and James Stephen. An exception is Francis Close, whose importance (and awfulness) had previously been kept in the decent obscurity of a manuscript life. Close ran Cheltenham as an Evangelical Geneva during his thirty years incumbency of St Mary's: 'the local theatre was in fact burnt down: no-one ventured to rebuild it', Mr Hennell laconically observes. His view that 'it is impossible for a minister

to open his mouth without being conservative' would have found general (if perhaps more guarded) support from Mr Hennell's other subjects, and the wry assent of the radical George Jacob Holyoake, to whose Denis Lemon Close played a mercilessly efficient Mary Whitehouse. This political conservatism, issuing at times in a horrified hatred of the newly organising working class, has been a persistent feature of Anglican Evangelicals of all shades and all periods. Mr Hennell accepts it as a fact of life (or act of God?) – it would be interesting if someone could explain exactly how it happens, but that would be another book, and I doubt if Mr Hennell would be writing it.

Because this is basically an approving book. To take just one example: Mr Hennell brings out the strong unifying influence which a fear of Rome and Ritualism had in building and uniting the Evangelical party in the period. What he does not mention, but what should not therefore be forgotten, is that this party contained the last people in England to succeed in imprisoning their fellow-Christians for their beliefs. Neither the Public Worship Regulation Act nor Lord Penzance are to be found in the index to Mr Hennell's sanitized history.

PETER GRANT

FESTAL DRAMA IN DEUTERO-ISAIAH
£4.95.

by John Eaton, *SPCK* 1979 pp xii + 132

This study forms a sequel in its approach and argument to the writer's earlier volume *Kingship and the Psalms* (SCM Press, London, 1976), and in fact forms part of an ongoing concern, set out in various commentaries and studies, with the nature of kingship in the Old Testament, the possibility of the reconstruction in some measure of religious celebrations, and particularly an autumnal festival, connected with the position of the kind, and the exploration of the presence in Old Testament writings of the themes and language deriving from that festival. It has long been recognized that there is an intimate relationship between the psalms, and especially the royal psalms, and that part of the book of Isaiah commonly designated

'Deutero-Isaiah', chapters 40-55. Here Eaton offers an exploration in a fuller form of the ways in which these chapters, taken seriatim, make use of the royal themes, themes of the autumnal festival. In one sense, this is not new; but it offers a fuller coverage of the material than has been previously given.

The general thesis is an attractive one, though questions may be asked about the degree to which reconstruction of a festival is possible from the kind of evidence available to us. As in the writings of Aubrey R. Johnson, the coherence of different metaphors and themes is shown by the linking of them to this central point. Eaton is well aware of the difficulties, and does not attempt an ordered reconstruc-