Rel. Stud. **34**, pp. 103–114. Printed in the United Kingdom

Reviews

David Ray Griffin, *Parapsychology, Philosophy, and Spirituality: A Postmodern Exploration*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997.) Pp. xiv + 339, US $59.50 hb., $19.95 pk.

The rather portentous title of this book neatly describes its topics, except that the term 'postmodern' is likely to mislead. Griffin distinguishes three postmodernisms; *new age metaphysics*, which he takes to be heavily indebted to pre-modern ideas; *deconstructive postmodernism*, associated with the work of Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Derrida, and most likely the orientation the term will first call to readers' minds; and *constructive postmodernism*, a 'thoroughly naturalistic' metaphysics which embraces many of the ideals of liberal thought, e.g. in the areas of environmentalism, social justice, and peace. While all three of these reject modernism (which Griffin associates with Cartesian dualism, or, alternatively, materialism; with capitalism, and with militarism), Griffin's project is to defend the third.

The plan of the book is as follows. First, Griffin argues for a monism which he calls panexperientialism, and which is largely inspired by the metaphysics of A. N. Whitehead. This is done in the context of a treatment of the mind/body problem, by canvassing familiar difficulties which allegedly defeat both dualistic interactionism and reductive materialism, but which, in Griffin's view, are neatly handled by a monistic interactionism. Mind and body interact, but do not belong to distinct ontological categories.

Though Griffin takes this argument to stand on its own merits, he has a clincher: only panexperientialism can make sense of a whole panoply of paranormal phenomena. Griffin prepares the ground here by distinguishing three kinds of thinkers: (a) those driven by an *a priori* ideology or 'paradigm' that is more or less impervious to data; (b) those whose beliefs are basically data-driven; and (c) those who succumb to fearful and/or wishful thinking. (Opponents of the paranormal tend, in Griffin's view, to fall into the first camp or the third.) And he makes the point, drawing on William James, that even one genuine paranormal phenomenon would force a radical rethinking of our science and our ontology, as one white crow defeats 'All crows are black'.

But there is, so Griffin argues, an abundance of paranormal effects. A longish chapter is devoted to early investigations, by James and others, of spirit mediums, to the thoughtography of Ted Serios (who allegedly could mentally project imagined scenes onto Polaroid film), to poltergeists or psychokinesis (PK), to telepathy, and to clairvoyance. There are brief sections discussing recent work under laboratory conditions to test clairvoy-

ance (the ganzfeld experiments) and micro-PK (e.g. the ability to affect radioactive decay events or random-number generators).

After arguing that only panexperientialism can underwrite the possibility of a mind or soul which is separable from the body, and hence which can survive (bodily) death, Griffin addresses the question whether we do survive death. He does so by devoting one chapter apiece to putative spirit mediums, spirit possession, reincarnation, apparitions, and out-of-body experiences (OBE's). Having established to his satisfaction the genuine existence of phenomena of these types, the central question Griffin faces is how they are best to be explained – specifically, whether they can be explained entirely by positing certain (perhaps quite powerful) capacities for telepathy, clairvoyance, and PK among the living, or whether they are best (or only) explained by positing souls that survive death. For various reasons, Griffin concludes that some of these phenomena – especially some OBE's – cannot easily be explained (though he devotes considerable ingenuity to the effort) except by positing spirits. A final chapter explores the metaphysical – and practical – implications of that conclusion, and leads to the suggestion that much of the spiritual content of religion can be retained within a naturalistic framework, a framework that validates various spiritual and ethical values, while dispensing with much of the organizational and authoritarian structures of traditional institutionalized religions.

Griffin arrives here at the insight (as have others – e.g., Ernest Gellner) that a purely social humanist ideology and ethic do not have enough pizazz to capture the imagination of the great mass of humanity. Both Gellner and Griffin nurture the hope that if something more closely resembling traditional religious ideas can be integrated with humanism, the result will be a worldview that has some hope of competing with religious fundamentalism for the allegiance of humankind.

