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COULD GOD EXPLAIN THE UNIVERSE?

PETER BYRNE

Explanation may take many forms and so therefore may explanations of the universe. In one sense the natural sciences seek to explain the universe. They seek to make known in detail how the universe works and thus to render it intelligible to the human mind. This is not the type of explanation that immediately springs to mind when one raises the question 'Could God explain the universe?' A theistic explanation of the universe seems to offer an explanation of why a universe exists at all. In the first instance reference to God seeks to account for the existence of the universe rather than make known in detail its structure and workings.

An explanation of a complex entity that seeks only to make known in detail how it works may render it intelligible without mentioning any other entities beyond the thing to be explained. It may be a purely internal explanation. No explanation of something which seeks to account for that thing's existence can be a purely internal explanation – unless we were prepared to accept the obscure possibility that something could bring itself into existence without the causal influence of any external circumstances. If we leave aside the possibility of self-generation, we are bound to conclude that to offer to account for the very existence of the universe involves describing something beyond it which brings it into being. This is what the attempted theistic explanation of the universe minimally seems to involve.

To allow the possibility of a theistic explanation of the existence of the universe we thus have to think of God and the universe as two distinct entities. This creates the first major obstacle in taking seriously the explanatory enterprise implicit in some versions of theism. For it is tempting to understand by 'the universe' 'everything that exists'. When so understood, it becomes absurd to look for something beyond the universe which brings it into being. D. Z. Phillips in *Religion without Explanation* takes this as his main ground for denying the possibility that belief in God is explanatory of the universe.[1] Phillips also draws from his definition of 'the universe' the consequence that the universe cannot be regarded as an identifiably distinct entity, for it cannot not be contrasted even in thought with anything alongside or beyond it. If the universe is not a particular thing, he argues, it becomes even more absurd to seek something that accounts for its existence.

These arguments seem to me to show more about the incorrectness of the original premiss from which they start than about the mistakenness of explanatory theism. Someone seriously seeking an explanation of the existence of the universe in God will surely be inclined to give a much more restricted definition of 'the universe' than 'everything that exists'. He will think of 'the universe' as the name for the physical cosmos, i.e. the totality of physical things and forces considered as forming an ordered whole. As defenders of explanatory theism have pointed out, we do think of the universe as forming such an ordered, physical whole and when we do we leave open the possibility that there could be entities which are not part of the universe, so defined.[2] On this account it may be possible to contrast the universe with other conceivable entities. It may be contrasted, for example, with God conceived as a spiritual being not at all part of the system of physical things and forces. The conception of God as spirit seems to be necessary here if he is to be regarded as an entity distinct from the universe, and anyone who finds this contrast incomprehensible will be left with Phillips' problem of identification through contrast unresolved.

It will be seen that if we are to think of God as accounting for the existence of the universe, we are committed to a cosmic dualism closely analagous to a Cartesian dualism of persons. If God is to account for the existence of the universe, he and the universe must be two distinct entities. But if the universe is the totality of physical things and forces, God's substance must be non-physical. He cannot be one physical force (however grand) interacting with other physical forces if the universe and he are to be two distinct entities. Hence the need to say that God is spirit, which results in a dualism of God and the universe paralleling that between soul and body on a Cartesian view of the self. I wish to argue that such a cosmic dualism cannot provide any explanatory link between God and the existence of the universe. If my argument is correct, the inclination to seek an explanation of the existence of the universe in a God reveals itself to be dialectical, in Kant's sense of that word. It generates contradiction and illusion. This is because the demands of such an explanation force us to think of the universe and God as two distinct entities, but the characterisations we have to give them to regard them as thus distinct forbid our perceiving any explanatory link between them. So we have a dilemma: either God and the universe are not conceived as distinct entities, or they are. In neither case can God account for the existence of the universe.

I hope that the first half of this dilemma has been sufficiently established in the above. The arguments given for the first half of the dilemma do not rule out the possibility that a God who was part of the universe could have *some* explanatory power in relation to it. His activity might be appealed to in explaining the character of the universe as we experience it. But any story relating how the universe as we experience it had arisen or emanated from this God would describe the history of a single complex entity: God-with-the-universe. It would be a description of how some aspects of this complex entity had arisen from more fundamental aspects of the same complex whole. It would not answer the question of why this complex whole came to exist at all.

What needs to be shown now is that the alternative conception of God and the universe as substantially distinct entities is equally incapable of providing an explanation of the very existence of the universe. To do this we need to find an acceptable, general account of what it is for one thing to account for another.

We may turn to science for a general picture of explanation, in the sense of 'accounting for'. For in attempting to make known in detail how the universe works, science seeks to account for how things are as they are. Rom Harré draws from scientific practice the following description of an 'accounting for' explanation: "To explain a phenomenon is to identify its antecedents and to identify or imagine the mechanism by which the antecedents produce or generate the phenomenon."[3] This definition of explanation should not be thought of as enshrining the

belief that the only successful explanations are those which present nature as a piece of clockwork. 'Mechanism' here has the more general sense of any kind of connection through which causes are effective.[4] Harré's definition does at the same time rule out some things as possible explanations of phenomena. Thus, according to this definition, it will not be sufficient to account for a phenomenon simply to show that it was to be expected given certain other things. It follows that, if Harré's definition is correct, the central core of the covering law theory of explanation provides an insufficient idea of what it is to account for a phenomenon. According to Hempel and Oppenheim, showing that a description of the phenomenon can be deduced from a true generalisation and statement of initial conditions does explain because it demonstrates that the phenomenon was to be expected.[5] One of the things which suggests that this account needs to be supplemented by a definition like Harré's is our realisation that true generalisations about a phenomenon which merely link it to another symptom of an underlying cause may be used to deduce a description of its occurrence, and thus show that the phenomenon 'was to be expected'. An association of this sort between a phenomenon and circumstances which regularly accompany it will not be thought of as an explanation of the phenomenon's occurrence unless we can imagine how these circumstances might generate or produce the phenomenon. This suggests that Harré is right in his description of an ideal, complete explanation: "A set of propositions is only an explanation if it describes the generative mechanisms responsible for the phenomena [to be explained]."[6]

The meaning and plausibility of the above account of explanation will be further explored as we apply it to the alleged explanatory power of theism in relation to the existence of the universe. For it can be shown that if this account of explanation is taken at face value it excludes the possibility of the idea of God explaining why the universe exists.

One of the reasons why this denial of the explanatory power of theism follows from Harré's definition is that this definition entails that *nothing* can account for the existence of the universe. Remembering that the universe is the entire system of physical things and forces, let us accept that to explain the universe will be to identify its antecedents and identify or imagine the mechanism by which those antecedents produce or generate the universe. The difficulty we now see in trying to find something which fulfils these demands is the difficulty of envisaging any such mechanism or antecedents as *distinct* from the universe. To search for an entity which accounts for the very existence of the entire system of physical things and forces is to search for something which is not at all part of that system and yet is also linked to it by a causal, generative mechanism. This is an endeavour to discover a conceptual impossibility. For if we did discover such an entity linked to the present state of the universe by a causal, generative mechanism, we should have sufficient reason to say that we had discovered an older or more fundamental part of the universe itself. We should have shown how one state or part of the universe had produced other states or parts. The universe is, as it were, too big to allow for antecedents and a mechanism beyond it which could generate it.

My conclusions are not meant to rule out the legitimate tasks of cosmology. Amongst the chief of these is the attempt to account for the present disposition of matter in the universe, i.e. the present order and arrangement of stars and galaxies. Perhaps too, cosmology may seek to account for the present quantity of matter in the universe and for the laws it is presently seem to obey. These are all difficult tasks, but they are not of the same order as attempting to account for the very existence of the universe. The difference may be disguised when the legitimate tasks of cosmology are described in terms of seeking to explain the origins or existence of 'our universe'. This description is appropriate, provided we remember that what is explained is not why a universe exists at all, but why the universe is as it is now. The difference between this and the enterprise I do wish to rule out becomes apparent when we realise that answers to the legitimate questions of cosmology describe forces operating within the universe or primordial states within the history of the universe. It is in terms of these that cosmologists seek to account for the universe's present order, behaviour and appearance. So the search is for the most fundamental mechanisms within the universe and its earliest states, which together might account for the present disposition, quantity and behaviour of matter.

The denial that any antecedents of the universe could be both distinct from it and yet linked to it by a causal, generative mechanism is in a way tacitly acknowledged by the traditional doctrine that the God who created the universe did so *ex nihilo.* This doctrine does not describe in positive terms how God created the universe. Rather, denying as it does the formation of the universe from pre-existent matter, it says that God created the universe and affirms that there is no answer to the question 'How did he create it?' Theologians who have put forward this doctrine have implicitly recognised that the explanation of the existence of the universe in terms of God is radically different from the standard cases of scientific explanation. If there were an answer to the question 'How did God create the universe?' it could only refer to a means or a mechanism. But such a means or mechanism will link God to the universe in a way which will make him and it parts of one complex whole. He will not be entirely distinct from it. So a theism which incorporates the traditional view of God's transcendence forbids an answer to the question: 'How did God's action bring about the existence of the universe?' This means that reference to God's activity cannot fulfil the demands made of any explanation which accounts for something. It does not both identify the antecedents of the universe and identify the mechanism by which the antecedents generate or produce the universe. The possibility of forming even a hypothetical picture of that mechanism is excluded.

We have now presented the argument for the second horn of the dilemma facing explanatory theism: if God and the universe are substantially distinct items there can be no explanatory link between them. We have argued that the first horn of the dilemma is equally unsatisfactory. If God and the universe are *not* substantially distinct items, God cannot account for the universe's very existence. The choice is between a cosmic dualism and a cosmic monism; in neither case can this particular search for explanation be satisfied.

Part of the force behind the rejection of the explanatory power of cosmic dualism lies in our seeing a parallel between the criticisms made of this dualism and criticisms often made of a Cartesian dualism of persons. In

trying to represent God as distinct from the universe, we have to represent him as being of an entirely different substance. Hence we say the universe is material or physical and God spiritual. Similar attempts to represent body and soul as distinct existences attract a similar criticism to that made of cosmic dualism in the above: if these are two entirely different types of substances, how can we conceive of a causal link between them? With regard to both dualisms we shall want to press the question: if there are causal links between these two entities, how can they be wholly distinct in substance? Dissatisfaction with the explanatory power of cosmic dualism does not of itself show that it must be false, no more than a corresponding dissatisfaction with Cartesian dualism shows it must be false. It may be that there is a spiritual deity beyond the universe. All that needs to be shown for our purposes is that this thought has no power to explain the existence of the universe. This will follow if it is granted that the dualism it enshrines forbids us from even beginning to conceive by what means God brought the universe into being.

The argument presented for the second horn of the dilemma facing explanatory theism depends on a particular interpretation of an 'accounting for' explanation. It may be objected that the argument has little force to demolish the explanatory power of theism because the interpretation of explanation employed is question-begging. The interpretation is culled from the natural sciences and to propose its universal adoption is tantamount to saying that all explanations must be like scientific explanations. Yet the form of explanation offered by theism to account for the existence of the universe is radically unlike a scientific explanation. Explanatory theism postulates a spiritual, personal being as the cause of the universe and to account for a phenomenon by referring to the enactment of the intentions of a personal being is radically different from offering a scientific explanation of that thing.[7]

There are a number of things one might point to as establishing that personal explanation is radically different from scientific explanation (one may see the role of general laws as crucial here). However, despite the differences between the two types of explanation, it may be shown that Harré's general interpretation will still fit both and that it does so because it captures the essence of any 'accounting for' explanation.[8]

Suppose we seek to explain something as the result of the activity of a personal agent, how can this be to identify its antecedents and to identify the mechanism by which those antecedents produce or generate it? The answer to this question stems from the fact that, whilst we may not have theories about human powers and potentialities, we do see human beings as bringing about things and events in the world. We see that they are centres of movement and power and we see how they act to produce and change objects. It follows that a personal explanation can meet the requirement of any 'accounting for' explanation in that it describes the generative mechanisms responsible for the phenomenon it purports to explain. Very crudely, in observing how human beings act, we see how they operate as generative mechanisms.

Human beings are, in part at least, physical beings in a physical universe. This fact is surely crucial in understanding why reference to the intentional action of one of these beings can compete with reference to other things in accounting for physical events. If human beings were not in part physical beings, the very fact that they are able to produce physical events and changes would present itself as an utter mystery. If we could not observe how they acted to produce physical events and changes, reference to the intentions of one of these beings would not explain such events and changes. In the absence of these conditions we could not conceive how the intentions of personal agents could produce change in a physical world or have any consequences in that world. Explanatory theism cannot draw any comfort from the fact that we often account for events in the universe by reference to the intentional actions of personal agents. For we have seen that if God is to account for the existence of the universe a radical cosmic dualism is presupposed, a dualism which forbids us conceiving how God acts upon the universe. This makes appeal to God as an explanation of the universe's existence fundamentally unlike appeal to a human agent as an explanation of an event in the universe.

The defender of explanatory theism who sees merit in the analogy with personal explanation may accept that the analogy is not without problems. He could concede that unless human beings had bodies we might indeed find it hard to comprehend the fact that they can act in a physical world. But such a thinker might see the link between a human agent's intentions and his own bodily movements as the key fact in personal explanation which illuminates God's creation of the universe. In those cases where the enactment of the agent's intentions is direct and unmediated, we may account for his actions by reference to an intention even though we have no conception of a mechanism which intervenes to link the two. If I raise my arm and do so as a basic action, the action may be accounted for by the corresponding intention even though I and others can form no picture of how I enact my intention. In such cases we are able to explain a phenomenon by reference to the intentions of an agent despite having no conception of the means or mechanism the agent uses to bring about that phenomenon.

The model of basic action looks as though it might be extremely fruitful in defending the possibility that God explains the universe. It is employed by R. G. Swinburne in his recent defence of explanatory theism to illuminate the notion of creation *ex nihilo*.[9] Swinburne argues that reference to the intentions of a God can explain the existence of the universe in the absence of an answer to the question 'How did God bring it about?' This is because creation and control of the universe are quite conceivable as basic acts of God. Here we have an attempt to illuminate God's relation to the universe by employing an analogy with a person's relation to his own body. However, it can be shown that this attempt also fails to take account of the dilemma which all versions of explanatory theism must face. In particular, it ignores the point that if God is to explain the very existence of the universe, he and it must be substantially distinct items. Once this is realised the use of the notion of basic action in this context is seen to be misleading.

It is a fundamental fact about a human being that when he moves his arm he is moving part of himself. He and his arm are not in this way substantially distinct items. This fact surely explains why we are content with the thought that a person can move his arm without employing any means to move it. In understanding human beings to be sources of

power and change, we recognise them to be organisms, animate beings with characteristic powers of movement. So, saying 'His arm moved because he intended to move it' has some minimal explanatory power. It removes the possibility that his arm moved as a result of some external source. It enables us to see it as the direct expression of a capacity of motion and to investigate its background in the agent's intentions.[10] This brief account of basic action implies that there will be something odd in trying to explain God's creation and control of the universe as the unmediated expression of basic acts of his if the universe is thought of as substantially distinct from him. But we have seen that if God is to explain the *existence* of the universe, God has to be thought of as substantially distinct from it. Granted this, God cannot stand in the same relationship to the universe that a person stands to his body, for to talk about a person's body is not to talk about something distinct from him. As a consequence, it is difficult to see how reference to the basic actions of human agents can give the notion of creation *ex nihilo* explanatory power.

Swinburne's awareness of these problems is shown in the way that, appealing to basic action as illustrative of creation, but mindful of God's transcendence, he says that God is only *partially* embodied in the universe. God does not stand in quite the same relation to it that a person stands to his own body.[11] This is a crude summary of a subtle and complex piece of argument. We do not need, however, to consider whether this notion of partial embodiment is coherent, or illuminating in some respects, to conclude that it will not give God's bringing the universe into being explanatory power. No appeal to a form of embodiment or basic action will do that. Whatever God is supposed to do in bringing the universe into being cannot be at all like an agent controlling his body, for prior to this activity of God's there is no universe, and hence nothing analagous to a body to control or act upon. Amongst the range of basic actions an agent may have, bringing his own body into existence cannot be one of them. The existence of his body is rather a pre-condition of there being any basic actions for him to perform. Creation *ex nihilo* cannot be a basic action of God and appeal to the notion of basic action cannot illuminate it.

We might take the analogy of human embodiment to its extreme and coneive of the universe as God's body and of him as the soul of the universe. Talk of God might then be explanatory of some things, but not of the very existence of the universe. A pantheistic God of this sort would be too closely bound up with the universe to explain its existence, but he might conceivably figure in explanations of aspects of the universe's behaviour and history. Nothing in this paper shows that that a pantheism must be false.

The appeal to personal explanation will not serve to make the alleged explanatory link between God and the existence of the universe comprehensible. The choice between cosmic dualism and cosmic monism, with their attendant difficulties for this explanatory link, remains. Our brief consideration of personal explanation has revealed no reason why we should abandon Harre's definition of explanation. This leaves us with the definition of an 'accounting for' explanation still standing: "to explain a phenomenon is to identify its antecedents and to identify or imagine the mechanism by which the antecedents produce or generate the phenomenon". If this definition can be accepted, there could be no explanation of the very existence of the universe and none could be provided by the idea of a deity.

