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KING'S Theological Review

The Playwright as Theologian: Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus* 1
Colin Gunton

What is Changed in Virtue of Christ? 5
Anthony Baxter

Ambiguity in the Marcan Narrative 11
Francis Watson

Pentecostal, Charismatic *or* What's in a Name? 17
Graham Baldwin

Theology in Anthropological Perspective? 21
Christoph Schwoebel

BOOK REVIEWS 26

FACULTY NEWS Insert

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THE PLAYWRIGHT AS THEOLOGIAN: PETER SHAFFER'S *AMADEUS*

COLIN GUNTON

I THE ABSOLUTE

Two preliminary remarks will, to begin with an appropriate metaphor, set the scene. The first is that we live, and have lived in England since the 19th century at least, in an age of theological loss of confidence, even of nerve. The effect has been paradoxical. Theologians spend a disproportionate amount of their time in attempts to defend their faith and their trade, to make it intelligible and acceptable under modern conditions. Yet the atmosphere of their endeavours is often surprisingly inward looking, not to say churchy, centred as they are on such questions as whether we can, or should, any longer propagate this or that article of traditional belief. The paradox is, of course only apparent: for defence breeds defensiveness, and defensiveness takes away the freedom to look about with open eyes for signs of grace. But important questions will out, and what the theologian neglects is sometimes to be found in works which lie outside mainstream theological debate. So it is with Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus,* whose original stage version has, even more than the later film, much for the theologian to ponder.[1]

The second preliminary remark takes us nearer to the heart, and it concerns the man named in the title of the play, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart has some claim to be the theologian's composer, at least to the degree that he has seemed to some of them to be in a class of his own. Karl Barth, famously or notoriously – for he could really not find time or reason to take much trouble over any other music – is a case in point:

> Why is it that this man is so incomparable? Why is it that for the receptive he has produced in almost every bar he conceived and composed a type of music for which "beautiful" is not a fitting epithet; music which for the true Christian is not mere entertainment, enjoyment or edification, but food and drink; . . . music which is never a slave to its technique nor sentimental . . . ?[2]

But appeal could also be made to David Friedrich Strauss (1808-74), a theologian of very different temper and coming from an era when Mozart did not always attract the kind of appreciation he does today:

> . . . Strauss was insatiable; he was so enraptured by music that he could listen for hours . . . For Strauss, no one could surpass the music of Mozart; that was for him immediate gratification without any reflection, the most soul-filling satisfaction.[3]

We must, however, realise that such superlatives are not the prerogative of the theologians. In that respect also, the children of this world are often as wise as the children of light. In conversation with Bernard Levin and in response to *Amadeus,* Sir Colin Davis made on television a number of points that stand comparison with Barth's. So also Mozart's recent biographer, Wolfgang Hildesheimer, not one to make much of the theological dimensions of the matter, is unable to avoid using words stolen from Christian theology, speaking of the "collective feeling" that "Mozart is an utterly unique phenomenon, indisputably and forever on the credit side of life's ledger, so sovereign and omnipresent that he reconciles us somewhat to the debit side. Indeed, Mozart seems to be reconciliation itself, a kind of redeeming miracle."[4] When speaking of this composer, it seems almost impossible to avoid the language of absolutes, so that we are already set very near to, if not actually within, the theological pale. For when there is talk of the absolute, can talk of Gopd be far behind? Certainly not for Peter Shaffer.

The play's central character is not Mozart himself, but another composer, Antonio Salieri, who looks back in old age on the encounter between himself and the (younger) Mozart. Salieri is the model of a certain religious type, instantly recognisable by (and among) the pragmatic English. As a young man, he is desperate to be a composer, and offers God a bargain: you make me a great composer, and I will service you all my life:

> Every Sunday I saw him in church, painted on the flaking wall. I don't mean Christ . . . No: I mean an old candle-smoked God in a mulberry robe, staring at the world with dealer's eyes. Tradesmen had put him there. Those eyes made bargains, real and irreversible. "You give me so – I'll give you so! No more. No less!" . . . I knelt before the God of Bargains . . . "Signore, let me be a composer! Grant me sufficient fame to enjoy it. In return, I will live with virtue" (p. 20).

The bargain apparently succeeds. Salieri obtains worldly success, popularity and acclaim, and, as court composer, uses his position, as he had promised, to better the lot of his fellows.

When he meets Mozart, however, Salieri begins to feel that he has been cheated by his God. At the very beginning of their encounter, he realises that he is in the presence of one whose gifts he is forced to recognise. In the play, realisation first begins to dawn when he writes for Mozart a march to welcome the young composer to Vienna. Mozart, ostensibly to flatter him, plays the march from memory, and then begins to improvise, freely, turning a banal piece into something of genius. Looking back, Salieri asks himself, "was it then – so early – that I began to have thoughts of murder?" (p. 39). Later, Salieri sees some recently completed manuscripts, and realises that Mozart composed, without correction, straight from head to paper. "I was staring through the cage of those meticulous ink strokes at an Absolute Beauty." And he is forced to realise his own mediocrity: "I know my fate. Now for the first time I feel my emptiness as Adam felt his nakedness." (pp. 58 f). Accordingly, in order to take his revenge on the God who has cheated him, Salieri resolves to murder God's favourite. "My quarrel wasn't with Mozart – it was through him. Through him to God who loved him so." (p. 64). The latter part of the play recounts the story of Mozart's decline and death, poisoned by his rival. But it is important to know also that in parallel with the murder goes an equally important destruction of Salieri himself. He con-

tinues to experience worldly elevation, but it is dust and ashes for him by virtue of his increasing awareness of the infinite qualitative distinction between himself and Mozart, between mediocrity and the absolute.

II THE TREASURE

The theological importance of the play is to be found in the questions it raises and the opportunities it gives for thought about central features of the relation between God and his creation. The following would appear to be central among them.

1. The nature of election. The matter of election or predestination is a difficult one under modern conditions because of the way it has been taught in the Western Christian tradition. The mind automatically recoils from a doctrine that appears to teach religious determinism, that God has destined each one of us either to heaven or to hell, before even we were born or able to respond freely to the gospel. But if we return to the biblical roots of the notion, we shall see that it is to do with a much more concrete and this-worldly relation. The Old Testament, in particular, tells how not only Israel, but particular people – and not only Israelites, as Isaiah 44.28 ff witnesses – are called by God to do a particular job. Classic examples are perhaps the calls of Amos and Jeremiah to fulfil particular prophetic tasks, even though such careers were the last things that either had in mind (Amos 7.14 ff, Jeremiah 1.4 ff). We are concerned here with the mysterious matter of the divine calling, which appears to operate quite independently of any human ideas of qualification or desert.

But *Amadeus* shows us that this is more than simply a religious question, as all the deepest questions are. There has always been puzzlement as to why life's successes and failures are so unevenly distributed. The great Greek tragic dramatists asked one form of the question, probing the mystery of apparently undeserved suffering in the divine dispensation. Salieri, similarly, asks a kind of negative religious question: why do the gifted succeed, even though they do not seem to deserve it, while the worthy, who toil away at life, receive few of the rewards? Notice that the question is even more poignant in the case of Salieri, because he has gained many worldly rewards. But for one who wants above all to be a great composer, they are as nothing. *It is a just world?* Because of Mozart, Salieri decides that it is not:

> You put into me perception of the Incomparable – which most men never know! – then ensured that I would know myself for ever mediocre. *Why? . . . What is my fault? . . .* I have worked and worked the talent you allowed me. *You know how hard I've worked!* – solely that in the end . . . I might hear Your Voice! And now I do hear it – and it says only one name: MOZART! (pp. 59 f).

Salieri's theological response to all this is to say not that God calls Mozart, but that he *uses* him, or at least that is what he tells the dying Mozart, in order to make his death the more bitter. (p. 101). God has used him, and now is simply throwing him on the scrap heap. The irony is that Salieri wanted precisely to be used, but was refused, with the result that his world has fallen apart:

> All around me men seek liberty for Mankind. I sought only slavery for myself. To be owned – ordered – exhausted by an *Absolute*. This was denied me, and with it all meaning. (p. 107).

The harsh fact is, however, that such things do not come to order, and, as has often been observed, the universe is not in that sense a just place. Indeed, one of the things that Mozart has to teach is, as the quotation from Hildersheimer near the beginning of this article suggested, that the matter is somewhat more complicated. But Salieri is classically Pelagian in claiming to be able to earn his way with God – "the God of bargains". He is destroyed as a person because he cannot accept what he has and is as a gift of divine grace. That is something that the old doctrine of predestination, for all the inadequacy of the way it was formulated, has to teach us. We understand Mozart if we see in his genius the free gift of the creator. Even Salieri almost realises this:

> I was a good man, as the world calls good. What use was it to me? Goodness could not make me a good composer. Was Mozart good? Goodness is nothing in the furnace of art. (p. 62).

2. The nature of inspiration. Inspiration raises similar questions to those treated in the section on election, because it is one of the words used to refer to the way in which human achievements are believed to derive from sources outside ourselves. It is a universal human preoccupation, and is revealed by the fact that we speak of all kinds of things as being inspired; an idea, a piece of music or even the Bible as a whole. Artists, in particular, have often felt that what they paint or write comes from beyond themselves, as when Stravinsky is reported to have said that he did not compose *The Rite of Spring,* but was the channel through which it flowed. It was for this kind of reason that Plato suspected the arts: they seemed to drive out reason through the onset of a divine madness. Something takes over which deprives the agent of control over thought and action. But there are ways of understanding inspiration which do not imply a loss of human freedom. It can be interpreted as something given to finite creatures to enable them to produce work which comes to them as an apparent gift or to transcend their apparent limitations in creations of transcendent greatness, while yet remaining, or, indeed, becoming, truly themselves.

The difference between Mozart and Salieri, as they are depicted in the play, is that one is inspired and the other is not. Again, it is not a question of worthiness. Inspiration is a gift independent of the desert or effort of the recipient, though that must not be taken to imply that no effort is required to realise the gift in concrete production. Mozart was as a matter of fact almost totally preoccupied with music, dominated by work. But he did not, and could not, earn his gifts. It simply is a fact that someone either has or has not inspiration of this quality. One of Salieri's *dicta,* comparing Mozart's operas with his own, make the point well enough: " . . . He from the ordinary created legends – and I from legends created only the ordinary." (p. 82).

Speaking of the Gospel entrusted to him, Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that "we have this treasure in

earthen vessels". (2 Cor. 4.7). Shaffer suggests something of the nature of inspiration by showing that that was the character of Mozart's genius. The drama over-plays Mozart's childish and irresponsible behaviour, depicting the composer as an arrogant young fool – "his high whinnying giggle" – coarse-speaking and totally lacking in tact. But that makes the transcendence of his gift only the greater. The contrast between Mozart's character and his music is brought out in a scene where Salieri first begins to realise the true nature of the music. He is present at a performance of the Adagio from the *Serenade for Thirteen Wind Instruments:*

> It started simply enough; just a pulse in the lowest registers . . . – like a rusty squeezebox. It would have been comic, except for the slowness, which gave it instead a sort of serenity. And then suddenly, high above, sounded a single note on the oboe. It hung there unwavering – piercing me through . . . I called up to my sharp old God *"What is this? . . . What?!"*

Salieri rushes from the room, able to stand no more the pain of the music. His comment on the experience tells us all that we want to know about treasure in earthen vessels. "It seemed to me that I had heard a voice of God – and that it issued from a creature whose own voice I had also heard – and it was the voice of an obscene child." (pp. 30 f).

3. The nature of human relationships. The modern age has witnessed an attempt, almost unique in the history of civilisation, to understand human life outside and independent of its relation to its maker. It is, at least theoretically, a perfectly feasible exercise, although there is now far less optimism about its outcome than was once the case. However that may be, the witness of those who have probed deeper has been that without redemption, we are lost. Shaffer's play witnesses, to an extent, to the truth of that claim, for it sees the divinity of Mozart's music to lie in part in its redemptive character.

Mozart's life, again according to the exaggerated portrayal of the play, is a series of messes. Alienation from his father and marriage to a foolish prattling woman are chief among them, and they are crowned by a decline into poverty and early death. It is against this background that the significance of some of the operas is displayed. It is sometimes said that, after Shakespeare, Mozart is the greatest of all dramatists, and in a reference to the final act of *The Marriage of Figaro,* Salieri is made to show us why this is so:

> I saw a woman, dressed in her maid's clothes, hear her husband utter the first tender words he has offered her in years only because he thinks she is someone else. Could one catch a realer moment? (p. 78).

"Mozart", says the critic William Mann, "understood the heart of women absolutely", and Shaffer in this play suggests that in the operas we see, transfigured yet real, the people whom Mozart failed in some way or other in his life. Whether such reading of autobiography into the characters is justified must be doubtful, but the fact remains that it enables the author to make his point. Thus there is the suggestion that *Cosi fan Tutte* puts on the stage in a kind of redeemed portrait of Mozart's wife and her sister, while Mozart's slighted father appears as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute.* It is in connection with this latter opera, on the face of it not much more than a kind of German pantomime, that Salieri enables us to see the redemptive function of the music.

> I saw a vast sun rise on a timeless land . . . ; and by its rays all the poisons we feed each other drawn up and burnt away! . . . And in this sun – behold – I saw his father. No more an accusing figure, but forgiving! (p. 96).

Well might Bernard Levin repeat the comment that the words which Sarastro sings are among the few that might be put into the mouth of God without blasphemy.

III THE SPIRIT

Patrick Sherry has argued that among the lessons to be learned from both *Amadeus* and celebrations of the significance of Mozart in writers like Barth is due appreciation of the work of the Holy Spirit in inspiration and the creation of beauty. He also comments, rightly, on the weakness of the theology of Barth in this very area.[5] Yet there is a remark made by Barth in his treatment of the theological significance of the music of Mozart, in itself puzzling, which suggests at least a place where links can be made. "Why is it possible to hold that Mozart has a place . . . also in eschatology . . . "? (p. 298). The Western theological tradition has been so captivated by its rather ecclesiastical way of conceiving the Spirit that it has tended to neglect a major New Testament theme. The Holy Spirit is the action of God making real in the present the eschatological future, the time of redemption.

Each of the three topics we have met in *Amadeus* is an illustration of this theme. It is most obvious in the case of inspiration, and not only because we can read into that term a notion of "breathing in" by the Spirit. We are not merely concerned with beauty which is the fruit of inspiration; the matter is eschatological also, as Sherry realises: "For him (Barth), the beauty of art anticipates the restoration of the wholeness of the creation." (p. 236 f). Linked with this is the third of our topics, that of redemption. The hymn to the Spirit that is the eighth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans explictly links, in vv. 18-24, the redemption of the human and the wider creation which is the context within which human life is lived. Peter Shaffer's play enables us, by its celebration of the music of Mozart, to see in that link something more than fanciful mythology. The music of Mozart does enable us to glimpse something of the reconciliation of all things, of sinful creature and fallen world, that is promised in Christ and realised, from time to time, by anticipation in the here and now.

But what of election? How does that fit into the pneumatological scheme? It could be said that the weakness, amounting to a scandal, of Western treatments of this theme since Augustine is that by neglecting the place of the Spirit in the concrete summoning of particular people to particular tasks, they have made it seem like some deterministic scheme in which the fate of all is decided before time. Yet if, with Robert Jenson, we say:

"the Holy Spirit is the choosing God",[6] we can see that here, too, the function of the Spirit is to enable those who will respond to live as members of the eschatological kingdom this side of eternity. That is what election is about. This may seem rather a long way from the preoccupations of *Amadeus*. But it is worth noting that one of the few direct biblical allusions in the play is to a pneumatological text, John 3.8: "They say the Spirit blows where it listeth: I tell you NO! It must list to virtue or not blow at all." (p. 60). So speaks Salieri, the Pelagian, but, unjust though it may appear, that is not the world in which the Spirit sets us free. God is free, too, and it is through his free Spirit alone that gifts such as those of Mozart, but also those of all his creatures, come to realisation.

One final point must be made in a reference back to the opening paragraph of this paper. Has Peter Shaffer taught us anything of the nature of the theological task? The obvious, if rather banal point, is that theologians, too, need the inspiration of the Spirit if we are to escape from the prisons in which our expectations and presuppositions so often encase us. Shaffer's freedom to tackle questions of utmost human importance should contribute to a process of liberation. But that is too feeble a conclusion to a paper over whose pages the spirit of Mozart is hovering. Let us, then, borrow a final point from his biographer. Speaking of the operas, Hildesheimer says: "It is the music which makes the unbelievable believable and the thoroughly improbable truthful." (p. 227). Is that not part of the theologian's task, too?[7]

FOOTNOTES:

1. Peter Shaffer, *Amadeus*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (1981).
2. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics Volume III, Part 3*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark (1960), pp. 297 f.
3. Cited by Horton Harris, *David Friedrich Strauss and his Theology*. Cambridge University Press (1973), p. 30.
4. Wolfgang Hildersheimer, *Mozart*. E.T. by Marion Faber, London. Dent (1983), p. 13.
5. Patrick Sherry, "Mozart, *Amadeus* and Barth". *New Blackfriars* 67 (May 1986), pp. 233-240.
6. Robert W. Jenson, "The Holy Spirit", *Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, Philadelphia. Fortress (1984), Vol. 2 p. 138.
7. I am grateful to Francis Watson both for encouragement to write up this paper and for timely criticisms of its first draft.

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WHAT IS CHANGED IN VIRTUE OF CHRIST?

ANTHONY BAXTER

Christians commonly speak along lines that in virtue of Jesus Christ, *change* occurs in, a difference is made to, people's situation. After and because of Christ, people are or can be in some favourable state, open to "salvation": whereas previously they were not so placed. Language of this character pervades the New Testament. And such language is prominent in subsequent presentations of Christian faith, including in utterances today.

Particular systematic accounts of Christ's function and identity tend to invoke some large-scale scheme of understanding as to what this change in people's situation comprises. By the same token, particular accounts of the Godhead in relation to our race, of being human, and of salvation or again eschaton, tend to incorporate some such scheme of ideas regarding change.

If a particular soteriological, christological, anthropological or theological account depends on a certain conception of change in people's situation which itself lacks cogency, that account is undermined.

In the first section of this article, I identify three familiar schemes of thought as to the change in people's situation which occurs in virtue of Christ; and I indicate why – in my estimation – none of these thought-patterns is satisfactory. In the second section, I sketch certain features of the outlook I myself commend.

As an aid to focusing, four further preliminary remarks are in order.

(i) We do well to be alive to the associations and the variety of usages of the word "change" in ordinary, non-theological contexts, so as to be sensitive to what is said in theology. As regards the noun "change", notions of "difference", "succession", "substitution of one thing in place of another thing", and "alteration in the state of a thing", spring readily to mind; and many further refinements in analysis are possible.

(ii) In noting common Christian speech, I have used the vague phrase "change occurs in people's situation". We must inquire of any systematic exposition, *which class* of human beings is envisaged as in the altered, favourable condition in virtue of Christ? Believing Christians (church members), and only them? Every human being living subsequent in history to Jesus? All human beings throughout world history? If the last of those replies ("all humans throughout world history") is given, we can perceive that the question here arises in markedly acute fashion, in what sense were human beings ever in an *unfavourable* condition, *from* which – because of Christ – *change to* the favourable condition occurred?

(iii) Over the last two thousand years, human beings at large and indeed church-goers have variously engaged in personal selfishness, in mass-slaughter of their fellows, and so forth – as did people in the preceding millenia. "Not too much in our world looks to have changed for the better since Jesus was in Palestine: and throughout human history things have been pretty bleak", so the hard-headed commentator may say. For some, such a train of thought counts decisively against being a Christian at all. Now the present article does not offer an apologetic, or a theodicy. Probing here is within Christian faith. Trust that some fundamental, all-sufficing good lies open to human beings, stemming from God and attributable specifically to Christ, is indeed highly demanding. Such trust can easily waver. However, I do not accept that to seek understanding within the terms of that trust is as such a mark of glibness or inauthenticity.

Of course, where it is affirmed in faith that in virtue of Christ people are differently, favourably situated as compared with before, queries can certainly be raised of the form: Is the favourable dimension experientially discernible here and now? Or for us humans is its experienced actualization a totally future, perhaps supra-historical, reality? Or what?

(iv) Given use of locutions in the vein "through Christ, change occurs in people's situation", we constantly need to be alert to how far or in what sense one or another such locution is to be construed as an assertion about reality. Issues concerning (degrees of) obliqueness in religious discourse, knowledge, reality, adequacy in theology and so on have particular crystallizations in the area we are examining. I myself regard as the proper overall stance a form of qualified realism.

I. THREE FAMILIAR PATTERNS OF THOUGHT

Here in turn are three schemes of thought familiar, at least in outline, within theological treatments.

A. The "Restoration of Primeval Perfection" pattern

Christians have often put matters thus. Over the span of history, three stages have occurred in human-divine relations. A long time ago, at stage one, there were human beings in a flawless, perfect relationship with God. Then there was a catastrophic dislocation of things as between human beings and God, which left all members of the human race in a wretched situation. Amidst the existentially manifest bad features of this situation, its gravest and most fundamental element was that everyone was from their earliest moment cut off in some objective fashion from grace-filled, wholesome relationship with God. This wretched situation comprised stage two. In virtue of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, people are or can be restored to a position as good as, indeed even better than, the situation humans were in at stage one. This position, which in some sense is objectively already available even if it is not yet fully complete, is stage three. So, through Christ there is a radical change in the basic texture of human-divine relations from stage two to stage three, both those stages being specified in terms of a primeval stage one when human-divine fellowship was perfect.

Now it is an error, in my view, to treat assertion that there was such a primeval stage one as among the essential tenets of Christian faith. Thus it is wrong to insist that Christ effected in people's situation a change whose

definition involves assertion of such a primeval first stage. I have the impression that comparatively few serious contemporary theologians, when the matter is directly before them, express dissent from the view I here endorse. And I do not take space in the present article defending this view.[1]

What does require attention is the scale of the adjustment in conceptualization needed, if no assertion is made of such a primeval stage one. It is not *simply* a question of regarding the opening of Genesis as a mythical story rather than history: and the word "Adam" in Paul as indicating humans generically rather than a specific figure. Or again, a question of depicting human life's proper pattern as growth, through education, from childhood to maturity – with sympathy in this context for Irenaeus over Augustine. Or again, a question of seeing Christ as intrinsic to God's "original" (eternal) purpose for humans – with sympathy here for Scotus over Aquinas. More than all those things, it is improper to hinge notions that God created human beings, and that creation is good, on the actuality long ago in the primeval mists of perfect human-divine relationship. And the whole practice of asserting Christ's work to be at root that of restoring a *status quo ante* should be abandoned. If it is not claimed that in the past there was intimate friendship between human beings and God which then came to be radically fractured, it may not fittingly be claimed that Christ's fundamental role lies in the *return* of such friendship: the reconciliation – in that strict sense – of human beings to God. (Allowance for specific lapses on people's path towards full closeness with God and each other, relative to which there can indeed then – in a strict sense – be reconciliation, is a different matter.)

