

Book Reviews

The Incarnation of the Word of God. St. Athanasius (being his treatise *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*, newly translated into English by a religious of C. S. M. V., S. Th., with an introduction by C. S. Lewis). New York, The Macmillan Company, 1946. 95 pp. \$1.50.

"What think ye of Christ?" is a question which must be faced by every generation that has heard about Him. In the book under review we have the answer of one of the outstanding Nicene Fathers of the fourth century to this "most decisive and determinative question of history."

In a day when secular education is undergoing a radical revolution, as revealed by the newly proposed Harvard, Yale and Princeton Plans, it is also in order for the church to consider the need for a radical change in her Theological and Christian Education programs. The trend in secular education is to introduce the student to the classical literature of the centuries at first-hand rather than through more recent scholarly interpreters of that literature. C. S. Lewis hints that this would be a good procedure for the Christian to follow in his approach to the classical literature of the church.

In a delightfully written introduction to the book under review, C. S. Lewis, noted British lecturer and author, remarks that "There is a strange idea abroad that in every subject the ancient books should be read only by the professionals, and that the amateur should content himself with the modern books. . . . It has always therefore been one of my main endeavors as a teacher to persuade the young that first-hand knowledge is not only more worth acquiring than second-hand

knowledge, but is usually much easier and more delightful to acquire." (p. 5) Mr. Lewis reminds the reader that there is great danger in our time of "an exclusive contemporary diet" in reading which confines us too much to the outlook of our own age. "The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books." (p. 7) Especially is this the advice needed in the realm of theological literature.

Employing James Moffat's method, the Catholic Sister who translates this ancient book, simplifies, paraphrases and condenses some of the Greek sentences when it is in the interest of clarity and readability to do so. Here is theological literature of a very high order both for laymen, for whom it is in part designed, and for the clergy.

Following a brief but interesting sketch of St. Athanasius' life, the reader will find nine short chapters which were written by this ancient scholar to prove "that Christ is God, the Word and Power of God." St. Athanasius wrote this treatise, not as a polemic, but as a persuasive appeal to a young Christian convert named Macarius, whom he sought to establish in the Christian faith. With arguments and illustrations drawn from nature, reason and the Holy Scriptures, St. Athanasius leads his catechumen to consider the fall of man which has brought upon him guilt, corruption and mortality. Since repentance was an insufficient remedy for man's sin, the incarnation was necessary in order that God might reveal Himself to man and redeem man from sin and death. With penetrating in-

sights and cogent arguments St. Athanasius sets forth the meaning of the death of Christ which provided redemption from sin, and the significance of the resurrection of Christ which imparts power over death for the penitent believer in Christ.

To be sure, this book does not harmonize with the theological interpretations of either the present-day liberal or the neo-orthodox thinker, but both conservative Protestants and Catholics will find here the essence and central emphasis of a Biblical Christology. To the fully orthodox thinker there are phases of this treatise which will seem inadequate and slightly off-color for a well-developed doctrine of the person and work of Christ; but the primary emphasis upon the true humanity and supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, meeting in one Personality, is worthy of highest praise. This was St. Athanasius' faith, and he felt that he was speaking for the whole of the Christian Church at this crucial point of doctrine. Said St. Athanasius: "Here . . . is a brief statement of the faith of Christ and of the manifestation of His Godhead to us." (p. 95)

It is refreshing to read from a Christian writer who was not plagued with the contemporary necessity of confessing the weakness and failure of the Christian Church. St. Athanasius wrote from the perspective of one who was witnessing the triumphant march of Christianity across the ancient world, conquering in every nation the idolatries of the spirit, the cruelties of the flesh, and the philosophies of the mind, of mankind. He attributed this amazing success of the church to her faith in Jesus Christ as 'very God of very God' who had become incarnate in the flesh.

If this volume, the publication of which is something of an experiment, wins its way with the public, more of

the great Christian classics are promised in similar form.

DELBERT R. ROSE

Brightman's Reply to Gerstner—

In general, it is not considered "proper" to reply to a review. But when a person asks you questions, should you leave him agape and unanswered merely because he happens to be a reviewer? Not I, if I can help it.

Dr. Gerstner wrote in the Summer issue of *The Asbury Seminarian* a characteristically fair-minded, objective, and scholarly review of my volume *Nature and Values*. Since I value the review, and Dr. Gerstner, so highly, I have prepared the following answers to his questions.

