

Harkins remarks, somewhat blandly, "that Chrysostom could hardly have delivered the *Discourses* in their present form after Vatican II's *Declaration on the Church's Attitude Toward Non-Christian Religions*" (p x). It is melancholy to reflect that nearly sixteen hundred years elapsed between the preaching of these sermons and the date when that Declaration found its tortuous way to light, that

a significant contribution towards this change of attitude was knowledge of what Jews in Europe suffered during the Second World War, and that what they suffered then was due, in part, to a long tradition of Christian hatred, which, if not always inspired by writings such as these, was often justified by appeal to them.

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RELIGION AND THE ONE: Philosophies East and West
by Frederick Copleston, *Search Press 1982. pp 281.*

This is the latest in a series of books which Copleston has produced in the years following his monumental *A History of Philosophy* (1947-1975), in which he has turned his attention to large-scale, *Geistesgeschichtliche* reflections on the ideas of our own and (more recently) of other cultures. The titles exemplify the scope and style: *Religion and Philosophy* (1974), *Philosophers and Philosophy* (1976), *Philosophies and Cultures* (1979). The present work represents his Gifford Lectures for 1979-80, although he tells us rather apologetically in the text that the lectures themselves differed in some respects from the book (the text of which was written before the lectures were given), and 'were perhaps a little more lively than the printed text may suggest' (p 1). He would have liked to rewrite the work, but he is in his seventies; 'It has been traditional policy to publish sets of Gifford lectures, and in somewhat advanced years it is perhaps unwise to count on retaining sufficient energy for serious literary activity' (p 2). One can hardly disagree with his contention that 'an interest in comparative philosophy, considered by itself, does not need any special justification. No sensible person would object to the attempt to broaden one's horizon and to understand different philosophical traditions' (p 16). He acknowledges the inevitable restrictions on such encyclopaedic enthusiasm – particularly of course the matter of linguistic competence in original sources – but claims that 'there may be room for contributions even by those who lack the ideal qualifications for the task!' (p 17). Certainly Copleston's own contribution is not that of a dilettante: his learning is breathtaking

in its scope and constantly astonishing in its attention to detail. Much of the material, of course, is very well-trodden philosophical ground, and Copleston himself has covered much of it in print before. Reading the book is rather like spending an afternoon in an attic full of family heirlooms; one finds much that is familiar, some things that were forgotten, and occasionally lights on an inspiring treasure which sets the mind working over past facts and future possibilities.

The book opens with a curious introductory chapter written in the third person, and which, as he says, 'may read like a review by the author of his own work'. In it 'the author makes clear his agreement with Whitehead's justification of speculative philosophy as an endeavour to form a coherent system of general ideas . . . The implication seems to be that metaphysics possesses cognitive value, that it can increase our knowledge . . . On the other hand . . . He makes it clear that his confidence in the metaphysician's ability to pin down the ultimate reality in a conceptual web and to describe it is extremely limited'. He sees these two approaches as a rationalistic one exemplified by Whitehead and a mystical or mystically-inclined one exemplified by Jaspers. 'But are these two approaches or lines of thought really compatible? . . . Should not a philosopher make up his mind, one way or the other, before publishing? It is hardly a satisfactory situation if the reader is presented with two conflicting estimates of metaphysics' (pp 3-4). Within these self-defined and self-consciously ambiguous parameters he then explores those areas of Western, Indian, Chinese and Islamic thought which

interest him. Although he often suggests that there are criteria for distinguishing between world-views, and for preferring some to others (mainly on grounds of internal coherence and practical effects), he also often reverts to a familiar modern version of the *philosophia perennis* approach: all (or most, or some) religions are attempts to express the Inexpressible, and so are in this way, by *via negativa*, saying the same thing. (The dust-cover has pictures of Radhakrishnan and Jaspers, for whom respectively 'all religions are one', being 'ciphers' for the undecipherable 'Encompassing'.) His interest in this sort of view is by no means a simplistic or *a priori* one. He insists, for example, that any acceptable metaphysics of the One must avoid making it a 'collective name' (p 7) of, or mere 'label' (p 146) for the Many, but rather must see the One as in some sense transcending the plurality of the world, (see for instance, his discussion of Buddhism, pp 52-5). Accordingly in his discussion of the Indian Vedānta traditions in Chapter Four, he is sympathetic to the theistic Vedāntins Rāmānuja and Madhva in their criticisms of Samkara's atheistic or Absolutistic view of *brahman*; and naturally on these (and of course on other) grounds he accepts what he sees as the metaphysical aspects of Christian theology.

