

and present. Mrs. Lubbock plays the part of an accomplished hostess, adding a shrewd comment here and there, and stating why, and to what extent, the views of a particular guest carry conviction with her. No-one is allowed to monopolise the conversation; in many books of the kind Kierkegaard or Aquinas would certainly have appeared as a *deus ex machina*, to dispel all problems and remove all doubts. The deep but not uncritical respect shown towards Hegel might be taken to heart by philosophers.

HUGO MEYNELL

IMAGES AND SYMBOLS, by Mircea Eliade, translated by Philip Mairet; Harvill Press, 18s.

'Symbolic thinking is not the exclusive privilege of the child, of the poet or of the unbalanced mind: it is consubstantial with human existence, it comes before language and discursive reason'. Thus Professor Eliade, in his foreword to this book, indicates the importance of looking into the religious symbolisms of the past in order better to understand our own minds. 'Let no one object . . . that it is all right for poets, children and the people in the Tube to satiate themselves with nostalgias and images, but for goodness' sake let serious people go on thinking and "making history". Such a separation between the "serious things of life" and "dreams" does not correspond with reality: Modern man is free to despise mythologies and theologies, but that will not prevent his continuing to feed upon decayed myths and degraded images'.

The book in fact consists of four long chapters on different groups of religious symbols, written independently of each other (and necessarily making for a somewhat scrappy whole), with a foreword about the psychological and literary importance of symbols, and a concluding chapter on the relationship of symbolism with history, and in particular its place in Christianity and the Christian view of the function of history.

The four chapters deal respectively with the symbolism of 'the Centre', of time and eternity, of the God who binds and of knots, and with the various water symbolisms (shells, pearls, the moon, etc., as well as water itself). Interestingly enough, the chapter which seems to present no kind of coherent pattern—that on the various binding and knotting symbolisms—is the only one which finds no echo in the Christian symbolisms which Professor Eliade discusses in his final chapter. And, while the Centre and Water symbolisms both hold the same sort of place in Christianity as they hold elsewhere, the whole question of time is very different: in other religions (the Hindu is his particular concern here), time is something to escape from; the only real events are those which take place outside time; the only function time can fulfil is the renewing and repetition of creation expressed in the notion of cyclic time—which is simply a way of increasing our chances to escape out of it altogether. But in Christianity, because of our belief that God became man, time is given a totally new significance, 'time is *pleroma* by the very fact of the incarnation of the

divine Word: but this fact itself transfigures history. How could it be empty and meaningless—that time which saw Jesus come to birth, suffer, die and rise again? How could it be reversible or repeatable *ad infinitum*?

It is not possible for a non-specialist to assess the importance of Professor Eliade's thesis. But one cannot fail to be enormously impressed by the scope of his thought, and his determination to treat religion as religion, and not as a branch of sociology or anything else. As in *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, his longer work, the analysis of time is perhaps the most valuable thing in the book. With the emphasis that is coming more and more to be placed today on the *Heilsgeschichte*, it seems to me that what he has to say is relevant to a lot of our more strictly theological thought.

The translation is excellent.

ROSEMARY SHEED

JOYFUL MOTHER OF CHILDREN, by a Loreto Sister; Gill, 30s.

It is just one hundred years since the death of Mother Francis Teresa Ball, the subject of this biography. Today more than one hundred Loreto convents in all parts of the world bear witness to this remarkable woman's work for Catholic education.

Born into the wealthy Dublin society of the early nineteenth century, she 'forsook the world ere it forsook her' and was sent to England by her director, the celebrated Dr Murray, Archbishop of Dublin, to make her noviceship at the Bar Convent, York. Here she was to imbibe the spirit of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary with a view to returning and establishing it in Ireland. (The Bar Convent, owing to the Napoleonic Wars, was cut off from its Generalate on the continent and thus, as an isolated community, hardly in a position to make the foundation, as they had been requested to do).

Mother Teresa Ball was eminently qualified for the undertaking and her religious life of forty years is an amazing record of achievement—having started from one tiny foundation, at her death Loreto convents numbered thirty-seven, and were established in the four quarters of the globe.

The author of this biography has given a very complete account of Mother Teresa's work and of all the difficulties overcome, labours undertaken and trials endured, in this far from easily won 'success story'. There are detailed accounts, also taken from contemporary letters, chronicles, or necrologies, of the lives of Mother Teresa's pioneer companions. The result is a valuable and inspiring factual history of the establishment of the Irish Branch of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. But it must be admitted that disappointment awaits the reader eager to encounter the real person, this character so paradoxically composed of gentle sweetness and authoritative determination, of unassuming charm and far-sighted enterprise. The personality of Mother Teresa does not emerge and we meet not a character in the round, but a portrait which might fit many another woman of her spiritual calibre—a type but not an individual.