1. "How can a person who has no abiding soul-substance identify himself as the same person from day to day?" *Answer*: The actual experience of self-identification and unity is the only abiding soul-substance we have or need. The person knows his identity by the facts of self-experience, memory, and anticipation. An additional, unexperienced scholastic substance would be empty of moral and spiritual values.

2. "If the mind can refer . . . to something beyond its idea why could this something . . . not be of a different stuff from personality?" *Answer*: In all philosophy there is a possible chance of error. I do not claim apodictic certainty. I claim only that any attempt to explain personality, or action on personality, by appeal to impersonal stuff is far less probable, less empirical, and less coherently rational, than the belief that mind alone creates mind and interacts with mind.

3. "How can Dr. Brightman honestly square his view of the supernatural with the traditional belief of the Methodist Church?" *Answer*:

Thank God, the traditional belief of Methodists includes John Wesley's: "If thy heart be as my heart, give me thy hand," and "Think and let think" (in nonessentials). My theory gives Spirit the control of nature, and makes God include both the natural and the supernatural. Methodists are not tied to any one metaphysics, either to idealism or to dualism. Methodists think and experience.

4. "Or any Christian symbol?" *Answer*: I suppose Dr. Gerstner means creed by symbol. If he asks whether I believe every item of any creed exactly as it was meant by its first writer, then I wonder how anyone can know that meaning with certainty or whether any Christian of today puts exactly the original meaning on very many credal statements. But if a creed is a symbol of Christian experience, I can assert that I believe fully in the reality and validity of the experiences on which the symbols are founded. But I can't let the Council of Nicaea do all my thinking for me.

5. "Because nature is known through consciousness, is ordered and purposive, are we justified in the conclusion that it is therefore of the nature of mind?" *Answers* I certainly deny that the nature of knowledge alone can prove the nature of the object. Order and purpose are signs of mind; and there are many other idealistic arguments. To invent an unexperienced kind of reality, other than consciousness, as the basis of nature is to raise questions as to how it can act on mind, produce sensations and conform to rational law. In fact, dualism is a compromise with materialism which really grants a large part of the materialist's argument. See also no. 2 above.

6. "Can you say there is no mind in our bodies because we cannot find it with our senses (p. 124)?" *Answer*: I define body as what can be perceived

by sense. If there is any better definition, let's have it. I hope it is clear that mind cannot be found within or as a part of what is perceived by sense. There is, indeed, no mind *in* our body. Mind cannot be located in brain or out of it. It is not in space; all space is experience in mind. No part of my body is my mind; no part of my mind is any part of my body. The interaction between my mind and my body is, I think, one instance of direct interaction between my mind and God's mind.

7. "Can we find our consciousness which is believed to be 'in' our body?" *Answer*: Consciousness is the only thing we can ever find directly and immediately. We experience our consciousness at all times when we have any experience at all. To say that our consciousness, say, of the Milky Way, or of the square root of -1 , or of God, is anywhere in our body, seems to me utterly unempirical and unreasonable. We *experience* consciousness; we *believe* in body. If we believe coherently in personalism, we believe that body is God acting on, sustaining, and constantly creating our personality. with its powers, including freedom.

EDGAR S. BRIGHTMAN

NOTE:

The Asbury Seminarian is glad to print this reply, inasmuch as Dr. Gerstner's review raised specific questions. It may be observed that the oft-quoted statement of John Wesley, "If thy heart be as my heart, give me thy hand." is capable of indefinite extension. It would be interesting to know whether Wesley, if he were living today, would be as latitudinarian as some would like to imagine. Wesley was tolerant only with reference to *non necessitas*—to diverse contemporary attempts to state the Christian faith; but he was by no means tolerant of distinct departures from historic Christianity such as Dr. Brightman's philosophy seems to be.

EDITOR

Christianity Rightly So Called, by Samuel G. Craig. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1946. x, 270 pages. \$2.00.

That the last word concerning the nature of Christianity has not been said is evidenced by the appearance of another volume which seeks to answer the question, What is Christianity? In his *Foreword* Dr. Craig indicates his purpose: "The aim of this book is to distinguish between Christianity and its counterfeits in a manner understandable by the man in the pew as well as the man in the pulpit. Its purpose is exposition, not defense, and exposition only in as far as needed to make clear what Christianity rightly so called is in distinction from what is wrongly so called." In the main the author has succeeded in keeping to his purpose; at some points defense has been the major part of exposition.

