

able detailed study of particular Hebrew concepts. Nowhere is he afraid of original ideas and there are some pertinent remarks about the accretions of New Testament and Christian dogmatics to Old Testament theology. His emphatic rejection of the contrast between *opus dei* and *opus hominis* is to be applauded. 'The harmony of human and divine planning will one day be reached in the rule of Messiah, which will promote community'. Summing up Isaiah's work, Koch argues that his concern is not with metaphysics but with metahistory – 'a system of thought which both reveals and evokes events which are intimately

linked with moral responsibility'.

This is a stimulating book which affirms the author's own scholarly independence and confidence. But a final paragraph on Isaiah's disciples 'forming a school in Jerusalem in which material deriving from Amos and Hosea was passed down' does not do justice to the complex way in which the prophetic books reached their present form, nor to what the prophet of the exile meant by describing God's word as not returning to him empty. But Koch's methodology determined that he should end where others would prefer to begin.

ANTHONY PHILLIPS

**THE STATURE OF WAITING** by W. H. Vanstone *Darton, Longman & Todd*  
1982, (p/b) pp x + 115, £4.50.

Canon Vanstone draws attention to a conviction, firmly held in the western world, that activity of any kind is commendable and inactivity deplorable. Old people are admired if they remain active to the end, and elderly patients are trained to overcome their dependence. We therefore resent the movement of modern life which increases inactivity and dependence, not only in old age and retirement and unemployment but also in the general need to wait for the system to do things which we cannot now do for ourselves. This compulsion to be active is attributed in part to the need in expanding capitalism for a multitude of human producers, and in part to the conviction that we are made in the image of God who is *actus purus* and impassible. The author agrees that God must be impassible in that he cannot be at the beck and call of the creation; and yet by an act of love, he can make himself dependent on the response of others. He defends this view (apart from a suspect discussion of -ible and -able words) by arguing that Jesus, an initiator and actor before his passion and a recipient during his passion (in St Mark's Gospel), thus discloses the intention of God. This is made plain to the attentive reader of St John's Gospel where Jesus has finished the work God gave him to do before his arrest; and only then, when he moves from action to passion, is the glory of God fully disclosed. Conse-

quently it is not only or chiefly the death of Jesus but his helpless dependence on others which achieves God's intention. What deeply impressed the first witnesses was that Jesus was *handed over* ('betrayed' is a mistranslation and gives spurious prominence to the unimportant role of Judas); and the early witnesses were right. Jesus' hope of winning the nation for the kingdom of God would succeed only if he could persuade the leaders that his programme had public support. Therefore he took his enthusiastic Galilean supporters to Jerusalem, aware of the risk that they might easily be seen as a threat. So he was prepared to be killed though he hoped to succeed in his appeal. Therefore in Gethsemane he waited and prayed that the authorities, prompted by Judas, might come to support and not to destroy him.

Canon Vanstone is mainly correct about Judas, though *paradidomi* can have a collateral notion of 'treachery' like *prodidomi* (why did the publishers allow him to use Greek type?) but he is an unsafe guide when he says that words should be used, whenever possible, with respect for their etymological roots. His romantic reconstruction of the Gethsemane episode scarcely corresponds to the text, and his simplified version of the Johannine passion allows him to miss some main emphases, including the conviction that Jesus was still the directing agent. Finally, although

he pleads well for a re-valuation of 'waiting', he underestimates the complex processes involved, and the kind of activity that undergirds a fruitful dependence. I

think he would not mind if readers declined to be dependent on his book if they were stimulated to receptive thought of their own.

KENNETH GRAYSTON

**AUGUSTINE ON EVIL** by G. R. Evans. *Cambridge University Press*, 1983. pp xiv + 198. £15.00.

Dr Evans tells us that the following premisses are those of Augustine: 'that God is good and the author of all things; that all things are good; that man is the cause of his own troubles; that those troubles are an illusion – that evil is, in other words, no more than a deceiving appearance' (p xi). But 'troubles' are only reportable by referring to 'things'. So God is the author of 'troubles' and 'illusion'. And, since an illusion has no reality, both God and man cause what has no reality.

If this is what Augustine is saying, it is hard to make sense of him. And his treatment of God and evil is indeed problematic. Consider, for example, his teaching on freedom and grace. Augustine came to insist on man's need for grace in order to do good, but he also held that, when man goes wrong, the cause is man and not God. Yet even if (as Augustine insisted) evil is a privation, there are evil *acts*, which are perfectly real temporal processes. Now these are either caused to be by God, or they are not. If they are, then God is their cause (even if man is too). If they are not, then a temporal process can occur which is not caused to do so by God, and one wants

to know why God is required to account for any process at all.

Yet Augustine is an important figure in Christian theodicy. And this book is a useful account of his views on the subject as they developed over a number of years. Dr Evans has read widely in Augustine, and she provides a lively and readable survey of his treatment of subjects such as Manicheism, knowledge, ideas, truth, scripture, and Pelagianism. Since she also offers a fair amount of biographical material, her book (in spite of its title) may reasonably be recommended as a worthwhile introduction to Augustine in general. And, as such, it ought to be much appreciated by students. Much of what Dr Evans reports is very familiar, and she has little to offer by way of critical comment on the thinking of Augustine. But she has produced an attractive essay in the history of ideas. One hopes that it can soon be reprinted at a price that will make it more readily available to the kind of audience likely to benefit from it most.

BRIAN DAVIES O P