The argument of this paper is not meant to provide a proof of the nonexistence of a transcendent God. It merely denies the explanatory power of this idea of deity, though this denial may weaken one support for the conception of God as a transcendent being. In this respect my conclusion is not wholly negative. It is meant to provide impetus to the examination of opposing conceptions of deity in the philosophy of religion.[12]

1. Oxford: Blackwell, (1976), pp. 19-20.
2. See, eg, R.N. Smart *Philosophers and Religious Truth*, 2nd Ed. London: SCM Press (1969), pp. 86-7.
3. *The Principles of Scientific Thinking*, London: Macmillan, (1970), p. 261.
4. See *Philosophies of Science*, London: Oxford University Press, (1972), p. 228.
5. C.G. Hempel and P. Oppenheim 'Studies in the Logic of Explanation' *Philosophy of Science* Vol. 15, (1948), pp. 135-175.
6. *The Principles of Scientific Thinking*, p. 132.
7. See Smart, op cit, p. 90 and R.G. Swinburne *The Existence of God*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, (1979), pp. 19-20.
8. I exclude here those contexts where 'to account for' means 'to justify'.
9. See *The Existence of God* pp. 46-50.
10. These remarks about basic action owe much to D.G. Brown *Action* London: Allen and Unwin, (1968), pp. 49-59.
11. See *The Existence of God* pp. 48-50.
12. I am grateful to my colleague Grace Jantzen for her helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

FREUD, THE SCAPEGOAT, AND THE EUCHARIST

CHARLES BROCK

The key to Freud's method of psychoanalytic healing is the phenomenon of transference. Jung writes:

> 'The enormous importance that Freud attached to the transference phenomenon became clear to me at our first personal meeting in 1907. After a conversation lasting many hours there came a pause. Suddenly he asked me out of the blue, "And what do you think about the transference?" I replied with the deepest conviction that it was the alpha and omega of the analytical method, whereupon he said, "Then you have grasped the main thing"[1]

Freud believed that the task of the analyst is to help the patient become aware of the repressed elements in the unconscious that cripple his efforts for happiness. Firstly, the analyst must obtain the patient's trust so that there can be complete candour on the part of the patient which means strict discretion from the analyst. Though this sounds like a secularised father-confessor role, there is a great difference. The analyst wants to hear not only what the patient knows and conceals from other people, but more especially he wants to know what the patient conceals from himself. The analyst will listen carefully to everything that comes into the patient's speech – slips of the tongue, jokes, asides, as well as noting carefully the way the patient relates to the analyst – no matter how trivial or meaningless it may seem. All information can contribute to new understandings of the patient. There will be much resistance on the part of the patient giving away information about himself, not only because he wants to hide himself from the analyst, but because he wants to hide from himself and his own very painful memories. Many times there will be certain personality differences between analyst and patient that will prematurely terminate the sessions, but then the analyst should advise the patient to seek help from another before giving it up altogether.

This latter difficulty is often caused by the role that the analyst must take, not only as one who seeks out the secrets of the mind, but the analyst becomes a re-incarnation of someone out of the past – namely the father (though in rare cases the mother). This is the first meaning of transference. The role that the analyst takes is quite ambivalent to the patient because it comprises positive and affectionate aspects as well as negative and hostile attitudes. A positive transference means that the patient tries to win the applause and love of the analyst. The weak ego becomes strong and his symptoms disappear and he seems to have recovered – all this out of love for the analyst as well as a new understanding of himself. The analyst has the opportunity to use his role of the parent to help undo some of the blunders of the original parents in the formation of the mind. Also the transference process means that the patient produces for the analyst a picture of what actually did happen in childhood by acting out onto the analyst the relation to the parent.

Later it almost always happens that the positive attitude towards the analyst turns negative. This too is a repetition of the past. If the patient wooed the analyst as the father-figure, the wish will not be able to be fulfilled. Then the patient will come to hate the analyst and feel himself insulted and neglected. He will probably try to end the analysis. At this point the analyst must tear the patient away each time from the father-figure illusion, and show him again and again that this procedure is only a repetition of the past.

Then comes the second meaning of transference. The libido (Freud's term for the energy of Eros, the love instinct) can attach itself to people, objects, or oneself. The great difficulty about children growing up is that they form a libidinous attachment to their parents – boys to their mothers, girls to their fathers. But boys are forced to abandon their libidinous feelings for their mothers because of an imagined threat of castration from their fathers. Though there are many variables to this, generally the boys' relationship to their fathers becomes ambivalent. On the one hand he is very hostile to his father because it is the father who is the potential agent of harm as well as the jealous suitor of his mother. And yet because of the necessity to sublimate or repress the desire for his mother, the boy can and most often does identify with his father, and imagines himself in the place of his father. This 'Oedipus complex' is made more difficult by the aspect of bisexuality. Not only does the boy want to possess his mother, but he also wants to be the love object of his father. This then is not the wish for identification with the father, but is is rather that the boy wants to be the object of his father's love. Yet this would require the loss of the male genitals which is too much to bear so this love is repressed too.

What happens to little girls? Because of the bisexual nature of people there is a similar growth in love as in boys, but there are differences as well. They also share the incestuous phantasies about possession of their mothers, but since they discover that neither they nor their mothers possess a penis, another thought becomes manifest. From the very first she envies boys because they have what she does not have. At this point her personality can develop in a number of ways, but the usual pattern is for the little girl to put herself in her mother's place and to identify with her. The wish for a baby from the father then takes the place of the wish for a penis.

These problems are carried in people all of their lives, and sometimes the pressure of the guilty feelings is too much for some to bear and forms of illness may occur. It is at this point that the analyst is of use. In analysis the patient is helped to understand himself, and gradually the libido for the forbidden objects is placed onto the analyst. The analyst encourages this and allows this to happen. Freud writes:

> 'When the libido has been detached from its temporary object in the person of the physician it cannot return to its earlier objects, but is now at the disposal of the ego. . . . Perhaps the dynamics of the process of recovery will become still clearer if we describe it by saying that, in attracting a part of it to ourselves through transference, we gather in the whole amount of the libido which has been withdrawn from the ego's control.'[2]

Thus the libido, which has taken the form of an incestuous love for the parent has been transferred to the physician, who carried the forbidden part of the libido away and renders it harmless. Some libido still exists and should

always do so, but it cannot now return to its earlier objects but is under the control of the self.

Freud claimed that everyone has this problem to a great or lesser extent, and some repressions take away much needed energy from people when they try to keep them under control. Thus it would be a benefit to everyone if they could release and transfer the unacceptable part of the libido that they have.

Freud wrote four books and numerous articles on religion, but his favourite subject in his later years was Moses. In 1934 he wrote: 'Not that I can shake him off. The man and what I wanted to make of him pursue me everywhere'.[3] Freud claimed in *Moses and Monotheism* that the deliverer of the Hebrews was also the founder of their monotheism which he received from Egypt, and because Moses was a father-figure for the Jews, they eventually murdered him in the desert because of uncontrolled libidinous transference.

Surprisingly, Freud paid no attention to Aaron, the brother of Moses. But the second meaning of transference has a curious parallel to the most solemn time of the Hebrew year – the Day of Atonement. Part of the account in Leviticus:

'. . . . Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness.'[4]

There are many other ancient rites of transference, especially used for healing sick people where the disease is unloaded upon an animal.[5] In many parts of the Jewish world other sin-transference ceremonies replaced the scapegoat rite once the Temple was destroyed in CE 70. The Kapparot custom has a cock (for a male) or a hen (for a female) swung round the head three times with the words: 'This is my substitute, my vicarious offering, my atonement; this cock (or hen) shall meet death, but I shall find a long and pleasant life of peace.'[6] The fowl is thought to take on the sins of the participant. Other animals can be used. Some congregations use money rather than an animal with the same said formula. At the Tashlikh ('Thou shalt cast') ceremony there is a custom of shaking out the pockets of one's garments over water which is taken by most as a rite of transferring sins to the fish.[7]

There are many differences between these accounts and Freud's method. For the ancient Hebrews, people must be cleansed so God's anger can be averted. But there is also a sure recognition that guilt is harmful for the individual and the people until it is expiated. Also it is true that incest is the main problem for Freud, but it is one sin among many in the Hebrew scriptures. It is, however, interesting to note that the main subject of confession at the afternoon service (Minhah) in contemporary Day of Atonement rites is incest where Leviticus 18 is used as the basis of prayer. Also there are no sophisticated notions of the unconscious in early Hebrew thought, although dreams are often used as primary means of revelation. In the Torah sins are clearly listed and stated, and Aaron confesses them in public and performs a clear expiatory act for all to see. Freud helps the patient to find his hidden sins but relates them to one great unconscious hope of forbidden love, and he does so in private over a long period of time gradually building up confidence of the patient. Nevertheless, the parallel is there too. There must be an unloading of sin whether public or private, conscious or unconscious, with lists of faults or without. Both Aaron and Freud recognize that something is wrong in the lives of the people. Though there are numerous ways to deal with guilt, unloading is the key to expiation.

Perhaps the greatest difference between Aaron and Freud is that the analyst needs to be loved by the patient before the cure can begin.

> 'Without this support arguments have no weight with the patient. . . . a human being is therefore on the whole only accessible to influence, even on the intellectual side, in so far as he is capable to investing objects with lidido.'[8]

In a letter to Jung, Freud wrote:

> 'One cannot explain things to unfriendly people. I have therefore kept to myself a good deal that I could have said about the limitations of therapy and its mechanism, or mentioned it in such a way as to be intelligible only to the expert. It would not have escaped you that our cures come about through attaching the libido reigning in the subconscious (Transference) which comes about with more certainty in hysteria than elsewhere. Where this fails the patient will not make the effort or else does not listen when we translate his material to him. It is in essence a cure through love. Moreover it is transference that provides the strongest proof, the only unassailable one, for the relationship of neuroses to love.'[9]

It might be hard to love a goat. But for the religious believer the ultimate bliss is to love God, the 'Father'. Indeed, this is the subject of the 'Shema' and the 'greatest commandment' of Jesus – to love God with all your heart, mind, strength. Then if *God* should choose to take on one's sins or forbidden loves, it might be easier to provide a transference there than to an animal.

For centuries Christians have pondered the relationship of God and the son of God to the transference of sin. Though there are several ways of expressing atonement in the New Testament and in the history of Christian thought, an important idea is that Christ carries the sins of the world on the Cross, then descends to the wilderness of Gehenna. As Karl Barth wrote, 'Like that second goat [in Lev. 16], [Christ] must suffer the sin of the many to be laid upon Him (and it is the faith of His Church that it can and should lay all its sin upon Him), in order that He may bear it away . . . . .'[10]

Jung saw the parallel to Freud:

> 'Just as medical treatment appoints the person of the doctor to take over the conflicts of his patients, so Christian practice appoints the Saviour, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins". (Eph. 1.7 & Col. 1.14, Isa. 53.4: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.") He is the deliverer and redeemer of our guilt, a God who stands above sins, who "committed no sin, no guile was found on his lips" (I Peter 2.22), who "Himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (Heb. 9.28).'[11]

It should be noted that the New Testament does not make a great deal of direct use of Day of Atonement customs. The closest reference is I Peter 2.24, but that can be translated and interpreted in a number of ways. The Passover lamb and the sacrificial lamb of Isaiah 53 seem to be the most widely used Old Testament points of reference regarding animal parallels with Christ. But as Jung recognized, Christ bears sins not unlike the goat of Leviticus 16 or lamb of Isaiah 53 in order to carry them away from the people and this has become one powerful meaning of 'Saviour'.

There are liturgical understandings of Christ as sin bearer in many of the analyses of pre-Vatican II eucharistic rites that include notions of transference:

> 'During this prayer [Hanc igitur] the priest extends his two hands horizontally over the chalice and the host in such a manner that the right thumb is placed over the left one in the form of a cross. . . The ritual of laying on of hands frequently occurs in both the Old and the New Testaments, as well as in the liturgy. According to its fundamental signification, it is always a symbol of the transferring of one thing to another; for example, in the Mosaic worship the laying on of hands was a symbolical representation of the transferring of sin and guilt to the animal that was to be sacrificed, which vicariously had to suffer death instead of man. Here in the Mass the laying on of hands has a similar object, for it shows that Christ offers Himself on the altar, in our place, for our sake, and on account of our sins, thus fixing deeply in our mind the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. Moreover, it indicates that we should unite ourselves with this sacrifice, offering ourselves along with it.'[12].

Another Catholic writer:

> 'In extending his hands over the oblations [the priest] signifies that Christ is dying on the cross, and in the Eucharist, the re-enactment of the sacrificial death, really takes upon himself the sins of all mankind.'[13]

Another:

> 'The imposition of hands was suggested by the marked emphasis upon propitiation and expiation. It appeared here in the 14th century: by anticipation, the priest heaps upon the divine Lamb the sins and suffrages of all who are present.'[14]

Protestants often have had difficulties with the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, but as the Presbyterian theologian Donald Baillie has argued, the sacrifice of the Eucharist can be understood as Christ eternally offering himself before the Father for the sins of the world and he extends the one sacrifice of Calvary to the world through the Eucharist.[15] This is expressed in some contemporary Reformed eucharistic prayers by the words:

> 'Wherefore, having in remembrance the work and passion of our Saviour Christ, and pleading his eternal sacrifice. . . .'[16]

What does it mean to 'plead' his eternal sacrifice? It could be thought of in a number of ways, but an important distinction made by the Lutheran theologian Gustav Aulén is that Christ makes a once and for all sacrifice on the Cross which is an *atoning* sacrifice, but since 'he is always living to plead on their behalf'[17] Christ performs an eternal *intercessory* sacrifice. 'The purpose of his intercession is to release and actualise the powers of life which are contained in the atonement.'[18] Aulén also claims:

> 'It is one of the funamental conceptions of Luther that Christ continues his redemptive work in that he assumes our burden and is our spokesman before God.'[19]

A profound meaning of this pleading, intercession and assuming our burden could indicate that Christ carried our sins so that we can distinguish two parts of the sacrifice – the atonement was made once for all, but the expiation of the sins of the world is still being taken away to free us from our present guilt. The Eucharist makes this gift available to us.

The Reformers had trouble with the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist because they feared it was being considered a "work" – something done by man to secure God's love. But modern Catholics insist that Christ is the celebrant. 'In the Mass, Christ offers himself to the Father as the sacrificial lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.'[20]

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Has Freud assimilated this ancient concept of transference and recast it in secular terms, making it one of his key concepts of psychoanalysis? Perhaps that is what he meant by his cryptic remark when asked how he was Jewish:

> 'A very great deal, and probably its very essence. He could not now express that essence clearly in words: but some day, no doubt it will become accessible to the scientific mind.'[21]

The great difference is the object of transference. For Freud it was the analyst; for Aaron it was the scapegoat; for the Christian it is Christ and thus in orthodox trinitarian thought, also God 'the Father'.

But Freud's other re-discoveries will help churches to have a look at their own practices. Clergy will want to help people deepen their understanding of their sin and guilt, though they will want to widen the definition of sin to go beyond incest and include pride, injustice, and may want to add the rabbinical idea of the yetzer-ha-ra (evil instinct) which Freud understood as the 'death instinct' in his later works. Dreams may be of help here. Careful and sympathetic individual attention to all aspects of the personality can be of great value, but it can do much harm if there has not been adequate training.

However, Jews and Christians will also want to allow more occasions for confession and transference, and always have set aside special 'seasons' for this (Elul and Lent culminating in Yom Kippur and Good Friday) along with the realization that regular times of confession and forgiveness are needed all through life.

For Christians it would be beneficial if confessions and/or counselling were eventually to culminate in the Eucharist. As in most eucharistic liturgies, a general and corporate confession of sins followed by words of forgiveness opens the service. This is also the case for good therapy or counselling. The person needs to know that he enters a situation where he is accepted and not put on trial. Then as times goes on – therapeutically and/or liturgically – methods are followed whereby the person can begin to transfer sins. It is one thing to be declared forgiven; it is

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another to get rid of the power of sin or that part of the libido which causes neurotic damage. This is where the liturgical action of laying on of hands on the elements can be of use. It should be carefully explained that it is Christ not the priest as 'father' who bears the sins. In the new rites it could be done during the Agnus Dei before the breaking of bread.

What follows is Communion – that which is denied to the Freudian patient who is not allowed to touch father/analyst. Jews have communion feasts, but with God as participant, not victim. Most Christians believe that communicants feed on Christ himself (with various ways of understanding how this happens). Christ, who vicariously carried the sins also victoriously bears them away, then gives himself so that communicants may be filled with his life. As in biblical thought, blood is the life, so in the Eurcharist the wine becomes that life filling the believer which "warms, nourishes, strengthens and gladdens the heart."[22].

A stronger and remade self is the positive result of good psychoanalysis. A forgiven and sanctified life is the gift of participation in the historic Jewish and Christian liturgies. All have much to gain from listening to each other and seeing how close they have been to each other, often without knowing it.

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PILGRIMAGE: LUKE/ACTS AND THE WORLD OF RELIGIONS

MARTIN FORWARD

The narrative of Luke/Acts emphasises the motif of journeying. For example, in the gospel Jesus is born on a journey (2vv1-7) and travels with his parents to Jerusalem at the age of 12 (2vv41-52). In the two best loved of his parables, both peculiar to Luke, Jesus tells of a man who is set upon by thieves on a journey from Jerusalem to Jericho (10vv25-37), and of a younger son who travels to a far land and back again to his Father's love (15vv11-32). In that most exquisite of short stories, unrecorded in the other gospels, the risen Lord Jesus walks unrecognised with two of his followers to Emmaus (24vv13-35). In the book of Acts, the good news of Jesus moves from Jerusalem in gradual stages to Rome, chiefly through the missionary journeys of Paul.

Why did Luke make so much of the motif of journeying? This paper contends that he regards the Christian life as a journey within God's world to God. This means that new discoveries are always possible for those who explore the life of faith.

Perhaps the circumstances of the early church whose beginnings and early years he narrates led Luke to this motif. The story begins in Jerusalem and in the temple, centre of the Jewish religion. It ends in Rome, with Paul preaching salvation to the gentiles. During its course, the principal characters have much to learn about God from the faith of others. Perhaps Christians in modern multi-Faith Britain have much to learn from Luke's interpretation of the earliest Christians' encounters with the multi-Faith world in which they lived.

The people of God whom Luke describes were learners in God's wide world, and to read of them reminds us that as we meet people of different religions and cultures, sharing the good news with them can teach us of God as well as them.

Luke's account of the healing of the centurion's servant (Luke 7 vv1-10) highlights the amazement of Jesus at the centurion's direct and perfect faith, surpassing the faith of any Jew he had encountered. (Matthew's parallel account makes the same point.) Jesus appears to share the prejudice of many of his countrymen about gentiles, but finds himself forced to admit that he had misjudged at least one of them. So Jesus is depicted as learning from the faith of another that a knowledge of God is not confined to Jews.