The heart of the volume, by admission of the author, is the chapter entitled "The Essential Content of Christianity." In thirty-six pages he succeeds in summarizing the basic principles of historic Christian belief, emphasizing primarily the rôle of Christ in the system bearing His name. It goes without saying that this chapter will mean much more to those of us who accept the New Testament as normative than to those who seek a norm elsewhere.

Dr. Craig is allergic to Lessing's dictum to the effect that "accidental truths of history can never be the proof of necessary truths of reason." Conservative Christians may well ponder his chapter "Christianity, Facts and Doctrines" in which he clarifies the question of the relation of authority to Christian faith. Craig is a

worthy successor to J. Gresham Machen at the point of his insistence upon a hard core of *content* in the Christian Gospel.

Other chapters deal with such subjects as the definitions of Christianity proposed by recent scholarship, the relationship of the Christian system to history, the ethical implications of the Gospel, the historic Christian attitude toward the Bible, modern variants of Christianity, and the finality of the Christian faith. Each of these subjects is treated from a frankly conservative point of view. Some may feel that Dr. Craig adopts an *ex cathedra* manner, notably in his chapter "Deformations and Falsifications of Christianity." In the opinion of this reviewer however, even at those points in which the author is firmly dogmatic, he manifests a spirit which adorns the office of the apologist. Let it be said also, that while the author is of the Calvinistic persuasion, he is more than usually successful in dealing fairly with the Arminian position. His chief divergence from Arminianism is evident at the point of the degree to which the Holy Spirit may operate in a sanctifying manner during the life of the Christian.

Finally, he avoids the tendency to define Christianity in terms of some highly distilled essence, or some neat formula of epigrammatic character. He frankly acknowledges that, in its elaboration, Christianity is by no means a simple and general phenomenon, but that it has a rationale which involves both breadth and depth of content. This, coupled with the fact that the author writes in a stimulating and delightful style, ought to commend the volume to a wide range of readers.

HAROLD B. KUHN

Remaking the Modern Mind, by Carl F. H. Henry. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans: 1946. 310 pages. \$3.00.

The twentieth century has had its fling at producing non-Christian answers to the basic problems with which man is confronted, and conservative religious philosophy has only recently ventured to re-assert the essentially Christian view of God, of man, of nature, and of the universe. Professor Henry of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, has made a heartening contribution to a Christian apologetic, and from a vantage point which is almost as contemporary as today's newspaper.

The central thesis of the volume is that the period 1914-1945 marks the end of an age, an epoch which was governed by a general pattern of premises which are today discredited by the realities of the judgment upon Western culture. The presuppositions under fire are declared to be especially the following:

- (1) The inevitability of human progress;
- (2) The inherent goodness of man;
- (3) The ultimate reality of nature;
- (4) The ultimate animality of man.

Chapters II, III, IV, and V contain a discerning analysis of the tyranny which the first three of these have exercised over the modern mind. The author is frankly committed to the positions of historic Christianity, and thus finds himself able to present the criticisms of modern life which such thinkers as Reinhold Niebuhr bring forward, in a frame of reference free from the unorthodox trappings of the Crisis Theology.

Welcome is Dr. Henry's observation at the point of the vitalism of Bergson, Morgan, and Alexander, which he considers to be a compromise between "the cardinal tenets of the past 350 years of speculative thought, and the complete relevance of the Hebrew-

Christian tradition." (Page 167.) Some of us are in hearty agreement with him in the conclusion that emergent evolution, and its related philosophy of personal idealism, are the most likely rivals of historic Christianity, representing yet a surrender of that which is truly basic to the Christian system. Chapter VI, under title of "A Criticism of the Theory of Levels" is a *must* for the student who desires to understand the basic principles of so-called creative evolution, and who lacks time to make a thorough canvass of the literature elaborating it. Equally stimulating is the chapter entitled "The Predicament of Modern Gods" in which the limitations of the gods of classical Greek paganism are shown to be paralleled by the impotence of the 'gods' of the moderns, whether of the subjectivists, the vitalists, the personal idealists or the absolute idealists.

