

deflected Dr Erhardt from any consistent soundness of judgment and perspective. I find it odd, I had almost said grotesque, to find it said of Anaximander: 'He by no means abandoned physical research; but he grasped the fact that it had to be based upon transcendental axioms' (p. 143). Words which might possibly have a meaning today in the mouth of some metaphysically inclined research scientist cannot be transplanted to the world of the sixth century. Anaximander could not abandon, nor retain, what he had never known; and to my mind his axioms are in no meaningful sense transcendental. On the following page: 'The method of number symbolism, employed by the Pythagoreans in the field of ethical philosophy, proved to be arbitrary.' I doubt whether numbers were symbols for the Pythagoreans, before Plato at least. They were employed, not 'in the field of ethical philosophy' as we might cleanly say in our application for a grant to the faculty board of theology, but in the only field the Pythagoreans knew before Socrates, the whole of reality. And a theory which was probably a potent force in the genesis of Plato's theory of forms can hardly be said to have proved arbitrary, if by that we mean trivial and sterile.

But these curious growths, and many more of the same family, should perhaps be tolerated for some final grasp of the words of St John: In the beginning was the Word. But I confess that for all the accumulated detail of Dr Erhardt's discussion my understanding when I had finished reading his book was little better than when I had begun it, and my patience was a

good deal frayed. Only in the last page or two was there some light, in a comparison of Philo and the book of Revelations. Philo wrote: 'God is the beginning of creation; while the last and the least honourable part, our mortal frame, is the end' (quoted p. 203). Christ says in the book of Revelations: 'I am alpha and omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'

Professor Neville's extremely involuted discussion of various traditional problems of ontology includes a refutation of Hegel and a demonstration of the existence of God. It also includes, and I abbreviate from the contents list to the third section, extended discussions on Concern, Conversion, Faith, Certainty, Solitude, Bliss, Dedication, Reconciliation, Brotherhood, Religion and the Other Things in Life, Freedom, Love and Glory.

The main tool which Professor Neville uses is a distinction of determinateness and indeterminateness in existence. Perhaps it is unavoidable that first principles should either be known by inspection, or, if we fail to see the point the first time, then gleaned by a process of osmosis. Neither method was effective in my case. Large areas of Professor Neville's book have a Thomistic flavour, acquired I should imagine at several removes. But despite this apparent Thomistic affinity, I have been unable to grasp quite how Professor Neville would distinguish himself from a traditional or Thomistic metaphysics, if for once I dare allow myself that loose conflation, and I suspect that this is an inability which I share with the author.

DENIS O'BRIEN

THE GREEK PATRISTIC VIEW OF NATURE, by David S. Wallace-Hadrill. *Manchester University Press*, Manchester, 1968. 150 pp. 35s.

This book has decided merits: it is lucid and often diverting. It provides a valuable *dossier* of Greek patristic texts bearing on the sciences and, more especially, on human physiology. The chapter on the interpretation of nature by the Greek Fathers is succinct and just. Yet I must admit to reservations about one of the book's principal theses. Dr Wallace-Hadrill is understandably annoyed by the charge that the Fathers attributed little or no value to the physical world and ordinary human experience. His evidence shows abundantly that they ascribed a considerable, if subordinate and instrumental, value to the physical world and man's study of it. But the author, in his zeal for the reputation of the Greek Fathers, tries to argue

that in practice some of them were interested in nature for its own sake, whatever their theoretical standpoint, and that Clement of Alexandria, St Basil and his brother Gregory, even anticipated St Francis of Assisi in their love of nature. This is surely excessive.