Often, analytical expositions have *relied* (apparently) on the assertion, the claims, just criticized; and theories of Christ's atoning work and Christ's person have been explanations of how or why such restoration occurred. Although today a broad array of theologians avoid explicit commitment to there having been a primeval perfect stage in human-divine relations, not as large a number, I think, squarely face the corollaries of refraining from such assertion.

A further point may be added. If in a contemporary account a theologian enlists phraseology of "restoration" and "reconciliation", and, while somewhere remarking that such discourse is notably oblique or figurative or narrative, still leaves his or her audience with the supposition that an actual primeval perfect stage is essential, that theologian is failing, so it seems to me, in an important responsibility.

We must, indeed, take evil, sin, and the radical deficiencies in people's current relationship with God and with each other, very seriously. As part of this, we should recognize that particular generations affect at many levels their descendants: hence there is scope for things worsening through the ages. I hold that one can, as a Christian, take evil, sin, suffering and incompleteness with all due seriousness, without structuring one's broad theological outlook round metaphysical speculation as to how or why these sombre aspects of the human condition are as they are: around, that is, a theodicy.

Identified next is the second familiar pattern of thought as to the change in people's situation that occurs through Christ.

B. **The "Enclosed Stage/Salvation Stage" pattern**

Christians sometimes put matters thus. There are two stages in human-divine relations. In the first stage, before Jesus, human beings were without access – in some objective sense – to wholesome relationship with God and each other. They were enclosed within egocentricity and destructiveness. In virtue of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a fresh stage began, in that people now have access to the mode of relationship with God and each other which God purposes: in other words, they have access to salvation. What people now have access to is expressible in terms of Kingdom and eschaton. And this reality is – in some sense objectively – already initiated and available, even if it will not be fully complete until the final climax. So, through Christ there is a radical change in the basic texture of human-divine relations from the first to the second of the thus defined stages.

An illustration of this way of putting matters may be helpful. We may refer to Walter Kasper's book *Jesus the Christ*.[2]

Kasper seems disinclined strictly to maintain that human-divine relations were once perfect, and that this situation was ended in some comprehensive, metaphysically-formulable way by a specific primordial sin.[3] Hence Kasper's work is not a clear-cut instance of the Restoration of Primeval Perfection scheme of concepts, as in A above.

A prominent train of thought in the book *Jesus the Christ* runs as follows. Historical human beings are "in a perpetual vicious circle of guilt and revenge, violence and counter-violence" (56). "There is an almost 'natural' momentum belonging to the history of sin: it becomes increasingly enclosed within a vicious circle" (205). People cannot attain peace, freedom and life of their own unaided resources (73). Kasper goes on: "If nevertheless there is to be any salvation, it will require a new beginning, someone who will enter into this situation and break through it" (205): "liberation from the present state of alienation is possible only as a result of an underivable new beginning within history" (204). According to Kasper, Jesus Christ constitutes this new beginning within history. "Through the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ the disastrous situation in which all men are caught up and by which they are determined in their innermost being is changed. It has broken through at one point and this new beginning from now on determines anew the situation of all men" (205). "By entering into the world in person as the Son of God [Jesus Christ] changes the situation of everyone. Every man's living space acquires a new dimension . . . Jesus Christ is now a part of man's ontological definition" (205). "The eschatological reality granted in Jesus changes the objective situation of all men, and makes it possible for all men to enter that new reality by faith and baptism" (156). "A completely fresh start . . . is necessary. This new element, which did not exist before . . . [and] which God alone can provide . . . is what is meant by the Kingdom of God" (73): and it is

introduced at a particular point in history by Jesus Christ.

When Christians put matters in the vein here isolated, they appear – on any ordinary construal – to be claiming that prior to two thousand years ago human beings were entirely without access to wholesome, salvific, relationship with God: whereas because of the Christ event, people living since then do have access to salvation, the Kingdom. Given a claim of that character, inquiry is needed as to whether the objectively changed situation is conceived as directly affecting every person chronologically after Christ (including for example Tibetan Buddhists themselves knowing no more about Jesus than did their Chinese predecessors in the years before Jesus' life); or whether it is conceived directly to affect only Christian believers. (We may notice that a claim of the present character has certain affinities with assertion of the historical actuality of stage two, then followed by stage three, under pattern A above.)

The Christian teacher may find it tempting to make a claim of the character just displayed. With such a claim, one is equipped to provide a simple, vivid exposition of the human condition and the person and work of Christ – an exposition into which assorted New Testament expressions, taken at face value, can seem easily to fit.

However, is it theologically responsible to make such a claim?

I myself hold, within Christian faith, that God's gracious gift of himself is present to all human beings throughout world history from their earliest moment; and that all human individuals, if they conscientiously respond to what is of value – other than their own particular selves – can be on the path of growth towards full knowledge, love and closeness with God. Put differently, the individuals can be on the path of growth towards definitive salvific communion with God and as part of that with other people. Such growth can in one way or another – and only by God's grace – be occurring, even if the persons at issue do not explicitly recognize what is going on. This tenet to which I adhere receives support from many quarters, including from Vatican II.[4] If human-divine reality is indeed thus, then it is incorrect to assert that concretely existing human beings have ever been situated without access to salvation: and that Christ effected a change from such a situation to a situation where people do have access to salvation. Hence the above-displayed claim about a change of this sort two thousand years ago cannot stand.

Just now I observed that the way of putting matters isolated under B (Enclosed Stage/Salvation Stage pattern) appears, on any ordinary construal, to contain a claim that prior to two thousand years ago human beings were entirely without access to wholesome, salvific, relationship with God. However, a theologian might conceivably deploy *phraseology* of the kind under B, while regarding himself or herself as advancing not that claim, but one out of two other possible theses. In the interests of careful analysis, we should advert to these possible manoeuvres.

A thesis could be propounded that in the case of every human being in world history, during the first part of the individual's life he or she is entirely without access to grace-filled, salvific, relationship with God, whereas in the second part of the life there is such access. The thesis, in other words, comprises an assertion that there is a historically located change in the objective situation of all human beings, somehow due to Christ. But instead of treating such change as a single occurrence two thousand years ago, the thesis rather treats the change as happening at some moment in the history of each person in turn.

If a theologian were to be advocating this thesis, it would be important that he differentiate it clearly from the claim considered above. Such a thesis does not, in any event, seem to me cogent.

The other stance a theologian might adopt is this. In so far as there is use of phraseology in the vein that at one stage human beings were without access to salvation and then at a later stage, in virtue of Christ, they have access, such locutions are not to be taken as a relatively straightforward assertion (in either of the versions noted) about human-divine reality, or ontology. The locutions are not to be taken as asserting that at one historical phase concretely existing human beings actually did not have access to God's gracious saving work, and that at a later phase the situation changed. Rather, utterances about people without access to salvation denote a *conceivable* state of human beings, a state people *would have* been in *but for* Christ, but a state which has never in fact been concretely realized. Or the theologian might put the position a bit differently, and observe that utterances containing the phraseology indicated are simply a highly indirect, figurative, perhaps story-framed, way of exposing diverse facets of our continual, ongoing, condition within history.

Where a theologian adopts a stance along these lines, the following comments may be made among others. If in a reflective setting a particular speaker intends his utterances to be taken in some such manner, he should make this abundantly evident, not leave his audience in the dark. A person who does seek so to employ the phraseology indicated has major tasks on hand showing how utterances here at issue relate to various *other* things the person is liable to say. These other things may include both what seems to fall under a rubric such as "christology", and what seems to fall under the rubrics "epistemology" or "connexions between language and reality". A question arises, for example: In the reflective, systematic context at stake, are *all* utterances to be taken as having that degree of indirectness, or only some: and if only some, how does one tell which? In my own estimation, the manoeuvre of talking reflectively for today in the vein that human beings were once without access to salvation and that Christ effected a change from that state, while intending such talk to be taken as counterfactual or as highly figurative, often leads to more obscurity than illumination.

A further word concerning Kasper may be appended. The reference to him was simply to provide one example of a certain style of putting matters. There is no further exploration in this article of how the sentences quoted from *Jesus the Christ* are to be understood and how they link up with assorted other sentences in that book. Fully to do justice to Kasper's suggestive text would take a protracted study. However, it should be noted that in the

course of *Jesus the Christ* Kasper makes a range of statements whose joint compatibility it is arguably difficult to discern, while he himself does not acknowledge – let alone resolve – such difficulties.[5] We ought, perhaps, to be cautious about dignifying that intellectual situation as apt use of coordinate models in order partially to disclose what ultimately is ineffable mystery. It *may* be that Kasper cannot here be acquitted of theological confusion.

C. **The "Uniformity in Basic Texture" pattern**

Partly in reaction against perceived deficiencies of thought-patterns A and B, theologians sometimes incline to putting matters thus. The basic texture of human-divine relations has been uniform, constant, throughout history. God has invariably been present and active within human beings, seeking to elicit response from them. (Phrases used by the writers at issue to characterize such invariable divine presence and activity severally include divine "grace", "Spirit", "word", "self-communication".) In so far as people do respond positively, relationship between themselves and God develops, and they are en route to the fullness of salvation. In the life of Jesus, such human-divine relationship was at the highest level of development that occurs or indeed could occur within history: and that peak level within history *only* occurs in the case of Jesus. People subsequent in history who attend in faith to Jesus – that is, Christians – can learn, gain knowledge. They can learn about God's style and purposes, in that these are reflected in Jesus without the sinful, obstructing elements which clog the rest of us. And they can learn what a total human response to God and peak historical relationship with God consists in, and can proceed to emulate this example. These people's motivation to respond positively is thus enhanced. In the upshot, their relationship with God within history is liable to flourish more than it otherwise would. (Various utterances about Jesus' resurrection and about the eschaton are prone to be accommodated within this general mode of expressing matters.)

Given this way of putting matters, how is the question "What is changed in virtue of Christ?" to be handled? The basic texture of human divine relations is homogeneous, constant, through history: it undergoes no change in virtue of Christ from anything it has ever been. The changes bearing upon the last two thousand years as compared with what went before can be summed up as just twofold. (i) There has actually existed a human being whose relationship with God was at the highest pitch possible within history. (ii) People who attend in faith to this human being, Jesus, have the opportunity of going through an intellectual or psychological process which is richer or deeper, at least in practice and relatively speaking, than is otherwise available. Hence they have the opportunity of more flourishing in relationship with God than otherwise within history is at hand. (Some thinkers, of course, take a "lower" outlook again, and regard Jesus as merely one among a number of world religious leaders: and likewise, Christianity.)

It can be tempting to settle for this thought-pattern (C), with its apparent simplicity, manageability, and allowance for assorted modern views. Such a thought-pattern can prove discernible behind a variety of theological labels – "Hegelian", "liberal", "process", "transcendental", and so forth.

However in my judgment thought-pattern C, taken on its own, signally fails to do justice to the relevant theological sources and indeed to reality. Some of the considerations prompting this judgment are adduced in material I have written elsewhere.[6] If the series of points sketched in the ensuing section of the present article is accepted, the rationale against settling for thought-pattern C comes into focus.

One other remark may be added. It was said above, when thought-pattern C was introduced, that theologians sometimes *incline* to put matters thus. That formulation leaves room for the fact that one or another concrete theological treatment, while approximating to the type identified under C, may also contain traces of further elements.

We have surveyed three conceptual schemes concerning what is, or again is not, changed through Christ. Various influential accounts of Jesus' person and work, of being human, and of the Godhead, have been couched – broadly at any rate – in terms of one or other of these schemes. If – as I judge – none of these schemes can appropriately be employed today (at least in so far as any relatively strong correlation between concepts and reality is posited), the problems to be faced as regards the basic structuring of christological and related thought are large. A sense that clear-sighted perception of the state of the issues here is not widespread provides my reason for devoting so much space in this article to highlighting these issues.

II. SOME POINTS TO BE AFFIRMED

I now indicate, under five headings, some of the positive points which in my view should be affirmed in the area at stake. In the present article there can only be bald, summary expression of what are in fact constituents of a complex, wide-ranging outlook. Steadily believing all these things to be so is liable to stretch a person to the utmost limits of faith and trust.

1. **Single economy of salvation: yet unfolding in different phases**

On the one hand, fundamentally there has only been one single economy of salvation, which God purposed from the outset for the human race: an economy centred in Christ. There was not some original preferred plan which was comprehensively dislocated, such that Christ – as agent in a second-best remedial plan – radically alters the direction of divine-human relations back to a course they were once on. Hence at this fundamental level, the answer to the question "What is changed in virtue of Christ?" is "Nothing". (That is to say, at this level no change occurs from an *actual* contrasting, prior situation. Those who wish can try to speculate on a query "What difference does Christ make to what *would* have been the case had God *not* provided a single saving economy centred in Christ?". However, I am not myself convinced of the fruitfulness of such speculative endeavours.)

On the other hand, it may fittingly be conceived that God puts his single overall plan of salvation into effect in

various phases, such that with a particular phase, there can be a genuinely *new* element or set of elements in history from what was before. In that sense, there can be change. (For what is new in the historical phase subsequent to Jesus, see under headings 3, 4 and 5 below.) Along with that, the notion of God doing specific acts within history should be retained. In these ways, the texture of human-divine relations is not uniform through history.

2. **From radical shortfall to the destination God purposes**

In the case of all human beings in history, at the start of their lives they fall radically short of what God ultimately purposes, destines, for them. They are enmeshed in disharmony, evil and sin. They oppose, in states of blindness or perversity, the divine will. The impact of these tendencies in one generation can then make things worse for later generations, down through the ages. At the same time, all human beings are from their earliest moment the locus of God's self-giving presence and activity. Provided people respond positively to God, they are transformed – by divine grace – such that, in relationship with God and each other, they become what God purposes them to be. This is how God freely, lovingly, deals with his human creatures. Jesus Christ is *central in this process,* and *in different respects causative of whatever transformation emerges.* The climax of this transformation, the fullness of salvation, lies beyond the grave. In varying ways and degrees there can be *some* "advance" transformation within history – even though it is here never more than fragmentary.

Thus from this angle, the question "What is changed in virtue of Christ?" is to be answered in the terms, "All the positive transformation, change, which occurs in people's lives throughout history is, in one respect or another, in virtue of Christ".

3. **Jesus the optimal case: attention to him yields knowledge**

We fittingly employ, I think, three key, complementary and irreducible ways of portraying Christ's role and identity. One of these is as follows.

The life of Jesus of Nazareth comprised, uniquely, the highest case possible within history of the kind of human-divine relationship God ultimately purposes for all. Moreover Jesus was drawn by God through death to the definitive fullness, completion, of human-divine relationship – the first human being to be so drawn.

These things being so, people who attend in faith to Jesus can obtain knowledge, or revelatory disclosure, concerning God's dealings and what they themselves are called to; they can be stimulated to respond, treating Jesus as a model; and they can thereupon by God's grace grow in relationship with God. Such opportunities amount to more, at least in practice and speaking relatively, than is otherwise available.

This mode of portrayal throws some light on how the position within history from the time of Jesus onwards is changed, compared with what it was before: and how those who attend in faith to Christ are better placed than they otherwise would be.

(The points just set down under this heading, *if* they were taken by themselves, would resemble certain points in thought-pattern C above, "Uniformity in Basic Texture".)

4. **Explicit sharing in Christ's life: a distinctive, fresh reality**

Another of the three key ways of portraying Christ's role and identity is this. Jesus' journey through history to the point of crucifixion, and then through death to risen life with the divine Father, is such that other people can in some real fashion share in, be caught up into, this journey: share in Christ. They can share in his suffering and death, and thereby share in his risen life in relation to the Father. To say that is of itself to ascribe to Jesus Christ a "more than individual", "inclusive", personality. This participation in, incorporation into, Christ occurs in a distinctive personalized form only in so far as people consciously attend in faith to Christ, take after Jesus in practical orientation, and enter into the life of the church community. Putting this point in other words: human beings who attend in faith to Christ and seek to follow him (as under heading 3 immediately above) do not simply undergo a certain intellectual or psychological process, focused on a figure "Christ". They are actually involved, in an ongoing, transcendent and personal manner, with the totality of Christ's existence – in his relationship with the Father. To be thus involved with Christ is *as such* – by God's power – to be transformed in a distinctive way or degree in the direction of the definitive fullness of salvation God purposes. It is to be created anew: or again, to be sanctified. This explicit, personalized form of involvement with Christ, and the associated transformation, is a notable – albeit in practice only fragmentary – anticipation within history of the final climax, the fully realized Kingdom. The involvement and transformation are a reality to which the words "objective" or "ontological" apply.

This mode of portrayal throws further light on how, subsequent in history to Jesus and because of him, there is a distinctive, new phase in the passage of God's saving economy towards its culmination: a phase in which only authentic Christians directly take part. The arrival of this phase, with its overt openness to the absolute future, is a change within history relative to what went before. And for particular individuals generation by generation, joining in can be a striking change from their previous experience.

It will be appreciated that the outlook I am expounding combines both various universal elements, and certain elements which can seem to attribute a "scandalously" high, particular, status to Christianity.

5. **Jesus, distinctive embodiment of God's movement towards human beings**

The other key way of portraying Christ's role and identity is this. Jesus distinctively embodies and manifests a gracious initiative, movement, from God to human beings in history. While we must avoid suggesting that God, loving and personal as he is, was objec-

tively absent from human lives in the millenia before Jesus' birth, nonetheless we should affirm that the divine movement towards our race was distinctively enfleshed and shown forth in the life of Christ.

This movement embodied in Christ is in a crucial sense *prior* to the divinely-fostered movement *from* human beings *to* God which stands more prominent under my headings 3 and 4.

On account of this divine presence in Christ, people who attend in faith to Christ can obtain distinctive knowledge, or revelatory disclosure, regarding God and God's character; they can be prompted to respond; and they can thereupon come towards God in a fashion not otherwise available.

This mode of portrayal throws yet further light on how the position within history from the life of Jesus onwards differs from what went before; and how those who attend in faith to Christ are better placed than they otherwise would be.

While the specific focus of the points respectively under headings 3, 4 and 5 varies, the reality at stake is unified: a reality comprising newness in history after Jesus from what was before. There are, I would argue, some intimations of matters under these three headings in what we may reconstruct as Jesus of Nazareth's own teaching, style and consciousness.

Amplification of the points I have sketched in the second section of this article brings in certain far-reaching understandings about knowledge, language and salvific advance. It brings in also ideas regarding God, time and history. Moreover, to enlarge on the points sketched is as such to elaborate notions about the Godhead in relation to human history which warrant the term "trinitarian".

Precisely how the points assembled under headings 1 to 5 all cohere together may perhaps not be as straightforwardly discernible as one would wish. But in any event, one should in faith trust that reality itself is integrated. And one should hold on firmly to each of these points concerning what is, and again what is not, changed in virtue of Christ.

FOOTNOTES:

This article was originally a paper presented to the Heythrop-King's Systematic Theology Discussion Group in May 1986.

1. One writer who elaborates well certain aspects of the viewpoint endorsed in the text is G. Daly, in "Theological Models in the Doctrine of Original Sin", *The Heythrop Journal*, 13 (1972), pp. 121-142.
2. *Jesus the Christ* (London: Burns and Oates 1977).
3. Such disinclination emerges amidst remarks on p. 204.
4. E.g. *Lumen Gentium*, art 16; *Gaudium et Spes*, art 22.
5. For instance, compare the utterances at pp. 156 and 204B of *Jesus the Christ* quoted in my text with utterances at pp. 255 and 266-268 about the Spirit at work everywhere and associated salvation.
6. See "The term 'archetype', and its application to Jesus Christ", *The Heythrop Journal*, 25 (1984), pp. 19-38; and "How is Christ's risen life relevant to other people's salvation?", *The Heythrop Journal*, 28 (1987), pp. 144-164.

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AMBIGUITY IN THE MARCAN NARRATIVE

FRANCIS WATSON

The Gospel of Mark used to be considered the most simple and straightforward of all the Gospels. The old view assigned it no independent significance at all: Mark was regarded as the abbreviator of Matthew who unaccountably missed out some of the most important sections – for example, the nativity stories and the Sermon on the Mount – and marred Matthew's plain but correct Greek style by his own clumsiness. The importance of Mark was first recognized with the discovery that it was actually the earliest of the gospels and the main source for both Matthew and Luke. At first, it was thought that this made Mark a source of the greatest importance for the so-called "quest of the historical Jesus". It was held that Mark gave us a straightforward historical account not only of individual incidents in the ministry of Jesus, but above all of the chronology of the ministry. Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi was seen as the great turning-point for Jesus. However he had thought of himself before, he now saw himself as a spiritual Messiah, quite different from the military Messiah of Jewish expectation, dedicated to achieving a spiritual salvation for his people by his death. Psychological explanations were produced to explain the gradual growth of this conviction in Jesus' mind.[1] But before long, this approach too had to be abandoned as it was recognized that Mark's chronology was his own work and not a plain account of the historical facts. The way was now open for seeing Mark as a work of theological originality and creativity.[2]

But old views die hard. It is still common to hear people contrasting the simplicity and straightforwardness of Mark with the theological profundity of John. In fact, a case could well be made out for precisely the opposite view: that John is simple and Mark profound. John lacks the sense of paradox which we find in Mark. In John, the disciples recognize Jesus as the Christ right from the beginning and without any difficulty. In Mark, when Peter at last appears to have resolved the mystery of Jesus' identity, he is almost immediately addressed in words of extraordinary harshness: "Get behind me, Satan!" In John, Jesus' divinity is unambiguously proved by miracles which are sometimes far more spectacular than anything recorded in Mark. For example, when news comes that Lazarus is ill, Jesus deliberately refrains from going to heal him; he allows time for him to die, be buried and begin to decompose, so that the miracle may be all the more stupendous and convincing when it eventually takes place. But in Mark, on the one occasion when someone is raised from the dead, Jesus denies that she was dead at all ("The child is not dead but sleeping"), and commands that the miracle should be concealed in the strictest secrecy. In John, Jesus is so exalted above suffering that his death is his own act: "I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No-one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." Instead of the agonized prayer in Gethsemane described by Mark, the Johannine Jesus' prayer in Jn. 17 is characterized by serene other worldliness.[3] If one regards the presence of unanswered questions, enigmas and paradoxes as signs of profundity, then Mark is indeed theologically profound.

