

Faith and Thought

Journal of the Victoria Institute

Published by

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

12 BURCOTE ROAD, LONDON S.W.18

Vol. 94 Nos. 1 and 2 Spring 1965

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	1
T. S. ELIOT	3
EUROPEAN THEOLOGY TODAY (Adapted from <i>Christianity Today</i>) Carl F. H. Henry, M.A., PH.D., TH.D.	9
THERMODYNAMICS AND THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF LIFE Douglas C. Spanner, A.R.C.S., B.SC., PH.D.	92
DILEMMA IN ISRAEL E. L. Tavener, M.A., PH.D.	105
THE PARABLE FORM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE RABBINIC LITERATURE (Reprinted from <i>the Evangelical Quarterly</i> , vol. xxxvi, no. 3) R. A. Stewart, M.A., B.D., M.LITT.	113
CORRESPONDENCE	128
<i>The Apologetic for Miracles in Contemporary Thought</i> (H. D. McDonald)	
from: The Rev. M. H. Cressey Professor D. M. MacKay A. E. Willingale	
<i>Genesis and Its Underlying Realities</i> (J. M. Clark)	
from: H. L. Ellison A. E. Willingale R. E. D. Clark	
REVIEWS	142

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
ABERDEEN

Faith and Thought

A Journal devoted to the study of the inter-relation
of the Christian revelation and modern research

Vol. 94

Numbers 1 and 2

Spring 1965

EDITORIAL

We are facing a situation in which, more than ever before, people are getting used to thinking about the supreme issues and purpose of life, though it may be along a number of very different avenues. Generally speaking it seems that from the assembly line of popularisation there is now emerging a new model of the man who is prepared to discuss the real world with a certain unashamed arrogance and self-satisfaction. To him, his manner of thinking is self-evidently true, and he therefore constructs a creed in which it is prescribed that all men, if they be men of good will, will think as he does.

Nor have the contributions, such as the latest from the Bishop of Woolwich—*The New Reformation?*—helped us much, unless it is simply to see that the Bishop has bravely attempted to reconcile a first-century Christ with a twentieth-century need. Certainly such books are far too philosophical or cerebral for many of us. We hope that in *Faith and Thought* there may yet be a serious and systematic appraisal of Dr Robinson's views.

Perhaps in a rather broad way the present Number indicates those areas where prevailing attitudes towards Christianity are to be noted. We are deeply indebted to our contributors who have written for this Number, or who have allowed us to reproduce and adapt work, which has already been published elsewhere, to be incorporated in it.

As we approach the Centenary of this Society we earnestly hope that some remembrance of the contribution of the *Victoria Institute* in the past to those areas of knowledge which bear upon the Christian Faith may help us to face the future of the Institute with an enthusiasm which will bring its influence into greater contact with thinking people of our day.

The next three Prize Essays have now been arranged, and, for the benefit of all our readers, the following details are appended.

Langhorne Orchard Prize (for 1964):

Modern Educational Trends: A Christian Perspective

Closing dates for entries 1 July 1965.

Schofield Prize (1965):

The Relevance of Christian Truth in a Modern Age

Closing date for entries 30 October 1965.

Gunning Prize (1966)

The Roles of Religion and Psychiatry in the Achievement of Spiritual Integration

Closing date for entries 30 April 1966.

Full details are obtainable from the Secretary.

T. S. Eliot

Faith and Thought was never privileged to number among its contributors the late T. S. Eliot. Nevertheless many members of the Victoria Institute will doubtless be glad that we wish to pay tribute in the following brief remarks to perhaps the greatest poetic genius of this century and certainly one of the outstanding Christian writers of our time.

Thomas Stearns Eliot's reputation as a poet largely rests upon his earlier work. Exploiting to the full the modern techniques of non-romantic realism, his portrayal of post-war disillusionment and aimlessness had a ring of truth and contemporaneity. Even today the bitter and sardonic comprehension of moral bankruptcy and despair cannot fail to arrest the reader. As an American obituary notice commented:

. . . his most golden lines were yoked to an ironic, satanic vision of the meanness of a scrap-iron age.

Prufrock (1917) is a love song of spiritual despair expressed with supreme effect in vividly mundane terms:

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
And how should I presume?

and later:

But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a
platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short I was afraid.

This was Eliot's perceptive expression of the 'condition humaine' as seen from the point of view of a despairing and aimless man. He developed it in the poems that followed *Prufrock*. In what was perhaps his most famous piece of verse, *The Wasteland* (1922) we are confronted with man's

. . . heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water . . . ;

likewise in *The Hollow Men* (1925) the cry is as derelict as ever:

We are the hollow men
 We are the stuffed men
 Leaning together
 Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
 Our dried voices, when
 We whisper together
 Are quiet and meaningless
 As wind in dry grass
 Or rats' feet over broken glass
 In our dry cellar.

This is the hopelessness that expects the world to end 'not with a bang but a whimper'.

The announcement of Eliot's Christian conversion in 1928 was therefore an event of great significance, because one of the leading poetic exponents of meaningless chaos now embraced a philosophy of order and hope. His poetry continues to exhibit the rugged recognition of evil and human tragedy, but now the supreme tragedy is the world's alienation from God. In *Ash Wednesday* (1930) this separation is expressed in haunting tones:

And the light shone in darkness and
 Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled
 About the centre of the silent Word. . . .
 No place of grace for those who avoid the face
 No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and deny the voice.

At the same time, a new dimension in human suffering begins to appear in Eliot's work. The recognition of the Messiah entails the hardships of pilgrimage in a hostile world. As the narrator concludes in *The Journey of the Magi*:

this Birth was
 Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
 We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
 But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
 With an alien people clutching their gods.
 I should be glad of another death.

Eliot's extraordinary ability was to relate with the barest minimum of words, the world in which we live to the issues of Eternity, or what is referred to in *The Rock* (1934) as 'the perpetual struggle of Good and Evil'. In the choruses of this poem we are continually confronted with this relationship of time and eternity.

Where is the Life we have lost in living?
 Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
 Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
 The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
 Bring us farther from GOD and nearer to dust.

In this poem perhaps more than any other the everyday problems of unemployment and social unrest are brought to our notice as ultimately theological problems,

You, have you built well, have you forgotten the cornerstone?
 Talking of right relations of men, but not of relations of men to GOD.
 'Our citizenship is in Heaven'; yes, but that is the model and type for your
 citizenship upon earth.

. . . All men are ready to invest their money
 But most expect dividends.
 I say to you: *Make perfect your will.*
 I say: take no thought of the harvest,
 But only of proper sowing.

For Eliot, social problems were but symptoms of the weariness of men who turn from God . . . to schemes of human greatness thoroughly discredited, with the result that the condemnation of our civilization is that

the wind shall say: 'Here were decent godless people:
 Their only monument the asphalt road
 And a thousand lost golf balls.'

Many Christians will think that Eliot was mistaken in the Anglo-Catholicism to which he adhered. For him, tradition played a particular important role in cultural forms, and rather naturally it gained a similar place in his religious thinking. His awareness of the past, however, gave him a peculiar understanding of the present, and he often reminded the world in his writings that as in the past, so today, behaviour must depend upon belief, and not vice versa. People are frequently tempted to accept the Christian faith for the wrong motive. As Eliot wrote in his book *The idea of a Christian Society* (1939): 'What is worst of all is to advocate Christianity, not because it is true, but because it might be beneficial.' One recalls the inward torment of St Thomas in *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935)

The last temptation is the greatest treason:
 To do the right deed for the wrong reason.

Here Eliot's message was not unlike that of the late Dorothy Sayers in

her famous little essay *Creed or Chaos*. Christian Society and its morality must rest upon the substructure of Christian dogma. As we read in *The Rock*

'such' modest attainments
 As you can boast in the way of polite society
 Will hardly survive the Faith to which they owe their significance.

Particularly in *The Idea of a Christian Society* Eliot's position was peculiarly relevant to the growing threats of German fascism and Russian communism. A system of government in itself was not right or wrong, and Eliot pointed an accusing finger at those who put democracy in the place of Christianity. 'To identify any particular form of government with Christianity is a dangerous error: for it confounds the permanent with the transitory, the absolute with the contingent. . . . Those who consider that the discussion of the nature of a Christian society should conclude by supporting a particular form of political organization, should ask themselves whether they really believe our form of government to be more important than our Christianity . . . whether they are confusing a Christian society with society in which individual Christianity is tolerated.' In the face of fascism and communism it was easy to feel that our own society was Christian, whereas Eliot was insisting that it was 'neutral' in that 'no-one is penalized for the *formal profession* of Christianity'. 'The fundamental objection to fascist doctrine, the one which we conceal from ourselves because it might condemn ourselves as well, is that it is pagan.' The materialism of our own society was, for Eliot, equally pagan. 'We conceal from ourselves the unpleasant knowledge of the real values by which we live. We conceal from ourselves, moreover, the similarity of our society to those which we execrate: for we should have to admit, if we recognized the similarity, that the foreigners do better. I suspect that in our loathing of totalitarianism, there is infused a good deal of admiration for its efficiency.'

It is immediately apparent that for Eliot every human question, was ultimately a religious one, whether it was political, as in this case, educational, or moral. For him, the once chaotic universe had become devastatingly theocentric and the tragedy of those around was that they failed to recognise the centre, and were consequently lost.

They constantly try to escape
 From the darkness outside and within
 By dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good. (*The Rock*)

Such an existence is fearful and desperate and is personified in the Chorus' chant at the end of the Family Reunion: (1939)

We do not like the maze in the garden because it too closely resembles the maze in the brain.

We do not like what happens when we are awake, because it too closely resembles what happens when we are asleep.

We understand the ordinary business of living,

We know how to work the machine,

We can usually avoid accidents,

We are insured against fire,

And against larceny and illness,

Against defective plumbing,

But not against the act of God. . . .

which gives place to frantic questioning a little later:

And what is being done to us?

And what are we, and what are we doing?

To each and all of these questions

There is no conceivable answer.

We have suffered far more than a personal loss—

We have lost our way in the dark.

This is the enigma of existence that can only be solved in the light of eternity. The solution is apparent when man discovers true reality outside his own existence:

Men's curiosity searches past and future

And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend

The point of intersection of the timeless

What time, is an occupation for the saint—

No occupation either, but sometime given

And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,

Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender. (*Four Quartets: The Dry Salvages*)

This was the crucial experience of T. S. Eliot, a man whose supreme achievement was to express the fears and hopes of mankind, both when lost and also when found. Such an experience of spiritual rebirth is perhaps most eloquently expressed in *Four Quartets: Little Gidding* in the following lines with which we conclude. They form a fitting epitaph.

The dove descending breaks the air

With flame of incandescent terror

Of which the tongues declare

The one discharge from sin and error.

The only hope, or else despair

Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre

To be redeemed from fire by fire.

Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.
 We only live, only suspire
 Consumed by either fire or fire.

CARL F. H. HENRY, MA., Ph.D., Th.D.

European Theology Today *

I. DECLINE OF THE BULTMANN ERA?

AFTER ruling German theology for more than a decade, Rudolf Bultmann is no longer its king. Former students have usurped his throne and are scrambling for the spoils of conquest. While their loose-knit coalition of post-Bultmannian views tends as a whole to fragment Bultmann's presuppositions, their own impact is blunted by internal disagreement.

In other quarters anti-Bultmannian forces are challenging existentialist theology with increasing vigour. European critics heading this anti-Bultmannian offensive include the traditionally conservative school, the *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation-history) movement, and the emerging 'Pannenberg school'.

Third Time in a Century

For the third time in our century Continental Protestantism has tumbled into a morass of theological confusion and transition. Apprehension shadows almost all phases of current theological inquiry and reflection; what the final direction of the dogmatic rift will be is now wholly uncertain.

Contemporary European theology underwent its first major reconstruction when Karl Barth projected his crisis-theology in vigorous protest against classic post-Hegelian modernism. As a result, German theologians by the early nineteen-thirties were conceding the death of rationalistic liberalism, which Barth had repudiated as 'heresy', and admitting the triumph of dialectical theology over immanent philosophy. Barth's *Kirchenkampf* role against Nazi Socialism, centring in his appeal to a transcendent 'Word of God', removed any doubt that theological leadership had fallen his way and gave him almost the status of a Protestant church father. Barthian theology accordingly remained the dominant force in European dogmatics until the mid-century.

It was the appearance of the theological essays titled *Kerygma und Mythos* (Hans-Werner Bartsch, editor) that soon eroded the vast influence of Barth's dogmatics. Published in 1948, this symposium

* This article has been currently appearing as a series in *Christianity Today*. We are deeply indebted to Dr Henry, Editor of that Journal, for allowing us to publish it in its present form.

included and made prominent Bultmann's essay on 'New Testament and Mythology', a work which had but a little recognition at its first appearance in 1941.

Barth's early agreement with existentialism had been evident both from his broad dialectical refusal to ground Christian faith in the realm of objective history and knowledge and in the explicitly existential emphasis of his *Römerbrief* (1919). Bultmann conformed this existentialist commitment to several ruling ideas, namely, that *Formgeschichte* (the form-critical evaluation of New Testament sources) establishes what the primitive Church (rather than what Jesus) taught; that Christian faith requires no historical foundation beyond the mere 'thatness' of Jesus' existence; and finally that Christian relevance and acceptance in the modern scientific age require reinterpretation of the New Testament in terms of an existential non-miraculous pre-philosophy. In view of this 'creeping naturalism', Barth and Bultmann parted company between 1927 and 1929. In the 1932 revision of his *Kirchliche Dogmatik* Barth openly repudiated existential philosophy, and he has continually added 'objectifying' elements in order to protect his dialectical theology against existentialist takeover.

At the same time, by dismissing modern scientific theory as irrelevant to Christian faith and relegating historical criticism to a role of secondary importance, Barth neglected pressing controversies in related fields of exegesis. Bultmann, on the other hand, assigned larger scope both to a naturalistic philosophy of science and to negative historical criticism, and demanded that the New Testament be 'demythologized' of its miraculous content. The theology of divine confrontation, he contended, can and must dispense with such proofs and props. The young intellectuals became increasingly persuaded that Barth's 'theology of the Word of God' applied the basic dialectical principle less consistently than did Bultmann's reconstruction. In fact, so extensive was their swing to Bultmannism in the seminaries that both Barth and Brunner had to concede that 'Bultmann is king' (cf. 'Has Winter Come Again? Theological Transition in Europe', in *Christianity Today*, 21 Nov. 1960, pp. 3 ff.).

The Stars are Falling

The wide split in the Bultmann camp has now created a new strategic situation. The differences among the disciples of Bultmann signal an impending break-up of the total Bultmannian empire. Self-professed 'followers' of Bultmann now range from those who regard inter-

personal relations alone as significant for encountering God, to those who emphasise a necessary connection between the historical Jesus and the content of Christian faith. In his retirement, Bultmann has become but a symbolic ruler of the theological kingdom. Meantime an oligarchy of post-Bultmannians—many of them former students under Bultmann—has seized the intellectual initiative and is now best known for pointed criticisms of Bultmann and for sharp disagreements within its own ranks.

Says Ernst Fuchs of Marburg, 'The vitality is now with Bultmann's disciples who are in revolt, not with Bultmann and those who remain loyal.'

And Karl Barth of Basel, commenting on *Time* magazine's statement that Bultmann's Marburg disciples dominate German theology 'the way the Russians rule chess', remarks, 'That's saying too much.' The Bultmann forces, he indicates, 'are divided among themselves'. 'And', he adds, 'Bultmann has become more or less silent.' As Emil Brunner of Zurich puts it, 'Bultmann's shaky throne gets more shaky day by day.'

Aware that a time of theological transition is again in process in which new views are constantly coming to the fore, scholars contemplate the future of Continental theology with mounting uncertainty.

'One of the tragedies of the theological scene today', remarks the Erlangen New Testament scholar Gerhard Friedrich, 'is that the theologians outlive the influence of their own theologies. Barth's star has been sinking, and now Bultmann's is sinking too.'

'The realm of systematic theology today suffers from a confusion of the frontiers of thought', adds the Hamburg theologian Wenzel Lohff, because there is not yet 'a new binding concept'.

And Brunner, whose encounter-theology held the line for a season between Barth and Bultmann, himself contends that 'no one theology now on the scene can become the theology of the future. The Germans are monists—they want one leader at a time.'

Brunner concedes that for the moment Bultmann and Barth remain the strongest contenders for this leadership. And Heidelberg theologian Edmund Schlink believes that 'in the field of systematic theology Barth still has more control, while in the New Testament field, it is Bultmann who holds more influence, although his positions are increasingly disputed and disowned'. 'Barth has the vitality and he has disciples', notes Fuchs, 'whereas Bultmann has the *a priori* and his disciples have the vitality—that is what distinguishes Bultmann's situation from Barth's. The real trouble is between Bultmann and his disciples.'

Commenting not simply on the vitality of the post-Bultmannians but also on the rivalry between them at the very moment when basic Bultmannian positions are under heavy fire, Schlink notes further: 'The counter-criticism is growing, and the waves of demythology are diminishing.'

The Irreconcilable Divisions

In the eyes of Bultmann's successor in New Testament at Marburg (since 1952), the Bultmannian school has 'broken to pieces' during the past ten years. Long a foe of Bultmannism in its German seat of origin, Werner George Kümmel has served as President of the (international) Society of New Testament Studies. As he sees the situation, Bultmannism is now irreconcilably split, and New Testament scholarship is divided into at least four competing camps.

1. The conservatives, including Otto Michel of Tübingen, Joachim Jeremias of Göttingen, Gustav Stählin of Mainz, Karl Heinrich Rengstorf of Münster, Leonhard Goppelt of Hamburg, and Gerhard Friedrich of Erlangen.

2. The *Heilsgeschichte* scholars, a mediating group to which Oscar Cullmann of Basel provides a kind of transition from the first category. Kümmel lists himself here, as well as Eduard Schweizer of Zürich, Eduard Lohse of Berlin, and Ulrich Wilckens of Berlin.

3. The post-Bultmannian scholars.

4. The so-called Pannenberg scholars. Led by Mainz theologian Wolfhard Pannenberg. This school stresses the reality of objective divine revelation in history and the universal validity of the Christian truth-claim.

5. Independents whose viewpoints defy group identification. Helmut Thielicke of Hamburg, for example, combines liberal, dialectical, and conservative theological ingredients. Cullmann may be listed here also; he so modifies traditional views that he prefers not to be identified as a conservative. On the other hand, many *Heilsgeschichte* scholars brush aside his positions as too conservative. Ethelbert Stauffer of Erlangen is widely associated with a revival of radical liberalism in conservative garb.

Revolt in the Camp

Kümmel traces the death-knell of the Bultmannian school to Ernst Käsemann's 'revolutionary' paper of 1954 on the historical Jesus ('Das Problem des historischen Jesus'): 'We cannot deny the identity of the

exalted Lord with the incarnate Lord without falling into Docetism, and depriving ourselves of the possibility of distinguishing the Church's Easter faith from a myth.' Since that time interest in the 'happenedness' of something more than the mere existence of Jesus has advanced until most of Bultmann's disciples have come to insist for both theological and historical reasons that some knowledge of the historical Jesus is indispensable. As a result, dialogue was inevitable with such New Testament scholars as Cullmann, Michel, Jeremias, Kümmel, Goppelt, and Stauffer, who had never been uninterested in the historical Jesus and who opposed Bultmann's theology for a variety of other reasons as well.

Not only Bultmann but also Barth deplored this revival of interest in the historical Jesus. In his report, 'How My Mind Has Changed', Barth voiced strong suspicions of 'the authoritative New Testament men, who to my amazement have armed themselves with swords and staves, and once again undertaken the search for the "historical Jesus"—a search in which I now as before prefer not to participate' (*The Christian Century*, 20 Jan. 1960, p. 75).

Nonetheless the historical Jesus became an increasing concern of Bultmann's former students—including Fuchs of Marburg, Ebeling of Zürich, Bornkamm of Heidelberg, if not of almost the entire Bultmannian school. Only a minority resisted this historical interest—former Bultmann students like Hans Conzelmann of Göttingen, Phillipp Vielhauer of Bonn, Manfred Mezger of Mainz, and, on the American side, James M. Robinson of Claremont.

Bultmann himself helped to create the popular distinction between 'genuine' and 'spurious' disciples of Bultmannism by commending the theological consequences of Herbert Braun's views. Together with Mezger, his faculty colleague, Braun stresses interpersonal relationships alone as decisive for divine revelation. Although both 'genuine' and 'spurious' groups retain Bultmann's emphasis that the task of exegesis is existential interpretation, the genuine disciples renounce a basic interest in the historical Jesus, while the spurious promote this interest.

Käsemann of Tübingen is the most disaffected member of the Bultmann school; in fact, some observers put him in a class by himself. He speaks of his former teacher as 'a man of the nineteenth century' and tells classes that when the Marburg scholar substitutes existential interpretation for New Testament tradition he is simply 'looking at his own navel'. With an eye on Bultmann's 'Eschatology and History', he charges that Bultmann's theology is no longer Christian. Käsemann

repudiates Bultmann's anthropological emphasis. He denies also the existential exegesis which Fuchs and Ebeling retain alongside their stress of the importance of the historical Jesus for faith. Although Käsemann sees no sure way to go behind the Gospels to the historical Jesus, he recognises the difficulty of the form-critical method, namely, that it cannot tell either where Jesus speaks or where the Church speaks. He resumes some of the basic emphases of conservative New Testament scholars—for example, the Jewish rather than Hellenic background of the New Testament ('all Torah must be fulfilled')—and shows interest in New Testament apocalyptic. For Käsemann what is central for primitive Christian preaching is not the believing subject (as with Bultmann), but the interpretation of the eschatological teaching with its anticipation of final fulfilment: God sent his Son, and this has apocalyptic significance. The *Jesusbild* of Matthew's Gospel is *eo ipso* the historical Jesus. It is equally significant that the problem of *Heilsgeschichte*—of the meaning of certain acts of God for proclamation—again comes into the foreground. In his deviation from Bultmann's methodology at the point of emphasis on the New Testament as the proclamation of an apocalyptic happening, Käsemann occupies a position between most of the post-Bultmannian scholars and the non-Bultmannian 'history of salvation' scholars. It is this exegetical turn which accounts for the fact that in New Testament discussion today the most lively theological encounter is occurring between the 'moderately' critical *Heilsgeschichte* scholars and the most energetic of Bultmann in his own camp.

Except for a very small colony of 'genuine' Bultmannians, most of Bultmann's former students and disciples now modify or reject his emphasis that 'the *preached* Jesus' is the ground of community between God and men. Fuchs and Ebeling seek to correlate the philosophical side of Bultmann's position with some of Luther's motifs as a corrective. Their conviction that the basis of community between God and men is the *historical* Jesus means, further, that the historical Jesus is the One who must be preached. 'The historical Jesus—not the preached Jesus—is the one theme of the New Testament', insists Fuchs. Bultmann's failure to say this, he adds, is 'the cause of the trouble among his disciples, and is a serious error'.

The Mainz Radicals

Eyeing the elements of ambiguity in Bultmann's presentation, Fuchs observes: 'Where Bultmann stands sometimes only God knows and not

even Bultmann.' Confusion over Bultmann's position grew apace when he approved the consequences of the theology of Herbert Braun and Manfred Mezger, the so-called 'Mainz radicals', who stay with 'the kerygmatic Christ' and do not revive the quest for the historical Jesus. (See 'Das Verhältnis der urchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus', a lecture at Heidelberg Academy of Sciences in which Bultmann replied to scholars reviving the quest for the historical Jesus. The English translation appears in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, Carl L. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville, editors, New York: Abingdon Press, 1964. Note Bultmann's remark: 'It may be that Herbert Braun's intention to give an existential interpretation has been carried out most consistently', pp. 35 ff.).

These Mainz theologians (Mezger is a former student of Bultmann; Braun, a friend) consider themselves—rightly or wrongly—the heirs of the dialectical theology, and carry Bultmann's position to 'greater extremes than do other Bultmannian disciples. They question the possibility of speaking of God as a being independent and distinguishable from the world and man. From the Incarnation Mezger concludes that God is not an exceptional reality but a totally profane reality, and that all facts and acts of faith must be encountered in our world in personal relationships. Mezger defines God as the *Unobjectifiable* and *Unutilizable* who encounters us always and only through our neighbour. Revelation for Mezger is the Word that meets me unconditionally, so that I can only trust or reject. Braun, too, insists that revelation shows itself 'only where and when I am struck by it'.

But despite his approving references to the results of Braun's theology (most recently in 'Der Gottesgedanke und der moderne Mensch', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, December, 1963, pp. 335-348, reprint of an article which appeared first in the daily newspaper *Die Welt* under the title 'Ist Gott Tod?') Bultmann considers some formulations of his Mainz disciples as objectionable and dangerous in so far as they leave in doubt the reality of God. Bultmann distinguishes reality and objectivity; he denies that God is knowable objectively, insists that revelation occurs only in decision and that God always confronts us when there is revelation. 'If Mezger and Braun depict revelation as occurring in personal relationships and dispense with the reality as well as with the objectivity of God, they are in error', he says. 'I will not dissolve the faith in revelation into subjectivism. The danger of Braun's formulations is that he seems to do so, although I do not believe he intends this.'

The irony of the situation is that Bultmann's criticism of the 'Mainz radicals' is not dissimilar from Emil Brunner's criticism of some of Bultmann's own recent formulations. 'The concept of revelation has been a dispensable luxury in Bultmann's scheme', Brunner remarks, pointing to Bultmann's delineation of God as the transcendent in the immanent, the unconditional in the conditional. Brunner quotes him: 'Only the idea of God which seeks and finds the unconditioned in the conditioned, the other-wordly in the this-wordly, the transcendent in the present reality, is acceptable to modern man' ('Der Gottesgedanke und der moderne Mensch', *ibid.* pp. 346 ff.). 'Bultmann is a modern Origen', says Brunner, 'an allegorist of the Alexandrine school. Bultmann has always been a student of Heidegger, who transforms the New Testament for him. Heidegger is an avowed atheist; he bows to no revelation — understands none, needs none, allows none. He smiles at Bultmann for "making theology out of my philosophy".'

Rudolf Bultmann singles out Hans Conzelmann of Göttingen and Erich Dinkler of Heidelberg as his most representative disciples whose results stand closest to his own and whose theology consistently veers away from the relevance of the historical Jesus. When pressed for additional names of 'genuine disciples' Bultmann lists almost all of his former students, despite their deviations. 'Although I cannot say with certainty, I think they all go along', he remarked, 'though with many modifications.' In such generalities, Bultmann reveals his awareness that, while none of his former students (Mezger, Conzelmann, Dinkler, Fuchs, Ebeling, Schweizer, Bornkamm, Vielhauer, Käsemann, Küm-mel) breaks in all respects with basic Bultmannian positions, yet their departures therefrom cannot be minimized nor can the differences among the men themselves.

The significance of the historical Jesus for Christian faith is the controversial issue that divides these scholars. Not only against the Mainz radicals who emphasise personal relationships exclusively, but also against Bultmann and many post-Bultmannians, Fuchs contends that 'community between men is possible only in the community between God and men' and that 'the historical Jesus stands in the midst of revelation'. Fuchs turns these principles against Braun and Mezger and whoever else seeks to invert them on Bultmann's premises, as well as against post-Bultmannians who are interested in the historical Jesus as he, and Ebeling also, are, but who are 'unsure whether God's presence is dependent on revelation or revelation dependent on God's presence.' Both Conzelmann and Käsemann, complains Fuchs, are unclear about

how the historical Jesus and revelation are to be correlated. Conzelmann, unlike Käsemann, concedes to radical historical criticism a role even more important than that of existential interpretation, while he nonetheless seeks to be an orthodox Lutheran. And while Bornkamm shares an interest in the historical Jesus, he subscribes also to Bultmann's notion that 'the faith came with Easter', while Fuchs, on the other hand, insists that 'the faith came from Jesus'. Yet when Schweizer of Zürich carries his post-Bultmannian interest in the historical Jesus to the point of inquiry into Jesus' Messianic self-consciousness, Fuchs calls this an illicit undertaking: 'The New Testament is dogmatics, and this cannot be translated into historical data.'

Bultmann himself meanwhile decries the fact that the growing interest in the historical Jesus may revive an appeal to historical factors in support and proof of faith. He still maintains that history can never provide a fundamental basis for faith and that faith does not need historical legitimation or historical supports. For Bultmann, the kerygma (the primitive Christian proclamation) is alone basic for faith.

Not even a post-Bultmannian like Bornkamm disputes this point of view, despite his insistence that Jesus' pre-Easter preaching contains inner connections with the post-Easter kerygma, and that faith is interested in the content of Jesus' preaching. 'Bultmann is completely right', he insists, 'in his view that faith cannot be proved, and that the resurrection of Christ is the point of departure.'

In conversation Bultmann now seems to move even beyond his earlier limitation of historical interest to Jesus as merely a Jewish prophet and to his death. 'We can know that he lived and preached and interpreted the Old Testament; that he deplored Jewish legalism, abandoned ritual purifications, and breached the Sabbath commandment; that he was not an ascetic, and was a friend of harlots and sinners; that he showed sympathy to women and children, and performed exorcisms.' In fact, in Wiesbaden, where Bultmann was seeking cure of an ailment, he was almost disposed to allow that Jesus healed the sick!

Nevertheless, Bultmann's theological outlook can tolerate no return to the historical Jesus as decisive for faith. His readiness to minimise the clash between his disciples must be understood in this context. 'We agree that the historical Jesus is the origin of Christianity and agree in the paradox that an historical person is also the eschatological fact which is always present in the Word.' By insisting on the event of Jesus Christ, Bultmann aims to distinguish the kerygmatic Christ from any mere Gnostic redeemer-myth.

Now it is true that Bultmann is formally right in insisting that the Easter message is the decisive starting point of Christian faith. He wants no return to the historical Jesus that would erase a decisive break between the historical Jesus and 'the Easter event'. But his repudiation of the Easter fact, his 'demiracleizing' of the Gospels, and his abandonment of the question of the historical Jesus as a theologically fundamental question all rob this emphasis of power. The complaint has widened that his complete rejection of any theological significance for Jesus of Nazareth does violence to apostolic Christianity. Bultmann's view seemed more and more—his intention to the contrary—to dissolve apostolic proclamation into a Christ-myth through his one-sided severance of the kerygma from the event it proclaims and his censorship of the relevance of the historical Jesus.

Breakdown of Bultmann's Positions

While the broken defence of existentialist positions has thus divided the Bultmannian camp, the assault from outside has increased in scope and depth. Over against Bultmann not only post-Bultmannians, but also the *Heilsgeschichte* scholars and the Pannenberg school as well as traditionally conservative scholars, are demanding the recognition of a Christian starting point also in the life and teaching of the historical Jesus. 'The smoke over the frontiers has lifted', reports Leonhard Goppelt of Hamburg, 'and a new generation is in view. Bultmann's spell is broken, and the wide range of critical discussion signals an open period. Now that a shift from Bultmann is under way in a new direction, we are on the threshold of a change as significant as that of a century ago, when Hegelian emphases gave way to the neo-Kantianism of Ritschl.'

As Joachim Jeremias of Göttingen sees it, the vulnerability of Bultmann's theological structure is evident from the fact that three of its fundamental emphases are now more or less shattered.

1. Bultmann's neglect of the historical Jesus has broken down, and a deliberate return to the historical Jesus now characterises New Testament studies. In deference to Wellhausen, Bultmann held that Jesus was but a Jewish prophet and that his life and message were not of great importance for Paul. The untenability of this position is now clear, and it is widely agreed that Christianity cannot be truly understood without a return to the historical Jesus.

