

Byzantine and Modern Greek. S.A. Kaufman's work in progress on the use of computers in Targumic studies shows that when the tedious task of listing and comparing forms of words is turned over to machines it is possible to confirm insights of earlier scholars; in particular he verifies Kutschler's principle of the distribution of scribal 'improvements' in the course of a given rescension of a text. J.J. Collins presents a very lucid assessment of the state of the question to date of the origin of the Qumran community, while giving cogent reasons for doubting the position held of late by Murphy-O'Connor and others. A.A. Di Lella sheds fascinating light on the structure and composition of the Matthean beatitudes through the simple means of counting words. J. Reumann does much to clear the air on the vexed issue of the origin of the 'We' passages of Acts by his judicious assessment of the evidence for the probable existence of the 'Itinerary' as a Gattung in classical literature. The one disappointment in this fine collection of essays is R. North on 'Yahweh's Asherah'. While North has much to offer of interest on the question of whether there was a female complement to YHWH in the popular religion during First Temple Judaism, the article is so full of distorted syntax, sentence fragments and solecisms as to be virtually unreadable. The editors should never have allowed it to appear in its present form.

The book concludes with a complete bibliography of 490 entries of Fr. Fitzmyer's scholarly output from 1943 to 1989.

All in all this is a fine collection, worthy of the man honoured, and is highly recommended.

ALBERT PARETSKY OP

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE TODAY: STUDYING THE FACTS by David Hay, *Mowbray*, London, 1990. Pp. 114.

Sir Alister Hardy drew inspiration for the final work of his distinguished career from William James' contention that religious awareness was not 'something remote, esoteric, or the preserve of an aristocracy of spiritual adepts', but 'part of human nature, universally present as a potential in every member of the species.' The work of Hardy and the Centre named from him has consisted largely in gathering and studying examples in order to understand how that potential is actualized in the lives of ordinary people.

Hay's book examines the background, development, and consequences of Hardy's unique approach to the study of religious experience. Professor in the School of Education at the University of Nottingham, formerly deputy director of the Centre for the Study of Human Relations, and until recently the director of the Alister Hardy research Centre, he continues to serve as chairman of the council on research. Hay writes from the perspective of an insider, although his approach is neither promotional nor defensive.

What Hardy and his colleagues discovered, closely paralleling more narrowly focussed sociological surveys in the United States by Greeley, Gallup, et al., is that large numbers of ordinary persons 'have' religious experiences in a range and depth of awareness that seems quite

surprising in a reputedly secular society.

Having reported on these findings in his previous book, *Exploring Inner Space*, Hay here provides a brief history of the Centre itself, beginning with the work of Joseph Estlin Carpenter at the end of the last century. It was at Carpenter's invitation as Principal of Manchester College that William James there delivered the Hibbert Lectures in 1908, beginning an association that would lead to the creation of Hardy's Religious Experience Research Unit in 1969.

A graduate of Exeter, Hardy enjoyed a brilliant career in zoology at the University of Hull and later at Aberdeen, where he became Regius Professor of natural history. In 1946, Hardy was given the Linacre Chair of Zoology at Oxford, which he held with distinction until 1961. A Fellow of the Royal Society, he continued to conduct field studies and pursue his investigations even after officially retiring. A colleague of Sir Julian Huxley, and one of the foremost marine ecologists in the world, Hardy was invited to give the Gifford Lectures in 1964. Two years later, he proposed the establishment of the Unit, to which he intended to devote his remaining years in the empirical study of religious experience.

Hay ably chronicles the development of the Centre, cataloguing the methodology and findings of Hardy, his staff, and his successors, Edward Robinson and Hay himself. Worth particular note is the pioneering 1977 volume on children's religious experience by Robinson and Tim Beardsworth, *The Original Vision*, which has been supported and amplified by the important recent book by Robert Coles, *The Spiritual Life of Children*.

In addition to valuably summarizing similar work in the United States, Hay's concluding reflections on scientific inquiry, religion, and the Church are likely to be chiefly interesting for anyone concerned with the philosophical, theological, and pastoral implications of research into religious experience. As demonstrated by Nicholas Lash's attack on the influence of William James and the work of the Alister Hardy Research Centre in *Easter in Ordinary*, the field of such study is mined with methodological and ideological presuppositions.

Whether Lash has correctly understood either James or the work of the Centre may be debatable, but the issues he raises warrant serious discussion. Hay's book represents a promising start in that dialogue.

RICHARD WOODS OP

THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD IN THE THEOLOGY OF HANS URS VON BALTHASAR by G.F. Hanlon SJ. *Cambridge University Press*, 1990. Pp. xiii + 229. £30.00.

It is often said today that Balthasar is a conservative theologian and yet the topic which Gerard O'Hanlon has chosen for his research reveals the daring side of Balthasar's theology, namely his approach to the problem of the immutability of God. In a detailed study of the texts O'Hanlon has shown how Balthasar stands on a razor's edge by defending a type of suffering and temporality in God without falling into the excesses of a limited God such as we find in process theology or in the philosophy of Hegel.