It is characteristic of modern gospel criticism that the more the evangelists' theological creativity and originality are stressed, the harder it becomes to relate their narratives to "the historical Jesus". On this view, the evangelists and the communities in which the gospel traditions were formulated have projected their own beliefs back onto the figure of Jesus; the Gospels therefore contain a mixture of genuine historical reminiscence and subsequent theological reflection, in such a way that it is often hard to say where one ends and the other begins. While various theoretical objections might be raised against this approach,[4] in practice it does make sense of many of the puzzling features of the Gospels; for that reason, it is most unlikely to be overturned. But the theological consequences of accepting it are considerable: it means that we have only a partial and doubtful access to the historical Jesus, and that the figure we encounter in the gospel narratives is to a considerable extent the product of early Christian reflection. The dilemma this poses is obvious: what is the use of even "theologically profound" reflections if the resulting picture has little or no basis in historical reality? It is not surprising that in the face of this dilemma, some theologians take refuge either in a historical conservatism or in a dialectical concept of history which finds true testimony about Jesus even in material which on one level is legendary.

An alternative solution is to set aside historical questions about the relationship of Mark's narrative both to the historical Jesus and to the evangelist's own theological purposes. Such questions are indeed important and often illuminating; but what one must resist is the idea that literary texts can legitimately be interpreted *only* from the historical point of view, since one of the reasons why they are worth studying at all is their continuing capacity to shed light on situations very different from those in which they were originally conceived. For this reason, a prominent strand in modern biblical hermeneutics (influenced by tendencies in literary criticism) stresses the comparative independence of both text and reader from the historical circumstances from which the text derives.[5] The present study attempts to work out some of the implications of this approach for the interpretation of the Gospel of Mark.

I. AMBIGUITY AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE MARCAN NARRATIVE

The theological profundity of Mark is seen primarily in its acceptance of paradox. Mark's thought is dialectical: that is, it holds together opposing elements in tension, without attempting any easy resolution. The fundamental tension is between power and weakness – or, to put it another way, between revelation and secrecy. This polarity is expressed in the division of the gospel into two halves by Jesus' dialogue with Peter at Caesarea Philippi. The first half culminates in Peter's ecstatic confession, "You are the Christ!" Here at last is the solution to the riddle which Jesus' power has posed for the disciples: "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?" Before Peter's confession, the disciples have failed to understand – a failure which leads to a vehement protest from Jesus himself: "Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?" (8.17). At Caesarea Philippi, the breakthrough at last seems to occur: Jesus' works of power identify him as the Christ. Yet despite

this apparent breakthrough, the disciples are immediately plunged into still deeper incomprehension by Jesus' announcement of his coming sufferings. Having encountered his power, and at last seemingly understood it, the disciples are mystified by the expression of the most abject weakness: "The Son of man must suffer . . ." (8.31). The journey southwards to Jerusalem which begins shortly afterwards, and the repeated passion predictions, give the whole second half of the gospel a quite different atmosphere to that of the first. Even before Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, the shadow cast by his predestined suffering and humiliation there is all-pervasive. The two halves of the gospel thus express a tension between power and weakness, and the dialogue at Caesarea Philippi is the hinge linking the two. In that passage, the two elements are juxtaposed with extraordinary harshness. According to Mark, the christological paradox is that Jesus whose power identifies him as the Christ is at the same time the Son of man whose destiny is to suffer. This is an early and profound expression of what later became the classical "two natures" christology. Mark is not trying to *replace* a christology of power with a christology of suffering, as some have argued.[6] His thought is genuinely dialectical: power and weakness must somehow be held together.

The tension between power and weakness is not only expressed in the *juxtaposition* of the two halves of the gospel; it is also present within *each* of them individually. In the first half, the Son of God whose power is manifested in his miracles is also misunderstood and rejected; his destiny of suffering is already secretly present. In the second half, the Son of man who is bound for the cross is still the powerful Son of God. Although power is the dominant element in the first half and weakness in the second, weakness is also present in the first half and power is also present in the second.

In the first half of the gospel, power is obviously dominant. Jesus casts out demons, heals the sick, raises the dead. So boundless is his power that even inanimate nature is subject to him: he stills the storm, multiplies the loaves, walks on the water. Everywhere he goes, he is accompanied by great crowds who hear his teaching gladly and respond with amazement to his miracles. Yet even here, the roots of the later rejection, suffering and humiliation are already present. Jesus' actions are not unambiguous manifestations of divine power; they are open to misunderstanding. His claim to be able to forgive sins is regarded as blasphemous. His eating with tax-collectors and sinners, his refusal to fast, and his failure to observe the Sabbath are seen as arbitrary and high-handed transgressions of the law. Even his own family agree with the scribes from Jerusalem that he is possessed by an evil spirit. So Jesus' power is indeed manifested – but not in such an unambiguous way that misunderstanding and rejection are impossible. Jesus' parable of the sower and its interpretation in ch. 4 is understood by the evangelist as a response to the opposition which has arisen in ch. 2 and 3. As Jesus has begun to encounter misunderstanding and rejection as well as acceptance, so the sower knows that much of his labour will be wasted. Indeed, Jesus repeatedly suggests that it is divinely ordained that his identity, his work and his teaching should be kept secret. This indicates that the misunderstanding which he provokes is not solely the result of culpable hardness of heart. If misunderstanding is divinely ordained, then it is of the essence of his mission that it should be ambiguous.[7] On one occasion, the Pharisees ask him to clarify the situation by performing an unambiguous sign from heaven. But he refuses with the words: "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation" (8.12). Jesus will not reveal his identity once and for all; he must remain an enigma and a paradox.

And so, although power and revelation dominate the first half of the gospel, there is an undercurrent of weakness, hiddenness and misunderstanding which paves the way for the stress on suffering in the second half. Conversely, the power of Jesus is not entirely absent from the second half, even though this is no longer the dominant element. As he begins his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus is transfigured by the divine glory. He still performs miracles – though not as frequently as before. The humiliation of the cross is mitigated by the fact that Jesus knows in advance exactly what is going to happen to him. He therefore submits actively to it in obedience to the divine will, rather than being surprised by events which are totally unexpected. In all his humiliations, his dignity is maintained, yet without his essential humanity being denied. Above all, in the brief and enigmatic nartive which concludes the gospel, he leaves his tomb empty. Although in the second half of the gospel the emphasis lies on suffering and weakness, the power which had previously been emphasized is not entirely absent. The tension between power and weakness is thus expressed in the juxtaposition of the two halves of the gospel, and also within each half individually. This dialectic must be seen as the key to Mark's whole presentation of Jesus.

A closer examination of the crucial Caesarea Philippi dialogue will make the issue clearer:

> And Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others one of the prophets". And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ". And he charged them to tell no-one about him. And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God but of men". (8.27-33)

If is often said that the key to this passage is the contrast between the Jewish idea of the Messiah as a military conqueror and the Christian conception of a spiritual Messiah.[8] But this interpretation is surely misleading: the early Christians would never have applied the term "Messiah" or "Christ" to Jesus if it was used in a military sense in normal usage. Although military connotations are sometimes present, they are subordinate to the essential meaning of the term in both Jewish and Christian usage: *the Messiah is the bringer of the new age.* This idea derives from the world-view of Jewish apocalyptic.

God's world and God's people have fallen prey to hostile, anti-divine powers – sin, death, Satan, the demons, Gentile oppressors. But God will shortly act in power to rid his creation of these evils, and to establish his own reign of peace and justice. While he is sometimes said to act directly, elsewhere he acts through an angelic or human agent who is endued with divine power. In one popular strand of this belief, the title "Messiah" was used of the human agent who was expected to bring in the new age.

Against this background, the full significance of Peter's confession becomes clear: it is a leap of faith which goes beyond the evidence. Jesus has indeed successfully manifested his power against sin, sickness, death and the devil. But he has done so only in individual cases; in general, the reign of sin and death remains intact. For this reason, Jesus is not generally recognized as the Messiah, since his work does not display the universality expected of the Messiah; he is identified with John the Baptist, Elijah or one of the prophets, figures of relative but not absolute importance. What Peter expresses is not simply a conclusion from what has preceded, but a hope for the future: that Jesus will now begin to exercise his power in order to inaugurate the glorious new age in all its fulness. He must now act not simply to free individuals from the power of Satan, but to remove the entire dominion of Satan from the face of the earth. In this way, the secrecy, misunderstanding and rejection which have so far characterized Jesus' ministry will be removed. There is no room for any ambiguity in the bringer of the new age.

Jesus immediately undermines this new-found faith in himself by announcing that he must suffer and die at the hands of his enemies. For Peter, this is a contradiction: the Messiah cannot be conquered by the powers of the old age, since it is *his* function to conquer *them*. In Pauline language, the proclamation of "Christ crucified" – a crucified Messiah – is "folly", madness. Peter therefore "rebukes" Jesus – an extraordinary term to use in the context of a disciple's relationship with his master, which emphasizes the exceptional gravity of the situation. Despite Jesus' vehement response, the disciples refuse to give up their faith in him as the bringer of the new age. They hope that he will manifest himself as such in Jerusalem, and on the way there they therefore discuss which of them is to take precedence. James and John specifically ask Jesus, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory" (10.37). The indignation of the other disciples shows that they too share this ambition. Jesus' repeated announcements of his forthcoming sufferings fall on deaf ears: "And they did not understand the saying" (9.32). When in Jerusalem it becomes clear that Jesus really is about to suffer and be killed, the disciples all abandon him; Peter denies him three times. Judas loses faith in him as the bringer of the new age just as the other disciples do; the only difference between him and them is that he alone seeks *revenge* against Jesus for the disappointment of his hopes. All without exception have failed to understand the great christological paradox which Mark sets before us: that the bringer of the new age must succumb to the powers of the old.[9]

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIALECTIC

The structure of Mark's narrative is thus dominated by a reinterpretation of the apocalyptic theme of the new age and its agent, the Messiah. The emphasis is shifted from the future to the present world: the Messiah has already come, the new age has already been manifested – and yet this has occurred in and despite the apparent victory of the old age. The old apocalyptic hopes are transformed in an unheard-of way.

What is the significance of this transformation, which has determined even the structure of the Gospel of Mark? It no doubt possessed particular sociological and theologic relevance to the situation of the community for which the evangelist was writing, and it is perhaps possible to determine what that situation might have been.[10] But we cannot simply consign Mark's narrative to a particular historical locus in the first century and leave it there. Literature of all types has been preserved through the centuries above all because of its continuing power to communicate, and canonical literature is no exception. To understand Mark *only* in its first century context is implicitly to deny this power to communicate; the text is treated as a lifeless object, and the interpreter's task is completed when this object has been assigned to its appropriate place in the museum of literary relics from the past. But a literary text is not only an object; it may also become a subject with a life of its own, addressing the reader and illuminating significant aspects of one's existence. The nature of this illumination will obviously depend on the nature of the text. In the case of the Gospel of Mark, the text concerns religious issues, in the broadest sense, and one would therefore expect it to shed light on religious aspects of human existence.

But how does a literary text illuminate aspects of one's existence? How does it possess a continuing power to communicate even in circumstances which, historically considered, are alien to it? The answer cannot be that it compels the reader to adopt precisely the world-view of its author. Texts expressing unfamiliar and, to us, untenable world-views do not necessarily lack the power to communicate: we do not believe in the Homeric gods, but we still read Homer. Literary texts have the power to communicate when what they express evokes an echo or resonance in us. We bring to the text a mind which is not a *tabula rasa* but a repository of the most diverse experience and insight. Only if the text can shed light on this experience and insight of ours will it succeed in reaching us. "Ultimately, no one can extract from things, books included, more than he already knows. What one has no access to through experience one has no ear for" (Nietzsche).[11] Or, as the Gospel of Mark more succinctly expresses it, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear".

The relevance of all this for the interpretation of Mark is that it frees us from the historical-critical obsessions with the author's purpose and with the historical reliability of the story he relates. The evangelist no doubt believed that the events he describes really took place and that they form the prelude to the imminent return of the Son of man with the clouds to bring the present world-order to an end, and if so, it was his purpose in writing to communicate these beliefs to others. But the text's power to communicate does not depend on whether one finds such beliefs convincing. A text has a life of its own independent of its author's purpose, and the author cannot compel his readers to read it in a particular way. He is not

absolute; both text and readers have their own relative autonomy.[12]

We may therefore return to the text of Mark and enquire whether his fundamental dialectic of power and weakness does have the ability to illumine aspects of our own experience. The new age is manifested in the midst of the old: can this view, springing from a conceptuality which is perhaps alien to us, still have anything to say? The question can be answered only obliquely, by examining individual instances of the dialectic in more detail.

1. In Mk.10.37, James and John say to Jesus: "Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory". This is a request for power and authority over others, and in it something universally human comes to expression: the desire for status and for recognition by others, through which one's underlying self-doubt is allayed. Here, this universal desire for recognition takes the form of apocalyptic fantasy. Apocalyptic expresses the desire of the lowly and oppressed for the power and glory which are at present denied them. Because it is impossible for this dream to be fulfilled within the existing world-order, a miraculous transformation is hoped for in which the great and the powerful will be humbled and the lowly exalted. Since the disciples have now recognized Jesus as the Christ, the bringer of the new age, they expect him to accomplish this miraculous transformation for their benefit.

Jesus exposes this desire for dominance as essentially pagan: "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them" (10.42). The disciples hope that in the new age they will be akin to Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar or Augustus in the old. They share the presupposition that power over others is a goal worth striving for, and they see their discipleship as a means of attaining that goal. Apocalyptic fantasies about power rivalling and exceeding that of the Gentiles were common in the early church. For example, in Rev. 2.26-7 the heavenly Christ promises the Christians of Thyatira:

> He who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces.

But that is to share the pagan idea that power is good and that absolute power is the absolute good. Jesus opposes this idea:

> It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. (Mk. 10.43-4).

The new age is paradoxically present, and this means that it is present in a totally unexpected way which overturns the assumptions of the old age.

The disciplines have in effect taken the pagan rulers ("Those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles") as their model. Jesus replaces this model with himself:

> The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (10.45)

The quest for power exemplified by Alexander or Caesar is replaced by the ideal of solidarity exemplified by Jesus. A new image is set up of what it is to be human. Jesus takes the place of the conquerors and the emperors, and he is the new standard of judgment by which the worth of human life is to be assessed. The old idols are destroyed by the one who as truly human is truly God: according to Mk. 10.45, that is the true meaning of the story of Jesus. The new image represents the renunciation of a quest for power which in fact alienates one from other people, and the acceptance of a solidarity which springs from a shared humanity. Traditional apocalyptic merely re-establishes the old idol in a new form; on this view, the new age is not new at all but the apotheosis of the old. Only the claim that the new age is present in the midst of the old genuinely overthrows the old.

2. Mark's narrative tells how the bringer of the new age succumbs to rejection, suffering and death. The disciples had believed that Jesus as the Christ would inaugurate an age in which God would wipe away every tear and suffering and death would be no more (cf. Rev. 21.4). But to their bewilderment, Jesus repeatedly announces that he himself is shortly to experience precisely the tears and suffering and death which he was supposed to bring to an end; for God has ordained that the Christ should be defeated by the powers of the old age. As the narrative unfolds, Jesus' prophecies about his suffering are inexorably fulfilled. The account of his sufferings, from his arrest to the act of crucifixion itself, is restrained, objective and dignified. In this part of the narrative, nothing is said about his inward reactions to these external events, and one might conclude from this that he behaved throughout with the exemplary piety expected of the martyr, calmly trusting in God. But at two points, the narrator's restraint is thrown to the winds: in Gethsemane and in the cry of desolation on the cross. In these passages, we have the New Testament's profoundest expression of the humanity of Jesus. He suffers not just the physical pain of beating, scourging and crucifixion, but the inward pain of loneliness and fear of death in Gethsemane, and of God-forsakenness on the cross: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death" – "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour?" – "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Christian piety, both ancient and modern, has tended to find these passages offensive and distasteful.[13] The martyrs are supposed to go to their deaths with joy and confidence, glad of the privilege of suffering for God's sake. If they experience hard struggles overcoming the natural human shrinking from death, that is seen as symptomatic of our perverse tendency to cling to this transient world instead of eagerly reaching out for the glories of the world to come. But by the time their death occurs, all such weakness has been set aside; they die quietly and joyfully trusting in God. In comparison with such piety, Mark's account of the suffering and death of Jesus seems quite inadequate. Jesus himself shrinks back from suffering: "Remove this cup from me". His own words to Simon Peter, "The flesh is weak", seem also to apply to himself. Worse still, Jesus dies not with an expression of pious confidence on his lips, but with a cry

of despair. Luke and John already felt this difficulty, and replaced the offending saying with other sayings which seemed to satisfy the requirements of piety better. But Mark's account is utterly stark and comfortless, and we should not allow its impact to be blunted by the modifications of it in other gospels.

One common solution to the problem is to remove Jesus' sufferings from the sphere of normal human suffering: he suffered so intensely in Gethsemane and at Golgotha because he was anticipating and then experiencing the divine punishment of sin in order to secure the world's redemption.[14] Quite apart from its other difficulties, such a view would make it impossible for the text to shed any light on our own experience. In any case, the text does not portray Jesus' sufferings as *sui generis*. James and John are told that they too will have to drink the cup which Jesus anticipated in Gethsemane and experienced at Golgotha: "The cup that I drink you will drink" (10.39). The disciples must share his suffering: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (8.34). The disciples must understand Jesus' suffering in the light of their own, and their own suffering in the light of Jesus'. And since the readers of the narrative are intended to identify with the disciples, this is true also of them.[15] The story of Jesus' suffering must shed light on their experience and understanding of suffering.

But what is the essential nature of this suffering? Christian contemplation of the Passion has often dwelt on Jesus' physical pain and his unjust treatment at the hands of his fellow human beings.[16] But Mark does not emphasize either aspect, and presents the crucifixion primarily as a theological problem. It is in the last resort *God's* will that Jesus is rejected and crucified; Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin and Pilate are the unwitting agents of the divine purpose. "The Son of man *must* suffer", and "must" refers not to an inner-historical necessity but to the compulsion of the divine predestination. This is stressed in the sayings in Gethsemane and on the cross: it is *God* who compels Jesus to drink the cup, to endure the experience of God-forsakenness. We might therefore say that this suffering consists above all in the destruction of the view previously held of the nature of God and of reality. Reality had once been accepted with child-like trust as the work of a loving heavenly Father who upholds it with his constant care. The cross starkly contradicts any such belief: the dark side of reality is here manifested, in such a way that the old, naive view is shattered. The God who was once gladly addressed as "Abba" has incomprehensibly turned away and hidden his face. In a moment of both bewilderment and insight, the reality of God-forsakenness as a characteristic of the world is recognized. No resolution to the problem is offered: only the question, "Why . . . ?", and the equally eloquent though wordless "loud cry" with which Jesus dies.

In what sense is this story of the crucified Jesus still the story of the Christ, the bringer of the new age? One answer would be to see "the new age" precisely in the new insight into the nature of the present world: the recognition of "God-forsakenness" as an inescapable aspect of reality, the refusal to comfort oneself or others with any of the expedients which piety has devised in order to evade this recognition. The new age is manifested in the abandonment of the illusions of the old. Here, the story of Jesus makes the same point as the older story of Job: the world does not point unambiguously to a rational and loving providential care, and we must honestly accept this fact.

3. The early Christians' recognition of this aspect of reality was qualified by their triumphant proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus. In Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, the joyful D major of the trumpets and strings at the words "Et resurrexit" immediately dispels the dark mystery of suffering, death and burial; and this admirably recreates the mood of much of the New Testament. But in Mark's resurrection narrative, triumph and joy are absent and are replaced by terror, confusion and doubt. The evangelist does not allow the resurrection to resolve the dialectic he has been elaborating – that is, the paradoxical presence of the new age in the midst of the old. On the contrary, even in the case of the resurrection the paradox is maintained.

A brief narrative, a mere eight verses long, tells of the events of Easter morning.[17] The women arrive at the tomb "early on the first day of the week" in order to perform the rituals omitted at the time of Jesus' burial. They are thrown into confusion by a young man in white, whom they suddenly encounter inside the darkness of the tomb. He tells them that Jesus is risen and that the disciples are to meet him in Galilee; their own task is to pass on this message to the disciples. However, instead of rejoicing and proclaiming the good news, they flee from the tomb in terror and tell no-one what has occurred.

The evangelist offers no proof that the young man's message was true. He does not tell us whether the promise of a meeting in Galilee was fulfilled; indeed, since the women failed to pass on the message to the disciples, it is hard to see how it could have been. In the other Gospels, the risen Jesus appears and the mystery of the emptiness of the tomb is immediately resolved; but in Mark, the enigma remains. The fact that a "young man" is mentioned is another problem. Matthew and Luke replace him with angels – beings whose glorious, shining countenances make them unambiguous messengers of God whose proclamation of the resurrection is self-evidently true. But Mark's young man in white is a more ambiguous figure. Is he God's messenger? Or is he perhaps deceiving the women? The narrative of course assumes that the former possibility is the true one; but it offers no grounds for excluding the latter. No attempt is made to deter the unsympathetic reader from drawing the conclusion that the tomb is empty because grave robbers have been at work; perhaps the young man was one of them. John shows his awareness of this glaring problem by insisting that the grave clothes, with their valuable contents of precious spices, were left behind; this makes it certain (even before the first appearance of the risen Jesus) that Mary Magdalene's initial conclusion, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him", cannot be correct.[18] But John's narrative merely shows up more clearly the strangeness of Mark's: the reader is left in suspense, with nothing more than the bare word of an unknown young man to confirm the belief that Jesus has risen. If it is true (as it may well be) that the story of the discovery of the empty tomb developed as an apologetic legend to con-

firm the message of resurrection,[19] Mark has transformed it. Instead of attempting to "prove" the resurrection, Mark's narrative leaves it with a question-mark against it. It is a riddle to which he refuses to provide the answer.

There may be any number of historical reasons which would explain why this narrative is as it is; but rather than speculating about them, it is more important to try to hear what the narrative as it stands is saying. For the early Christians, the resurrection was the preliminary but triumphant manifestation of the new age. Its imminent arrival was guaranteed by the sure knowledge of Jesus' resurrection: the one who had ascended to heaven in a cloud would shortly descend in a cloud to bring the old order to an end, to raise the dead, to judge the world, and to bestow eternal life on his elect. Only this train of events can dispel the ambiguities and the darkness of the present world, symbolized by the crucifixion; only the new age can justify the fundamental goodness of God's creation, as it is at last freed from the evil powers to which it has fallen prey. The proclamation of Jesus' resurrection therefore concerns nothing less than the justification of reality, the vindication of God's goodness.

