

of the book: 'There remains a boundary for human activity which is no longer a boundary between two possibilities but rather a limit set on everything finite by that which transcends all human possibilities, the Eternal. In its presence, even the very center of our being is only a boundary and our highest level of accomplishment is fragmentary.' In the book itself Tillich spells out some of the boundary situations of his life and thought as, for instance, between social classes, between heteronomy and autonomy, theology and philosophy, Church and Society, Lutheranism and Socialism, Idealism and Marxism. In doing so, he throws a great deal of light on the whole of his personal and intellectual development and thus provides the reader with one of the best introductions to his work and thought. For as he himself states: 'At almost every point, I have had to stand between alternative possibilities of existence, to be completely at home in neither and to take no definitive stand against either. Since thinking presupposes receptiveness to new possibilities, this position is fruitful for thought; but it is difficult and dangerous in life, which again and again demands decisions and thus the exclusion of alternatives. This disposition and its tension have determined both my destiny and my work.' Professor Heywood Thomas in his introduction to the book brings Tillich's own unfinished story to its close and points out that this slim volume will quickly and easily give even the reader who has never read any of

Tillich's work a real appreciation of his 'peculiar style of theological thinking. This is because his thinking was to a remarkable degree autobiographical.'

Perspectives on nineteenth and twentieth century Protestant Theology is the first major work by Tillich published posthumously. It represents a set of lectures delivered by Tillich in 1963. This work is again 'autobiographical' in the sense that it gives a brilliant introduction not only to the leading developments of modern thought but also into the sources of Tillich's own constructive thinking. At first reading it may give the impression of being a rather superficial and over-simplified summary of the philosophical and theological movements from the Enlightenment to Existentialism. But on deeper reflection it will be seen to possess the simplicity of genius arising out of the sureness of insight into the essential points and basic relationships. With its most valuable Introduction by Carl E. Braaten on 'Paul Tillich and the Classical Christian Tradition', it is a 'must' for all serious students both of the Protestant Tradition and of Tillich himself.

In fact, both these works will provide worthwhile reading for all those who are getting rather tired of the vagueness of contemporary 'journalistic' theology and who are interested in the history of constructive theological thought whatever their own tradition. For only in this way can we really understand our present situation.

KARL-H. KRUGER

KIERKEGAARD ON CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN COHERENCE, by Paul Sponheim. *SCM Press*, London, 1968. 332 pp. 70s.

It is about time that the identification of Kierkegaard as the 'father of modern existentialism' was corrected, or rather enlarged, to take account of the coherence, subtlety and catholicity of his thought, and it is this type of corrective which Mr Sponheim's study provides. The burden of his work is to point out that Kierkegaard is more of a systematic theologian than has been realized hitherto, and the result is a full-scale study of the content of Kierkegaard's theology of a kind, so the author claims, that distinguishes this book from most other books in English about Kierkegaard.

Of central importance are the instruments which are used to probe the writings of Kierkegaard: these are the contrary notions of the rhythms of *diastasis* and *synthesis*, an emphasis on withdrawal to stress the separate-

ness of God and man on the one hand, and relatedness to stress their coinvolvement on the other. Using these probes we then range from the matrix of Kierkegaard's thought and even the relevance of the details of his life in understanding his thought, through his treatment of God and man, a major portion of the book, to his treatment of the Christ, the actuality, efficacy and possibility of the God-man realized in history as Jesus of Nazareth. In all of these stages, the rhythms of diastasis and synthesis are seen each to be justifiable by reference to Kierkegaard's writings—of which the book is copiously full—but diastasis 'wins' more often than not—a predictable result in view of Kierkegaard's importance as an existential thinker. And where neither wins, we find not a resolution but a paradox. The

importance of the synthesis rhythm is to help us to arrive at the paradox in a more honest and thorough-going way than is often done.

As mentioned above, the core of the work is its two sections on God and man and on the Christ. The diastasis rhythm characterizing the polarity of God and man shows itself as a polarity of eternal and temporal, but Mr Sponheim points out to us Kierkegaard's 'really quite remarkable awareness that the metaphysical distinction did not lie at the heart of the matter: 'If the difference is infinite between God, who is in the heaven, and you, who are on earth: the difference is infinitely greater between the Holy and the sinner''.' Not only this, but there is in Kierkegaard an important and perhaps surprising rhythm of synthesis in his treatment of God and man, where the self's life is placed in a social matrix: 'Every individual is essentially interested in the history of all other individuals, yea, just as essentially as in his own. Perfection in oneself therefore means participation in the whole' (quotation from Kierkegaard). When the rhythms of diastasis and synthesis are juxtaposed, Mr Sponheim suggests that the concepts of human freedom (over against divine omnipotence) and love (over against God) are born. But this love demands something of man and 'Woe be to him, if omnipotence turns against him' (Kierkegaard). Here are discernible diastasis and synthesis, to the extent of not only juxtaposition but living interpenetration.

At that point is introduced God's ideal for man, in its formal and material determinations. The nature of the ideal is such that 'Man not merely *can* choose . . . he *must* choose . . . for in such a way God holds himself in honour, while he also has a fatherly concern for man' (Kierkegaard). Mr Sponheim claims that here the rhythms are not resolved but lead to the

paradox that man exists before God. The analogue of this paradox in the material determination of the ideal is that man must serve God, but cannot. And so we go on to Kierkegaard's Christology, the analysis of which is seen to follow the same sort of pattern as the treatment of God and man, the paradox for example being mirrored in the fact that Christ loved with a *divine* love which we must *imitate*: 'Christ loved in the power of the divine understanding of what love is, he loved the whole race . . . his whole life was an awful collision with the merely human understanding of what love is', and 'there is a pattern who is the fulfilment of the law and whom we must imitate' (K.). Some of the reasoning in this central part of the book is difficult—perhaps inevitably so, considering the problem of tracing the systematic in some of the thought of Kierkegaard which verges on the self-contradictory.

In discussing the legacy of Kierkegaard's thought, the layman is on slightly more familiar ground. Some time is spent indicating the perils of the prospect of a polarized understanding of man; for example, we read of Sartre: 'Knowing no God who places man in a condition of relational necessity, Sartre conceives freedom in a way which involves a second dimension of arbitrariness.' Jaspers and Marcel, Camus and Heidegger, Barth, Tillich and Robinson are all referred to under 'the dominance of the diastatic', and there is even a reference to Saul Bellow. The book ends by expressing the hope that the Kierkegaardian final emphasis on coherence may show us a way out of the polarization of our time, and prevail against 'those forces which imperil our existence and erode our well-being'.

LEWIS RYDER

THE STRUCTURE OF CHRISTIAN EXISTENCE, by John B. Cobb. *Lutterworth*, London. 156 pp. 42s.

Dr Cobb teaches at Claremont in Southern California and is one of the growing American school of 'process theologians'. He is known as the author of a substantial natural theology which used Whiteheadian concepts in a systematic way. On the whole, the members of this school have remained talking where their Master stood, in the market-place of the Philosophers, but this essay is a foray into the coffee-house of the Historians. It is odd that—in a group which concerns itself so centrally with the significance of sequence and change—

he should be something of a pioneer. Unfortunately, however, he did not stay for any length of time to talk with historians; the conversation of Messrs Cox, Altizer and Koestler on the pavement outside was too fascinating in its sweep and bite.

The thesis of the essay is nonetheless important. To compare forms of practical 'religiosity' is to let through your net Jesus of Nazareth and Karl Marx; 'comparative religion' can be a notoriously non-communicative analysis of words; and the 'history of ideas' seems to miss