

yesterday; the latter will be saved by God's grace even if the present and future way of proclaiming the faith makes them insecure'.

To read either of these authors opens one to

the need to go forward in faith with insecurity as part of the struggle.

MICHAEL HOLLINGS

BERNARD: BRINGING UP OUR MONGOL SON, by John and Eileen Wilks. *Routledge & Kegan Paul*, London, 1974. 160 pp. £3.

All living matter is composed of cells, and the nucleus of cells under microscopic examination reveals the presence of small thread-like substances called chromosomes. The human cell contains 46 chromosomes in 23 pairs, except for the sex cell which, at the moment of conception, contains 23 single chromosomes and unites with another 23-chromosome cell to produce a new 46-chromosome cell: a kind of genetic template from which eventually a new human being grows by a process of reduplication and division. Sometimes, for reasons as yet unknown, the new cell formed at the moment of conception has an extra chromosome, and in these cases (about one in six hundred live births) the human being that results will have certain physical and mental abnormalities known clinically as Down's Syndrome, and more generally as mongolism.

Dr Down was the late-Nineteenth-Century doctor who first identified the characteristics of the condition (without of course understanding its chromosomal origins, something discovered a mere decade ago). A clever and in many ways humane man, he nevertheless showed an unfortunate racial and eugenic prejudice characteristic of his age in dubbing the condition (on account of the slant eyes usually associated with it) mongolism: a slightly sinister, foreign word that has not helped either individuals or communities to adapt themselves to the existence of these people. Such adaptation is an especially urgent task today because the mongol population is steeply rising. Whereas in the recent past something like 80 per cent of mongols died before reaching full adulthood, with the development of antibiotics they now have a life expectancy little less than average. And since in 96 per cent of cases mongolism seems to be a random occurrence unrelated to the chromosomal make-up of the parents, there is usually no way of predicting or preventing it. Most parents of mongol babies therefore find themselves quite unprepared for the eventuality, as were Mr and Mrs Wilks.

One of the virtues of their book is its calm, down-to-earth, matter-of-fact tone. Both scientists by training and profession, they have no time for sentimental or rhetorical self-indulgence. But there is one sentence that stands out from the text by its apparent redundancy, and reverberates with unstated emotion: 'Meanwhile the quinces, picked from the garden, ripened in the kitchen, and their sweet smell began to pervade

the house'. A little earlier John Wilks (who for convenience acts as narrator of this joint composition) has described how Eileen's second confinement was brought to term by the exertion of picking a heavy harvest of quinces from a tree in their garden. Though the new baby was not as handsome as his elder brother, they never suspected anything was wrong and the doctors and nurses did not disillusion them. 'Eileen had to spend a long time feeding him; he was inept at sucking and dribbled inordinately. This was an ominous sign, but one which we did not appreciate at the time. Meanwhile the quinces, picked from the garden, ripened in the kitchen. . . .' One suspects that for the Wilkses the smell of quince is a Proustian memory-trigger which recalls in a flash the fools' paradise of Bernard's first weeks and the painful awakening that inevitably followed. And although I imagine that I have been invited to review this book as the parent of a mongol son rather than as a literary critic, I can't resist pointing out the appropriateness, in this context, of the quince—that odd, bitter little fruit that, rightly used and appreciated, is yet capable of yielding its own special savour.

At first, however, it is mainly a bitter business. Only a saint could rejoice in the birth of a mongol child. Most parents are stunned, depressed, resentful. They feel trapped—perhaps even (irrationally) ashamed and guilty. In many ways the event hits especially hard at professional, middle-class couples such as the Wilkses reveal themselves to be: hard-working, intelligent, highly organised, self-denying (no TV), placing a high value on achievement, on discipline and good manners, emotionally restrained, totally rational: all things a mongol is not, and never can be. It might seem therefore that a mongol child is likely to fit more happily into a more casual, sprawling, unreflective life style. Perhaps this is so, in the short term. But all mongols must eventually cope in some way with life beyond the horizon of the family, and the better equipped they are to do so, the happier they will be. Then the very same virtues and values which can never be realised *in* the mongol come into play in educating him to fulfil his maximum potential, for the effort required can be enormous, as this book shows. Fortunately, the benefits are not all on one side: the mongol child has his own kind of sweetness and light to contribute to a culture which, from the factory

floor to the senior common room, is based on the principles of competition.