So much by way of summary. I take up now – all too briefly – two questions. How cogent is Griffin's stance on the metaphysical questions? How plausible a case does he make for the existence of 'an abundance of white crows' (paranormal events)?

The treatment of the metaphysical issues is unfortunately at best cursory, occupying somewhat less than three of the nine chapters. Still, two questions come to the fore, and I shall focus upon these. What is the nature of the mind or soul? And how are minds/souls causally linked to the rest of the world?

It is, unfortunately, not easy to get a 'fix' upon what Griffin takes mind to be. It is not different in kind from matter; it is the same stuff, viewed from the 'inside' or as 'for itself', but appears as matter when presented to the sensory perception of others (pp. 135, 277). Griffin does not hold that every body has (or is?) a mind, but he does hold that every true (uncomposed) substance has at least primitive experiences (Whitehead's 'prehension'); in some composite individuals, the prehensions of the individual subatomic

parts combine into a single unified consciousness. The human mind causally interacts with the body (p. 142), so is distinct from it. That means, one would think, that, viewed externally, the mind is a distinct *body*. Thus real confusion sets in when (p. 140) Griffin defends the possibility of discarnate perception and action. Having proclaimed (p. 129) that the mind might be only 'different in degree [degree of what?] from brain cells', he now considers the separation of the mind from its physical body. Indeed, Griffin allows (p. 152) that the 'discarnate' mind *may* have some kind of body. He fails to see that his position *entails* this. Things get worse: on p. 202, we are told that the mind is 'a series of occasions of experience'. Is this a slip?

The reader will perhaps be forgiven if he or she brings from a reading of this book no clear idea what Griffin thinks a mind is. The question is quite crucial. If my mind is (viewed 'from the outside') a body, and is not what we would ordinarily identify as *my* body (or brain?), then which body is it? Does it lurk somewhere within me? Does it possess a mass, energy, and a spatial location? Can it be detected by the usual means employed to detect the presence of matter? Can it be destroyed? One would have thought that Griffin would have lingered over questions such as these.

Causation is another vexed topic but essential to Griffin's thesis – most especially, mind/body and mind/mind interactions. Griffin understands these by invoking Whitehead's notion of prehension, which he thinks is a basic causal connection presupposed as the relation between brain and mind even by ordinary sense perception. The central topic here is the possibility of action at a distance. Dualists can't explain mind/body interaction at all, and materialists are purportedly confined to contact forces – whereas prehension (in some way not explained) allows for genuine action at a distance. Paranormal phenomena, which supposedly require remote influence, therefore falsify materialism and support panexperientialism. Unfortunately, Griffin never explains just *why* causal interaction (which he says involves a real connection, not merely regularly) cannot occur at a distance or across ontological categories; he is content to quote other philosophers who see some difficulty here. Nor has it been shown that paranormal phenomena require action at a distance. For example, if spirits exist (and are bodily beings, viewed 'from the outside') why couldn't they mediate paranormal influences, as intervening messengers?

I should mention that Griffin rejects precognition (hence prophecy?) on the grounds that backwards causation is a logical impossibility. Perhaps: but Griffin seems unaware of the extensive debate over this. And it is somewhat puzzling that, having ruled out retrocausation on unargued *a priori* grounds, he straightaway condemns Kai Neilsen for a similar rejection of disembodied existence.

Are there any paranormal phenomena? Readers who consider only Griffin's survey of the evidence will doubtless come away convinced that

there are, in spades; though they would do well to bear in mind Hume's astute observation that belief in a miracle (and Griffin suggests that the Biblical miracles are natural, paranormal events) is not in general justified, even when a normal explanation is wanting. But Griffin's account of the record is severely, and tendentiously, distorted. This is not the venue for a serious discussion of Griffin's evidence. I can only mention a few of his cases, and refer readers to literature that will provide some counterpoise.

