

sian works, the book is disappointing.

It is said on page 85 that 'He fails to distinguish between the Apostolic Tradition and Apostolic witness and subsequent tradition', identified as 'the continuing living experience of the Church'. On the next page 'The Creeds do not contain any new revelation, but as criteria of the validity of the Church's preaching he places them on the same level as the Scriptures'. This view is called 'rather strange' but 'in harmony with what has been seen of ecclesiology. His emphasis is firmly on the presence of Christ in the Church, through the action of the Spirit, at the expense of the revealing and salvific role of the historical Jesus'.

The author in places cites Germans in German, but it does not seem to occur to him that 'the historical Jesus' could mean the Jesus accessible to historical research of the kind that Germans were doing. The passage cited on pp 66-7 as 'startling confirmation of this a-historical view of Christ' can be read as concerned with the irrelevance of such events as can be critically explored in comparison with the interior reality of the life of Christ in the Christian and in the Church. It is difficult for any Catholic, Western or Eastern, to deny that

eucharistic and Marian dogmas have grown up out of the Church's life. There is a case for saying that the same is true of Christology and of the Trinity, but also that the *filioque* developed into a dogma in disputations 'against the errors of the Greeks'. This was and is the real objection to it. At Florence it was qualified and could have been accepted, but the obstacle to the reception of Florence was the absence of Christians under Turkish rule, who could not receive it without adhering to a crusade. It may well be true that the present Eastern Orthodox position on the authority of ecumenical councils was constructed to justify this, but it is relevant to their present difficulties in assembling a council on either side of the iron curtain.

It seems to me that more use could have been made of Khomiakhov's English contacts in assessing his position. What impressed him about London was the silence of Sunday. No doubt he was wrong about this, but it does throw light on his interest in the adherence of a whole community to traditional sanctities. It may also be noted that his use of German philosophy is curiously Coleridgean.

GEORGE EVERY

THE PROPHETS, VOLUME I, THE ASSYRIAN PERIOD,
by Klaus Koch, SCM Press, London 1982. pp viii + 182. £6.95

The English translation of this lively German work first published in 1978 is to be welcomed. Koch's aim is to present the prophets (in this volume down to the end of the Assyrian period) as thinkers. While recognising additions and glosses, his emphasis falls on the prophets themselves. In this he selects a different approach from the now fashionable attempts to understand the prophetic books as reflecting a continuing and developing tradition mediating God's word to successive generations of his people. As a consequence of his methodology, Koch is more willing to assign material to the prophets themselves than many contemporary scholars. So with the exception of *berit* in Hosea (where the idea is dismissed), no mention is made of any Deuteronomistic redactional work within the prophetic corpus. Yet surprise is expressed at the absence of the canoni-

cal prophets in the Deuteronomistic History, itself explicable once it is recognised that for the Deuteronomists the law and the prophets were to be taken together, Deuteronomistic covenant theology being the end of a long process of theological development finally systematised in the Deuteronomistic History and applied to prophetic material.

After discussing the origins of prophecy and their ninth century antecedents, Koch concentrates on the classical prophets. There is much that serves as a necessary corrective to some popular ideas particularly in his comments on the prophetic attitude to the cult and the future. For Koch, all the prophets remain prophets of salvation 'in the sense that they presuppose that life will go on in an undoubtedly positive sense, for both God and the world'. His work is carefully backed up by val-

able detailed study of particular Hebrew concepts. Nowhere is he afraid of original ideas and there are some pertinent remarks about the accretions of New Testament and Christian dogmatics to Old Testament theology. His emphatic rejection of the contrast between *opus dei* and *opus hominis* is to be applauded. 'The harmony of human and divine planning will one day be reached in the rule of Messiah, which will promote community'. Summing up Isaiah's work, Koch argues that his concern is not with metaphysics but with metahistory – 'a system of thought which both reveals and evokes events which are intimately

linked with moral responsibility'.

This is a stimulating book which affirms the author's own scholarly independence and confidence. But a final paragraph on Isaiah's disciples 'forming a school in Jerusalem in which material deriving from Amos and Hosea was passed down' does not do justice to the complex way in which the prophetic books reached their present form, nor to what the prophet of the exile meant by describing God's word as not returning to him empty. But Koch's methodology determined that he should end where others would prefer to begin.

ANTHONY PHILLIPS

THE STATURE OF WAITING by W. H. Vanstone *Darton, Longman & Todd*
1982, (p/b) pp x + 115, £4.50.

Canon Vanstone draws attention to a conviction, firmly held in the western world, that activity of any kind is commendable and inactivity deplorable. Old people are admired if they remain active to the end, and elderly patients are trained to overcome their dependence. We therefore resent the movement of modern life which increases inactivity and dependence, not only in old age and retirement and unemployment but also in the general need to wait for the system to do things which we cannot now do for ourselves. This compulsion to be active is attributed in part to the need in expanding capitalism for a multitude of human producers, and in part to the conviction that we are made in the image of God who is *actus purus* and impassible. The author agrees that God must be impassible in that he cannot be at the beck and call of the creation; and yet by an act of love, he can make himself dependent on the response of others. He defends this view (apart from a suspect discussion of -ible and -able words) by arguing that Jesus, an initiator and actor before his passion and a recipient during his passion (in St Mark's Gospel), thus discloses the intention of God. This is made plain to the attentive reader of St John's Gospel where Jesus has finished the work God gave him to do before his arrest; and only then, when he moves from action to passion, is the glory of God fully disclosed. Conse-

quently it is not only or chiefly the death of Jesus but his helpless dependence on others which achieves God's intention. What deeply impressed the first witnesses was that Jesus was *handed over* ('betrayed' is a mistranslation and gives spurious prominence to the unimportant role of Judas); and the early witnesses were right. Jesus' hope of winning the nation for the kingdom of God would succeed only if he could persuade the leaders that his programme had public support. Therefore he took his enthusiastic Galilean supporters to Jerusalem, aware of the risk that they might easily be seen as a threat. So he was prepared to be killed though he hoped to succeed in his appeal. Therefore in Gethsemane he waited and prayed that the authorities, prompted by Judas, might come to support and not to destroy him.

Canon Vanstone is mainly correct about Judas, though *paradidomi* can have a collateral notion of 'treachery' like *prodidomi* (why did the publishers allow him to use Greek type?) but he is an unsafe guide when he says that words should be used, whenever possible, with respect for their etymological roots. His romantic reconstruction of the Gethsemane episode scarcely corresponds to the text, and his simplified version of the Johannine passion allows him to miss some main emphases, including the conviction that Jesus was still the directing agent. Finally, although