2. Bultmann placed great weight on an alleged Gnosticism which supposedly influenced the Gospel of John and other New Testament literature. But the Dead Sea Scrolls show that the dualism of John's

Gospel is Palestinian and Judaic. A monograph by Carsten Colpe is widely credited with demonstrating convincingly that the model of a pre-Christian Gnostic redeemer-myth which Bultmann locates behind New Testament writings is actually nothing but the myth of Manicheanism of the third century A.D., which very likely sprang from a Docetic Christology repudiated by historic Christianity.

3. Bultmann defined the task of exegesis as the existential understanding of the New Testament, and he therefore stressed anthropology: 'The Gospel gives me a new understanding of myself.' But 'the Gospels stress theology, and they give us new knowledge of God', counters Jeremias, one of the most articulate spokesmen for traditional conservative positions. Jeremias comments that 'the history of the Church has shown that it is always dangerous when New Testament exegesis takes its method from contemporary philosophy, whether the idealistic philosophy of the nineteenth century or the existentialist philosophy of the twentieth century'.

It remains true, nonetheless, that Bultmann's followers—whether 'genuine' or 'spurious'—perpetuate many methodological and critical presuppositions integral to Bultmann's theology. Despite their interest in the historical Jesus, even the deviationist disciples retain Bultmann's notion that the task of exegesis is existential interpretation. But this basic Bultmannian assumption is challenged by Kümmel, a spokesman for the *Heilsgeschichte* school. Kümmel repudiates the presupposition that the task of exegesis is to discover the self-understanding of the New Testament writers in order to correct our self-understanding. The real task of hermeneutics, he says pointedly, is to find out what the New Testament teaches. The New Testament is 'revelation of the history of salvation', he insists, and he is confident that the critically founded search for the historical Jesus will 'win the field.' Kümmel emphasises that 'the facts, not the kerygma, evoke my response'.

An Unrepentant Bultmann

Bultmann remains unconvinced that his presuppositions have been shaken. He hardly regards himself as an emperor in exile or about to be deposed. Of his *a priori*s, he considers the second (as Jeremiah lists them) less important than the others, but even with respect to the supposed Gnostic background of the New Testament he clings still to the position that the theology of the Fourth Gospel and of Paul is influenced by Gnostic views. In fact, Bultmann is currently writing a commentary on John's Epistles from this perspective to round out his earlier work on

John's Gospel. Bultmann attaches more importance, however, to his other *a priori* regarding the historical Jesus and existential understanding which, he says, 'stand together'. Although he professes also to be 'interested in' the historical Jesus, he speaks only of Jesus' deeds, and of these in attenuated and non-miraculous form. Contrary to the nineteenth century 'life of Jesus' school, he insists that we can know nothing of Jesus' personality, and considers this no real loss. 'What does it matter?' he asks. 'What counts is his Word and his Cross which is the same now as then.' While Bultmann does not destroy continuity between the historical Jesus and the New Testament kerygma, he nonetheless denies continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of the kerygma. As he sees it, the kerygma requires only the 'that' of the life of Jesus and the fact of his crucifixion. In other words, the kerygma presupposes but mythologises the historical Jesus.

The issues of central importance, according to Bultmann, are the historical method and *Formgeschichte* in biblical theology, and the problem of history and its interpretation in hermeneutics, the latter being 'connected with anthropological and philosophical problems'.

The complaint that he virtually abandons the concept of revelation Bultmann attributes to a misunderstanding of his thought and intention. He insists now as always on the reality of revelation, but he distinguishes *Offenbarkeit* from *Offenbarung*—that is, revelation as an objectifiable fact from revelation as an act. In Bultmann's sense, 'genuine revelation' is always only an act, never an objectified fact. 'Revelation happens only in the moment when the Word of God encounters me.'

But for all Bultmann's self-assurance, European theology is increasingly moving outside the orbit of his control and influence. The so-called 'Bultmann school' has never really been a unit, even if his disciples all work within similar critical and methodological assumptions. While they build on Bultmann as the most important New Testament theologian of our time, they now separate the two emphases which Bultmann conjoined: radical criticism of the trustworthiness of the Gospels and existential interpretation. Heidegger's dark and harsh image of man, which so neatly fits the mood of a post-war generation plagued by anxiety, became most important for Bultmann's disciples. The Fuchs-Ebeling line of existential exegesis turned Bultmann's New Testament ideas into dogmatics *à la* Heidegger. But Bultmann's disciples have increasingly pulled back from his views or moved around them in some respects, each man emphasising a perspective which diverges from Bultmann—sometimes dealing severely with him—

and combating other post-Bultmannians as well. More and more, Bultmann's followers distinguish his exegetical and historical work from his philosophical and dogmatic intention. But none of the post-Bultmannians has so united the relevant data from a new perspective as to be able to shape a coherent alternative to Bultmann's view.

Attacks on Bultmann's position from outside his camp have become sharper and sharper, and have exploited the interior divisions. Heinrich Schier, a former Bultmann student and disciple, became a Roman Catholic and is now teaching in Bonn. 'Bultmann is a rationalist and neo-Ritschlian', says Emil Brunner. 'He seeks to overcome nihilism', which endangers his position, but his alternative is never quite clear'. And Peter Brunner, the Heidelberg theologian, points a finger at Bultmann's 'weakest point': 'In *Glauben und Verstehen* he nowhere tells us what a minister must say in order to articulate the Gospel, nor what (besides the name of Jesus and his Cross) is the binding or given content of the message to be perpetuated. He presupposes that a message comes to the individual, and discusses the problem of the individual to whom the message comes, and how it is to be grasped. But if one raises the question of proclamation into the future, it becomes clear that Bultmann has not resolved the problem of content.' Says Otto Weber, the Göttingen theologian: 'In a word, the reason for the breakdown of Bultmann's theology is his existentialism.' And from Basel, Karl Barth's verdict has echoed throughout Europe: 'Thank God, Bultmann doesn't draw the consistent consequences and demythologize God!'

Criticism of Bultmann's theology is increasing. Many scholars observe that while Bultmann scorns all philosophy as culture-bound and transitory, he nonetheless exempts existentialism. In his existential 'third heaven' he claims to have exclusive leverage against the whole field of thought and life. But existentialism is no heaven-born absolute; it is very much a modern philosophical scheme. Any translation of New Testament concepts into existential categories must result in a version no less 'limited'—linguistically and historically—than the biblical theology the existentialists aim to 'purify'. The Bultmannians assume, moreover, that the New Testament writers, since they were especially interested in their subject, must have transformed (and deformed) the historical facts of the Gospels. This premise the existentialists fail to apply to their own special interest in the kerygma. While the Bultmannians rid themselves of the miracle of objective revelation, they seem to endow their subjectivity with a secret objectivity, and abandon the apostolic miracles only to make room for their own.

Signs of a Bultmann-Tillich Merger

The theological scene now reflects increasing prospect of a synthesis of the viewpoints of Bultmann and Tillich. Talk of such a synthesis signifies that neither man's position has fully won a permanent hold, and that disciples of both are seeking exterior reinforcement. Otto Weber of Göttingen has recently noted the growing impact of Tillich's philosophy upon Bultmann's position, because Tillich's thought includes an appealing apologetic element absent from Bultmann's presentation.

Quite understandably, Bultmann would be less than happy over a synthesis. All such mergers of systems are ideological reductions, and they imply that neither of the positions involved is independently adequate. Bultmann still criticises Tillich's view as 'less Christological and more philosophical'; one critic notes that Bultmann promotes independence of all philosophy, *existentialism excepted*. Moreover, Bultmann disowns Tillich's interest in psychology and depth psychology, because of his own distinction of true-being and non-being and his understanding of man on the basis of *Worthaftigkeit*.

Nonetheless, some components are common to both viewpoints, and there are noteworthy similarities between the two scholars. Both have influenced many young intellectuals—divinity students more than scientists. Both are more theological in their sermons than in their systematic theology. Both oppose traditional dogmatics and ontology from the standpoint of critical reason. Both reject any knowledge of God objective to personal decision. In respect to anthropology, moreover, Bultmann says Tillich and he concur. Both scholars have sharply accommodated Christianity to modern philosophy of science. Yet Bultmann professedly seeks a Christological systematics, while Tillich's structure is more obviously that of a religious philosophy.

Bultmann insists on the reality of a personal God who specially confronts all men in the World alone; Tillich, on the other hand, considers personality as applied to the Unconditioned purely symbolic, and finds a special side in all general revelation. Tillich's influence in Europe has thus far been impeded by his lack of emphasis on historical criticism and on the newer exegesis ruling the field. Aspects of his thought, however, are now being reworked by the so-called Pannenberg scholars, who consider history and exegesis within the framework of a revelational concept. Above all else, the trend toward a synthesis of these systems signifies that both European and American liberalism have entered upon a major period of dissatisfaction and transition.

II. THE DETERIORATION OF BARTH'S DEFENCES

Among the many issues raised by contemporary theology, one question is persistent.

Why was the theology of Karl Barth unable to stem the tide of Rudolf Bultmann's theories?

No Continental theologian is disposed to conduct a post-mortem examination of Barth's theology; to do so would be to suggest that its influence were something wholly past. But this is not the case. Emil Brunner regards Barth as Bultmann's greatest present contender, and many others concur that both the Basel theologian and his theology are still 'very much alive'. In French-speaking Switzerland Barthian theology has always held greater sway than Bultmannian theories. And on the German scene, Heidelberg theologian Edmund Schlink thinks Barth's influence is not only far from spent but actually expanding in some quarters.

Nor are European theologians ready to minimise the differences between Barth and Bultmann, differences which have increased markedly with the years. Often, in fact, the divergences are even exaggerated—for example, by assigning more weight than Barth allows to the 'objectifying' elements in his theology, or by imputing to Bultmann a denial of the reality of God in view of his stress on subjectivity. Such distortions aside, the contrariety of their positions cannot be denied. 'A wide gulf', says Erlangen theologian Wilfried D. Joest, 'separates the emphasis that God has *no objective reality* at all, but exists only for me, from the emphasis that concedes that there is *no objective revelation*, yet asserts an objective reality that cannot be objectified by methods of reason and must be won by faith.'

Barth and Bultmann

As the Bultmann school reiterated its belief in the *reality* of God, however, and stressed the necessity of a consistently dialectical theology against Barth's exposition, this 'wide gulf' seemed to disappear. Even the 'Mainz radicals' speak of Barth and Bultmann as representing complementary rather than opposing viewpoints. 'It is not a matter of either/or between Barth and Bultmann', says Manfred Mezger, 'for each theology needs the other as a corrective'. Why so? we might ask. 'So Barth does not forget the *anthropological* relevance of theology', continues Mezger, 'and so Bultmann does not forget the genuine root (revelation) of theology. Barth's basic principle (the absoluteness or

divinity of God) has as its logical consequence that *no* advance reservations are possible for revelation'. Once this is said, the Mainz school is poised to feed the lamb to the lion in the interest of a Bultmannised Barth: 'We emphasize that man does not need to recognize *God first* and then recognize reality, but the recognition of reality is coincidental with the recognition of the reality of God. Barth says, "first the dicta about God, and then the statements about man"; Bultmann says "every dictum about God has to be said simultaneously about man." Barth's principal thesis "God is God" is useless nonsense. God is not absolute in the metaphysical sense but is absolute only in the "geschichtliche" sense of always occurring. We have not seen God and know absolutely nothing about God except what He is saying. *All* dicta of theological origin must and can only be verified anthropologically.'

However much Barth may deplore existentialism, however much he may reinforce the 'objectifying' factors in his theology and appeal to wider and fuller aspects of the biblical witness, his position has remained vulnerable to Bultmannian counterattack. Bultmann was one of the earliest sympathisers with the Barthian revolt against objective historical method, a revolt that Bultmann then carried to a non-Barthian climax by imparting an existential turn to the distinction between the *historisch* as mere objective past occurrence and the *geschichtlich* as revelatory present encounter. In the revision of his *Church Dogmatics*, Barth had sought to divorce dialectical from existential theology; this effort Bultmann fought vigorously. On the premise that Barth expounds the dialectical view uncertainly whereas Bultmann does so comprehensively, the Bultmannian scholars turned the main tide of student conviction away from Barth and towards Bultmann.

'The great effect of Barth's theology', remarks Bultmann, 'was that it destroyed subjectivism. Barth said God is not a symbol of my own religiosity, but He confronts me. In this we agree. And we agree also in the dialectical method in so far as Barth says theological propositions are genuine only if they are not universal truths. But Barth applies the dialectical method inconsistently: many of his propositions are "objectivizing" propositions—and this I have sought to eliminate in my own theology.'

Walter Kreck, Reformed theologian at Bonn, and one of Barth's former students who still regards himself as broadly a Barth disciple, concedes that the differences between Barth and Bultmann have receded further into the background. 'Both Barth and Bultmann reject objective revelation. Barth and Bultmann have dialectical theology in

common, and their main difference lies in Barth's methodological rejection of existential interpretation. Bultmann fears that Barth's method leads to a false objectivity, and insists that his existential exegesis alone prevents this. Barth fears Bultmann's method leads to a false subjectivity, and insists that his emphasis alone preserves the reality of revelation.' 'Yet, for all their differences', Kreck concludes, 'to many scholars the two positions no longer look as far apart as they once did.'

An Inner Connection?

Is there an inherent relationship, a principal continuity, between Barth's theology and Bultmann's? Or is there rather a vacuum in Barth's thought that made his dogmatics vulnerable to Bultmannian counterattack? Why did Barthian theology, which held sway in Germany for half a generation, lose its hold in the face of Bultmannian existentialism? These questions press for an answer. Aside from circumstantial factors—for example, Schlink's indication of political considerations (Barth's influence in Germany was retarded by his failure to oppose Communism as strenuously as he did National Socialism)—what accounts theologially for the fact that Barthianism, which had routed post-Hegelian rationalistic modernism, could not stem the surge toward Bultmann's revival of the old modernism in connection with *existenz*?

Heidelberg theologians suggest two critical areas of weakness. Schlink, for instance, doubts that an inherent principal connection exists between Barth's and Bultmann's formulations. Barth, says Schlink, was 'more systematic than historical, and he did not deal adequately with the historical aspects of Christian faith. After the Second World War, many problems were again raised at this level, and it was apparent that Barth's exposition had not really met them.' Schlink's associate, Peter Brunner, singles out 'the historical facet' also as one of the weaknesses in Barth's theology which Bultmannians were able to exploit. As Brunner sees it, Barth treated too naïvely the question of what historical reasoning can tell us about the facts in which God has revealed himself; indeed, Barth totally suppressed these facts from a purely historical view. Bultmann, on the other hand, took his negative approach seriously, and sought to destroy every effort to find revelation by historical investigation.

Besides Barth's indifference to the historical, exploited by Bultmann, Brunner adduces 'the decision facet' as a second major Barthian weakness. For Barth there is no saving moment in time (the saving moment is an eternal moment). But, observes Peter Brunner, theology must not

overlook the importance of this time-event in which man here-and-now encounters the Word of the Cross. Contrary to Barth, Bultmann stresses the event of encounter with the Word here-and-now. For Barth, the salvation of every man is settled in the eternal election of the man Jesus and the means of grace are significant only for the cognition of salvation, not for the transmission of salvation. Barth and Bultmann agree this far: that without the Living Word of God here-and-now, which is the Word of God for me, one cannot experience the reality of revelation. But when Barth detached the transmission of salvation from the means of grace he opened the door, as Peter Brunner sees it, for Bultmann's wholly existential setting.

Does this mean that the history of twentieth-century theology will reduce Barth and Bultmann to one theological line? The Heidelberg theologians think not.

Some theologians are less reluctant than the Heidelberg theologians to identify an inner principal connection in the Barth-Bultmann formulations. They insist rather that the transition of influence from Barth to Bultmann was inevitable because of presuppositions common to both systems, presuppositions to which Bultmann allowed greater impact than did Barth. 'Theologians of a later century,' says Erlangen theologian Wilfried D. Joest, 'will look back and see one line from Barth to Bultmann, and in this movement they will recognize the same type of theology, despite deep-rooted differences.'

Actually, such assessments are not only a future expectation. Theologians both to Barth's right and to his left are already insisting that certain *a priori* common to Barth and Bultmann explain the sudden fall of Barth's theological leadership, and, in fact, the present predicament of Continental theology. Graduate students in European seminaries increasingly view Bultmann's position as 'an automatic development from Barth's'; and in the few remaining Bultmann centres they picture the dialectical Barth rather than the demythologising Bultmann as the 'fairy tale dogmatician'.

The essential connection between the two theologians is the basic emphasis that God meets us personally in the Word and makes this Word his own. With this relationship in view, Otto Michel, the New Testament scholar at Tübingen, asserts that 'Barth and Bultmann are two parts of one and the same movement of dialectical theology. Barth begins with the Word of God and defines this in relation to human *existenz*. Bultmann inverts this; he begins with man's *existenz* and relates this to *kerygma*.' 'Neither Barth nor Brunner', says Michel, 'gave

earnest weight to historical questions—the origin of certain of the biblical elements and theological content, and their relevance for dogmatic questions. The objectivity in Barth's theology is not an object of historical research. Only by way of philosophical construction does Barth avoid subjectivizing revelation.'

Adolf Köberle, the Tübingen theologian, singles out the Barthian discontinuity between revelation and history as a decisive central point of contact with Bultmann's delineation. Barth's 'prophetic' role, says Köberle, involved him in a broad and bold criticism of modernism in which he too hurriedly brushed aside some of the fundamental and crucial problems of contemporary theology. Regarding this broad prophetic proclamation, Köberle thinks it not impossible that Barth may exercise in dogmatics somewhat the same influence as Billy Graham in evangelism. Barth 'failed fully to engage the historical background of the New Testament, and this failure gave competing scholars an opportunity to correlate the data with contrary conclusions'. Köberle points to Barth's neglect of such questions as the relationship of Christianity and science and of revelation and history, and his indifference to the problem of supposed Hellenistic or late Jewish apocalyptic influence in the New Testament.

Wolfgang Trillhaas, teacher of systematic theology at Göttingen, and former student there of Barth, has broken with his mentor's dogmatics, because 'Barth so oriented his theology to critical questions and to critical reason that Bultmann could snatch away the initiative'.

Trillhaas recognises the differing intentions of the two theologians, and is aware of Barth's efforts to guard his systematics against subjectivising miscarriages of it. Says Trillhaas, 'Both Barth and Bultmann had an interest in the speciality of Christian revelation. But through philosophical speculation Bultmann gave this interest a radically destructive interpretation, whereas Barth has sought increasingly to purge himself from the earlier philosophical influences.' Trillhaas considers Barth's scheme still vulnerable, however, particularly in its severance of revelation from reason.

Barth and Brunner

Among the theologians at Erlangen and Hamburg, Emil Brunner's influence is greater than Barth's. Nonetheless it is Barth more than Brunner who penetrates the mainstream of dialectical controversy. Brunner's illness has hampered his creative and productive effort and removed him from theological engagements; in the aftermath of his

stroke he spends much time indoors. Brunner has become more mellow over his differences with Barth, and with a twinkle he comments to visiting students: 'I'm a Barthian. I always have been.' But he nonetheless considers certain facets of Barth's system unnecessarily weak. Among his favourite anecdotes is that of the lady theologian who embraced him warmly and said: 'Barth saved me from liberalism, and you saved me from Barth.'

The strength of Brunner's theology has always rested in its recognition of general revelation. Its weakness, along with Barth's, centres in the dialectical presuppositions that relate revelation only tenuously with history and reason. In his revision of *Truth as Encounter*, which now appears under the title *Theology Beyond Barth and Bultmann* (Westminster Press, 1964), Brunner stresses that Christianity must be more than merely negative toward philosophy. While he calls for a Christian philosophy, he does not modify his dialectical approach to revelation and reason. His philosophical treatment of the idea of truth as encounter still excludes revealed propositions and a revealed world-life view.

Brunner's theology also lost ground as he strengthened its basic personalistic philosophy. This reinforcement gave his thought an individualistic touch that—so Wenzel Lohff of Hamburg thinks—prevented Brunner 'from fully appropriating the dimensions of the newer Christological and ecclesiological thought'. Yet because of its clarity, Brunner's work remains useful among lay theologians. Theologian Anders Nygren of Lund notes that Brunner indeed freed the Christian doctrine of God of Platonic and neo-Platonic speculation. In doing so, however, he attached it instead, says Nygren, to 'an I-thou philosophy and a kind of philosophical actualism' which represents still another compromise 'between a philosophical thinking and the revelation' (in *The Theology of Emil Brunner*, Charles W. Kegley, ed., New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962, p. 183). In any event, Bultmannian theologians exploited Brunner's emphasis on the divine-human encounter for their own contrary objectives, and Brunner's affliction left him a less formidable foe than Barth.

In Europe's present theological turmoil, Brunner anticipates 'a little return' to his own theology which 'held the line between Barth and Bultmann' for a time. 'The best option is my own', he insists. But Brunner seems to under-estimate the difficulty of regaining a strategic position on the fast-changing frontier of European thought, particularly when a theology that has served for a season and has lost its hold no longer commands the centre of debate.

Pro-Barthian theologians are sobered by the fact that the already bypassed options will hardly enjoy more than a limited revival. Neither Barth nor Bultmann is likely to dominate the European theological situation again. Some scholars are now asking if the deterioration of Barthian defences under Bultmannian assault, and the subsequent collapse of Bultmannian positions, perhaps portends a radical reconstruction of Continental theology.

Barth registered his most comprehensive Christological emphasis immediately after World War II. But in deducing theological positions from Christological analogies, he tended to overlook empirical reality. This weakness also characterised his approach to ethical problems and to critical historical investigation. While many scholars felt it necessary, therefore, to go beyond Barth's compromised historical interest, they were forced nevertheless to keep in touch with Barth because of his active participation in the theological controversy. At the age of seventy-eight, however, the ailments of declining years turn Barth's thoughts more often to 'the tent that is beginning to be dissolved', as he puts it. While he continues his monthly student colloquiums in the upstairs room of Restaurant Bruderholz near his home, Barth's creative work has begun to lag, and he feels unsure about completing his *Church Dogmatics*.

Busily but cautiously Barth has been modifying his theology in the direction of objectivity in order to escape Bultmannian expropriation. 'Barth has become almost a Protestant scholastic again', chuckles Gerhard Friedrich, the Erlangen New Testament scholar; 'more and more he leans on the historical rather than the existential.' But the feeling is widespread that the revisions in Barth's theology are 'too little and too late'. The moving frontier of theological debate is shifting beyond the Barth-Bultmann discussion in a manner that brings some of their common *a priori*s under fire. This means that the revisions in Barth's theology have lagged too long to have any direct impact upon main line Continental theology.

The New Frontiers

The formative theology of the foreseeable future is not likely to be Barth's, Brunner's, or Bultmann's, but rather an alternative to all three.

The *Heilsgeschichte* school is calling for a fuller correlation of revelation and history. The traditional conservative scholars have long attacked dialectical theology in even wider dimensions. And a revolt against dialectical theology has been under way among several followers

of Wolfhard Pannenberg of Mainz, a former student of Barth. In his bold insistence on objective historical revelation, Pannenberg represents the farthest contemporary break from Barth and Bultmann and the dialectical theology.

Says Pannenberg: 'Barth and Bultmann both insist on the kerygmatical character of the Christian faith and tradition, and both assign the Christian faith (kerygma) independence over against the truth of science and philosophy. Both Barth and Bultmann refuse to bring Christian tradition in relation to the realm of objective knowledge.' In spite of his 'apparent objectivism', protests Pannenberg, 'the later Barth remains a disciple of Herrmann, as is Bultmann.' And, he adds, 'Bultmann is the most faithful exponent of the dialectical theology—more so than Barth.'

As Pannenberg sees it, the dialectical theology undermines both historical revelation and the universal validity of Christian truth. He insists that 'if one really takes history in earnest, he will find that God has revealed himself *in history*'. He maintains the necessity of knowing something about the historical facts on which Christian faith depends. Moreover, he strikes at the dialectical theology's disjunction of revelation and reason, and at its consequent refusal to relate Christianity to the realm of objective knowledge.

III. REVELATION IN HISTORY

The long failure of German theology to reject the existential-dialectical notion that the historical aspects of the Christian revelation are dispensable gave to Continental dogmatics something of the atmosphere of an exclusive private club. Membership was restricted mainly to scholars who shared the speculative dogma that spiritual truth cannot be unified with historical and scientific truth. They therefore emphasised the kerygmatic Christ at the expense of the Jesus of history, isolated Christianity from answerability to scientific and historical inquiry, and detached theology from philosophic truth.

Meanwhile British and American theologians and exegetes—whether conservative or liberal and despite sharp differences over the rôle and outcome of historical criticism—retained a lively interest in historical concerns. Most Anglo-Saxon biblical scholars still repose bold confidence in the historical method. They view the Gospels somewhat as historical source documents, carry forward the research effort to reconstruct the life of Jesus, stress the kerygma connection with

specifically historical factors, and assume generally the concrete historical character of divine revelation.

The current renewal of European interest in biblical history and its bearing on divine revelation encourages many scholars to hope that for the first time theologians and exegetes in America, Britain, and Europe as well may at long last join in theological conversation. Since British and American scholars currently hold a considerable head start in their commitment to historical concerns, some observers feel that non-Europeans could in fact wrest away the theological initiative long held by the German professors.

Most of today's unrest in Bultmannian circles results from the present sprawling interest in historical questions. Some pro-Bultmannian scholars, of course, still invoke radical historical criticism in support of existentialist exegesis; Conzelmann, for example, insists that the bare fact of Jesus' historical existence is the only datum that can be historically fixed. Even the post-Bultmannian 'new quest' for the historical Jesus reflects a continuing loyalty to Ritschl's and Herrmann's subordination of the knowledge of God to faith and trust, so that its historical interest does not lead to evangelical results. But many post-Bultmannians at least share Fuchs' emphasis that 'the historical Jesus of the nineteenth century was not really the historical Jesus, but [that] the Jesus of the New Testament, the Jesus of revelation, is'. Bultmann's kerygmatic Christology closed the door in principle to any movement behind the kerygma to the historical Jesus. At the same time, he nowhere explains why, on his premises, any continuity whatever is necessary between the *historical cross* and the *preached cross* of the kerygma; nor why, since he insists on this limited continuity, other historical aspects embraced by the kerygma must be excluded.

Yet what sets off post-Bultmannian interest in the historical Jesus from that of the *Heilsgeschichte* scholars is its refusal to regard the historical Jesus as decisive for faith, and also its emphasis that faith requires no historical supports. The salvation-history scholars, by contrast, investigate the revelation-significance of God's acts in history.

Some post-Bultmannians, it is true, take a position at the very edge of *Heilsgeschichte* concerns. Günther Bornkamm, for example, argues that the *Heilsgeschichte* concept cannot be renounced but must be redefined. 'Faith must be interested in history', says Bornkamm, 'because the name of Jesus in our confession is not a mere word but an historical person.' Yet he centres historical interest in the content of Jesus' preaching. He rejects antithesising history and experience, and stresses that while

revelation does not (as he sees it) take place in 'history itself', it does occur in the encounter 'which belongs to history'. Unlike *Heilsgeschichte* scholars, who locate the meaning of history in sacred history, Bornkamm insists that the essence of history is still to be decided. 'We are ourselves part of the drama of history and salvation-history. The meaning of history is not given as a *Heilsgeschichte* drama or series of past events of which we are spectators, and to which we need only relate ourselves to accept the divine gift.'

Bornkamm complains, moreover, that Ernst Käsemann's view of the relevance of Jewish apocalyptic for Christian faith is contestable. Käsemann, who presses the question of the meaning of certain acts of God for Christian proclamation, stresses over against Bultmann that the real centre of primitive Christian proclamation was not the believing subject but rather the interpretation of the eschatological teaching with its anticipation of final fulfilment. The New Testament message, he says, is the proclamation of an apocalyptic event.

Historical Revelation

Heilsgeschichte positions differ from post-Bultmannian perspectives in emphasising that the saving deeds of God supply a ground of faith: Christian faith is faith not only in the kerygmatic Christ but also in the historical Jesus. All *Heilsgeschichte* scholars insist on an integral connection between the saving deeds of God and Christian faith.

Not all members of the salvation-history movement today speak unreservedly of historical revelation, and none would go the distance of the old Erlangen *Heilsgeschichte* school. Their approach sometimes does not transcend an application to New Testament studies of Gerhard von Rad's positions in Old Testament study. Von Rad rejects the old Erlangen view of history as a process whose inner meaning can be demonstrated, and his emphasis on the Old Testament as a collection of confessional traditions of salvation-history leaves the historical and confessional factors unsurely related. He does not regard Jesus' life and work as a direct fulfilment of particular Old Testament prophecies and promises; rather, with the contemporary *Heilsgeschichte* school, he views Jesus as fulfilling the general Old Testament picture only in the broad sense of archetype and type. All *Heilsgeschichte* scholars reject the bare *Religionsgeschichte* view that Jesus incarnates the universal spirit or idea; they look instead in the direction of Von Rad's emphasis that the Old Testament must be interpreted (independently of all developments of non-biblical religion) as the history of God which was fulfilled in

Jesus Christ; and that the New Testament must be interpreted (independently of all religious developments in the old world) as the fulfilment of the Old Testament.

While a mildly conservative New Testament scholar like Goppelt of Hamburg is congenial to these positions, some conservative scholars view the *Heilsgeschichte* wing as little else than a more positive movement of the critical school. The problem is dramatised by the fact that many *Heilsgeschichte* scholars, for all their larger emphasis on biblical history, still hesitate to regard the meaning of salvation as objectively given and accessible. Instead, they continue to speak of religious experience or decision as a fulcrum of revelation. Although he insists that the Old Testament is strictly a *Heilsgeschichte* process, Goppelt refuses to hold that divine revelation is given in history, and retains a dialectical perspective despite differences with Bultmann and Barth. Invoking the Lutheran formula of 'in, with, and under', he asserts that it is too much to say that the Word is revealed in history.

For the sake of clarity we shall compare the viewpoints of the *Heilsgeschichte* scholars and of the traditional conservative scholars. Both schools agree that divine revelation and redemption are objective historical realities. They both admit that the sacred biblical events, like all past happenings, are not accessible to empirical observation, although from written sources these events are knowable to historians by the same methods of research used in the study of secular history.

What, then, of the meaning of the biblical events? Surely even the immediate observers, whether Pharisees or apostles, could not have learned this by mere observation. The spiritual meaning of these sacred events is divinely given, not humanly postulated. Here again *Heilsgeschichte* and conservative scholars agree.

But how is this divine meaning of sacred history given to faith? Conservative scholars insist that the historian need not shift to some mystical ground or suprarational existential experience to discern it. For the New Testament documents as they testify to divine deed-revelation give or *are* themselves divine truth-revelation; that is to say, the divinely given interpretation of the saving events is contained within the authoritative record of the events themselves. Or to put it another way, the divine saving events include, as a climax, the divine communication of the meaning of those events, objectively given in the inspired Scriptures. While nobody can infer the meaning of the biblical events from empirical observation or historical inquiry, the doctrines of Christianity are accessible to the historian in the form of the New

Testament verbal revelation of God's acts and purposes. Historical investigation deals with the scriptural documents that record the historical disclosure of God's suprahistorical redemptive plan. When conservative scholars assert that God's revelation in history is not found by scientific research but is given to faith, they mean that the Holy Spirit illumines the minds of men to accept the scriptural revelation of the meaning of the events of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. That the truth of apostolic interpretation is grasped only by faith and our acceptance of Scripture is a work of the Holy Spirit is a constant evangelical emphasis.