Peter learned much the same point as Jesus did from his encounter with a different centurion named Cornelius. Earlier, he had claimed, speaking of Jesus, that "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4v12). That verse was addressed to elders and rulers of the Jews, so it has no wider immediate reference than Jesus's relation to the Jewish religion of Peter's and Luke's times, whose leaders should have recognised him as the culmination of their religious hope. Moreover, the verb 'to save' can also in Greek mean 'to heal' and since Peter's speech arose out of the context of a healing miracle, he would most naturally have used it to mean 'to heal' rather than 'to save'. Theology has to be done in particular contexts, which can modify even deeply cherished beliefs about God. Peter's bold statement about Jesus had eventually to be tested in a wider world than that of an intra-Jewish debate about the source of authority for healing. Observing the will to fuller faith by Cornelius, a gentile whom he first thought 'unclean', Peter exclaimed, "I now perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10v34).

There is no Lukan account of Paul realising that a knowledge of God was to be found among the gentiles, but it probably never occured to Luke that he had to labour this point. Paul was a Jew of the diaspora and, unlike Palestinian Jews, would have had the opportunity to meet many gentiles, whose capacity for faith he would take for granted. Certainly, Luke makes it clear that Paul recognised a knowledge of God among non-Jews. Paul's speech in the middle of the Areopagus in Athens bears witness to this, when he quotes with approval a Greek philosopher and poet (Acts 17v28). Moreover, it is recorded that in Ephesus, Paul entered the synagogue, dialoguing and pleading about the kingdom of God. After three months, when some were stubborn and disbelieved and spoke ill of "the way", he removed to the hall of Tyrannus, where he dialogued daily for two years. (*Dialogomenos*, in Acts 19vv8 and 9 comes from *dialegomai*, which in this context most naturally means to talk together, to discuss. Paul would surely not have lasted so long in either venue if he had monologued, argued and harangued!) To dialogue is to commit oneself to the ministry of listening as well as talking. Nowadays the word 'dialogue' has been made to bear a variety of pseudo-technical meanings, and is (almost?) beyond redemption as a meaningful term. With what relief then one finds it used in Acts 19 as meaning something like 'meeting together and talking about God'. It is not just since Martin Buber that people have talked together of God across the boundaries of faith-systems!

This capacity of Jesus and his leading followers to learn from the faith of other people goes hand in hand with a recognition of the universal Lordship of Christ. The centurion whose servant Jesus healed called him Lord and recognised in him God's healing power. Peter's exclamation, recorded in Acts 10v34 is not a denial of the centrality of Christ, but a recognition, which once at least he fell away from (Galatians 2vv11f.), that the basis for a pilgrimage to God begins not just from within Jewish experiences of the divine, but from within any religious person's reverence for God and desire to serve him. Furthermore, Peter's earlier statement of faith in Acts 4v12, though directed to people who shared a common Jewish tradition about God's dealings with his world, and primarily about healing and not salvation in all its fullness, implicitly raises the question of the unique authority of Jesus. This can be seen by reading Acts 3-4v22 alongside Acts 14vv8-18, which describes how Barnabas and Paul were called Zeus and Hermes when they healed the cripple at Lystra. It seems that Luke intends a deliberate parallel with the earlier miracle, which was also that of healing a cripple. The point of the second account is that the miracle was done by a servant of Jesus, and that Zeus and Hermes have no real power to heal. Finally, Paul in Athens, despite his recognition of the presence of God within the faith of others, felt "his spirit . . . provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols", and declared that although God had overlooked the times of ignorance, he now commands all men everywhere to repent.

Luke also condemns the blindness of Jewish leaders but this does not mean that he plays down the importance of Jewish history and experiences for deepest faith. Too much has been made by some scholars of the 'Christianity' which Luke describes in his second volume. Luke knows nothing of two religions, Judaism and Christianity. In his view, Christians owe to Jesus one interpretation of the history and experiences of living in God's world recorded in the Jewish scriptures. Clearly, he believes it to be the 'correct' interpretation, but he recognises variant interpretations even when he condemns them or aspects of them; those, for example, of the pharisees and sadducees. The Christians he writes about share Jewish festivals, worship in synagogues. With the advantage of hindsight, we can see how the entry of the gentiles into the promises of God, which became after some debate the Christian interpretation of Jewish faith, led to an irrevocable split with other interpretations, particularly that of Pharisaism which, broadly speaking, became with Christianity the surviving 'school' of Jewish religion after the Roman/Jewish war leading to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Luke did not have our advantage, and though we can trace the beginnings of that irrevocable split in his works, we must not read too much of the present back into them. Paul could, in his view, be both a pharisee and a Christian (Acts 23v6), a pharisee who had accepted Jesus as Lord.

This means that what has sometimes been interpreted as anti-Jewishness or even anti-semitism in Luke's works is more properly understood as profoundly different interpretations of the meaning of Israel's history and vocation being recognised and evaluated by him. His may not be a delicate and careful evaluation; his descriptions of pharisees scarcely does full justice to the movement they represent; but he does at least recognise (as his recording that Paul was both a Christian and a pharisee shows) that awareness of God and a desire to serve him is not a monopoly of any 'school'. So Luke's attitude towards Jewish religious experiences is rather like his attitude to gentile religious experiences; that they are authentic, but that accepting the Lordship of Jesus is what is required "today", a word which is used at least twice in his gospel (19v5; 24v43) to indicate the importance of responding to God's invitation to find him in Jesus.

Paul's claim to be both a pharisee and a Christian does justice to the fact, apparent in both Acts and the Pauline epistles, that he was indebted to and built upon his Jewish heritage. Paul's vision of Jesus on the journey to Damascus, which must be of crucial interest to Luke since he recounts it on three separate occasions (Acts 9vv1-19a, 22vv3-16, 26vv4-18), was not a conversion experience leading him to transfer from one religion to another. Rather, it led him to recognise the Lordship of Christ whom he believed called him to witness to the gentiles. It meant that he saw his Jewish heritage through different spectacles by which Jesus came into view as the focal point of God's dealings with his people.

Among both Jews and gentiles God "in present generations . . . did not leave himself without witness" (Acts 14vv16f.), and it is clear that for Luke the clearest witnesses were the Jewish scriptures. His works are soaked in an understanding of them, and his interpretation of them often weaves into his motif of journeying.

In particular, Abraham is more often cited in Luke's works than in any other New Testament author's writings. Jews regarded Abraham as, among other things, the exemplary pilgrim who heard God's promise and went on a journey in God's world through many vicissitudes to receive, understand and share that promise. For Luke, such faith in God demands openness and wonder, and recognises that the Almighty cannot be constrained by static laws or customs, however venerable. Hence it is easier for the sinful and sick, who know their need of God, to travel hopefully and faithfully with him, than the type of self-satisfied religious person who thinks himself to have no real need of God and nothing more to learn from him, who thinks rather of all that he does for him. So Jesus calls the woman whom he heals on the sabbath a daughter of Abraham, and the implication is that the ruler of the synagogue and other Jews who condemned miracles done on that day were not Abraham's children, because they tried to fetter God's healing power with rules instead of praising him for his boundless compassion (Luke 13vv10-17). Likewise, Zacchaeus, more of a 'quisling' than an orthodox Jew, becomes a son of Abraham because, like Abraham, he hears God's word, obeys and moves away from his past (Luke 19vv1-10).

In other places, Luke is content to admit that the Jews are the children of Abraham but denies that, of itself, it is of any value in God's sight. So John the baptiser declares the futility of trusting in kinship with Abraham without meaningful faith, obedience and compassion: "Bear fruits that befit repentence, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (Luke 3vv1-14, esp.v8). The need for compassion as an essential part of faith is dear to Luke and comes to the fore in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man throughout his life has ignored the needs of the poor man at his gate. After death and in torment, he appeals to his father Abraham to have mercy on him. Abraham accepts the relationship by calling him son, but can do nothing for him. He utters the sombre words: ". . . between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us" (Luke 16v6). Those who do not travel faithfully with God, open to him and his promise, one day may want to but will find that it is too late and they cannot. And then no relationship can be of help.

Luke also takes from the Jewish scriptures the important theme of Jerusalem. The importance of Jerusalem in Luke/Acts is that it shows that Jewish antagonism to Jesus and his followers is a profound misinterpretation of the faith of Israel. For Luke, Jerusalem is a deeply compromised city, its supposed holiness being as much a sham and a delusion as it had seemed to Jeremiah 600 years earlier (e.g. Jeremiah 11vv1-17). Luke depicts movement to and then away from Jerusalem: Jesus sets his face towards the city in Luke 9v51 and takes until the latter half of chapter 19 to get there; this evangelist brings to bear the image of the exodus on his account of the transfiguration, whereas none of the others do (in Luke 9v31 Elijah and Moses talk with Jesus about his exodus which he is to fulfil at Jerusalem, but significantly the image has shifted from a geographical this-wordly event to an act of glory and obedience, death and resurrection, a journey to the promised land beyond); and Jesus's lament over Jerusalem as recorded by Luke takes place away from the city and holy week, and becomes a sombre statement of her forsakeness and of how she will receive him in blessing but only to accomplish his death (13v34f.). So Jesus's long

journey towards a fateful destiny depicts Jerusalem as a city flawed by the blindness of its citizens who do not recognise their Lord when he comes and who are to suffer the punishment of destruction (Luke 23vv28-31). Moreover, it is in Jerusalem where the first witness to die for the good news is killed, outside its walls like Stephen's Lord (Acts 7v57). And it is in Jerusalem that Paul is rejected and begins his journey which leads him to Rome (Acts 21vv27ff.). In Acts, the spirit of the crucified and risen Jesus empowers his followers in a city where he met his fate and where some of them will meet theirs (2vv1ff.), a hint that no place, however holy, can override the will of God. Thereafter, the gospel gradually moves away from Jerusalem to other cities in the gentile world where it finds small but ready audiences.

Jerusalem is the place where a tragic hero meets his destiny. It is the locus of misplaced holiness and of faith misinterpreted and betrayed. It never becomes for Luke the heavenly image it becomes for Paul (Galatians 4v26), and the authors of Hebrews (12v22) and the Apocalypse (21v2). He uses it as a symbol to illustrate the corruptibility of faith.

Luke realised that stories can tell far more about God than dogmatic statements. Three stories which he uniquely records are among the greatest stories ever told and all of them are about a journey.

The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10vv23-37) is a story of human behaviour, of vulnerability and violence, heartlessness and compassion. It is clear where Luke's sympathies lie; he believes that religious people should care. To be sure, such care can be discerned in the rules and regulations which religion prescribes, but these prescriptions hinder rather than further the will of God when they cause people to pass by on the other side or else to ask questions instead of reacting spontaneously to help a person in need. The Samaritan proves himself a neighbour to the man in need whereas the priest and the Levite, and the questioner, for all their knowledge of religious law, do not. On the journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, God is encountered where he is least expected, in a Samaritan, and not where he might most be expected to be found, in the professional religious. So on the journey of faith, it is necessary to be open to find God in extraordinary people and places and to be wary of people who are expected in some way to embody him.

Stories cannot usually be contained within one neat interpretation. The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15vv11-32) has sometimes been interpreted as a story of divine love meeting human need and greed, or else as God's relationship to Jew and gentile. But it can also be read differently as the story of a human family beset by difficulties which often attend such close-knit institutions: a father who loves well but perhaps not wisely, a son who chafes against parental discipline, another son who sees obedience in terms of duty and who resents his father's loving forgiveness of a young wastrel. In this interpretation, the hurt, self-righteousness, self-interest and anger of fragile human relationships need a power beyond the protagonists to find genuine reconciliation. This may be to read out of the story more than Jesus and Luke meant, but it is the fate of stories to give up treasures more than the original teller could know they contained. Stories resonate in the imagination, they take on new possibilities of interpretation in different situations and at different readings, they remind us that our creative imagination is as much a God-given gift as is our capacity to rationalise, simplify and categorise. For a religious person, the known and the cherished, such as this parable, can yield up new insights on the journey of faith.

This point is made plain in the story of the journey to Emmaus (Luke 24vv13-35). The Jewish scriptures, the Lord's supper, a sudden and intuitive recognition: in this wonderful story these are well-loved but ever renewed and renewing things which mediate the presence of God. Yet as soon as the risen Lord is recognised, he vanishes. Too much dogma or indeed the central activities of faith can trap God; whereas an encounter on a journey challenges the pilgrim not to contain that vision but to go from it to new insights on the way.

There are dangers in regarding faith as pilgrimage, as travelling in God's world to God. It might encourage too personal an interpretation of faith, namely that *my* faith is what is important. The account of the journey to Emmaus indicates that there are the safeguards of scripture and eucharist which anchor the Christian's individual experiences of Jesus in a corporate response to the grace of God in Christ. The Christian treads a way and comes to his own convictions, but these must be measured against the life and teachings of Jesus and the community's share in his spirit. As the letter resulting from the Council in Jerusalem of apostles and elders puts it: "It has seemed good to the holy spirit and to us . . ." (Acts 15v28).

A second danger is that too much can be made of the interpretation of faith as journeying. There are other symbols for faith. If the Theophilus to whom Luke sends his works (Luke 1vv1-4; Acts 1vv1f.) really is a person and not a literary device, then he would probably be a Roman of high rank ("most excellent Theophilus"). Indeed, it was probably the intention of these works to win gentiles of social standing for the way of Jesus. Certainly, Luke's works tacitly approve of Roman authority; it is worth recording that the *pax Augustana* had brought to an end a long period of civil war in the Mediterranean region, and established conditions in which the gospel could be spread through a large area with stable government and at peace. Circumstances alter cases. It is not, for example, to be expected that the author of the book of Revelation, writing at a time of imperial persecution of Christians, would have much sympathy in the interpretation of faith as journeying in God's wide world; nor does he, finding faith as trust in the certain and ultimate triumph of God over evil as much more appropriate to his and his readers' circumstances. However, readers of Luke's works should not blame him for what he omits, but be grateful for the insights his writings contain, and recognise that his insights need to be read alongside others offered in different responses to the good news of Jesus, recorded in those various writings we now know as the New Testament.

BERDYAEV'S THEODICY AND THE NATURE OF GOD

LLOYD CADDICK

Nicolas Berdyaev saw the mystery of evil at the heart not only of Christian thought, but of religion of every kind, for every religion offers the promise of freedom from evil and its consequent suffering. The rationalistic mind of modern man is especially burdened with the problem of how to reconcile the existence of God, an all-merciful, all-powerful being, with that of evil.

> "Theodicy can judge God only in the light of what God has revealed to us about himself. It defends God against human conceptions of him, against human slander."[1]

To wrestle with this problem Berdyaev began not with God or man, but with "the God-Man", Jesus Christ, for the Christian experience of the Incarnation is the most concrete and fullest expression of the basic phenomenon of religious life, which

> "is the meeting and mutual interaction between God and man, the movement of God towards man, and of man towards God."[2]

Here we are shown the birth of God in man and man in God, by which the divine love and human freedom are reconciled. It accepts evil as a mystery which cannot be resolved conceptually, although it can be lived redemptively. Any attempt to think out a justification for God transmutes the mystery of evil into a problem. In the demand for an explanation of suffering and evil we see a "Euclidean spirit" which is unable to accept that a world which allows freedom, has to include the irrationality of evil. The Christian answer shows even God accepting and grappling with this irrationality, although some traditional formulations of the doctrine of God do not allow us to do justice to this answer.

Berdyaev accepted the elements of freedom and irrationality as inescapable, if God made man in his own image. He understood this to mean that man is made to be a creator, called to free spontaneous activity, rather than formal obedience to God's power.[3] Berdyaev was not so much concerned with the problem of free-will, which he regarded as a recognition of man's responsibility without which he could not be held innocent or guilty, as with freedom which is part of the structure of reality. In talking of this he was confusing and perhaps confused, because he used the language of speculative mysticism derived from Jacob Boehme to describe the mystery which bounds human knowledge.

In the beginning was the abyss of "the Divine Nothing" or the Absolute of negative theology, which Berdyaev indentified with Eckhart's *Gottheit* (Godhead, or the God beyond God) and with Boehme's *Ungrund* (the groundless abyss of being)[4]. From this abyss was born the Creator God and "meonic freedom". This latter concept is difficult if not impossible to express; it is almost like the remainder of the Divine Nothing, left over after the Creator God has been born. It represents the possibility of all things, but is literally nothing, hence Berdyaev's term, "meonic" (*me on*, nothing) freedom. With the Creator comes simultaneously the creation of the world and the invitation to men to co-operate with the Creator through the use of freedom. The offer of freedom, however, involves the possibility of rebellion, and, as rebellion, the nothing of freedom becomes evil. God then descends into the abyss of freedom become evil, and by manifesting himself in sacrifice not power, overcomes misused freedom, not by external force, but by enlightening it from within, so that the whole world regains freedom. Berdyaev sees this "theogonic process" as the acting out in eternity, in the hidden life of the Deity, of what is expressed historically in the Incarnation in Christ[5]. Such talk is confusing, and no more than speculation. Even if we accept Berdyaev's protest that he is attempting to express mystical insights in rational language, and to describe a living God with whom man has an affinity, one may question its usefulness.

It can be argued that in talking about the "theogonic process", Berdyaev projects human speculation to describe what is essentially unknowable, the inner life of God, in a way which is not helpful, and may be quite literally nonsense, because it goes beyond anything that can be called knowledge. Berdyaev, however, distinguished the Godhead (Eckhart's *Gottheit*), which is the inexpressible mystery of God as he is in himself, from God, who reveals himself in the ways we recognize as the Trinity (*Gott*). Not that Berdyaev was postulating more than one God. The distinction is rather in our experience and talk of God. There is one God. In cataphatic theology we are able to say positive things about the God who reveals himself as Trinity. We are concerned with God's own self-objectification to make himself knowable. In describing this we use analogies and pictures taken from society and man's own being. Man also finds himself in communion with the Mystery which makes itself known in mystical experience. When he tries to describe this, he is forced back into the negative ways of apophatic theology. This recognition that God is beyond our concepts and symbols should liberate us from distorting anthropomorphism which becomes imprisoned in analogies drawn from human authority, legal processes, and punishment.