Mark likewise assumes that this is the significance of Jesus' resurrection; he too shares the apocalyptic framework of early Christianity. Yet by leaving the message of the resurrection with a question-mark against it, he once again draws attention to the ambiguity of the presence of the new age in the midst of the old. There is in his resurrection narrative no triumphant, certain knowledge which already participates in the joys of the age to come in anticipation of the final victory. The ultimate justification of reality is not something about which we may attain certain knowledge, since we see always through a glass darkly. It is something to be hoped for – the age-old hope, expressed in countless ways in different religious traditions, that despite everything, human existence does in the end make sense. No grounds are offered for this hope; it remains vulnerable, suspended in mid-air like the young man's doubtful testimony to the resurrection.

1. Writing in 1907, W. Sanday said of this theory that it is "in its main outlines familiar to all of us, as it is substantially that which has for some time with slight differences in detail been generally accepted", (*The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, Oxford 1907), p. 55.

2. For a survey of modern Marcan research, see W.R. Telford (ed.), *The Interpretation of Mark*, London 1985, pp. 1-41.

3. This presentation of John as "simplifying" theological issues is, of course, deliberately one-sided. R. Bultmann has interpreted John as an expression of a paradoxical christology with affinities with Kierkegaard (*The Gospel of John*, English translation Oxford 1971). However, as E. Käsemann has pointed out, Bultmann is only able to maintain this view with the help of an elaborate and very doubtful source criticism. Käsemann writes: "I am unable to see the incognito of the Revealer as being maintained in a Gospel which begins with the wedding at Cana, sees the Passion narrative as arising directly out of the raising of Lazarus and reaches its culmination in the shout of victory from the Cross" (*New Testament Questions of Today*, London 1965, pp. 16-17; see also Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*, ET Philadelphia 1968).

4. See for example, C.E. Gunton, *Yesterday and Today. Studies of Continuities in Christology*, London 1983, pp. 56 ff, who argues that modern New Testament scholarship has been misled by the empiricist tendency to separate "facts" from "meaning": purely immanent, neutral facts are separated from interpretation which involves the imposition of subjective projections of meaning (pp. 61-2). But meaning should be conceived as *inherent* in the facts, and the thought of the early Christians would then take the form of "discernment" rather than "imposition" (p. 62).

5. Thus Hans Frei writes: "Especially in narrative, novelistic, or history-like form, where meaning is most nearly inseparable from the words . . . , there is neither need for nor use in looking for meaning in a more profound stratum underneath the structure (a separable "subject matter") or in a separable author's "intention", or in a combination of such behind-the-scenes projections" (*The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, New Haven and London 1974, p. 281). While Frei's apparent desire to exclude traditional historical questions altogether is unjustified, his assertion of the legitimacy of an alternative approach remains valuable.

6. Notably T.J. Weeden, in *Mark: Traditions in Conflict*, Philadelphia 1971.

7. The original historical and social setting of this view is discussed in my article, "The Social Function of Mark's Secrecy Theme", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 24 (1985), pp. 44-69. For a variety of more traditional approaches to Mark's "messianic secret", see C.M. Tuckett (ed.), *The Messianic Secret*, London 1983.

8. Thus Vincent Taylor understands the command to secrecy as "a counsel of prudence in view of the political repercussions of such a confession". To proclaim Jesus publicly as the Messiah would be to arouse a revolutionary movement among the people, which would be a disastrous misunderstanding of Jesus' profoundly personal understanding of the title (*The Gospel according to St. Mark*, London 1952, p. 377).

9. "The Messiah who is supposed to bring the new eon is defeated by the powers of the old eon. The defeat of the Messiah on the Cross is the most radical transformation of the symbol of the Messiah . . . A defeated Messiah is not a Messiah at all. Christianity acknowledges the paradox – and accepts it" (P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology* 2, London 1957, p. 111).

10. See H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age*, London 1977.

11. *Ecce Homo*, ET London 1979, p. 70. Nietzsche is, typically, discussing the conditions for understanding *his own* books.

12. It should be noted that the modern discussion of the theological significance of "narrative" is not all motivated by the desire to interpret narrative texts in comparative isolation from their hypothetical circumstances of origin. Some scholars strongly emphasize the significance of narrative for both individual and communal identity, and belief in the basic historicity of the narrative may well remain important on such a view (see George W. Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology*, London 1984). This approach has affinities with Brevard Childs' "canonical criticism", which lays a similar stress on the church as the locus of the interpretation of Scripture. There is perhaps a danger here of forgetting that the Gospels (for example) are part of the literary and religious heritage not just of "the church" but of the whole western world.

13. Because of his view of Jesus' continuous God-consciousness, Schleiermacher asserts that the Gethsemane story is not literally true and that on the cross Jesus had in mind the whole of Ps. 22 (*Life of Jesus*, ET Philadelphia 1975, pp. 396, 423). A more characteristically twentieth century view distinguishes between what Jesus *felt* and what was actually the case: Taylor approvingly cites the comment of T.R. Glover, "I have sometimes thought there never was an utterance that reveals more amazingly the distance between feeling and fact" (*St. Mark*, p. 594).

14. This exegesis, deriving from the Reformation, is reaffirmed by C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, Cambridge 1959, pp. 433, 458-9.

15. On the identification of the readers with the disciples, see R.C. Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark: the Function of a Narrative Role", in *The Interpretation of Mark*, pp. 134-157.

16. A typical example of this is George Herbert's poem, "The Sacrifice", which is based on the medieval liturgical tradition of Christ's complaints to his people (*The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. C.A. Patrides, London 1974, pp. 48-56). Christ reproaches his disciples and all who are responsible for his death for the sufferings and humiliations he undergoes; each stanza ends with the words, "Was ever grief like mine?" But nothing is said about the main problem posed by the passion narratives: that it is above all *God* who wills the death of Jesus.

17. Modern scholars are increasingly agreed that Mk. 16.8 was the original ending of the gospel, and that the earlier view that the gospel is incomplete is to be rejected. See W.R. Telford (ed.), *The Interpretation of Mark*, p. 26, and the literature cited there.

18. R.H. Fuller states that "the apologetic and legendary character" of this motif is "obvious" (*The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives*, London 1980, p. 135).

19. R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, ET Oxford 1963, p. 287; J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology, Vol. I*, ET London 1971, pp. 304.

PENTECOSTAL, CHARISMATIC *OR* WHAT'S IN A NAME?

GRAHAM BALDWIN

Whatever a person's view of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, it is clear that most Christians are at least familiar with the terms. It is also fair to say that most denominations have been, in recent years, affected and influenced by both groups, and yet it is obvious that much confusion exists concerning exactly what the terms refer to and the relationship between the Charismatic (ie Restoration/Renewal) Movement and the older Pentecostal Movement. This article is an attempt to clarify this confusion by outlining briefly the origins and theological emphasis of both groups. In doing this I am in no way trying to compete with the many books that have been written recently,[1] rather I am attempting to present an overview for those with little time or inclination to read more detailed works.

Throughout the history of the church there have been isolated reports of people speaking in languages "unknown to themselves", prophesying or experiencing the Charismata listed by Paul in I Cor. 12: 8-10.[2] The roots of Pentecostalism however, are based in the United States during the latter part of the 19th Century. Those concerned were almost entirely drawn from what has been termed the "Holiness Movement". This Movement was comprised of some Methodists (who in the main followed Wesley's teaching on holiness), some members of the recently formed Salvation Army and others who were associated with the Keswick Convention.[3]

By 1906 there were approximately a thousand people in the United States who claimed to have experienced a "baptism in the Holy Spirit" which they linked to the phenomena of glossalalia or speaking in tongues. Initially they were shunned by other Christians. However in 1906 a small church was established in Azusa St. in the negro quarter of Los Angeles.[4] The services there drew not only the attention of local people but attracted visitors from all over the world. From these visitors returning to their own countries Pentecostal churches were established throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

In spite of great numerical growth, particularly in North America and Scandinavia, these groups were not accepted by the established churches and for almost 50 years were classed as fanatics and sectarians, outside mainstream Christianity. In the United Kingdom the three main groups formed were Assemblies of God, Elim Pentecostal Church, and the Apostolic Church, each functioning as a separate denomination, having different systems of church government, yet maintaining some links,[5] with Elim and Assemblies of God remaining more closely linked. In 1960 the situation was to change dramatically. Up until then Pentecostals had remained isolated in this country, a situation not helped by their rejection of the World Council of Churches. Once again following events in the United States, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists and others began to experience similar phenomena to those occurring in the Pentecostal churches.[6]

Despite the initial expectation of Pentecostals, that this would bring unity by these new "charismatics" leaving their own denominations, most decided, at least at first, to remain where they were. Indeed it soon became clear that as a result of the differences in backgrounds there were major disagreements of doctrine. For example William Kay states in an article on Charismatic theology, "When we heard... Roman Catholics, who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, saying that they could now appreciate Mary more, we were taken aback".[7] In scenes reminiscent of Acts 11 both sides eyed each other with a certain amount of suspicion.

With the birth of the house church movement in the mid 1960s, there began an exodus from the established churches of charismatics who found it more and more difficult to remain in the older denominations. Faced with endless battles concerning worship and the gifts of the Spirit, and often branded as fanatics, many charismatics decided to leave their own churches. By the seventies the argument became less centred on the "Baptism" of the Holy Spirit and more concerned with whether Charismatics should leave or stay in their own churches.[8] Those remaining in the denominations being generally known as "the renewal movement" and those who left as "the restoration movement".

Before examining the current situation a look at the differences in doctrine is necessary. As a result of the Pentecostal movement's origins being so firmly rooted in the Holiness movement, not surprisingly, much of its teaching is based on Holiness movement doctrine and practice. Methodism had taught both the decisiveness of the conversion experience and also a further experience variously called "entire sanctification", "holiness", "perfect love" and "the second blessing". Pentecostal doctrine similarly is expressed in terms of two distinct experiences. A new believer repents, receives Christ and is then "baptized" in the Holy Spirit. In some people these two distinct experiences can occur almost simultaneously or be separated by days, weeks or even years. Water baptism (by total immersion) may occur after conversion and before "Baptism in the Spirit", or after conversion and after "Baptism in the Spirit". In addition glossalalia (or "speaking in tongues") has always been held to be the initial evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.[9] This emphasis on glossalalia, however, is not to the exclusion of the other charismata listed in I Cor. 12 (e.g. the gifts of interpretation, prophecy, healing, wisdom, knowledge, faith etc.) all of which play an important part in Pentecostal teaching and worship. Indeed in many Pentecostal churches glossalalia have tended to take a less central position in services. In addition some Pentecostals, seeing the experiences of the charismatic movement, have re-examined their personal position and no longer feel able to maintain a doctrine of a second experience, with "tongues" as the initial evidence of it. Nevertheless the mainstream Pentecostal churches still include this point in their declarations of faith.[10]

Aside from their distinctive teaching on the Holy Spirit, Pentecostals, as one would expect, hold beliefs in many ways similar to most other Protestant churches with perhaps a closer similarity to the Baptist denomination. Along with other evangelical churches they hold a

high doctrine of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture.

Criticism has often been levelled against Pentecostal churches concerning their lack of academic theologians and their emphasis on personal experience rather than dogmatic theology. Happily this situation in recent years has begun to be rectified. Donald Gee, one of the founders of Pentecostalism in Britain, went so far as to warn the charismatic movement against falling into the same trap as the Pentecostals by emphasizing personal experience over doctrine.[11]

It is, however, important to note that all of the mainstream Pentecostal churches have detailed and clear cut declarations of faith. The charismatic movement, on the other hand have often been accused of having a nebulous and inconsistent theology caused by embracing and accommodating people from many varied backgrounds. By emphasizing experience without attention to doctrine they have been able to unite people with very different theologies. Thus charismatics whilst accepting most of the Pentecostal teaching concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their importance to church life and worship, have no clear cut position on the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In some cases, Charismatics have changed their positions since the 1960s. Michael Harper, one of the leaders of the Anglican Charismatics, for example, has become much less dogmatic concerning glossalalia as the initial evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.[12] In addition there has been a gradual recognition that the list of charismata in I Cor. 12 is not exhaustive.[13]

Some have accepted a two-fold experience as a way of explaining their experience. Others however hold what might be termed a "one stage" theology, thus avoiding the inherent tension in the two-stage position, often expressed as first and second class Christianity. To explain the often sudden and life changing experience accompanied with a deeper spirituality and an increase in commitment, devotion and love for others, that both Pentecostals and Charismatics claim, they argue that at Baptism (adult or infant, depending on background) or at conversion a person receives the Holy Spirit; and at some point in a Christian's life, either immediately or at some time later, by a working of the Holy Spirit comes into a heightened awareness of God, often manifesting various charismata. Tom Smail expresses this position thus: "it is important to notice that it is one thing to testify to a new experience of the working of the Holy Spirit and quite another to identify this experience as 'the second blessing'. The one is a description of what has happened, the other presupposes a particular theological interpretation of it."[14]

The problems that Charismatics have in accepting a two stage experience have been highlighted by Anglicans and Roman Catholics who have stayed in their denominations, thus having to come to terms with their churches' teaching on the Sacrament of infant baptism. Some charismatics for example have begun to feel that there is an inadequacy in supposing that water baptism must produce new birth by the Holy Spirit. They feel that to hold that an infant who has been baptized with water in the name of the Trinity must be considered as a child of God, fully equipped with the Holy Spirit, has a weakness in the areas of personal experience, faith and allegiance. Michael Green, an Anglican clergyman, expresses it thus: "There are millions of people who have been baptized in infancy without their knowledge or consent... They neither believe in the Christian story themselves nor do those who brought them to Baptism, except perhaps in the most general, not to say superstitious way."[15] He goes on to ask in what way it is meaningful to speak of such people as Christians when they do not go to church or believe the creeds, and claim no knowledge of the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit, and yet have been baptized in water in the name of the Trinity.

To answer this problem many Roman Catholic Charismatics have tended to argue that it is not Baptism alone, but Baptism accompanied (normally years later) by the laying on of hands in Confirmation, which imparts the Holy Spirit. Passages such as Acts Chapters 8 and 19 are usually quoted in support of this position (which interestingly enough are the same passages quoted by Pentecostals to support a "two-stage" experience). Some Catholics such as Simon Tugwell have however tried to maintain a more orthodox position.[16]

Charismatic Anglicans, on the other hand, have on the whole tended not to challenge their church's doctrinal position, rather just postpone the Baptism of their own children until they are old enough to be personally involved in what the sacrament signifies. John Gunstone feels[17] that the indications are that infant Baptism will become less widespread in Anglican families and virtually non-existent amongst non-church attenders. He also mentions that the Alternative Service Book does already provide a service of thanksgiving for the birth of a child (similar to infant dedication in many Free denominations). Other Catholics and Anglicans, feeling infant baptism to be inadequate, have left their churches, often joining house groups who have rebaptized them by total immersion. In fact rebaptism is often, although not always, a pre-requisite of membership.

The Lambeth Conference in 1978 acknowledged this problem saying, "A... pastoral problem arises when a person baptized in infancy experiences the renewing power of the Holy Spirit as an adult and asks to be baptized again. Such a request must be declined, as it suggests that the efficacy of Baptism lies in the effects on the individual's feelings and denies the fact that Baptism incorporates the person who receives it into Christ."[18] The Conference also suggested that some other form of affirmation of renewal was required to meet this need. In some cases, faced with the loss of a committed member of their church, Priests have either "borrowed" the facilities of another church and quietly rebaptized the person or have asked a local Free Church minister to perform the rebaptism.[19]

The situation in the House Church movement is even more confused. These independent groups are led by individuals, whose interpretations of the Bible are taken as authoritative by their members. As much of their teaching is experience-based, the theology that is expressed sometimes appears contradictory. For

Example, Anne Mather reports an interview with an elder of one of the largest House Church groups (which gives the impression in its literature that it is firmly promulgating a two-stage doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit), in which he said "Baptism in the Spirit is part and parcel of the whole salvation package. We don't really believe in two stages, but because of deficient teaching and understanding many get it in bits and pieces."[20] In the main, however, most areas of the Restoration movement hold the traditional Pentecostal two-stage doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. They also hold firmly to a doctrine of Believer's Baptism which is similar to traditional Pentecostalism. It can however be argued that their "Baptist" views owe as much to Brethrenism as to traditional Pentecostalism. The same could be said of their attitude to sacraments and liturgy. Like all Brethren and Pentecostals they abhor ritualism and sacramentalism of any kind. However given that in the main the Restorationist position on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit is also substantially the same as that of the Pentecostals, one might reasonably expect to find a close link between the two groups. In reality this is not the case. One of the most distinctive beliefs of the Restoration movement (which they state either explicitly or implicitly) is that the early Church very early on fell into the trap of denominationalism. The Restorationists therefore see themselves as returning to a Christianity based on New Testament lines without denominational barriers. They therefore believe that all denominations are wrong and no longer useful or part of God's purposes. They therefore feel that the Pentecostals have fallen into the same error of denominationalism as the older denominations have done. What this has meant in practice is that although there are greater doctrinal differences between Pentecostals and Renewalists they have tended on the whole to be more closely related to each other. The Restorationists therefore have remained more isolated.[21]

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

Whatever the shortcomings of both the Pentecostals and Charismatics (and I believe there are a number), it has become clear that the established churches ignore them at their peril. At a time when overall church attendance in the UK has fallen, most Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have shown large increases, unfortunately in part at the expense of other churches. The Anglican church in five years, on the other hand, has suffered 10% drop in church attendance, figures which have been mirrored in the Roman Catholic church.[22] The failure of these churches to welcome and accommodate charismatics, I believe, must to some extent be the cause of this.

Cardinal Suenens in a call to church leaders says "Let us open our hearts to the grace of the Renewal, grasping its meaning and wealth". He finishes by saying "The Holy Spirit works in many ways, and no one can claim to have an exclusive monopoly of His action. But we have to recognise with Paul VI that the Renewal is an opportunity for the church and the world."[23]

Within the last ten years there has been a further development, caused in the main by the charismatic movement, of whole churches of the Baptist and other free Church denominations, including Pentecostals, breaking away to become independent. The normal reason given is that denominations are a hindrance to unity and are therefore wrong and outdated. However most of these churches seem to end up joining groups such as the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (F.I.E.C.) or House Church groups, which appear to function in a similar way to the denominations that the churches have broken away from in the first place. The reports of the F.I.E.C. Annual Assembly in their magazine *Fellowship*[24] mention a central headquarters, a home missions fund, Youth Committee, etc., much the same as other denominations. Far from breaking down barriers to church unity they have erected another and caused a further splintering of the Christian Church. Another result is that by placing the authority in a church in the hands of one, two or three men, as in the House churches, there have sometimes been excesses in areas such as the control and disciplining of church members, including in some cases financial control.

In addition there has been a tendency towards what has been termed "judgmentalism." No longer do we have Pharisees and Tax Collectors (see Luke 18:9 ff); instead we have charismatics and non-charismatics often both thanking God they are not like each other. However, in the past few years there have been hopeful signs concerning unity. Many leading churchmen, theologians and evangelical leaders have appealed not for a unity of all charismatics, but for a unity of all Christians, that comes from accepting each other's differences: not by merging denominations but rather by accepting and tolerating one another in love and working together where possible, when differences in doctrine allow it. A large number of books and articles putting forward this view have been written recently,[25] and I believe that if the church is to see growth and renewal in the future, this must be the way forward.

FOOTNOTES:

1. For example J. Gunstone, *Pentecostal Anglicans* (Hodder, 1982), R. Laurentin, *Catholic Pentecostalism* (DLT, 1977), A. Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom* (Hodder, 1985), P. Hocken, *Streams of Renewal* (Paternoster, 1986)
2. For a brief historical outline see Michael Harper, *As at the Beginning* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1965) pp.17ff.
3. For further details see Vinson Synan, *The Holiness – Pentecostal Movements in the U.S.A.* (Eerdmans, 1971).
4. For an eye witness account of the services there see F. Bartleman, *Azusa St.* (Logos, 1980)
5. For details of the differences in origins and practices etc. of these groups see W.J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (SCM 1972).
6. For details of the developments in Britain in the 1960s see Michael Harper, *None can guess* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1971), P. Hocken, *Streams of Renewal* (Paternoster, 1986)
7. *Redemption Tidings* (Assemblies of God) Vol 61 No 27 p.4.
8. For details of both sides of the argument see: Edward England, *The Spirit of Renewal*, (Kingsway, 1982) pp.87ff.
9. For detailed exposition of Pentecostal teaching on spiritual gifts see: Harold Horton, *The Gifts of the Spirit*, (AOG Publishing House, 10th ed. 1976).
10. For Pentecostal declarations of faith see Hollenweger, pp.513ff.
11. Donald Gee, *Pentecost* (Vol 68, 1964) p.17.
12. To see how his position has changed see *As at the Beginning*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1965) pp.102-4; *Walk in the Spirit* (Hodder & Stoughton 1968) pp.20-21; *This is the Day* (Hodder & Stoughton 1979) pp.60-61

13. See A. Bittlinger, *Gifts and Ministries*, (Hodder & Stoughton, 1974). An excellent book from a Roman Catholic theologian.

14. Tom Smail, *Reflected Glory* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1975) pp.17-18.

15. Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (2nd edition, Hodder, 1985) p.149f.

16. Simon Tugwell, *Did you Receive the Spirit?* (DLT, 1972).

17. John Gunstone, *The Pentecostal Anglicans*, (Hodder & Stoughton, 1982) p.134.

18. *The Report of the Lambeth Conference 1978* (C.I.O. Pub., 1978) p.73.

19. In my own church Anglicans have been baptized, with their Priest's blessing and on the understanding they remain within their own church.

20. Anne Mather, 'The Charismatic Movement' (*Themelios*, Vol 9 No 3) p.19.

21. For further details of the distinctive teachings and structure of the Restoration movement see A. Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom* (Hodder, 1985).

22. All statistics are taken from *U.K. Christian handbook 1983* and *1985*. (Marc Europe)

23. Cardinal Suenens, *Renewal and the Powers of Darkness* (DLT, 1983) pp.102 ff.

24. *Fellowship* (July/August 1985) Vol 7 No 4.

25. G.W. Kirby, *All One in Christ?* (Kingsway, 1984), M. Harper, *That We Might be One* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1983), Paul Billheimer, *Love Covers* (CLC, 1981), Michael Griffiths, 'Handling Differences' (*Fellowship*, May/June, Vol 7 No 3; July/Aug, Vol 7 No 4.)

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THEOLOGY IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE?