The *Heilsgeschichte* scholars compromise the conservative view because of their prior critical rejection of the historic Christian understanding of revelation in terms of the infallible divine communication of propositional truths. Their emphasis falls instead upon individual spiritual encounter not only as the focal point of illumination but as the focal point of the revelation of divine meaning. While they insist that revelation is objectively given in historical events, they suspend the knowability of the meaning of that revelation upon subjective decision and isolate it from divine truths and doctrines objectively and authoritatively given in the inspired Scriptures.

A Case in Point

Werner Georg Kümmel of Marburg, a spokesman for the salvation-history school, insists that divine revelation 'exists only in response', although his exposition of this perspective includes many conservative facets.

'Revelation is given not only in history but even in historical events and the interpretations connected with these events. Historical critical research is therefore indispensable for faith that wants to know about the events and the interpretation connected with them. But research can find out only the events or the reflex of the events (e.g. of the resurrection of Christ) and the claim of the participants to interpret these events in the way God wants. Whether this claim is correct, research cannot find out, but only faith. So we never *find* revelation in history by scientific research. But we can clarify and make clear that their claim and our faith attached to this claim are founded in an event that really gives the sufficient ground for this faith. So faith does not depend on historic research but needs it as soon as faith begins to reflect on itself, for faith does not only need the certainty of the event-basis but also the good conscience of not being built in the air.'

As Kümmel sees it, by historical research one finds in Scripture both the sacred events and the meaning adduced as the kerygma connected with those events. But, he insists, the unbeliever cannot disallow 'the *factuality* of the events and the *factuality* of the interpretation given them by the apostolic witnesses, (whereas) the validity of these interpretations is grasped only by personal response in faith'—in response, moreover, that must be a '*reasoned* response'. Apart from his disjunction of fact from meaning (and not simply of objective event from subjective appropriation), it should be clear that Kümmel struggles to elevate the meaning of saving history above a theology of decision. Yet he balks at an objectively-given scriptural interpretation which is to be appropriated, as in the conservative tradition, as authoritative propositional information. For Kümmel distinguishes proclamation from information and, moreover, subjects the scriptural meaning of salvation-history to possibilities of critical revision. In view of his appeal to 'the character of faith as response to a proclamation and not to an information', and of his consequent insistence that the believer 'cannot simply repeat what has been said by others, but must try to understand and, perhaps, to reformulate or to criticise the aptness of the apostolic interpretations', one must ask Kümmel what post-apostolic criteria and what non-historical ways of knowing are available for this task. Surely we cannot object to the need for understanding (what Paul said), rather than mere unintelligible repetition; but what is it to criticise Paul's interpretation? Does this mean that we can amend or replace the scriptural interpretation with one of our own? That may not reduce to a 'theology of decision', but it does imply the acceptance of a norm inconsistent with and independent of Scripture. By distinguishing proclamation from information, moreover, Kümmel seems to imply that proclamation contains no information, hence is not true as an account of what happened.

The predicament of the *Heilsgeschichte* scholars, therefore, lies in regarding history as an avenue of divine disclosure but suspending the meaning of that revelation upon subjective factors. If Bultmann was content to connect Old and New Testaments in decision (and even then viewed the former only in terms of negative antithesis), while *Heilsgeschichte* scholars insist on connecting them historically, the contemporary salvation-history school nonetheless compromises objective historical revelation in a manner that suspends its meaning upon personal response. The intelligibility of revelation remains a matter of private decision. The dilemma confronting this salvation-history

compromise is reflected by Nils Ahstrup Dahl of Oslo: 'I don't want to say that all religious affirmations are only subjective emotive affirmations, but I find it hard to state the alternative without surrendering what I want to preserve—the right of historical research to establish truth.'

This bifurcation of divine revelation into a deed-revelation in history and a meaning-revelation in experience has propelled the problem of history to new prominence. In fact, the debate over the definition and meaning of history has become so technical that few scholars any longer feel wholly at home in it. In barest terms, history involves these questions: What relation if any exists between event and meaning? Does one method grasp both event and meaning? Are there bare events as such or only interpretations of historical process? What relation exists between Christological faith and historical fact?

Heinrich Ott, Barth's successor in Basel, contends that no historical facts whatever exist. Significance is an integral and constitutive element of all historical reality. Reality impresses itself upon us in the form of pictures which we interpret, and from which we abstract 'facts'. Hence history, he says, is always of the nature of encounter: all reality merges factual, interpretive, and mythical elements. 'God's seeing'—his purpose and goal in historical events—is said to exclude a purely subjective notion of history, and thereby limits the danger of relativism. But because we stand within history, argues Ott, we can never transfer ourselves to God's standpoint. It is through the Spirit's inner testimony that 'the knowledge of faith' assures us of having rightly understood the Christ-event.

Instead of detaching historical investigation from the philosophical presuppositions of twentieth-century dialectical-existentialist theory as well as from nineteenth-century naturalism, some recent scholarship stresses an existential relation to history in which historical continuity yields to 'personal-ontological continuity'. Hardly surprising, therefore, is Ott's acknowledgement that 'the mystery of historical reality, its ambiguity and depth' are more likely to multiply the historian's esteem and awe than to reward with striking results the axioms on which historical research is presently conducted.

Many graduate students find the current climate of conflicting exegetical claims so confusing that they are tempted to identify the 'assured results' of historical research simply with 'what most scholars (now) think'. The definition of history remains so much in debate that more radical students think of history only in terms of historical documents plus the imagination of historians.

Oscar Cullmann views salvation-history as a revelatory activity in which God's plan is unfolded. His Basel colleague Karl Barth absorbed history into the decrees of God and emptied it of revelation-content by locating justification in creation and by viewing all men as elect in the man-Jesus. For Cullmann, the options are not so predetermined as to nullify revelation and decision in history, although Cullmann objectionably puts time in the nature of God as the means of preserving a genuine distinction between what has happened and what will happen. The concrete historical character of divine disclosure is a controlling emphasis of Cullmann's thought. God acts in the contingent temporal sphere, and divine revelation takes place in 'sacred history'; at the centre of this line of time, which reaches from creation to consummation, stands Jesus of Nazareth, as the absolute revelation of God. There can be no *Heilsgeschichte* without Christology, and no Christology without a *Heilsgeschichte* that unfolds in time, Cullmann contends. While he emphasises Jesus' work more than his person, Cullmann insists that one can assuredly possess authentic Christian faith only if one believes the historical fact that Jesus regarded himself as Messiah—a complete inversion of Bultmann at this point. Thus Cullmann views the history of salvation as the locus of divine revelation, anchors revelation in the dimension of historically verifiable facts, and assigns to historical knowledge a relevance for faith that is more in keeping with historical evangelical theology.

Many *Heilsgeschichte* scholars push Cullmann outside their circle, however, because—like more traditionally conservative men such as Jeremias and Michel—he speaks of Jesus' messianic self-consciousness (a predication equally distasteful to the post-Bultmannians, Eduard Schweizer excepted). Cullmann's critics complain that his historical critical investigation is dominated by theological presupposition—from which they presumably are scot-free in achieving contrary exegetical results!

The *Heilsgeschichte* emphasis on historical revelation represents a development that moves beyond both Bultmann and Barth and that is as distasteful to one as to the other. Barth avoids the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, preferring to speak instead of 'the *Geschichte Jesu Christi*', of that which 'happens and continues to happen'. The tendency of both post-Bultmannian and *Heilsgeschichte* scholars to resurrect the search for the historic Jesus he considers a mistake that regrettably 'returns to the way of the nineteenth century'. 'It marks a retreat from the New Testament witness', contends Barth, 'to something behind the witness

and existing independently of it.' 'I don't like the term "*Historie*" [knowledge of what has happened]', protests Barth, and 'much prefer "*Geschichte*" [something that happens].' Barth's view of the rôle of historical investigation in relation to faith remains so negative that historical research, as he sees it, not only may lead to a false construction but 'must yield a Jesus not identical with the Christ of the New Testament'. Nonetheless New Testament scholars are increasingly pursuing exegetical and historical studies and are letting the dialectical theologians paddle for themselves.

Yet the *Heilsgeschichte* emphasis on historical revelation surrenders on the one side what it gains on the other in so far as it suspends the meaning of that revelation on spiritual decision rather than deriving it from an authoritative Scripture through historical investigation. Some *Heilsgeschichte* scholars view the truth of revelation not as universally accessible and valid for all men but, in agreement with Barth and Bultmann, as existing only for some persons in and through a miracle of grace. Thus the meaning of revelation is presumably carried not by saving history or the biblical interpretation but by spiritual decision.

Precisely at this point the young but growing Pannenberg school insists on historical revelation in a larger sense that incorporates additional elements of an evangelical theology. In his *Offenbarung als Geschichte*, a recently translated work, Pannenberg sees the denial of the objectivity of revelation as a threat to the very reality of revelation. Contrary to Barth's contentment with 'objectifying' elements in dogmatics, he insists upon the objectivity of divine revelation. Pannenberg vigorously opposes the way in which the dialectical theology relates revelation and its meaning to truth and history alike. He deplores the Barth-Brunner legerdemain with the problem of revelation and history—as when Brunner says that the kerygma which brings forth faith includes history 'but not in the isolation which the historian demands'. It distresses him that whenever the dialectical theologians run into a historical problem they rise above it by appealing evasively to the self-communication of God.

Although he reasserts objective historical revelation, Pannenberg does not preserve the traditional distinction between general and special revelation. What has happened in time, he says, is God's revelation as such, but what has happened in Jesus Christ is the real clue to the totality of happenings. Barth criticises this approach, contending that no such 'general revelation' exists, but only a particular revelation of God's doing. Pannenberg holds that everyone stands in some relation to God

and therefore has a general knowledge of God; but this knowledge he refuses to call revelation. Revelation he defines as the self-disclosure of God in the end-time (because at the end of his deeds) as realised prophetically in Jesus. In defining revelation as history, Pannenberg holds we must regain an original 'eschatological understanding'. On this basis he criticises Cullmann's view of Christ at the middle of the time line of saving history, and holds instead that Christ is the end of history as fulfilment. Yet this end is at once always present and also future. Whereas Bultmann connects the Old and New Testaments in existential decision and *Heilsgeschichte* scholars connect them historically, Pannenberg relates them apocalyptically. Some *Heilsgeschichte* scholars protest that Pannenberg's main interest is *Universalsgeschichte*, or universal history, rather than salvation-history; but Pannenberg's correlation of divine disclosure with special revelation means that he, like Barth, views all divine revelation as saving. In fact, Pannenberg assertedly seeks to carry out the basic intentions of his former teacher, intentions that he thinks Barth weakened by his dialectical concessions.

Radical Transcendence

The main significance of the Pannenberg plea for objective historical revelation is its open recognition that unsatisfactory formulations of the transcendence of God and of the relation between eternity and time have dominated European theology since Kierkegaard. It is noteworthy that in Kierkegaard's homeland the Copenhagen theologian N. H. Söe (who thinks S. K.'s influence is here to stay) criticises Kierkegaard's time-eternity disjunction as being objectionably philosophical. Kierkegaard, says Söe, finds his concept of time in Greek rather than in Palestinian motifs. Like Cullmann, Söe views time as created by God and made therefore to receive God's revelation. But Söe does not on that account view divine revelation as objectively given in history, because with Kierkegaard and Barth he understands revelation in terms of singularity and as existing for man in any given moment only as an act of grace. At this point Söe's thought mirrors S. K.'s *Postscript*. Despite theological perpetuations of Kierkegaard's views, Kierkegaard now is little followed by European philosophers. And even among Danish theologians his positions are brought under increasing criticisms. K. E. Lögstrup of Aarhus assails especially Kierkegaard's individualistic emphasis and self-centred approach to the teaching of Christian love.

Anders Nygren of Lund, whom Gustaf Wingren groups with Barth and Bultmann in *Theology in Conflict* (1958) because of his inversion of

Gospel and Law, is nonetheless a stern critic of Barth's extreme disjunctions of eternity and time. 'We must be done', he says, 'with the docetic notions of revelation so popular in our generation'. Barth found his point of departure in Plato and Kierkegaard, remarks Nygren, and he was 'right in drawing the consequences, that we cannot truly speak of God' once eternity and time are over-separated this way. 'But', counters Nygren, 'on the basis of God's image in man, now shattered, and especially of the incarnation, we may indeed speak of God.' Over against Barth, Nygren speaks of God's continuing revelation in nature, history, and conscience.

Helmut Thielicke of Hamburg assails Barth and Bultmann's radical disjunction of eternity and time from another angle. Their approach, he says, left the Church impotent to provide a social ethics. 'The Barth-Bultmann theology was unable to stimulate the ethical concern of the Church, the latter because Bultmann places everything within the individual, the former because Barth so idealizes Christ that even *Heilsgeschichte* gets lost in a "supernatural *Heilsgeschichte*". Hence Barth must superimpose the New Testament imperative and indicative upon his dialectical formulation.' Although Barth was a strong opponent of the Third Reich, the effect of his theology, Thielicke contends, 'was to call the Church to think of itself while the world was left to itself. No Christian criterion was given to the world whereby the world could judge itself. As a consequence, both the self-certainty of the Church and the self-certainty of secularism increased.' Unlike Barth, Thielicke insists upon general revelation. Although man is 'subjectively closed to the revelation', an ethical possibility exists different from Barth's projection—though not without its own difficulties. Thielicke asserts that the kerygma-theologians 'forget that the objects of theology are the actions of God—and that involves history'.

The Historical Jesus

Thus far rationalistic and irrationalistic liberalism alike have failed to discover the authentic historical Jesus. Both Bultmann and Barth deplore the historical critical method as leading necessarily to a false Christ. There is growing suspicion that not the facts about revelation and history and faith but prior dialectical-existentialist assumptions arbitrarily dictate this verdict.

Those who insist upon the importance of the Jesus of history as decisive for Christian faith now follow two main avenues—one illustrated by Ethelbert Stauffer, the retired Erlangen New Testament

scholar, and the other by the Uppsala New Testament exegetes Birger Gerhardsson and Harald Riesenfeld. Stauffer proceeds on the nineteenth-century notion of a fundamental break between Jesus and the primitive Church. 'I see only one way to find an objective basis for our Christian thought and life: the question of the historic Jesus', says Stauffer. 'The historical Jesus in the Bible is my canon.' And the starting point of this truly historical Jesus he identifies infallibly with 'those few hundred words' where the Evangelists give us what is a scandal to them or to the early Church. 'There they record what belongs to the historical Jesus.' While Stauffer insists that 'the word, the work, and the way of Jesus are crucial', the Swedish scholars assail the presuppositions underlying his historical study. 'A valid methodology', protests Riesenfeld, 'will recognise the continuity between Jesus and the primitive Church.' Nor are the Uppsala exegetes impressed by a second assumption that Stauffer shares with Hans Conzelmann, namely, that anything found in Judaism is not to be ascribed to Jesus. That is simply the myth of the total originality of Jesus, whereas Jesus is not without a point of contact in Judaism.

Riesenfeld and Gerhardsson boldly criticise one crucial presupposition of the *Formgeschichte* of Dibelius and Bultmann. In a climate of mounting criticism of Bultmann's methodology, now also joined by Roman Catholic writers (most significantly Heinz Schürmann of Erfurt, Germany), they call for a new approach that treats historical questions earnestly. Riesenfeld and Gerhardsson dispute the Bultmannian notion that one can immediately elucidate the formulation of New Testament material by applying the form-critical method. While they grant that every Gospel *pericope* has its life situation in the history of the primitive Church, they reject the inference that the *pericope* has therefore been *created* by the primitive Church. They concede further that the content has been changed and modified by the primitive Church, but they insist nonetheless that a real tradition originating with Jesus himself is included. What the Uppsala scholars demand, therefore, is a methodology aware of the firmness of this tradition.

'The Bultmannian theology is a twin sister of the form-critical view of the origin of the Gospel tradition', notes Gerhardsson. 'The two presuppose one another. But I don't find that the *a priori* scepticism, which determines the form-critical programme, is historically justified. I am trying to find a method of exploring—by way of purely historical research—the way in which the Gospel tradition was transmitted—technically speaking—in the early Church. Historical research cannot

solve theological problems—in any case not all of them—but it can help theology by way of providing some firm points and basic values. And the unwarranted *a priori* scepticism of the form-critics can hardly serve as a basis for a realistic theology.'

IV. A SPECTRE IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

A question that New Testament critics can no longer evade haunts European theology today. In Hugh Anderson's words, it is this: 'What bearing or relevance for Christian faith or theology has historical knowledge that is gained from historico-scientific research?' (*Jesus and Christians Origins*, Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 93).

Ever since John the Baptist's clarion call, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world', the relation of the historical Jesus to the preached Christ has been of vital concern. In the nineteenth century, naturalistic historicism rejected the apostolic Christ as a speculative invention and professed to discover an original non-miraculous Jesus. In the twentieth century, naturalistic scientism, reflected in the imaginative religious mood of Bultmann, commended the 'apostolically proclaimed Christ' but dismissed the life, deeds, and words of Jesus of Nazareth as irrelevant to Christian faith. Whereas the old rationalistic liberalism championed the historical Jesus at the expense of the 'kerygmatic Christ', its dialectical-existential successor championed the 'kerygmatic Christ' to the neglect of the historical Jesus. The 'witness of faith' thus replaced interest in the 'facts of history'; existential experience rather than objective history became the pivot of divine revelation.

At first the new theology's description of revelation in wholly transcendent categories, independent of historical correlation, was welcomed. It seemed a necessary corrective to rationalistic liberalism's derivation of Christian realities from the socio-cultural environment. But theological neglect of the historical foundation of Christian belief proved costly. Preserving only an oblique reference to the bare fact of Jesus' life and crucifixion, Bultmann's existentialism ran the risk of dissolving the Christian kerygma into a Christ-myth and the Gospel into a speculative theory of existence. In defining faith as a frontier moment of repeated existential decision, Bultmann rejected the evangelical view that Jesus of Nazareth is the ground of Christian faith. And Barth, despite his tardy repudiation of existentialism and his firmer connection of kerygma with divine deeds, by distinguishing *Geschichte* from *Historie* obscured Christianity's historical foundations also. For Barth

and Bultmann alike, historical exegesis is no valid avenue of knowledge concerning Jesus Christ but a faithless clinging to this-worldly props.

But the debate over the significance of the historical Jesus for Christian theology has now become a central issue in contemporary theology. By suppressing historical interest in Jesus Christ, the kerygmatic theology encouraged a Docetic Christology; that is to say, it tended to reduce the Christ's presence in history to a phantom appearance. While the kerygmatic repetition that Christ is Lord held sole importance, the historical facets of the life and ministry of Jesus became irrelevant.

Present-day Christian theology can be rescued from this costly development only by a full rehabilitation of the historical realities of the Gospel. Because biblical Christianity demands an open interest in the historical Jesus, both post-Barthian and post-Bultmannian scholars now insistently raise the question of the connection or unity of the historical Jesus with the kerygmatic Christ, and the link between the teaching of Jesus and the apostolic proclamation. In their 'new quest' for the historical Jesus, Bultmann's successors struggle to establish the continuity of the kerygma with the mission and message of Jesus of Nazareth. But their use of lingering existential categories such as 'the immediacy of Jesus for me' and 'encounter with the selfhood of Jesus' precludes a definitive contribution to a historical investigation of the relation between the historic Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ. The 'new questers' know that to dehistoricise the kerygma is theologically illegitimate. But their assertion that historical aspects of the life and work of Jesus are inseparably related to the Christ of faith hangs in mid-air. Even some of the critics who advance beyond the Marburg mythology and the post-Bultmann reconstructions as well do no justice to the realities of historical revelation.

Is it really true, as Hugh Anderson would have us believe, that Christ's incarnation, resurrection, and ascension are events 'concerning which the historian *qua* historian can really say nothing, save that a number of people came to hold belief in these things at a certain time in the course of human history' (*ibid.*, p. 60)? Did the evangelists suppress their instinct for historical reality when they testified to these great events? That historical science cannot fully plumb the realities of the biblical kerygma is no reason for succumbing to negative historical criticism, or for demeaning what historical investigation can establish. To be sure, the historico-scientific method of research about Jesus cannot fully explain the psychological processes by which he was recognised as the Christ; faith-response is not open to historical study.

Nor does the historical fact of the empty tomb of itself give assurance of a Risen Lord. But the sensitive historian is not so bound to an intra-worldly nexus of causes and effects that he must ascribe New Testament realities to subjective factors at the great cost of discrediting competent eyewitnesses.

Anderson endorses Bultmann's call to rid the apostolic message of 'the false scandal of the obsolete mythological world view, ideas and language, in which it has been clothed in the New Testament' (p. 53). He insists that 'the Bible's language about God, the world, and history is permeated with mythological traits', so that 'there is no escape from the task of demythologizing' (p. 75). He ignores the contributions of conservative scholars like Machen and Warfield to the history-and-faith controversy, while he disparages the 'uncritical evangelicals' (p. 76) and speaks of biblical authoritarianism as uncritical (p. 78). He approves the liberal theology taught in American Protestant seminaries by Bushnell, Clarke, and Brown as 'deeply evangelical' (p. 62). He prizes the socio-historical method above a strictly historical approach to the New Testament (p. 70) because it stresses historical-human factors in the reception and interpretation of revelation and the kerygma (p. 75).

The merit of Anderson's book lies in its full reflection of influential theological currents, in its recognition of the crucial importance of the history-faith problem for contemporary Christianity, in its analysis of certain weaknesses of existential exegesis, and in its awareness of significant recent biblical studies by New Testament scholars. But at the central point of commentary on faith-history tensions, Anderson fails to provide either an adequate solution or a clear alternative. Despite emphasis on the importance of history for the kerygma, he reduces that history to relative importance and, in fact, leaves its range and character in doubt. Indeed, he limits the role of the historical method. The historian, he says, 'may constantly protect the Church's theology from relapsing into a historical speculation . . . ; he can preserve . . . the truth that our faith and our religion are rooted and grounded in a particular history and person and life; he can . . . throw some light on how Jesus' contemporaries understood him and even, to some extent, on how he may have wished to be understood' (p. 316). But if the historian cannot, as Anderson insists he cannot, grant legitimacy to any historical grounding of faith; if he cannot authenticate any sure words or deeds of Jesus; if the records upon which he depends transform the basic historical facts of the life of Jesus; and if, moreover, faith is wholly dependent upon encounter by the Risen Christ, as Anderson also con-

tends—then the historian's inquiry is foredoomed to irrelevance. The modern theological road often follows many welcome detours around peril-fraught landscapes. Anderson steers a non-Bultmannian course for a large part of his journey. But his observance of historical markers is hurried, and he is mainly concerned with the vision of the kerygmatic Christ. In the last analysis, Bultmann's existentialism still remains the shortest route between Spirit-faith and historical scepticism.

V. REVELATION AS TRUTH

Metaphysical perspectives have faded from the modern scientific and democratic community. An absolute authority and an objective revelation are difficult to understand and even harder to accept. How are we to cope with this predicament? By accepting secularisation? By 'demythologizing' the Gospel and changing theology into anthropocentric *Existenzverständnis*? Or shall we retain traditional terms like revelation but redefine them speculatively?

No! replies Uppsala professor Birger Gerhardsson. Instead, he insists, we must confront the present crisis by probing these two fundamental questions in a new way: (1) What is *revelation*? (Does it or does it not contain certain 'facts' and 'information' which, if altered, change truth into a lie?) (2) What is *divine authority*? (Does faith involve a measure of belief in authority and specifically in *divine* authority?)

This connection of divine deed and divine information in the Swedish scholar's discussion of revelation puts a finger on the second basic issue in contemporary theology—namely, the character of revelation as truth and not simply as act.

That divine disclosure occurs in history and not merely as personal confrontation or as subjective stirring on the fringe of history is increasingly emphasised over against existential and dialectical viewpoints. Conservative scholars like Adolf Köberle stress that Christianity rests on historical revelation and that God's saving disclosure is given objectively in special historical events: 'In the New Testament', says Köberle, 'the great deeds of God are proclaimed like news: "The battle is finished; the victory is won; the trespasses are forgiven." Then the reader is called to appropriate this subjectively and and to realize this good news for himself. But everything hangs in mid-air if the divine events have not already taken place.' So the Tübingen professor insists that in order to progress beyond its present dilemma, European theology must again recognise that *what God has done and*

said is fully as important as *what God is doing and saying*; the former is, in fact, the presupposition of the latter.

This inclusion of God's *Word* in the discussion of historical revelation, and the refusal to confine it to God's *Work* or *Act*, focuses attention on the crucial question of revealed truth, which once again has become a subject of theological concern.

From Word to Deed

Admittedly, the breakdown of the dialectical *Wort*-theology has encouraged a readjustment of the understanding of revelation to other categories than God's *Word*. Gerhard Friedrich of Erlangen, revision editor of Kittel's famous *Wörterbuch*, thinks that theologians in the near future will emphasise that 'Jesus is Lord' more than that 'God speaks'. As he sees it, the Church must now locate the centre of Scripture in the message that 'Jesus is Lord of the world'. Likewise, Ethelbert Stauffer thinks Barth too narrowly understood revelation as the *Word* of God.

To emphasise deed-revelation brings in some respects a wholesome corrective to the dialectical severance of revelation from history. Edmund Schlink of Heidelberg contends that, with its historical ingredient modified and strengthened, 'the *Wort*-theology has a future'.

But in other respects the *Wort*-theology represents a peak of disillusionment at the end of an era Karl Barth inaugurated with his hopeful invitation to hear the Word of God anew. As a matter of fact, the widening shift of European emphasis from *Word* to *Deed* or *Act*, in defining revelation, diminishes the intelligibility of revelation.

Although Barth's dialectical formulation precluded identifying events or concepts as revelatory, it is noteworthy that his 'objectifying' additives bolstered the emphasis on revelation as truth more than the emphasis on revelation as history. In contrast with the earlier hesitation to speak of revelation in concepts and propositions, Barth today refuses to say that revelation contains no communication of information about God. Now that some European theologians are moving away from a theology of 'the Word of God' toward a theology merely of 'the Deed of God', Barth stresses that God's acts are not mute, and that any disjunction of Deed and Word would be 'deeply nihilistic'. 'What would revelation mean', he asks, 'if it were not an information whose goal is to be universally recognized, although not everyone recognizes it as such?'

Barth sees no hope in any movement away from a *Word*-theology and deplores any such development as futile. 'The Word of God is the Word that is spoken by Him *in and with* His action. Act and Word belong

together. God's revelation is not one of mute acts, but an Act which in itself was a Word to humanity. Any theology that disjoins God's mighty Acts from His spoken Word will ultimately prove destructive of the Christian idea of revelation itself.'

Revelation and Truth

In his early writings Barth ruled out all statements about essential divine being on the ground of God's inconceivability. The argument was blunt: non-dialectical propositions belong to speculative metaphysics; theological ontology involves the illicit objectification of God, who is unknowable and unthinkable. But in later writings Barth affirms that God is an object of knowledge: God's revelation in Christ provides a basis for genuine ontological statements. In *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* (1931), widely regarded as a bridge between the two editions of his *Church Dogmatics*, Barth depicts faith as a call to cognitive understanding. Assuredly the 1932 revision of his *Dogmatics* reflects many passages in the earlier mood: we can know only God's acts, not his essence as such (I/I, p. 426). Yet in revelation we are given 'a true' knowing of the essence of God' (I/I, p. 427), a 'real knowledge of God' (I/I, p. 180), a knowledge in terms of human cognition (I/I, p. 181). True faith includes the actuality of cognition of God (I/I, p. 261).

Yet even in the revision of his *Dogmatics* Barth's movement from critical to positive theology is hesitant and halting. He places greater emphasis upon analogy than upon dialectic. And he still disowns conceptual knowledge of God. While 'the logico-grammatical configuration of meaning' is present both to belief and to unbelief, the religious reality is present only to belief. Theological theses are so inadequate to their object, he contends, that no identity can be affirmed between the propositional form and its object. Theological propositions are finally 'adequate' to their object only on the basis of an internal miracle of divine grace; theological predications about God do not constitute universally valid truths independent of personal decision. The correspondence and congruity of our ideas with the religious reality involves no epistemological identity between God's knowledge of himself and our knowledge of him. All human words are 'confounded by the hiddenness of God . . . and . . . in their repetition in another man's mouth they are not exempt from the crisis of the hiddenness of God' (I/I, p. 195).

For all his attempts to strengthen the connection between revelation and truth, Barth's position is, therefore, still widely criticised in

European theological circles. The criticism is aimed not only at Barth's rejection of general revelation—although that is often in view—but also at his concessions to Kantian speculation about the limits of reason, and at his suspension of Christian truth upon private response.

The Loss of General Revelation

Contrary to Barth's definition of all divine revelation as saving, the insistence on general revelation found expression in many theological centres in Europe. Brunner at Zurich, Althaus at Erlangen, Thielicke at Hamburg, and Scandinavian scholars as well were among those who opposed the Barthian formulation. (It is noteworthy that Pannenberg of Mainz stops short of a commitment to general revelation. Although he insists that everyone has a general knowledge of God, he does not equate this with revelation; moreover, like Barth, he holds that all divine revelation is saving.)

Over against Barth, Anders Nygren speaks of continuing divine revelation in nature, history, and conscience. He does not, however, approve natural theology, in line with the distinction that Brunner has impressed upon three decades of contemporary European theology. Nygren sees man as standing always in some relation to God on the basis of rational, moral, spiritual, and aesthetic *a priori* factors. Nygren's theological successor at Lund, Gustaf Wingren, also insists on both general and special revelation. He holds, too, that while the revelation of forgiveness (the Gospel) became known through the sending of Christ into the world and the apostolic proclamation, the revelation of wrath (the Law) is found in human life itself, independently of preaching, and that general revelation ends in the law. Contrary to Nygren, Wingren departs from Barth's formulation by preserving the traditional sequence of Creation and Law, Gospel and Church.

But the critique of Barth's doctrine of religious knowledge does not end with the reaffirmation of general revelation. Wolfgang Trillhaas, a former student of Barth now teaching theology at Göttingen, protests that Barth so oriented theology to critical questions and to critical reason that Bultmann could readily seize the initiative. But in working out his objection to Barth's separation of revelation and reason, Trillhaas does not preserve revelation in the objective form of concepts that are valid for all men irrespective of subjective decision.

Barth himself has struggled with this problem of concepts adequate to the expression of spiritual truths. The route by which he proposes to escape agnosticism while preserving a dialectical 'yes-and-no' is to

many theologians both complicated and unconvincing. The dialectical theologians disparage any revived emphasis on conceptual revelation as a kind of resurrected Hegelianism. Nonetheless, the doctrine that divine revelation is given in historical events, concepts, and words belongs to mainstream Christianity; a pre-Hegelian emphasis, it has in fact been held also by ardent anti-Hegelians. Yet it is true that many post-Hegelian scholars infected this emphasis with a doctrine of radical divine immanence that violates a scriptural view of revelation. But now, in the aftermath of the equally radical doctrine of divine transcendence sponsored by the dialectical theologians, the interest in conceptual revelation is once again being explored.

The Significance of Reason

Nygren realises that the significance of reason is at stake in the modern controversy over revelation. 'Reason is one of God's gifts to us', he remarks, 'and He wills that we should use it for understanding the things in this world and for understanding Him.' He disallows the dialectical premise that divine revelation is never given objectively in historical deeds, concepts, and words; instead he holds to a normative revelation given objectively in precisely this manner, but supremely in Jesus Christ. 'God is revealed in material things and in history, and He is specially revealed in biblical history and biblical concepts and words.' Hence Nygren views history and concepts not merely as sign-posts to revelation but as the bearers of revelation. When God speaks, he speaks 'in human words—and not in the twisted vocabulary of the dialectical-existential theologians'. His critics, Nygren adds, with an eye on the dialectical theologians particularly, cannot argue that his view implies God's retirement, for the Spirit still 'takes the revelation of God and makes it our own'.