The usefulness of the concept, the *Ungrund*, the abyss of Nothingness, is also questionable. Like Boehme, Berdyaev called it the divine chaos, not in the sense of confusion, but as the source from which life could develop, e.g. an egg is the "chaos" of the bird. The *Ungrund* is that undeveloped complex totality from which all things comes. Berdyaev did not want to absorb all things into God, but it is hard to see how he can avoid this, even if he follows the way of negative theology. Further, if the *Ungrund* is absolutely Nothing, it is difficult to see how it can be chaos in Boehme's sense. If it is an undeveloped totality in Boehme's sense, it cannot be totally undetermined. It must have already built into it certain characteristics which will guide its development. How is it that the God of love emerges from the groundless chaos? It must already be that kind of being, which we apprehend in terms of creation, liberation, and fulfillment. Berdyaev here tried to get behind the human projections we call God to the reality we seek to express by them. In the attempt he merely substituted one set of models for another.

The positive element which comes out of Berdyaev's attempt to do justice to the mystery of God and freedom, is his recognition that freedom introduces the possibility of the irrational and of evil into the world. Both pantheism and pure theism are unable to deal adequately with the problem of evil for both deny the reality of freedom. Pantheism on the one hand can find no other source for evil apart from

God, and God is good. Evil therefore becomes a moment in the development of good, which appears evil to us because we cannot see the process of development as a single whole.[6] Berdyaev fiercely rejected any theodicy which argued that suffering could be justified as the inevitable means by which the individual contributes to the creation of a perfect order. Such a subordination is incompatible with freedom and the creation of personality, and justifies not God but injustice, evil and suffering, by rationalizing the inexplicable doctrine of providence in terms of an autocratic monarch. On the other hand, theism, which also sees God as good, can find no origin for evil in God. Because it takes evil seriously, it is forced to postulate the existence of another being alongside God. This is seen, for example, in forms of dualism which see God as spiritual and evil as material. Evil, however, is spiritual in the Satan myth, for Satan is not 'the autonomous source of evil' but

> "the manifestation of irrational freedom
> at the highest spiritual levels",[7]

objectified in mythological form.
Here we see again the concept of the autocratic God who overrules all that opposes his authority and purpose. Both pantheism and theism fail to apprehend God revealing himself in freedom, love and sacrifice, which is the kernel of the Christian answer to the request for a theodicy[8].

In this way, Berdyaev argued that the Christian revelation presupposes the existence of freedom and the possibility of evil and suffering. He denied that the source of evil is to be found in God or in a being which exists alongside God, but in the very nature of freedom. In the beginning was the Logos, but correlative with it was freedom which makes both good and evil possible. Evil, however, has no independent and positive existence. It is a negative and destructive caricature of the Divine. It is caused by the self-affirmation and spiritual pride which separates man from the divine source of life, and creates a disharmony which disrupts the material world.[9].

In considering the privative theory of evil Hick has distinguished "a valid theological insight arising out of the Christian revelation" and "a questionable theological conceptuality" used to present it[10]. The insight, and inference from the Christian doctrine of God and Creation, regards evil as the going wrong of something which is good. It denies the ultimate reality of evil and warns against dualism as a way of theodicy. The theory built on this insight uses a philosophical tradition which goes back through medieval mysticism to Ancient Greece and regards evil as nothingness and non-being. This does not mean that such things as non-being or nothingness exist. When the good goes wrong or fails to achieve its potential, it becomes twisted and warped, and ultimately ceases to exist. There is no need to postulate a realm of non-being as a kind of mirror-image alongside the realm of being. But this is what Berdyaev does. He seeks to avoid an ultimate dualism by this *Ungrund* doctrine which takes both the creator God and the meonic freedom into the Godhead. It is, however, unnecessary to resort to this kind of language, if we recognise that freedom is not a thing which exists, but the condition which is essential for all spiritual existence and activity, including God's. By using what "can be useful as a piece of poetic diction"[11] as a metaphysical concept Berdyaev hypostatized a reality in a way which is both false and misleading.

Christianity, as a religion of redemption, presupposes the reality of evil, but it distinguishes suffering from evil. Although suffering is inescapable, it is not necessarily evil, for it can become a path of salvation and so answer the "tormenting question of theodicy".[12] Of the three fundamental answers to questioning about suffering, Buddhism and Stoicism both reject suffering and seek release from it. Christianity however "in the enlightened bearing of suffering seeks liberation and salvation". Buddhism seeks to escape suffering by repudiating the world and rejecting the cross in a life of detachment as the road to enlightenment. Stoicism accepts the world but offers liberation by changing the attitude to the world and everything capable of bringing suffering. Buddhism seeks detachment, Stoicism apathy, but neither seeks to change the world. Christianity, on the other hand, "teaches us to bear the cross of life," by which the world is freed from evil[13]. This means not that we have to seek out suffering or impose it on ourselves and others, but that we accept the enlightened bearing of suffering which falls to our lot. Much sadistic and masochistic suffering in Christian history has been imposed from a mistaken assumption that human suffering pleases God as punishment for sin. Man's real problem, however, is not the intellectual problem of explaining suffering but the spiritual problem of so bearing suffering that it is changed from a gloomy and destructive experience into an enlightened following of the path to salvation. Man is unable to do this himself, but

> "the God who has become Man and taken upon
> himself the suffering of Man and the whole
> creation can vanquish the source of evil
> which gives rise to suffering".[14]

Thus the God-Man shows us a theodicy which does not rationalise the mysteries of evil or of freedom. At the same time it has important implications about the nature of God and his relationship with man and the world.

Berydaev's theodicy presents God not as the divine autocrat, as "Lord", but as "the Saviour and Liberator from slavery of the world"[15]. The concept of God as master and man as slave is derived from our relationship in human society, although the relationship of God to men can not be described adequately in terms of social relationships of dominance and subjection. Equally, the relationship is not to be conceived in terms of power borrowed from nature, for God does not operate through necessity or impose himself by force. God does not dominate man or exhibit himself as a power which demands a subservient and slavish reverence. He does not treat us as slaves, who must obey his will without question, but as sons called to fulfil his will freely[16]. Such a concept, however, is possible only when God reveals himself not as the despotic monarch of monotheism but as the Son, the God-Man, and as Spirit. God shows himself in the world always *incognito* and preserves man's freedom by his self-emptying in Christ. But

> "it is with difficulty that men bear the
> *incognito* of the Divine and the *kenosis*
> of Christ. They would like an imperial
> majesty of God, and the God-Man".[17]

Thus Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor is right, men want a God who rules by miracle, mystery, and authority, and wish to escape the God who offers freedom.

Berdyaev, then, accepts that Feuerbach was right to say that man has been enslaved by his own projections, which he creates from the world of nature and from society. Feuerbach for example, says that man derives from his own political regime the belief that "God is author, preserver

and ruler of the world"[18]. If this is so we would expect changing concepts of God with changing political arrangements. Feuerbach was prepared to recognise a change from a patriarchal to a despotic concept of God, but dismissed as an absurdity the idea of a constitutional God. Now it is true, as Berdyaev suggests, that the understanding of what we mean by God is coloured by survivals and influences from earlier times, but there seems to be no reason why we should not use the ideas of constitutional monarchy to express our experience of God. Feuerbach was perhaps willing to accept only a despotic view of God because that was an easier idol to smash. Berdyaev's concept of God-Manhood, however, which seeks to do justice to Christian experience of God in Christ, makes the despotic image of God unnecessary and points to a more democratic or constitutional model, which is preferable, not on political grounds, but because it is more in accord with our understanding of personality and morality. Or rather, the political model should be replaced by one taken from personal and loving relationships.

The question remains, however, whether in giving this interpretation Berdyaev has not abandoned or lost an important element in the Christian understanding of God. Indeed the crux of the mystery of suffering and evil lies in the assertion that God is both good and almighty. Berdyaev said,

> "God is not world providence, that is to say, not a ruler and sovereign of the universe, not *pantokrator*. God is freedom and meaning, love and sacrifice".[19]

Such an assertion seems at first glance to contradict the Christian understanding of God, and certainly Berdyaev could here have expressed himself with more care. When we look more carefully both at Berdyaev's meaning and at the Christian concept of omnipotence, we shall see that the disparity is more apparent than appears at first sight. However, there seems to be an inconsistency in Berdyaev's thought, for although he denied that God is to be thought of in terms of power, he wrote

> "God the Creator is all-powerful over being, over the created world, but He has no power over non-being, over the uncreated freedom which is impenetrable to him".[20]

Alongside the creator God he sees freedom as something which emerges with him from the primeval abyss of the *Ungrund*. The condition of freedom determines the kind of world which God can make, but if God does not work by necessity, nor force himself on man, then it is difficult to see how Berdyaev can speak of him as all-powerful over being.

The trouble is that he has not spelt out clearly what he means by calling God omnipotent. Both the Greek *pantocrator* and the Latin *omnipotens* are not so much philosophic terms as "adjectives of glorification", used outside the Bible of the pagan Gods, and in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew "Sabaoth", "Lord of Hosts"[21]. In the New Testament the basic idea is to denote the sovereignty of God shown in his activity to control the world, by preventing chaos from destroying the cosmos, and avoiding the triumph of wickedness and disorder. More positively, the divine sovereignty is seen in God's work to watch over his Word and bring it to fulfilment. Now sovereignty can be maintained by the exercise of physical force, but this is destructive. Instead, God seeks to win over those who oppose his rule not by force, but by love which is prepared to give itself. While love is powerful, it is not omnipotent, for it can be rejected. Nevertheless, we believe that in the long run it will overcome all rejections of its claims. The Christian assertion of the omnipotence of God is a declaration of faith and hope.

Berdyaev's rejection of the idea of God as power and his assertion of the Creator God's omnipotence over the created world have to be understood in these terms. The Christian God is not the God of pantheism who includes all things in himself, nor the divine autocrat who demands and enforces submission, but the God who longs for a free response from men in love, and is prepared to share the work of dealing with the evil in the world. He is not, as Barth said, power-in-itself, for that would be chaos, but power whose character is shown as love in Jesus Christ[22]. When we speak of God as Almighty or *pantocrator*, we are affirming our faith in the divine sovereignty thought of as "love endowed with power, power subordinated to love"[23]. Berdyaev's meaning could be expressed more accurately if we said that God is not *force* but *love*, and this would leave us free to speak of the power of God shown in Jesus Christ.

The question arises then, whether the weakening of the concept of omnipotence does not remove the need for theodicy altogether. It is often said that unless God is both good and almighty, there is no problem. This, however, is too simple, for evil, even if it is a mere fact of existence, appears to contradict the conviction that the world ought to make sense. Here Berdyaev's discussion of the problem is valuable in its recognition that in both human and divine life there is an element of inescapable tragedy[24]. There is the tragedy of Fate which so exercised the Greek mind. Fate is "the solidified, hardened outcome of the dark meonic freedom", and it imposes itself on men as tragedy in situations for which they are not responsible. It is possible to rise above such tragedy. But the primary kind of tragedy is not that of Fate, but the tragedy of Freedom, when there is a conflict between principles which are equally noble and lofty. At times it appears almost as if the very existence of freedom made evil inevitable. Certainly Berdyaev saw tragedy as an essential part of the Divine Life, for the innocent takes responsibility for dealing with evil in the world. Berdyaev's interpretation of omnipotence points to the Christian doctrine of the loving God who gives himself for the world, but it raises, too the question of divine passibility.

Berdyaev argued that the doctrine that God is self-sufficient, immobile, and impassible, is inconsistent with the Biblical tradition which speaks of God's jealousy, wrath, and love. Admittedly, in talking of the emotions of God we are speaking symbolically, and when we use negative theology we have to deny that God is angry, or even that he is good. But these symbols point to some characteristics of God as men have experienced him. To speak of him in terms of love and sacrifice is more worthy than to speak in terms of self-sufficient immobility. In his denial of divine impassibility, however, Berdyaev would appear to be in conflict with the mainstream of Christian tradition. Lossky criticises Berdyaev for teaching that tragedy has an essential part in the divine life. He sees it as the improper influence of 19th century romantic philosophy[25]. While it must be admitted that Berdyaev inevitably reflects his 19th century background and the influence of German philosophy, nevertheless his rejection of a simple divine impassibility points to a difficulty in the traditional doctrine of God. In

hellenistic thought God is essentially immutable, insusceptible to any suffering or passion, and incapable of mutual relations with his creatures[26]. This belief in ontological unchangeableness is contradicted if we believe that God enters into the kind of relationship with men which is proclaimed in the New Testament. Attempts during the Christological and Trinitarian controversies of the first five centuries to reconcile the Greek doctrine of God's impassibility with the Biblical doctrine of the Incarnation were unreal. If we insist on the impassibility of God in some sense, we have to say that Christ suffered only as man which is to divide his personality.

Three kinds of passibility can be distinguished[27]. The first, external passibility, concerns the Divine capacity for suffering in relation to creatures outside himself. Aristotle rules this out absolutely. Aquinas tried to reconcile the Bible with Aristotle by saying that the creation does not exist outside of God. This, however, seems to be inconsistent with the Judeo-Christian tradition that God has created the world as an independent realm alongside himself, and could lead to a kind of pantheism. We should, rather, see in the creation of other beings God's voluntary self-limitation to allow these beings freedom. God, then, is relatively passible, i.e. he can suffer in relation to the things he has created. In the second sense God is properly described as impassible for he is "without passions", that is, is not subject to movements of mind contrary to reason as a result of emotion. Instead, impassibility signifies "the absolute steadfastness of will" which might be better called the integrity of God. There is a third sense which Quick calls "sensational passibility", intermediate between the other two. Traditionally, it is denied that God is susceptible to pain or pleasure, but if this is so, he ought to be "insensitive to human sin or virtue, unsympathetic with the sufferings of his creatures". Again this is inconsistent with the Biblical doctrine that God loves the world and is grieved by sin. This ability to suffer is part of the divine activity to overcome evil, and is the consequence of the divine self-limitation. Berdyaev would seem to go beyond this, however, for he sees this passibility within the Trinity itself. He could speak, for example, of "suffering within the inner life of the Trinity", although for this, he admits, there can be no clear analogy drawn from life in our natural world[28]. If, however, we accept Berdyaev's argument that the Trinity is God in relation to the world, he would appear to be justified in speaking of God's passibility, provided that this is not taken to infringe the integrity of the divine working. When, however, we speak of the internal life of God in himself we must show a greater reticence and agnosticism than Berdyaev thought necessary, and recognize limits to what we can know.

In all his wrestling with the problems of theodicy, Berdyaev was attempting to do justice to the Christian conviction that in Christ we see God at work to deal with evil. He shows us a God who accepts the limitations of freedom and, by his enlightened bearing of suffering, overcomes evil.[29] In this God shows himself not in force but in sacrificial love which accepts the tragedies of Fate and Freedom and triumphs over them. This mystery of redemption, which answers the mystery of evil, has been rationalised in Christian thought because it has been treated as a judicial process, or a business deal. But,

> "In Christianity Redemption is the work of love and not that of justice, the sacrifice of a divine and infinite love, not a propitiatory sacrifice, nor the settlement of accounts".[30]

This understanding of redemption overcomes the concept of what Berdyaev calls "the vampire God"[30] who demands blood-sacrifice as a condition of forgiveness. Nevertheless, "vampirism" still persists within Christian thinking, for it fails to recognise that the sacrifice of Christ is the life and love with which we are called to co-operate. There are within Christianity two spiritual types. One understands the mysteries of redemption juridically as pardon and justification which delivers men from perdition; this is connected with the old Covenant and is typical of St. Augustine. The other sees redemption as the making of the New Covenant in which creation is transfigured and a new spiritual man appears. Clement of Alexandria presented redemption in these terms. In his treatment of redemption, Berdyaev gave powerful expression to this second line of interpretation within the Christian tradition, but, as so often, he asserted one by denying the other. Here justification, sacrifice, debt, all have their place within the exposition of the mystery of redemption seen as the work of love. Nevertheless, his theodicy underlines the inadequacy of any doctrine of a pantheistic God which absorbs man and the world into the deity, or a dualistic God who is so exalted above the world as to be indifferent to it.

The clue to theodicy must be found in what God has revealed to us about himself, as the God who makes us in his image, seeks to win us to share his work, and work in us to fulfill our efforts. In expounding this Berdyaev tried to clarify our understanding of God, and defend him against the slanders that he is a cruel tyrant or an indifferent power. He faced squarely the reality of freedom, although he spoke of it as some kind of object which exists rather than a condition of our being. He reminded us that ultimately God is an ineffable mystery who chooses to reveal himself through creation and through experience of what we call the Holy Spirit, and that all of this is focussed in the Incarnation, where man and God meet. This is the starting point from which we can begin to understand ourselves and God, and also find the answer to the mystery of evil and suffering. This answer does not enable us to comprehend these mysteries, in the sense that we can give a complete, rational explanation of their existence. Rather, it shows us how they can be taken over and conquered by the weakness which Christ shows us to be an expression of the divine love.[32] Much of our difficulty in finding that answer comes from a mistaken understanding of the mystery of God, and Berdyaev helps us in the necessary work of clarification.

NOTES:

Much of the material in this article is derived from the author's unpublished Ph.D. thesis *The Reality of Spirit: the response to reductivist critiques of theism in the later work of Berdyaev*, presented to the University of London in 1978. In its present form it was first read as a paper at the Ecumenical Institute for Theological Research, Tantur, Jerusalem.

1. Nicolas Berdyaev *Destiny of Man*, N.Y. Harper (1960), p. 43.
2. Nicolas Berdyaev *Freedom and the Spirit*, London, Bles (1935), p. 185.
3. *Destiny of Man*, p. 32.
4. *ibid*, p. 25.
5. *ibid*, p. 29.
6. *Freedom and the Spirit*, pp. 163ff.
7. *ibid*.
8. Nicolas Berdyaev *Slavery and Freedom*, London, Bles (1944), p. 89.
9. *Freedom and the Spirit*, pp. 166-171.