CHRISTOPH SCHWOEBEL

A Review Article of *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, by Wolfhart Pannenberg, translated by Matthew J. O'Connell (T.&T. Clark, 1985). Pp. 552. £24.95 (hb)

Anthropology is a child of the Enlightenment. After having played a subordinate role as a part of metaphysical psychology in the 17th century, it later became (alongside with history and philosophical aesthetics) one of the "new sciences" which were characterised by the Enlightenment's emphasis on liberating human beings from the dogmatic presuppositions of traditional Christian doctrine and from the antiquated framework of Aristotelean metaphysics. In a time in which Europe suffered from the after-effects of religious wars and in which explorers brought news of human cultures totally different from those previously known, the quest for a secular scientific conception of human nature could be sure of a positive response.

Like most of the academic disciplines and spheres of culture which had claimed autonomy in the fragmentation of the unified culture of the Middle Ages, anthropology also claimed at one stage – most notably in Feuerbach's late philosophy – to provide the new centre of meaning for a new unified world-review and for a new unity of culture based on an enlightened explanation of the outmoded religious world-view and culture. And like most of the intellectual disciplines which had their origin in the general segmentation of culture in the Enlightenment, anthropology itself underwent a process of segmentation at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century when several disciplines were established (biological, psychological, social and cultural anthropology), each claiming to be the true representative of anthropology.

A common feature of modern intellectual history is that, when such conflicts among the arts and sciences arise, philosophy – having itself earlier lost to the new sciences many of its previous functions of giving a comprehensive interpretation of reality – appears on the stage offering not only to sort out the differences among the sciences but also to integrate their different viewpoints in a new philosophical synthesis. That was the case when in the first half of this century philosophical anthropology was introduced on the Continent as a philosophical synthesis of the anthropological sciences and as a new approach to philosophy in general.

The historical and cultural circumstances in which anthropology developed did not leave Christian religion and theology unaffected. With the dissolution of the medieval cosmos of meaning and with the fragmentation of its unified culture, religion lost its place as the generally acknowledged organizing centre of meaning and found itself reduced to the status of one cultural sphere among others. It has been maintained, no doubt rightly, that the Christian doctrine of creation (with its sharp distinction between a transcendent divine creator and the wordly order of creation) was one of the presuppositions of a scientific investigation of nature. Even so, the progress of the natural sciences in finding natural explanations for natural phenomena seemed to sever the links between God and his creation as they were traditionally understood and to call into question the traditional ways of inferring God's existence and nature from the world. One consequence of the crisis of natural theology – more acutely felt on the Continent than in Britain – was that the internal world of human consciousness displaced the external world as the primary point of reference for attempting to find a secure foundation for theology.

This development was accompanied by the privatisation of religion after the confessional wars had discredited the public religion of the Christian denominations. Many thinkers expressed this privatisation by contrasting the statutory faith of the churches with the rational faith of private religiosity. But this privatised religion could only retain its religious character of providing a comprehensive interpretation of reality, if it was not just a subjective perspective on the world, but possessed general validity. The moral religion of Rousseau and Kant was intended to serve this purpose, as well as Schleiermacher's conception of religion as the feeling of absolute dependence.

These attempts to compensate the loss of public legitimation of institutionalised religion by claiming universal validity for the privatised religion of interiority have been subject to forceful criticism precisely with regard to its anthropological foundations. The historicism of the 19th century questioned whether it is at all possible to define a universally valid concept of human nature which is not subject to the changes of historical consciousness. Furthermore, it criticised the attempt to find a universal anthropological foundation for such an eminently historical phenomenon as religion. In the 20th century Karl Barth and his followers challenged the implied anthropocentricitry of all these attempts to validate the anthropological universality of religion by contrasting it to the theocentricity of the Christian revelation. He also called into question the theological legitimacy of trying to find a basis for theology derived from an external (eg anthropological) perspective on the Christian faith. Yet these general criticisms did not resolve the problems of the relationships of theology and anthropology. They emphasised even more strongly the problems implied in viewing theology from an anthropological perspective and in assessing anthropology from a theological standpoint.

The work of Wolfhart Pannenberg is characterised by the patient attempt to unravel the cluster of problems confronting Christian theology in the modern era and to propose theological solutions which would be acceptable by the standards of modern scientific thought. As early as 1962 Pannenberg argued in his book *What Is Man?* (Eng trans 1970) that the anthropological thesis that human existence is open to the world points to an inherently religious openness to the future which anticipates the totality of meaning in which the human destiny is fulfilled. This attempt to demonstrate the justifiability of central claims of Christian theology by making use of anthropological research was reflected on a methodological level in his *Theology and the Philosophy of Science* (1973, Eng trans 1976). In this work Pannenberg emphasised that God, the subject-matter of theology, is not directly "given" and cannot be thought of as empirically accessible like an

object in the world. Rather, the reality of God is indirectly "given" in the totality of reality as a totality of meaning which we cannot experience directly, but which we anticipate in every act of interpreting reality. Because of this anticipatory character, all theological statements must be viewed as having hypothetical status. Although they are not directly verifiable or falsifiable by empirical observation, they must nevertheless be validated by the experience and interpretation of reality until they are finally verified eschatologically. To assess the validity of theological assertions within the framework of a general theory of religion is in Pannenberg's view the task of a *fundamental theology* which should be developed in close contact with non-theological sciences.

Pannenberg's new *magnum opus* published in English in a translation by Matthew J. O'Connell is the attempt to put this programme into practice. In his introduction (pp.11- 23) Pannenberg vigorously defends this programme on the basis of considerations about the primary role of anthropology as the battlefield on which the dispute about the universal validity of theological claims has to be decided:

> Theologians will be able to defend the truth precisely of their talk about God only if they first respond to the atheistic critique of religion on the terrain of anthropology. Otherwise all their assertions, however impressive, about the primacy of the Godness of God will remain purely subjective assurances without any serious claim to universal validity. (p.16)

This aim can in Pannenberg's view only be achieved by "a critical appropriation of nontheological anthropological research by theologians" (p. 19) which, unlike dogmatic anthropology, does not start from the assumption of the existence of God and does not develop its conception of human nature on the basis of the witness of scripture. In Pannenberg's *fundamental-theological* approach these doctrinal presuppositions are, so to say, bracketed in order to start the discussion on the level of the findings of the human sciences. Nevertheless, his final aim is "to lay theological claim to the human phenomena described in the anthropological disciplines . . . by showing that the anthropological datum itself contains a further and theologically relevant dimension." (p. 20)

Pannenberg divides his discussion of anthropological research into three parts: after analyzing "The Person in Nature" (Part I, pp. 27-153) against the backdrop of human biology and behavioural science, he continues by presenting "The Human Person as a Social Being" (Part II, pp. 157-312), making extensive use of social psychology and related disciplines; the final part ("The Shared World", pp. 312-532) concludes, after an analysis of the concept of culture and the theory of institutions, with an account of the relationship of historicity and human nature. In spite of his sharp distinction between dogmatic anthropology and his own fundamental-theological approach, Pannenberg discusses two fundamental aspects of Christian anthropology – the "image of God" and "sin" – in the first part of his book.

In Pannenberg's assessment, the decisive move in modern anthropology, from a view which saw the defining characteristic of humanity in its relation to God to the attempt to determine the specifically human by relating it to the higher animals, was further radicalized by the exclusion of concepts such as "soul" and "spirit". This turn to corporeality, represented in its most stringent form by behaviourism, is – in a somewhat milder form – also a characteristic of the movement of philosophical anthropology in Germany from which Pannenberg draws the basic categories of his discussion of the person in nature.

Max Scheler's work *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (1928) is commonly considered as the inauguration of the new discipline of philosophical anthropology. Although he continued to employ the concept of spirit to denote the defining characteristic of humanity which cannot be derived from its biological constitution, Scheler nevertheless tried to show that the spirit has a bodily correlate in the human *openness to the world* as exemplified in human behaviour. At the same time, Hellmuth Plessner saw the key for explaining the phenomena which Scheler had summarised in this formula in the *exocentric position* of human beings, ie in the fact that human beings find their centre outside themselves. By interpreting this exocentricity not as expressive of a spiritual principal but as a structural modification of nature in humanity, he prepared the ground for Arnold Gehlen's thesis that humans are "deficient beings" who have to compensate the shortcomings of their instinctual capabilities by language and culture.

Pannenberg tries to exhibit the hidden religious dimension of this understanding of humanity by appealing to Herder's interpretation of the metaphor of the image of God. Herder contends that in humans the deficiencies of their instinctual equipment is compensated by a sense of direction and meaning for human life which is the form of God's image in humanity. On this view, the concept of the image of God functions as a teleological concept which denotes the disposition and standard for the education of the human species to a higher degree of reason, humanity and religion. Herder thus departs from the traditional view of the *imago Dei* as a state of original perfection. Instead it is interpreted as the destiny of unfinished humanity which is not achieved by the gradual self-perfection of the human race, but by God's providential agency.

Pannenberg attempts to demonstrate the religious dimension of human openness to the world which is presupposed in Herder's interpretation of the *imago Dei* by an analysis of the act of perception. The fact that we can perceive an individual object as an individual object presupposes, according to Pannenberg, that we can locate the object in question in relation to ourselves and in relation to other objects within a general framework; and this "step into the universal" presupposed in every act of perceiving an object "reaches beyond the totality of all given and possible objects of perception, that is, beyond the world" (p.68). It is here, claims Pannenberg, that the religious dimension of human openness to the world becomes apparent: even if we are not explicitly conscious of the divine reality we are implicitly presupposing it in every act of perception. "That which can become the explicit object of religious consciousness is implicitly present in every turning to a particular object of our experience." (p. 72)

In his discussion of sin (pp. 80-153), Pannenberg again takes his starting-point from Plessner's concept of the "exocentricity" of human existence. The tensions between ego and self and between the awareness of non-identity and the consciousness of identity are interpreted as grounded in the conflict between the centralized organisation of human beings which they have in common with all higher animals and the specifically human exocentricity. The exocentric self-transcendence (as being present to what is other-than-the-self) constitutes the ego or person. This constitution from the other is obscured, however, when the ego tries to impose itself on everything that exists outside itself.

It is in this tension that Pannenberg locates the concept of sin, which he interprets in the Augustinian tradition as *concupiscentia*. Sin as concupiscence leads to a reversal of the end-means relation, so that transitory things which should be means of attaining the final end of finding fulfilment and enjoyment in the relationship with God become ends in themselves, whereas God is reduced to a mere means for accomplishing these ends. This discloses *amor sui* in the form of *superbia* as the source of sinful behaviour in which the ego becomes the centre and ultimate end of all volition and activity.

Locating sin in the conflict between the central organisation of human beings and their exocentricity implies that sin understood as concupiscence and egoism belongs to the *natural conditions* of human existence. But – as Pannenberg hastens to add – "even if human beings are in this sense sinners *by nature*, this does not mean that their nature as human beings is sinful" (p. 107). Pannenberg resolves this paradox by distinguishing the *natural conditions* of human existence from *human nature* which is understood as the essential destination of human beings as images of God.

Here, as elsewhere, Pannenberg insists on the empirical verifiability of the anthrological claims implied in theological concepts as the foundation for a more specifically theological development of Christian doctrine. "It is precisely by way of anthropological proof of the universality of sin that the universal relevance of redemption through Christ becomes convincing" (p. 134). But Pannenberg has to concede that the empirical demonstration of the universality of sin does not extend to its "theological" character as opposition against God. Sin in the theological sense is only implicitly present in concupiscence until it is revealed through the law and in the cross of Christ. Sin is recognized as guilt only in the light of the revelation of the ultimate destiny of humanity in Jesus Christ.

Pannenberg's approach in the first part of his book is characterised by a methodological abstraction in so far as he restricts his analysis to individual behaviour. He lifts this restriction in the second part, where he discusses the human person as a social being. By introducing a new set of categories taken mostly from social psychology, he refutes the arrogant reductionist strategy of sociobiology, which purports to account for complex cultural and social phenomena exclusively by employing biological principles of explanation, summarised in the criterion of the maximal propagation and diffusion of genes.

In this part of his book Pannenberg concentrates on the process of identity formation. But only after a historical description of the emergence of the independence of the individual in society, after a detailed discussion of social theories from Hobbes to Hegel and an exhaustive survey of philosophical and psychological theories of identity does he hint at his own solution for the problem. "Familiarity with 'oneself' is mediated through trust in a sheltering and supporting context in which I originally awaken to myself" (p. 221). The sameness of the self is the point of departure for identity formation. Identity is established when the momentary unity of ego-consciousness which is mediated through the self acquires stability and constancy, so that the ego can be an accountable and responsible agent. The religious dimension of this view of identity formation is, in Pannenberg's view, suggested by the phenomenon of basic trust which can be most clearly identified in the stage of symbiotic unity of mother and child as analysed by developmental psychology. Because it is virtually limitless, basic trust which accompanies the whole development of a healthy personality is for Pannenberg "antecedently a religious phenomenon" (p. 231). Here he follows – with slight modifications – Hans Küng's attempt to characterise basic trust as the anthropological phenomenon underlying faith in God. The conflict of identity and non-identity with its implied religious dimensions is the counterpoint of Pannenberg's discussion of feeling, alienation, guilt and consciousness of guilt.

In the third part of his book, Pannenberg covers an even wider field. In his discussion of the concept of culture, he modifies Johan Huizinga's interpretation of culture in terms of the phenomenon of play. In play, and especially in cultic drama, the consciousness of meaning which is constitutive for the unity of culture is represented. In this representation the symbolic activity is organised in a system of rules. Thought and language are constitutive for this representation of meaning. They both possess in Pannenberg's view a religious dimension which can be found in the most basic forms of the development of thought in infants and in the most ancient forms of language, like myth.

The thesis that the religious dimension is the source of human culture in all its different aspects is to be found not only in Pannenberg's general description of social institutions, but also in the discussion of individual institutions ("Property, Work and Economy", pp. 416-427; "Sexuality, Marriage and Family", pp. 427-443; "Political Order, Justice and Religion", pp. 444-473). Here theological concepts, such as "the kingdom of God", function as criteria for the assessment of the role these institutions play in organising the social relations in such a way that they are in accordance with the still unfulfilled destiny of humanity.

The reader of Pannenberg's book may be justified in expecting from the last chapter "Human Beings and History" (pp. 485-532) the all-encompassing summary of his discussion of the religious dimension of anthropology. This expectation is partly disappointed. The unfinished character of history which mirrors the exocentricity of human beings prevents its use as the definitive framework of interpretation which would provide the ultimate perspective on the findings of anthro-

pology. Pannenberg, therefore, concentrates on the problem of the historicity of human self-understanding which made its first appearance in the Christian claim that in the particular event of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth the true destiny of humanity is revealed and that only in relation to that event human beings achieve their final destiny. Once the modern historical consciousness had separated the historicity of human self-understanding from its christological roots and had subsequently discarded the idea of divine providence as interpreting the goal-directedness and unity of history, it was left with the problem of how human subjects which were now seen as the only agents of history are themselves constituted as acting subjects.

In Pannenberg's theological solution, the identity of the human subject (which is presupposed in the concept of historical action) is grounded in an antecedent experience of meaning which takes the form of an anticipation of the totality of as yet incomplete history. Pannenberg interprets the anticipatory experience of the unity of history as the experience of the presence of truth in history. And at this point he finally introduces the hitherto bracketed concept of spirit into his anthropology: "To this presence of the true and definitive amid the processes of history that always break off uncompleted and amid earthly failure and earthly transiency I give the name 'spirit'" (p. 519). The concept of spirit here signifies the sphere of meaning which constitutes the unity of conscious life (which implies both subjectivity and consciousness) and the unity of social and cultural life (which, in turn, implies the continuity of the historical process in spite of its incomplete and fragmentary character). In this way the concept of spirit summarises all that is experienced as constituting human existence as well as transcending its present state towards it future destiny.

Unlike the rest of the book, Pannenberg's remarks on the concept of spirit are very short. He justifies this brevity by saying that "an adequate treatment of the problems needing to be discussed would be possible only in the framework of a general ontology" (p. 521). Instead of giving some indication of how he would tackle this truly formidable task, Pannenberg limits his discussion to the connections between his concept of spirit and the Christian tradition. Noting that in important biblical texts "spirit" denotes the creative spirit of God as the source of life which transcends all given forms of life and points to their future perfection, Pannenberg can redescribe human exocentricity and the process of identity formation as the spiritual constitution of the human person: ". . . the human being as person is a creation of the spirit" (p. 528). Since the activity of the spirit which is made concrete in reason and love transcends any particular being, it also brings about human community in its most comprehensive form as the community of the human race. In their "societal structure" (E. Jüngel) human beings are the image of God in accordance with the trinitarian life of God.

One cannot read this book without a deep sense of admiration for the scope and depth of its author's erudition and expertise in anthropological research as well as in historical scholarship. The immense amount of material discussed will undoubtedly make it for many years indispensable in the investigation of many individual anthropological problems. But it also accounts for the open-textured and sometimes rather loosely connected structure of the argument, so that the reader will at times experience some difficulty in tracing the thread of Pannenberg's argument amid the many strands of the anthropological discussion. Since testing specific steps in the argument would exceed even the limits of a rather lengthy review article, I will restrict my remarks to two fairly general questions concerning Pannenberg's method in presenting the anthropological research.

Pannenberg's analysis in Part I of the concept of person by comparing individual human behaviour to that of higher animals suffers – as he himself points out – from a "methodological abstraction" which forces him to use concepts like "subjectivity" and "self-consciousness" before they are properly introduced in Part II. There he contends that self-consciousness cannot be understood apart from its social context. And, if Gehlen's much quoted thesis that human beings are by nature cultural beings is correct, it would follow that the social context is always a cultural context structured by language, ordered in specific institutions and historical in character. Would it not perhaps be a more appropriate approach to start from the shared world of culture which represents the fundamentally social character of human beings as a condition for assessing their place in nature? Would not such an approach help to account for the pivotal importance of the fact that persons are always "persons in relation" (J. Macmurray) who relate to one another in he context of the shared world of culture? And would not such an approach have advantages for describing the religious dimension of the constitution of the human person? It would, for instance, make it possible to present God not only as the horizon of totality for the exocentricity of human beings, but also as the personal being in relation to whom personality is constituted.

Although these questions concerning the method of shaping the anthropological material already have important consequences for the content of anthropology, there are some questions concerning Pannenberg's method of trying to place anthropology in a theological perspective which have even wider-ranging implications. Pannenberg sharply criticizes Brunner's methodological attempt to find a "point of contact" between theology and non-theological disciplines, because it would leave anthropology as it is: "It stands over against theology as something different from the latter, and theology, which in turn stands over against the anthropology as something different from it, is supposed to establish contact with this very different thing" (p. 19). Is it not possible or, indeed, even probable that at least some anthropologists would prefer *this* approach over Pannenberg's strategy "to lay theological claim to the human phenomena described in the anthropological disciplines" (ibid)? They might well feel that such an approach respects the autonomy of anthropology more than does Pannenberg's strategy, which at times seems to offer a religious *reinterpretation* of anthropological research.

The possible protest of anthropologists could perhaps be ignored by theologians whose chief concern must be how Pannenberg succeeds in putting anthropology in theological perspective. From the theological viewpoint possibly the most surprising feature of Pannenberg's book is that in his discussion of Christian anthropology

he concentrates almost exclusively on two undoubtedly central topics: the metaphor of the image of God and sin. Two other, perhaps equally important aspects of theological anthropology are never discussed in detail.

The first is the creatureliness of human beings. It would seem theologically important to stress that the relatedness of human beings as creatures to God as their creator is constitutive for the way in which the human person is related to him- or herself, to other persons and to nature. The second aspect which is only mentioned in passing in Pannenberg's *Anthropology* (cf p. 367) – despite its being of crucial importance in Pannenberg's own Lutheran tradition – is Luther's "definition" of humanity in his thesis: "hominem iustificari fide". This thesis expresses the anthropological content of the concept of justification by claiming that the recognition of the constitution of true humanity in the creative and recreative action of God is the standard of an adequate understanding of humanity. The crucial significance of this formula becomes evident when it is interpreted as an *ontological* claim which states the ontological constitution of humanity as it is restored in the justification of the sinner. Talk about the image of God refers to this *new* justified humanity in which the contradiction of sin is overcome by God's grace.

Can the reason why these aspects of Christian anthropology are virtually missing in Pannenberg's attempt to present anthropology in a theological perspective be seen in his method of appropriating anthropological research for theology? His technique implies that "the secular description is accepted as simply a provisional version of the objective reality, a version that needs to be expanded and deepened by showing that the anthropological datum itself contains a further and theologically relevant dimension" (p. 19)? Is it not a danger of this approach that theological anthropology comes into play only when the secular description of the anthropological phenomena seems to suggest it? And can the autonomy of *theological* anthropology (which is based not on the empirical findings of anthropologists but in the view of reality disclosed in faith) really be preserved in such a way?

These questions suggest a more general question. Is Pannenberg's approach – which sometimes seems to endanger both the autonomy of secular anthropology and of theological anthropology – the best method of achieving the mutual illumination of secular and theological anthropology which would result from a dialogue acknowledging their respective autonomy as well as their mutual interdependence?

It would seem that such questions are provoked by Pannenberg's contention "that in the modern age anthropology has become not only in fact but also with objective necessity the terrain on which theologians must base their claims of universal validity for what they say" (p. 16). Even if we leave aside the possible conflation in this statement of historical necessity and logical necessity and assume that theologians could meet this demand, a major difficulty still remains. Would not the existence of some kind of religious "dimension" in human nature and culture be the sole basis for their claims of universal validity? And, if so, is the possible evidence for such an anthropologically universal religiosity really sufficient for justifying the universal validity of theological statements? Is not the universality of theological statements rather an implication of the character of the Christian faith as implying distinctive *ontological* truth-claims which refer to what there is and how it is to be interpreted? If that is the case, then no amount of anthropological research can verify these ontological truth-claims. But would not precisely the ontological character of theological truth-claims constitute a theological perspective in which the findings of anthropology could be viewed as "a provisional version of the objective reality" (p.20)? And is not the ontological debate about the coherence of the truth-claims of the Christian faith (rather than the findings of anthropological research) the terrain on which theologians have to defend their claims to universal validity of Christian truth-claims? It depends on the answers to these questions whether one decides that Pannenberg's book indeed offers what the title promises – namely, anthropology in *theological* perspective. Some may feel tempted to ask if it does not in fact present theology in *anthropological* perspective.