Nygren wishes, however, to avoid a 'rationalistic misunderstanding' of his view and to preserve man's dependence on revelation. Curiously enough, he seeks these ends by backing away from the full adequacy of concepts for divine revelation, and deliberately stops short of the widely held evangelical view that identifies revelation in terms of propositions. 'The words of the Bible are revelation, but not as propositions', he says. But this negation troubles him, and so Nygren compromises it: 'We cannot press this distinction with reference to Jesus; what He says is revelation. Jesus of Nazareth is revelation. God is once for all revealed in the prophetic-apostolic revelation, and especially in Jesus Christ.' Yet Nygren contends that even God's revelation in Christ

cannot be fully captured in concepts, 'not because it is inherently irrational—for it is rational indeed—but because it is too big to be captured'.

The Uppsala exegetes Riesenfeld and Gerhardsson also insist on the objectivity of revelation. They move, too, beyond the *Heilsgeschichte* emphasis on deed-revelation to divine revelation in concepts and words as well as in action, and beyond this to divine revelation in Christ's words as well as in his person. They stress a special divine inspiration in the prophetic-apostolic writings and in the Church's collection of the Canon.

While certain European theologians are now concerned about the significance of reason in Christian experience and about the truth-content of Christian revelation, Wolfhardt Pannenberg of Mainz is zealously formulating the case for the universal validity of revealed truth. Some Continental thinkers tend to downgrade 'the Pannenberg school'. Gerhard Friedrich of Erlangen refers to it as 'five or six young theologians who set Hegel's philosophy over against Heidegger's, but they are already past their peak'. Pannenberg is rather widely characterised as 'Hegelian'—a favourite device by which many dialectical thinkers now stigmatise theologians who insist on the essential congruity of revelation and reason. The Mainz theologian rejects the label, albeit somewhat ambiguously: 'I am not an Hegelian. But Hegel has been greatly misunderstood—and there is a kind of "classical dialectic" of Hegel's to which I can be related.' 'If we must speak of dialectic, then Hegel's is most to be respected', says Pannenberg. Bultmann views the Pannenberg movement seriously. And while he deplores any theology that does not emphasise revelation as act in contrast to revelation as objective fact, he calls Pannenberg 'very gifted and clever'.

Universal Validity of Revelation

Pannenberg's criticism of dialectical theology—be it Barth's, Brunner's, or Bultmann's—goes far beyond an insistence on objective, historical revelation. He does not, it should be said, return fully to the emphasis of historic evangelical Christianity concerning divine revelation given objectively in concepts and words, nor does he identify the whole Bible with revelation. Revelation, for Pannenberg, is objective in the form of historical events, but not in concepts; while revelation does take the form of thought, he holds it does not do so authoritatively in the special form of concepts supernaturally given once for all, as in old

Protestant theology. The Christian tradition is always in development, he contends, because revelation is given 'in deeds or acts that remain to be explained'.

But as opposed to the whole 'theology of the Word' movement, Pannenberg insists that revelation carries a truth-claim for all men and is universally valid. He criticises Barth, despite Barth's theological self-correction in the area of religious epistemology, because Barth maintains that in the final analysis the truth of Christianity enters into the hearts of Christians only by a miracle of grace. All the objectifying factors in Barth's more recent dogmatics notwithstanding, Barth remains with Bultmann 'a disciple of Herrmann', says Pannenberg; in other words, he subordinates the rational knowledge of God to trust. But if faith is in the first instance obedience, laments the Mainz scholar, there can be no reason for faith, nor any place for addressing questions.

'The Christian truth is the one truth for all men', Pannenberg stresses in refuting the dialectical notion that the truth of revelation becomes truth only for individuals by personal appropriation. 'There are not two kinds of truth—one covering the arena of modern life and thought, and the other that of Christian faith and life and thought.'

Thus Pannenberg goes also beyond the theological milieu at Heidelberg, where he was offered but declined the chair of philosophy of religion. In revelation, both Edmund Schlink and Peter Brunner find a truth-claim of universal validity wholly apart from subjective decision. Brunner contends, however, that this truth-claim is mediated not through the historical revelation but through the means of grace. And, while he avoids Barth's terminology, Peter Brunner nevertheless bridges to the Barthian dialectic: 'God revealed Himself in the historical Jesus, but you cannot *prove* that He did. You cannot demonstrate revelation as a fact to one to whom revelation is not revealed. Insofar as Barth emphasizes that you cannot handle revelation as you would a loaf of bread, his position has an element of truth.'

The predicament of Continental theology must be located in its unsatisfactory juxtaposition of objectivity-subjectivity, of *Historie* and *Geschichte*. But even scholars who think the objective element in revelation needs more stress than Barth assigns it often seem to yield essential terrain to the dialectical school.

With respect to revelation and reason, for example, Wilfried Joest of Erlangen insists that Christian concepts are not to be reduced simply to our own ideas about God but must include an element of universal truth, and hence constitute truth for everyman. Yet Joest emphasises

the imperfection of human concepts, wants no part of a fundamentalist view of 'inspired Scriptures', and holds that God remains incognito and cannot be theoretically proved outside the phenomenon of revelation and response. He concedes there must be an existential interpretation of Christianity but of a non-Bultmannian sort, one that is 'both modern and yet more congruent with the Church tradition'.

The Dutch theologian G. C. Berkouwer, of the Free University, Amsterdam, asserts that 'of course men can know Christ as Pilate knew Him, and Christian truth can be intellectually cognized'. But it is 'neither understood nor fulfilled in its real purpose apart from an act of grace'. At the same time, Berkouwer thinks it unwise to reinstate the old objectivity-subjectivity antithesis and fears Pannenberg's approach may lead to a revival of natural theology. "The theological scene is now characterized by a lack of definition. What is meant by "objectivity"? Surely Christian faith does not have its origin in our subjectivity. But the old objectivity-subjectivity antithesis is transcended by the fact that the Christian revelation is always "directed" and "kerygmatic". God's communication always has a special purpose. We must reject the demythological facet of recent theology, but not the direction of the kerygma.'

Truth Is Truth for All

In Lund, Anders Nygren forthrightly rejects the prevalent dialectical notion that, while the meaning of the Christian message can be universally known, its 'real meaning' can be grasped only by believers. "There are not two senses of "meaning" ", he says. "The truth of the Christian message can be understood without personal faith. If that were not the case, all discussion with unbelievers would be impossible. As a Christian I am convinced that Christ is the Truth. He could not be the Truth, however, if He were not the Truth for all men. The truth of Christianity is universally valid for all men in all times and in all places irrespective of personal faith.'

Barth, for all his effort to strengthen the adequacy of concepts for divine revelation, still insists that this adequacy exists only on the basis of recurring miracle. Revelation is 'for all', he emphasises, 'but not all may catch it. The Word of God is understood only by the power of the Spirit'.

Otto Weber of Göttingen, an able expounder of Barth's views, has sought to rise above the position that Christian truth exists only for the believer through grace. Divine revelation is true for the believer and also

for the Church, says Weber, and *therefore* for all men. Weber complains that Barth did not connect revelation and reason 'strongly enough' and insists that the dialectical theology must be developed in the direction of a more satisfactory relation between revelation and reason. Weber's larger interest is in a Christian ontology: 'We cannot have theology without ontology', he asserts.

So, over against Barth, Weber contends that if revelation is indeed true, it is true for all men. 'Revelation is for all but not in all and saving for all', he stresses. Does he therefore intend that the truth of revelation is given in an objective structure similar to mathematical propositions and thus valid for all men? Here Weber hedges and keeps one foot in the dialectical camp. 'No man can know revelation as truth until he becomes a Christian', he holds. 'Revelation is true for me as a Christian and for the Church and *therefore* for all', he continues. Theological theses are objective only because God in himself and in his revelation is 'open in Christ' toward man, and is willing to communicate. In other words, Weber rejects the thesis that truth is truth for the Christian because it is universally true, and substitutes the thesis that truth is truth for all men because it is true for the Christian and the Church. Pannenberg, however, counters with the assertion that divine revelation is true for all men, and *therefore* true for the Christian and the Church.

So dawns the end of an era in which Ritschl held that the validity of religious judgments can be known only through an act of the will, in which Troeltsch found himself unable to assert the universality of the Christian religion, and in which both Barth and Bultmann failed to vindicate the universal validity of Christian revelation apart from a miracle of personal grace or an act of subjective decision. But if the deepest truth of God is found in Jesus Christ, if the contention is to be credited that Christianity is a religion for all nations, bringing men everywhere under judgment and offering salvation of import to the whole human race, then it is imperative that the Christian religion reassert its reasoned claim to universality.

Salvation-History and its Meaning

Theological debate on the Continent is now especially intense between those who contend that God's redemptive revelation is historical in character and those who dismiss salvation-history as myth. The debate is marked by many compromises and inconsistencies. While a dialectical theologian like Barth deplores the vagaries of Bultmann's existentialism, his own strongly asserted 'objectifying elements' remain

inaccessible to objective reason and historical research. Brunner also disdains Bultmann's reduction of the New Testament miracles to myth; yet he himself rejects the Virgin Birth as mythology, depicting it as 'the crucial negative idea' and contending that whoever insists on it is bound to 'go wrong'.

Advancing beyond the dialectical consignment of revelation to the mere margin of history, the *Heilsgeschichte* scholars emphasise historical revelation by locating divine disclosure in the very time-line of sacred events. So Oscar Cullmann, for example, wholly rejects the reduction to myth of any link in this temporal sequence of salvation-history. Cullmann nonetheless retains the notion of myth, applying it to events beyond the time-line both past and future—events that cannot be investigated by historical method. Such are the Adam story and the events of eschatology, Old Testament and New.

Thus we come upon a curious disjunction in Cullmann's thought. While he describes such events not as actually historical but rather as myth, he concedes that the biblical writers regarded them as historical (as Christ's descent from Adam, and so forth) and therefore placed them on the same level with events on the time-line. As the biblical writers 'tried to demythologize' (in Cullmann's view) in a way that extended the historical into the non-historical past and future, so Cullmann aims also to illumine such past and future 'myths' through Christ as the mid-point of salvation-history. But Cullmann has not really reconciled this supposed misjudgment of historical realities by the biblical writers (and presumably by Jesus of Nazareth also) with the high view he elsewhere insists upon—that sacred history and its biblical interpretation are both rooted in divine revelation.

In his latest work, *Heil als Geschichte*, Cullmann lifts the contemporary European discussion of revelation as history and revelation as truth to new and significant dimensions. He notes the 'meshing of historical fact and interpretation' in Old and New Testaments and recognises the reality of revelation both in 'the event as such and in its interpretation'. In the theological controversy over history and kerygma, Cullmann emphasises a series of vital points—particularly the following: that the New Testament itself relates salvation-history to eyewitness and thus places it in a truly historical setting; that New Testament revelation not only carries forward and enlarges but also reinterprets the earlier scriptural interpretation in connection with this new saving history; that in New Testament times the revelation of new events and meanings is compressed into a much shorter time-span than in the Old Testament

era, and that these divine realities now centre in one person; that the New Testament reinterpretation is linked to a dual history of salvation—on the one hand to the Old Testament kerygma, on the other to the great central event along with Jesus' own kerygma about it; that the meaning of events after Jesus' death was disclosed to the apostles simultaneously with those events, not subsequently or progressively, as when they were eyewitnesses of his works; that while as eyewitnesses they saw and heard yet lacked full understanding, the later complete revelation reinterprets the kerygma so that they *remember* what Jesus himself had told them, and that this along with the eyewitnessing is of greatest importance in designating Jesus as the originator of the reinterpretation of the kerygma.

VI. CONTROLLING PRESUPPOSITIONS

Chiefly responsible for the tension in contemporary European theology is the speculative notion that divine revelation is never communicated *objectively*—neither in historical occurrences nor in intelligible propositions—but is always *subjectively* received through submissive response.

This assumption contradicts the historic Christian concept that divine revelation is objective intelligible disclosure. The classic Christian view, moreover, states that divine revelation is addressed by the Logos to mankind generally through nature, history, and conscience, and is mediated more particularly through the sacred history and Scriptures, which find their redemptive climax in Jesus of Nazareth. On this basis—of the accessibility of a trustworthy knowledge of the Living God and of his purpose in creation and redemption—historic Christianity emphasises the possibility of personal salvation through experiential appropriation of the truth of God and of his provision for sinners. While the Holy Spirit is indeed the sole source of regenerate life and the illuminator of sinful man's darkened mind, and while faith alone is the instrument of salvation, the ground of faith—so evangelical Christianity insists—is a historical revelation and redemption; moreover, the Spirit uses God's objectively revealed truth to persuade unregenerate sinners to appropriate for themselves the saving truth and work of Christ. In a word, then, the historic Christian Church has understood divine revelation to be an intelligible, objectively given disclosure, whether that revelation be universal (in nature, history, and conscience) or special (in the redemptive deeds and declarations of the Bible).

This objectivity of divine revelation, respecting both its historical character and its universal validity, is expressly repudiated by the dialectical and existential movements in contemporary theology. In fact, the traditional 'intellectualistic' view of divine revelation is deplored as a 'doctrinaire' and 'rationalistic' perversion of Christianity. It is ascribed to a misunderstanding of the nature of faith, which presumably is independent of a historical basis and of belief in truths about God. Not some past divine activity in the stream of objective history, nor information mediated to and through chosen bearers of God's disclosure, but rather present divine confrontation and personal response, an event here-and-now, becomes the crucial carrier of divine revelation. For more than a generation this emphasis on revelation in present-day divine-human confrontation has been the dominant theme of Continental theology, even to the extent of refashioning the doctrine of faith itself.

Much that this approach sought to correct in the many reductions of biblical Christianity needed rectification. Medieval, modern, and recent modern philosophy had all left scars upon the Christian outlook. The lamentable result was evident both in the medieval scholastic and in the neo-Protestant readiness to expound Christianity in the speculative categories of secular philosophy. It was seen, too, in the Hegelian reduction of reality to an immanentistic process in which the Absolute could be viewed only as More, but never as Other, so that man's mind was exalted as part of God's mind. Other weaknesses were the modernists' loss of an authoritative Word of God in the plurality of pontifical pronouncements by their influential philosophers of religion, and the prevalent notion even in Continental Protestant churches that salvation is simply a matter of adequate catechetical instruction in Christian doctrine. Moreover, certain conservative theologians, who quite properly emphasised the propositional character of divine revelation, tended to project a schematic theology that neglected the progressive historical character of biblical disclosure. And there were those fringe fundamentalist writers who were obsessed with discovering in Scripture minute and intricate predictions of a scientific and eschatological nature. Many aspects of the theological situation might therefore have encouraged a bold, new presentation of the nature and content of divine revelation.

Nonetheless, one could have discredited and eliminated departures from apostolic Christianity without at the same time rejecting and repudiating the objectivity of divine revelation and its intelligible or universally valid propositional form. But the newer anti-intellectualistic

theory of divine disclosure not only opposed certain lamentable compromises that had become current in Protestant Christianity but also proceeded to correct them by an equally egregious error. It opposed not only modern misunderstandings but also a supposed 'misunderstanding' of revelation itself that virtually spanned the entire Christian era. The late Cambridge theologian J. M. Creed may have deplored the fact, but the historical actuality remains: 'Had any Christian of any Church between the end of the second century and the closing decades of the eighteenth been asked a question as to the content of the Christian religion, his answer could scarcely have failed to be to the general effect that the truths of the Christian religion were contained and conveyed in the inspired books of holy Scripture . . .' (*The Divinity of Jesus Christ*, Cambridge University Press, 1938, p. 105). In fact, this confidence in the supernatural and infallible divine communication of propositional truths is characteristic also of the New Testament writers, so that the supposed 'misunderstanding' of revelation existed even in apostolic times within the dimensions of biblical Christianity. If the new anti-intellectual theory truly reflects the character of revelation, one would have to contend that the 'misunderstanding' permeates almost every portion of the holy Scriptures! The divinely chosen prophets and apostles, and Jesus of Nazareth too, view divine revelation in terms of revealed information about God and his purposes. If this is intellectualistic perversion, then not only a 'doctrinaire' view of revelation but Jesus himself and the apostles themselves must be disowned.

The dialectical and existential *redefinition* of divine revelation—for such it is—clearly reflects the influence of recent philosophical currents. Thus it cannot be explained simply as a corrective reaction to recent compromises of the Christian revelation.

Contributing to this novel reformulation of revelation were numerous speculative trends. Kant emphasised that the concepts of human reason cannot grasp metaphysical realities and maintained that affirmations about the spiritual order therefore lack universal validity. Schleiermacher insisted that God communicates himself but not truths about himself. Lessing believed that no historical event can communicate absolute meaning. Darwin taught that reflective reason is a relatively late emergent in the evolutionary process. Kierkegaard stressed the disjunction of the temporal and the eternal as being so radical that only a leap of naked faith can bridge it. Bergson declared that conceptual reasoning imposes an artificial structure upon reality, whose rationally incomprehensible dimensions must be grasped

intuitively. There was also Ebner's emphasis that God confronts persons only as Subject, never as Object. And Heidegger held that reality must be existentially experienced rather than conceptually grasped. In one way or another, these currents undermined confidence in the ontological significance of reason, in the rationality and objectivity of divine revelation, and in the role of cognition in religious experience.

So many and so great are the differences among the dialectical and existential theologians of our generation, that should any effort be made to combine them into a single formula, one might expect an immediate disclaimer from almost all quarters. When one notes the divisions between Barth and Bultmann, for example, and Barth's increasing inclusion through the years of more and more 'objectifying' elements to escape an existentialised 'Gospel', it might seem inaccurate indeed to view the whole dialectical-existential development as a theological monstrosity that rejects objective revelation.

But a simple test will justify classifying both the dialectical and the existential schemes in this way. However much a theology stresses 'objectifying' elements, the determinative question is whether or not it views divine revelation as objectively given in historical events and in intelligible concepts and words. While the dialectical-existential theologians differ from one another at many secondary levels, they all agree in respect to this ruling notion of the non-objectivity of divine revelation. Whether the so-called Pannenberg school projects a wholly adequate alternative may be open to serious debate; but its spokesman, Wolfhard Pannenberg of Mainz, at least recognises the fatal flaw in contemporary *Wort*-theology—namely, its denial of the objectivity of divine revelation and of the validity of that revelation for all men irrespective of subjective decision. A former student of Barth, the Mainz theologian considers Barth's theology, for all its 'objectifying' reinforcements, unable to escape Bultmann's existentialist critique because Barth does not insist upon the objective character of divine revelation.

VII. WHICH WAY FOR THEOLOGY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

'We are "on the way" in a time of great concern with crucial problems. But we do not have final answers, and I am unsure what is at the end of this theological road. Truth is our task but it is not so much our possession.' So Günther Bornkamm, the Heidelberg New Testament scholar, describes the prospect for contemporary European theology and its predicament.

The role of theology in the near future is wholly unclear. Some observers wonder what trend in dogmatics will replace the dialectical theology. Others ask whether German theology may not already have forfeited its opportunity to influence post-war European thought.

The Place of the Bible

Inscribed on many pulpits in Germany is the message, *Gottes Wort bleibt ewig* (God's Word stands forever). But the place of the Bible in the thought and life of these churches is often far less certain. Since, as Emil Brunner once remarked with unerring instinct, 'The fate of the Bible is the fate of Christianity', one may rightly inquire about the Bible's status in European theology.

According to Professor Otto Michel of Tübingen, 'The Bible remains the *theme* of preaching for modern theology, but it is no longer the *authority* for life and thought. Among the people generally its content is rather well-known, but it is not honoured as the divine rule of faith and practice. So Germany today lacks a chart for life. It unites with other nations, but cannot supply spiritual direction for itself or for them as long as the Bible is unrecognized as the dress for the body of the Word of God.

And as far as theological students preparing for the ministry are concerned, observes Norbert Rückert, professor of studies in Nürnberg's Melancthon Gymnasium, 'the Bible is read mainly as a textbook, and all too seldom as a source of faith and devotion'.

In moving from the student to the professional level in Europe, one soon discovers the source of this dominantly 'academic' interest in the Bible. Even Bible commentaries tend to be more linguistic than theological, and theologians seem to select and reject their texts at will.

If, moreover, the Bible no longer ranks as an unqualified norm among most European theologians, what has replaced it?

'The norm', insists Edmund Schlink of Heidelberg, 'must remain the whole canon under the middlepoint of the Scriptures: whatever points to Christ and the Gospel.'

Gerhard Friedrich, revision editor of Kittel's *Wörterbuch*, disagrees. 'The norm of Christianity is not the canon', he says. 'Not all parts of the New Testament have the same value. Nor is it [the norm] even the centre or heart of the Bible—or as Luther put it, what proclaims Jesus. It is rather [and Friedrich concedes this is time-determined] what at the time in which we live leads to man's salvation.'

'The norm for me. . . .' This formula now serves to introduce not

simply two, or two dozen, but a vast variety of 'norms' set up by European theologians today. In fact, as many 'norms' exist today as European theologians espouse for their own purposes and systems. From the ecumenical creeds to historic confessions to modern credos; from 'the Absolute confronting me' to 'what strikes me absolutely'; from the 'Word of God' to (some of) the words of Jesus or of Scripture—the range of determinative 'norms' is both striking and staggering. On any one seminary campus students usually sample but a part of this doctrinal smorgasbord; because they are free to select one or another of the proffered 'norms' or even to postpone their choices, they do not experience the full discomfort and danger of such theological fare. No assessment of the present situation can hide the fact that today's multiplicity of 'norms' on the seminary scene simply evidences the absence of any one authoritative standard. Aware of this awkward competition of options, European theologians no longer confidently confess what *the norm is* but rather what '*the norm is for me*'.

Immediately after the *Wort*-theology had dethroned classic liberalism, the impression gained currency that Europe was enjoying a major theological revival. Yet it is more accurate to say that many philosophers and scientists, and most lay church members, too, have found the thinking of the theologians enigmatic, and therefore have remained quite indifferent to the theological scene.

The Next Turn?

Protestant theologians on the Continent differ about whether theology should seek to be descriptive or normative. And if normative, should theology be individualistic, confessional, or ecumenical in character?

The abundance of individualistic theologies advanced by influential thinkers during the past two centuries of confessionalistic decline has encouraged two reactions: on the one hand, a movement toward *descriptive theology* (history of dogma), which rejects any aspiration to be normative; and on the other, *ecumenical theology* (whatever that may prove to be), which, it is hoped, may supply compass-bearings in the future.

Contrasted with German and Swiss theologians, who intend their theological systems (whether confessional or speculative) to be accepted as normative, Swedish theologians have quite abandoned such an ideal. Not even Gustaf Aulén (now eighty-five years old) and Anders Nygren (seventy-four on 15 November) champion normative theology,

although they are often so represented in view of even more extreme Swedish reaction toward non-normative dogmatics. Nygren, it is true, holds to normative revelation, but not to normative theology. 'There are revealed truths', he says, 'but not a revealed system of truths'. For him, biblical theology is the effort to grasp revelation in the form of a science. 'Theology is a systematic reconstruction of revelation. There can be no genuine theology which is other than biblical—only a bad philosophy of religion. But theology is not normative; if it tries to become so, it loses its character.'

A much deeper conflict characterises the current theological scene in Sweden, however, than that posed by Nygren's distinction between scientific and normative theology. At Lund younger theologians like Per Erik Perrson and Hampus Lyttkens, who, together with the Uppsala theologians, confine their interest to descriptive theology, do so on the ground that the Bible is inconsistent and therefore cannot be normative. Lyttkens's plea for scientific theology involves also a concession to the analytic philosophy now regnant in Swedish universities, which contends that no objective propositions about God can be formulated and that religious propositions must be verified in experience. From the perspective of this analytical philosophy the differences between Barth and Bultmann are wholly inconsequential and mainly of historical interest.

On the other hand, Gustaf Wingren of Lund, although rejecting normative theology, nevertheless insists on the biblical character of a specific theology. For this reason Nygren says that 'Wingren is more normative than I'. But Wingren asserts, 'The fact of Christian preaching says the Bible is normative, and modern preaching can be criticized and judged from this point of view.' It is clear, therefore, that Wingren too does not believe that any one theology ought ideally to become everybody's theology. When asked how revelation ought to be defined, he gives a descriptive reply: 'Revelation *in the Bible* is defined as. . . .'

Swedish theologians always place the discussion of contemporary theology in the context of the history of doctrine, and especially that of Luther-research. While their exposition of systematic theology is still presented in a way German theologians neglect and reject, it is not offered as normative—as are the theological schemes of Barth, Brunner, or Bultmann. 'In Sweden the question is no longer whether a scholar stands theologically on the right or on the left', says Lyttkens (who stands considerably to the left), 'but whether he is a competent research scholar.'

Although theologians in Sweden have lost heart for normative theology, the New Testament exegetes at Uppsala are more cautious. Says Harald Riesenfeld, 'We do not think it worthwhile to be normative at present because the theological situation in Sweden is such that no normative theology would be accepted. But we must be prepared for a new perspective; things will change in another ten or twenty years. We are inclined to think normatively because ultimately we must face the problem of truth in biblical revelation and theology.'

A Challenge from Norway

Norwegian theologians, however, openly challenge the prevalent Swedish assumption that theology cannot be both scientific and normative. They view the emphasis on descriptive theology or history of doctrine not simply as a Swedish tradition, which it is, but also as the by-product of the analytic philosophy dominating the universities. In Oslo, Nils Ahlstrup Dahl, New Testament professor in the Church of Norway's State Faculty of Theology, remarks that whenever the self-professed descriptive theologians preach in the churches, they forsake their detachment from normative theology. He believes that normative theology is more prominent in preaching than in dogmatic systems, which must wait for light on many problems. But Dahl's colleague, theologian Reidar Hauge, argues that dogmatics embraces more truth than sermons can, since sermons by nature cannot raise or settle many intricate questions. Norwegian theology, he stresses, is both normative and descriptive.

The Church of Norway's Free Faculty, which is more confessionalistic and less ecumenical than the State Faculty, insists even more strenuously on normative theology. 'True theology must be normative', says systematics professor Leiv Aalen of the Free Faculty. 'The Church in its proclamation of the Gospel must have the truth of Christ, and that will accord with the Scripture and the confessions of the Church.' For Aalen the Lutheran confessional writings in the Book of Concord supply an ideal starting point in this direction. Hauge has criticised Aalen for elevating the confessions above Scripture, but Aalen denies the charge and insists that the confessions simply 'protect Scripture against misunderstanding'.

The abandonment of the ideal of normative theology must be traced in part to a reaction against the tide of speculative theologies; claiming to be normative, each has deluged Continental Protestantism with the influence of modern European philosophy. But this reaction against

speculative theology may lead in other directions as well, such as toward a plea for a genuinely normative, authoritatively based theology. The real alternative to Bultmann's theology, contends Riesenfeld, must be 'a theology authorized by the churches, a traditional Christian theology, and not the private speculations of some theologian'.

The traditional conservative scholars plead for a theology whose authoritative basis is not so much established by the churches as recognised to be genuinely scriptural by the churches. Yet the loss of the biblical norm leads instead toward substitution of an ecclesiastical norm. As a result the promotion of a normative theology now tends towards two directions, one confessional and the other ecumenical.

Ideally, of course, Christian theology ought to be both ecumenical and confessional in the best sense of those terms. But at present Christendom is fragmented denominationally by competing confessions, and it is ecumenically committed in a context of inclusive theology that embraces confessional, counter-confessional, and anti-confessional elements. While member churches of the World Council of Churches have approved an elemental theological 'basis', this basis serves neither as a test of doctrine nor as a deterrent to heresy.

Some Scandinavian theologians, however, feel that the Church dare not content itself with purely descriptive theological work but must crown such research with theology of a normative nature; they wistfully look to the ecumenical movement to lead the way creatively in such a development. Even those scholars who want no part of a normative theology—adrift as they are from confessional Lutheranism—are moving beyond Luther-research into new areas of dogmatic study under the aegis of their descriptive interest in history of doctrine. In Lund, Per Erik Perrson displays a growing interest in Greek Orthodox theology, and Hampus Lyttkens in Roman Catholic theology. Harald Riesenfeld of Uppsala, on the other hand, thinks the World Council might lead the way to a return to normative theology over against the subjectivistic theological speculation now rampant in Europe.

Because of the breakdown of contemporary Protestant theology, theologians in the old-line denominations are increasingly disposed to look to the ecumenical dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches to heal the present dogmatic ailments. Heidelberg theologian Peter Brunner believes such conversations may force a new exploration of Scripture and tradition, dogma, and other themes now overshadowed by the Bultmannian preoccupation with hermeneutics. And Edmund Schlink, who represented his church as a Vatican Council

observer, predicts that through the ecumenical dialogue with Eastern Orthodoxy and Rome 'new constellations will appear' to revive the themes of the Trinity, Christology, and liturgy. In the 'far future' he envisions a new ecumenical theology for Christendom built on a Christological foundation; he himself is busy writing a two-volume ecumenical dogmatics. These men, Schlink and Brunner, are more ecumenical and less confessionalistic in their theological writings than are many conservative Lutheran dogmaticians, such as Walter Künneth of Erlangen and Ernest Kinder of Münster.

Ecumenical Prospects

The ecumenical development to date has been more hospitable to theological openness and inclusivism than to definitive dogmatics. Much ecumenical effort is based on a tolerance of wide theological differences, even upon a pragmatic impatience with theological priorities. On the Protestant side of the ecumenical movement there is little manifest indignation over alternative and competitive views. Churchmen hostile to historic Christian positions and committed to views that even the ecumenical creeds would exclude as heretical are not only defended but welcomed as divine gifts to the Church. Seminaries most energetically engaged in the ecumenical development tend to become exhibition centres for a great variety of theological viewpoints rather than bearers of an authoritatively given message.

Whether a movement that advances organisationally through theological inclusivism can also become theologically exclusive remains to be seen.

Theologian Leiv Aalen of the Church of Norway's Free Faculty is not hostile to ecumenical dialogue. Yet because of its scanty achievements to date, he does not think it will serve to reunite the churches on the basis of scriptural truth and recovery of biblical theology.

'A new estimation of Luther is necessarily emerging in Roman Catholic circles', Aalen comments, 'but Rome is still more interested in involving Luther in her own system than in allowing him to oppose it in the name of Scripture. Is Rome really as much concerned about taking the Reformation seriously as about stretching its own point of view over new territory?'

Will the ecumenical direction of theology, one might ask, mean the loss of the Protestant character of the seminaries?

Schlink of Heidelberg thinks not. He feels, instead, that it will mean more serious preoccupation with the basis of the apostolic Church and

with the Christianity of the first centuries in view of the ecumenical creeds.

Yet as the Protestant and Roman Catholic options are set side by side, new patterns of theological education are emerging. In Tübingen the Catholic seminar room is the first classroom that greets visitors. Munich, which has had only a Catholic faculty, failed in the effort to get Helmut Thielicke of Hamburg to serve as its first Protestant theologian, in the hope that he and Karl Rahner might occupy corresponding chairs. Hans Küng's presence in Tübingen has lent additional interest to that campus. Küng wears no clerical collar, often appears in a sports shirt, and displays Barth's writings in the front office while Aquinas's *Summa* remains in the back room. 'Lourdes gives me indigestion', says Küng, who tells his classes he believes in *sola fide*. 'If I were at Tübingen', a graduate student in Basel remarked recently, 'I'd study under Küng; he's closer to the Reformers than Protestant theology generally.' While Küng's public lectures are well attended by both Protestants and Catholics, his classes draw few Protestants, although he is credited with turning at least one of them toward the priesthood. American students in Tübingen speak more appreciatively of Küng than do German students, who consider Rahner the truly intellectual source of the ecumenical developments but Küng primarily its spokesman.

