

the personality of others' (p. 205-6). Surely the whole point of a genuine Christian morality is that it can cut through this kind of undergrowth? If the above is not cliché-thinking, we want some evidence that it is not. But in point of fact there is plenty of evidence to show that it is, as any reader of Brown's Pelican on the *Social Psychology of Industry* can verify for himself.

The really bad gap, however, is that the problem of nuclear war is not discussed. Now the whole context of the debate between (say) Père Regamey and Dr McReavy is the distinction between a wisdom morality and a code morality. (Incidentally Canon Leclercq's book suggests the inadequacy from a Christian angle, of trying to argue against the H-bomb on an exclusively code-morality basis, as I think Miss Anscombe does in *Nuclear Weapons and Christian Conscience*). But while the distinction between these two views of morality is constantly present in every page of the book, the very detachment of the author seems to make it impossible for him to discuss the question of when, in a particular issue such as modern war, the valid claims of code-morality are nevertheless inadequate as a total response to the problem, and have to be superseded (I don't mean blurred) by a recognition that only a full commitment to a wisdom-morality is adequate to this new situation.

BRIAN WICKER

KARL BARTH ON GOD, by Sebastian A. Matczak, Alba House; \$5.75.

KARL BARTH, by Jerome Hamer, O.P.; Sands, 27s. 6d.

One of the most remarkable facts about the theological work of Karl Barth has been the degree of understanding and sympathy which it has received from Roman Catholic theologians: indeed, the authors who have shown most penetrating insight into the concerns of Karl Barth are almost certainly Hans Urs von Balthasar, Henri Bouillard, and Hans Küng. Barth appears the first Protestant theologian since the Reformation itself to have excited serious theological debate from among Catholics (strangely enough the understanding of Barth by Protestants has often been less profound—even among those Protestants such as Gogarten and Brunner most closely associated with his name). It may be one of the indirect and not least important results of this massive labours of Karl Barth that to many Protestants unity with Rome is once again a logical possibility, even if a distant possibility. This is not a question of irenism or compromise, since no one has been more careful at every point to distance himself from Catholicism than Barth, but rather that in Barth the problems that are the real problems of Dogmatics become visible once again, and with this the possibility of disagreement with other solutions to those problems. It sometimes becomes doubtful in nineteenth century liberalism whether or not we are still talking about the same matter, God's self-revelation in Christ, which makes Christianity to be what it is; whereas in Barth it is

unequivocally clear from the first word he wrote that this is for him the whole theme and subject matter of all his thought. It is this feature which makes discussion, real debate and listening, and real disagreement between him and Roman Catholicism possible: and also possible that this real listening and debate sometimes issue in unbelievably positive results (cf. Hans Küng: *Rechtfertigung*)

It is within this context, and ultimately within the context of Church unity that these two new books on Karl Barth must be viewed. And it is here that in both cases, although to a different degree, one is intensely disappointed. The debate between Barth and Catholicism has taken several steps back. These books despite the usual irenic conclusions (How much we have learnt from Barth . . . etc.) show in their matter very little of real attempts to understand Karl Barth, but rather attempts to pin him down to an absurd position which may then be attacked and refuted. Both interpret Barth as though the main influence of his thought were Kierkegaard, and a peculiarly crude interpretation of Kierkegaard at that, despite the fact that Barth has explicitly broken with Kierkegaard, and apparently precisely because of the possibility of this crude interpretation: neither of them take seriously the connexion between Barth and St Anselm. In the case of Matczak, in a book on Barth and the existence of God, there is hardly any mention of the fact that Barth has written a book on St Anselm's *Proslogion*, a book that Barth has himself called the key to his own thought: one can only suspect that this book would prove an embarrassment to the interpretation of Barth as a crude irrationalist for whom faith demands a *sacrificium intellectus* and a blind leap into the void—the mere existence of this book of Barth's renders untenable the whole approach which Matczak adopts. In fact a complete refutation of Matczak as a serious contribution to Barth studies can be obtained merely by confronting with the actual text this remark which Matczak makes (p. 30) the centre of his entire argument: 'Therefore, our best attitude consists in a sacrifice of the intellect, concludes Barth (*Dog.*, II.I, pp. 7, 477).' I can only suppose that Matczak has merely used the index of his *Dogmatik* and not the text which runs: (p. 477) 'No *sacrificium intellectus* is demanded of us to know this event, to know the divine being as the ground of the divine patience', and on p. 7 we are offered a sustained polemic against all theology that demands of the believer a *sacrificium intellectus*. Matczak is not arguing, he is mud-raking and finding it necessary to create his own mud.