10. J. Hick *Evil and the God of Love*, London (1968), pp. 185-193.
11. *ibid*, p. 193.
12. Nicolas Berdyaev *The Divine and the Human*, London, Bles (1949), p. 73.
13. *ibid*, p. 74.
14. *ibid*, p. 74.
15. Nicolas Berdyaev *Dream and Reality*, London, Bles (1950), p. 177cf. *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 82-4.
16. *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 149.
17. *Divine and Human*, p. 13.
18. *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 82, cf Ludwig Feuerbach *Lectures on the Essence of Religion* N.Y. Harper and Row (1967), pp. 144-149.
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20. *Destiny of Man*, p. 25.
21. J. Burnaby *The Belief of Christendom*, London, S.P.C.K. (1959), p. 27.
22. K. Barth *Dogmatics in Outline*, London, S.C.M. (1949), pp. 46-49.
23. W. Temple *Readings in St. John*, London, Macmillan (1949), p. 83.
24. *Destiny of Man*, pp. 30ff.
25. V. Lossky *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, London, Clarke (1957), p. 45.
26. O. Quick *Doctrines of the Creed*, London, Nisbet (1938), pp. 122-7.
27. *ibid*, pp. 184-7.
28. *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 192.
29. *Destiny of Man*, pp. 25f.
30. *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 174.
31. *ibid*, p. 179.
32. cf L. Boff *Jesus Christ Liberator*: Maryknoll, N.Y. (1978) p. 119.

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R.R. Reuther, SCM Press 1983
Pp. 289. £7.95.

The blurb-writer remarks, with rather more justification than is usual in such persons that Professor Rosemary Reuther's new book amounts to a *Principles of Christian Theology* written from a feminist perspective. This theology begins from a myth of creation and redemption and goddess, a myth related to the tellings now orthodox among us rather as is the reworking of Adama and Apollo and Sheba in *Battlestar Galactica*, but a myth designed, as that amusing television series is, I suppose, not, to prompt a revaluation of our cultural assumptions. To show us at the start what truth there is in the scholastic tag *quidquid recipitur secundum modum recipientis recipitur.* Those domineering, earth-scarring, complacent males who run our society and its religion, could receive revelation only as from a domineering, earth-scarring, complacent, male God. From such a revelation an authority may be derived for burnt-offering, crusade, and defoliation, for male hierarchs, patriarchal government, and derring-do, for a male's understanding of himself as *imago Dei.*

Professor Reuther's thesis is forwarded, the blurb-writer is right again, by 'personal' as well as 'intellectual' references. She even characterizes gossip and its attendant "bitchiness" as a 'network of female communication and covert resistance'. A reader may, therefore, feel justified in sometimes reacting to her work in anecdotal terms. Having read the first part of her book in the train on the way to the English National Opera's current production of *La Traviata*, I was the readier to appreciate what the elder Germont is doing in his Act II scene with Violetta. I felt, as keenly as on that very first time I distinguished the words being sung, how appalling was his insistence that it was God's will for the fallen woman to enable his son's escape from the disapproval of society, at whatever cost to herself. Even the splendour of Mr. Norman Bailey's singing could not distract me from the recognition that Verdi's social criticism was entirely congruent with Professor Reuther's feminist analysis of experience.

Experientia facit theologum, Luther remarked of his life and work, and it is by such experiences in the Dress Circle, or the *Turm,* or the window at Ostia, that a language is given for theological reflection. 'What have been called the objective sources of theology, Scripture and tradition, are themselves codified, collective human experience'. Religious authorities attempt to persuade us that the symbols in which they express our experience should be accepted as dictating what can be experienced. Woman can recognize this strategy more clearly than men who are half in love with easeful orthodoxy. As Ms. Sallie McFague insists in *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language,* the allegation of women's experience exposes the accepted theological tradition of our society as inappropriate for the expression of universal human experience. 'Feminist theology makes the sociology of theological knowledge visible, no longer hidden behind mystifications of objectified divine and universal authority'. It may be necessary to re-examine those theologies which christian orthodoxy has rejected in order to see whether they might have been offering some image of experience more consonant with what women know. Ms. Olivia Harris has been showing lately how attractive such a re-examination might be. Women in Brazil and Colombia, and in several mediterranean countries, have recovered a source of inspiration in the femaleness of divinity. Professor Reuther takes such a programme to be vitiated from the start. It is 'historically inaccurate' and 'ideologically distorted'. The Biblical tradition is not quite empty of resources for feminist theology, and the old Goddess cults of the Levant were often vehicles of male power. She is content that ancient paganism 'does not exist as a living tradition'.

Other human beings, even males, may have at least a momentary appreciation of what the Goddesses reveal. Autobiography and anecdote seem appropriate again. On the afternoon of 17 December, 1978, having taken a 'bus for the greater part of the road, I walked along the Sacred Way from Athens to Eleusis. The great precinct was deserted. The janitor had gone off for a nap. There was not even a solitary German or Japanese tourist. So, free of the feeling that I would be giving others a bad example of sacrilege, which had restrained me on previous visits, I determined this time to sit on the *agelastos petra,* that laughless rock upon which Demeter had rested in her search for her daughter, Persephone. I did so. The winter sun had that afternoon been strong enough to warm the stone. I shut my eyes. The memory of the *mater dolorosa* was strong, also. I heard the Goddess weep'.

Professor Reuther says nothing of Demeter, but she does make time to note 'the widely diffused image of the Goddess without an accompanying male cult figure' in Paleolithic times. She construes the large-breasted, large-buttocked, large-thighed, Lady of prehistoric religion as 'an impersonalized image of the mysterious powers of fecundity', though to me the Lady has seemed quite closely related to the Beauty Queen, and expressive of some male notions of personal charm. Professor Reuther is interested in the Goddess as imaging an order of complementary existence, of human beings living in ecological harmony with animals and plants. This is a particular theme of her feminist theology. 'We cannot criticise the hierarchy of male over female without ultimately criticising and overcoming the hierarchy of humans over nature'. Professor Reuther's ecological sympathy is of a piece with her social programme. 'Any ecological ethic must always take into account the structures of social domination and exploitation that mediate domination of nature and prevent concern for the welfare of the whole community in favour of the immediate advantage of the dominant class, race, and sex'. In all talk of this kind, of course, there is something to prompt the male fear that women will cause trouble if they can. It is a fear expressed, Professor Reuther tells us, in the theologies of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Barth, and which has erupted into 'prolonged bouts of witch-hunting that took the lives of as many as a million people, most of them women'. The eruption in Puritan communities of New England was, significantly, against women who had some talent, were economically independent, and lacked the required docility towards male neighbours and clergy. Such women were accused of being in league with nature against men.

It is no wonder, therefore, if those women who understand what has been going on are enraged. 'Males take on a demonic face. One begins to doubt their basic humanity'. Chief among such angry women is Professor Mary Daly. When I was teaching at Boston College in 1971 and 1972 she was turning men out of her theology course along the corridor on the ground that their presence would slow down the class because the universe that human beings know would have to be explained to them. Going back to that university to give a lecture last October, I was told that she turns them out still.

Professor Reuther, while acknowledging the real cause of such anger, does not wish to delay on the alienating past. She wants to be remaking christian theology. She looks out for redeeming signs in Jesus. And in his parables she finds a language which goes beyond the criticism of existing power systems to suggest a wholly new pattern of relations in our dealings with one another and with God. 'Women play an important role in this Gospel vision of the vindication of the lowly in God's new order. It is the women of the oppressed and marginalized groups who are often pictured as the representatives of the lowly. The dialogue at the well takes place with a Samaritan woman. A Syro-Phoenician woman is the prophetic seeker who forces Jesus to concede redemption of the Gentiles. Among the poor it is the widows who are most destitute. Among the ritually unclean, it is the prostitutes who are the furthest from righteousness'. So Jesus prompts a feminist theology which will liberate 'the oppressed of the oppressed', that is, 'women of the oppressed'. But a feminist theology must find Jesus problematic. Even if the theologian reaches behind the christological symbols which have been used to enforce male dominance, and remakes, as Professor Reuther surely does, the scriptural figure of the Servant in her own image, the Jesus of history presents only in partial, fragmentary, conditioned, terms, the possibilities of being human. Professor Reuther will have nothing to do with attempts to see Jesus as embodying the feminine, either in the *kitsch* of repository statuary, or in the romantic devotion to one who is meek and mild. She would have made short work of that delight in christological androgyny that Coleridge, Tennyson and F.D. Maurice indulged. It is certainly a pity that she did not have space to notice Maurice's remarks that 'Truth is essentially the manly virtue' and that in Christ 'Truth is wedded to Obedience, the characteristic of the Woman'. She does, however, have some sharp things to say about 'clergy and other males who belong to the more humanistic disciplines and who find themselves marginalized from the centre of (male-macho) power', complaining that they have been deprived of their right 'to cry, to feel, to relate', and about patriarchs who, as a grand exception, will take over the family cooking when it's a matter of a barbecue on the porch. It is a necessary preliminary for a theology of the future that we should abandon the myth of such distinguishing marks of female and male. It is a myth which is supported on many levels by male organizers of society. Men have a 'cultural tendency to identify their ego with left-brain characteristics and to see right-brain characteristics as the "repressed" part of themselves, which they in turn project upon and identify with women'. Men have a 'cultural tendency' also to seek out dichotomy and place reality in pairs to match their own opposition to women. They re-interpret equivalents as complements, as in their theory of the old Goddess and God couple of Near Eastern cults. 'There are tensions that define ancient religion – especially between chaos and cosmos, death and life – but divine forces, male and female are ranged on both sides'. After all, Professor Reuther says in an innocently incidental phrase, 'the Canaanite Goddess continued to be worshipped alongside Yahweh in the Solomonic temple for two-thirds of its existence'. Men have suppressed the witness to equivalence in their exegesis of Jesus' parables. He imaged the divine as a farmer who sows seed, a woman folding leaven into dough, a shepherd who recovers a sheep, a woman who sweeps up a coin. Such sayings are 'basically the work of Christian prophets', male and female, who speak out of the spirit of Jesus, representing Jesus' teaching as it is effective not in the past but in the present. 'Soon, however, a developing institutional ministry (bishops) felt the need to cut off this ongoing speaking in the name of Christ'. So those who are loyal to the spirit of Jesus must look for a Third Age.

There is no 'once-for-all' disclosure of the divine in the past; but by holding the memory of the life and death of Jesus among other memories of other persons, we may come to recognize what 'authenticity' there may be in ourselves and those we encounter, and in earlier reachings toward the new world. Montanism is to be remembered as preserving the prophetic office of women as well as men. And a gnostic group has left us, in the Nag Hammadi library, witness to their veneration for the apostolic authority of Mary Magdalene. Within the confines of the seventeenth-century Quaker movement, 'thanks in no small part to the role of Margaret Fell', something of a coherent theology of the *imago Dei* in all human beings was developed, but, even among them, 'in the world' the male was still to rule. The late eighteenth-century Shakers saw that if women and men were created in the image of God, there must be androgyny in God, and in the divine order of redemption; 'the Messiah must appear in female form as well'. Their ministerial order properly reflects their soteriology. In their Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, leadership is given equally to celibate orders of men and women. And there are signs that, 'although Eddy stopped short of allowing her a new Christ', she too saw the need for a messianic disclosure in feminine form. She accepted the title of new "Mary".

The original Mary of christians does at least look promising as a feminine sign wholly disassociated from the myth of woman as bringer of evil. No-one, to use a neologism Professor Reuther employs on at least six occasions, *scapegoats* female sexuality for sin and death in orthodox mariology. In her exegesis of the *Magnificat*, Professor Reuther makes much of Mary's dominion over her own body. When the angel arrives, Mary does not consult Joseph, but makes her own decision. There is a contrast here with Hannah, who wanted to fulfil her husband's expectations of a woman. Mary makes liberation possible through her free act, and, at the same time, is herself liberated. 'She is the humiliated ones who have been lifted up, the hungry ones who have been filled with good things'. It would have been more consonant with Professor Reuther's professed interest in all humanity if she had noted that *Luke* 1.46-55 depends not only from *I Samuel* 2.2-8 but also from *II Samuel* 6.9-23, and that the evangelist is remembering a woman who sneered at the poor, hankered for the restoration of the mighty on their thrones, and refused to welcome the divine power. However that may be, Mary herself may represent, in the language of Latin American liberationists, God's 'preferential option' for the poor. In an older language, she may present a *metanoia*

within woman by which her familiar role is understood to be the negation of her humanity. 'This *metanoia* necessarily starts within woman herself, who in turn demands a recognition of woman's personhood from men as well'.

That this *metanoia* should be first exemplified in Mary's pregnancy is significant for many women in the present Roman Church. When that anxious, tradition-ridden, well-meaning male, Pope Paul VI, at last brought himself to issue *Humanae Vitae,* my aged mother, long past any child-bearing but with a lasting memory of the horrors of child-birth, and a life-time's accumulation of 'covert resistance' stories about drunken husbands, sadistic rapists, and back-street abortionists with their knitting-needles, ceased, after seventy years of mass-going, to count herself a Roman Catholic. 'That man hates women', she declared. The nature of male power-broking was perfectly revealed to her when the local parish priest called to tell her that 'there is death-bed perversion as well as death-bed conversion' and that it was equally decisive for eternity. At this, my mother slipped from uninstitutionalized christianity into paganism. 'Do you then worship a God who would, if I am making a mistake now, not remember all my years of serving Him? How right I was to make my escape'. In a moment, a twinkling of the eye, she had perceived God, his world and the males in it as just that demonic conspiracy which Professor Mary Daly has worked so long and hard to express.

Professor Reuther sees that any 'enemy-making' of men must in the end subvert the feminist aim. 'The dehumanization of the other ultimately dehumanizes oneself'. After all, if there are no distinguishing marks of temperament then women are not wholly secure against those temptations to domination to which men have succumbed. Women may forget their own experience and collapse into male perversions.

It is not entirely clear where Professor Reuther would locate the Church of her future. Something of it is recognizable in socialist and communist states, but 'socialism, like liberalism, operates under an unstated androcentric bias', assuming that the male work role is the normative human activity. Women are to be given the chance to do men's work. That may be an improvement on the ecclesiastical state in which so many women are denied male jobs, but it is still to accept the perverse as the norm. 'Should we not take the creation and sustaining of human life as the centre and reintegrate alienated maleness into it?' This is the necessary *metanoia.* And its liturgy is the twirling dance of the old Shaker folk. I am sorry that those who presently wear the Shaker clothes and make the Shaker cheeseboards on Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, did not thus explain to me the meaning of their happy chorus-line:

To turn, turn, will be our delight
'Til by turning, turning, we come round right.

Professor Reuther sees a sign of the recovery of blessedness 'within the mortal limits of covenantal existence' in the circle of the Shaker dance. A feminist theology does not, in the end, require a personal existence beyond the dancing-floor.

Her final chapter, 'Eschatology and Feminism', which deals with the old questions of immortality, includes an extended reference, again, to Near Eastern cults, and a comment upon the epic of Gilgamesh which exhibits more clearly than anywhere else in her impressive work that element of her theology which seems to me most alienating. She recalls the scene in which the woman who makes wine, or the 'alewife' as Professor Reuther chooses to call her, tells the hero that his quest for immortality is futile. Gilgamesh should give up such dreams and get on with the business of living. 'The epic', Professor Reuther says, 'confirms this advice in an ironic way'. 'Ironic'? Well, certainly, Gilgamesh, having achieved the quest, is robbed of the plant of immortality that he was bringing to his people; and, certainly, the whole poem is revealed to be Gilgamesh's epitaph, extolling his care for the walls within which his people may live at peace. But 'ironic'? After the verse where he has sung of the snake snatching the sprig of life, the poet has placed the simple phrase

And Gilgamesh wept.

It is the only designed half-line of the poem as we now have it. The poet knew not only that he would need a moment to pull himself together after the recital of such sadness, but that his listeners would feel as keenly in that moment the fragility of human life, the frustration of human friendship, the fallenness of human experience. They would weep too. This, as much as the battle-cry and the missile-count, is the male tradition. '*Sunt lacrimae rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt*'. 'Alas poor Yorick, I knew him, Horatio'. 'I am the enemy you killed, my friend'. 'And Jesus wept'. It is a part of our memory of Jesus that the death of the young, the promising, the unfulfilled, was for him as for us, a sadness. And a sadness whatever practical advice the alewife may offer. The death of any other may be a sign for each one of us, that, however aged, each may die before anything she or he attempted has been brought to completion.

It cannot be enough to say, in the face of this sign, that, 'to the extent to which we have transcended egoism for relation community', we can accept our deaths as 'the final relinquishment of individuated ego into the great matrix of being'. It seems to me that there is something ungracious in such talk of relinquishing or transcending the *locus* of my experience. Especially when Professor Reuther has told me at the very start that 'consciousness is ultimately individual'.

I may, by all this, simply prove myself to be a typical 'White Male-System person' and properly placed by Dr. Anne Wilson Schaef against 'Female-System persons', of any colour, who realize that 'immortality is not a genuine possibility', and spend little or no time worrying about it. In defining this distinction of persons Dr. Schaef simply proves herself unable to sympathise with those members of the human race who so far transcend the individuated grief of particular deaths as to regret our general conditions. *Mortalia,* the things that are not simply going to end in death, but have an inbuilt death from their beginning, are evidently experienced differently, but if human experience is indeed 'the starting point and the ending point of all theological reflection', experience of the tears of things may enjoy a like theological dignity with the experience of little or no worry. I would be loathe to term it either a male experience or a female experience. I have heard the Goddess weep.