Karl Barth thinks this proliferation of European theology into descriptive, confessional, and ecumenical options offers no hopeful prospect. He points to Bishop John Robinson's *Honest to God* ('at once descriptive, since he was a scientist; confessional, since Robinson is Anglican; and surely ecumenically-minded') as a clear indication that the alternatives run far deeper. 'In this renewal of Feuerbach, of a theology identical with a certain kind of anthropology', says Barth, 'we stand at the end of the whole development of modern theology in a return to the nineteenth century. The real question for the future of theology is this: Is there a theology not anthropological but "theanthropological", one grounded in the Word of God in Jesus Christ?' Barth declines to venture a prophetic verdict on the outcome: 'I cannot prophesy what the general trend of theology will be—whether theology will take "the good way" or not.'

Concerning the Vatican Council dialogue, Dutch theologian G. C. Berkouwer of Amsterdam's Free University says: 'The contacts are many, and Rome has able men in all fields. But to speak now of a theology of the Word of God is only a beginning. We have had this

formula for over thirty years, and many accept it who destroy its best sense. It does not of itself solve the hermeneutical problem which faces both Rome and Protestantism. To face this problem is not a matter of "unbelief"; if we do not face it, we shall be out of touch with our responsibility as well as with modern thought and life. We are called to a Gospel-conforming theology made concrete in our life work and renewed day by day.'

VIII. EUROPEAN THEOLOGY AND THE LOST MULTITUDES

The gulf separating the leadership and the membership of the Continental churches remains a conspicuous feature of the times.

One observer has said that while 95 per cent of the European church leaders are increasingly occupied with ecumenical concerns, 95 per cent of the church members couldn't care less.

Whatever measure of theological renewal was stimulated by the 'theology of the Word of God', its controlling presuppositions were too abstruse and enigmatic to prompt any great revival among the laity.

Barthian theology did indeed stimulate a new searching of the Bible, and here and there it raised up powerful pulpiteers like Walter Luthie in Berne, who drew large audiences. A significant number of European theological professors are also outstanding preachers and fill the churches in which they minister. One might name Thielicke of Hamburg, Von Rad of Heidelberg, Schweizer of Zurich, Zimmerli of Göttingen, among others—men certainly of divergent theological perspectives.

But in the main there has been no great popular movement toward the churches in Germany and Switzerland. Not even on Christmas and Easter Sunday will one find more than 4 or 5 per cent of the church members in attendance. Some pastors actually no longer expect adults to attend church, although they do expect children to go through the routine of baptism and confirmation. The man in the street—and that is where most Germans are on Sunday—considers theological reflection irrelevant to his most pressing concerns. In the United States, on the other hand, people tend to regard theology as dispensable because they attend church in significant numbers.

In Europe the churches themselves often perpetuate a mood of theological compromise among the few members who do attend. Many of the Continental churches deliberately 'balance' the theological tone of the pulpit by maintaining two pastors, one liberal and one conservative, in order to satisfy both elements in the congregation. The

seminaries have long practised this approach by engaging professors of divergent theological viewpoints (although conservative replacements seem ever less tolerable to non-conservative majorities). Even if theological faculties have learned to live in peace in the midst of extensive dogmatic differences, laymen still somehow expect a close relation between theology and truth. Says Professor Gerhard Friedrich of Erlangen, 'One must practise theology critically. Both orthodox and liberal theology are heretical.' Such a comment, while it may not startle a seminary campus, is upsetting enough for the man in the pew to make him cast all theology aside.

One disturbing factor in this confused and spiritually moribund situation is that seminary faculties seem to cultivate theology 'for its own sake'. Professors often insist that they are training theologians, not pastors. Thus the chronic separation of church and theology continues and worsens. Increasingly distressed over this condition, some Lutheran bishops want seminary faculties to be more answerable to their bishops. But such a prospect the university-related faculties regarded as intolerable.

With most of the people 'in the Church' but few of them 'in the churches', the spiritual condition on the Continent is especially dark because of the widespread scepticism that there really is a Word of God that the Church must proclaim. Theology and Church, after all, must stand in some sort of reciprocal relation. And in the present situation the masses consider church attendance just another fragmentation of their time. Lutheran Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover has charged that Europe is no longer aware of the importance of the Bible in the conduct of human affairs; even a 'simple knowledge' of the Bible, he says, is fast disappearing from European life. He is convinced of the connection between the contemporary theological situation and the breakdown of interest in Scripture: the current trend of European biblical scholarship, he insists, has 'made the Bible appear to be uncertain of its message'. Nor is the Bible being read in a great many homes in Germany. Yet, as Norbert Rückert of Nürnberg comments, 'while the Bible is widely neglected in Protestant circles, the Roman Catholic Church has undertaken to promote a Bible-revival'.

What is more, Bultmann's aim to accommodate Christianity to the modern scientific mind by demiracleising the Gospels has not succeeded. In point of fact, he has diverted more young theologians from biblical Christianity than he was won scientists to Christian faith. It is remarkable that among graduate students in Germany one can hear students

even of Missouri Synod background contend that in every generation the Church needs a heretic like Bultmann to speak 'for faith' to those outside its orbit. Yet the lamentable gulf between European scientists and theologians remains and has not been spanned by theological obeisance to scientific naturalism. The movement away from miracles is still mainly a movement away from the Church as well. Growing disbelief in miraculous Christianity may be assumed in the Church Free Society's claim to have liberated its almost 100,000 members from 'the Church and its dogmas'. The society seeks 'independently thinking people' who now 'belong to a church and cultural association only because of inherited custom and family tradition'.

No doubt many persons who lack vital personal faith are found in Continental churches that automatically incorporate children into their membership. But it is specious to argue from this situation that Christian realities lack any sure foundation and that science brings freedom while the faith of the Church means bondage, and to convey the impression that modern science and an atheistic world view demand each other. Yet for a generation the premise that the Christian Gospel requires no break whatever with a naturalistic view of science and history has had the enthusiastic support of Bultmannian theology. The Church Free Society sponsors public lectures promoting an atheistic *Weltanschauung*, holds independent marriage, confirmation, and children's dedication ceremonies, and substitutes a light or sun-festival on 21 December for the Christian celebration of Christmas.

In surveying the theological situation in Europe, one is left, therefore, with some clear impressions.

European Protestant theology has neither closed nor bridged the wide gap between the churches and the masses. The broad disagreements of the dogmatists support the general opinion that theology is a matter of specialised speculation. Efforts to attract the intellectuals by diluting the Gospel have failed; Bultmann's demythology has won few existential philosophers from Heidegger's atheistic camp and few naturalistic scientists; moreover, those who have been influenced have yet to be won to biblical Christianity. The common people find theology too abstract and unclear for profitable reading, and church attendance they regard as sadly unrewarding. That no one norm any longer controls the climate of conviction in the seminaries is widely reflected in the pulpits, and the well-known tendency of the professional to compromise the Scriptures as the rule of faith and life discourages Bible reading among the laity. While the Swedish theologians think

that the whole notion of a normative theology should be discarded, most confessional theologians believe that without normative theology the Church would go into bankruptcy.

But then again the ecumenical development is convinced that the assorted denominational confessions by which the disunity of Christendom is perpetuated cannot all be true. The resultant interest in the ecumenical movement, therefore, is supra-confessional and theologically inclusive, yet at the same time wistfully normative. Any theological norm for the ecumenical development, it now seems, will be ecclesiastically decided rather than biblically determined. The World Council of Churches, which has already forsaken its pan-Protestant character for a merged Protestant-Orthodox image, is moving into conversations with Rome at a time when the council lacks a clear theological norm and when many Protestant dogmaticians reject a Bible-bound theology. Protestant participation in the dialogue with Rome is driven forward not so much by confident theological consensus and conviction as by an exasperating lack of such concurrence, and by the secret and perhaps strange hope that larger ecumenical conversations will shape a new unity in which Protestant consciousness can survive unhindered.

IX. JUDGMENT OF THE THEOLOGIAN

Protestant Christianity no longer responds to any one final authority. The sad result of its theological defection from the biblical norm shows in the chaotic condition of Continental religious thought. For the third time in a century the supposed bulwarks of Protestant theology are falling and scholars are seeking new strongholds.

Many questions are being asked in Europe, some of them of special interest and significance for America. What future remains for the 'theology of the Word of God'? What theological development and progress can be expected in the days ahead?

But, preoccupied only with each other, the theologians seem wholly unaware of their fading prestige in the world of thought.

Is this chaotic condition in contemporary theological thought a sign of God's judgment upon the theologians? Has their persistent compromise or sacrifice of the message of the Holy Scriptures made them victims of their own confusion?

Theologians frequently remind us that divine judgment must 'begin at God's house', a theme well entrenched in modern dogmatics. Could it be, however, that they themselves have overlooked one of the subtler

points of the biblical message—namely, that even theologians are not exempt from God's scrutiny?

When theology was queen of the sciences, theologians recognized the indispensability of Jesus and of the apostles for understanding contemporary man (theologians included). But now that modern theologians have made *themselves* indispensable to the 'understanding' of Jesus and the apostles, theology has become the slave of speculators. What God may be proclaiming in the history of our times is that modern theologians and their theology are quite unnecessary for the well-being and on-going of his Church.

Many theologians on university-related faculties seem oblivious of their fallen status; they seem unaware that their colleagues no longer give them the same academic esteem that scholars in other disciplines enjoy. One reason for this demotion is the apparent inability of modern theologians to communicate their convictions intelligibly. It is true that the frequently changing frontiers of dogmatics now necessitate conquering novel terrain with countless hazards of discussion. Nonetheless the physical scientists escort their colleagues over equally devious paths and do so successfully. This leads some academicians to ask whether the theologians—in the midst of their strongly asserted individualistic preferences—are perhaps using ambiguity to conceal their insecurity.

It is not only simpletons who cannot understand these theological subtleties but also some other scholars, whose own fields of specialty are highly complex; they stand amazed in the presence of the verbiage concealing Jesus the Nazarene.

But we do not believe that the theologians are deliberately clouding the atmosphere. Amid the confusion they have brought about, they are simply trying to market what is non-intelligible; that there are few takers in academic circles should surprise no one. Is it perhaps a sign of divine wrath and judgment that the theological leadership of major denominations is wielded predominantly by those who are content with changing fashions of doctrine, or who establish these changing fashions? The fundamental question for the cult of the professional theologians is simply this: What is God saying to them, to the theologians, who claim to be specialists in what he is saying to others? What is God trying to teach them in the historical fact that Protestant theology is suffering its third collapse in the twentieth century? Is he telling the theologians that *they no longer know what the Word of God is?*

As the religious thinkers of Europe look into the near future, what do they anticipate? While a few scholars wonder if German theology is

approaching an era of divine chastisement, apparently none senses that judgment may already be in process. 'It is likely', thinks Adolf Köberle of Tübingen, 'that in a short time dark events and judgments of God may come over us. The future of European theology hangs heavily on events in world history.'

The future, says Emil Brunner, is 'a matter of the Holy Spirit. Bultmann does not even acknowledge the legitimacy of the term; for him the Holy Spirit belongs to "the myth".' 'Communism', continues Brunner, 'is still the greatest and most powerful ideological opponent of Christianity. Truth does not play a role in Communism, and totalitarian power can do away with theology.'

Most scholars abroad look for a generation of action and reaction in the realm of religious thought, a time of adjustment and readjustment, of combination and recombination. The course of European theology has been determined in the past so largely by the prevailing winds of philosophical speculation that Tübingen professor Otto Michel says candidly: 'No man can predict the future. Spiritual developments are rooted deeper than the theological emphases of the professors. Yet they hang together with the philosophical currents and cultural and historical phenomena which often prove decisive.'

No new philosophical current as powerful as Hegel's or Kant's or Heidegger's has appeared on the German horizon. The voices of Moses and Isaiah, of Jesus and Paul are permitted to say only what the critics allow. Younger theologians evidence a rationalistic drift to philosophy of religion. No clear alternative to the broken Bultmannian perspective is yet in view. While a few strong voices are rising, each distinct from the others, none speaks comprehensively and influentially enough to warrant recognition as an established alternative to Bultmann.

One thing is clear, however. No one anticipates a golden era of theological prosperity in Europe. The conservative scholars on the seminary faculties are a woeful minority, and are often isolated. Thus any decisive shift in the outlook of Continental theology is less likely to issue from an evangelical counter-thrust than from some novel philosophy. As a successor to Heidegger's *existenz*, such a philosophy may accommodate Christian motifs to new forms of speculation. Or in a context of some dark turn in European history it may either plunge the Continent into bleak despair and unbelief, or prompt men in their anguish to seek afresh the God of the Bible.

Predictions concerning the future of theology differ in perspective and intensity. 'The dialectical theology is secure', says Rudolf Bultmann

despite its present turbulences, 'and it has a future.' Wilfried Joest of Erlangen, who agrees that the division of Bultmann's empire need not signal an end-time for dialectical theology, notes, however, its drift toward more extreme positions: 'The Bultmann school is separating into diverse shades of emphasis. . . . It assumes even more radical forms among some of the Mainz professors.' According to the Göttingen New Testament scholar Joachim Jeremias, 'the hopeful sign and promise of a fruitful future in German theology exists through the evident turning from Bultmann's presuppositions. We must now labour as carefully as we can to get at the words of Jesus and the content of his message.'

Two others, individualistic enough to preclude their attachment to any school of thought, should also be quoted here: Ethelbert Stauffer of Erlangen, now retired, and Helmut Thielicke of Hamburg. In these next years, says Stauffer, who is sometimes pictured by other New Testament scholars as 'a twentieth century Renan, though not so sentimental', 'the Church will find it necessary to stand in the forefront of all human concerns, and we shall see the rise of a new Christian humanism'. 'In 1916', observes Stauffer, 'Barth's *Römerbrief* said a *nein!* to *humanismus*. The Nazi era divided Church from *humanismus* and Hitler fought both and conquered. What is needed now is not Khrushchev's socialistic humanism but a new Christian humanism in which the Good Samaritan can lead us on.' Thielicke hopes that the present dead-end street in dogmatics will encourage new interests in the widely neglected realm of theological ethics: 'The crisis of modern preaching lies in the fact that it speaks only to the "inner man", instead of addressing his socio-cultural situation.'

Yet in one major respect the present age of European religious thought differs from the recent past, and particularly from the generation that Barth called to a fresh hearing of the Word of God. This new generation is the one that has already heard the summons to 'the God who reveals himself' and yet has turned away to Bultmannian and post-Bultmannian positions.

What will be the plight of a future generation whose spiritual confusion is compounded by the fact that the Barthian 'rediscovery of special revelation' and the message that *God speaks* is for it an already by-passed option?

While Barth's *Wort*-theology crumbled the defences of the old liberalism, the new liberalism traced its own ancestry to the *Wort*-theology! What is the destiny of those who meet the plea for special

revelation with deliberate detachment, who reject it as an incoherent and unconvincing option of dialectical theology?

Otto Weber of Göttingen captures the sorry mood in this observation: 'Bultmann stressed *that there is a Word of God even if he was unsure what it is*. Bultmann's students all speak about "the Word". But now we are already seeing a movement away from the certainty *that there is such a Word*.'

'Sometimes I fear the end of Protestantism in such a generation', confesses Köberle of Tübingen. 'But in a dark hour, many may long again for a firm foundation and for living bread' and by God's grace 'ears may be open again to *the old unshortened Gospel*'.

At present the prospect of a rediscovery of 'the old unshortened Gospel', by the theologians at least, does not seem very bright, for the chaos of contemporary theology rests in the frontier realm of the problem of religious knowledge. It is a strange fact of modern European theology that while most of its theologians stress special divine disclosure they differ woefully as to its nature, content, and significance.

'The basic problem remains Christology', insists Wilfried Joest of Erlangen. 'The real issue is the meaning of the person of Christ for the Word of God, for truth, and for justification. Is he only the prophetic mouth of God, or is he present in the Word?'

But what is this Word? Notes Peter Brunner of Heidelberg: 'If the Church does not experience a new awakening—not necessarily in the eighteenth or nineteenth century sense of pietistic renewal—then we shall not have a real renewal of theology. The prophet Amos speaks of a time when people go through the land and ask for the Word of God and there will be no Word of God. This bad situation must be turned by God's grace into a good situation, or there is no hopeful future for German theology.'

X. OUTLOOK ON THE CONTINENT

'If one fact is clear from the twentieth century, it is that evangelical Christianity gains nothing from a "reaction theology"! Because it falls short of a full biblical emphasis, "reaction theology" is powerless to confront the alternatives and always proves weak in the next generation.'

So comments the Dutch theologian G. C. Berkouwer. One of the real tasks of evangelical Christianity, he feels, must be to move beyond old boundaries to new frontiers of theological enterprise. 'The distinction between theological conservatism and progressivism is no longer

serviceable', Dr. Berkouwer says. "The words are no longer useful because everybody wants to "conserve" and to "progress". Lack of progress is no characterological feature of our theology. We need to face the future unafraid. Faith need not fear in the face of danger. An openness in confronting modern problems in the wrestling of this century will not destroy or dilute the Word of God, but rather will give it free course.'

From another quarter—L'Abri Fellowship in Switzerland, where Francis Schaeffer works with intellectuals on the agnostic fringes of modern life—comes another warning to evangelical forces. 'For many of "the doubters" in our generation the accepted religious vocabulary no longer conveys what the words were intended to mean. So the "general evangelicals" are often articulating slogans rather than communicating ideas. They need therefore to step into the twentieth century.' 'Worse yet', says Schaeffer, 'some segments of the evangelical movement have fallen prey to the irrationalistic spirit of the age, and they see no real possibility of intellectual answers. They are losing a battle they do not even realize they ought to be fighting. They give away key chunks in their armour to the existential and dialectical philosophies, and rely on piety and zeal to win the day. Or they combat the new theology on too narrow a strip—not seeing its connection with the line of despair that characterizes modern thought.'

These tendencies—first, a ready reliance on reactionary negation rather than on the counter-thrust of creative biblical theology; and second, a spirit of accommodation that simply erodes elements of Christian belief less rapidly than more radical views—largely account for the present predicament of evangelical theology in Europe. The collapse of rationalistic liberalism in European theological thought was forced not by traditional evangelicalism but by the crisis-theology; it was the lack of vigorous evangelical theological thrust relevant to the spirit of the times that furnished Barth and Brunner their opportunity to speak in the name of biblical theology. Now that the existential-dialectical framework is increasingly strained and a search for new alternatives is under way, the question arises whether European theological history will again neglect a sound evangelical option—and if so, why.

There is little doubt that evangelical scholarship on the Continent is less formidable today than in earlier times of struggle against modern critical theories. In German theology there have been traditionally two streams of conservatism in biblical-exegetical scholarship. First, there was the confessionalistic theology centred throughout the nineteenth century in the conservative Erlangen *Heilsgeschichte* school (Paul

Althaus, who also reflected the influence of Martin Kähler, carried this witness forward into the present generation). The second trend, the pietistic movement, has taken two directions. Originating in Halle, where leaders like Francke and Tholuck combined Lutheran theology with pietism, one stream claimed Martin Kähler and Julius Schniewind among its significant figures, and in our generation has Otto Michel of Tübingen, one of Europe's able New Testament scholars, as its outstanding representative. Another stream, which under A. Schlatter combined Reformed theology with pietism, has Karl Rengstorf of Münster and Adolf Köberle of Tübingen as leading present-day exponents—the latter reflecting also the influence of the late Karl Heim, another representative of this movement.

Almost all these lines of thought have been somewhat influenced by historical criticism. Moreover, even in their dissent from dialectical theology, they have in recent years found some reinforcement in the writings of Barth and Brunner, so that some evangelical indebtedness to the crisis-theologians cannot be denied. It is true that former Erlangen giants like Hermann Sasse and the late Werner Elert took the position that what was valuable in Barth could be found in the Bible and what was false—including the dialectical structuring of theology—should not be commended to divinity students. Although Elert once said he wanted 'no piece of bread' from Barth, the younger conservative theologians acknowledged a debt to Barth for his bold assault on rationalistic modernism, for his role in the *Kirkenkampf* against Nazi socialism, and for occasional fresh insights into biblical positions. In fact, in their struggle against modernism the conservative forces had to draw much of their ammunition from Barth, because their own theological leadership in the protestant faculties had been decimated. Thus it developed, as one evangelical put it, that 'Barth injected a dose of quinine into the blood of the theologians, and while this checked much feverish speculation, it also encouraged them to survive by means of dialectical infusion'. This turn of events explains why any checklist of evangelical stalwarts in Europe almost invariably includes the names of scholars whose moderate adjustments to biblical criticism or accommodations to recent theology set them part from American fundamentalism. It accounts also for the mood of moderation in conservative critiques of dialectical theology, as reflected in the works of Althaus. The list of evangelical spokesmen, therefore, is often enlarged beyond the non-dialectical theologians to include scholars like Peter Brunner and Edmund Schlink of Heidelberg, whose formulations retain a dialectical structure, or Helmut Thielicke

of Hamburg, who resists the Barthian theology but whose preaching and popular writing seldom reflect his full critical viewpoint.

The evangelical critique of dialectical theology has nonetheless been maintained along several lines. There is the continuance of the Erlangen salvation-history tradition by Althaus and now by Walter Künneth. The Tübingen line of Schlatter and Heim is continued by Adolf Köberle. There are the biblical exegetes specialising in Judaistic studies (Gustave Dahlmann, Hermann Strack, Otto Michel, Paul Billerbeck, Joachim Jeremias, Karl Rengstorff), and there are also some younger theologians (among them Hans Schmidt, docent for systematic theology in Hamburg, and Adolf Strobel, privat-docent in New Testament at Bonn) who criticise on biblical grounds the philosophical presuppositions of the new theology.

The difference between the conservative and mediating camps, therefore, tends sometimes to become merely a difference of emphasis. Jeremias warns, for example, against drawing too sharp a line between the traditional conservative scholars and the *Heilsgeschichte* scholars. In part, this plea springs from the fact that, although they resist extreme critical positions, many conservatives are not averse to accepting moderate critical views. So Jeremias assigns *Formgeschichte* the rôle of distinguishing 'Palestinian from Hellenic layers' in the New Testament. But the plea is based also on the validity of the fundamental concept of salvation-history, to which the recent *Heilsgeschichte* movement does less than justice. European conservative scholars have learned not to discard valued terminology just because somebody temporarily cheapens it. 'The old way, the *Heilsgeschichte* approach, was correct', Jeremias insists. 'The method did not put the stress on the anthropological side but on the theological. It regarded the main task of hermeneutics as the understanding of the message of our Lord himself with the help of the biblical-palestinian environment. It took the message of the Gospel without imposing external philosophical presuppositions.'

Then too, the *Heilsgeschichte* school itself includes an exegete as conservative as Oscar Cullmann, whose theologically positive views embarrass some salvation-history scholars. In fact, just this extensive theological diversity within the modern *Heilsgeschichte* movement is one feature that differentiates it from the conservative camp. The salvation-history scholars are actually less unified in perspective than their mutual interest in historical revelation might indicate. They represent a wide variety of viewpoints and interests, although at this present time in the theological debate they manifest a common concern. Eduard Schweizer

of Zürich is really a post-Bultmannian, Ulrich Wilckens of Berlin is numbered in the Pannenberg school, and Eduard Lohse of Berlin reflects much of the position of Jeremias, his former teacher.

Wanted: A New Methodology

Amid the growing recognition of the methodological crisis in European theology, conservatives venture little radical criticism of the presuppositions now dominant. It is doubtless true that, as Emil Brunner remarks, 'the methodological alone has never changed the church line; the theological is decisive'. Yet in almost every camp some scholars now recognise that the presently controlling methodological premises are under great strain because of the chaotic condition of Continental theology. The Bultmann devotee Hans Conzelmann aptly describes the present tumult as 'a trouble of methodology'. And Werner Kümmel, spokesman for the *Heilsgeschichte* scholars, unhesitatingly calls for 'a new methodology' to replace the Bultmannian misconception of the task of hermeneutics with a renewed interest in what the New Testament actually teaches. Yet even among the more conservative scholars there is little evident disposition to attack *Formgeschichte* in more than a general way.

Whatever criticisms are sounded, however, are significant and include a rejection of Bultmann's premise that the form-critical method immediately elucidates the formation of the contents of the New Testament. Otto Michel of Tübingen has spoken openly of the need for a new and different methodology, and calls for a scriptural rather than a critical norm. While in New Testament criticism Michel confessedly retains much the same methodology as Bultmann, he emphasises the historical roots of early Christian phenomena and achieves a theological result that is evangelically sturdy. 'It is customary to draw certain contents (kerygma) from the Bible', he notes, 'but not to draw categories of thought from the Bible, nor to check our categories of historical criticism from it.' A somewhat similar complaint can be found in the writings of A. Schlatter, whose untranslated criticism of modern philosophy from Descartes to Nietzsche should be better known.

Difficulties Facing Conservatives

One reason for the limited initiative and impact of conservative scholars is that their representation on the university faculties is in meagre disproportion to the theological outlook of the generality of Lutheran and Reformed church members. For this reason some

mainstream ministers and churches are increasingly disposed to establish centres of theological learning independent of the universities. They complain that conservative forces are not adequately represented. They charge that on retirement conservative scholars are replaced by non-conservative. Only here and there does an isolated scholar make a mark for the evangelical cause. Among such is the New Testament professor Johannes Schneider, a Baptist, recently retired from Humboldt University in East Berlin.

Time pressures on the conservative scholars are such that their literary output often lags. Moreover, the theological situation often requires their engagement on a more technical level than polemical debate. Yet Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann all knew the value of closely reasoned textbooks supporting their positions. A time of theological transition requires coping with the concerns that engage the influential theologians. If evangelical Christianity is again to acquire mainstream theological power, it cannot perpetuate itself by remaining in ideological isolation from dominant trends of thought. Furthermore, the paucity of conservative theological literature frustrates evangelical students. Because there is little else, the dogmatics of Barth and Brunner, appropriated critically, serve as the main theological supply of many conservative students, while Von Rad's Old Testament theology fills much the same vacuum in that area. Yet the picture is not wholly dark. A few valuable works have appeared from the conservative side, among them Michel's commentaries on Romans and Hebrews. Long a publishing for pietistic literature, Brockhaus Verlag in Wuppertal has now widened its programme to include the publication of theological works.

In a campus atmosphere of many viewpoints, students easily become sceptical of theological truth as something beyond their reach; instead, considerations of professional status and ecumenical eligibility bulk large. Even if the diversity of faculty perspectives does not result in the systematic destruction of their faith, evangelical students still must 'struggle not to be drowned', because conservative scholarship on the Continent lacks dynamic centres for comprehensive propagation of its convictions.

Almost a century ago there was a great debate over whether evangelical isolationism rather than evangelical penetration would result from the participation of evangelicals in Free University, Amsterdam, the only Calvinist university in the world. Today it is clear that in the seminaries at German universities no community of evangelical scholarship has arisen and that evangelical forces have been largely

isolated from the ecumenical dialogue, which mainly reflects what is currently fashionable. While the traditional conservative scholars did not gain a large platform in Germany during the Barth-Bultmann era, it is noteworthy that Rengstorf, Michel, and Jeremias have been popular guest lecturers in Sweden. Discussion of demythology and of dialectical theology has been more marginal in Sweden than in Denmark, which has been aligned mainly on the Barthian side.

In the past century, as rationalistic liberalism began to pervade the seminaries, Bible institutes were established within the state church framework. Among these were *Missionsbibelschule Liebenzell* in the Black Forest, which now enrolls sixty students annually, and St Christophone near Basel, which has eighty students and became quite widely known through Fritz Rienecker's writings.

But doctrinal dilution is a problem not only of the university theological faculties; most free church seminaries also reflect a considerable measure of theological diversity. They make little decisive contribution to the main currents of European theology. Their literature programme rests upon too few professors. Even the well-equipped Southern Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon outside Zurich is being strengthened against criticisms of a mixed position on the inspiration of the Bible and against some past intrusion of Barthianism into its theological emphasis.

Although evangelical scholars in Europe readily support on scriptural ground their conservative positions against dialectical theology, they are more timid about turning their theological presuppositions into a vigorous counter-attack. As a result their work tends more to demonstrate the inadequacy of Bultmann's, Barth's, and Brunner's deformed dogmatics than to formulate a comprehensive alternative that grapples with problems posed by contemporary theology.

It is significant that evangelical scholars in America have formulated their objections to neo-orthodox theology more extensively and more fully than have European conservatives. Yet the writings of Gordon H. Clark, Edward John Carnell, Cornelius Van Til, Paul K. Jewett, and other critics of neo-orthodox theology are largely unknown or are brushed aside on secondary grounds. German theology, for all its comprehensive character, is actually very provincial; in many respects it is a closed corporation indifferent to foreign competition and comment. An exception is G. C. Berkouwer's constructive critique of *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, which has been translated from Dutch into German and of which Barth has taken appreciative but unrepentant note. But as a general rule, notes an American observer,

unless outside comment comes from a Germanic name like Niebuhr or Tillich, it will be ignored as theologically insipid. And if it comes from conservative sources, it will be overlooked as dealing with questions of no special interest to European theologians.

This tendency to ignore conservative Protestant thought is not particularly German; it is characteristic of liberal Protestantism in general. Contributors to the recent work *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ* simply ignore the painstaking American efforts in historical research by J. Gresham Machen and B. B. Warfield in New Testament studies or relevant work on the British side by men like James Orr and James Denney. Dr John Baillie, the late principal of New College, Edinburgh, and a gifted scholar in his own right, once rejected a proposed assessment of Orr's writings as the subject of a doctoral dissertation on the ground that Orr was 'not really a scholar'. The prejudice that biblical Christianity cannot and will not be defended by a true scholar is a widespread denigrating notion in some liberal circles. Actually, however, it merely reveals the illiberality of liberalism. The reading and reference lists in ecumenical seminaries and the books proposed for translation by ecumenical literature committees reflect much the same temper, as do the reviews in such journals as the *Journal of Bible and Religion*, the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and, indeed, the *Christian Century*.

Pietistic Concern

European church life also includes a pietistic force, one alertly evangelistic and concerned with the practical side of the Church's mission. Although it, too, deplores the impact of Bultmann upon German church life, its opposition is more polemical than comprehensively dogmatic. Its most conspicuous achievement has been the sponsorship under the German Evangelical Alliance of large-scale evangelistic crusades in which evangelist Billy Graham has called the masses in major German cities to faith in Christ. The alliance is an organisational rallying point for conservative leadership from both the people's church and the free churches. It has also sponsored community evangelistic efforts by the Janz Brothers, Gerhard Bergmann, Anton Schulte, and others. At the level of the local churches the German Evangelical Alliance has exerted a formidable influence for spiritual renewal. In Paris, encouraged by a similar French group, more than 200 pastors and workers now attend an annual three-day conference of evangelical leaders from French-speaking countries.

Unfortunately, the evangelical witness is impeded by a lack of coordination of independent and interdenominational efforts that cling to desires for private glory; nevertheless, greater association among leaders of diverse projects is noticeably increasing. The strength of independent evangelical effort still lies in its vigorous appeal to the God of the Bible expounded in an unqualified way. 'We are not surprised', says René Pache of *Institut Emmaüs*, Lausanne, 'when neo-orthodox positions crumble, since even those theologians who revived a theology of "the Word" insist that the Bible is not the Word of God.' The task, he adds, is 'not to create a competitive new theology, but to train a ministry concerned for a full hearing and full obedience of God's Word'.