It may seem by now that our author has entered the lists with a formidable group of opponents. Sometimes he gives the impression, even to the reader of kindred heart-beat, that he has spread himself too widely. Nevertheless Professor Henry has sensed accurately the rather intangible thing called the *Zeitgeist* of our age, and treads with confident step in his assertion of the disjunction existing between that spirit and the Judeo-Christian way of thinking. This same type of plain dealing is manifest in the discussion of the ethical dilemma of the modern mind. Here our author locates our difficulty, in large part, in the lack of moral absolutes, and especially of norms grounded in an absolute and supernatural Person. Contemporary non-revelatory ethics, even in its better forms, is without the dynamic furnished by supernatural regeneration, and must fall back upon the doubtful dynamic inherent in its own philosophical position. All this is traced to the repudiation by the modern mind of

the essentials of the Hebrew-Christian position.

The concluding chapter, "Remaking the Modern Mind," deals with the problem of the anti-intellectualism which promises to grip an era which has found its confidence shaken to the point that it must reject many of its dogmas, but which has formed such intellectual habits as forbid the forthright abandonment of the lame metaphysics out of which these dogmas have come. It is probable that at this point Dr. Henry has the dialectical theologians primarily in mind; professing faith in such views as the essential sinfulness of man, and repudiating the dogma of necessary progress, they yet retain allegiance to principles which militate against a thorough faith in the only source of a really alternate mode of thinking, namely in the Christian Scriptures.

At some points in the volume, Dr. Henry seems more confident than some of us that high intellectual circles really recognize the bankruptcy of the initial premises which have produced the modern mind. One wonders whether, in some circles at least, the commitment of scholarship to the basic 'modern' dogmas may not be so deep that for some years a reversal of intellectual gears will be impossible—and that at least in America the devotees of 'modernity' will be compelled, in order to save face, to maintain these commitments with a 'do-or-die' persistence.

Welcome is the re-assertion by our author of the relevance of the historic Christian faith to the crisis of the hour. A thoughtful study of *Remaking the Modern Mind* will give courage as well as information to the person who desires to understand something of the underlying causes of the sickness of the modern world.

HAROLD B. KUHN.

The Great Divorce, by Clive Staples Lewis. New York, Macmillan, 1946. 133 pages, \$1.50.

In this little volume, Mr. Clive Staples Lewis, the don of Oxford, has given us another brilliant and absorbing fantasy. He describes with clarity and wit an imaginary journey from Hell to Heaven.

To understand the story the reader must continually keep in mind two things which the author mentions in his preface. First, "attempts to marry hell and heaven are perennial," he says. "The attempt is based on the belief that reality never presents us with an absolutely unavoidable 'either-or'; that, granted skill and patience and (above all) time enough some way of embracing both alternatives can always be found; that mere development or adjustment or refinement will somehow turn evil into good without our being called on for a final and total rejection of anything we should like to retain." "This belief," he continues, "I take to be a disastrous error." . . . "If we insist on keeping hell (or even earth) we shall not see Heaven: if we accept Heaven, we shall not be able to retain even the smallest and most intimate souvenirs of Hell." The second thing is to remember that the story is a fantasy. "The transmortal conditions (described) are solely an imaginative supposal: they are not even a guess or a speculation at what may actually await us."

The story begins with a description of a group of people awaiting the arrival of a bus. Anyone in the "Grey City—the city of shadows" may take the excursion to the outskirts of Heaven. Some were going for a definite purpose, such as the theologian who found no one in the grey city with whom he could argue or discuss the subjects in which he was interested. Then there was the woman who wanted God to return the son he had taken from her

Others were going to see if this was just another racket. Still others were going for the ride.

When the group arrived, the narrator discovered that all were transparent ghosts. Each ghost eventually encountered someone—a bright shining individual,—a Spirit—who answered his questions and tried to assist him in making right decisions. Some of the Spirits were former acquaintances whom the Ghosts felt had not been especially saintly while on earth and, therefore, resented their well meaning assistance. Despite the continued and skilful leading of the Spirits, all but one of the newcomers returned to the bus and to the shadows from whence they came. Being free to make their choice, they were unwilling to give up petty jealousies and various sins, preferring rather to continue as they were.