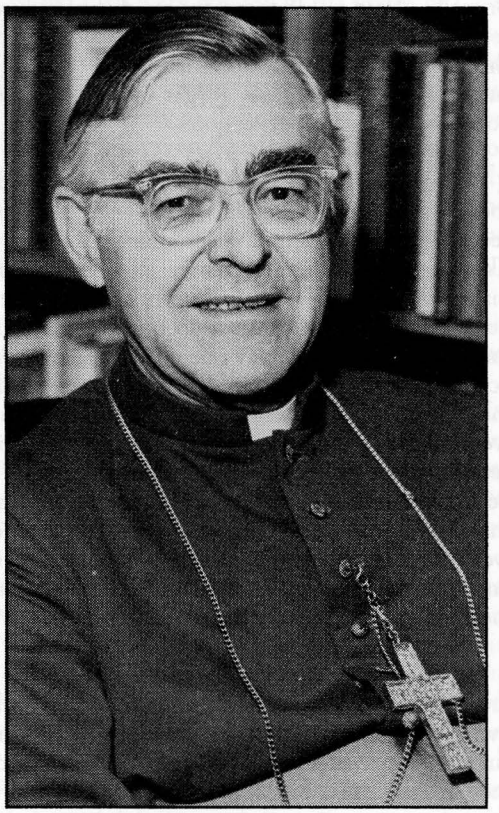
It is not that I hanker after immortality. To hear Demeter weep is not to expect the *epopteia* of the Greater Mysteries of Persephone. I rather entertain the thought that if there is a further world it would be too great a triumph of hope over experience to look for anything very splendid. It is only that I am amazed at the generosity, nobility and

courage which women and men have shewn even in the midst of their uncertainty about what was and what was not a 'genuine possibility'. And that I am almost as much amazed that anyone, but particularly anyone as concerned for universal humanization as Professor Reuther asserts herself to be, should show so little sympathy with them in this uncertainty, and so little sensitivity to the beauty of the art they have made to express that uncertainty.

All this rough, tough, talk suggests, along with the shopping-trolley used as a weapon in the supermarket, and the prams advanced side by side like tanks across the width of the pavement, that women, must, indeed, guard themselves, as Professor Reuther herself warned, from taking on the ruder aspects of the males whose world they mean to change. 'That's a nice hat auntie', I said when I was four years old and susceptible to the slant of a well-placed feather. 'Yes, my dear, it's a hunting hat'. 'Oh, what are you hunting auntie?' 'Men, my dear, men'.

Firmly I Believe and Truly

GRAHAM LEONARD
Bishop of London



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BOOK REVIEWS

Jesus and the Politics of his Day

Edited by Ernest Bammel and C.F.D. Moule. Cambridge University Press, 1984. Pp. xi x 511. £37.50.

Some fifteen years ago Professor Moule remarked to me that the views of the late S.G.F. Brandon, which had recently been advanced in two publications (*Jesus and the Zealots,* 1967, and *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth,* 1968) deserved "full dress treatment". I imagined at the time that he meant an extended review in a learned journal; but in fact he must have already envisaged a period of research by a team of eminent scholars, only now coming to fruition in this impressive (though regrettably expensive) collection of studies. Not that Brandon is the ostensible subject of the book, which (as its title implies) has a wider range than any one scholar's work; and in any case there have been and still are many others who argue for a "political Christ" – the longest essay in this book consists of a comprehensive review by Ernest Bammel of "The revolution theory from Reimarus to Brandon". Yet his arguments dominate this collection from beginning to end, and the seriousness with which these (mainly) Cambridge scholars have addressed themselves to the issue is a tribute to the seriousness of the challenge which the work of Brandon and others have presented to the traditional Christian understanding of a non-revolutionary, non-political Jesus.

Put very crudely, Brandon's case is that Jesus was in fact a rebel against the Roman authority, a zealot and a revolutionary; that the gospels have deliberately suppressed this side of his activity; but that certain tell-tale traces remain of a more violent Jesus in such episodes as the Tribute Money, the Triumphal Entry, the Cleansing of the Temple and the Two Swords. These episodes, and several more besides, are each here subjected to careful and thorough analysis. The result is seldom claimed to be conclusive, but the weight of probability is shown in each case to tell against Brandon's conclusion. Our knowledge of Jesus' cultural and political environment has been gradually increasing; this enables each particular episode to be set in a wider context of probabilities, and a number of more general essays (on "The Poor and the Zealots", "The opposition between Jesus and Judaism" and several other similar topics) has the effect of exposing further weak points in Brandon's reconstruction.

All this is (as befits these distinguished authors) patient, painstaking and judicious. No easy points are scored; there is just a slow erosion, detail by detail, of the probability of Brandon's interpretation of the evidence being correct. It is only on p. 445 that a point is made (by Bammel in his study of "The trial before Pilate") that gives a different turn to the whole debate. The case for "Jesus the Zealot" ultimately depends on what Brandon himself called "the one fact of which we can be certain, namely, the Roman execution of Jesus for sedition" (Trial, p. 141). Taking his stand on this one apparently firm piece of historical knowledge he judges all the gospel evidence which appears inconsistent with it (which is the greater part) to be tendentious fabrication by the early church, and seeks to recover a more reliable account from those few scraps of the gospel tradition which preserve traces of the real, seditious, anti-Roman Jesus. But suppose this "one certain fact" is itself debatable? After four pages of careful discussion Bammel reaches a conclusion that was advocated more than eighty years ago and since forgotten. He writes, "A scrutiny yields the result that the main traits of the pieces of evidence point rather to a Jewish execution than a Roman one". Here at last the judicious approach is as deadly as any rhetorical attack. It is not necessary to show that the execution *was* a Jewish one, only that it might have been. By doing so, Bammel removes at a blow the one certainty on which most "political" reconstructions have relied. At this point Brandon's entire thesis collapses like a house of cards.

Yet even this is perhaps not the final coup de grâce. Much of Brandon's argumentation depended on the assumption that the gospel accounts of Jesus' trial and execution simply do not hold water. "Ludicrous", "preposterous", "manifestly absurd", are phrases that occur again and again in his work with reference to particular episodes. Now if this is your estimation of the gospel narratives you are bound to disbelieve them: almost any reconstruction may seem preferable to that suggested by a narrative which you judge to be manifestly absurd and implausible. Such a view may not be greatly challenged by the painstaking discussion of particular points which fills the Bammel-Moule volume: you do not come to believe that a fairy story is true just because certain secondary features of the landscape can be shown to be plausible. You need to be persuaded that the whole story is worthy of serious attention. This is essentially a *literary* judgement, one that countless readers of the gospels (and not only Christian ones) have made instinctively for themselves, but which deserves to be presented as carefully and honestly as the historical arguments assembled here. We are told in the Preface that some of these essays were completed a decade ago and that the publication was much delayed. Had the same team of scholars been working today, it is possible that they might have made room for one or two collaborators from other disciplines which have recently been making a contribution to New Testament study, in which case the argument for a non-violent Jesus might have been presented even more persuasively.

A.E. Harvey

The Eucharist in Bible and Liturgy

G.D. Kilpatrick. Cambridge University Press 1984. Pp. 120. £15.00

"Differences in words and the ideas behind them separate us from the world in which the Eucharist came into being. Part of my exploration will be directed towards these differences". On the face of it, it may be thought that this book covers much the same ground as J. Jeremias' *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus.* But the content and, even more so, the aim are both very different. Jeremias' primary concern is the analysis of the material, but Dr. Kilpatrick's study endeavours to show how our present eucharistic worship might be affected were we to take the biblical texts seriously. To this end a liturgical draft is given in the appendix. Superficially this might be thought to resemble some of the texts of the ASB, though in fact there are significant differences, the result of the conclusions upon which the draft is based.

Dr. Kilpatrick is in substantial agreement with Jeremias in respect of the priority of Mark 14 as interpreted by I Corinthians 11. In other respects, however, he reaches very different conclusions. For example, he upholds the originality of Shorter Luke on textual grounds; he rightly questions whether the Last Supper was, properly speaking, a Passover meal; he offers the interpretation of the term *anamnesis* as 'proclamation' rather than the familiar retrospective memorial or even 'souvenir'; importantly, also, he allows much more weight to the evidence of the Fourth Gospel in connection with the possible existence of sacred meals in hellenistic Judaism and the Qumran community. In all this the first five chapters of the book provide a brief, comprehensive and stimulating study of the New Testament evidence. Little is said about what Jesus and his disciples thought they were doing when they took their common meal. The prime concern is what the Church made of it in the apostolic period.

The description of the Last Supper in Mark, as received and handed on to the Corinthians by St. Paul, is to be understood as the 'charter-story' of the liturgical eucharist. To use Dom Gregory Dix's distinction, this is the source but not the model. In this approach Dr. Kilpatrick acknowledges his debt to S.H. Hooke and the 'myth and ritual' school of thought. Though the myth and ritual approach has been fruitfully used in Old Testament studies, scholars have not felt nearly so free when they come to the New. Rather than use the tendentious word 'myth' (a caution amply justified by recent events) Dr. Kilpatrick substitutes the neutral term 'character-story', which carries no hidden judgement on the truth or falsehood of the story in question. But granted that its nature and content can be established (p.86), then we are bound to take it as the regulative source of our own eucharistic practice, setting the limits to the propriety or otherwise of what is done.

This is where the problems start. In the first place there is the general problem raised, for example, by D.E. Nineham in *The Use and Abuse of the Bible,* and acknowledged by the present author in his opening sentence, of the great gulf between the world of the Bible and the world of today. The discussion of a particular single topic, the Bible and Liturgy, serves to throw the problem into even higher relief. The solution, it is maintained, will lie in the recovery of a truer understanding of the biblical concepts implicit in the charter-story, in particular those of 'covenant' and 'sacrifice', and also a more exact grasp of the distinction between 'blessing' and 'thanksgiving'. The outcome of such an approach may be seen in the author's liturgical draft. It does not seem to be too outrageous to the sensibilities of the modern worshipper, but it will be best to leave it to each individual reader to determine the actual measure of its success.

The second problem is a hermeneutical one. Putting it baldly, has the charter-story got it right? While we may accept the explanation of the addition of the command to repeat in I Corinthians, there is also the question of the omission of the vow of abstinence, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine &c". The words lend strong support to the suggestion of the presence of a strong eschatological reference in the Eucharist at this time, which is suspected on other grounds[1], and which was lost at a later period. The charter-story is itself selective, and this should give some pause for thought before drawing conclusions too readily.

The long history of the development of the liturgy in East and West and the theological reflections on it do not fall within the scope of Dr. Kilpatrick's study. Nevertheless, this is important in accounting for any possible resistance on the part of "a long-suffering Christian public" to the practical implications of his conclusions. The distinction between sacrifice and sacrament might present such a difficulty. The Eucharist is, surely, both sacrifice and sacrament, the material bearing eternal significance, the vehicle of divine power. The unfortunate and well documented preoccupation with 'the moment of consecration' may distort the understanding of the sacrament but it does not invalidate it, even when, in the words of the late E.C. Ratcliff, the Eucharist has ceased to be regarded as a pass to the Royal Enclosure and is only seen as a national health card entitling you to benefits for self and friends!

Anglicans of the Prayer Book tradition are in a peculiarly awkward position. If Christ has indeed made the one, full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, then is not any notion of eucharistic action in any sense of the words entirely excluded by implication? The whole weight of the service, as a result, came to rest on the act of communion and the fruits of it. The balance is being recovered only slowly and somewhat painfully in the new services.

The truth is that people worship in their living traditions that have grown and developed over the centuries. There have been misunderstandings and distortions, but the light has not been quenched. Part of the process of the renewal of the liturgy will be the identification of origins of the distortion, just as equally part is the illumination of the source from which each of the various traditions stem. While the present book is primarily concerned with the latter task, the author is well aware of the need to make it speak clearly to us in our worship. The difficulties involved are not unlike those of enabling the Bible to speak with equal clarity and distinctness in preaching.

Hugh Bates

1. See, for example, J.A.T. Robinson, *Twelve New Testament Studies,* Chapter XI, 'The Earliest Christian Liturgical Sequence?' Studies in Biblical Theology No. 34, SCM Press, 1962.

Biblical Faith: An Evolutionary Approach

Gerd Theissen. SCM Press. 1984. Pp. xiii + 194. £5.95.

One of the besetting sins of New Testament scholars (and no doubt of other scholars too) is insularity. But no-one could accuse Gerd Theissen of this. In previous books he has applied the methods of sociology, psychology and structuralist literary criticism to the study of the New Testament, and in his latest book he makes use of biology (and specifically the theory of evolution) to shed light on biblical faith. In concentrating on one or two central points, I shall not be able to do justice to a book which is full of challenging and often illuminating ideas about the nature of biblical faith, the relationship between science and religion, and social ethics. I wish to criticize some of the theses he sets

forth; but I do not wish to detract from his achievement, which is essentially to open one's eyes to the possibility of connections between phenomena which at first sight seem quite different. It is true that some of these connections seem a bit far-fetched; not every reader will be convinced that the information about the sex-life of the stickleback on p. 76 is strictly relevant to a discussion of the biblical prohibition of images! But the experiment of setting biblical studies against a much wider background than usual should surely be welcomed.

Theissen's main argument is that basic categories from the theory of evolution – mutation, selection and adaptation – can also be applied to cultural evolution in general and the biblical tradition in particular. 'Mutation' refers to spontaneous changes in the genetic information of an organism. 'Selection' refers to an increased capacity to survive and reproduce, which gives one organism an advantage over another in a competitive environment. 'Adaptation' refers to an organism's ability to change in response to the demands of the environment. When applied to cultural evolution, 'mutation' refers to the possibility of innovative human behaviour. Thus, in the sphere of biblical religion, Jesus of Nazareth may be seen as a 'mutation' in human life, and his proclamation as offering the possibility of a more successful 'adaptation' to 'ultimate reality'. But there is no place here for 'selection', for Jesus's message is a *protest against selection,* a protest against the principle by which the strong flourish and the weak perish. Selection must be replaced by solidarity. Whereas in the biological model, mutations are selected for survival on the basis of their adaptation to the environment, in its theological analogue the content of the 'mutation' which took place in Jesus is the rejection of the harsh principle of selection, and this is the way in which human adaptation to ultimate reality must finally be achieved. There is thus a fundamental difference between evolution in the biological and in the theological realm.

This disparity introduces a certain amount of confusion into Theissen's argument. I think the problem is that he is trying to do two incompatible things at once. He is seeking to interpret biblical faith as a protest against the harsh principle of selection, in the name of the solidarity between all human beings. Thus, the heart of his argument is that biblical faith is *anti*-evolutionary. But he is also impressed with the possibility of using biological terms *positively* to shed light on biblical faith. The result is a curious hybrid: a mutation (successfully adapted to ultimate reality) whose content is the rejection of the principle of selection. In biological terms this is an absurdity, and this means that the fundamental analogy between biology and theology is incoherent.

Theissen finds a protest against selection and an assertion of the need for human solidarity in biblical monotheism as a whole, in the proclamation and ministry of Jesus, and in the early Christian experience of the Spirit. His underlying goal is perhaps to oppose the pious individualism which characterizes so much of the church's use of the Bible, and to replace this with a much broader concern for the welfare of society as a whole. But he presents this interpretation of biblical faith not as a response to the needs of the contemporary church but as the result of sociological analysis; he claims that from the sociological standpoint, the essence of biblical faith is a protest against selection and an affirmation of solidarity.

This interpretation seems highly questionable. A sociological analysis of biblical monotheism might justifiably reach precisely the opposite conclusion: that biblical monotheism, with its uncompromising polemic against other gods, is an *affirmation* of the principle of selection (or 'election', to use the theological synonym), and a *denial* of human solidarity. Theissen can point to individual features like the vision of universal peace in Is. 2 and the OT's 'bias to the poor', but he does not adequately recognize the fact that polemical monotheism is inseparably bound up with the desire for dominance. This is so even in the exilic and post-exilic origins of strict monotheism, in the Isaianic tradition: the proclamation of Yahweh as the only true God is inseparable from the belief that Jerusalem will shortly become the capital of the world, that foreigners will be enslaved and forced to perform menial tasks, and that those who refuse to do so will be destroyed (Is. 60:10-14, 61:5, etc.). Theissen finds a significant contrast between the 'pacifism' of biblical monotheism and the 'militarism' of polytheism, according to which the gods of an imperialistic nation such as Assyria are seen as conquering the gods of subjugated nations. But if anything, monotheism heightens this aggressiveness towards others, in fantasy if not in fact. The desire to dominate is now justified by proclaiming not the conquest of other people's gods but their non-existence: because Yahweh is the true God and because the gods of the nations are nothing, the destiny of the people of Yahweh is to rule. This is an affirmation of selection and not a protest against it.

Nor is the situation essentially different in the New Testament. The apparent universalism of the proclamation that 'in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek' is illusory, because it results not in universal human solidarity but in sectarian communities hostile to all non-members, both Jews and Greeks. Once again, polemical monotheism expresses the desire to dominate. The people who 'know that an idol has no real existence, and that there is no God but one' (I Cor.8:4) also 'know that the saints will judge the world' (I Cor.6:2). The desire to dominate is integral to biblical polemical monotheism, and this is therefore the precise opposite of a protest against selection and an affirmation of human solidarity. It is easy to evade this conclusion out of a desire to stress the continuity between the apologetic, compromising, and therefore humane faith of our own day, and the uncompromising faith of the Bible. It would be much more comfortable to accept Theissen's interpretation, but in taking the opposite view we are merely putting into practice his own insistence that one should not set arbitrary limits to the sociological investigation of the Bible.

Theissen's book is so wide-ranging that it deserves a much fuller response than is possible here. It should be widely read; but it should be read critically. Its author is very much aware that the principle of 'selection' also applies in the intellectual sphere, and that progress is made here through the falsification of earlier ideas and theories. He will not expect his own views to be immune from this inexorable process.

Francis Watson

Viraha-Bhakti: The Early History of Krsna Devotion in South India

Friedhelm Hardy. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983. Pp. xxii + 692. £29.00.

How is it possible for physical, sexual human beings to find complete fulfilment in a transcendent, ultimately unknowable deity? It is interesting to compare the various answers which strands of the major world religions give to this question. When, as a non-specialist in Indian religions, I imagine what the response of the Hindu tradition would be, the image that springs to mind is that of an emaciated monk sitting lotus fashion absorbed in contemplation, disciplining himself by long and severe asceticism to deny physical and especially sexual urges. Common sense tells me that this is a ludicrous idea: religion in India is not the exclusive property of ascetic old men; one surely need not suppose that all lusty young Indians abandoned their religious principles when they filled the land with babies. Friedhelm Hardy's book on Viraha Bhakti, is a massive work of scholarship on the emotional and sexual religious devotion which provides an alternative answer to the question of human fulfilment in relation to the transcendent.