The conservative Bible schools in Europe, however, tend to move outside the theological dialogue. Most faculty members feel that the debate as now carried on is so marginal to evangelical concerns that to bog down in these discussions would mean inevitable neglect of biblical and evangelistic priorities.

Growth of the Bible school movement has been a conspicuous feature of European evangelicalism. Dispensational interests accounted for the early establishment of German schools like the *Bibelmissionsschule* at Beatenberg, an independent venture whose 200 students supply reserves for missionary, pulpit, and evangelistic endeavour as well as for other church work. In Wiedenest the *Bibelmissionshaus*, known beyond its Open Brethren circle through the writings of the late Erich Sauer, has thirty-five students. In Switzerland the *Institut Emmaüs* at Vennes, near Lausanne, with its fifty French-speaking students, has become rather well known through the writings of René Pache; the school has missionary alumni throughout the non-Communist world.

Using the French language and sponsored by four European Bible institutes, a new European seminary is being projected in Paris for students with a baccalaureate diploma; hopefully, it will succeed the seminary at Aix-en-Provence, now slowed almost to a standstill. Co-operating in the project will be the institutes in Brussels (mostly Flemish-speaking), Beatenberg (German), and Nogent-sur-Marne in Paris and Emmaüs in Vennes (both French-speaking). The doctrinal basis is to include an unqualified position on the inspiration of the Bible and will also be moderately premillennial.

The most comprehensive Bible school programme has been ventured by Greater Europe Mission, whose American leadership was encouraged by Continental evangelicals (its field director, Robert Evans,

is author of the volume, *Let Europe Hear!*). This group now sponsors the European Bible Institute in Lamorlage near Paris (founded in 1952; now has thirty-nine students); *Bibelschule Bergstrasse* in Seeheim, Germany (founded in 1955; has forty-four students); and *Instituto Biblico Evangelico* in Rome (founded in 1960 and soon to graduate its small first class). The objective of Greater Europe Mission is to give nationals who want to enter Christian service a biblical foundation and a sense of evangelistic urgency. From these coeducational institutions the men go out to become assistant pastors in the national churches, pastors of free churches, and evangelists, while the women become youth and children's workers.

Denominational Anxieties

In Lutheran and Reformed churches, conservative pastors are increasingly encouraged to sponsor similar study programmes on a local church basis to preserve biblical fidelity and promote evangelistic concern. In the people's church, for example, the evangelistic youth work of Wilhelm Busch of Essen, now retired, quickened evangelical sensitivity. Others known for evangelistic initiative and preaching are Hamburg, pastor F. Heitmüller, active in the German Evangelistic Alliance; Hans Brandenburg (Lutheran) of Korntal; J. Grünzweig (Moravian Brethren) of Stuttgart, and Heinrich Kemner of Ahlden; Peter Schneider, general secretary of the YMCA, West Berlin; Arno Page of Köln, leader of the Christian Endeavour effort; and Anton Schulte, a free church evangelist who has held community campaigns in Austria and Germany.

Yet no absolute contrast can be drawn between the free churches and the people's (state) church. While the free churches are generally lively and aggressive, individual pastors in the older-established denominations have equally vigorous groups. Older pastors in the established churches who reflect the influence of Schlatter, Kähler, or Barth tend to be conservative; the younger generation of ministers has been more largely influenced by Bultmann, an influence increasingly compounded with other emphases as well. The free and people's churches often share similar tendencies. To gain respect or status, many free churches have imitated the state churches organisationally, have become enmeshed in similar theological compromises, have forsaken the proclamation of the Evangel, and have lost their fervour. Yet the people's church goes further amiss by compounding these unfortunate tendencies with public involvement in decisionless Christianity. Because its members are automatically baptised, confirmed, married, and buried by the church, most

of them assume that they belong to the body of Christ irrespective of personal faith. 'The churches are state-tax-supported; what other support do they need? And what more do we need than infant baptism and confirmation?' So runs opinion. This lack of spiritual decision in the people's church created a vacuum into which the Bultmannians could readily insert their existential appeal.

In the interest of personal faith both Barth and Brunner have attacked infant baptism; those enrolled in the churches by baptism, they imply, are not on this ground Christians. The baptismal rite has become an increasing problem for Lutheran and Reformed pastors alike. In some places ministers are no longer required to officiate at infant baptism if they have questions of conscience. Some of them encourage the children to wait. Barth has declared for believer's baptism. For some Lutheran theologians this assertion was sufficiently provocative to end any and all interest in his theology. Brunner has hesitated to go this far; the religious structure of Continental civilisation is such, he feels, that it cannot stand a renunciation of the validity of infant baptism and confirmation.

XI. THEOLOGICAL DEFAULT IN AMERICAN SEMINARIES

The wave of Bultmannian teaching and writing now flooding American seminaries is a sorry commentary on religious thought in that country. Not only does it attest the lack of independent theological virility in America, a fact lamentable in itself; it is also repeats the costly tendency to popularise speculative notions already discredited abroad. Before the Second World War, liberal theologians in America were indoctrinating seminary students with a theology supposedly as up-to-date as tomorrow (the modernism these young professors had absorbed in their doctoral studies abroad). But in the meantime classic modernism was already being discarded in Europe as outworn and untrue. Then the American 'frontiersmen' moved toward crisis-theology, and by 1958 almost as many Protestant ministers listed themselves in the neo-orthodox camp as in the modernist movement. Barth and Brunner were the luminaries of these Americans, and little mention was being made of Bultmann. Barth and Brunner, however, were soon to acknowledge Bultmann's command of the theological dialogue. And now that the Bultmannian empire is breaking up in Europe, the American Protestant seminaries are predictably becoming a Johnny-come-lately Bultmannian circuit.

Amid the professorial cross fire and combat on Continental seminary campuses, most European students are withholding any personal commitment to Bultmann's theology. They learn Bultmann's positions, yes, but fly no Bultmannian banners. As George Traar, superintendent for the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church for Vienna, puts it, students are equally interested in 'what others are saying—not only Bultmannians, but anti-Bultmannians'. 'Bultmann's solutions are bypassed and his methodology of existential interpretation is under such fire', says Helmut Thielicke of Hamburg, 'that students no longer are transfixed by the claims of the Bultmann scholars, and their minds are open to a hearing for alternative viewpoints'.

'The German students like the ancient Athenians are especially on the lookout for novel points of view', remarks another Continental theologian. 'That is why our textbooks live for a only a couple of years. Students are interested in watching a fight—in hearing theologians who make cutting remarks about competitors and colleagues; scholarship and relevance and dialogue no longer seem to assure an atmosphere of enthusiasm. The younger generation now seems more disposed to watch the theological controversy than to join it.'

In America things are worse. Seminary students are content with European leftovers specially seasoned by American dieticians against decomposition.

Despite the decline of Bultmann's prestige and influence in Europe, and just at the time when Continental scholars and students are veering from a commitment to his views, American divinity students abroad and some seminary professors in the States are rallying to 'modern' perspectives already considered dated and doomed on the European side. The latest theological fashions in America have traditionally lagged a half-generation or more behind European influences. Subsequently this European inheritance has been carried to radical extremes, long after its underlying presuppositions were abandoned abroad. There are numerous indications that this unpromising process may now be repeated once again.

Yet an *avant-garde* minority is energetically carrying Bultmann's theology to the American scene. And through its influence upon ministerial students in the seminaries, the Bultmannian speculation sooner or later will be felt in certain church-related colleges and in the churches themselves. American graduate students abroad, always open to new idols and finding none at home during liberalism's present transition period, are committing themselves to Bultmannian positions

in conspicuously greater numbers than are Continental scholars. At the Montreal Faith and Order Conference in 1963 it became clear that World Council programming hoped to give Bultmann scholars a larger rôle in the theological dialogue. American seminaries have welcomed an increasing Bultmannian exposure. Bornkamm and Conzelmann have given lectures here in the past; Käsemann comes in 1965 to Yale and San Anselmo; at Drew, Union, Claremont, and Harvard, Bultmannian scholars have served or are now serving as professors. But none says openly what needs to be said—that contemporary Protestant theologians are largely lost in wildernesses of speculation, and that further progress can now be made in theology only by asking not where Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann end but where the Bible begins.

Despite the absence of a native American tradition of existential philosophy, other factors contribute a mood compatible with Bultmannian views. The American theological interest in Kierkegaard and in Barth and Brunner as well as in Bultmann has encouraged religious interest in both dialectical and existential premises. Much of American liberalism had already shared neo-orthodoxy's scepticism over the ontological significance of reason; that is, over the rational structure of the metaphysical world and the competence of human reason to understand spiritual realities. Further, the trend toward analytic philosophy and linguistic analysis has tended to limit the search for universally valid meaning to the world of sense realities. The most influential theological figures in America, Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich, themselves have emphasised that reason can expound the supernatural realm only in symbolic or figurative categories.

There is, in fact, increasing prospect of a synthesis of the positions of Bultmann and Tillich. This development signifies that neither position has won a permanent hold, and that disciples of each are seeking exterior reinforcement.

Despite its pursuit of the latest fashions in European thought, theology in American seminaries is touching mainly the formative principles that distinguish Bultmannian from non-Bultmannian positions. Whereas European scholars reflect a mood that runs increasingly contrary to Bultmann, American religious speculation at the frontiers reflects much more Bultmannian sympathy. In their studies of the Bultmann tradition, American graduate students abroad scarcely have time to keep up with the most recent books. Many volumes are increasingly critical of Bultmannism; many are not yet translated, and some undoubtedly never will be. It is strange, indeed, that pulpits of university

churches and teaching posts in church-related colleges as well as in seminaries so often are reserved for doctorate-holding scholars who return to America as flag-wavers for European systems, especially when abroad these systems are already outmoded and in disrepute.

In view of the break-up of Bultmannian positions, Werner Georg Kümmel of Marburg, ex-president of the Society of New Testament Studies, cannot understand why 'the younger grandsons of Bultmann keep getting chair after chair in the theological seminaries'. 'The post-Bultmannians continue to get the spoils', he comments, 'although the unity of the Bultmann school is shattered.'

Many seminaries have become so much the purveyors of abstruse theological speculations, and give so little evidence of a fixed authoritative norm, that they seem to be making themselves theologically dispensable. Contemporary theologising has become an exceedingly perishable commodity. Doubtless some seminaries remain denominationally or ecumenically indispensable for ecclesiastical objectives. But in a warring age at the brink of self-destruction, when scientists think that 22,3000 miles out in space is no place for mistakes, one might wish that the seminaries on terra firma would forego the business of propagating heresy generation upon generation.

It is as true in America as in Europe that the theologians are today looked upon as an inferior academic species. Claiming a private pipeline to the supernatural, they refashion their gods every generation. And American theologians are notoriously predictable. Unless they stand in the mainstream of evangelical Christianity, committed to the God of Moses, Isaiah, and Paul, they are forever resurrecting the ghosts of recently buried European dogmatic speculation. The theologians can hardly be fully blamed—they are student-victims of earlier theologians addicted to the same error. And each generation of students seems to drink from the same bitter wells.

XII. EVANGELICALS AND THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE

A recent survey discloses that many conservative scholars concentrate their interests upon a few lively concerns, and that wide gaps exist in evangelical research. Two out of the three evangelical scholars think biblical authority is the main theological theme now under review in conservative circles in America. Of these scholars, more than half trace this development to pressures for doctrinal redefinition resulting from recent theological speculations about the nature of divine revelation.

One in three conservative scholars singles out ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the Church, as the critical area in contemporary theological study. Eschatology (the doctrine of the end-time) and the nature of God were listed as other priority concerns. The respondents put soteriology, the saving work of Christ, in fifth place, and the doctrine of sanctification in sixth place, as theological areas under special theological pressure for critical modification.

The compromise of the authority of the Bible noticeable in many mainstream Protestant denominations is viewed as a lamentable surrender of scriptural perspectives to modern critical speculations. The result of the critical assaults has been to qualify the historic Christian view of the Bible by multiplying doubts over historical and propositional revelation, plenary inspiration, and verbal inerrancy.

The evangelical reply to this critical trend, the survey discloses, is not one of simple and naïve negation. Since the Bible is a mooring that holds Protestant Christianity from drifting aimlessly on a wide sea of subjective speculation, the case for scriptural authority calls for clear exposition. The conservative emphasis on divine revelation and on the deeds of God as the foundation of Christian faith is studied and positive.

Yet the replies confirm the judgment that affirmations of the high view of Scripture in the catalogues of evangelical seminaries, colleges, and Bible institutes do not reflect the extent to which some faculties are struggling with the issue of reaffirmation or redefinition. A plea is widely sounded for interpreting the Bible 'in the light of its revelational purpose'. At times this formula is taken simply as a warning against seeking scriptural solutions to questions that the sacred writers never intended to answer (for example, the effect of chemicals on moral decisions). Sometimes its implications are broader, so that the reliability of Scripture is limited to doctrinal and moral elements at the expense of historical and scientific content, the net result of which is a refusal to view the Bible as a document of unbroken divine authority.

Emphasis on divine confrontation and human encounter tends to weaken some expositions of a completed past revelation, and to give a neo-evangelical and almost neo-orthodox character to subjective-experiential factors at the expense of objective orthodoxy. Doctoral dissertations written by some conservative American scholars under neo-orthodox teachers at Edinburgh, Basel, Princeton, and Drew attest this conformity to present theological pressures. Instead of trying to justify this existential emphasis on the basis of Luther and Calvin, however, these neo-conservatives criticise the early Reformers as well as their

more recent exponents, Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield in particular. A noteworthy feature of this neo-conservative negation is that it has not issued in any consistent or stable alternative to the position it criticises; in this respect it is a theology with a fluid notion of religious authority and is particularly vulnerable to considerable further pressure.

Yet even in these circles there remains the recognition that without the authority of Scripture Protestantism too many soon become merely an echo of a decadent society. All evangelical scholars repudiate the reduction of *thus saith the Lord* to 'it seems to me'. They deplore 'demythologizing' as only a modern revival of unbelief of an ancient gnostic type. They abhor radical philosophical postures. They reject the far-out theories that religious concepts are only symbolic and not normative or informative, and that theological language has no fixed or absolute significance. They reject the existential view of revelation as mere subjective act or event. While they seek rapprochement with modern science, they are wholly undisposed to rule out the miraculous, to subordinate divine factors to human, or to locate the centre of religious authority in man's experience and thus to substitute a rationalistic for a revelational understanding of the supernatural.

In evangelical circles the tension over the Bible does not spring from a desire to accommodate Christian realities to a secular world view. In the question of how God acts in nature and history the character and words of God are seen to be at stake. If he does not act in the way the Bible says (or 'means'), the result is a different religion from historic Christianity. Many significant expositions of the Protestant position still view Calvin's *Institutes* as a major contribution to the doctrine of Scripture as revelation.

Nonetheless tension arises in evangelical circles through the inordinate pressures of contemporary scientific theory about the antiquity of man. Christian anthropologists are by no means agreed on an interpretation of the data, but those who insist that *homo sapiens* is hundreds of thousands of years old make little effort to correlate this conclusion with an insistence on objective historical factuality in respect to the fall of the first man, Adam, and its implications for the entire human race. Among many evangelical biblical scholars, moreover, one can discern an assignment of priority to salvation-history over revealed truth. Thus an emphasis on the God who acts and on his concrete historical revelation tends to replace that on *the God who speaks and acts*; interest in a dynamic deity acting in history comes to supplant interest in verbal inspiration. The Bible may survive as a religious document through

which God still speaks uniquely, but it no longer is assigned objective authority in the classical Protestant sense, for the unchanging factual character of revealed truth is in doubt.

Debate over the Bible seems again to be hardening into a 'party struggle' over the nature of revelation and authority. Liberal, neo-orthodox, and conservative scholars now all appeal to a 'Word of God', but they do not mean the same thing. Liberalism balks at objective authority and pole-vaults over the miracles of the Christian religion; neo-orthodoxy hedges over revealed information and plays leap-frog with the miraculous. Neo-orthodoxy discusses revelation in God's 'acts' from the vantage point of psychology of religion alongside an oral tradition and source-theory of Scripture. Every evangelical effort to bridge the gap to non-evangelical scholars ends up with an impossible demand for the surrender of verbal and plenary inspiration and propositional revelation as well.

Evangelical scholars are fully aware that the doctrine of the Bible controls all other doctrines of the Christian faith. 'A correct view of the Bible (its inspiration, nature, and authority)', insists one theologian, 'is prior in importance to any other doctrine.' 'Dilute or dismiss the authority of the Bible and other doctrinal matters will not long remain in the center of discussion', comments a New Testament professor, 'since no authoritative voice remains to decide what they shall be.' Another scholar comments: 'The doctrine of Scripture is fundamental to all others. The source of knowledge governs the results. Even the doctrine of Christ and salvation depends on it.' 'Without an authoritative Bible', remarks another, 'even the authority of Jesus Christ is eroded; deep down all the major problems involve the question of biblical authority, for it affects all the realms of doctrine and life, including the life and witness of the Church.' And another spokesman puts it thus: 'The formal principle of Protestantism is the objective and sole authority of the Bible. The material principle is salvation by grace alone. Both are undermined by the view of the Bible which is becoming dominant today.'

It is noteworthy that no contemporary Protestant theologian has dealt exhaustively with the subject of biblical authority in the context of the broadest ecumenical dialogue. Evangelical discussion often concentrates on objections to the conservative view, or on rear-guard controversies within the conservative camp, to the neglect of a comprehensive statement of its own position. The evangelical critique is oriented to liberal and neo-orthodox deviations, and it is ill-prepared for dialogue

with Roman Catholicism at a time when Rome is assigning new scope to the Bible and restudying its own view of church authority. Meanwhile a growing rôle for church authority in ecumenical circles, along with an unsure position on the role of the Scriptures, leaves the ecumenical dialogue open and vulnerable to both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic counter-claims. Everyman perforce will have some authority—if not the Bible or the Church, then his own reason, tradition, or 'experience'. The ecumenical Protestant loss of an authoritative Bible has shaped a vacuum which, for a time, is likely to be filled by ecclesiastical commitments but which ultimately could be filled simply by Church decree, whether post-Protestant or Roman Catholic.

Evangelicals do not dispute the fact that for a time at least Christianity may function with an impaired doctrine of Scripture. But it does so at its own peril and inevitably must then lose much of its essential message. The strength of the evangelical view has been demonstrated in manifold ways in the aftermath of the liberal erosion of Christian authority. Evangelist Billy Graham's emphasis on what 'the Bible says' attests the enduring grip of scriptural revelation on needy human hearts. The Christian colleges graduate a steady stream of ministers and missionaries whose doctrinal stability is evident in a time of theological flux.

If the strength of American evangelicalism rests in its high view of Scripture, its weakness lies in a tendency to neglect the frontiers of formative discussion in contemporary theology. Thus evangelicals forfeit the debate at these points to proponents of sub-evangelical points of view, or to those who assert evangelical positions in only a fragmentary way. One can understand why it is necessary to emphasise continually that the best precaution against burning down the house of faith is not to play with incendiary criticism. But when the edifice is already afire, the extinguisher needs to be concentrated immediately and directly on the consuming path of the flames.

The element missing in much evangelical theological writing is an air of exciting relevance. The problem is not that biblical theology is outdated; it is rather that some of its expositors seem out of touch with the frontiers of doubt in our day. Theology textbooks a half-century old sometimes offer more solid content than the more recent tracts-for-the-times, but it is to the credit of some contemporary theologians that they preserve a spirit of theological excitement and fresh relevance. Evangelicals need to overcome any impression that they are merely retooling the past and repeating clichés. If Bible reading has undergone a revolution through the preparation of new translations in the idiom of the

decade, the theology classroom in many conservative institutions needs to expound the enduring truths in the setting and language of the times. Unless we speak to our generation in a compelling idiom, meshing the great theological concerns with current modes of thought and critical problems of the day, we shall speak only to ourselves.

Almost every evangelical scholar, moreover, voices some complaint about the present theological situation, but only a minority share in the burdens of conservative scholarship and contribute concretely to an evangelical alternative.

Specific areas of theological concern meanwhile press for evangelical attention. A comprehensive statement of evangelical theology from American sources, comparable to Berkouwer's *Studies in Dogmatics* in the Netherlands, remains a necessary project. To serve its purpose, such an effort must give attention to the theological frontiers of special interest to the contemporary religious dialogue. The great issues of authority, revelation, history, the canon, and ecumenism call for sustained study. There must be room also for specialised studies that may not seem particularly relevant to present developments at the frontiers of current religious thought, in view of the fact that theologians converse over mobile fences. But contemporary Christianity is face-to-face with a major transition time in theology, and this affords evangelicals providential moment for earnest engagement.

Just now the theological debate has moved closer to central evangelical concerns than it had for several decades. In the current controversy over the connection of revelation and history, and of revelation and truth, evangelicals have a strategic opportunity to contribute at the moving frontier of contemporary theological dialogue.

DOUGLAS C. SPANNER, A.R.C.S., B.Sc., Ph.D.

Thermodynamics and the Christian View of Life *

In his essay 'A Free Man's Worship' written in 1903¹ Bertrand Russell begins with an account of Creation as given by Mephistopheles to Dr Faustus as follows:

The endless praises of the choirs of angels had begun to grow wearisome; for, after all, did he not deserve their praise? Had he not given them endless joy? Would it not be more amusing to obtain undeserved praise, to be worshipped by beings whom he tortured? He smiled inwardly, and resolved that the great drama should be performed.

For countless ages the hot nebula whirled aimlessly through space. At length it began to take shape, the central mass threw off planets, the planets cooled, boiling seas and burning mountains heaved and tossed, from black masses of cloud hot sheets of rain deluged the barely solid crust. And now the first germ of life grew in the depths of the ocean, and developed rapidly in the fructifying warmth into vast forest trees, huge ferns springing from the damp mould, sea monsters breeding, fighting, devouring, and passing away. And from the monsters, as the play unfolded itself, Man was born, with the power of thought, the knowledge of good and evil, and the cruel thirst for worship. And Man saw that all is passing in this mad, monstrous world, that all is struggling to snatch, at any cost, a few brief moments of life before Death's inexorable decree. And Man said: 'There is a hidden purpose, could we but fathom it, and the purpose is good; for we must reverence something, and in the visible world there is nothing worthy of reverence.' And Man stood aside from the struggle, resolving that God intended harmony to come out of chaos by human efforts. And when he followed the instincts which God had transmitted to him from his ancestry of beasts of prey, he called it Sin, and asked God to forgive him. But he doubted whether he could be justly forgiven, until he invented a divine Plan by which God's wrath was to have been appeased. And seeing the present was bad, he made it yet worse, that thereby the future might be better. And he gave God thanks for the strength that enabled him to forego even the joys that were possible. And God smiled; and when he saw that Man had become perfect in renunciation and worship, he sent another sun through the sky, which crashed into Man's sun; and all returned again to nebula.

'Yes' he murmured, 'it was a good play; I will have it performed again.'

* This is a paper delivered at a meeting of the Research Scientists' Christian Fellowship held during the Southampton meeting of the British Association, in the University, Southampton, on 31 August 1964.

¹ *Mysticism and Logic*, Penguin Books, 1953, pp. 50-51.

He continues:

Such, in outline, but even more purposeless, more void of meaning, is the world which Science presents for our belief. Amid such a world, if anywhere, our ideals henceforward must find a home. That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.

I don't know if Lord Russell still holds these views. Science has moved quite a long way since they were written, and such scientific doctrines as the Principle of Indeterminacy have put a rather different complexion on things. But certainly some prominent thinkers still believe that the scientific world-view is the enemy of the biblical doctrines of Providence and Purpose, as witness Sir Julian Huxley in his major work, *Evolution, the Modern Synthesis*.¹ 'The ordinary man', he writes, 'or at least the ordinary [*sic*] poet, philosopher and theologian, is always asking himself what is the purpose of human life, and is anxious to discover some extraneous purpose to which he and humanity may conform. Some find such a purpose exhibited directly in revealed religion; others think that they can uncover it from the facts of nature. One of the commonest methods of this form of natural religion is to point to evolution as manifesting such a purpose. . . . I believe this reasoning to be wholly false. The purpose manifested in evolution . . . is only an apparent purpose. It is as much a product of blind forces as is the falling of a stone to earth or the ebb and flow of the tides. It is we who have read purpose into evolution. . . . If we wish to work towards a purpose for the future of man we must formulate that purpose ourselves.' Evolutionary science, in other words, presents us with the same purposeless view of things. All is due to the same 'accidental collocations of atoms', or of predators and prey; and in so far as there is any real purpose in Life it all originates with Man, a late comer on the scene and hardly a

¹ George Allen & Unwin, 2nd edn., 1963, p. 576. Reviewed in *Faith and Thought* (Vol. 93, no. 3, summer 1964).

very stable source of this ingredient. Purpose doesn't seem therefore to be, to Sir Julian, very deeply rooted in the constitution of things. In passing we may note how, apparently unnoticed, a major presumption appears in his argument. We might be disposed to agree with his assertion that the large-scale phenomena of life are 'as much a product of blind forces' as is the falling of a stone; but that even the falling of a stone is ultimately to be thought of in such terms is a proposition to which the Bible gives an emphatic denial.¹ If simple physical happenings may be thought of as the outcome of the Divine Will (and Science can offer no valid objection to this interpretation) then Sir Julian's whole argument becomes rather insubstantial. It fails in fact to realise that scientific laws are *descriptive* and not *prescriptive*; in the ultimate sense they account for nothing.

Suppose we ask what are the elements in the scientific picture of Nature which contribute most to the impression of a Universe devoid of purpose and meaning; what would the answer be? It would hardly include Relativity, with its emphasis on what might be called the large-scale architecture of time and space; nor Quantum Theory, with its description of the fine structure of things. Even Neo-Darwinism would hardly qualify, for while it makes much of the ideas of randomness and chance it does recognise that once the level of organisation we call life, and particularly self-conscious life, has been achieved, 'progress' and eventually 'purpose' enter the world of matter; and it is not a big step from this recognition to maintain that they were there all the time, only hidden. Probably most people would agree therefore that some other element is chiefly responsible for the impression, and it is not difficult to find it in the Second Law of Thermodynamics. In fact, Bertrand Russell makes four rather specific points:

- (i) Man is the product of blind causes.
- (ii) His total life is merely the outcome of chance encounters of atoms.
- (iii) Individual life ends with the grave.
- (iv) The whole achievement of mankind is destined to extinction in the death of the solar system, and perhaps of the Universe.

It would not be true to say that all of these points illustrate our present preoccupation with the Second Law, but certainly this law has much relevance to them. In passing, Bertrand Russell himself

¹ See, for instance, Prov. xvi. 33; Luke xiii. 4, 5; Matt. x. 29, 30.

answers the first point in a later essay in the same collection¹ when he writes:

This supposition [that the world of mind and matter is a mechanical system] . . . throws no light whatever on the question whether the universe is or is not a "teleological" system,

a conclusion which permits the simultaneous validity of the biblical view of nature and its scientific description in terms of law.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics

Before we proceed it will not be out of place to say a few words about the famous Second Law of Thermodynamics. Alone among the generalisations of physics it distinguishes between a forward and a backward direction in time. It takes its rise from the observation that all happenings in physical nature involve the element of irreversibility. Even such a simple thing as the dissolving of a lump of sugar in a glass of water leaves an indelible imprint on the Universe. Of course, the sugar can be recovered in its original form, and likewise the water, but only at the cost of further changes elsewhere, changes we become aware of when the gas and electricity bills are rendered. It is impossible therefore to *exactly* restore the entire *status quo*; some sort of imprint on the physical Universe is there for all time. Thermodynamics refers to this element of irreversibility in terms of an increase in a property called the entropy, and one form of the Second Law due to Clausius runs:

'The entropy of the Universe is continually increasing'

For present purposes it is unnecessary to define entropy at all exactly; it will be enough to remark that it is connected in the positive sense with the ideas of randomness, probability, disorder and degradation. Correspondingly from a thermodynamic point of view the history of the Universe, both past and future, can be described as follows:

- (i) Nature pursues an irreversible course.
- (ii) This course is characterised by an overall continuous increase of entropy.
- (iii) The rise of entropy corresponds to a degradation of energy and a decrease of order. In particular all ordered movement is doomed to come to an end and all ordered structure to descend to the lowest level.
- (iv) Chance is the sole determining factor in the final outcome, thermodynamic equilibrium.

¹ 'On the Notion of Cause' in *Mysticism and Logic*, Penguin Books, p. 190.

The Second Law has been called the most absolute of all the laws of physics. When relativity and the quantum phenomena were discovered very radical changes were imposed on large areas of physical theory, and a fundamentally new understanding of Nature emerged; but the Second Law was unscathed. Even if modern theories of Continuous Creation are verified the significance of the Second Law will not be markedly affected, and it seems rather unlikely that this fate will ever befall it. This only makes it more urgent to face the problems it poses for Christian faith, since there seems little likelihood that science will solve them for us. Even Continuous Creation at most can only slightly alleviate them; and Continuous Creation is far from being a verified hypothesis.

Biology and the Second Law

When the time comes to discuss them I shall confine myself mainly to two aspects of the Second Law; that chance alone¹ seems to dictate the end, and that the end is thermodynamic equilibrium. Before we come to this, however, we must notice very briefly a point which has some relevance to the main problem; is the Second Law applicable to living systems? The question has a double bearing on biology. Ontogenetically, the development from a single cell to adult organism seems to run counter to the processes of degradation spoken of by the Second Law; and phylogenetically, the progress from simple organisms to highly complex ones is superficially similar. However, in neither case can any real antithesis be maintained. Simple physical systems (such as a thermal diffusion cell) can very easily be set up in which, in the context of an overall increase in the entropy of the system and environment, the system itself undergoes a decrease in entropy. It gains in order at the expense of a rather greater loss of order by the environment, rather as a heavier-than-air machine rises by imparting a greater downward motion to the air in which it moves. Ontogenetically therefore there is no real problem. The case of phylogeny is even less troublesome and need not detain us.

Thus there is no escape from the question we are considering in the thought that perhaps where life is involved the Second Law is not obeyed, and that living systems are able to conduct processes which run counter to the otherwise universal principle of degradation. So far as

¹ That is, for an *isolated* system, such as is substantially the case with our solar system.

we can see living systems are just as much subject to physical laws as are non-living ones, and in particular to the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

The Christian View of Life

In discussing the Christian, that is the biblical, view of life I shall concentrate on Man, since this is where the crux of the problem really lies. We can note the following points about the biblical doctrine of Man:

(i) The Bible regards man as what might be called a 'psychosomatic unity', or in simpler language as an 'animated body'. It was Greek thought which divided man up into 'soul' and 'body' as separate parts, and this separation has persisted in much Christian thought, as in the well-known hymn:

On the Resurrection morning
Soul and body meet again.

However, biblical passages which refer to the two must be interpreted not in the light of Plato, but in that of Scripture as a whole. The Greek word *psyche* is translated 'soul' fifty-eight times in the New Testament and 'life' forty times; and in many places the sense is clearly not that of the Platonic idea. Thus Herod sought the young child's *life*¹; we are to take no thought for our *life*, what we shall eat²; the apostles hazarded their *lives*.³ If we wished to maintain the distinction in the Greek sense between soul and body then in the passages quoted the appropriate word would seem to be body (*soma*) rather than soul (*psyche*). On the other hand there are passages where the reverse is true; it is the *body* which is cast into hell⁴ (*Gehenna*, not *Hades*). In this context much Christian thought, following Plato, would instinctively substitute *soul*.