One Ghost rode off on his beautiful white steed to the hills where God was waiting, but only after he consented to have his sin "burned out" and after that process had been completed. The narrator, after witnessing the struggle between self and the tempter, was told by his Spirit Teacher that "nothing, not even the best and noblest, can go on as it now is." It must be purified.

Mr. Lewis has presented this great spiritual truth in popular form. His rare gift for character analysis, his wise choice of suitable words combined with his ability to intersperse the serious with humor, makes this story fascinatingly readable.

There may be some readers who will object to the implication of the "time" and "place" of purification. Most readers, however, will agree that Heaven and Hell must be completely divorced and that the process of purification is a necessary prerequisite to entering the Eternal City.

LENA B. NOFCIER

Religion in America, by Willard L. Sperry. New York: Macmillan, 1946. xi, 318 pp. \$2.50.

Religion in America, a book of more than 300 pages, was written to interpret certain American institutions to the English public. The author, who is the dean of Harvard Divinity School, warns us that the book is not designed to be either a history, a theology, a sociology or an apologetic; but the reader will find the book to be an engaging amalgam of all these.

The author's aim is to tell the British people some very pertinent things about ourselves. He uses an informal and chatty style which is refreshing indeed. One gets the feeling that here are the matured reflections of deep and reverent scholarship, gleaned from the vantage point of one of the significant centers of the American scene. The author is an avowed liberal, yet he condemns the ultimate of the liberal position; in fact, he is almost as much displeased with that as he is with the "somber and pessimistic" position of the conservatives.

The introductory chapter indicates the points at which our religious life differs from that of England. There are twelve chapters, dealing with such topics as religion in the Thirteen Colonies, The Denominations (of which there are 256), American Theology, Religious Education, Negro Churches, Catholicism, etc.

The readers of this review will appreciate some random samplings of the book to show its spicy, penetrating insight. In characterizing us Americans, the author says we are "predominantly sons of Martha." Our Protestantism is much engaged in "doing good," "more especially that sort of good that involves 'going about,' preferably in Pullman cars—."

In appraising the theological position he makes this observation: "Our

immediate theological position is this; our most vocal theologians . . . are either at the humanist left or at the neo-orthodox right." He sees a great middle group who are perplexed and inarticulate. He believes this middle group may find its voice and achieve a compromise. He cuts to the heart of the matter with this: "The idea of religion presupposes the paradox of God and man met in one experience." "Neither the absolute sovereignty of God (neo-orthodoxy) nor the final self-sufficiency of man (humanism) preserve that which the idea of religion requires." On the basis of this the author might be branded as a synergist and claimed for Arminianism.

On human nature he says, "Patently human nature in its totality is, at the moment, very far from giving a letter-perfect vindication of liberalism." He says the biological sciences have never taken a "blandly cheerful view of human nature." "If not Adam, then the ape and the tiger live on in us."

Discussing the small sects which make much of the prophetic books of the Bible, he says, "Let it be said in defense of these people that contemporary history seems to be on their side rather than on the side of those of us who are heirs of an old-fashioned, up-grade, omnibus liberalism."

He analyzes the educational situation in this discerning fashion: "We have in America the curious paradox of denominational colleges soft-pedaling their religious traditions in an attempt to be cosmopolitan (thus forfeiting denominational support), and the state universities providing means for the cultivation of the religious life and maintenance of religious habits, which is no part of their concern."

The book is fascinating, stimulating and informative. Religious leaders could read it with profit. The author has no axe to grind nor anything to

sell, so he is uninhibited in his appraisals. He definitely does not like fundamentalism. One gets the idea that it is old supra-lapsarian Calvinistic fundamentalism that he opposes. On the other hand he is frank in charging liberalism with moral bankruptcy. He thinks there should be a middle way. Perhaps the hour is golden for Arminians or Essentialists to begin to advertise their wares.

WILDER R. REYNOLDS

The New Modernism, by Cornelius Van Til. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1946. xx, 384 pp. \$3.75.

The content of this volume is indicated more fully in its sub-title, *An Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner*. Professor Van Til's thesis is, that Barth and Brunner differ radically from orthodox Protestantism at every significant point of doctrine, so that while their theology is ostensibly a protest against modern theological liberalism, it is in reality Modernism in a new guise.