Krsna emotionalism as Hardy presents it centres on the range of myths of the god Krsna who comes to the *gopis* (cow-herds - girls and married women) of Vrndavana, makes love to them, but then abandons them, leaving them to long for his return and to re-experience the intimacy with him even within the separation. Hardy explores this religious mythology of love-in-separation at two levels that are interwoven throughout his book. One is what we might call the theological level, probing the implications of emotional bhakti for the concepts of God, personhood, and their relationship. He stresses the humanism of this devotion, in that it repudiates any suggestion that physicality must be denied. Religion is for human wholeness, not fragmentation. The consequence of this view of personhood, however, is that the relation to God must always be characterized not only by love but also by longing, since in respect to sensuality humans are separate from a transcendent God, always turning the emotions to desire for consummation in union with him.

The other level of Hardy's exploration is historical. He discusses the origins of Krsna Bhakti in the wider context of Indian religion, and traces the changes which take place when this type of devotion, originating in South India, moved gradually northward and interacted with more intellectual, doctrinal versions of the religious tradition. He explores one of its re-interpretations through contact with the Gita, another through its contact with the anthropocentric early Tamil culture. Most significant, however, was its combination with the spirituality of the Alvars by which its down-to-earth humanism was integrated into an intellectualistic mysticism of an ineffable transcendent deity.

For a non-specialist the book is both fascinating and, in parts, difficult. It is full of Sanskrit words and abbreviations: these are usually explained or defined when they are first used, but it is obviously impossible to read the book at a sitting and it is hard to keep them all in mind between sessions. A glossary and table of abbreviations would be a great help. Some passages, for example the discussion of the early Alvars and emotional bhakti in the Prabandham (Parts 4.2 and 4.3) seem considerably more specialized than other sections of the book. Hardy is careful, however, to sign-post his way with very helpful statements of plan and summaries; this makes it possible for a non-Indologist to follow the thread of the argument even if some of the detail is lost.

I must leave it to those competent to do so to comment on the historical and technical aspects of Hardy's presentation. What particularly fascinated me was the theological dimension, especially in comparison with the *Brautmystik* or nuptial mysticism strand in the Christian tradition. In both, erotic imagery is used to describe the relationship to the transcendent deity, and in both, men as well as women designate themselves as female (in the Christian tradition the soul is "she"), longing to receive the (male) God. The Song of Songs provides a framework for the development of *Brautmystik* tradition in Christianity as the gopi songs do for Krsna Bhakti. Hardy touches on this parallel briefly in his final section, and warns against an easy assimilation that is insufficently alive to contrasts. This is a warning to be heeded, especially during this time when it is fashionable to declare a mystical unity of religions on the basis of superficial similarities. Nevertheless, the question with which I began is one which every vital religion that holds to a transcendent deity must face. It would therefore be most useful to study Hardy's monumental work on Krsna Bhakti in comparison with answers given by the *Brautmystik* tradition - not least, to dispel the mental image that religion, whether Indian or Christian, is the preserve of ascetic old men who, with God as their ally, frown down on attractive women.

Grace M. Jantzen

Theological Investigations, Volume 18: God and Revelation and Volume 19: Faith and Ministry.

Karl Rahner, S.J. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984. Pp. 304 and 282. £18.50 each.

The publication of these two volumes, which completes the English edition of *Theological Investigations,* virtually coincided with the death of the author on 30th March, three weeks after his eightieth birthday. They contain papers on a wide variety of topics (largely fundamental theology in Volume 18, and current ecclesiastical issues in Volume 19) written during the 1970s. They therefore provide evidence of the major trends in his thinking during the fifth and final decade of his theological activity, so that their publication is especially appropriate at this time. Although they contain few surprises for anyone already familiar with Rahner's thought, it is noticeable that some old preoccupations are quietly dropped (for instance, the notion of Jesus Christ as goal of the evolutionary process) and other themes de-emphasized, as the author concentrates on expressing, often with considerable passion and lucidity, what he had clearly come to regard as of abiding significance in his message. Volume 18 contains in particular some powerful descriptions of "transcendental experience", especially the incomparable 1976 account of "Experience of the Spirit" (pp. 195-206). In such passages

Rahner is evidently speaking from the heart as well as the mind, achieving a union of intellectual theory and personal spirituality which is rare.

There is an embarrassment of riches in these volumes which it would be impossible to survey adequately in a brief review. At the cost of neglecting much which would be worthy of comment, such as the bracing radicalism of Rahner's approach to contemporary church affairs in Volume 19, it seems sensible to concentrate on two features which struck the present reviewer particularly forcefully. The first is that Rahner's final statements concerning "transcendental experience" diverge so markedly from the metaphysics of his early *Spirit in the World* and *Hearers of the Word* that in important respects they amount to a reversal of it. That these changes have emerged gradually over many years, and are masked by a continued use of some of the same transcendentalist terminology, helps to account for the widespread but demonstrably mistaken assumption that Rahner operated with essentially the same set of philosophical presuppositions throughout his career. Secondly, the clarity of many of Rahner's Christological discussions in these volumes has convinced the present reviewer that his claim that a fully orthodox Chalcedonian Christology emerges from the application of his transcendental anthropology to the historical Jesus, i.e. by an "ascending" Christology alone (e.g. Vol. 18 pp. 147-148) is based on seriously flawed arguments, and therefore that his project of trying to dispense with the "descending" Christology of Jesus as the "real symbol" of God, which he had earlier worked out in considerable details (e.g. Volume 4 of *Theological Investigations)* cannot be regarded as a success.

The nub of the difference between the early and late transcendentalism is that the later Rahner no longer seeks to prove by a Maréchalian transcendental deduction that God is implicitly "co-known" in every act of knowledge in the form of an unthematized preapprehension (*Vorgriff*) of "absolute *esse*" which is the condition of the possibility of conceptualization of finite entities. Rather, ontological expressions are avoided in referring to God, for whom the standard term becomes "absolute Mystery" (*Geheimnis*). Furthermore, "incomprehensibility" is declared to be "not one of God's attributes in addition to many others. . .but the starting point always and everywhere determining the understanding of his nature and of its peculiar and unique character" (Vol. 18 p. 92). Inevitably, Rahner comes to stress that this unfathomable Mystery is not knowable in any normal sense of the term, a relation to the Transcendent being achievable not so much by the intellect as by the will exercising an "ultimate free decision" (Vol. 18 p. 103) since "we can at most wonder whether what is beyond (the) field of clear knowledge and autonomously practicable plans amounts to a fall into an abysmal meaninglessness or to being caught up by a sheltering incomprehensibility" (Vol. 18 p. 99). The early Rahner had by contrast sought to refute nihilism by philosophical argument.

Although Rahner makes these themes very much his own, there is little in them which is exclusive to him: the parallels to the philosophy of Karl Jaspers are for example strikingly close. Thus, both stress the importance of what Jaspers calls "boundary situations" of suffering and failure in shattering the attempts of human beings to "suppress and forget" the drive towards the encompassing Mystery which is constitutive of the human spirit (Vol. 18 p. 212). Both also insist that an affirmative courage in the face of one's own death is the indispensable means of achieving "a definitive self-realization of freedom" (Vol. 18 p. 140). Belief in resurrection of the dead is, again according to both Jaspers and Rahner, the mythological expression of the authentic human being's ultimate goal of attaining "definitiveness. . . emerging in time". This "final and definitive consummation" of temporal existence is the real meaning of "eternal life", the notion of "the endless running on of time" being condemned as "dangerous and pernicious" (Vol. 19 pp. 170-177).

It is when he turns to Christology that Rahner begins to diverge markedly from the transcendental existentialism of Jaspers, who decisively rejects the notion of a uniquely authoritative self-revelation of the Transcendent on the ground that the presumption that it has a "self" let alone that it could adequately reveal itself in a single finite individual contradicts its incomprehensibility and its infinity. Rahner by contrast persists in affirming that in Jesus the absolute Mystery achieved "final", "unsurpassable" and "definitive" "self-expression".

Rahner's defence of these traditional-sounding affirmations seems to consist of two crucial elements, which stand out more clearly in these relatively simple late texts than in the often confusing prolixity of some of his earlier statements. First, the term "revelation" applies to Jesus only because the drive to transcendence which is natural to the spirit of *all* men is identified with divine revelation, e.g. "the self-communication of God. . .is. . .essentially. . .the *a priori* dynamism of man's knowledge and freedom towards the immediacy of God himself" (Vol. 19 p. 9). Thus what is usually thought of as a divine movement towards men is identified with a Godward movement by men. This radical redefinition is evident also in an essay on prayer entitled "Dialogue with God?". Here Rahner rejects the view that "God's fundamental word to us" should be sought "in a word that occurs as something additional or a single object among other objects of experience, categorically, at a definite point within the wider field of consciousness"; rather "it is we ourselves in unity, totality, and dependence on the incomprehensible mystery that we call God, the word of God that we ourselves are, and that as such is spoken to us" (Vol. 18 p. 128). It is in line with this interpretation that Rahner draws his well-known conclusion that man's nature and divine grace, our experience of our own spirit and the influence in us of the Holy Spirit, cannot in actuality be distinguished, so that all men who respond positively to the Transcendent are "anonymous Christians" and all human history and all religions are part of the history of revelation (Vol. 19 p. 11). This entirely meets, of course, the substance of Jaspers' criticism of the concept of revelation but only at the cost of so modifying established usage that one suspects that Jaspers would have rejected it as an erosion of the issue.

It follows that since revelation becomes universalized in humanity the fate of Rahner's Christology hangs on whether he can substantiate his claim to Jesus's "unsurpassability". Alas, it seems to the present reviewer that Rahner's case is vitiated by equivocation as he slips from one meaning to another of terms suggesting "finality". The argument centres on the view that Jesus in his death "surrendered (himself) unsupported and unreservedly into the incomprehensibility of God himself". He thereby achieved his own *telos* so that "his death is his resurrection and vice versa, since he entered into definitive life precisely

in death and in no other way" (Vol. 18 p. 167). Rahner then shifts without any evident justification to the claim that Jesus' death must be "final" in an eschatological sense, "unsurpassable" in value, "unique" in the sense of not repeatable by other men, and "definitive" in the sense of paradigmatic for all time. But even granted that Jesus's death was "final" and "definitive" *for himself*, and thus exemplary for all mankind, why should he not merely rank as one among many "paradigmatic individuals" as Jaspers maintains? Rahner freely applies exclusive terms to Jesus such as "absolute salvation bringer" (Vol. 18 p. 146) but attentive reading makes it apparent that the salvation in question can be communicated only through encouraging example, e.g. "since the Christian believes in the *God*-man, he also has the courage to believe in himself and in his supreme possibility, the possibility of reaching the absolute God as his own most intimate life" (Vol. 18 p. 224). Why then could it not be maintained that the greater the number of such encouraging *Bodhisattva* figures the better?

Rahner's difficulties clearly stem from his unqualified stress on the incomprehensibility of the Transcendent: unchecked it seems bound to lead to the kind of universalist unitarianism which Jaspers advocates, and from which Rahner does not seem far when he expresses his hostility to what he terms the "indiscriminate speculative interpretations" of certain contemporary theologians concerning the Trinity (Vol. 18 p. 113). Given such opposition to anything which appears to involve ontological theorizing about the "inner" divine nature it seems obviously impossible to sustain the Logos Christology without which there appears to be no hope of remaining loyal to Catholic tradition. So it is not surprising that the term "mythological" is not far from the later Rahner's lips when discussing "descending" Christology (e.g. Vol. 18 p. 148).

This reviewer is impressed by a good deal in Rahner's later theology, particularly his insistence that by "God" we must mean the intractable Mystery which surrounds and sustains us, and which we can never "know", but only either trust or distrust. But does not an act of trust carry with it implicit assumptions about the nature of that which is trusted? Does it make sense to speak of an "act of self-surrendering love trusting entirely in this very incomprehensibility, in which knowledge surpasses itself, rising to its supernature and is aware of itself only by becoming love" (Vol. 18 p. 100) in which it is left an entirely open question as to whether the Transcendent which is trusted and loved can know itself? Does not this imply faith in the divine Logos? Such a "thematization" of the implicit presuppositions of faith could perhaps lead to reasonable affirmations about the "inner" nature of the divine which would nevertheless not amount to claims to assured knowledge. They might, however, make possible the re-appropriation of the "descending" Logos Christology affirmed by the early Rahner without abandoning his later insistence upon the "absolute Mystery" of the divine.

R.M. Burns
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Living with Death

Helmut Thielicke. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983. Pp. xi + 208. £9.70.

Thielicke, now professor emeritus of the University of Hamburg, confronted death during the last war and wrote a book *Death and Life* which brought help to survivors also in the English-speaking world. Forty years have passed and the book now under review is virtually a new creation. Even so, Thielicke's Bibliography whilst not unaware of the flood of relevant literature and of the pastoral-clinical work (following Kubler-Ross and others) is amazingly uninformed of standard works, such as John Hick's *Death and Eternal Life.* Nor is there any reference to *Life After Death* with contributions by Toynbee and Koestler et al. This is a pity or possibly an advantage: the author explores his theme as a Lutheran and he restricts his vision to a narrow field.

Nevertheless, even this narrow field is still wide enough. The first survey introduces Death as the problem of Life: to be human we cannot accept existence without meaning. Death is the watchman over our finitude and ends everything, including all our relationships. The author steers his craft over the ocean of our awareness of Death with comments on texts representative of a variety of schools of thought, both ancient and modern. From Plato to Heidegger we follow a path of possible insights, if not solutions which are unacceptable to Protestant dogma. Is Death natural or unnatural? And do you admit the notion of lasting personal (loving or hating) relationships into the area of discussion? The author takes the reader with him into a maze of theories and opinions and it becomes clear at the outset that a gulf divides the risen Lord on the road to Emmaus from Freud or Rilke or the latest voice from the Oakland Medical Centre.

But these and similar voices can only be peripheral, for the phenomenon of dying has very little to do with death. Empirical approaches to the subject count for much less than reflections. Hence Plato and all the outstanding philosophers must dominate the topic, and Thielicke's Chapter III is the longest and central to his conclusions. Plato's natural anthropology divides man into an authentic and inauthentic part, for the soul and only the soul, is *athanatos,* and detached from the body it hastens to its appropriate sphere. This 'principle of division' remains the target of Thielicke's attack. It is also fatally linked to the cyclical concept of time: the psyche takes part in the cyclical movement. As against this idealism stand Nietzsche's immanentism, a freedom for and in death, which may not only validate suicide but regard the act as a noble fulfilment. The author does not refer to Nietzsche's own miserable end (not suicide) nor to Dostoevsky's figure of Kirilov in the *Demons,* who is the very embodiment of the ideal of heroic nihilism. Euthanasia, however, is discussed along the lines which have become accepted among us as reasonable in recent theology (cf. Gordon Dunstan's refutation of euthanasia).

The Biblical view (sic) must be seen in contrast to all natural eschatologies because of the "totality of the I". "Individual existence in its uniqueness is totally different from the stage of pupation from which I emerge to a butterfly state of supraindividual values" (p. 85). Not only

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Hegel and Marx, but also Goethe must be excluded from the Christian scheme of things. In the case of Goethe I part company with the author. He identified him with Dr Faustus, as if an author could or should ever be thus identified (Hamlet - Shakespeare!). Goethe is always troublesome to German Protestant theologians and they hardly ever get him right. But since the English reader is probably unaware of the issues, such as the proper definition of *entelechy,* or the status of Faust's redemption in a Dantesque heaven, I must refrain from arguing the case here.

Thielicke fails to deploy the Biblical material in a multi-dimensional manner but rather presents a unified picture of existential Dying outside and beyond the biological sphere. The key word is "personal". The crucial point is "to show how the personal relation of guilt and death is worked out in and behind the death that limits us quantitatively" (pp. 125 f.). Thielicke makes a great deal of concepts such as "limit" and "wrath of God", which certainly transcend the impersonal or mere animal bios. He argues against the mythical character of Time and the false sense of security as well as a tragic understanding of death. These antitheses are designed to buttress the Lutheran identification with the Risen Lord, "to be embraced by his life". Again he insists "justification comes to a climax here", not in Eucharistic union but in *sola scriptura* fellowship.

As I close the book I ask myself why it leaves me quite dissatisfied, apart from matters of style and a few mistakes. I feel uneasy about the existential approach which really denies the principle of ontological immortality. If we do not admit the substantial being of the soul (whether with Plato or the Church Fathers) nor grant merit to the human achievement, Goethe's entelechy, how can we escape from a blunted uniformity in which everything is permitted and everybody is alike? Christian forgiveness comes then pretty near the category of "cheap grace": no one brings anything to God, and God accepts all. But this kind of *apocatastasis* (Hick's universalism) does not even get very far when Lutheran dogmatism restricts the scenario altogether. Moreoever, it is not an interesting one and lacks the pathos, the charm, the *timor mortis,* the wonder aroused by Life to come. Why is it that one Bach Cantata, as Lutheran as you could wish, such as *Der Friede sei mit Dir* or *Es ist genug* or the motet *Jesu meine Freude* opens such a polyphonic immensity that death is truly swallowed up by Life? To ask such a question is not to denigrate a perfectly respectable book but to raise the larger one: how can theologians speak of the unspeakable?

Ulrich Simon

The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in the Central American Revolution

S.C.M. Press, 1984. Pp. 464. £12.50

Philip Berryman's aim in writing 'The Religious Roots of Rebellion' has been to describe and explain how it has come about that Christians have become significant participants in Marxist-led revolutionary movements in Central America, and to reflect upon the issues raised by this participation.

The book opens with a scene-setting section which attempts to give the reader a taste of how the Bible is used in basic Christian communities, quoting extensively from Cardenal's 'The Gospel in Solentiname'. The broad thrust of Latin American liberation theology is then outlined in broad strokes to give a context to what has been depicted in microcosm in Solentiname. A description of the Central American situation follows, providing an overview of the fluid, even chaotic, state of the region, which is both the spur to rebellion and the churches' sphere of pastoral involvement.