John Taylor, a British physicist, was convinced by Uri Geller of PK, until the children Taylor experimented with were caught cheating, and James Randi, a magician, bent one of Taylor's wires, sealed in a 'foolproof' glass tube, beneath his nose. But Griffin characterizes Taylor's recantation as driven, not by the evidence, but by materialist prejudices.

Griffin devotes a lot of adulatory attention to Leonora Piper, a turn-of-the-century spirit medium who took in William James and the investigators of the British Society of Psychical Research. A much more detailed description of Mrs Piper and her methods can be found in Martin Gardner's *On the Wild Side*. Readers can make up their own minds. Griffin has similar admiration for Daniel Home, a talented medium whose *bona fides* were certified by the physicist William Crookes. Again, we are given a very partial story; and Griffin discretely omits Crookes' suspected extramarital dalliance with another medium, the young and handsome Florence Cook. Another favourite case is the thoughtography of Ted Serios. Griffin dismisses an exposé of Serios' methods by Eisendrath and Reynolds, yet never mentions that Serios' powers magically evaporated immediately after the publication of this exposé. More disturbing is Griffin's incorrect charge that magician James Randi turned down Jules Eisenbud's challenge that he reproduce Serios' stunts under the same conditions Eisenbud used to test Serios. Readers will get a different slant on this from Gardner's *On the Wild Side*, p. 170, and Randi's *Flim-Flam*, pp. 22–7. Ian Stevenson, upon whom Griffin relies almost entirely for data supporting reincarnation, was one of those taken in by Serios.

Griffin's treatment of OBE is similarly defective. The cases he considers most evidential – ones in which OBEers are reputedly aware of events at some remove from their bodies – are, even as he describes them, open to alternative interpretations. There is a simple test for the genuineness of an OBE. The OBEer lies on a bed, and a six-digit number is written on a slip of paper placed face-up on a high shelf. If an OBE occurs, the subject is asked afterwards to report the number. To my knowledge, no subject has ever passed this test. Griffin takes his main target here to be Susan Blackmore (*Dying to Live*), whom he accuses of wishful-and-fearful thinking in refusing to accept the evidence. He does not mention that Blackmore began as a parapsychologist and a believer.

Griffin also fails to mention that few professional parapsychologists would

cite any of the above material as evidential. For them, the serious evidence come from more recent work in ganzfeld experiments, micro-PK, and meta-analyses which statistically analyze conjunctions of experiments. In her *In Search of the Light*, Blackmore details her exposure of the fraud of Carl Sargent, for a time one of the most successful of those doing supposedly foolproof ganzfeld experiments. And she explains how fallible and subjective are the results of meta-analyses.

It would, perhaps, be generous to allow that the question of the existence of paranormal phenomena remains open. Paranormal events aside, Griffin's book is rich with provocative and interesting metaphysical and epistemological claims. Certainly, any proposed solution to the mind/body problem, one of the deepest and most enduring puzzles, deserves serious exploration. Beyond that, Griffin suggests that it is via the faculty of prehension that we become acquainted with the real nature of causal connections, with objective values, and (in mystical experiences) with God. These are strong claims, upon which Griffin unfortunately does not elaborate; he owes his readers both an explanation and a justification for them.

Let me conclude by noting that Griffin has little patience with skeptics regarding the paranormal, especially with the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), in which both Gardner and Randi have been leading lights. He considers them to be driven by ideology and guilty of wishful thinking. Perhaps there is some justice in this charge. No doubt I too am not free from these sins. But this pie is large: there seems to be more than enough wishful thinking for everyone to share.

Evan Fales
University of Iowa

Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism: Aquinas's Natural Theology in* Summa contra Gentiles I. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997.) Pp. viii + 302, £35.00

This book is a reworking of the Wilde Lectures given by Kretzmann in Oxford in 1994, with the addition of an introduction and three further substantial chapters. In it, Kretzmann undertakes a detailed commentary on many of the arguments to be found in Aquinas's text. Book I of the *Summa contra Gentiles* (SCG) deals with the proofs for the existence of God, and with the nature of God as he is in himself. Kretzmann promises two further companion volumes, dealing with Books II and III.