The first 187 pages are devoted to a critical analysis of the earlier phase of the Dialectical Theology, as developed by Barth and Brunner in agreement. This section, which is by no means easy reading, gives especial consideration to the common indebtedness of the crisis theologians and modern liberal theologians, to the critical epistemology of Kant. Our author sees both movements as grounded in the 'idea of the autonomous man.'

Professor Van Til traces the Dialectical Theology to five sources, namely: Kant's critical philosophy, Hegel's dialecticism, Kierkegaard's existential dialecticism, the motif of 'primal history' as developed by Overbeck, and the *Existenz* philosophy of Heidegger. These same ingredients are held to enter into the structure of modern liber-

alism. Both movements are then charged with being positivistic and naturalistic. The crisis theology of Barth and Brunner, ostensibly conservative, is portrayed as having for its chief foe historic Christianity.

At root, the "new orthodoxy" seems to be no orthodoxy at all. Its interpretation of the doctrines of God, creation, fall of man, sin, redemption and future things are fundamentally opposed to the classical Protestant conceptions. The treatment of this question is carefully done, and represents a thorough canvass of the maze of paradoxical statements employed by Barth.

The second division of the volume deals with the differences between Barth and Brunner, and embraces pages 188-274. The chief contribution of this section is the careful comparison by the author of the two writers at the points of the nature of God, the nature of human responsibility, and Brunner's doctrine of personal correspondence. Dr. Van Til discovers again that while the theologians under question seem to consider the consciousness theology of Schleiermacher as Enemy No. 1, in reality they rehabilitate modern immanentism.

The third section, pages 275 to the end, deals with the contrast between the dialectical notions of the Christian church, the Christian life, and the Christian hope on the one hand, and the Reformed views at these same points. The reader will notice that the author's treatment of these subjects is from the point of view of high Calvinism. He considers the doctrine of a self-contained God and an ontological trinity to be the truly Christian view and infers that this doctrine is the exclusive property of Calvinism—Professor Van Til might be surprised to

learn that this view is held by many Arminians!

The real question posed by the volume is that of the essential dependence of Barth and Brunner upon the critical philosophy. Some will contend that Barth grounds his biblicism upon philosophical skepticism, and that his use of the canons of modern criticism has for its purpose merely the establishment of this skepticism. If this were true, then Dr. Van Til has misunderstood his opponents. This reviewer is of the opinion, however, that the author is correct in his contention that modern phenomenism is basic to the Dialectical Theology, all along the line.

It is hoped that enough has been said to indicate that this volume is a *must* for the person who would understand the nature of the 'new supernaturalism.' The author might, without weakening his own case, give credit to the crisis theologians for their positive achievements, such as the renewal of emphasis, in high circles, upon sin as pride instead of sensuality, and upon eschatology, even if in attenuated form. Nevertheless, Professor Van Til has rendered the cause of orthodoxy a large service in drawing attention to the deeper implications of the Dialectical Theology, and to its basic kinship with the very system against which it inveighs.

Many will dismiss the book as expressing a domestic quarrel within the conservative household. To the reviewer this seems a superficial objection. While some elements in the theology of crisis seem to be conservative in tendency, the author has made a strong case for the view that the system is a blood cousin to modern liberalism—that it is in reality only a New Modernism.

HAROLD B. KUHN

Plato's Theory of Man, An Introduction to the Realistic Philosophy of Culture, by John Wild; Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1946. x, 320 pp. \$5.00.

Professor Wild has produced one of the outstanding books of the year. He has accomplished fully the difficult task of combining a profound analysis of human culture, its components and structure and the perennial problems it must face, with a vivid study of the practical philosophy of Plato.

As a study of Plato this book stands among those of the best recent scholars, such as F. M. Cornford, Raphael Demos, Werner Jaeger in *Paideia*, and the late A. E. Taylor. It is inferior to none of them, and conspicuously stronger than some, in point of the magic of insight that sees beneath the obvious tenets of Plato (e.g. the Ideas and immortality) to the more basic theses which start from practical life, orienting it in its full setting of the various metaphysical levels and unveiling the critical choices that direct its flow. This approach is true to the historical Plato. He was at bottom the practical philosopher, exercised by the issues of life in a dissolving democracy and seeking the roots of collapse and restoration in the inversion and conversion of the individual soul and of the encompassing group. Though Plato's argument for the unity of the virtues under intelligent decision (in the *Protagoras*) is a fallacy on the conceptual plane, it is sound and cogent on the level of practice. The living individual, aspiring toward his end, responds to the action-situation in such wise that, unless directed by clear insight, he slips down toward vice. Plato's marvelous moving images of the soul as the chariot-driver with his steeds (*Phaedrus*), of education as turning about and climbing out of the cave, and of society as a ship (*Republic*) requiring the art of navigation and firm helmsmanship in

order to avoid the rocks and weather storms, are evidences of his practical concern and vital insight into practice. Life is process, and the issue is direction.