(ii) However, this unity is a *spoilt* one since Man is a fallen creature. This emphasis lies at the back of the words so often on the lips of Jesus Christ, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' or 'Thy faith hath made thee whole'. This wholeness however, is not something self-contained, and man is not to be regarded as like a broken watch needing repair. It is something realised only when man's life recovers its right relationship with God, and in fact this aspect of biblical teaching is very strongly

¹ Matt. ii. 20.

² Matt. vi. 25.

³ Acts xv. 26.

⁴ Matt. v. 29-30.

stressed. Consider such passages as 'In the Name of Jesus Christ . . . even in Him doth this man stand before you whole'¹; 'ye are complete in Him'²; 'behold, thou art made whole; sin no more',³ sin being a principle of separation from God⁴; or 'In Me ye . . . have peace',⁵ a most important element in the biblical idea of peace being unity and wholeness.

(iii) While the Bible does not sub-divide man into parts it does speak of different qualities of life, according as man is dominated by different aspects of his total existence. 'He that loveth his life (*psyche*) shall lose it; he that hateth his life (*psyche*) . . . shall keep it unto life (*zoē*) eternal'.⁶ Life connotes two things in particular: awareness, and the power of response. Imagine a man spending his last days under sudden and unexpected sentence of death. He is stunned, dead to the world, to music, to science or to any other interest. His awareness towards these things has fled, and his life is dominated by the presence of fear. Compare this with the heightened awareness of a man whose life is under the domination of a different element, love. Falling in love is perhaps a rather dangerous illustration to use here, but in the best cases it will serve to illustrate the point! These examples may help us to see what the Bible means by different qualities of life as conditioned by different levels of awareness, accompanied by different abilities to respond. As examples of its stress on the former (i.e. awareness) we may instance 'Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy'⁷; and 'this is eternal life (*zoē*) that they know Thee . . .'.⁸ For the latter (i.e. power to respond) we may recall 'I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me',⁹ and 'the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action'.¹⁰

(iv) Man's life is entrusted to him by God and will finally be required of him. This is true whether the use he makes of it is good, as in our Lord's case 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do'¹¹; or evil, as in the parable, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul (*psyche*) shall be required of thee'.¹² In the biblical view therefore, man's natural life as now constituted emphatically has a God-appointed termination; it is lived under a regime in which it is 'subjected to futility' and in 'bondage to decay'.¹³

¹ Acts iv. 10 (R.V.).

² Col. ii. 10.

³ John v. 14.

⁴ Isa. lix. 2.

⁵ John xvi. 33.

⁶ John xii. 25.

⁷ Psalm xvi. 11.

⁸ John xvii. 3 (R.S.V.).

⁹ Phil. iv. 13 (R.V.).

¹⁰ Dan. xi. 32 (R.S.V.).

¹¹ John xvii. 4.

¹² Luke xii. 20.

¹³ Rom. viii. 20-21 (R.S.V.).

(v) Finally, and as a consequence of the foregoing, the Bible is not concerned with the Greek way of posing the problem of the inner conflicts of man's nature. The Greeks saw this as an antagonism between reason and passion, or soul and body; the Bible sees it essentially as a conflict between man as an autonomous being and God. As a highly inadequate and anachronistic analogy we might say that the Greeks saw man as a locomotive with its wheels all askew; the Bible sees him as off-the-rails. Correspondingly the Greeks sought to align the wheels, the Bible seeks to replace him on the track. It is consistent with this view that in its doctrine of the resurrection the Bible does not state that the body is raised to be reunited with its separated soul; it is the *man* who is raised. He arises with a new body (*pneuma*—instead of *psyche*-), the characteristic being that in this body the Christian man's relationship with God is fully and finally restored¹; in other words, his life achieves perfection.

Thermodynamics and the Christian View

I now have to try to draw together the threads of what are two quite distinct 'universes of discourse', so distinct in fact that they may seem to have very few points of contact. As we dealt with the thermodynamic standpoint first it will be appropriate to pick up the threads of this, and relate them as we do so to the biblical view, which is fresh in our minds.

Life as we know it (barring ghosts and other questionable phenomena) is always associated with matter and energy. There seems no possible escape for matter and energy from the implications of the Second Law. These are that the end to which all things are moving is determined solely by considerations of entropy (that is, chance); and that the end is characterised by total equilibrium. It has to be remembered that all awareness through the medium of the physical senses must cease at thermodynamic equilibrium, the eye, for instance, seeing only when the light entering it is out of equilibrium with the radiation which as a material body it is itself emitting, and a similar statement being true for the ear. Further, the power of organised movement or response is also at an end. Biologically therefore, thermodynamic equilibrium is total death.

In comparing this with the biblical view we notice at once some points of congruity. Bearing in mind that the Second Law is based

¹ Phil. iii. 21 (R.S.V.); 1 Cor. xv. 28, 42-44.

wholly on *physical* observations made on *physical* systems,¹ and has therefore no validity when applied to non-physical entities such as mind or spirit, it is noteworthy that the Bible also speaks of the physical side of man as inevitably subject to decay and death, though in its teaching on death it goes beyond this and embraces also spirit.² Further, the characteristics of mortality are very much those predicted, in different terms, by the Second Law: no physical movement and no awareness,³ and strikingly, no order.⁴ For the Bible, man's progress to this state is also, from one point of view, validly described in terms of chance.⁵ Thus, provided we confine attention to the physical aspect of man's being no conflict appears between the biblical teaching and the expectations of thermodynamics.

The Crux of the Matter

However, this is just what Bertrand Russell, in the passage quoted, does not do; he appears to subject man's non-physical side, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, to the Second Law as well. The justification for this is probably to be sought in a belief that mind and personality have arisen as what might be called local phenomena within the context of an overall movement of matter and energy to thermodynamic equilibrium. Of course therefore, being conditioned by matter, they share its fate. But the Bible views things the other way round; it teaches that matter and energy (it does not of course use these precise notions) have arisen as local phenomena within an overall context of life and thought—that of God.⁶ To repeat the point: Bertrand Russell appears to see life and thought within a framework of matter and energy; the Bible implies that the reverse is the true view. Put with a different emphasis, one sees mind as arising out of the workings of chance, the other sees chance as operative owing to the decisions of mind.

It should be fairly obvious that which of these two views is the right one is a point which cannot be decided by logic alone, even granted the physically universal validity of the Second Law. It is probably quite possible to maintain with logical self-consistency that mind has arisen as a newcomer out of the chance encounters of atoms 'wandering endlessly, meaninglessly'; after all, it is just conceivable that plastic letters

¹ Living organisms are physical systems in this sense.

² See for example Luke xv. 24, Ephes. ii. 1, Rev. iii. 1.

³ Eccles. ix. 10.

⁴ Job x. 22.

⁵ Eccles. ix. 11, Luke x. 31.

⁶ Gen. i. 1, John i. 1-3.

shaken out of a bag might fall into positions spelling out a piece of pregnant prose! But life is more than logic, and few would probably feel satisfied that such a barren consideration did justice to the facts.

On the other hand the thesis that a physical universe dominated by the Second Law (that is, by chance) had been called into being by Mind runs into the difficulty that the rule of chance seems to be the negation of the rule of Mind; it would appear therefore on this view as if Mind, having exercised itself creatively, abdicates in favour of chance, at least for a time. This conclusion however, is quite unwarranted. It remains entirely true that the self-same events can be validly described both in terms of chance and randomness, and in terms of mind and will. As a matter of fact the very realisation that all physical laws are statistical in nature has been used by an American physicist¹ of no mean standing to reconcile the biblical doctrine of an immanent Providence with the scientific picture of a world subject to law; and in a simple way this contention can be justified as follows.

Without loss of generality we may consider a series of 'random' numbers instead of a sequence of chance events. What is required of such a series in order that it may legitimately be called random? Simply this, that it should follow no readily discernible law. The series 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 . . . might, as a matter of fact, be part of a random sequence obtained perhaps by the throwing of a symmetrical dice; but we should hardly be prepared to accept it as such since it appears to exemplify too obvious a law. A random series of numbers can accordingly be generated not only by such mindless processes as throwing a dice but also by procedures *mentally determined at every point* if only such procedures *follow rules sufficiently involved*. For instance, a line of chosen form might be drawn across a table of logarithms, and the numbers appearing along it selected by a suitable arbitrary procedure. If this programme were carefully designed, the detection of any law in the resulting numbers would be an impossible task, and they would accordingly be genuinely 'random'. But at no stage has mind abdicated in favour of chance. Nor need it in the realm of natural events. Here both descriptions remain valid, for mind has no difficulty at all in 'programming' random events.

The above considerations are not, incidentally, the whole story. Even if the selection of individual events is left to such a mindless procedure as dice-throwing it is still true that chance operates only within a framework of law. The motions of atoms may be random, but the laws

¹ W. G. Pollard, *Chance and Providence*, Faber & Faber, 1959.

according to which they interact are not, and this is true even if these laws be themselves statistical. Mind can design the dice to be loaded in any way it chooses, or to have many unequal sides instead of six equal ones. All such choices will influence the results chance throws up. The 'absolute empire of chance' becomes in fact, in the light of all this, rather a problematical conception.

Spirit Transcendent

We are therefore perfectly free to conclude with the Bible that the transcendent reality is not matter but mind, or as we would prefer to put it, Spirit.¹ Matter and energy are but impermanent inhabitants of the world of Spirit, and there is no inconsistency involved in holding this view alongside a belief in the validity meanwhile, for physical nature, of the Second Law. Mind has the workings of this law firmly under control. This is the view which in effect the Bible itself takes in connection with both human affairs and those of nature.²

The Christian View of Life—an Analogy

The conclusion that Spirit is transcendent over matter and energy refers of course to God as Spirit and not to man, and in this essay we are concerned principally with man. The Christian view of man does after all teach that he has an essential physical element in his make-up (subject presumably to the Second Law). If this is not a dispensable part of him how does the whole man stand with regard to the Law? What any acceptable analogy needs to safeguard is the Bible's doctrine that when man's life is rightly related to God it is everlasting³; yet the physical part of him which is subject to decay is not an 'optional extra', but is so essential a part of him that it must partake in his resurrection⁴ to give meaning to this everlastingness. It should be noted that 'resurrection' in Scripture always has reference to the body, though not *exclusively* so; it is the whole man who is raised. The body with which he is raised is not identical with the old, though it maintains continuity with it. It is opposed to it as 'spiritual' to 'natural',⁵ and this also is a point the analogy must meet. Finally, we must accommodate the fact that the spiritual element of man takes precedence over the physical.⁶

¹ John iv. 24; Gen. i. 2.

² Cf. 2 Chron. xviii. 33, xviii, 17-22; Psalm xxix (R.V.).

³ John xi. 26 and many other passages.

⁴ Mark xii. 26-27.

⁵ I Cor. xv. 44.

⁶ I Cor. ix. 27.

Scripture itself suggests an analogy for us in such passages as those where it speaks of the believer as God's 'workmanship' (*poiēma*, cf. English 'poem')¹ and man as having been made in the 'image' (Heb. *tselem*, Gk. *eikōn*)² of God. These figures can be held to justify the description of man as God's great 'work of art'. If this be a legitimate way of regarding him then we can draw the following parallels. A work of art has no existence of its own until it is embodied in a physical medium. Until then it is known only to its Creator; after that it can enter into manifold relation. This might well point the significance of the body, which like the medium in human works of art is subject to decay.³ However, there is clearly something in a work of art which transcends the medium. It is this which is 'known' in aesthetic experience, and it corresponds to spirit 'known' in personal encounter. Clearly this element is not subject to the Second Law. In an important sense this aspect of a work of art is independent of the physical medium; were the latter to be destroyed the work could be reconstituted, recognisably the same, in a new medium, perhaps in oils instead of water-colours. This may serve as a parallel to the Bible's doctrine of resurrection and of recognition of identity in the world to come.⁴ Further, it is suggestive about the way we should think of the believer between death and resurrection; known only to his Creator⁵ and waiting to be 'clothed upon' before he can enter into the manifold relations of eternal life.⁶

The final point the analogy can but dimly hint at. It concerns the quality of life which in man, according to the Bible, depends so much on the extent to which he lives in the presence of God⁷; that is, in the experience of personal encounter with Him. It is as if a work of art, designed for a place of honour in the artist's home, were to banish itself to a dusty cellar. Of what quality would its existence then be compared with what it should have been? It might almost as well never have existed at all. This is virtually what the Bible says about the man whose life is lived out of relationship with God.⁸

The Conclusion of the Matter

The question whether the Second Law of Thermodynamics poses any problems for the Christian view of life clearly turns mainly upon what we regard as the transcendent reality. If, like materialism

¹ Eph. ii. 10.

³ Rom. viii. 20.

⁶ 2 Cor. v. 4.

² Gen. i. 26; Col. iii. 10.

⁴ Thess. iv. 13, 14.

⁷ Psalm xvi. 11.

⁵ Phil. i. 23.

⁸ Luke xv. 16, 24.

and scientific humanism, we see matter and energy in this role constituting the ultimate frame of reference, then clearly the Christian view is unacceptable. It is thus that Bertrand Russell apparently portrayed it:

Only *within* the scaffolding of these truths . . . can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.

On the other hand if we see God as ultimate, then things are otherwise. The scientific scheme of things (i.e. the Second Law) is still wholly acceptable, not only when confronted with the Bible's doctrine of God but also, as our final analogy shows, when confronted with its doctrine of man. But it is a scheme of things which fits *inside*, not *outside*, the biblical:

*In Thy light shall we see light.*¹

and

'Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth;
And the heavens are the work of Thy hands.
They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure:
Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;
As a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed:

But Thou art the same,
And Thy years shall have no end.
The children of Thy servants shall continue. . . .'²

As to which of the two views to take the Second Law can give us little guidance; the great questions of existence are after all always moral and spiritual and have to be decided on such grounds.³

¹ Psalm xxxvi. 9.

² Psalm cii. 25-28.

³ John iii. 19-21; Prov. ix. 10.

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Dilemma in Israel

ONE of the most fascinating, and perhaps the most important of the problems with which the student of historical geography is faced concerns the Jews and Israel. He must consider, in the first place, the fact of the Diaspora and the circumstances that permitted Jewish communities to exist for two and a half millennia in eighty to a hundred different places of widely contrasting environmental opportunity, while at the same time these communities maintained a life and culture separate and distinct from the host countries but with common features strong enough to ensure unity in spite of no central authority, no common land, no constitution and no head of State.

Next he must consider the fact of Israel; its geo-strategic location, its remarkable configuration; its unique variety of settlement opportunity, and the emergence first of the nation, then of the Commonwealth of Israel, whose moral, social and religious life was based on laws given to the nation once and for all at Sinai; and whose national consciousness marked it off completely from the nations which surrounded it.

And thirdly, he must consider the circumstances that made possible the re-establishment of the State; and seek to evaluate its significance and the part Israel has to play in the world today. Modern Israel is not an intrusion into the Middle East, for not only have the Jews a more consistent record of continuous settlement in Palestine and the adjacent areas than practically any other identifiable inhabitants, but, on those occasions in the course of history when it appeared that world Jewry would collapse or be completely annihilated, it was always Palestinian Jews who produced the rallying centre.¹ Moreover, a large proportion of the Jewish communities now settled in Israel—the figure is given as high as 65 per cent—comprise Jews who have moved into the country from adjacent Middle East States.

Nevertheless, the re-emergence of a strong State of Israel creates problems with reference to the surrounding young and somewhat insecure Arab States, and these problems extend in their implication far beyond the borders of the Middle East. At the same time there is a dilemma within Israel itself. Stated briefly, it is that forms of society now developing in Israel are different from those envisaged during the

¹ James Parker, *Five Roots of Israel*.

Diaspora; and accordingly we may look forward to a great many changes in the social geography of the country—though within a framework that has been unconsciously dependent on the early history of the nation. To the religious Jew the fundamental history of the world is a relationship between God and mankind. He is aware that God has a plan and purpose, and that the ultimate experience for man is to become identified with that plan and purpose. He is conscious of the possibility and the duty of being brought into intimate affinity with the Logos—the Lord—or ‘that which happens or is’. The patriarchs spoke of a fleeting awareness of this experience. The prophets looked for its full manifestation. Throughout the Diaspora the Jew—unwilling to admit or investigate the claim that the ‘Word became flesh’ in the person of Jesus—continued to remember and look for this ultimate dialogical relationship with the Godhead.

This theme, of the encounter of a particular people and the Lord of the world in the course of history, is central in the Hebrew scriptures. It is depicted in records of the theophanies; it is expressed in songs that give thanks for victory through divine intervention and in prayers that plead aid or lament failure; and it is sustained in prophecies that warn and exhort and that reassert the basic nature of the people’s relationship with the Godhead.

The prophets stressed the contention that the Jewish nation does not exist for its own sake. With directness and simplicity they declared that a peculiar bond ties this particular people with a God who is holy and righteous. They spoke not so much to the nation as such, but to the individuals who comprised it, reminding them that they were members of a community set apart from the rest of mankind to convey what God is like to the rest of the world’s communities. Such a conception of God and of man’s relation to Him is the antithesis of pantheism. It is historico-ethical monotheism in which the people experience a personal revelation of God as Father of the nation: and it marks out the race immediately and completely from all other nations.

It would appear that the primary objectives of this selection or election of a particular people living in a selected environment were somewhat as follows. Israel was to proclaim the existence of God, and present Jehovah as the one God of Revelation. Blessings arising out of this experience were to become the envy, and ultimately the experience, of other nations. The Jews were to record and preserve the word of God, and they were to become God’s nation-priest through which channel God’s blessing would flow to all nations. They were destined to

bring into the world the world's Redeemer and they were instructed in great detail about the nature of His human origin, His national origin and His divine origin. This heritage and mission were nevertheless dependent upon obedience to God; and the destiny of the nation to some extent—and apart from the sovereign will and grace of God—was dependent solely upon the response made to this challenge to obedience. This idea of the segregation of a select line—whether in the lives of the patriarchs, or in the monarchy, or later in the 'remnant' of the nation—contributed to the withdrawal of the Jews from association with other races; it led to the conception of Messianism, and to a consciousness of mission; it gave to the race a sense of responsibility towards the rest of mankind; and it sustained them throughout the Diaspora.

Accordingly, the history of Israel, unlike the history of other nations, is the history of a people whose activities are dictated by their faith; and progress towards the fulfilment of the destiny of the nation is dependent upon the actions of the individuals who comprise the nation. For this reason Israel cannot be placed into any of the usual categories of nations according to their constitutional structure or ideological bases. Israel is unique.

That Israel should believe in an intimate personal relationship with a personal God and in a divine mission that involves the salvation of society is the more remarkable when it is realised that the nation emerged in an area dominated by the three great cultures of Babylon, Egypt and Greece. Long before the rise of Israel, both the Assyrians and the Persians made successive attempts to understand the forces that govern world affairs. Intensive study was made of the movements of the heavenly bodies. But attempts to understand the future by this means degenerated into astrological prognostications. The Jew seemed to realise that God could not be unveiled in this way; for the man who imagined that by searching he could know and hold the mystery of the unknown had never met God face to face, as he had closed the door to revelation.

The Egyptians, on the other hand, tried to outwit nature by probing the mysteries of death and the life hereafter, and to overcome or achieve eternal life by the exercise of magical practices and the invention of mystical formulas. But the Jew regarded the curiosity and mystic practices of Egypt as offensive to the holiness of God and proof only of the unfitness of man to experience a personal meeting by these means.

The Greeks produced a third approach by setting out on an endless search for perfection that left no place for revelation nor for a personal

experience of an intimate relationship with God, but found its satisfaction only in inconclusive philosophic speculation.

Israel was located in a strategic position between these opposing cultures. She was brought face to face with God at the commencement of her history and came to know Him by direct revelation. She learnt to fear Him, yet trust Him in a filial sense. Subsequently she sought to grasp more fully and enter experimentally into the fullness of this relationship. This conception of God oriented her attitude to history, which regarded the history of mankind as revolving around the existence and function of Israel in world affairs. It could be seen in her belief that she would become in due course the divinely appointed agent through whom God would make himself known to man. The messianic vision, the focal point of which was the redemption of Israel, and subsequently the redemption of humanity, became the co-ordinating force which held together the nation's sense of purpose and destiny. Furthermore, Israel seemed to accept the two premises on which the realisation of these objectives rests.

The first was the presence of Israel in her land. To be exiled from the Land of Israel was, for Israel as a nation, to be exiled from God. Israel believed that the future prosperity of the race was based on clearly defined covenants or promises revealed to the nation by God through the prophets and subsequently recorded in the Jewish sacred writings. These covenants apply to specific facts of location and to economic prosperity as well as to spiritual benefits. Thus they gave rise to the conviction not only that the Jews are a 'chosen people' but that they are destined to occupy a 'promised land'. This land has definite limits and peculiar characteristics that make it ideal as a nursery for spiritual instruction. At the same time it occupies the most strategic location in the Middle East. From this unique position and from no other, Israel sees herself fulfilling her ultimate mission in world affairs.

The second premise was the necessity of the people of Israel to be established in the Land of Israel, in order to be ready for the fulfilment of the Messianic Vision, whether that was to be the physical appearance of the Redeemer of Israel, or through a national experience that would culminate in the fulfilment of her destiny in service to the Gentile nations.

This religiously based conception of the history and future evolution of the race influenced the attitude of Jewish thought towards nature itself and towards the rest of mankind. It is fundamental to an understanding of Jewish history. It enabled the Jew to rise above the influence

of environmental or economic determinism and to regard himself as the human agency who would in due course make known to the rest of the world the ultimate purpose of God. Indeed, he saw history in the long run vanquishing the course of nature rather than conforming to a natural evolutionary process. Accordingly the race survived in spite of a dispersion that extended over forty-five generations and that was interspersed by successive persecutions and pogroms directed towards its extermination.

Ben Gurion calls this 'the Riddle of Jewish survival'. He asks the question, why, of all peoples in the Middle East, nothing has survived but inscriptions, *tells*, ruins and temple remains. Language, literature and religions have vanished. Yet the Jewish people alone have preserved their historic identity; have ingathered from four score countries their scattered communities, and have already begun, in their ancient homeland, to integrate their past traditions with modern culture. His 'Leap in Time' theory suggests that modern Israel is closer in touch with the past than was possible in the varied environments in which Jews lived during the dispersion.

Nevertheless, the course of events during the past eighty years which have resulted in the return to the Land have, in fact, created for Israel what may be called an unperceived dilemma. The emergence of Zionism and various experiments in national socialism have, for the time being, superseded the supernatural ideals that gave birth and rebirth to the nation and sustained it through the long centuries of dispersion.

One of the remarkable facts associated with the ingathering is that the majority of those returning to the land do not consciously believe in the message of their own scriptures. The average Israeli finds it difficult to recognise or admit that the scriptures, upon which the nation's existence and hopes have been based and sustained, truly present the history of the world with reference to its creation and redemption. He turns away from the thought that there are nodal points in the history of mankind where the Godhead and creation meet. Nor does he perceive that these points of meeting and man's response to them are reflections of his own personal experience. He seems to regard history either as an unpredictable evolutionary process, or as a mere deterministic development of events deducible from analysis of past sequences. He has travelled so far in thought away from the faith of his forefathers that the very word 'God' to the non-religious Israeli has come to connote, not the Creator of the Universe, but exclusively and merely

the sanction for a particular set of rules demanded by the extreme orthodox Jews.

The sequence of circumstances by which this happened is somewhat as follows. The Torah—the early Jewish scriptures—was of course intended to lead to the manifestation of the Messiah. But with the rejection of Christ and the final dispersion from the Land, attempts were made to continue the religious instruction of the people through the development of Rabbinic Judaism. Principles, interpretations, laws and ways of life were gradually collected and recorded in the Talmud which became the authoritative basis of the religious life of Orthodox Judaism. Although these laws and interpretations were based originally on sound principles and continued much that was of high moral value they led away from the Torah itself. In consequence, Judaism, whether Orthodox or Liberal, has become just another 'religion'; almost as organised Christianity has become a 'religion'. The one has rejected the New Testament revelation of the Messiah on the basis of unbelief; the other has largely denied its teaching in practice. The effects of this are particularly noticeable in modern Israel, where apart from the few orthodox groups the average Israeli has little time for religion. On the one hand he sees in Meah Shearim, Orthodox Ashkenazim Jews from Europe, and Orthodox Sephardim Jews of Mediterranean origin who have little regard for or confidence in an emergent Israel. He sees them broken into sects, but agreed for the most part in keeping separate from the State. They do not vote; they profess to remain politically neutral. But they appear to be divided into political groups rather than into groups of outstanding piety or scholarship and they are heartily despised. On the other hand he sees other religious groups who identify religious faith with temporal power. He sees sections of the Christian Church, such as Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Copts and Romans, retaining considerable power in the control of property and people yet exercising little spiritual influence. He sees Druses, Maronites; alongside Baptists and a dozen other Protestant groups. He sees non-orthodox Jewish sects; exclusive orders as at Ein Gedi and many new religious arrivals all seeking to justify their existence and substantiate their claims in the land.

At the same time he is aware that 12 to 14 per cent of the population around him are in Moslem Arab communities who find it impossible to accept either Judaism with its strange history of 2,500 years in exile, or Christianity with its strange doctrine, based on a cross and humility of life.

It is within this context that Israel is attempting to achieve the ideal state by secular means without reference to the basic faith of the nation. Many modern Israelis reject, for the most part, the idea of founding a true and just community based on religious principles, and have substituted for them, nationalism, ideologies, programmes, political theories and social experiments. Theodore Herzl and other ardent Zionists were concerned primarily with the re-establishment in Palestine of a place of refuge for Jews and a centre from which anti-Semitism could be combated. At Degania, the birthplace of the Kibbutz, it was determined to create a society which earned its bread by the sweat of its brow; though, as material accomplishment and technical efficiency superseded the more fundamental needs, so it was re-discovered that man does not live by bread alone. Many of the early settlements were Marxist in their conception and were designed to contribute to world socialism. So strong was the Marxist influence that in the Declaration of Independence the word Redeemer was removed from the phrase 'The Rock and Redeemer of Israel' because 'God was not responsible for the coming into being of the state and no credit should be given to Him'. It was Ben Gurion who suggested the compromise wording 'Rock of Israel' which left open various interpretations of their significance. But the 'Rock of Israel' came to connote the 'will to live' of the nation and so denied the people's dependence upon the transcendental God of Israel. While this temporarily united shades of religious opinion towards the re-building of the State, it has also succeeded for the time being in cutting off the Jewish Nation and its Bible from a living God.

But there remains inborn in the fibre of the Jews and far deeper than these outward expressions of an emergent society a simple and almost unconscious religious belief that has persisted throughout centuries of isolation and persecution. By curious anomaly, all are agreed that the Bible must remain the basic textbook of Jewish education and culture, even though much of the teaching from it is directed towards the building up of a national ego, which it is hoped will satisfy the religious and the non-religious. Some more thoughtful observers would even go so far as to suggest that modern Israel is already fulfilling her destiny. They interpret the willingness of the Jews to keep to a frugal level of personal expenditure in order to be able to implement the law of return and the creation of their new society, and their programme of help to Afro-Asian countries, as being a most exciting fulfilment of the demand of the prophets. They see technical aid as a kind of fulfilment of Judaism as a missionary religion even though undertaken blindly.

But the sabras and other young Israelis are uneasy, and are becoming dissatisfied with a system that seeks to meet only material and cultural needs. Amidst the variety of experiments in communal living, each exploiting its own interpretation and each seeking after the true destiny of the nation, there is a growing consciousness that nationalism and socialism alone are producing a State that has little connection with the concept and forces that originally created it; nor with its intended mission in society. Even the self-sacrificial altruism of the kibbutz is being replaced by the more liberal moshav: yet the ideology and philosophy behind the moshav are not able to meet the demands of either the economic progress of the land or the unsatisfied spiritual hunger of its members.

It may be that the solution of Israel's dilemma will come only when her people accept the place and pattern and purpose in world society set down for them in their own sacred writings, and are prepared once again to humble themselves sufficiently to seek and obey the God of Revelation.

The Parable Form in the Old Testament and the Rabbinic Literature¹

I. *Criterion and Kinds*

ANALOGY is the most familiar of all homiletical tools, and the more pictorial of its end products become parables. Analogy is the touchstone of the parable, indeed its essence—the story, if there be one, is mere trimming. The grain of mustard seed is no whit less a true example than the Good Samaritan, though the element of narrative is almost lacking. The simple words, 'My love is like a red red rose that's newly sprung in June' build up a perfect secular parable in germ, whereas 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' is merely a moral tale in verse. Every specimen of the form has a teaching purpose, but the ostensible theme is never the real point of the pencil, only the knife which sharpens it. When the lover looks at his symbol, the deep red rose, does he care two straws about botany? The analogy of a good parable must above all things be forceful and vivid. A Rabbi wishes to underline the inescapable interdependence of individual and community. Instead of thundering a long harangue to his sleepy listeners, who already know it all in theory, he gains their immediate attention by deftly likening Israel to a company of people sailing in a ship. One individualistic passenger claiming, in virtue of his paid ticket, absolute rights over the space immediately below him, begins to bore a hole. If his rights are honoured, all must drown.² Here the symbol vividly spotlights the thing symbolised, and makes a first-rate parable, though the story aspect is negligible. Punch and clarity was probably the first purpose of this kind of teaching, though many obscure, esoteric and allegorical examples are found later.³

In Hebrew, a parable is a *mashal*, but a *mashal* is not necessarily a parable. This word has three main groups of meaning: (1) poem, song or taunt song; (2) wisdom teaching or proverb; (3) any kind of parable. It

¹ This article is reprinted from the *Evangelical Quarterly* (vol. xxxvi, no. 3, July-September 1964) by kind permission of the Editor and the author.

² *Seder Eliyyahu Rabba*, quoted Levertoff, *Midrash Sifre on Numbers*, London 1926, p. 36, note 9. See also J.E., vol. XII, pp. 46 ff. (The footnote abbreviations correspond to those in the writer's *Rabbinic Theology*.)

³ Cf. Matt. xiii. 11 ff., and Strack-Billerbeck ad. loc., with parallels.

is only with the chief items in the last group of meanings that this article deals. These require some rough preliminary definition.

A fable is a plant or animal story meant to teach a lesson, with characters usually personified; the parable proper is a personal comparison or story, transcribing a real or inventing a potential human experience, or perhaps reflecting a facet of nature, in the artistic extension of a simile; the allegory is the detailed description of one thing which is really a cryptogram for something else not overtly disclosed, though perhaps obvious enough—the artistic extension of a metaphor. In each case, the moral or lesson is the object, the analogy the mirror which reflects it. The definitions are somewhat rough—a fable may be an allegory at the same time, and the distinctions between parable and allegory are frequently blurred. The paramyth is the personification of some moral, mental or spiritual quality, such as Wisdom in the book of Proverbs, or Torah in the Rabbinic writings.¹ The paradeigma is the appeal to a famous name of the past as authority or example. This begins within the canon of the Old Testament, for Moses is thus invoked in Psalm xcix. 6, Solomon in Nehemiah xiii. 26. Hebrews xi is notable in the New Testament, and Rabbinic examples number thousands. Every contemporary preacher uses the same device, whether from Scripture or from secular biography. Allegorical interpretation, the reading of new meanings into old books, has adequate Rabbinic exemplification, though Philo is its main exponent. It has been variously used to explain the scandalous behaviour of Homer's gods, and to adapt the teachings of the Old Testament to changing social conditions. Akin to this is the allegorical interpretation of the dreams of, say, Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar by the chosen servant of God. The word parable may be used loosely to cover all these forms, except perhaps the last. The present study is concerned particularly with fable, parable proper and allegory.

