

fact that hymns written by Nonconformists such as William Williams (Pantycelyn) and Ann Griffiths started to be sung in Catholic worship.

The final chapter looks at the effects of the Second Vatican Council on Catholicism in Wales. With the Council's emphasis on ecumenical dialogue, Hughes believes that after 1962 'a new era dawned in Welsh denominational relations'.

This reader agrees with the author's conclusion that the Roman Catholic Church has, by our day, become an accepted part of the religious and social landscape of Wales. However, to say as the author does that it is an 'intrinsic' and 'revered' part of Welsh life is more debatable. A post-1962 observation from the the artist and Dominican tertiary, David Jones (1895-1974) is perhaps closer to the truth: 'the Roman Catholic Church in the Welsh land is a small minority and Welsh-speaking Welsh Catholics are a very small minority within that minority.'

RHIDIAN JONES

THE PHYSICAL, THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL: MODERN IDEAS OF MATTER AND MIND by William Charlton *Sheed & Ward*, London, 1998. Pp. v + 186, £13.95 pbk.

William Charlton has a deadly serious purpose which he presents with delightful high spirits in this fascinating short book of philosophical theology. He shows that the modern illusion that only the physical is truly real derives from the fallacy of thinking that bodily sensations are *mental* states and that beliefs and desires are *mental states*. On the contrary, he argues, bodily sensations are states (but not mental), and beliefs and desires are mental (but not states, nor processes, as though they were naturalistic paintings which we see). The truth is that 'understanding a belief or desire is irreducibly teleological understanding, understanding action or inaction as being for a reason or purpose' (p. 66). 'If I think that Othello is smothering Desdemona for the reason that she loves Cassio I must consider *both* whether she really does *and* whether, if she does, that makes it right to smother her. If the answer to either question is 'No', it is *part* of believing that Othello really is acting for this reason to try to stop him...' (p. 66, my italics). Physicalists believe that 'for the reason that' and 'in order that' are eliminable. Since we cannot eliminate such expressions if we are to continue to believe and desire anything, we cannot continue (if we ever had done) to hold that only the physical is truly real.

Charlton argues that, if we recover a true version of the natural, the supernaturalism of the Bible becomes clear and persuasive. God is 'a kind of gardener who raises, if not the whole of humanity, at least the Jews, to a higher level' (p. 110). 'The idea of a supernatural transformation of the natural runs all through the New Testament' (p. 112). If God raises our natural life to a supernatural level before we die, life after death is surely also possible as life in union with God. 'What has been said about supernatural life before death can be extended to life after it' (p. 138).

That is the heart of the book, but there is much else. Let me mention

the chapter on the Trinity, where Charlton repeats an argument first presented in *New Blackfriars* 78 (1997), that the three-fold way we are motivated 'by egoism, by duty, and by altruism' can provide a model for the three persons of the Trinity.

The six chapters in which the author addresses the reader in his own voice are delightfully supplemented by three dialogues in the tradition of Plato and W.H. Mallock: at a meal, on a railway journey, and on the banks of a river. They feature a crusty Oxford don called Eddie Dodson, a hospitable spinster who lives in Northumberland and who has a cousin in the Iles des Nuages, newly married, and a nephew with a girlfriend who has absorbed some philosophy from a former boyfriend. In the last of the dialogues they swim in the river, and talk, and drink, and draw philosophical pictures in the sand. Mr Dodson pays a tribute to the vivid demonstration by the Polynesian cousin and the nephew that beliefs are ineluctably teleological: 'I think there is some marvellous causal property in the water of that pool. [Mr Dodson does not swim.] To be a match for you I should have to baptise myself in it. But I shall stick to that wine... Could you spare a glass, please, for a silenced but unconvinced atheist?' The scene is depicted on the cover in a watercolour made by the author himself.

A book to read, enjoy, and re-read.

J.C. O'NEILL

RETRIEVING THE TRADITION AND RENEWING EVANGELICALISM: A PRIMER FOR SUSPICIOUS PROTESTANTS by D H Williams *William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1999. Pp. ix + 243, £9.99 pbk.*

I hesitated before agreeing to review this book on two counts. It did not, from its title, sound as if it would be of much interest to readers of this journal and I am not a Protestant who is deeply suspicious of the patristic tradition and uneasy at embracing catholicity — I come from the mainstream Reformed tradition that has always prided itself on taking the Fathers seriously.

The worst thing about this book is its title, which is bound to limit its readership, and in a few places makes what is in essence a very attractive, scholarly and balanced elementary introduction to the Fathers a manifesto directed at mainly American Protestant churches which have a very narrow understanding of the *sola scriptura* and attach no importance at all to apostolic and ecclesial continuity.

But there is another reason why this book deserves a wider readership. It is not only on the wilder shores of Protestantism that Christians, and others, sit easy to tradition today, and are amazingly ignorant of the riches of the Christian past. 'Neophilia' has penetrated deeply even into the Christian community, bringing with it a devaluing of history and of the past, and a dark suspicion combined with a profound ignorance about the development of the Faith, particularly in the Patristic age. Williams' book could be a useful corrective, although the title should be changed.

DUNCAN B. FORRESTER