The introduction situates Aquinas's work in the context of the recent revival of interest in 'natural theology', with particular reference to the views of Alston and Plantinga. This leads naturally enough into the first chapter in which Kretzmann sets out what he takes to be the best way of settling the

controversies surrounding Aquinas's aims in writing SCG, and his views of the relationship between reason and religious faith more generally. He largely discounts the suggestion, implicit in the title given to the work in at least some of the early manuscripts, that it was intended primarily as a work of apologetics, on the grounds that Aquinas probably met few educated atheists who might have provided such a readership, and, if the work were aimed at Jews or Muslims, much of the material in Books I-III would have been unnecessary. He therefore concludes that the work is intended to show how much of Christian belief could be established by the efforts of reason and human wisdom alone. Kretzmann doubts whether Aquinas would have claimed that without 'natural theology' the systematic study of revelation lacked a proper evidential basis. In view of Aquinas's general acceptance of Aristotle's view that before studying the nature of anything, one has first to establish that there exists such a thing, I am not so sure. Aquinas may well have thought that, unless one can give good independent reasons for believing that there is a God, one can neither have grounds for believing that God has given us any revelation, nor any solid framework for interpreting what such revelation could mean.

The topics of the following chapters include: some of the proofs SCG offers for the existence of God, most of them briefly, but two, one from motion (SCG 1, 13, 97–106), and one (SCG 1, 15, 124) which is offered as a proof of God's eternity but includes a proof based on contingency and necessity, in considerable detail; the perfection of God; infinity; intellect; will; and a final chapter entitled 'Joy, Love and Liberality'. Kretzmann gives a fairly detailed commentary on some sections of the text, mentioning only in passing arguments which he takes to be less important, and giving excellent cross-references in the footnotes to parallel passages in other works. He is on the whole sympathetic to Aquinas's position, while offering some well-aimed criticisms at inconsistencies and inadequacies in his arguments.

There are, of course, points at which one might disagree with Kretzmann's interpretation. For instance, his discussion of the relationship between essence and existence in God centres upon deciding whether it is better thought of as identity or as entailment, both of which alternatives Kretzmann believes to be found in the text. I do not think Aquinas could possibly have thought of these as *alternatives*, because he would have said that the logic of entailment quite generally is simply the linguistic representation of (or at least our best effort to represent) a real necessity in things. The absence of 'composition' of any kind in God includes the claim that in God there is no actualization of any potentiality; and essences are real potentialities. God, in this strict sense, does not have an essence. Kretzmann remarks (p. 124) that 'Not all complexity is compositeness (nor does susceptibility to conceptual analysis entail any passive potentiality).' While this is true, I do not believe Aquinas would have agreed that talk of real (as distinct from nominal) essences was

simply an exercise in conceptual analysis. Similarly, the claim that God cannot be defined in terms of genus + difference is not reducible to a remark about 'the taxonomic devices we've found to be indispensable to our detailed understanding of the things and events what make up the observable world'; once again, it is based on the view that both genus-terms and species-terms refer to real potentialities in things.

Kretzmann also passes rather rapidly over Aquinas's claim that there can be no accidents in God; but does not this view present at least some problems which need to be addressed? I am thinking of the status of such truths as that God knows that the present world as actual, given that he did not of necessity create this world; or that God willed to create this world rather than some other.

Overall, though, this is an excellent book, all the more welcome in that there is no similar commentary available. It contains a handy chronology of Aquinas's life, an index locorum, a concordance between the numbering of the Marietti edition and the Pegis translation, and a good bibliography. One looks forward to the appearance of the companion volumes.