Nor is it the case that he mistakes discussion of this metaphysical sort for an understanding of religion as a whole. 'It is not the author's intention to reduce religion to metaphysics or the concept of God to that of the One . . . For example the concept of the One, taken by itself, is not the same as the concept of a loving Father. But it does not follow that the latter must be discarded. The author's thesis is that the analogy of a loving Father does not come from metaphysics but is accepted by Christians on the authority of Christ, as recorded in the gospels. In other words, it belongs to the Christian language-game and is accepted by participants in the relevant form of life.' (p 269). His attitudes to the use of these Wittgensteinian notions is somewhat ambiguous: he sometimes seems, as here, to use them with approval, at least as descriptive terms. But elsewhere, as in

previous publications, he has serious reservations: they should not be pushed to 'un-acceptable' levels (pp 11-12), on the grounds – in my own view correct and decisive – that 'all [language-games] are played by human beings; and all "forms of life" are forms of human life, having a common basis in human nature' (p 25). There is a similarly ambiguous attitude, or as the publisher's blurb has it an 'exploratory rather than dogmatic' approach to one of the fundamental issues of the book, the status of metaphysics. He argues, and is surely correct to do so, that we stand in need of a general philosophical anthropology which might offer a synthesised account of the human being who is both practitioner and object of the various natural and social sciences, that is, of 'a more general interpretation of the human being, which would counterbalance the tendency [of the particular sciences] to fragmentation' (p 23). But as he himself says, 'it can indeed be objected that anthropology, whether philosophical or otherwise, is not the same thing as the metaphysics of the One and the Many . . . It is the cognitive value of the metaphysics of the One and the Many which is in doubt, not the legitimacy of synthesis as a mental activity' (pp 25, 26). He devotes a large amount of space to the epistemological nature and status of metaphysics, discussed explicitly in relation to mysticism (Chapter Six) and to science (Chapter Eleven), and is understandably cautious. But at last he does claim that metaphysics is 'the basic science' and that a metaphysical world-view 'can count as a hypothesis or as analogous to a scientific theory' (p 258): 'There is no question of metaphysics taking the place of the particular sciences. It cannot do this. It is the basic science which logically precedes all the particular sciences and does not presuppose them. At the same time it lets these sciences be' (pp 260-1). The kind of knowledge to be had from metaphysics is not 'fresh empirical knowledge', but rather: 'Knowledge of the basic structure of reality, of the fundamental categories, if there are any, would be an example of that kind of knowledge which I have in mind' (p 263). It is perhaps a cynical understatement to remark that this

would indeed be a valuable contribution for metaphysics to make; but I see nowhere in Copleston's pages a wholehearted and substantive account either of how (and which) metaphysical systems are to count as knowledge in this sense, nor indeed of

why *nous avons besoin de ces hypothèses* at all, save for their historical interest. But to say that he has not had the last word in these matters is hardly something with which Copleston would disagree.

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ESSAYS IN NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

by C.F.D. Moule. C.U.P. 1982 pp xiv + 327 £18.00.

This is a selection by Professor Moule of essays which were originally published in journals and collections between 1952 and 1978 and which are unrevised here, except for the addition of several footnotes and the modification of one paragraph. Professor Moule chose them because he thinks that, in the main, the arguments still hold good.

Many of the essays contain criticism of widely held opinions and alternative suggestions about large issues in New Testament interpretation: promise and fulfilment in relating Old and New Testaments (essay 1), the Son of man (6 and 12), New Testament eschatology (13), forgiveness (17, 18, 19 and 20), giving as distinct from receiving in the Christian life (21). In Pauline Studies, both matters of general concern and matters of detail are considered: Paul and Jesus (2), Paul's understanding of the resurrection of believers (14), Luke as Paul's amanuensis for the Pastoral Epistles (8) the use of the dative with verbs of dying (10), the absence of main verbs from II Corinthians 8 (11), maranatha (15), II Corinthians 3: 18b (16). One essay speculates about the relation of Matthew the tax collector to the Gospel according to St Matthew (5), and another elucidates the individualism of the Fourth Gospel (7). I Peter is to be read not as liturgy but as the conflation of two originally separate editions (9). Two short studies discuss the '40 days' in the Ascension story (4) and parabolic material in ethical instruction (3).

On the whole, Professor Moule's judgment is justified. For example, his suggestion (6) that 'the Son of man' represents Jesus' application of the insights of Daniel 7 to his own mission of suffering and glory is convincing. He argues that 'the Son of man' is not a title by which post-Easter Christians hail Jesus, but a description of

Jesus' martyr-ministry. In 13 he offers an interesting alternative to the usual classification of New Testament eschatological teaching. Instead of picturing successive phases of development in view of the delay in the parousia, he argues that much of the teaching is complementary. Distinctions have to be made between teaching addressed to the uncommitted and to the committed, to individuals and to humanity as a whole. Language appropriate to the description of the fate of the cosmos is inappropriate to that of human destiny. Apocalyptic is valuable in picturing God's control, but this is balanced by a complementary emphasis on the missionary responsibility of the Church. Moule likens New Testament statements about eschatology to tent-pegs driven in simultaneously or in complementary sequences, in an attempt to give full and adequate expression to beliefs as they relate to different circumstances. Finally, may I pick out one detail from the essay on Johannine individualism (7) which seems to have been ignored by most commentators? Moule suggests that the word Paraclete is chosen because the Spirit is seen as the vindicator of God's cause, 'as the Advocate, pleading God' cause against disobedience everywhere, first in the Church and next . . . in the world' (p 101).

These essays, then, are well worth re-reading, but that is not quite to say that the book is worth buying at £18. Most theological libraries contain the journals and collections in which they first appeared, and even if they are not available locally, photocopies for individual use are easily obtained. Only very occasionally is the juxtaposition of essays on similar topics useful.

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