

THE ETERNAL NOW, by Paul Tillich; S.C.M., 16s.

If Tillich is remembered in the future as more than the latest member of the traditions of liberal theology begun in the nineteenth century it will perhaps be not so much for his constructive theologising in works such as *Systematic Theology* or for what appears to me an extremely muddled assault on the questions of ontology, but rather for the books of sermons such as *The Shaking of the Foundations*. This book is another brief collection of sermons preached by Tillich on various occasions, and although it lacks the power of its predecessors it is not without value. (It is interesting to find that if one attacks Tillich in a discussion with one of his disciples he will usually last-ditch with Tillich's sermons: I suspect that a great deal is taken on trust in his other works because they display some of those qualities which make his sermons of value; qualities which I shall attempt to describe.)

These sermons are different from most sermons, and perhaps should not really be described as sermons at all: they are not primarily the exposition of a text, or the preaching of the gospel, but rather a descriptive analysis of the situation of a contemporary Christian in a world which is largely non-Christian—a Christian who is not prepared merely to ignore that world and our knowledge of it, but yet sees it as a world in which it is extremely difficult to discern the workings of God. 'Could it be that in order to judge the misuse of his name within the church God reveals himself from time to time by creating silence about himself?' Even those sermons which are most explicitly concerned with God come far closer to describing the situation of the believer than to actually talking about God.

Perhaps because of this it might be better, however bold it may seem, not to regard Tillich as a theologian at all, and to regard his writings as far closer to spiritual biography than anything else: I think that those people who regard Tillich as an atheist have totally misjudged him, but I think that it is extremely difficult to regard his works as offering a positive account of what God is. If we take these writings not so much to be sermons as phenomenological analyses of the situation of the man who is to be addressed by a sermon, we shall then see their value, not as theology but as the raw material with which theology must be concerned.

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The writers call this an 'in-between missal' suitable for the older boy or girl (8-12?) who has outgrown the simple mass book of the small child and yet is not capable of understanding the language of the adult missal. Recent work has tended to focus attention on the needs of the young child or the adolescent so that the spiritual needs of this middle group have been rather neglected. Group activity and loyalty are characteristic behaviour-patterns of this age, and this