Gerard J. Hughes
Heythrop College
University of London

Daniel A. Dombrowski, *Analytic Theism, Hartshorne, and the Concept of God*. (SUNY Series in Philosophy, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996.) Pp. xi + 247

In the second half of this century analytic philosophers have shown that they have much to contribute to theological understanding by clarifying the nature and content of statements about God as well as by suggesting how puzzles in such statements may be resolved and how apparent contradictions may be seen to be just that – apparent but not real. Some of the work that has been done in this regard has shown subtlety, ingenuity, perceptiveness and complexity that in no way suffers from comparison with the precise definitions and cunning reasoning of scholastic reflections on these issues, both medieval and modern. Unfortunately, as Dombrowski's interesting work seeks to make clear, much of this work suffers from trying to defend the indefensible. It tries to make sense of what critical reflection should have perceived to be incurably nonsensical.

In the *Westminster Review* in April 1860 T. H. Huxley described 'the cosmogony of the semi-barbarous Hebrew' as 'the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox' and went on to speak of 'the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonize impossibilities – … in the attempt to force the generous new wine

of Science into the old bottles of Judaism' (*Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews*, 1883, p. 278). Today the readers of the journal in which this review appears may raise their eyebrows at the 'semi-barbarous Hebrew' and sigh at the sexist 'men' but none, I suspect, will be likely to damn with *odium theologicum* the view that credible notions of the divine as creator must be generally compatible with what current scientific understanding maintains about the origin and development of the natural order. That emancipation from once hallowed traditions of belief has been established, at least in principle. This is not the case, however, with understanding of many of the attributes of the divine. Here theological reflection on the nature of the reality of God seems in many ways to be where it has been for centuries. While the language and style may have changed, the substance of many of the debates that continue about these matters (for example, concerning the relationship of the supposed timeless eternality of God to the temporal order, the compatibility of the presumed impassibility of God with divine compassion, the coherence of the conjectured unchangeability of God with divine purposiveness and agency) are ones in which the three great A's of theology – Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas – would find themselves at home. As a result, since there seems to be an unquestionable as well as an unquestioned givenness about what must be maintained about God's attributes, and since the analytic approach is to describe what is given, analytic philosophers have typically used their often considerable skills to try to uncover coherent interpretations of traditional – and widely perceived to be problematic – claims about the divine without first investigating whether the unquestioned given in these matters is warrantably unquestionable. Neither the relativity of ideas and the alternatives suggested by other faiths nor the intrinsic problems with traditional ways of conceiving the attributes of God have alerted them to start by considering whether these forms of understanding should be regarded as appropriate ways of envisaging the God of theistic faith.

The issue of what is appropriate is a notoriously complex one where it is easy for discussion to go round in a self-justifying circle to warrant traditional views: *this* concept of God expresses what is traditionally held to be meant by God in Christianity, *therefore* to consider any other way of conceiving God is not appropriate to analyses of Christian theism, *therefore* to question this concept is to reject the Christian concept of God, *therefore* it is this concept that analytic philosophy of the Christian faith must investigate and those who offer other concepts and analyze them are playing a different game and can be ignored (and for 'Christian' in this sentence, *mutatis mutandis*, other terms can be substituted, either equivalent ones such as 'Jewish' or 'Muslim' or more particularized ones such as 'catholic', 'reformed', 'augustinian' or 'thomist'). The upshot is that if a different concept of God is put forward to that considered to be traditionally entertained in a particular faith, then

those putting it forward are held to be rejecting the faith, not expounding it. The result is a lack of basic self-criticism that allows errors, misunderstandings and confusions to be given a canonical status. It is not, however, an irredeemable situation. Critical reflection on the concept of God and critical attention to the actual character of theistic faith not only may challenge hallowed mistakes and suggest that, however ancient and revered they may be, they are mistakes and need to be corrected; they may suggest (and in fact have suggested) how more appropriate ways of thinking about God may be developed.