Professor Wild's analysis of certain great dialogues lays bare the mutual interweaving of metaphysical truth and cultural sanity. His case is unusually strong concerning the strict interpretation of Plato's ontology. Much is gained by his joining Cornford to repudiate the popular tendency to consider the *Parmenides*, Plato's most baffling work, as a mere exercise or even as a joke. It is time to appreciate the correlation between the cave and divided line in the *Republic* and the intricate dialectic of the second part of the *Parmenides*. Both passages investigate the levels of being, says Wild, from the flowing, relative being of subjective fantasy, through the partially stable structure of the changing world as seen by common experience and the permanent formal order of science, to the perfection of pure Being, the cause and end of all. Again, Wild shows convincingly that the ontology of the *Parmenides* and *Sophist* bring Plato close to Aristotle's realistic vision of the dynamic world whose individual substances interact in a manner requiring analysis by the four types of causal determinant. In fact, Plato's first hints of such analysis appear early in his scattered accounts of man's arts or crafts—the craftsman makes his product by imposing structure on a piece of matter for an end. Here we note Plato's practical interest coming back in force. The *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* show that inversion of the order of being necessitates inversion of human culture. Consider the arts, both singly and together. Each is rational action on matter for an end. Together they constitute a proper hierarchy, one using the product of another for a higher and ruling end; the higher

art legitimately dominates the efforts of a lower. The scale is topped by religion, philosophy, and the special sciences; education receives insight from above and then dominates politics, which in turn provides the order essential to the lower arts and makes safe the peace and material sufficiency which are conditions for the kingly arts and for the life that is good for man. Turn this right order upside down, however, and the lower arts dictate to the superior. Then culture is inverted and society is on the road to materialism. Life is distracted by quack doctors and educators, the end of social cooperation is degraded to the production of more and more external goods, the state divides into factions, and spurious arts breed freely—demagoguery in place of political leadership, propaganda for objective education, “scientism” and sophistry for philosophy, pragmatic techniques in place of intelligent practice. This trend is the essence of materialism; and there is no end of the road but brutal totalitarianism devoted to bald outward goods and to unlimited increase of brute power. Then all are slaves; most of us to a few of us, all to fake values blindly mistaken for the real goal of life.

Despite his brilliant penetration, Wild seems to falter now and then. Quite often the reader desires interpretation and defense of Plato's views, not only exposition. One passage deals with the philosopher's power to descend the ladder of knowledge with greater certainty than that with which he came up. Is it possible to “prove” the assumptions of the sciences by

means of the more intelligible truths on a higher stratum of being? Another Platonic insight that needs a commentary and defense is the conception of the significance of myths, i.e. of the relation of religion to rational investigation. Again, while Wild reports Plato's growing awareness of the reality of life and soul and suggests the argument for God to which it leads, he might have stated the argument fully and exhibited its claim to cogency. Sometimes Wild points out a mistake of Plato; but he fails to test the tendency to treat the individual chiefly in terms of his craft or art. On this account the book is slightly fuzzy on the issue of democracy. It states uncritically the dogma of Plato that the crowd is essentially ignorant and fractious (Aristotle is less hasty here), and asserts that the ideal state of the Republic is a “classless society.” These matters need rethinking. Finally, I would like to see the doctrines of the *Timæus* and *Laws* interpreted in the light of what Wild takes to be Plato's “Aristotelian” ontology.

I conclude with a tribute to the author. We should be grateful for his book. The great classical tradition, running down from Plato into the late Middle Ages, is the sanest and broadest philosophy the West has known. Many of our modern movements are eccentric by comparison. Professor Wild works brilliantly to remind us of our tradition and to stir us to learn from it. For this task he has hardly an equal in America today.

JESSE DE BOER