Hamer's is on the other hand a far more serious attempt to come to grips with Barth's actual thought, and begins with an introduction which in a review of the more recent books on Barth by Catholic writers makes what reads curiously like a formal retraction of the rest of the book. The actual interpretation that follows is interesting but fundamentally wrong-headed, abounding in remarks like 'Barth says . . . , but let not the reader be deceived, what Barth means is . . .'. Both writers if they had been more concerned to hear what Barth has to say for himself, and to assess it on its own ground, and only then to present objections and criticism, would have made valuable contributions to understanding between Protestantism and Catholicism. As it is these books have the

importance of warning us how difficult even thinking of reunion between the Churches will be unless we are prepared to listen seriously, and allow ourselves be corrected and instructed by what others have to say. Since these are the only books at present in English on Barth by Catholic writers, I can only warn Catholics who wish to understand Barth either to read himself, or to read one of the books I mentioned at the outset, and only regret that it is Hamer that has been translated and not one of those.

R. WHITE

THE KEY CONCEPTS OF ST PAUL, by François Amiot; Herder Nelson, 35s.

This translation from a French work which appeared in the *Lectio Divina* series in 1959 represents the distillation of many years of teaching the doctrine of St Paul by a professor at the Seminary of St Sulpice. Here we have laid before us a synthesis, by a competent enthusiast, of all the main elements in Paul's teaching. The exposition is thoroughly sound, and takes account of most of the more important and reliable opinions available in the French language. (Père Durrwell, for example, is quoted more frequently than any other writer). The resulting book is the most readable short presentation of St Paul's doctrine as a whole that I have come across, suitable to Catholic priests, seminarians and the educated laity. Not that it is without certain limitations which follow necessarily from the book's very nature, as a synthesis of doctrine. The trouble with any work which confines itself to this form is that it necessarily loses the sense of immediacy which the epistles themselves give us, the sense of a concrete situation in which the apostle is grappling with a definite problem, striving to penetrate deeper into the meaning of the gospel tradition. In a doctrinal synthesis the concepts can only be presented neat, as abstract ideas stripped of their original 'setting in life'. In the present case the following sentence in an introductory chapter quickly makes us prepare for the worst: 'In these letters, we can see right from the beginning the complete maturity of his thought, which he later developed only slightly in one or two particulars, as events dictated.' The correct view on this point seems to me to be that expressed by Mgr Cerfaux, who, summing up at the end of his *Christ in the Theology of St Paul* (p. 529), says that although we cannot speak of a true evolution in Paul's system, yet 'one gets the impression that it is impossible to make one synthesis of Paul's thought that will be faithful to every stage of his career'. In the event, however, things turn out in P. Amiot's book very much better than we might expect. Often a rather timid attempt is in fact made to sketch the development of a concept, especially in the case of the theme of Christ's body, where Amiot follows the general line laid down by P. Benoit in his article 'Corps, Tête et Plérôme dans les Epîtres de la Captivité' (*Revue Biblique*, 1956, pp. 5-44). A theme to suffer from 'synthetic' treatment, on the other hand, is that of eschatology. It is true, of course, that some scholars (as for example the Protestant exegetes C. H. Dodd