In this respect the work of Charles Hartshorne, who was born on June 5th 1897 and, when this review was written, was looking forward to his centenary, has made a major contribution to theological understanding. As Dombrowski indicates, Hartshorne's dipolar analysis of the concept of God and his notions of panentheism and of divine perfection as dual transcendence provide a major breakthrough in solving questions about how a coherent concept of God may be identified that is adequate both to the ultimacy and absoluteness of the divine and to the relativity and activity of God as the purposive, gracious, responsive and agential object of theistic faith. In developing this theme in his perceptive study Dombrowski makes two major contributions to current reflection on theistic understanding. In the first place he engages in illuminating debates with a number of analytic philosophers who have explored aspects of the concept of God – the philosophers that are discussed include Mann, Stump, Kretzmann, Plantinga, Creel, Swinburne, Alston, and Morris while the attributes of the divine that are considered include perfection, immutability, embodiment, and independence. Dombrowski argues with some justification that the considerations of these topics by analytic philosophers would have been much more fruitful and theistically significant if they had taken account of the careful analyses and expositions of the concept of God that have been presented by Hartshorne and some other contributors to so-called 'process theology'. Secondly he indicates in various illuminating discussions why the 'classical' reference in Hartshorne's description of his position as 'neoclassical' is justified by a thorough awareness of the whole range of Plato's thought. In this respect his study shows that the Hartshornean way of thinking about God is not as radically new as some appear to think – and fear.

Those who are not conversant with the conceptual structure of Hartshorne's dipolar panentheism (and even more those whose supposed knowledge of it is dependent on one or other of the misrepresentations that are spread by ill-informed critics) may find that parts of Dombrowski's discussions need careful reading and patient thought if they are to appreciate the points being made. Occasionally, furthermore, remarks made in the study (such as the statement that 'God's necessity consists in God's contin-

gency' – p. 59) may well only make sense to someone who comes to the text with a sound acquaintance with Hartshorne's ideas and is accordingly able to elucidate what is likely to be intended by them (if authorial intention is still allowed to be a proper consideration). This, however, should not put off analytic philosophers who have not studied the options presented in process thought as a result of critical reflection on the concept of God. Dombrowski's work may point them to insights that will make their analytic work on god-talk much more significant. Finally, it may perhaps be mentioned that the important thesis that Dombrowski is putting forward may not be as novel as is sometimes implied. In principle it is one that one or two others have been seeking to promote for a number of years, albeit without much success. Perhaps, however, Dombrowski's work will have the good fortune to be noticed by those with whom he seeks to engage in dialogue (and their followers). It is to be hoped that this will occur and that debates about theological understanding will accordingly move forward.

David A. Pailin
University of Manchester

Julia A. Lamm, *The Living God: Schleiermacher's Theological Appropriation of Spinoza*. (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.) Pp. 246.

This is a very good book indeed, on the value and cogency of Schleiermacher's Christian theology – even if it is so in spite of its specific focus. And even that qualification implies no negative criticism as such. It merely expresses a theologian's preference for books which focus primarily on clear understanding and positive proposal of all that is best in the thought of a theologian whose work has stood the test of time, with only such reference to positive and negative influences on him in his own time and place as may be necessary for understanding; and it expresses also the hope that Julia Lamm will soon write such a book. She already shows, if only incidentally in this book, how much better she understands Schleiermacher than do any of a number of his theological critics, who range from Barth through Barthians, for whom Schleiermacher remains a whipping boy, to Richard Niebuhr, who accuses Schleiermacher of dissolving God's transcendence only because he himself confuses transcendence with externality, and Pannenberg who quite wilfully confuses absolute dependence with relative dependence, … and so on. And she can do this, at least partly because she understands so much better than most students of Schleiermacher the structural logic of his *Glaubenslehre*. This is a structural logic which so few seem to see, although the many have no excuse for not seeing it, since Schleiermacher himself advertises it from the very first pages. In short, the logic is that the first part of the work is an abstraction, as Lamm puts it, with respect to the second part. That is to say,