Dr Wallace-Hadrill comes to his rather surprising conclusions through a somewhat indiscriminating attitude to his material and an excessively wide conception of nature. By 'indiscriminating' I mean that the author is inclined to see personal observation where the use of a handbook is more probable, to mistake an interest in theories for an interest in nature and to neglect questions of literary *persona*. For instance, he can write (p. 81): 'It is the eye of a

countryman which leads Basil to note, as a sign of returning spring, the restless movement of the cattle in their stalls.' In the original (*Hex.* ix. 3) the cattle look towards the exits 'as by one agreement' and the rhetorical flourish suggests a literary origin for the observation—Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xviii, 361) mentions oxen sniffing the air when a change of weather is impending—as does its juxtaposition with an item which quite certainly is derived from a hand-book: the hedgehog changing its vent-hole in accordance with the direction of the wind.

Again, it is significant that so much of the author's material comes from homilies where the rules of the genre, deriving from the Stoic-Cynic *diatribe*, prescribe *exempla* from nature; such *exempla* consequently tell us little of their users' tastes. In any case, Basil's *Hexameron* is one of Dr Wallace-Hadrill's most frequently cited texts and it is hard to imagine a popular course of sermons on the Creation which had nothing at all to say about the physical world.

Consequently, I feel that the author has failed to recognize how much of his patristic material is either conventional or derivative. But that is not all. The 'nature' by which the Fathers are said to be fascinated is so widely interpreted as to be of little use to Dr Wallace-Hadrill's argument. Sometimes interest in nature means no more than Basil's concern

over his health; sometimes it means Clement of Alexandria's addiction to (pseudo-)scientific hypotheses, such as his assertion that sexual desire is due to a super-abundance of sweat in the body (and not to constipation, as Fr Simon Wood seems to think—vide his translation of the *Paedagogus*, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 23, p. 250. Such a version places strain on the Greek); sometimes it means indulgence in a highly-literary *topos*, like Basil's description of his hermitage in terms conventionally applied to the Golden Age. With such a broad definition of 'nature' it would not be difficult to attribute even to the desert Fathers a fascination by the physical world.

It is as a collection of texts that this book can be recommended. On the larger question of the Fathers' attitude to the physical world and scientific studies there is still no reason to dissent from the judicious summing-up in Armstrong and Markus' *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy* (esp. pp. 41–42). The really interesting question is not whether the Fathers attributed a subordinate value to the physical world and a purely instrumental value to scientific studies—for of this there is little doubt—but whether such views have anything to commend them to the 1960s.

DUNCAN CLOUD

PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION: A CONTEMPORARY DIALOGUE, (ed.) Joseph Havens van Nostrand, *Insight paperback*, London, 1968. \$1.95.

FREUD ET LA RELIGION, by Albert Plé. *Editions du Cerf*, 1968.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT, by William Kay. *Allen & Unwin*, London, 1968. 45s.

The first book is a report of discussions and the interchange of papers following the 1959 American Psychological Association Convention in Cincinnati. Participating are a dozen well-known American Professors of Psychology and Theology (the psychologists outnumber the theologians by about five to one). The 'dialogue' ranges over a very wide field in which most of the problems common to psychology and theology are discussed, with main emphasis on the historical and empirical relationships of psychology and religion. The pieces from the various contributors are well knit by the editor, with sections of dialogue enlivening the general discussion. It would be untrue to say that a consensus is reached in the 150 pages of this contemporary dialogue, but the questions are raised in an intelligent way, and answers sought in a spirit of truth-seeking disciplined enquiry.

The second small paperback is an attempt by Father Albert Plé to reconcile Freud's various statements about religion with the Thomistic view. This is an extremely interesting text which succeeds in placing Freud's views within a total context, revealing a misunderstanding of the essence of religion by some Freudians and by many Catholics. In the concluding chapter Father Plé presents the Thomistic teaching on 'hylomorphism' and indicates how this can be used to reconcile what appears to many to be a head-on collision of Freudianism and Catholicism. A short quotation illustrates the line of argument: 'It is the whole man who becomes progressively human and Christian. Animal at birth, he changes slowly into a human being; this humanization process goes on in relation to his bodily structure, his powers of discrimination and his psyche in general. The believer penetrates the Divine