tried to construct God from our knowledge of the world. But as I cannot feel so negative about the wider metaphysical tradition of Western thinking I am not so susceptible to the brightness of these new lights. The actual spelling-out of the argument certainly lacks sparkle. In fact, the dullness of the presentation of the argument obscures the communicative force of language—the communicative force which, paradoxically, is the very foundation of that argument.

ROB VAN DER HART

SUMMONS TO LIFE. The Search for Identity through the Spiritual, by Martin Israel, M.B. *Hodder & Stoughton,* London, 1974. 158 pp. £2·10.

This is an interesting and unusual book. Its author was born in South Africa and came to England in 1951. At present he lectures in Pathology at the University of London. It is clear from the book itself that he is a deeply religious man with some sort of mystical experience. His aim is to convince his readers of the primacy of the spiritual and to show them how they may grow in the knowledge of God by entering into what he discerns to be the realities of life and especially by entering into their own inner reality.

On the whole it is a convincing message he conveys, although at times his language and his highly personal philosophy and terminology somewhat obscure his argument. His use of the words 'personal' and 'personality' is particularly unclear, Two quotations will illustrate this. On p. 26, speaking of the presence of God, he says 'As we move beyond the limitations of our own personality to the vast reaches of the soul that underlie it, so the being of God ceases to be merely personal, but expands to embrace the whole universe, and transcend it at the same time'. On p. 81, 'Faith is the movement of the personality towards that integration which is accomplished by the spirit of the soul'. If I understand him correctly, by 'personality' Dr Israel means an existential and superficial self that is identified in normal living with 'the fleeting ego that represents the present focus of my awareness' (p. 12). This existential self has to be transcended so that we can arrive at the true or spiritual self. Thus 'the course of constructive living is to foster the light of the true self in such dedication that it may pervade the personality and raise up the ego to a consciousness of true being' (p. 13).

What this must involve he attempts to clarify in subsequent chapters. 'The realisation of your true identity', he says, 'consists primarily in detaching yourself from those attributes that are superficial but which you, in your blind ignorance, consider essential to your being. In other words, the movement towards the real is first and foremost a progressive stripping from yourself of illusion'. This stripping comes about through the circumstances of life and, in particular, through relationships with other people, the course of our chosen work and through suffering. Each of these is given one or more chapters. Chapters 5 and 6, dealing with the mystery of love and with love and relationships, are specially to be recommended. Dr Israel is at his best when he shows us the need to become mature within the real human framework and not within some 'spiritual' enclave. From thence he moves on to speak about the inner life of prayer and faith, but he puts these squarely in the context of our social life. In passing he touches on a host of interesting and relating topics—meditation techniques, the charismatic movement, extrasensory perception, the occult, loneliness, euthanasia, re-incarnation (to be distinguished from rebirth, in which the author believes), psychedelic drug experiences—and in each case he shows great practical sense and wisdom, although he also makes many statements which are challengeable.

Perhaps one of his most surprising shortcomings is a failure to grasp the true role of dogma and credal formulae. He sees in them an attempt to constrict God to man-made terms or even a form of escape from intimacy with God. Although he himself is not a Christian he frequently quotes the gospels and Pauline epistles and always refers to Christ with respect. In fact, his view of religion is highly syncretistic and correspondingly vague. One of his favourite ideas is some sort of 'world-soul'. He mentions it many times. A typical and rather puzzling example occurs on p. 69: 'Meditation is a relationship in the depth of silence with the object of meditation. And when the relationship is complete, subject and object merge into a unity in which the one becomes the other inasmuch as both lose their separate identity and instead are members of the body of creation, which is the universal body of Christ. This is the I-Thou relationship of Martin Buber, in which there is neither subject nor object, but all is one in that ultimate reality which is God'. But *is* this 'the I-Thou relationship of Martin Buber?' Another area where one may criticise Dr Israel is that concerned with prayer itself. Here God appears more as man's fulfilment than in His own right.