BOOK REVIEWS

Jeremiah I-XXV

William McKane. T. T. Clark. Pp. ccxxii + 658. £24.95 (hardback)

Jeremiah

R.P. Carroll. SCM Press. Pp. x + 874. £20.00

"The dearth of English commentaries on Jeremiah in the past sixty years is hard to explain." So wrote R.P. Carroll in 1981, in his first major study of the book, *From Chaos to Covenant*. This lack, which meant that Jeremiah has long been the only substantial Old Testament book for which no satisfactory commentary was available, was in some ways made more irksome by the wealth of detailed studies of particular aspects of the book, often interesting, indeed impressive, in themselves, but needing the context of a commentary on the whole book to be assessed in their appropriate larger setting.

Now, as is the way of these things, two major works have appeared within weeks of one another. (Indeed, it seems as if a flood of commentaries may now be anticipated, for more recently there has appeared W.L. Holladay's work on Jer. 1-25 in the *Hermeneia* series; and Professor Clements has completed his study which will appear in the *Interpretation Bible Commentaries*. But these must await other assessments.) Both of our present authors comes from Scotland: William McKane of St. Andrews has completed the first of what will be a two-volume International Critical Commentary, and Dr Carroll himself, who teaches at Glasgow, is the contributor to the Old Testament Library series. A few words first about the characteristics of each work, then an attempt at assessment.

McKane is foursquare within the exacting scholarly traditions of the International Critical Commentary. He plunges straight in with a detailed consideration of the features of the ancient versions, the Greek in particular. The versions are regarded as primary witnesses to the ongoing exegetical concern of the Jeremiah tradition, and so the character of the different versions requires and receives detailed analysis. As McKane himself justly claims, "No modern commentary on Jeremiah has devoted such attention to the ancient versions". The way in which our text of Jeremiah is best understood as an expansion of a shorter Hebrew text underlying the LXX is set out in careful detail.

Full consideration is then given to those proposals which have attempted either to detect a Deuteronomistic structure underlying the present form of the book (so W. Thiel), or to trace the words of the prophet himself in considerable detail (so H. Weippert). Neither is held to be satisfactory; instead we are led to think of a 'rolling corpus': "small pieces of existing text trigger exegesis or commentary", so that the present book of Jeremiah embodies commentary on the earlier elements of the tradition. In the last part of his introduction, McKane dismisses as a false trail attempts to recover the contents of the scroll in the famous story in ch. 36; and is very severe on attempts by Reventlow and others to dismiss the 'historical Jeremiah' from the laments or confessions. All of these points are followed up with detailed references; by contrast the last section of the Introduction, 'Exegesis and Theology', occupies just two pages, though the former of these aspects is of course more prominent in the commentary itself. On theology, however, McKane takes a firm line. He has recently written an article entitled 'Is there a place for Theology in the exegesis of the Hebrew Bible?' which gave a strongly negative answer to his own question; and here the same principle is applied: "the exegete of a Hebrew text is dealing only with the grammar of a human document, and not immediately with 'God' or with a hinterland of truth claims". One can imagine vigorous debate arising from such an assertion.

Following the introduction, there is an extensive bibliography, but it is confined to works cited in the text; other works which McKane has presumably not found helpful are simply ignored. Greek and Hebrew are not transliterated (though other Semitic languages are). In short this is a piece of technical scholarship aimed almost exclusively at an academic readership.

Carroll also shows himself fully aware of the technical literature, but, as might be expected from the nature of the series to which he is contributing, he also recognises the need to awaken the interests of a wider readership. He focuses straightaway on the contrast between, on the one hand, the 'historical Jeremiah' approach, which has sought to see in the book the record of an individual's sufferings and emotions in a time of personal and national crisis, and, on the other, an assessment of the book which regards it as the end-result of an elaborate editorial process, drawing its material from a variety of contexts. From time to time in Carroll's work, there is a feeling that he has it in mind to *épater les bourgeois*, and this is especially so in the manner of his rejection of the traditional view that we can have access to the inner thoughts of the individual Jeremiah. In the section entitled 'Function, setting and date' the limitations of our knowledge are strongly emphasised; interests from various later contexts may well have supplied the impetus for the shaping of particular sections of the book. (The bitter hostility to 'prophets' as a class is taken as an illustration of this point.) In other words, no straightforward reading of Jeremiah will bring out all the nuances of the book; it is multi-layered. Here the influence of modern literary studies is evident. Like McKane, Carroll provides a full bibliography, and here there is a more comprehensive coverage, listing many works with whose approach the author will not have been in sympathy.

Detailed discussion of the commentary on individual sections is clearly not feasible, but perhaps one section may be taken as a representative sample: 10. 1-16, the section in many ways reminiscent of Isaiah 40-55, mocking the useless idols and proclaiming the incomparable power of Yahweh. It also contains the only verse in the whole prophetic canon which is in Aramaic (10.11). McKane provides his own translation of this unit, as he does throughout; and then he is primarily concerned with how the text reached its present form, and assesses it as a passage "built up by piecemeal contributions". Then detailed investigation of each verse follows, with main attention being given to textual difficulties and extensive discussion of the ancient versions and the

possible implications of their readings for the Hebrew text. The Aramaic verse is regarded as a gloss, with no real attention being given to the reasons for the inclusion of such a gloss.

Carroll's text is the RSV, which is printed at the head of each section; textual notes are provided, with the Hebrew and Greek transliterated. The comment begins with an overview of the section, rejecting Jeremianic authorship and setting out a likely background in the Babylonian period. The Aramaic verse may be a gloss, but could also be quasi-magical incantation directed against foreign cults. Carroll does not draw back from noting the chauvinistic nature of the poem, and the way in which paganism is misrepresented. Many of the condemnations could as well have been directed against Israel's own cult of Yahweh. As will be seen, this is a commentary which is not overawed by the fact that its subject is Scripture, and this vigour runs all the way through. (One is sometimes even tempted to explore further than one had intended; and of how many commentaries can that be said?) Inevitably there will be occasions when Carroll seems to go against the evidence, but caution is not the only virtue in a commentator! At the practical level, the limitation implicit in this, of course, is that this work may be less helpful than some others if the user's primary purpose is to find factual information or elucidation of a particular phrase. Carroll's style is vigorous, though just occasionally obscurities creep in; it is not quite clear what is meant, for example, when we are told that the tradition is 'syncitial in nature'.

It will be clear that there are enough basic differences between the two books for them to stand independently, McKane essentially as a work of reference, Carroll as a literary study in its own right. McKane has produced a remarkable example of a type of critical scholarship which one might have thought to be almost extinct. It is certainly right to be impressed by the erudition which underlies his book, though the question is bound to arise how long such an approach can survive. Carroll is more emphatically of the late twentieth century, and his literary allusions and his whole frame of discourse are very much in line with contemporary trends in biblical scholarship. For myself I shall be pleased to have both on my bookshelves: I envisage turning to McKane when seeking detailed information on literary or historical points, to Carroll when I want to get to grips with the issues raised by understanding an ancient text in a modern world.

Richard Coggins

The Old Testament: An Introduction

Rolf Rendtorff. SCM Press, 1985. Pp. xi + 308. £12.50.

There are already so many 'Introductions to the Old Testament' that one groans a little at the sight of yet another. Not for long, however: for this one is really outstanding. It does not only provide the information for which the genre of 'Introduction' exists – dates and places of composition, authorship, sources – but, in effect, a complete guide to every aspect of Old Testament study apart from the theological ideas (and even these are not neglected). The author first traces the history of Israel as the books of the Old Testament make it available to us, with comments on modern critical reconstructions, in a section entitled 'The Old Testament as a Source of the History of Israel'. Secondly, he provides an excellent brief account of the growth of the literature of ancient Israel, from the small units of oral tradition to the finished books of the Old Testament, not neglecting their 'final form' and even including a consideration of their canonical arrangement as the last stage in their literary development. This is possibly the first major German work to take note of the 'canonical approach' of B.S. Childs, and incidentally to spot the small but precious baby in the rather excessive quantity of tepid bathwater of Childs's theories. Finally, the bulk of the book presents the traditional material of an 'Introduction' in the form of a book-by-book account of the Old Testament literature, following the order of the Hebrew canon.

Rendtorff is a mine of information about current scholarly opinion, as well as contributing a good deal of his own, especially though not exclusively on the formation of the Pentateuch, where his own views are concisely sketched but not allowed to dominate the discussion. Best of all, he does not let bibliographical detail obscure the main lines of the discussion. The reader is referred to all major books and articles on the issues concerned, but still gets a clear impression of the whole. The layout of the book is a very strong point, with a creative use of inset paragraphs in a smaller typeface, good and plentiful section-divisions, and a mass of marginal cross-references which make the book virtually a small encyclopedia. A pleasant surprise for the English reader is that the author frequently refers to English-language books and articles, and is also at home with French and Israeli scholarship; while the style is clear and readable, thanks to John Bowden's usual skill as a translator. The work sets new standards in its field, and deserves to be widely used.

John Barton

Studying the Old Testament: From Tradition to Canon

Annemarie Ohler. T. T. Clark, 1985. Pp. 388. £17.50 (hardback).

Much attention has been given in recent years to appropriate means of making the riches of the Old Testament more accessible to the intelligent reader without any formal background of study. The literary genre known as 'Introduction' has always been somewhat anomalous, implying a range of questions and problems that would never have occurred to most readers to ask. With such issues in mind Dr Ohler attempted in the early 1970s to sketch out a new approach, by way of the great variety of literary forms to be found in the Old Testament. Her work was first published in two volumes in 1972/3; now it has appeared in English translation.

Her method is to begin by outlining some of the distinctive features of Hebrew thought and language, and then in the four main chapters which follow she

analyses different literary forms, beginning with the smallest units and finally reaching the complete Old Testament as itself a single literary unit. Each chapter is prefaced by a specimen passage which is discussed in such a way as to focus upon the characteristic problems: Exod.3:10-15 for the distinctivness of Hebrew; Gen.11:1-9; 32:22-32; Exod.20:1-21; and Ps.31 as individual literary forms; Ezek.1:1-28; Prov.8 as illustrative of the interrelation between personality and ongoing tradition; Gen.12:1-4 for the larger literary units (in this case 'J'); and Isa.7 for the Old Testament as a whole.

So much one could discover from the table of contents and some judicious dipping. But the basic question is, of course: does it work? Does this method of approach actually make 'studying the Old Testament' a more enjoyable or illuminating experience? Regretfully, one is forced to say that for most people the answer is likely to be No.

There are several reasons for this. Some can scarcely be laid at Dr Ohler's door. There is a strong feeling that she has not been well served by either her translator or her publishers. The translation is never flowing, and at times positively opaque: "The Israelitic custom of seeing the whole future people summed up in the ancestor expresses itself even in the explanation of such sagas as do not materialise in individual form characteristics of collectives" (p.94) – an extreme but not an isolated example. Even when the translation is accurate and readable the risk of misprints remains: footnotes wrongly numbered or omitted entirely, page numbers left out, mistakes, most of them obvious but some which defy correction – what can have been intended when the Deuteronomists are described as "the second gap of historians" (p.297)? From publishers with a high academic reputation, this is very disappointing.

But even when these mechanical problems have been overcome all is not well. At times the book seems to be aimed at beginning students with little previous knowledge; elsewhere the tightly-knit and allusive argument presupposes considerable prior acquaintance with the text. The basic approach is an interesting one, but does not always seem to have been fully worked out, so that the reasons for the placing of some of the material are not clear. Possibly the English title may add to the confusion here: *Studying the Old Testament* suggests, as does the blurb, a book for "college students and all those in the churches who want to read the Old Testament intelligibly (*sic*)"; the title of the German original, *Gattungen im Alten Testament*, conveys a different and more accurate impression.

One other criticism is necessary. The delay since the original was published gives parts of the present book a very old-fashioned appearance. To take three examples: there is no reference to the current debate on the composition of the Pentateuch, JEDP being virtually taken for granted; there is strong emphasis on the individual experience of prophets such as Jeremiah, with no consideration of the questions raised by this type of interpretation; the section on the final shape of the Old Testament does not allude to 'canonical criticism'.

These criticisms may seem harsh. If so, it is at least partly because of a feeling of frustration. Could some of the points mentioned above have been handled more satisfactorily, this could have been a very worthwhile project. Many of the individual sections are excellent: for example, the ones on the sagas of Genesis; the relation of Israel's laws to those of surrounding states; and the constructive role of redactors in the development of prophetic and other books. The pity is that these very interesting sections are only too liable to be lost in the larger context.

Richard Coggins

The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament

J.H. Charlesworth. SNTS Monograph Series 54. CUP. Pp. xxiv + 213. £19.50

During the Watergate investigations one prestigious participant repeatedly said, "I *caveat* that". Letters to the media brought comfort in displaying that there were still around purists who, if by nothing else, were at least shocked by the abuse of the Latin language. But how is the purist to survive in the modern world? Can a passion for precise definition and for a clear demarcation of the limits of our knowledge master great projects and persuade the multitudes? This book will suggest both positive and negative answers.

For the purist, to find in a *mono*graph series not just the text of two public lectures or the minutes of a series of seminars, but both, will come as a double shock. The minutes (certainly not a mono*logue* if now perhaps a mono*graph*) represent the passion for precision. Recording the debates of the SNTS Pseudepigrapha Seminars between 1976 and 1983, they reveal the limits of scholarly consensus on subjects such as *The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs*, *The Books of Enoch*, Jewish use of terms such as Messiah, and other issues arising from the Jewish non-canonical literature of approximately the 3rd century BCE to the 2nd century CE commonly known as the Pseudepigrapha. Those whose interest in the area is real but not so specialised as to make them participants in the seminars or in the technical scholarly literature will gain here a sense of the variety in scholarly opinion, the areas of dissent and consent and the trends in the debate, but, as with any minutes, they will miss the passionate argument, the careful proof and counter-proof and the sense of general support or rejection.

Those who prefer the wide sweep and the excitement of the story will turn to the first three chapters which are adapted from two plenary addresses given in 1983 to learned bodies. Here they will find first a concise, somewhat triumphalistic, historical survey of the modern study of the Pseudepigrapha with examples of those issues in the study of first century Judaism and Christian origins which must now be reexamined in the light of new editions and research. Chapters 2 and 3 range more widely over questions of methodology and of relating the Pseudepigrapha to the NT and other contemporary Jewish or gnostic thought. A consistent theme is the crucial importance of the Pseudepigrapha particularly as that literature reveals the multiformity of 1st century Judaism. This leads to a critique of E.P. Sanders's search

for the "essence" of Judaism (in defiance of Sanders's own disavowal of that term), although Charlesworth himself is willing later to describe the *Zeitgeist* of early Judaism. Rightly, he rejects the use of such terms as normative, sectarian or hellenistic Judaism in our period and perceptively recognises that an awareness of that diversity should caution us against too simple a picture of what might be early or late in early Christian thought. There is a breadth and verve here which may prove attractive to beginners in the subject and counter the assumptions of older studies of the period.

The purist will fare less well here. The scholarly caution and diversity of the "Minutes" are lost behind "What specialists now affirm". The rhetorical sweep is too florid; of the period from 1914, under the subheading "The World-wide psychosis" – "A great cloud not only obscured any research on the Pseudepigrapha, it threatened to obliterate civilization" and, later, "The Pseudepigrapha contained writings not to be understood, but to be mined (or to put it perhaps too harshly, not to be loved but to be used as Dinah was by Shechem; f. Gen 34:2, Levi 6:5-8 (*sic*, i.e. *TLevi*))". Latin is used, only to be abused: scholarship of the 40s and 50s affirmed the legitimacy of searching not only for the *ipsissima verba Jesu* but also for '*bruta facta* in Jesus' life'. The glossary intended to interpret for the general reader the necessary *termini technici* ((Latin) 'technical terms'!) of scholarship explains *bruta facta* as '(Latin) indicates brute, uninterpreted facts'. Not in my dictionary! There are historical errors too; Erasmus is credited with an edition of the Greek text of 4 Maccabees completed in 1517 and published in 1524. The reference must be to his Latin paraphrase of those years, based on an earlier Latin text. Unfortunately, examples could be multiplied and, distracted by these, the purist may lose confidence in the grounds for enthusiasm.

Charlesworth himself is evidence that the concern for detail and the vision of the whole can coexist in one person. He has edited the new edition of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (DLT 1983,85) which will prove an indispensable tool for English speaking study of the literature, and has been tireless in his espousal of its cause. That cause is less well served by this volume. "Language is a vehicle, almost never destination" quotes the author in his final paragraph; "but", responds the purist, "only the well-tuned vehicle may be sure of reaching its destination".

J.M. Lieu

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

G.R. Beasley-Murray. Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1986. Pp. x + 446. £19.95.

As the largest and most recent book on a key subject, this is bound to be regarded as the standard work in succession to the well-tried texts of Schnackenburg, Perrin, Ladd, *et al.* In the wide range of its interaction with scholarly literature, and in the detailed documentation of the exegetical issues discussed, it is well worthy to fill this role. But before ordering it as the basic undergraduate text-book on the subject, theological teachers would be well advised to recognise that this is not quite the same type of book.

It begins traditionally enough, with four brief chapters on the Old Testament background to "kingdom of God" language, and four more on the same theme in early Judaism. But even at this point the section headings warn of a particular focus which will determine much of the following discussion, in that the theme is specified as "the *coming* of God". The focus is on theophany and on eschatological "coming", rather than on the theme of God as king in the present situation, and this focus on "coming" remains throughout the book.

The rest of the work then consists not of a discussion of *themes* in the New Testament relating to the kingdom of God, but of a detailed study of a large number of individual sayings or brief passages from the Synoptic Gospels (only), each of which is separately discussed. While reference is frequently made to the context of the saying under discussion, this approach has the unfortunate result, in contrast with much recent scholarship, that sayings or pericopes are viewed more as isolated units of tradition than as parts of a literary whole.

There are few attempts at summary of the findings, or at an overview of the material, except for a final concluding chapter of only 7 pages (based on 266 pages, plus copious notes, of exegesis of NT passages!). This is not a book which makes concessions to the skim-reader.

The one overt attempt at systematisation is in the division of the exegetical studies into six chapters. Two deal with the sayings and parables (respectively) "on the coming of the kingdom of God in the present", and two with the sayings and parables (respectively) "on the coming of the kingdom of God in the future". Such a division immediately sets the agenda in terms of the classical "realised v. futurist" debate, and leaves little room for the more fluid approach proposed by Perrin with his "tensive symbol" language, which aimed (helpfully in my view) to get away from the idea that "the kingdom of God" can be identified with any specific time, event or state of affairs and thus to move the debate away from the "chronology" of the coming of the kingdom of God.

Of the two remaining chapters, the first deals with Jesus as the Son of Man. This too is not yet another general discussion of this over-worked subject (there is no attempt to survey all the recent "Son of Man books" – for which relief much thanks!), but an exegesis of the Synoptic Son of Man sayings, whether or not they have any overt connection with the kingdom of God (which of course, notoriously, few do). The omission here of any reference to the relevant Johannine material is strange, for if "kingdom of God" is barely a Johannine theme, "the Son of Man" certainly is.

To devote nearly 100 pages in a book on the kingdom of God to the Son of Man is a calculated challenge to the assumption still dominant in German scholarship that the two themes represent separate areas of early Christian thought. Beasley-Murray demonstrates effectively that Jesus understood his role in the light of Daniel's vision of a son of man who is "the representative and mediator of the kingdom of God". Indeed the importance of Daniel

7, and the propriety of interpreting the son of man there as an individual eschatological figure, not merely an image for the people of God, is a recurring theme throughout the book.

The final chapter deals with 'discourses of Jesus on the parousia', viz the 'Q apocalypse' and Mark 13. On the latter the author is surprisingly brief, in view of his considerable previous writing on the subject, and at this point I found his work least satisfying. He dismisses the expressed setting of the discourse (vv. 2-4) very much to the sidelines in his account of its focus. On 13:30 he concludes uneasily that it must refer to the events of vv.24-27, which he interprets of the parousia, but that Mark put it here to refer to the fall of the temple. This does not say much for Mark's competence as a compiler.

The overall thrust of the book will offer little comfort to those who are in the habit of talking about 'the Kingdom' (a misleading abbreviation into which the author also sometimes falls) as primarily a matter of ethical, social or political change in this world. The author understands the kingdom *of God* (which he helpfully paraphrases as 'the saving sovereignty') as a term with primarily apocalyptic connotations. It is a 'divine intervention that brings about judgment and redemption'. It *comes* in the totality of Jesus' action as Son of Man, which is focused in his death, resurrection and parousia as an inseparable sequence, but its coming marks the end (however extended in actual chronology) rather than a new beginning. This is why for Jesus the parousia was always *near*, and this is no cause for embarrassment to his followers however long the delay, because 'near expectation is endemic to hope itself'.

This is a book full of good things for all who appreciate rigorous exegetical discussion. Its breadth of scholarship is impressive, and it is unusual to find an English author who pays far more attention to German scholarship than to British. It will prove an invaluable work of reference for the exegesis of specific passages (including many that do not directly refer to the kingdom of God). But its structure is such that it will not be easy to use as a systematic guide to what Jesus meant by 'the kingdom of God'.

R.T. France

Four for the Gospel Makers

Linda Foster. SCM, 1986. Pp. xii + 127. £3.95

This is an excellent book, and strongly to be recommended. It makes good sense of the kind of study of the gospels that has been going on for about two hundred years, but seldom seems to have reached further than some educational establishments (i.e. it does not yet appear to have entered the life of the churches).

Linda Foster asks questions, and points us in the direction to look for the answers: Why did people tell stories about Jesus? Why did they put together the individual stories and make larger collections? Why is there more than one gospel (in the sense of book)? What were the aims of the four writers? How do the books differ from one another? (She is particularly good on the difference between John and the other three.)

A characteristic of this book is its modesty. Miss Foster does not pretend that we can know what we do not. "Today we are too far from the events, detached by a vast gulf of years, to be able to say with certainty, 'It happened like this'. We can only say that this is how the evangelists tell the story. Perhaps it happened like that, perhaps not. We are not in a position to say one way or the other with certainty" (p.23; this is about Easter Day). "When it comes to the final analysis, we have to admit that there are no answers to our questions, or rather, that there are no right answers. There is a great deal of which we can speak only hesitantly, and much of which we must be brave enough simply to say we do not know" (p. 117; this is about the historical Jesus).

She is honest and realistic, not sceptical; certainly not sceptical: everything is used by her in the service of faith. What matters is not that our questions are answered in the way that we expect them to be answered when we ask them, but that the questions are turned back on us, and we are made to say, What does this mean for me? "When we ask questions about Jesus and his story, we are asking questions about ourselves and whether that story makes sense for us. And how we finally understand that challenge, and whether we take it up, also depends upon each of us as individuals. The process of asking questions about Jesus is also a probing into how we understand ourselves in relation to him and the significance he may or may not hold for us" (pp. 116f).