The Second Part is a detailed analysis of the historical, political, military and economic situations presently to be found in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, each country being dealt with at length. The author is clearly aware of the complexities of the internal affairs of these states and has the wisdom to include brief summaries of "the story so far" to enable the reader unfamiliar with the machiavellian schemings of the various power sub-groups to maintain a sense of the general drift of events up to the end of 1982. In view of the recent rapid developments in El Salvador and Nicaragua, a section has been added subsequently which brings the happenings up to the end of 1983 to the readers attention; thus, although the United States' involvement in El Salvador and the attempts to destabilise Nicaragua in 1984 are not recounted, this section does provide a very thorough and well-ordered analysis of the internal affairs and external relations of these Central American states.

Berryman is less successful in his description in this section of how the churches (Protestant and Roman Catholic, but predominantly Catholic) are involved in these events. His references to the activities of churchmen and women give the impression that the religious denominations are acting responsively to the national situations rather than being a determinative factor in the direction taken by the liberation movements as a whole. One is left with the feeling that a 'secular' historian could write a complete account of the strivings for self-determination of the oppressed peoples without reference to the churches, and not a great deal would have been omitted. On the other hand, there may be an element of truth here - from within the ecclesiastical world, the whole field of liberation theology has become prominent as a new direction in religious thinking and practice, but to those whose interests lie outside the realm of religion, it probably has very little impact, even in Central America. Berryman admits this: "The basic Christian communities, while very important, are a minority phenomenon . . . For the moment, basic Christian communities are not the dominant expression of Nicaraguan Catholicism . . . " (p.266).

In Part Three, Berryman goes on to reflect on issues which arise from the involvement of the churches in the revolutionary movements of the Central American states. The problem of the ethical questions posed by Christian involvement in violent protest is outlined and dealt with situationally, the author proposing that violence is an allowable response to an unjust, exploitive, inhumane and violent system. To support this, he is keen to adduce favourable opinions from ecclesiastical sources such as the Medellin conference and the Roman Catholic hierarchy,

rather than to wrestle with the problems personally. This chapter is one of the most unsatisfying; in a book which is seeking to reflect on a situation which is rent by violence and death, a place could surely be found for a trenchant theological discussion of the whole issue of the nature of the Christian response to a situation where violence is proposed as a means of achieving ultimate pacification. It is true, as Berryman comments, that the issue of violence is one on which no Central American churchperson has written or reflected extensively, but one might suggest that here an opportunity has been missed for him to rectify that omission.

Far more effective are the following two chapters on the ecclesiological implications of the Central American unrest, outlining how the churches are dealing with the pastoral problems raised thereby, and suggesting ways in which the religious bodies can respond effectively to the needs of the people without compromising their integrity. This is followed by an analysis of some of the main themes with which liberation theology is trying to come to grips. The ones identified are the nature of God in countries where the powers that be act godlessly; the interpretation of sin, conversion and grace in the context of 'structural', political sin where conversion involves structural change, and the centrality of the paschal mystery for Christology, Christ being he who delivers the oppressed from bondage. Eschatology, or the final consummation of the oppressed peoples' hopes, is referred to only briefly and fails to find the prominence that it achieves in the writings of, for example, Gutierrez or Miranda. In this section, Berryman shows tantalisingly that he has the insight to think broadly, almost prophetically, and one regrets that he did not apply this ability to a more full discussion of the ethical problems of violent confrontation.

One or two other general points arise from the book. Berryman frequently quotes 'pro-revolutionary' pronouncements from the (Roman Catholic) church hierarchy as if they are of particular significance for the life of Christians in Central America. He himself comments, however, that only about 15-20% of Catholic clergy support revolution, which leaves the vast majority disinterested or in opposition. Add to this the large scale of illiteracy amongst the peasants of Central America and the general lack of interest in episcopal pronouncements, and the picture of a popular church movement towards revolution becomes significantly toned down. Further add hostile statements (not quoted by Berryman) from at least a proportion of the 75-85% in opposition, and a very subdued portrait emerges.

Berryman is self-contradictory in parts – he claims that " . . . there is no way to "apply" the New Testament directly across twenty centuries to the present day social contexts", (p.310) and yet this is the very method of application which he applauds so warmly in his description of life in basic Christian communities in Solentiname. He goes on to claim that "people who have not actively opposed the violence of the powerful against the poor, at some cost to themselves, have no moral authority to question the violence used by the poor" (p.310), but yet he launches a tirade in the epilogue against nuclear weaponry, a subject which he has no 'moral authority' to speak upon, on his own definition which limits ethical pronouncement to those who are suffering.

Despite these limitations, 'The Religious Roots of Rebellion' is an important contribution to the writings emerging from the Americas. It is one of the very few English language books to give a first-hand, detailed account of the plight of Central American states from economic, political and ecclesiastical or theological points of view, and to attempt to reflect on the issues arising from there. It describes a desperate situation without recourse to hyperbole, and yet sees through that state of despair and flux a prospect for change which will benefit the poor and begin to make present the Kingdom of God.

Nicolas Clough

Science and Religion in the Nineteenth Century

Tess Cosslett (ed.). Cambridge English Prose Texts. Cambridge University Press 1983. Pp. 249. £22.50 hardback, £7.95 paperback.

The magazine "Nature" was first published in 1869, and the launching of this new periodical devoted to scientific topics may be seen as symptomatic of a growing cultural divide between science and the arts. Increasingly, the major scientific works were no longer reviewed by leading scientists in the quarterlies. To us, today, a book of scientific extracts for use by English students seems an anomaly, but we would do well to remember that our Victorian literary giants had no such compartmentalised minds. Indeed, in the evenings George Eliot and George Lewes used to read books aloud on phrenology and physiology. If this book of extracts helps to introduce student of Victorian literature to the authors and texts which so exercised the minds of their heroes, then it will have served a valuable purpose.

The book will, of course, also be of service to theological students. Tess Cosslett has selected 9 pieces (by William Paley, Robert Chambers, Hugh Miller, Charles Darwin (2), Leonard Huxley, John Tyndall and Frederick Temple); as the cover says, these texts are commonly unavailable in suitable editions – Darwin's being the exception. She has wisely gone for a few long extracts, rather than a plethora of piecemeal paragraphs. Each has a short introduction and copious notes, both valuable, although for my money I would have preferred it the other way around, for the introduction seldom does justice to the subjects covered and the notes (albeit clear, informative and displaying an obvious grasp of the literature) can descend to a Who's Who of Victorian England. As with a box of chocolates, it is easy to be critical of the selection. Not that Paley, Chambers et al. are unpalatable, rather one misses certain favourites. I was surprised at the omission of anything by Charles Lyell, saddened that the only words of Thomas Huxley are some from his diary as edited by his son. Admittedly the diary extract concerns the Wilberforce-Huxley duel, but (as Coslett herself points out) this 'battle' has been transfigured into a myth and was hardly national news at the time. One of Huxley's reviews of The Origin would have been more valuable, not only as a mirror of mid-century attitudes but for their grand English style: "Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules."

In her useful introductory essay Dr. Cosslett examines the sources of conflict between science and religion. The analysis is focused on natural theology and the impact of Darwin's theory of evolution; understandable for a short essay on the 19th century, but I cannot help feeling that insufficient attention is given to the geological sciences. These (earlier) controversies may have left Paleyian theology intact, but they did initiate discussion on God's relationship to Creation – as absentee landlord or interfering magician – and debates over whether invoking final causes was scientifically valid. The 'catastrophists' are too readily branded as attempting to produce harmonies of Genesis and geology, whereas many saw no need to relate natural facts with Revelation and were driven to catastrophism by the fossils themselves.

Concerning the origins of conflict, she has little to say on the popular reactions to the new ideas, even less on the theory that some scientists were anti-clerical in a bid to gain cultural dominance. In her view, the battles were largely intellectual: for a scientific method free from the demands of natural theology, for Truth in contrast to superstition. The response of the Broad Church was to define religion in terms of inner spiritual conviction, so making historical and scientific attacks irrelevant. That of the Tractarians was either to ignore science or, with Newman, to separate Revelation from inductive science as two ways of knowing. The attitude of 'fundamentalist' evangelicals is highlighted with the views of Dean Cockburn of York, but there is nothing on the way some orthodox Christians quite readily come to terms with Darwin, and indeed hailed him as setting natural theology on a firmer foundation. This is a pity since, as some argue, it was they and not the Broad Church who found most affinity with the new science. The liberals may have advocated evolution, but not as described by Darwin. In the end, Dr. Coslett's conclusion is positive: Darwinian science may have showed up the inadequacies in 18th century natural theology, but it forced theologians to "rethink their faith in a more profound, spiritual, and sometimes traditional way."

Similarly, my overall conclusion is positive. Libraries are not so well stocked with 19th century scientific treatises as with the novels based around them. This is a useful collection, made more so by Tess Coslett's notes and the introductions which set the texts within contexts. I hope that within the minds of both English and Theology students this will prevent the dismissal of Victorian theologians as 'strangled snakes'!

Vernon Blackmore

Creature and Creator: Myth-making and English Romanticism

Paul Cantor. Cambridge University Press, 1984. Pp. 220. £19.50

Professor Cantor's case-study of English Romanticism concentrates on the inter-relation of philosophy and literature, throwing light on the range, depth and complexity of romantic myth-making. However, his clear and fascinating approach has important implications for theology, as well as for English literature, especially with regard to the meaning and status of myth in theological language.

Starting with Rousseau's re-thinking of human origins in his *Second Discourse*, Cantor traces a new philosophical awareness which the romantics were to develop, rightly reminding us that romanticism is not simply concerned with poetic creation and forms but with deep philosophical isues about human origins and destiny and a vision of life. At the outset, he notes the unorthodox bias of romantic creation myths (perhaps notably in Blake), seeing these as a development of Rousseau's philosophy and as an inversion of orthodox Christian myths of creation. Orthodox notions of God are inverted in romantic myths and Cantor regards these developments as parallels to tendencies in the history of religion which go by the name of gnosticism. Cantor insists that the romantic creation myths as a genre stands not simply for a distinctive voice in literature, but for a distinctive, indeed new, conception of human nature. In the hands of romantics such as Blake and Shelley, these myths provide a revolutionary reply to religious conservatism and the social order which it sanctions in its myths of origins. In short, romantic myth-making provides a critique of an orthodox Christian view of life, values, society and authority. Cantor believes that the romantics take up Rousseau's philosophical challenge, stressing the fundamental contradictions of the human condition, the insolubility of the problem of evil and the lack of civilisation, reason and passion, individual and society, are forged into a romantic vision of the world which is at once creative and tragic, the outcome of a failure to reconcile these tensions into a higher all-embracing synthesis.

Cantor offers us a number of case studies of romantic myth-making, all of which take up the theme of man learning to assume or internalise, the traditional prerogatives of God. He focuses on Blake's *The Book of Urizen* and the *Four Zoas*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbowed*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Byron's *Cain* and Keats' *Hyperion* poems. These works explore the remaking of man's consciousness in uniting the functions of creator and creative in man himself. The dark side to human creativity is then traced in the rise of nightmare visions, loneliness, tragic suffering and the creative isolated ego, as reflected in *Frankenstein*, *Cain*, and the *Hyperion* poems. Perhaps Keats comes across as the most sceptical yet steadfast poet who, in maintaining his poetic vigil, acquires a painful but quietly noble vision of man's fallen condition without looking to the gods for a vision of a higher destiny for man.

In learning how to come to terms with creativity and tragedy, faith and stark realism, Cantor notes, in his case studies, a gradual cutting back of the apocalyptic element in those myths, whether a better or higher state for man was believed to be realisable in the emergence of nobler social and political structures or internalised in creative and artistic awareness. A mixture of the two and a growing disillusionment with apocalyptic hopes altogether can be seen in Cantor's selection of creation myths, as they proceed from Blake and Shelley, at one end, to Byron and Keats, at the other. Cantor believes that in Byron and Keats we have an acceptance of the human condition and almost an internalising of apocalyptic to the point where one is able to maintain a poetic vigil in which one inhabits a painful but wise fallen world. Progress becomes perpetual process and a vision of eternity is marked only by endless change. Cantor sees in romantic myth-makers a return to Rousseau, but a return which issues in a new creativity in man that is remarkably prophetic, if one can look beyond what may appear to be a failed vision.

Cantor's very clear presentation of English romantic myth-making seeks to give romanticism a serious philosophical basis from which to revolutionise man's consciousness of the human condition. But by pointing to religious gnostic parallels to romantic creations (which seek to invert and internalise orthodox religious myths) and by tracing a gradual reduction of apocalyptic hope for a better world or a higher synthesis of man's tragic condition, he is at least implicitly challenging the coherence of theological statements which are barely credible unless they are grounded in myth and appeal to apocalyptic for their vindication. But then how can Christian theology give an account of itself which is substantially different from romanticism? Perhaps this is one of the challenges which Cantor's book presents to the reader whose interests are theological as well as literary and philosophical.

Martin Roberts

God so loved the Third World

Thomas D. Hanks. Orbis Press, 1983. Pp. xviii+152. $8.95

The amount of material written in Latin America and made available in this country continues to grow, and often important new perspectives on biblical teaching are opened up thereby. So it is with this book, which has two sub-titles, which together say a good deal about its purpose and character. On the cover we find 'The Bible, the Reformation, and Liberation Theologies', and this sets out clearly the three principal sources of inspiration; on the title page the sub-title is 'The Biblical Vocabulary of Oppression', which gives an indication of the contents. The author is a conservative evangelical, yet the lessons he draws are uncompromisingly radical. Indeed, it is only from such a background that the impact achieved would be possible.

The first part of the book consists largely of series of texts dealing with oppression and poverty. Ten Hebrew roots of particular importance are identified, and the texts are then allowed to speak for themselves without critical questions about sources and origin being raised. They would in any case be irrelevant to the issues being discussed. Hanks is able to show in a remarkable way how the two themes are linked. The suggestion that poverty is simply inevitable, or a form of punishment, is shown to be a profoundly unbiblical one; oppression is the basic cause of poverty, and the poor are (or should be) the basic concern of the church and of each Christian community.

At various points it would be possible to challenge Hank's exegesis, but this scarcely seems to matter: his main case is made out with overwhelmingly detailed support. The question now is whether his plea will be heard in the USA and this country; and if heard, acted upon.

Richard Coggins

The Anglican Tradition

Edited by Richard Holloway. Mowbray, 1984. Pp. v + 106. £3.25.

As part of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Oxford Movement – and also, incidentally, of the centenary of the Church of the Advent, Boston, U.S.A. where he was the Rector – the Reverend Richard Holloway arranged a series of five lectures dealing with various aspects of Anglicanism. It is these lectures which are here made available in book form.

Richard Holloway himself contributes the introduction entitled 'Anglicanism: a Church adrift?', in which he considers the present state of affairs as not so different from that of July 1833 when John Keble accused England of 'National Apostasy'. We have, he says, to establish once again the truth of the Church's divine nature: 'The Church exists primarily, not to make us good or to improve the world or to uphold the state or even to overthrow it, but to witness to the adorable, objective reality of God and to give him praise'.

In the following chapter Professor John Macquarrie discusses the various attempts made in official reports drawn up by the Commission on Christian Doctrine, and by individuals as diverse as Cranmer, Lancelot Andrewes, Pusey and Stephen Sykes to set forth the doctrinal position of the Anglican Church in accordance with its ideal of the *via media*. His hope is that the authentic spirit of this *via media* will remain a strong influence among the present conflicting movements, and thus ensure the continuance of a Christian theology which is both rooted in the biblical witness and true to catholic tradition.

Marion Hackett, who is Professor of Liturgics and Music at the University of the South, Tennessee, contributes the longest chapter entitled 'The Anglican Liturgical Tradition', and within the compass of twenty-nine pages manages to compress a great deal of valuable material, starting with the First Prayer Book of 1549 and ending with a brief review of the 1979 American revision.

Perhaps because in recent years so much has been written on 'The Anglican Spiritual Tradition', I found Martin Thornton's contribution bearing this title slightly disappointing. Not only is it shorter than the other chapters, but it lacks notes and bibliography, which is surprising in view of the amount of material on the subject currently available.

The final chapter, which stands apart from the rest, is a fresh assessment of that work by the historian of the Oxford Movement, Richard Church, the first edition of which appeared as long ago as 1891. To those who, like myself, were brought up to regard Church's *The Oxford Movement* as one of the finest accounts of those stirring events – my tutor at King's used to refer to it as still 'a great book' and to point out that its author had been intimately acquainted with many of the leading personalities involved – it may come as something of a shock to be presented with the real facts of which Owen Chadwick makes us aware in his brilliant and penetrating essay.

Gordon Huelin

A Dictionary of Religious Education

Edited by John Sutcliffe. S.C.M. Press, 1984. Pp. xvi + 376. £14.95.

To attempt a Dictionary covering such a vast, and in some places almost-uncharted, field is certainly courageous and possibly foolhardy. John Sutcliffe, his planning group, and over two hundred contributors from many disciplines and four continents, have tackled the task intelligently and it is hard to fault them on comprehensiveness. (One rare omission concerns University Departments of Education; we are directed to 'Higher Education', but nowhere is it mentioned that P.G.C.E. and Higher Degree courses are available in Religious Education in the Universities).

The Dictionary aims to give information, to summarise ideas and to suggest further reading. Much of the first aim must be taken on trust; the second is rather more difficult; – who, for example, can write a definitive statement on 'Aims of R.E. in L.E.A. Schools' which satisfies everyone? The reading lists are uneven; one book only for 'Sacred Places', ten for 'Sacred Books', none for 'Heroes', 'Values Education', 'Voluntary Schools' and 'Peace Studies'. The same recommended reading crops up in several places, but reasonably so.

One could cavil and criticize endlessly, but the final judgement must be based on experience. The Dictionary is already an indispensable part of this Religious Education Department's equipment, and (the ultimate accolade) may be consulted but *never* borrowed.

Enid B. Mellor

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T. Balasuriya *Planetary Theology.* SCM Press. Pp. 282. £6.95.

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W. Carr *The Priestlike Task.* SPCK. Pp. 116. £3.95

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D. Cupitt *Only Human.* SCM Press. Pp. 228. £5.95.

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W.J. Dumbrell *Covenant and Creation. An Old Testament Covenantal Theology.* Paternoster. Pp. 217. £6.95.

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B. Hebblethwaite *The Christian Hope.* Foundations for Faith series. MMS. Pp. 256. £7.95.

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