This book, then, contains much that is informative and helpful, but it also contains much that is questionable and, to say the least, misleading. However, the author's obvious sincerity and humility come across so strongly that the final effect is to inspire the reader with a real desire to follow him in his spiritual quest.

AMBROSE SOUTHEY, O.C.R.

LORD ACTON ON PAPAL POWER, ed. by H. A. MacDougall. *Sheed and Ward*, London, 1973. 241 pp. £4.

In 1962 Fordham University Press published *The Acton-Newman Relations* (*The dilemma of Christian Liberalism*), an interesting study by Hugh MacDougall which, so far as I know, has not been published over here, though superior to some books on that subject which have. The author has now made this selection of Acton's writings on papal power, handy and useful for students of the subject, if expensive. It consists principally of four published essays; 'The States of the Church' from the *Rambler* (1861); the famous 'Conflicts with Rome' with which Acton concluded the *Home and Foreign Review* in 1864; one printed in 1867 on 'The Next General Council' and a long summing up, 'The Vatican Council', done for the *North British Review* of October 1870. To these have been added three extracts from essays on the reformation period, dating from 1895, and a fourth from an essay on Ultramontanism for the *Home and Foreign* of July 1863. The book is concluded with a few extracts from letters to Ignaz Döllinger, the Church historian, to Newman, Lady Blennerhassett, Mary Gladstone, and the two letters to *The Times* of November 1874 which Acton thought might get him excommunicated (by Manning). There is, in an appendix, a *Times* report of Acton's speech in 1871 on the Roman Question.

The selection gives Acton's views during a critical period and shows him at his most incisive and magisterial, hammering the papalism of past and present: 'It is the fiend skulking behind the Crucifix', and yet maintaining his traditional Catholic faith throughout. If deprived of the sacraments, he had no intention of leaving the Church. Fortunately this punitive measure was never taken and Acton lived to set the Cambridge Modern History on its way, a respected aristocratic and academic layman of international fame.

MacDougall, in his introduction, simply presents Acton's position in the context of the times, and sees him as, in some sense, a prophet. I must say that to me Acton never gives any impression of looking forward, or of being interested in the future of the Church in the world. In the 1867 article his forecasts of the results of defining the papal power verge on the ludicrous, though it has to be remembered that he then expected past Bulls to be included among infallible pronouncements, which was certainly what men like W. G. Ward and Louis Veuillot wanted and campaigned for, *ad nauseam*. Acton seems to have lived, as he was born, inside the old world where Church and State interacted in a society committed for centuries to Christian standards even when not living up to them. Within that civilisation he maintained the finest standard of truth and moral action conceivable and helped to give the study of history the same high and incorruptible ideal.

MERIOL TREVOR

ARIOSTO, by C. P. Brand (The Writers of Italy, vol. 1). *Edinburgh University Press*, 1974. viii + 206 pp. £2·50.

ORLANDO FURIOSO, by Ariosto. A prose translation by Guido Waldman. *Oxford University Press*, 1974. xviii + 630 pp. £5·95; £2·25 paper.

Centenaries are a good time to consider or reconsider the debts we owe to the past. Last year's crop included Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533), arguably the greatest Italian poet of the Renaissance. With Professor Brand we can assess his life and work, while G. Waldman offers us a new translation of Ariosto's masterpiece, the *Orlando Furioso* (abbreviated to OF in citations below). Ariosto gained more than a living from the patronage of the ruling d'Este family; he gained an incomparable position from which to experience and reflect on a brilliant civilisation taking possession of its cultural heritage. The city of Ferrara, the fairest in setting, studies and manners, as the poet tells us (OF XXXV, 6), had been a stopping place for the travellers and minstrels who brought the Carolingian and Arthurian tales to Italy. These tales were to be the inherited material for Ariosto's work; 'I sing of knights and ladies, of love and arms, of courtly chivalry, of courageous deeds—all from the