All the styles of gospel criticism are explained and employed in this book: source-criticism (on which she is rather old-fashioned and favours not only the priority of Mark but also the existence of a source used by Matthew and Luke independently, Q,), redaction-criticism and historical-criticism (i.e. the quest of the historical Jesus). She makes the good point that the story of Jesus "may never seem the same again" since the arrival of gospel criticism. "The simple story is not simple after all, but quite complicated" (p. 110). And here again she makes positive use of what is the case but might have been seen only negatively: "A critical examination of the gospels is important for our understanding of the person and message of Jesus" (p. 111).

I have read all this book twice, and some of it more often; it can take re-reading, and it requires it. I shall recommend it to students and those on lay-training courses; it would be a good book for a study group – a Lent course, for example, if the members meant to take things seriously. There are five main chapters, an Introduction and a Conclusion.

J.C. Fenton

Law in Paul's Thought

Hans Hübner. T.&T. Clark, 1984. Pp. xi + 186. £10.95

When this book appeared in German in 1978 it usefully filled a gap. The difference in what Paul says about

the law in Galatians and Romans deserved a monograph, and Hübner's tight exegesis of the relevant passages in these epistles (especially Galatians 3) was helpful. Its emphasis upon the differences was and still is persuasive, the discussion of other relevant literature illuminating, and the suggestion of what happened between writing Galatians and Romans provocative. James or someone may have protested about Paul's virtually unchurching Jewish Christians in Gal 5.2, so Paul wrote more carefully in Romans.

While better than older harmonizations, all this was not entirely convincing. It did not resolve the tensions, not to say contradictions, in what Paul says about the law within Romans, and the thesis of "development" in Paul's thought raises other issues not germane to the thesis (other epistles, chronology, opponents, the rest of Paul's theology, and other aspects of his biography). The subject cannot satisfactorily be treated in isolation from Paul's teaching about justification, i.e. his soteriology and his christology on the one hand and his ethics on the other. But within these limits the differences between what Galatians and Romans say about the law can be looked at, and the resulting monograph was worth translating.

But then came a bit of a blow. The translation was evidently delayed (p. 11), and in 1983 two outstanding treatments appeared, those of E.P. Sanders and H. Räisänen. These recognize and render intelligible the contradictory things that Paul says on this topic without really dminishing the apostle in the way his defenders fear. The whole subject was simply set in a more plausible frame of reference.

The delay over translation gave Hübner the chance to respond, and on some of the exegetical details he could reasonably stick to his guns. However, his two-page response to Sanders at the end of the book is woefully inadequate, and the half page on Räisänen worse. After claiming (with some immodest exaggeration) that "the author has presented his book to a very large degree as a discussion of my thesis . . ." he says "I cannot of course deal with Sanders's argument in detail. To do that . . . would require a book on its own" (p. 152). Yes, a very different book on Law in Paul's Thought.

The response to Räisänen is even sadder: "At this juncture however I cannot enter into discussion with him as I am to publish a detailed review of the book in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* (Leipzig)". So what? That is a puzzling excuse. He advises readers (of his English translation) to refer to that (in German) "at the appropriate time". That being now ripe, I translate from it: "It seems characteristic of the history of research that from time to time you get a total break. All previous attempts at a solution are pressed at their weak points and these are mercilessly exposed. A new explanation is given for the open questions, and this radically supersedes the earlier hypotheses. The evident contradictions of the earlier solutions are taken up and overcome in a new synthesis. This is what we seem to have in Räisänen's book on the Law in Paul . . ." (*TLZ* 110, 1985, 894).

There are problems about applying Kuhn's thesis about scientific revolutions to the humanities, but I agree with Hübner that something like a paradigm shift has happened in Pauline interpretation over the past few years. As the translation of Hübner got stuck in the works, New Testament research made some remarkable progress. When the translation appeared, the book was dated. That happens to books that are not translations, too, and in this case no blame attaches to the author – except that he cannot quite bear to draw the consequences of the insight just quoted. Instead, he defends his earlier position, or claims to, without giving an adequate response.

The change of perspective pioneered by Krister Stendahl (who is not even mentioned by Hübner), and now brilliantly developed by Francis Watson, arises from seeing Paul's theological argument about faith and works in its historical context as an argument for Gentile converts not being circumcised. Hübner is reluctant to accept this because he fears it relativizes Paul's theology (and so his own). But that fear is misplaced, even though Paul's value for today may need restatement. It needs it anyway, and the historically conditioned character of theological statements is no argument against their truth or their value for a later generation. It is clear that Sanders and Räisänen can illuminate Paul historically without giving much thought to theology. But theologians should welcome the clarifications, take up the new insights and get on with their own job of theological interpretation, not defend trenches dug in the 1920s.

The clearer historical perspective on Paul is germane to the close exegesis undertaken by Hübner. Paul's Greek creaks with ambiguities, and one's exegetical decisions will often hinge on one's overview. It is silly of Hübner (in his preface) to play off "philological arguments together with the theological arguments which arise out of them" against (admittedly hypothetical) historical reconstructions. Such hypotheses are inescapable in trying to understand Paul's epistles. Nevertheless, this monograph was a splendid addition to the literature in 1978, and remains a powerful contribution in the present debate. Paradigm shifts take time to get accepted, and the history of research remains a source of stimulus.

Robert Morgan

The Social World of the First Christians

John Stambaugh and David Balch. SPCK, 1986. Pp. 194. £6.95

It is surely a sign of the times in New Testament scholarship to have a book on the social environment of the first Christians (note, not of the New Testament alone) jointly authored by a classicist (Stambaugh) and a New Testament specialist (Balch), both from America. The old partnership between classical and New Testament studies is fortunately taking on a new lease of life at present and nowhere more so than in America (it is, strangely, much less evident in Britain). The common ground of interest is, of course, the social realities of the Graeco-Roman world in the first century AD – a subject which is essential grist to the mill of all those currently trying to analyse the early Christian movement sociologically. In fact Stambaugh and Balch eschew sociological

analysis and content themselves with providing a broad-ranging description of the Graeco-Roman world with particular reference to Jews (in the Diaspora and in Palestine) and Christians (especially in an urban environment).

The value of this book lies in the scope of its interests. When Eduard Lohse published his *Umwelt des Neuen Testaments* (1974; translated as *The New Testament Environment*, 1976), like many other writers on the same subject, he was almost exclusively concerned with two topics: political history and religious/philosophical movements. Stambaugh and Balch throw their net a lot wider and rightly so, if we are going to get an adequate picture of social life in the first century: political history has a part to play, but only alongside sections on, for instance, law, economy, language, work, education, social status, clubs, cults and city life in general. The first three chapters (by Stambaugh) provide a general overview of the historical, political and legal background, together with particularly informative discussions of mobility, the movement of religions and the ancient economy. Balch then contributes a chapter on Palestinian society which concludes with a section on "the ecology of the Jesus movement"; and both authors combine to write the final chapters on city life and the early Christian house-churches in an urban environment. The effect of the whole book is to put the first Christians in amongst the Galilean towns, the temple courts, the Diaspora synagogues, the itinerant sages, and the city households and clubs of the first century, which is socially where they belonged. With brief descriptions of the range of social status represented in the churches and the social and economic circumstances of some of the main urban centres, one begins to get a glimpse of the social realities in which Christianity took root. Thus this book has many merits as a summary description of the first century world and the Christians' place within it. An extraordinary amount of information is packed in, but the authors manage to keep it readable throughout. Inevitably it also suffers from the main disadvantage of all summary descriptions. So many different topics are discussed that none can be pursued in any detail, leaving one with the feeling of having rushed around the Mediterranean world in a kind of whistle-stop package tour. At many points I found myself wanting to stop for a while and look at the scenery more carefully; but that, I suppose, is the mark of a stimulating tour and there are, fortunately, some useful suggestions for further reading at the end of the book.

It would be fair to say that the authors do not (and probably did not intend to) break much fresh ground in their descriptions of the social location of the first Christians. Rather their work brings together the evidence marshalled by others, with Meeks, MacMullen and Theissen playing a particularly important role. Thus, though there will be something new and valuable for most scholars, this book is probably best characterised as a student handbook. One unfortunate result is a tendency to make confident generalising statements often based on flimsy evidence. It is hard to see how one could support such statements as "most Greeks did not perceive any immorality in prostitution" (p. 158) or "the Jewish people in general were observant [of the law]" (p. 100), especially when the evidence cited for the latter is only Rom. 9:30-10:4 and various passages from Josephus' clearly apologetic work *Against Apion*. Still harder to swallow is the bold statement that Jesus' unconventional social relationships with women "stimulated negative reactions that led to Jesus' death on a cross" (p. 104). Indeed, it is a pity that Stambaugh and Balch do not discuss more explicitly the value of the primary sources they are using. They sometimes exhibit an uncritical use of the gospels and Acts and rarely allow themselves to admit where their evidence is insufficient or suspect. On many points I am inclined to think that the social realities of the first century were a lot more complex, diverse and fluctuating than they are represented here.

A few maps would have come in handy at several points and a list of abbreviations and primary sources would have helped students with references like "T.B. Shabbath 14b" (p. 87). The British publishers have retained American spelling and vocabulary and even the conversion of ancient prices into American dollars (pp. 80-81). I think most of us will be able to do the necessary translations; and perhaps the foreignness will spur a few British New Testament scholars to talk more earnestly with their Classical colleagues before either or both get "rationalised" (or emigrate to America).

John Barclay

Gods and the One God. Christian theology in the Graeco-Roman world

Robert Grant. SPCK, 1986. Pp. 211. £6.95

What Grant writes is always learned, never boring, sometimes difficult and invariably provoking. In this case we have a series of studies of the relation of Christian theology to its early environment in pagan philosophy and religion. The first part reviews attitudes to paganism in Acts and the state of Mediterranean religion at the time. The second part expounds missionary preaching against idolatry and the terms in which the gods were praised by their cultivators. The third part, occupying over half the book, involves intricate examinations of basic doctrines – Greek philosophical theology, the teaching of the earlier fathers, the status of Christ from the NT onwards, divergent christologies at Antioch before Nicaea (a whole chapter), the Holy Spirit, the Trinity (including remarks on Arianism), and finally "Creeds and cult", which discusses creedal origins and compares Christian and pagan attitudes to doctrinal tradition. Brief documentation is given, disguising the undisplayed depth of learning behind.

The writing is full of pointed little forays like this comment on some affirmations of revealed certainty in the New Testament:

> "If we say that they defended "orthodoxy", we say no more than that they meant what they said and were sure they were right. We may add that they had no idea that Christian doctrine would have a history that their thought would be part of it" (p. 166).

More substantive points of interest abound. It is claimed that Origen's position on the passibility of God

changed drastically between *On first principles* and the *Commentary on Matthew* as a result of reading Ignatius' letter to the Romans (pp. 91-94). Partly following R.L. Sample, Grant traces two traditions of christology in pre-Nicene Antioch, deploying his unrivalled experience as an interpreter of Theophilus (pp. 124-135). Such things combine to make the book fascinating to the moderately well-informed reader. It is particularly helpful to have so compactly expressed so much information on the religion and thought of the world into which Christianity emerged. It remains a difficult book however, especially for the beginner. That is first because it is a series of studies round a theme, and not a clear sequential argument; it could have stopped at various points, or gone on longer, without being obviously wrong. It is also difficult because not enough is done to assist the beginner. The first section on Asclepius (pp. 32-33) cites only documents which call him Aesculapius, without explanation. After several discussions of Clement of Alexandria, "Clement" suddenly refers to Clement of Rome (p. 133). The compressed, telegraphic style aggravates this. It may also explain the numerous unqualified statements which the reviewer notes for challenge. My list includes: that the Christians were called "godless" because they had no images (p. 42), when surely it was because they repudiated the gods; that in Rom. 2.22 Paul insists "that abhorrence of idols does not justify robbing pagan temples" (p. 49), when Paul in fact writes as though abhorrence of idols should make one *avoid* such acts; that "by whom all things were made" in the old translation of the Nicene Creed is incorrect, attributing creation to the Son and not the Father (p. 113), when the Prayer Book translators were actually using "by" to signify "through"; that Hippolytus' account of Callistus' doctrine is (by implication) reliable (p. 108); that "there was when he was not" was an Arian slogan (p. 161), when there is no evidence that any Arian ever used this catchword of current philosophical cosmology (see for instance M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo,* Rome 1975, p. 48 n.6).

I am also unconvinced by the lining up of Antiochene witnesses for high and low christologies, and especially by the calling of Marcellus of Ancyra as a witness (pp. 134-135). A different interpretation in D.S. Wallace-Hadrill (*Christian Antioch,* Cambridge 1982) goes unmentioned. Furthermore Marcellus' economic trinitarian doctrine was held by Eusebius and others of the Arian camp to diminish the deity of Christ by denying his pre-existence as personal Son. In itself, however, it was an attempt to be biblically and consistently homoousian. If Marcellus follows Theophilus of Antioch, then perhaps Theophilus himself is further from Ebionism than Grant implies. That however is ground on which I would hesitate to challenge him. Altogether this book is a royal dish of meat to chew upon.

Stuart G. Hall

Studies in Christian Antiquity

R.P.C. Hanson. T.&T. Clark, 1985. Pp. xi + 394. £16.95

"Are we cut off from the past?": this provocative question and the author's strong assurance that we are not (1981), head a collection of 17 studies by an acknowledged authority on the history and theology of the Early Church. Such is the range of Hanson's scholarly interest and depth of learning that the collection will undoubtedly appeal to a broad spectrum of scholars whose interest lies in the theology and history of the Early Church. Being a well-trained Classical scholar as well as an eminent theologian and patristic scholar, Hanson brings formidable skills to bear on the topics he has chosen for investigation, discussion or refutation. His deep familiarity with the Classical World and especially with its literature lies at the heart of his defence against the more negative assertions of the cultural relativists or historical sceptics on the relevance or reliability of the Bible. In "The journey of Paul and the journey of Nikias" (1968), he light-heartedly applies to a comparable passage in a Classical author (the journey of Nikias to Syracuse in Thucydides VI, 1-61) the type of destructive historical criticism which Conzelmann had used to discredit the historicity of Paul's voyage to Italy in Acts, in order to highlight the outcome of such an approach if widely applied to the study of ancient texts. The biblical scholar may also have cause to consult his piece on "The provenance of the interpolator in the 'Western' text of Acts and of Acts itself" (1966) which focuses on the enigmatic ending of the book and adduces a Roman origin of the 'Western' text. Patristic scholars are unlikely to ignore the studies on Origen (1972), the Trinitarian debates (1982) and the development of religious language and liturgy in the Early Church. It is a pity that his study on the Creed of Constantinopole of 381, based on a lecture delivered at New College, Edinburgh (1981), has no notes, not even bracketed references in the text, as the author has made use of a wide range of sources, including papyri, which are not easy for a less well-informed student to locate. The *humanitas* of the church in the last days of the Roman Empire in the West is underscored by the author in "The Reaction of the Church to the Collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century" (previously unpublished). In the same vein is the delightful study of Sidonius Apollinaris (again previously unpublished) and the church in fifth century Gaul. The author's own considerable episcopal experience might well have influenced his understanding of the role of the church in the barbarian world. While it is right to stress the important part she played in the preservation of Roman culture and social order, one must not be blind to the problems created by her intolerance. The Visigoths, for instance, who were mainly Arians did not enjoy the full membership of the new Roman Empire of St. Peter until their conversion to Catholicism in Spain under King Richard in 589. The reviewer is particularly pleased to see the inclusion in the collection of the author's well-documented study on the transformation of pagan temples into Christian churches. Originally published in the Bruce Festschrift (*Journal of Semitic Studies* 23, 1978), the article makes the important observation that the process did not begin in earnest till the fifth century as a result of special imperial legislations. In support of his argument, that the temples on the whole were unsuitable for conversion, the reviewer would like to add that in the mind of some less-educated Christians, pagan temples were haunted by demons and their sites had to be cleansed by holy men (cf. *Vita S. Danielis Stylitae* 14-15 ed. Delehaye, pp. 14-16). However, the study seems to have been little known to late Roman historians for whom the subject is of considerable importance. It

should be read along side Fowden's equally admirable study on the role of the bishop in this process of transformation in the Greek East ("Bishop and Temples in the Eastern Empire", *JTS*, n.s. 29, 1978, pp. 53-78).

The collection contains a study of monograph length on Christian attitudes to pagan religion (pp. 144-229). Originally published in the prohibitively expensive and interminable Festschrift for Josef Vogt (*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, 23/2 1979), it is a major contribution to an area which has been much neglected by modern scholars, especially those contributing in English, as it falls uneasily between the traditional boundaries of patristics and the history of Roman religion. The author is admirably qualified to tackle the subject and he gives a thorough examination of the main types of arguments used by Christian apologists and polemicists against aspects of pagan cults such as sacrifice, allegorical interpretation, anthropomorphism, orgiastic rites etc. He rightly draws our attention to the debt which the Christian polemicists owed to Euhemerus, a Hellenistic fabulist whose novel on an imaginary voyage was seen by many ancient writers as a work of rationalizing atheism. The respect shown by both Jews and Christians towards oracles and the consequent attack on the effectiveness of pagan oracles is admirably shown. The section on the "Sibylline Oracles" (pp. 190-94) is probably one of the best brief introductions in English to the subject. On the other hand, by adopting a thematic approach and conflating and combining material from three centuries, the author does not always make clear whether there were any historical developments in this type of polemic nor how accurately they reflected changing fashion in contemporary paganism. Nor does he indicate the motivation behind the Christian attacks or their choice of targets other than briefly indicating their Jewish inheritance (pp. 144-45). In the discussion of the themes, the reader is occasionally bombarded by examples, each of which, though interesting in itself, does not always add much that is new or different to the subject. There are paragraphs in which virtually every sentence begins with the name of a source (see eg pp. 153-54). An author examination may seem more mundane but can draw out more effectively the unique contribution of each apologist or polemicist. It will also give more attention to apologists like Athenagoras and Tatian who are often cited only in passing.

The article concludes interestingly with a study of Constantine's attitude towards paganism which may seem to some readers as somewhat out of place as he hardly shared the polemical views of Athanasius or Firmicus Maternus on paganism. Much of what he has to say about Constantine is not new and he pays a long overdue tribute to the work of the American scholar C.B. Coleman whose work *Constantine the Great and Christianity* (New York, 1924) remains invaluable because of its extensive use of both pagan and Christian sources. What is however original is his demonstration that Constantine's attempt to produce a form of sanitized paganism was carried out along lines which were not dissimilar to those which had been sign-posted by Christian apologists.

Hanson assumes that the majority of his readers would have had as good a Classical education as he himself and he therefore often leaves long citations from his ancient sources untranslated. This may deter some students from making good use of these very valuable studies: it therefore behoves the *magistri* to direct their attention to them.

Samuel N.C. Lieu

Metaphor and Religious Language

Janet Martin Soskice. Clarendon Press, 1985. Pp. x + 191. £17.50

Theologians can often be heard to say that religious language is metaphorical; but exactly what metaphors are and how they might depict reality in an irreducible way are matters rarely given precise analysis. This book is important because it undertakes such an analysis. It falls into two parts; the first five chapters explore the nature of metaphor as such, and the last three deal with matters of reference and metaphor in religion.

In the first part, the author rejects the "substitution view", that metaphor is only a decorative substitute for what can be literally said; and "emotive theories", for which metaphors have no cognitive content, but only psychological efficacy in evoking novel ideas. Her own view is an "incremental theory" which she calls a form of "interanimative theory", after I.A. Richards. Metaphor is "a figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another" (15). There need be no comparison of two subjects, and there is no special metaphorical meaning of single terms. Metaphorical ascription is the reference, by a speaker in a certain context, to one subject in terms of an associative network allied with another subject. The interanimation is between the word explicitly referring to one subject and various subsidiary associative networks of meaning, which belong to subjects which remain implicit and indicated only by speaker's intention and context.

This view puts a great emphasis on the speaker's intention rather than on the formal properties of a linguistic system. But a speaker can only properly intend to use language in a way that its formal properties allow. We can play with language in many creative ways; but words do have meanings regardless of how we intend to use them. I am not convinced that we speak metaphorically only if we intend to do so. Metaphor can be detected linguistically by the literal falsity of the attributed metaphor. On this point the author's argument against Donald Davidson and others seems to elide the issues of "the meaning that a word has" and "what a speaker intends by using the word". The truth-conditions of "He is a lion" and "He is like a lion (in certain unspecified respects)" are very different; but a speaker may intend to do just the same thing in using these different expressions. So I think a formal semantic analysis may reveal more about metaphor than the author thinks.

Yet this leaves her main argument intact, that metaphors are cognitively unique and genuinely creative. They can embody new insights, which might not otherwise have occurred. They can suggest new categories of interpretation and enable us to go on extending the

significance they have enabled us to discern in a new way. Most importantly, they are irreducible to literal descriptions.

In the second part of her argument, she draws on various accounts of scientific method to illustrate how models and metaphors have an essential cognitive and explanatory role. Then she argues that the analogy with religion is fairly close, so that metaphors may have an explanatory and irreducible role in speaking of God. It remains rather unclear, however, just how metaphors can "explain" in religion; for do not the ways of God remain a mystery? It is also paradoxical to claim that metaphors refer to a God whom, she says, "we cannot describe as he is in himself".

To deal with these problems, she develops an account of reference, drawing on Kripke and Putnam, which permits us to refer to something without having an unreviseable description of it. But in science such reference must in the end be established by giving a paradigm instance – e.g. "*this* is gold". What is the equivalent naming-situation in religion? Her suggestion is that we refer to God as "that, whatever it is, which causes certain experiences (either of ecstasy or a general sense of contingency)". But the question is precisely whether there is any such cause. In science, the cause is part of a wider explanatory theory, giving rise to a cumulative body of experimental knowledge. But what does God explain, with his mysterious will? And what cumulative knowledge is there in religion, that battlefield of endlessly competing claims?

There is also an internal difficulty with the claim that we can point to God without claiming to describe him. "God is spirit", she says, denominates the source of thousands of experiences in a tradition, rather than describing God. But while we may not claim an unrevisable or infallible description, it is impossible to refer to something without providing some description, especially when what we are referring to is an explanatory-theoretic term. Thus God cannot be just *any* sort of cause, one knows not what. He must at least be conceived as an agent through will and knowledge. If the apophatic way qualifies this claim, it does not do so just by renouncing it or allowing that it may be wholly mistaken.