Therefore, though it is by no means invariably the best solution, there is usually much to be gained by bringing up the mongol child in his own family and community. *Bernard* will be of the greatest interest and value to parents of mongols, or indeed any mentally handicapped children, who have made this decision, especially if they belong to the same social group as the authors. Parents less well-off, less confident and less competent, might find it somewhat intimidating, as Olive Stevenson warns in her very sensible Foreword. But *Bernard* will also be of great usefulness to doctors, social workers and others whose interest in mongols is professional rather than personal. It contains a superbly lucid explanation (to which my opening paragraph is indebted) of the genetic basis of the condition, is well illustrated with photographs of Bernard at various stages of his development, and has an excellent bibliography, except for the omission of the invaluable *Improving Babies with Down's Syndrome* by Rex Brinkworth and Joseph Collins (published by the Northern Ireland Region of the National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children; first published in 1969 as *Improving Mongol Babies*).

Bernard consists mainly of a straightforward account of his development, the problems he presented, and the degree of success achieved in coping with them. In many ways the Wilkses had a particularly hard task: Bernard's IQ is pretty low, even for a mongol, and he seems to have manifested a tendency to throw tantrums

to a rather unusual degree, for an unusually prolonged period. Also much more is known now, than when Bernard was born, about the care and training appropriate to mongol children—in particular the vital importance of programmed stimulation in the first year or two (which is why it is very wrong of medical people not to diagnose the condition and inform the parents as soon as possible). Mr and Mrs Wilks had lots of friendly assistance and well-intentioned advice, but not, it seems, much expert counselling. They had to make up their own rules as they went along.

It might be felt that their rules were sometimes a little severe—that more emphasis on reward and less on punishment in training, for instance, might have been not necessarily more productive but less wearing on the parents. The great merit of this book, however, is that it describes, but does not prescribe. Each reader can draw his own conclusions from the account, and none, surely, will fail to profit from it. As for the authors, they may feel a justifiable pride in the achievement Bernard, at seventeen, represents: someone severely and unmistakably handicapped, but reasonably happy and contented; a valued member of his family, especially as a companion to his invalid grandmother; able to help in simple tasks around the house, to do meaningful paid work in a sheltered workshop, and to assist (with only occasional deviations from the rubric) in the celebration of the liturgy at Blackfriars, Oxford.

DAVID LODGE

C. S. LEWIS. *A Biography* by Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper. *Collins*, London, 1974. 308 pp. £3.50.

C. S. Lewis has been fortunate in his two biographers; Walter Hooper was a son to him at the end and Roger Lancelyn Green inspired the 'Narnia' cycle and was responsible for his final idyll, the journey to Greece. They aimed at providing 'a framework of straightforward fact not advancing psychological theories or passing philosophical judgements'. The life story has been told quietly—but it is the quiet digestion of massive documentation. Still, perhaps because of the interests of both authors, it is primarily the life of C. S. Lewis the writer: each of his books is analysed with sensitive perception. But his influence on his contemporaries was at least as much as orator as writer. This will be forgotten increasingly and there is already some evidence of a strange popular image of him. One is cited on p. 140 of this book: 'Lewis was popularly supposed to regard both lectures and tutorials as a complete waste of his valuable time and to hold undergraduates in the uttermost contempt'. No travesty could be farther

from the truth. His milling audiences would never have enjoyed his lectures so much if he had not been so obviously enjoying them himself. He took a vivid, perhaps rather sporting, interest in the numbers who came to him and was depressed when he failed to repeat his Oxford triumphs at Cambridge. At times he lectured from skeleton notes, at times from a written text, on occasion he improvised; it was hard to tell which method he was following. But always he forged a personal link with those who heard him.

I can write with some authority on C. S. Lewis as a lecturer; for nine years my lectures for the English Faculty were co-ordinated with his and when he went to Cambridge he arranged that I should take on his course 'Prolegomena to Medieval Literature'. I have no qualification to write on him as a tutor but when I remember the vehemence of his belief in education as opposed to training, I find it impossible to conceive that he judged his tutorials to be a complete waste of