

to consciousness'. An interesting disagreement; and let us not complain that its relevance to theology isn't obvious: why should all such relevance be so? Here in any case we are nearing the end of a most rewarding book: in fact the only thing left to praise is Mr Simon Clements's moving account of his discovery – born of personal experience as a teacher of Cockney children in a

non-Catholic comprehensive secondary school – of the modern Christian layman's crying need of theology. Mr Clements is young, discontented and demanding; and he brings us back to our common starting-point – human beings and human responsibilities.

Kenelm Foster, O.P.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND WORLD RELIGION by R. C. Zaehner, *Burns and Oates (Faith and Fact) 9s 6d.*

The aim of Professor Zaehner's book is to see, acknowledge and welcome the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit whenever it is to be found; to examine its traces in world religions other than Christianity and to show where these traces are fulfilled in Catholic theory, and where they may bring fulfilment in Catholic practice. This is a very large undertaking for a small volume, but it is carried out with deep though unobtrusive learning, and with a limpid clarity of exposition. The religions of law, and of behaviour in time, Judaism, Islam, some forms of Protestantism, are discussed, and Islam is contrasted in detail with the religions of contemplation, seeking experience of the timeless. The author points out the great variety of goals formulated by different cults. The Vedantist is anxious to know his own identity with the Supreme Self, the Buddhist takes practical measures to prevent rebirth into this world of painful illusion, the Taoist yields to an almost Franciscan wonder at the welling up of creation 'humble and precious and pure', the Moslem worships the terrifying transcendence of God, the practitioner of the shock-therapy school of Zen attempts by non-rational violence to deliver himself from the tyranny of use and went into enlightenment. But what else could be expected? If even sensory perception is conditioned by the

way in which a man has learned to interpret the data presented to him, how much more must the given awareness of 'deep but dazzling darkness' flow inevitably into traditional channels of explanation. Nevertheless Professor Zaehner shows the development alike in Mahayana Buddhism, in the Bhakti cults of Hinduism and among the Sūfis in Islam, of an understanding of the love of God for man, and man for God.

He distinguishes three kinds of mystical experience: nature mysticism; the sense of identity with God; and the love of God. He cannot long conceal his curious animus against the first, that sudden sense of the glory and significance of created things which sings through Traherne and Wordsworth, and the early chapters of Dom Bede Griffiths' *The Golden String*. He accounts for the second and 'an experience of the soul as the image of God' (the soul as spirit, distinct from the psyche) and suggests that 'a jealous God' sets it as a 'trap' for those inclined to spiritual pride. This concept of Deity as a petty-minded practical joker trying to trip up those who seek him in ignorance is surely rather blasphemous. The third experience is of course the fulfilment of all human longings.

It is an amazing achievement to have packed so much thought, erudition and flowing argument

into so brief a study. Two points which call for disagreement have already been indicated, and one might add to them. Thus, for instance, Krishna was not *the* incarnation but *an* avatar of Vishnu; and again Aldous Huxley did not 'reject with loathing the Christian God' but the distorted

image of him presented by the Victorian evangelicals. By and large, however, the book is illuminating, and deserves a large and critical audience.

Renée Haynes

THE PERSIAN SŪFIS by Cyprian Rice O.P., *Allen and Unwin 15s*

'If God (in the *Surat an Nur* – Sura 24 of the *Qoran*) is compared to the light in a lamp set in a niche, the niche, we must know, is the believing and loving heart'. Thus, on page 85 of his admirable little book, does Father Cyprian Rice give the vital Sūfi gloss on that text of the *Qoran* which is central to the Sūfis' grounding of themselves upon Muslim Scripture: 'God is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth. His Light is like a niche wherein is a lamp . . .' This and similar passages which convey the majesty of God, passages like 'Wherever you turn, there is the face of God', are for the Sūfis, in the words of Professor A. J. Arberry, 'the subject of constant meditation and commentary'. For however much Sūfism, *Taṣawwuf*, may be regarded as the attempt by Muslims, particularly non-Semitic converts to Islam and notably those of Iran and India, to read into their faith some possibility of a link, vitalized by love offered and reciprocated, between God and each of us; however much this Islamic 'mysticism' may be seen as an accretion to the legalistic and awe-inspiring, the fundamentalist, unitarian Qoranic basis of Islam; and however much it may be said to bear the marks of Neo-Platonic influence or Buddhist, Hindu influences or Manichaeism, or be a growth out of all of these, Sūfism is a Muslim religious phenomenon and Sūfis were members of a strictly Muslim society. Therefore, both from an innate desire to exalt the faith of their fathers and with the wish to avoid a schism and strife so con-

trary to Sūfi practice, the more responsible among them strove always to find sanction for their gospel of love, of tolerance and of grace in the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad and the sayings ascribed to him.

Neither Father Rice nor Professor Arberry, the latter in his *Sūfism*, published by the same publishers in 1950 and a book to be read in conjunction with that under review, hesitates to emphasize this Muslim basis for Sūfism and certainly Professor Arberry gives a lucid account of how al-Ghazzali sought to legitimize Sūfism by giving it a 'theology' parallel to the conventional Muslim 'juridico-theology' of the Schools. But significantly Father Rice calls his illuminating hand-book *The Persian Sūfis*, for he in the main confines himself to the most extensive manifestations of the 'mystical' spirit in Islam, which were Persian in the first instance, but latterly, and still today, Indian. However, neither Egypt nor Spain failed to provide Sūfi teachers of passing eminence, so that it will be noted that, taking Arabia as the core of pristine Islam, it was on the fringes, the Fertile Crescent, the cultivated Nile Valley and the Mediterranean shores, that Sūfism took root; in areas primarily less harsh than the Arabian desert by nature but ultimately challenged by conquering encroachment and devastating invasion, while anciently they had been the seats of older and more subtle lore than any known directly by the Prophet.