the distinctive experience in which the true God is truly, if progressively, encountered (namely, the experience of regeneration in Christ) is nameable only in terms of general patterns of human experience, especially the deepest or highest of these, in the cosmos, and that naming in turn changes with the general philosophical cultures of different times and places. But these general experiences, much less the ideas and nouns that at any time and place express them, are never the reality. Experience is always concrete, as is (according to Hegel) truth. So one may well begin with the 'abstract' analysis of such experience and naming, before going on to describe as best one may by means of these the concrete experience of these mighty, cosmic, universal, transcendent processes which are just what they are, and not other. To the question, why not start with the specific experience of regeneration by God through Christ, and later go on to the general categories?, the only answer can be: one would then be using these categories uncritically from the beginning; and the persisting need to give a critical account of them, such as theology requires, but now in 'part two', would then prove, in Schleiermacher's own terms, anti-climactic. And if one quite refused to perform this proper theological task at all, then one would sooner or later suffer the relative indignity of having someone else do it for one – as is the case of commentators on the Kantian (if not Hegelian) underpinning of Barth's Supreme Divine Subject.

Julia Lamm then leads us through a clear analysis and cogent presentation of Schleiermacher's Christian vision of a God neither too anthropomorphically conceived (as in the old, Greek, metaphysic in which God first generated the *cosmos noetos* in the Word, and then by *fiat* the *cosmos aesthetos* through which we currently sojourn), nor reduced to a pantheism in which God is identified with the totality and interaction of finite entities; a vision of the One, which is not just a name for the abstract idea of a unity of all existing things, nor yet a name for a totally extramundane entity, additional as an object, however infinitely superior, to the objects that make up the world (here is the point at which Schleiermacher understands that transcendence is the correlative of immanence, not the contrary to internal in the world); a vision of a God who can be known as wholly originating and universally pervasive active force sustaining all finite entities in their inevitable interconnectedness and mutually relative dependence; known in the deepest recesses of the human consciousness/spirit which is purely receptive to the sheer unearned givenness, the *gratia* of the promising profligacy of being, at a depth below knowledge, as those unfortunately named mystics insist, where the source-presence cannot be named (for again it is not an extra being); known concretely and existentially as a love that is the real content and aim of all other divine attributes, but not sentimental, discriminatory or wilful in too anthropomorphic a fashion; a love that regenerates continually, pouring out life in a healing and progressive abundance, in the

experience of which no final distinction is needed between nature and history, and which is Christic in that the *Urbild* (the originating, rather than a merely exemplary or *Vorbild* form of it) is present in the history of the world in the person of Christ.

And so back to the opening qualification. All of this, and more, is presented to us, in the course of a most impressively clear and cogent analysis, in accordance with the specific focus of the book, of the relationship of Schleiermacher to Spinoza. Spinoza himself is made to appear, as he did to Schleiermacher, through the filters of those who admired him, like Lessing, and those who resisted him, like Jacobi, and through the filters of the intervention of Kant and the emergence of a Post-Kantian Spinozism. And there is then a most detailed, and again a most clear and cogent presentation of these modified Spinozist themes and of Schleiermacher's nuanced and changing attitudes towards them, ranging from Schleiermacher's early essays on Spinoza to the final edition of his great *Glaubenslehre*. Had the book not consistently shown such fine insight into Schleiermacher's own thought in all its major parts (with the exception of a substantial account of his Christology, which the focus of the book did not require), the present reviewer might not have persisted with it to the end. Books of this predominantly historical genre tend to be repetitive of themes traced through earlier and later documents, and to conduct the analysis and argument too much in terms of 'isms', because that is how combatants historically conduct their debates, and both these features leave one impatient for more systematic analysis and synthesis. But this again is ideosyncratic. It leaves intact the impression that this book is an excellent example of the historical theology genre, for those who prefer that kind of thing. And, furthermore, it yields the hope that we may see from the pen of this author a more systematic presentation and proposal of Schleiermacher's theology. She has an understanding of Schleiermacher which is palpably superior to more established theologians, and which is more promising for contemporary theological needs (in ecology, for instance) than many other brands of Reformed theology.

James P. Mackey
The University of Edinburgh