I have, perhaps unfairly, picked on the difficulties in Janet Martin Soskice's account – unfair, because no such account is without difficulties. I hope it is clear that her discussions are invariably of philosophical depth and insight; and that her key position – that metaphors have an irreducible cognitive role in language, and can refer to God in a realist way without claiming to reduce God to the level of a comprehensible object – is subtly and convincingly argued. In particular, her account of how metaphors in a religious tradition accumulate diachronically to produce a "layered" series of associative networks, is one that I hope she will develop more fully in subsequent work. This book is now important reading for all who think of metaphor as having a central place in the language of religion.

Keith Ward

Only Human

Don Cupitt. SCM Press, 1985. Pp. xii + 228. £5.95

Mr Cupitt's title has Nietzschean overtones, as has the heading of the final part of his book, "I have said, ye are gods". And very powerful is the rhetoric of his summons to religious integrity, giving us notice that the "old external supports, inducements, consolations, cognitive and ethical guidelines, guarantees and promises are no longer required". Convergence on the ethical and on the present moment synthesizes the wide spectrum of belief "back into white light". Indeed, he explicitly appeals to the image of the welder at work, "unifying divine and human creativity, the ultimate with the here-and-now, religion and morality, heaven and earth". Conversion experience of this kind – self-creation – frees us from forms of belief which are at once "imprecise and gratifying, pseudo-factual and self-serving". But may it not be equally gratifying and self-serving, notwithstanding what is supposed to follow? For having abandoned consolation once and for all, we can then pride ourselves that "we" are able to concentrate, Kant-wise, on inner truthfulness, using the way of purgation (but not the other "ways" of spirituality, since there is no ultimate "illumination" to be had from any "divine" other than ourselves to be looked for). Dislike of outward show will reinforce preference in the best iconoclastic manner for religion which is "austere, hidden, dry and subjective", and above all, *cool*. Moreover, "spiritual poise" comes like a cake-mix from the right combination of commitment and non-attachment, a packet-deal which explains what it is to have eternal life, and indeed to enjoy one's own life's "battling self-affirmation". One is, however, recommended to pursue certain spiritual values which are in a sense dearer even than one's own life, of which spiritual freedom is obviously the chief. Hence Mr Cupitt's entirely proper detestation of the "snooping, censorious and over-scrupulous psychology of dogmatism". Expressed here too is a certain invigorating toughness towards one's own life, to be seen of course as devoid of grace or the means of grace. The axiom of one's life should be that one makes one's bed and lies on it. "The way reality is for you depends upon just what you are and what you have put in." Other axioms we might notice are, "eschew dreams of salvation" and "never, ever, complain", which latter is rough on Job, not to mention even David Hume.

This is exhilarating stuff, prompted for instance by appreciating Darwin in the first part, "A life in time", for Darwin's work has helped us to rediscover our sense of kinship with all life, re-awakening in us "a truly passionate love for the natural environment". Notwithstanding the predictable Wittgensteinian touches, the core of this book is to be found in part two, which has a nice medieval title, "The mirror of the soul", but which is focussed principally on Freud. This leads to part three, "A common life", which takes us along to the acknowledgement that religion deals with the world of man as "an emotional, embodied, active social being". But as I have indicated, the key to this text as a whole is to be found in Mr Cupitt's view of Freud, a view most appropriately applied to his own writing, unless I'm much mistaken. For Freud's system, Mr Cupitt tells us, is a

work of art, a hermeneutic, constructed to *persuade* us to adopt Freud's view of life. It is an *expression* of Freud's spirituality – which indicates the considerable value of Mr Cupitt's own writing. The trouble with it, as is well known, is that he insists on coupling his own expression of spirituality with claims such as "there simply is not anything else that religion could ever possibly have been", which is surely mistaken. We can and do use the resources of religion expressively, aesthetically and regulatively, as he urges us to, but these uses are I think parasitic on intellectual and moral commitment to forms of objective realism about the way things are. Making religion one's own is not identical with making one's own religion, even when, lucky us, we find other like-minded democratic rational relativist voluntarists who happen to have worked it out in the same way, thus mitigating our Cartesian loneliness. If we are to opt for self-wrought religion and the gratification that option sustains, let us be clear that that is what we are doing, and not suppose it to be identical with Christianity as it has been and is believed, not least when it is purged of the sheer sentimentality and egocentricism Mr Cupitt rightly deplores.

At one point Mr Cupitt comes close to acknowledging the radical character of his revision when he writes that "Western Christianity is a psychologically very 'hot' religion that imposes severe stress on the serious believer", so we can cool it – Mr Cupit's option, or leave it for Buddhism, say. Mr Cupitt's text is best read as a plea for attention to neglected elements in the Christian tradition – no cheap grace as an ascetic Orthodox might say – but his difference from the tradition is no more clearly indicated, perhaps, than when he comments that the function of our ideas of God or of Christ's death is to "stabilize the self" in the face of the enigma of the human condition. Take, for example, Abelard's "Solus ad victimam procedis, Domine", which in Helen Waddell's translation ends:

> So may our hearts have pity on thee, Lord
> That they may sharers of the glory be:
> Heavy with weeping may the three days pass,
> To win the laughter of thine Easter Day.

Abelard may have got it all wrong, or Aquinas or whoever – and even Siger of Brabant could be found conversing with the latter in Dante's *Paradiso* – but that their fundamental beliefs are different from Mr Cupitt's is abundantly clear.

Ann Loades

Domination or Liberation. The Place of Religion in Social Conflict

Alister Kee. SCM, 1986. Pp. xiii + 126. £5.50

Alister Kee's latest book is hardly his best, but it displays his customary crisp style: uncluttered exposition, sharp analysis, deft humour. (Mocking tables are turned here on journalistic chauvinism, for example, with Jürgen Moltmann nicely identified as the husband of Elizabeth Wendel, a dapper, brown-haired father of four daughters.) The volume falls rather disappointingly between a critical introduction, too selective and curtailed to be pedagogically satisfactory, and a creative thesis whose persuasiveness is compromised by partiality.

Originally the 1986 Ferguson Lectures at the University of Manchester, here is a call for Christians to "examine the part which their religion has played in the legitimation of domination in the spheres of gender, race, class, politics and economics, [and] . . . consider how religion, freed from its associations with domination, might contribute to liberation" (p. xi). At one level, this is a brief introduction to Christian feminism, black theology and Latin American liberation theology, showing how "religion" (never defined, unhappily) has reinforced social domination, and concluding with an analysis of the religious dimension to the current conservative backlash against liberation.

The general reader will learn much here about the multiform theology of liberation; yet, due no doubt to the original lecture format, brevity is frequently the enemy of balance. Attempting, it seems, to out-feminise the feminists, Kee short-circuits the exegetical debate about women in the Bible. Excessively critical of both OT and NT, he under-represents the positive readings of some feminists. On Genesis 2-3, for example, he too quickly dismisses one such (Phyllis Bird), and ignores others (eg Phyllis Trible in *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*), who see in the J account the equality and oneness of female and male. The discussion of women's ordination is curiously lop-sided. There is first an overly sanguine assessment of the Reformed churches, for whom this is allegedly no longer an issue, with particular reference to the Church of Scotland. In truth the change of law and practice has left many old attitudes and conventions in the Kirk unaltered; and the fact is that half the members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches do not ordain women. With this is juxtaposed an extremely negative, rhetorical judgment upon the Roman Catholic Church, with little allowance for the rapid changes of attitude to women now occurring within that communion. Between Edinburgh and Rome there is not a mention of the great debate on women priests in Anglicanism; which, however happy a reversal of the normal complaint north of the Tweed, is odd, given the Mancunian provenance of these lectures, and the intrinsic significance of the Church of England for any discussion of the role of religion in the socio-political life of Britain.

In this connection, too, Kee's implicating of religion in the rise of Thatcherism fails to convince. His outrage at the hypocrisies of the New Religious Right in the USA is fully justified; but a few articles on "Christianity and Capitalism" notwithstanding, is British neo-conservatism remotely "religious" in the manner of the Moral Majority? For many of us the significance of the Thatcher years, rather, has been precisely the new courage of erstwhile erastianism to resist government pressure and directly or obliquely indict state policy.

Again, Kee seems less than fair on Rome's response to liberation theology. There is surely sufficient tension between the biblical witness and a Marxist interpretation of reality, and sufficient concern about the restraint of dissent, worship and mission in societies where that interpretation has been implemented, for questions justi-

fiably to be raised. Critical theory must tolerate critique. And while the Vatican's 1984 "Instruction on the Theology of Liberation", and examination of Leonardo Boff, were unduly hostile, probably for the ecclesiastical reasons Kee suggests, it is a pity that the second, more positive, "Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation", issued shortly after Kee's Lectures, was not assessed in their subsequent revision for this book.

It is from Boff that Kee adapts his specific thesis. Movements for the liberation of women, and blacks, are blind to their own complicity in the ideology of domination, and do more to condemn oppression than to halt it. For they lack that critical theory which explains *why* even the best of people conspire to dominate others: the analysis of Marx that society is determined by its means of production. The church itself is a "religious monopoly capitalism " (was the Body of Christ ever more pitifully conceived?), and "can only be changed when the mode of religious production is replaced" (p. 85). But whereas Kee asserts that "the church is not guided by theology, by ideas or ideals", Boff himself is clear that nothing will change the balance of power in the church but "the Christian experience with its content of revelation". It is the gospel of Christ himself, the theology that recaptures him, the ideals he evokes, which transforms hierarchy into community, enslavement into freedom (*Church: Charism and Power,* pp. 113 ff). Kee admits occasionally the ideological vices of the Left as well as the Right. Yet his blanket denunciations of capitalism, and incautious uses of Marx not only concerning the world's problems but also their solution, sometimes evade the gospel's prophetic, relativising critique of *every* programme and policy besides that of a Crucified Liberator, whose kingship is not of this world.

Alan E. Lewis

Christianity and War in a Nuclear Age

Richard Harries. Mowbrays, 1986. Pp. 170. £4.95

In his latest book, Richard Harries moves from some theological considerations about power and coercion, through a summary of just-war tradition, to a discussion about how this can be applied to nuclear deterrence, finishing up with some remarks about war and theodicy.

Nothing in this progress impresses. To take firstly the core of the book, in which Harries argues that a "minimum deterrence" may meet the criteria of discrimination and proportionality: this argument founders on the fact that the threat of long-term ecological damage and massive loss of population is an inherent part of what distinguishes "deterrence" from "defence". No serious secular nuclear strategist supposes, like Harries, that it is possible to separate an incapacitating degree of military damage from damage to the civil infrastructure. And the more the use of nuclear weapons can be regarded as "proportionate", then the more possible it is to think of this use as part of the conventional strategy of a winnable war. Although Harries says that nuclear wars are not winnable, he clearly does not believe this, because his notion of "acceptable use" assumes that an early, "small" nuclear attack could have the effect of forcing the enemy to sue for terms. A similar contradiction exists between Harries's claim that nuclear escalation from an initial strike should not be assumed probable, and his admission that the risk of escalation is an inherent part of deterrence. Where, like Harries, one associates "flexible response" with the paramount duty not to give way to unjust aggression, one is committed to a nuclear game of chance in which the "defending" side will be always likely to turn the nuclear screw one twist further, in the hope that this will secure some margin of advantage.

Harries concedes that the principle of "non-combatant immunity" can scarcely be used to discriminate between nuclear exchanges, and puts the weight of his argument upon "proportionality". His case for the possible legitimacy of "limited" uses fails at any point seriously to face up to the scale of long-term damage that would be involved. But the nub of the issue is not here; Harries argues that even *admitting*, as he does, some real risk of escalation to apocalypse, there is still an overriding moral duty to resist evil. He recognises that the *whole point* of the principle of proportion is to deny that this duty should always be acted upon, but he feels, nonetheless, that the double risk of a full-scale *conventional* world war or of a totalitarian tyranny founded on nuclear blackmail permit us to take a chance on ultimate destruction. But the proper answer to the threat of "conventional" world war cannot be to sustain an even worse threat; rather, as Harries himself suggests in relation to the issue of multilateral arms reduction, the real solution here can only be the political one of dismantling the grounds of enmity. In the case of the totalitarian threat one can sympathise, up to a point, with Harries's fear of a "seamless" oppression founded in a nuclear monopoly. But in this circumstance, surely, the imperative to "resist injustice" is not exemplified in a counter-nuclear threat, but rather in a courageous calling of the nuclear bluff – on the assumption that substantial use of nuclear armoury is destructive also for the perpetrator.

The irony is that the nuclear pacifist is much more likely than Harries to recognise the post-Clausewitzian character of nuclear strategy, in which realism dictates that "proportionality" is relativised, because a seemingly disproportionate act may be the gamble necessary to trounce the enemy and win unimaginable, long-term stakes. Of course this very *strategy* must seem "disproportionate" to the Christian who is never able to rate the "security" of a human state or socio-economic order so highly. If Harries is blinded here it is ultimately because he takes an unhistorical and fatalistic view about the structures of power and coercion as being somehow permanently fixed in their scope and character. Hence international nuclear terror, and the modern sovereign state can be equated by him with the temporary and local "police power" endorsed by St Paul, or, yet more ludicrously, with the "anarchistic" consensual order presupposed for the *Torah*. The "Kingdom of God", on the other hand, cannot for Harries establish any real scope in this world (Utopia is not here in question) because, we are told, non-coercive action is not intended to convert our enemy, but rather symbolically anticipates the eschaton when God will see to it that the wicked get their deserts. I was sorry to realise that a bishop-elect is unaware that the ontological state of the wicked is always and everywhere, and without extrinsic reinforcement, a

reflex of their wickedness.

Schoolboy relish for technical details cannot replace genuine realism and historical sense. Absence of the latter vitiates Harries's brief guide to just-war theory. He perplexedly wonders why Victoria was the first theologian to be seriously interested in the *ius in bello,* and fails to connect this with the rise of the nation-state, and the increasingly "total" character of renaissance power warfare formalistically detached from *ius ad bellum* questions of justice and policing. So far, *pace* Harries, is Grotius from being in the line of Catholic natural law, that already within the rationalist formalism of his "Godless" iusnaturalism he can conceive of "justice on both sides". Even in the seventeenth century Grotius knew, as Harries still does not, that "pre-Copernican" *ius ad bellum* theory will scarcely endorse most of the actuality of "post Copernican" warfare. If there is any "Catholic" judgement, it is of the entire modern "conjuncture".

The book is worthy of its climax which introduces the enterprising Professor Michael Howard as a major theodicist of war and celebrates the pagan and pre-Augustinian sense of conflict as an impersonal force, which is yet the occasion for the exercise of heroic honour. Although the inherently redemptive character of war "is a question which takes us beyond the scope of this book", Harries is here far too modest. We are admirably prepared for the conclusion which introduces a new God whose providence is overdetermining the human manufacture of nuclear weapons.

That the world is such as for our intervention to be able to bring about mayonnaise or meringue, is, as Alice Thomas Ellis has shown us, a very good proof of God's existence; but that its nuclear bomb-potential should demonstrate his "ways to men" – and not the *mere* "seriousness of sin" – well, here we have had to wait on Dean Harries.

John Milbank

The Making of a Moonie

Eileen Barker. Basil Blackwell 1984. Pp. xv + 142. £5.95

First published in 1984, this is a most timely book. On 22 May that year, the European Parliament, against the advice of Christian leaders in many countries, passed a bill which advocated a common approach by member states of the European Community towards various infringements of the law by new organisations, operating under the protection afforded to religious bodies. The act appears to militate against freedom of worship. Moreover, it does not describe what a new religious movement is: is the URC such, having come into being in 1972? Furthermore, how competent are Euro-MPs to judge what constitutes a genuine religion or religious person?

There is a widespread assumption that young people are conned or forced into the Unification Church and other new-ish religious groups. This could seem to be confirmed when, in 1980-81 the British leader of the Unification Church fought a libel action against the *Daily Mail* and lost. On 29 May 1978, that paper had published an article accusing the church of breaking up families, and the article had included a story entitled "They took away my son and then raped his mind".

What Barker's book does is to make us ask whether, in the case of the Moonies (which members of the Unification Church are often called, after the founder, Sun Myung Moon), people are brainwashed into becoming members or can choose to.

Chapter 1 describes some of the ways she went about collecting and analysing the data on which her book is based. It tells how she first came across the movement in 1974 when she was invited to speak to a conference by an organisation founded by Sun Myung Moon, whom she vaguely remembered having heard about and whom she determined to investigate further. This led eventually to her being given permission by the British leadership to study the church on more or less her own terms. Among her ways of gleaning information were interviews with members, ex-members, potential members, parents of members, "anti-cult" people, and participation in Moonie activities. Above all, she wanted to find out about Moonies rather than Moon – he interested her for "what his followers are prepared to believe and do for him as the (possibly no more than symbolic) focus of their attention".

Chapter 2 gives a historical background to the Unification Church, ending with Moon's imprisonment in the USA on charges of tax evasion. Chapter 3 is about Unification beliefs: an important point is that they are sincerely held by some, providing a new world view which can disrupt previous relationships. Moreover, since the movement claims to be Christian, this can bring it into sharp conflict with those who would deny it. Chapter 4 describes the process of meeting Moonies and attending Unification "workshops" – residential courses during which potential recruits are told of beliefs and see some of the practices of Moonies.

Chapter 5 is crucial. It is entitled "Choice or Brainwashing?". It first of all describes the libel action already referred to. Then it has a section entitled "Whose Story?": has the convert had a liberating experience as he would claim, or a personality change induced by brainwashing as his relatives might? Are ex-Moonies' claims that they were brainwashed entirely unbiased or motivated by an attempt to explain a phase in their life they now regret? Barker thinks the question needs reformulating to discover under what circumstances a person can objectively be claimed to have made a choice. She isolates four key variables which must be considered if we are to conclude that a person has made a choice: "(1) the individual's predispositions; (2) his past experience and expectations of society; (3) his understanding of the attraction (or otherwise) of the Unification Church; and (4) the immediate environment in which he finds himself".

In Chapter 6, the workshop is examined from the point of view of the potential convert, their "guest", to use Moonie parlance. The vast majority believed Moonies to be misguided, though sincere. Smaller groups in the one case joined up, in the other regarded the church as evil. Certainly, the majority cannot be said to

have been brainwashed. Chapter 7 looks at the effects of alleged deception of potential converts, at the effects of a controlled environment upon them, and the attention showered on guests ("love-bombing"). Chapters 8 and 9 look at the kind of people who become Moonies and their experience of society. The last chapter contains the author's conclusions.

She concludes that it is not really satisfactory to pose the question "Choice or Brainwashing?" in quite that way, "but that the evidence seems to suggest that the answer lies considerably nearer the rational-choice pole of the continuum than it does to the irresistible-brainwashing pole".

Is her evidence convincing? Some statistics (e.g. the one on page 207) seem to me to merit Mark Twain's/Benjamin Disraeli's assessment of their merits. But by and large her arguments are convincing; she does not seek to promote the Moonie cause, nor does she seek to absolve them from their share of the blame for the way in which many regard them, nor was she at any time convinced by the merits of their claims and thus tempted to join them.

So this book must be warmly commended, especially to gentlemen of the press, and members of the legal profession and of the European Parliament.

Martin Forward

BOOKS RECEIVED

Dale C. Allison. *The End of the Ages has Come.* T.&T. Clark. Pp. xiii + 194. £13.95 (hb).

Angelus Silesius. *The Cherubic Wanderer.* Classics of Western Spirituality. Paulist Press/SPCK. Pp. xxii + 145. £9.95.

C.J. Arthur. *In the Hall of Mirrors. Problems of Commitment in a Religiously Plural World.* Mowbray. Pp. xiii + 172. £6.95.

Kenneth Boyd, Brendan Callaghan SJ, Edward Shotter. *Life before Birth. Consensus in Medical Ethics.* SPCK. Pp. viii + 168. £6.95.

John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536 edition). Collins. Pp. lix + 396. £17.95.

Jane Dillenberger. *Style and Content in Western Art.* SCM Press. Pp. 240. £10.50.

Gillian R. Evans, Alister E. McGrath, Allan D. Galloway. *The Science of Theology.* The History of Christian Theology, Vol. I. Marshall Pickering. Pp. xi + 363 (n/p).

Duncan S. Ferguson. *Biblical Hermeneutics. An Introduction.* SCM Press. Pp. 220. £7.75.

Dieter Georgi. *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians.* T.&T. Clark. Pp. 464. £19.95 (hb).

George Goodman. *Seventy Lessons in Teaching and Preaching Christ.* Marshall Pickering. Pp. viii + 402. £4.95.

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Robert Grant. *Gods and the One God. Christian Theology in the Graeco-Roman World.* SPCK. Pp. 211. £6.95.

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Richard Harries. *Christianity and War in a Nuclear Age.* Mowbray. Pp. 170. £4.95.

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D. Martin Lloyd-Jones. *Revival: Can we make it happen?* Marshall Pickering. Pp. 316. £4.95.

H.D. McDonald. *The God who Responds.* James Clarke and Co. Pp. 204. £5.95.

Donald M. Mackinnon. *Themes in Theology. The Three-Fold Cord.* T.&T. Clark. Pp. 256. £14.95 (hb).

D. Moody Smith. *Johannine Christianity.* T.&T. Clark. Pp. xix + 233. £12.95.

Janet Morley and Hannah Ward (ed.) *Celebrating Women.* MOW/Women in Theology. Pp. 44. £1.50.

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Tom Regan (ed.) *Animal Sacrifices. Religious Perspectives on the Use of Animals in Science.* Temple University Press. Pp. xii + 270. $24.95.

Dietrich Ritschl. *The Logic of Theology.* SCM Press. Pp. xxiii + 310. £12.95.

Jack T. Sanders. *The Jews in Luke-Acts.* SCM Press. Pp. xviii + 410. £15.00.

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Peter Vardy. *God of our Fathers? Do We Know What We Believe?* DLT. Pp. ix + 124. £3.95.

Francis Watson. *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles. A Sociological Approach.* CUP (SNTS Monograph Series). Pp. xii + 246. £22.50 (hb).

Claus Westermann. *Genesis 37-50. A Commentary.* SPCK. Pp. 269. £30.00 (hb).

Theo Witvliet. *The Way of the Black Messiah.* SCM Press. Pp. xiv + 332. £12.50.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Graham Baldwin completed the BD at King's College in 1986. He is Independent Evangelical Churches' Chaplain to the University of London.

Anthony Baxter, SJ, teaches Christian Doctrine at Heythrop College, London.

Colin Gunton is Professor of Christian Doctrine at King's College and Joint Editor of the *King's Theological Review.*

Christoph Schwoebel is Lecturer in Systematic Theology at King's College.

Francis Watson is Lecturer in New Testament Studies at King's College and Joint Editor of the *King's Theological Review.*

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