

periods' but in its notion of the transcendence of death. What is interesting about Collins' article is that he does try to draw some theological conclusions from what he has written. That does not seem to occupy most of the authors, and yet the editor in his introduction, written for this volume, ends his survey of apocalyptic with some suggestions about the future shape of apocalyptic studies, and here he hints at the need for some theological answers. What can we expect from the future? This is, after all, a very apocalyptic question. Well, he hopes for more scholarly studies, i.e. better critical texts and better attempts to state what the essential nature of apocalyptic is. But surely we might expect a little more light on the theological significance of apocalyptic as we wait for the end. He is aware that his subject is quite a dangerous one for millions of people. He says soberly 'We have noted that the mood of the times has contributed to the current interest in our subject'. Having gained a surprisingly

large audience do the scholars then have anything to say to it? If they do not respond there are plenty of what Hanson calls sensationalising pseudo-scholars 'who seek only to exploit popular curiosity for personal attention...' (13). Hanson tells scholars who may have 'a loathing for such exploitation' to meet the challenge of taking common readers seriously enough to offer them responsible scholarship on this important and relevant material in an idiom they can understand'. On the whole, the common reader, whoever he or she is, may find the idiom of this book too inaccessible. As an example of what might be achieved I would turn to J. Beker who is not included here. Having written his large scholarly book on Paul, he turned to a more common audience in *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel* and tried to show what difference an apocalyptic approach to life makes, as we wait for the end. Perhaps this is what the editor is looking for.

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ALAN OF LILLE: THE FRONTIERS OF THEOLOGY IN THE LATER TWELFTH CENTURY by G.R. Evans. *C.U.P.*, Pp. 249. £25.00

Alan of Lille was one of the most wide-ranging writers of the later twelfth century. Today he is remembered most often as a poet and allegorist; but Dr Evans prefers to see Alan as a theologian. Her new book builds on ideas about Alan she has already put forward in a number of articles, sections of which are incorporated in this study. She examines Alan's concern with the limits of human language: the need for the ordinary rules of logic and grammar to be transformed in theological use. She goes on to discuss Alan's attempt to provide a set of rules specifically for theology. A lucid section is devoted to Alan's practical theology. Evans illustrates his use of set-topics both in the theory and practice of preaching, and argues for his originality in bringing together, in a single volume, material for the defenders of orthodoxy against its four main twelfth-century adversaries—the Cathars, the Waldensians, the Jews and the Moslems.

Finally, Evans examines the *Anticlaudianus*, Alan's allegorical verse epic. She argues that it should be considered a daring piece of theology because it tells of the creation of a man who is perfect and overcomes vice, and yet is not, like Christ, also God. Her view is difficult to accept, since it seems to overlook the fact that the *Anticlaudianus*, as Alan stresses in his preface, is an allegory. It is intended, neither directly to repeat Scripture, nor to contradict it, but rather to furnish a myth which the proficient interpreter will understand as consistent with Christian truth. The daring of the *Anticlaudianus* is not theological but imaginative.

Evans's treatment has some large gaps. Neither the *De Planctu Naturae* (an allegorical prosimetrum widely read in the Middle Ages) nor the *Summa quoniam homines* (Alan's most sustained piece of systematic theology) is discussed except in passing. Indeed, Evans says very little at

all about the content, as opposed to the method, of Alan's speculative theology. There are a number of useful comparisons between Alan and his contemporaries or predecessors: with Peter of Poitiers and twelfth-century grammarians on the theory of language; with Nicholas of Amiens on theological axioms; with Gilbert Crispin and Peter the Venerable on Jews and heretics; and, more generally, with Anselm, St. Bernard and Thomas Aquinas. However, there are suggestions of a less than thorough grasp of the traditions and context in which Alan worked. Aristotle is mentioned several times; but Evans does not cite the Latin texts of Aristotle which Alan knew, nor does she make use of the work of Minio-Paluello and others on when and in what form different Aristotelian works became available. Alan's Platonism is discussed mainly in terms of his use of the *Asclepius*. The *Timaeus*, Boethius's *Opuscula sacra* and pseudo-Dionysius are mentioned, but there is no attempt to sort out the different types of Platonism contained in each of these works, or to see what sense Alan makes when he combines them; and the important new influence of the Greek theologian John Damascene is ignored. Many of the important thinkers of the earlier twelfth century, such as Abelard, Bernard Silvestris, Thierry of Chartres and Gilbert of Poitiers, are mentioned frequently; but more philosophically complex features of their thought are never analysed, and Alan's ideas are not placed clearly in relation to theirs. And there are some striking omissions: Alan's moral theology is discussed without reference to the School of Laon; Abelard's *Dialogue between a Christian, a Philosopher and a Jew* is not cited in connection with Christian attitudes to Jews and pagans; and twelfth-century theories of the universe are discussed without mentioning William of Conches's *Philosophia mundi*.

On a more detailed level, too, this book has some failings: —(p xi) the reference to Evan's own article on

axiomatic method is wrong, and should read vol. XXX, pp 36—52, not vol CIII, pp 13—29; (pp 14—9: table of Alan's writings) the classification of Alan's writings here does not correspond to that used in the text; and, although Häring's new editions of *De planctu Naturae* (1978) and *Regulae caelestis iuris* (1981) are cited in this table, Evans elsewhere always quotes and refers to the inadequate text found in *Patrologia Latina*; (p 24) it is most unlikely that Bede was indebted, as Evans says, to 'Boethius on Aristotle'; (p 40) Moffat's poor translation of *De planctu naturae* is quoted here, instead of Sheridan's more adequate one, which is listed in the table; (p 72) Gilbert of Poitiers does *not*, as Evans states, say that 'the statement: "In Christ was made a union of God and man" is a *regula generalis*' —but rather uses a logical *regula generalis*, which he goes on to mention, in order to interpret this statement in a particular way; (p 138 Honorius Augustodunensis's *Clavis physicae* is not, as implied, a pioneering work, but merely an abbreviation of the ninth-century philosopher John Scottus's *Periphyseon*; (pp 176—7) the treatment of the text of Alan's *Regulae* here is superseded by Häring's introduction to his new edition; 6pp188—197 —Appendix 2) since most of this appendix reproduces an article already published, which is not about Alan of Lille, it is questionable whether it should have been included; (p.237) Dronke's edition (1978) of Bernard Silvestris's *Cosmographia (De mundi universitate)* should be given, not Barach and Wrobel's unreliable one of 1876; (pp.238—9) John Scottus Eriugena appears twice in the list of sources, once as 'Eriugena, John Scouts' (sic), the author of *De praedestinatione*, once as 'John the Scot', co-author with Remigius of Auxerre of commentaries on Boethius which he is no longer believed to have written.

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