Introductory formulae to parables are almost entirely lacking in the Old Testament,² common but not essential in the New, almost universal in the Rabbinic literature.³ As the order is chronological, it is possible that natural Oriental idiom developed into more self-conscious art. The Old Testament demonstrates that the formula is a mere appendage, adding little to the value of the parable. The simplest Rabbinic

¹ The Lie and Injustice are used in a striking paramyth in *Midrash Yalkut on Genesis*, chap. 56, but the writer knows the passage only at second hand.

² Isa. xxviii. 23 and Ezek. xvii. 2 are approximations to such formulae.

³ For exceptions, cf. Sanh. 91^a init; Gen. R. X, 9; etc.

convention is the bare Hebrew preposition, *lamed*, corresponding to *ὡς* in the New Testament, standing alone,¹ or with the word *mashal* prefixed.² This Rabbinic shorthand implied 'The comparison suggested is . . .'. There are several more elaborate formulae, most of them hinging on the same preposition. A common one runs: 'A parable. To what may the matter be compared? It may be compared to. . .'.³ This is similar to the Lucan 'Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children. . .'. Matthew uses a similar form.⁴ Two pleasantly variant openings are 'In ordinary worldly custom . . .'⁵ and 'Come and see how the character of the Holy One, blessed be He, differs from the character of men of flesh and blood'.⁶ The Rabbinic complexity and variation is much greater.

II. *The Fable*

The fable, beloved of the nations of antiquity, might be aetiological, ethical or allegorical in purport. The first kind, dear to the heart of Aesop, made scant appeal to the Hebrew mind, whilst Aesop troubled his head little about the third. In the second type, widely interpreted, there is common ground.

The New Testament is devoid of fables, whilst the traces in the Old Testament are scanty but significant. It is clearly implied that Solomon was the author of many,⁷ but these have not survived, for the two undisputed Scriptural examples are not associated with his name.⁸ The rare canonical use of a delightful form of such clear mnemonic advantage may be due to its ready adaptability to counsels of prudential ethic, offset by its marked limitations as a vehicle of spiritual instruction.

In the superb fable of Jotham (Judges ix. 8-15) the trees seeking a king are the men of Shechem, the olive, vine and fig potential candidates who decline office, possibly indeed Gideon and his son and grandson, as Judges viii. 22 f. might suggest. This is not a piece of spiritual or even political teaching, and it is certainly not a plea for republican government—it is merely skilful unmasking of the deceit and treachery of one

¹ Cf. Gen. R. LXXXVI, 2; Eccles. R. XI, 9, 1; etc., etc.

² Cf. Ber. 35^a; Num. R. XVIII, 3; etc.

³ Ber. 7^b, etc., etc. There are numerous sub-variants.

⁴ Luke vii. 31; Matt. xi. 16. ⁵ Gen. R. I, 1; Lev. R. XXIV, 2; etc.

⁶ Ber. 5^a, 10^a, etc. See also Strack-Billerbeck, vol. i, p. 653; vol. ii, pp. 7-9.

⁷ 1 Kings iv. 33.

⁸ The disputed example, Ezek. xvii. 3-10, will be discussed below.

bad king, Abimelech. Its brilliant symbolism has embalmed for all time a petty and rather bloody page of history. The punctuation of the English versions is disastrous. Jotham's exposition of his own fable (verses 16-20) is interrupted by a lengthy parenthesis, a slight blemish on his forensic skill. This is marked as though it consisted exactly of verses 17, 18, whereas it should extend half a verse further in both directions, beginning after 'king' in verse 16, ending after 'this day' in verse 19. Jotham begins with an ironical supposition of good faith on the part of the men of Shechem who have made Abimelech king—then his personal feelings overcome him, and he talks just a little too long about their shameful faithlessness towards his own family. The real clinching of the fable comes in verses 16a, 19b, and 20. The ridiculous pride of the worthless bramble or buckthorn in verse 15 is capped by the merciless sarcasm of verse 19b, where the usurper Abimelech is damned and stripped of every pretence.

Comparable in forcefulness, though briefer in compass, is the tiny fable of the cedar and the thistle in 2 Kings xiv. 9. King Amaziah of Judah, flushed with his victory over Edom, boldly challenged his stronger rival, King Jehoash of Israel, to war. The contemptuous message of the fable stung him to fury and hasty attack, to his final ruin.

The Rabbinic literature is very well sprinkled with fables. Some of these were of international currency in the ancient world,¹ but their original setting may be lost in some new imparted emphasis, legislative or dialectic. The heron which on promise of reward removes a bone stuck in the lion's throat is then told that its reward consists in the continued and rather surprising ownership of its head. This is a childhood favourite in Jewish dress, but the fresh implication is that Israel (the heron) must not make too many demands on Rome (the lion).² Fable has of course slipped into allegory. Similarly, the thirsty bird dropping pebbles down the neck of an earthenware water-pot becomes in Talmudic argument a snake carrying water to a wine jar with comparable purpose.³ Haman is the villain of several shafted fables. In his impossible desire to destroy Israel, he is likened to a foolish bird trying to turn land into sea, sea into land, all with its own beak.⁴ One stockowner possesses an idle and well-fed sow, with a hard-working but hungry ass and filly. The ass comforts her offspring with assurances of safety, for work

¹ See *J.E.*, arts. *Aesop's Fables among the Jews*; *Fable*.

² Gen. R. LXIV, 10. The story is taken directly from Aesop.

³ A. Zar. 30^a. For other stories, cf. Lev. R. XXII, 4; Deut. R. I, 10.

⁴ Esther R. VII, 10.

secures life, whereas the sow is fattened only for the butcher. Even so Haman is exalted for greater punishment.¹ It is claimed that the Rabbis once possessed many excellent fox fables,² and outstanding examples have survived.³ The realm of botany is not neglected—in the wind, the reed possesses greater survival potential than the mighty cedar.⁴ Some fables are completely allegorical. A cock and a bat await the light of dawn—yet how can this serve the bat in his blindness? The cock is a symbol for the Jew, the bat for the Gentile, the dawn for the Messiah, who, on the Rabbinic presuppositions of the immediate context, is useless outside Judaism.⁵

There is a multi-lingual field of research in the literary history of the fable, but this is scarcely for the student of the Bible to tackle. The two examples in the Old Testament are excellent of their kind, but remain devoid of doctrinal or theological importance. The writer has no knowledge of Indian sources, but would suspect that the most masterly use of the form in all secular literature is associated with the name of Aesop. These stories, whoever wrote them down, have a perennial, bubbling spontaneity and lifelikeness, ably reflected in the sparkling French verse of La Fontaine, but usually marred sadly in the Rabbinic re-telling. Superadding an allegory to such a fun-filled trifle—which need not even be ‘improving’—is like dropping a large beefsteak into the lightest and most perfect soufflé. The Biblical writers may have been wiser in their generation in realising for the most part that the form was not suited to their purpose.

III. *The Personal Parable*

One type of Old Testament parable might be fittingly described as personal—addressed to an individual face to face, in assessment or criticism of his policy or conduct. With a slight change of direction, the two fables of the last section could furnish brilliant examples, for both concern particular people in a vivid and personal way—but one is

¹ Esther R. VII, 1. The full story is somewhat longer.

² Sanh. 38^b-39^a.

³ Cf. Ber. 61^b; Eccles. R. V, 14, 1. The latter is cited in the writer's *Rabbinic Theology*, pp. 168 f.

⁴ Sanh. 105^b f. Perhaps this is more correctly a parable than a fable. Cf. also Taan. 20^b; Gen. R. LXXXIII, 5; Num. R. II, 12.

⁵ Sanh. 98^b. The passage Ezek. xvii. 3-10 is of this type—cf. p. 115, n. 8 *et infra*. Cf. Sanh. 105^a or Num. R. XX, 5; Exod. R. XX, 6; Song of Sol. R. II, 14, 2.

transmitted through a third party, and the other is spoken about Abimelech, not to his face. Of course parables, like other creations of the human mind, fall into groups which are fluid rather than absolutely watertight.

There are three personal parables in the Old Testament, each outstanding, but mounting in dramatic power in the order in which they are given. King Ahab had received some divine commandment not Scripturally recorded to destroy Ben-hadad king of Syria, just as Saul had been enjoined not to spare Agag. Ahab, like Saul, was disobedient, probably rather with a view to political advantage than from any humane prompting. An unnamed prophet boldly accosts him, parabolically transferring the royal action to himself in fictitious and figurative circumstance, then craves a judgment. Ahab, cleverly trapped, condemns the prophet, and thereby unwittingly condemns himself out of his own mouth.¹ The plea of the woman of Tekoa to David against the banishment of Absalom is contrived by a parable of precisely the same kind,² as is that famous and heart-searching indictment of Nathan on David, which culminates in the blood-freezing words: 'Thou art the man!'³

Rabbinic parallels to these personal parables are readily discoverable, though they may scarcely be comparable in quality. Two Rabbis pointedly follow opposite procedures in a small ceremonial matter, whereupon one of them aptly compares himself and his fellow to a man with a fine beard, who spitefully cuts it off in retort to a compliment.⁴ A man too adjectival in his prayer of praise to God is compared to one who lauds a king for his possessions in silver, totally ignoring the fact that he has many in gold.⁵ The best example is really borrowed straight from Aesop. Rabbi Isaac the Smith was beset by two eager junior colleagues, one of whom wanted Halakhic or legal instruction, the other Haggadic or homiletical. Each kept rudely pressing his own requirements, whereupon the older man rebuked them by personal parable. A middle-aged man, he said, had two wives, one his senior, one his junior. The younger wife, wishing her husband to look more her own age, kept pulling out his white hairs—the older lady, with the same motive in directional reverse, kept pulling out his black ones. But the poor man was merely left bald, and both ladies dissatisfied. Perhaps the students perceived the fitting of the cap.⁶

¹ 1 Kings xx. 39-40.

² 2 Sam. xiv. 6-8.

³ 2 Sam. xii. 1-4. These three passages must be read in their contexts.

⁴ Ber. 11^a.

⁵ Ber. 33^b.

⁶ B.K. 60^b.

A sub-variant of this type, not found in the Old Testament, answers, like the parable of the Good Samaritan, a personal query or objection. A Roman Emperor maintained in conversation that God, in taking Adam's rib to fashion Eve, acted as a thief. His feminist daughter retorted that the Deity resembled a burglar who stole a silver dish, only to leave a golden one in its place—an admirable answer from her point of view.¹

The personal parable may be a quip of cross-talk, or a powerful rebuke. Like the fable, it does not occur in the New Testament.

IV. *The Parable from Nature*

There are several striking and familiar parables from nature in the Old Testament, such as the comparison of Israel to an unfruitful vineyard,² or a wild vine,³ likewise the lesson of the ploughman's work.⁴

The legal Rabbinic mind sometimes sees, sometimes fails to see, the beauty of nature, and the universal in the particular. One Rabbi reasons that if a man sows stolen wheat, the grain itself should demonstrate the iniquity of the thief by failing to grow. But natural, not ethical, law prevails in this weary world, and the scamp may have an excellent crop, though he will still need to reckon with God ultimately.⁵ A much better though more allegorical example is the comparison of the Shekinah to the mighty ocean, and the tent of meeting to a cave by its rocky shore. The sea could fill that cave again and again and again, yet seem no drop diminished—equally the radiance of the Shekinah is no whit lessened however often it fills the tent of meeting.⁶

V. *The Acted Parable*

Another common feature of the Old Testament rarely found in the New is the acted parable. When Ezekiel lifts the knife to remove, divide and dispose of his own hair at God's command the action is richly symbolic—as are several other such actions in the same book.⁷ The reader will recall Zechariah's two staves, Beauty and Bands,⁸ the rent garment of the prophet Ahijah,⁹ the literal interpretation of the book

¹ Sanh. 39^a.

³ Ezek. xv. Cf. Ezek. xvii.

⁵ A. Zar. 54^b.

⁷ Ezek. v. 1-4. Cf. also iii. 24-26; iv. 1-12; xxiv. 3 ff.; Isa. xx. 2 ff., etc.

⁸ Zech. xi; cf. Ezek. xxxvii. 15 ff.

² Isa. v. 1-7. Contrast Isa. xxvii. 2 f.

⁴ Isa. xxviii. 23-29. Cf. ants, Prov. vi. 6 ff.

⁶ Song of Sol. R. III, 10, 1.

⁹ 1 Kings xi. 30-32.

of Jonah, and many other examples. It may perhaps be conceded that Jeremiah did not go around in person compelling the nations to drink of the wine cup of the Lord's fury,¹ and that this example may be regarded as a parabolical narrative rather than an acted parable. In other cases, there is no reason to suppose that the prophet did not literally fulfil the Lord's command.

The Rabbis, unlike the prophets, were not the inspired mouthpieces of God, and this type of parable was unsuited to their office. There is a single quoted example, attributed to the ingenious feminist daughter of the Emperor abovementioned, which affords a meagre parallel.² To clinch her argument, this lady placed a piece of raw meat under her armpit, later offering the unsavoury morsel to her disgusted father. But for the anaesthesia concealing the divine theft of Adam's rib, she declared, the father of the race, repelled, would have made the mistaken choice of bachelorhood.

VI. *Allegory*

There is abundance of pure allegory in the Old Testament. Beautiful if sombre is Ecclesiastes' symbolic description of old age.³ More detailed than the vine parables abovementioned is the description of Israel as the vine out of Egypt in Psalm lxxx.⁴ If the reader cares to compare these two allegories with two familiar parables, the differentiating features will soon be apparent. Ezekiel xix and xxiii furnish further examples. Ezekiel xvii is an interesting amalgam of fable, allegory and superadded exposition, which does not fit neatly into any single category.

In the Rabbinic literature also, allegories are very plentiful. Here is a short one, given complete:⁵ 'At the time when Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh, Gabriel came and affixed in the sea a reed, which attracted to itself a sandbank on which Rome, that mighty capital, was built.' The meaning is that Solomon's marriage into heathendom was symbolically the initiation of Rome, that cause of the ultimate destruction of Jewish sovereignty. Again a night watcher fears dangers, natural, animate and directional. A lighted torch enables him to avoid sharp thorns and unseen pits; daylight brings immunity from beasts and bandits; directional problems are solved by the crossroads. The journey is life, the lighted torch the divine commandment, daylight the Torah,

¹ Jer. xxv. 15-33. See *H.D.B.*, Vol. iii, p. 662, col. 1.

² Sanh. 39^a. Cf. p. 139, n. 29, *supra*.

³ Eccles. xii. 1-7.

⁴ Cf. Jer. ii. 21.

⁵ Shab. 56^b.

and the crossroads death.¹ Details may be criticised, but analogy and imagination blend into an artistic whole capable of triumphing over certain logical defects.

The Talmud contains a weird collection of mariners' tales, all probably political allegories of contemporary situations.² The fish with sand and grass on its back, which sadly frightens those who mistake it for an island, possesses a more familiar Miltonic variant.³ In a very elaborate example⁴ some sailors on a ship perceived a precious gem lying on the sea bed, guarded by a circumjacent snake. They sent down a diver, but the snake attacked the ship, only to be attacked in its turn by a raven. The bird's sharp beak severed the serpent's head, and the blood incarnadined the water all around. A second snake replaced the head of its companion, healing the deadly wound, whereupon the first snake returned to its attack on the ship. Its head was however cut clean off a second time by a bird. At this juncture the diver returned from his successful mission, and threw the precious stone into the ship, where some dead, salted birds were lying. As soon as the stone touched the birds, it restored them to life, and they flew off with it. What exactly was in the mind of the perpetrator of this story?⁵ Some three minutes of reflection gave me a possible interpretation in Rabbinic terms, offered without guarantee. Suppose that the precious stone represents the Torah, the Jew's ethical goal. The diver would then be the seeker after Torah, the first snake the evil inclination rooted in his nature. The birds would signify the equally inherent good impulse, which gains the first victory, the blood of the slain snake, sin. Satan the adversary, angered by moral integrity, appears as the second snake, reviving the first from death, or re-quickening the temporarily conquered evil impulse, otherwise temptation. The ship becomes the totality of Judaism, and the dead salted birds those Jews whose adherence to the Torah is imperfect or lacking. Contact with the Torah brings their souls to life, just as it will bring their bodies to resurrection.

The parable, the big brother of the simile, is usually, though not invariably, perspicuous, whereas the allegory, the big brother of the metaphor, makes greater intellectual demands, and may remain meaningless without the key.

¹ Sot. 21^a.

² B.B. 73^a ff.

³ B.B. 73^b. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, i. 200 ff.

⁴ B.B. 74^b.

⁵ Rab Judah the Indian.

VII. *Rabbinic Parables Interpreting the Old Testament*

There are several main types of Rabbinic parable. An important group has for its purpose the direct interpretation of the Old Testament. Before Solomon's day, we are informed,¹ the Torah was confusing and difficult to understand. A heavy basket requires handles for its manipulation, likewise the Torah requires parables for its exposition—these the resourceful monarch supplied. The Hebrew word for 'handles' is in the dual number, and means literally two ears. Similarly, parables illuminating Scripture are likened to cord tied to cord to reach the bottom of a deep well, a precious pearl lost and re-discovered with a farthing wick, and so on.² The apt modern sermon illustration is of course precisely parallel in function. In the Rabbinic examples, the *peshat* or literal meaning of the O.T. text is pictorially illuminated, but it is not changed, even when the analogy seems a little far-fetched. Saul, in approaching the witch of Endor after he had himself banished all necromancers from the land,³ is likened to a king entering a province, ordering the slaughter of every cock therein, then inconsistently demanding one to ensure his early wakening.⁴ This is excellent. One Rabbi, convinced that the forbidden fruit was the fig, compares Adam to a prince of loose morals, the fig tree to a slave girl with whom he commits adultery. After his sin, all the other trees decline to help him—the fig alone sympathetically provides garments for himself and his partner.⁵ The exegetical value of this parable may be questioned, but it does no violence to the *peshat*. Ahasuerus and Haman are likened to the respective owners of two fields, one containing an unwanted mound, the other an unwanted ditch. Ahasuerus is overjoyed to give away his mound—the Jews—and Haman eager to use his available means of trying to exterminate them—the ditch. This parable is based on Esther iii.⁶ Solomon asking for an understanding heart is compared to a favoured councillor who requests the hand of the king's daughter in marriage, knowing that all his other earthly desires will then flow to him by inheritance.⁷ Job, in the utterances of his despair, is likened to a drunken and mutinous soldier, rebelling boldly and rather vulgarly against the governor of the city—who stands for God—and then trembling in fear before his awful power.⁸ Theological literature

¹ Song of Sol. R. I, 1, 8.² *Ib.*³ 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 7 ff.⁴ Lev. R. XXVI, 7.⁵ Gen. R. XV, 7.⁶ Meg. 14^a, init.⁷ Eccles. R. I, 1, 1, interpreting 1 Kings iii.⁸ Exod. R. XXX, 11.

abounds in more perceptive evaluations of the personal character of Job—nevertheless here also the rules are not broken.

Clearly these examples and others like them are parables, not allegories. They expound with varying success the literal meaning of the O.T. They never reduce a scriptural personage or event to a mere symbol for something other than itself. In parable proper, Abraham would always remain himself, he would never, as in Philo, become a cryptogram for the soul seeking God, or anything else. That is allegorical interpretation, which may be found in the Rabbinic literature, but does not concern us here.

VIII. *Parables of God's Dealings with Man*

In a second group of parables, the Rabbis explore, fully if not always too perceptively, God's dealings with man. In a certain kingdom, the blind walk on an evil, thorny road, the seeing on one scented with spices—both roads have been created by royal edict, for some reason unexplained. Similarly, God constructs a good road through life for the righteous, and an evil one for the wicked.¹ This fails to square with the observed facts of life. But the notion is interesting, first as a throwback to the earlier Jewish heresy of unfailling material prosperity for the righteous in this mundane realm, challenged in the book of Job, and further as a contrast to the more realistic words of Jesus about the broad and narrow ways.² Another parable open to serious criticism is that of the kindly moneylender (God), who forgives and forgets the former debts of his clients (human sinners).³ This almost impugns the righteousness and holiness of God. Post-biblical Judaism frequently soft-pedalled the true doctrine of sin, found in all its stark realism in Psalm li. Yet other parables show deep consciousness of human transgression. A solar eclipse is interpreted as a symbol of God's condign wrath—the Deity is like the parabolic mortal who has invited his servants to a banquet, become offended by them, and extinguished the lamp in anger.⁴ During the Feast of Tabernacles, when Israel dwelt in tents, rain was interpreted as a sure sign of God's displeasure—observant Israel, intending obedience, is then like the servant who comes to fill his master's wine cup, only to find the contents of the pitcher hurled in his face.⁵ Despite possible aetiological quibbles, these are trenchant

¹ Exod. R. XXX, 20.

² Matt. vii. 13-14.

³ Exod. R. XXXI, 1.

⁴ Sukk. 29^a.

⁵ Sukk. II, 9.

parables. Some examples of the class are conceited, some contrite, according as Jewish election or Jewish sin dominates the mind of the teacher.

IX. *Parables of Human Situation*

A third group of Rabbinic parables deals with life's challenges and dilemmas, whether in personal or in community reference. A man languishing in prison prefers penniless freedom today, rather than hypothetical freedom with much money tomorrow.¹ It is very bad taste to offer consolation to a mourner twelve months after his bereavement—this is like re-breaking a man's leg after it has healed, merely to demonstrate your medical skill a second time.² One Rabbi requests the blessing of another. But he already possesses children, riches, learning in the Torah—what more can he want? He is like a desert tree with luscious fruit and pleasant shade, standing by a sparkling stream—could such things be imagined in the desert. The tree cannot be further blessed except with the hope that all shoots taken from it may grow up just like it. So this already fortunate man cannot require further benediction, save in the careers of his sons.³ In community reference, there is, despite widespread hostility towards proselytes, a pleasing parable of a king endowed with many flocks and herds, who yet shows especial kindness towards the stranger stag which has voluntarily forsaken its more usual haunts and companions. The proselyte has made similar sacrifices, and should be welcomed with like honour.⁴ Again the successive dangers of Israel are likened to the history of a man who escapes in turn from a wolf, a lion and a snake. Always he is very voluble about his last experience, until the next one banishes all thoughts of it from his mind.⁵ The number and interest of these parables depends on the fact that nothing is better fitted to explain life than life itself.

X. *Rabbinic Parables with Familiar N.T. Parallels*

The Christian reader of the Midrash will feel quite at home when he encounters the man who loses a small coin in his house, lights lamps, and searches carefully till he finds it—how much more thorough should be his search after words of Torah, which will quicken him in

¹ Ber. 9^b.

² M. Kat. 21^b.

³ Taan. 5^b-6^a.

⁴ Num. R. VIII, 2.

⁵ Ber. 13^a.

this life and the next.¹ The reader familiar with the East will automatically supply the correct mental background of mud hut and flickering earthenware 'virgin lamp'. The parable of Jesus is superior. Palestinian ladies wear dowry coins in their hair to this very day, especially in Bethlehem. In an Eastern home, it is most unlikely that the man would go down on his knees to look for the coin, whilst his wife sat idle! Again, a king hires many labourers to work all day in his vineyard. One is so outstanding that the monarch draws him aside after a little, and enjoys his company rather than his labour. Yet this man also receives full pay, despite the grumbles of the others, for the king declares that he has performed as much work in his brief period of activity as the others in their longer one. The intended analogy is the Rabbi who learns more Torah in a short life than his less able colleagues have learned by ripe old age.² A king bade many guests to his banquet, without disclosing the precise hour at which it was to begin. The wise prepared themselves, and remained near the palace in their best attire, with clothes washed white and head anointed with oil—the unwise returned to their avocations, and were caught unawares. These latter were compelled to stand throughout the feast and remain hungry.³ This is intended to illustrate the text: 'Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.' In a similar parable, each invited guest is instructed to bring something on which to sit. Some bring unsightly pieces of wood or stone, then grumble at their predictable discomfort, to the very vocal anger of their kingly host. They symbolise those who in Gehinnom suffer eternal punishment through their temporal fault.⁴ The last two examples have obvious links with the Gospel parables of the bidden and unbidden guests, and the man without the wedding garment. According to the Talmud, God gives the soul in purity, and expects to receive it back unstained—the doctrine of Original Sin is sometimes unpopular in Judaism. A king is said to distribute magnificent garments to his servants—some cherish, some soil them in workaday pursuits. But a day of reckoning comes. With the careful servants the king is well pleased, with the others he is furiously angry.⁵ This may be compared with the dominical parables of the Talents and the Pounds.

¹ Song of Sol. R. I, 1, 9. Cf. Luke xv. 8-10.

² Eccles. R. V. 11, 5; Song of Sol. R. VI, 2, 6; Shab. 153^a. Cf. Matt. xx. 1-16.

³ Eccles. R. IX, 8, 1.

⁴ Eccles. R. III, 9, 1. Cf. Matt. xxii. 2-14; Luke xiv. 15-24.

⁵ Shab. 152^b. Cf. Matt. xxv. 14-30; Luke xix. 12-27.

It is exceptional for the Rabbis to offer any direct exposition of their parables, as Jesus does in the case of the Sower. There is an isolated example, which may be quoted in full¹:

A parable. It is like a king who had a garden in which he built a lofty tower. He then gave command that labourers be disposed in the midst of it, and occupied in his work. Next he decreed that every man who toiled with zeal and conscientiousness in his work should receive his wages in full, whilst everyone who was lazy should be handed over to the authorities. The king of this parable is the King of Kings, and the garden is this world, which the Holy One, blessed be He, gave to Israel, that she might observe Torah in the midst of it. And he arranged with them, and made the declaration that he who observes the Torah, behold! he will be in Paradise before His face, whilst he who does not keep it, behold! he will be in Gehinnom.²

This example exhibits a curious divergence from the usual Rabbinic form.

Most of the familiar Gospel parables are yarns of the first quality. Many Rabbinic examples are a trifle anaemic by comparison, but good stories may be found there too. In one typical example, a travelling merchant turns his real estate into precious stones, and cleverly fools the intercepting robbers on his journey with the pretence that they are mere glass baubles. He reaches the safety of a town, where the robbers follow, only to find him selling his 'baubles' at a very high price. Their righteous anger at such shameful deceit is, however, a little too late to be effective. This parable shares with the last one cited the unusual distinction of an added explanation—the commandments of God observed in this life (the merchant's journey) do not reveal their true value. That is discerned only in the world to come (the town).³ Many other stories could be produced.⁴ It was, however, stressed at an earlier stage that the essence of parable is not story but analogy. The Prodigal Son happens to be a superb story, but the pearl of great price does not lose its parabolic status because it is a rather bare analogy.

XI. 'Parables'

There is another kind of parable, the epigrammatic or thumbnail type, which fits both the first and second definitions of the word *mashal*. The Bible teems with examples—'The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the street'⁵—'For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.'⁶

¹ Exod. R. II, 2.

² The Midrash explains further, but this is the parable proper.

³ Exod. R. XXX, 24.

⁴ Parables and mere stories.

⁵ Prov. xxii. 13.

⁶ James i. 6.

Some of the Rabbinic 'parables', if it be permissible to coin a word, are of a high order of excellence. Knowing that the camel has small ears, it is possible, without even knowing that there is an allegorical reference to the death of Balaam, to appreciate the saying¹: 'The camel went to ask for horns, so they cut off the ears he already possessed.' Another example runs²: 'A weasel and a cat prepared a feast from the fat of those whose luck was evil.' This probably means that the co-ordinated forces of the unscrupulous are dangerous for the unwary. Twice the Israelite idolatry of the Golden Calf at Sinai is summed up in these words³: 'A parable. A lion does not trample and become excited because of a basket of straw, but because of a basket of flesh.' This means that Israel made her infamous idol, not in poverty but in prosperity, when endowed with much gold. Strong passions are evoked by strong incitements. Again it is epigrammatically declared that if a stone strikes a pot, or if a pot strikes a stone, there will inevitably be a breakage—but the stone is certain to win in the unequal contest.⁴ Those who have handled the common earthenware pots of the Middle East will readily appreciate the point.

XII. Conclusion

The notes above touch merely the fringes of a subject which has ramifications and parallels in many languages and literatures. Most modern sermon illustrations are parables of one sort or another. The Oriental mind, in ancient as in contemporary times, was considerably more given to picturesque speech and memorable utterance, and the striking analogy possesses mnemonic as well as didactic value. After 2,000 years, the teaching stories of Jesus are still the finest the world has ever known. Yet the Rabbis and others produced some quite creditable examples.

¹ Sanh. 106^a.

² Sanh. 105^a.

³ Sanh. 102^a. Cf. Ber. 32^a.

⁴ Esther. R. VII, 10.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Apologetic for Miracles in Contemporary Thought

THE REV. H. D. McDONALD

(vol. 93, no. 3, pp. 159-174)

The Rev. M. H. Cressey writes: In the preface to his 1865 Bampton lectures on miracles J. B. Mozley could declare that the difficulty which then attached to miracles was one concerned not with their evidence but with their intrinsic credibility. For many of those whom he addressed the only possible attitude to alleged miracle was that of Alice: 'one can't believe impossible things'. It is still necessary to examine the philosophical presuppositions which led to this denial of the possibility of miracle, but the real interest of the discussion has shifted from possible occurrence to practical value.

We may show that the objective definition of miracle as an event not in principle subsumable under a law of nature and due to the direct causative action of God is not self-contradictory. But this demonstration brings us face to face with what is now the chief problem of miracle: *how can it be recognised?* For if the occurrence of a miracle cannot be recognised it is hard to see what value it has for revelation or for theology. For Mozley the occurrence of miracles in conjunction with Jesus' preaching was the guarantee that the doctrine taught by Jesus was true—indeed it was the substantiation of vital doctrines of Christianity which provided a sufficient occasion for the extraordinary activity of God. Yet when we consider any particular miracle, how can we be sure that it cannot be subsumed under some natural law? As Locke pointed out, we know so little about the limitations of the unaided power of the human mind that it is folly to say that miraculous healing or even control over natural forces like wind and wave is beyond that power. Even if the events in question are unique and therefore not explicable in terms of general principle, how can we be sure what special supernatural agency is at work? The New Testament itself contains many warnings against lying wonders. Of works of mercy we may be sure that Satan does not cast out Satan, but what of natural marvels such as the turning of water to wine? There are many temperance workers who find such a miracle a serious stumbling-block and cannot see it as self-evidently good. If recognition of a miracle depends on a final test by objective criteria that recognition is next to impossible.

We must therefore turn back to the subjective aspects of miracle, to the 'mirabile'. The event will still arouse this wonder partly by the fact that it is not subsumable under a known law, but the stress is on its significance for the particular observer. In some of those who see it its wonderful nature calls forth a response of faith and an attribution of this action to God himself; others are astonished, frightened, but do not respond. This is what F. R. Tennant called a concept of miracle as 'sign'. We can certainly trace this idea throughout the Bible; the mighty acts of God are made known only to his chosen people, the signs wrought by Jesus are only meaningful to those who are already in some sense his. If this is true, what is the religious and particularly the evidential value of such signs?

In the first place they cannot form an external guarantee as Mozley conceived it. Not only does the response to a sign presuppose or involve a belief in God, but it depends on a right estimate of the sign-worker. The crowds only sought healing or food; they found no evidence of the presence among them of the kingdom save in a material sense. Nevertheless the New Testament writers stress the fact that mighty works form a necessary part of that total presentation of Jesus as the Christ which is their saving testimony to the world. Whilst it cannot be categorically asserted that all the wonders worked by any prophet are miracles in the objective sense, while the right response to them is only one element in a total response to a person, there is something in us which sees a rightness, a moral necessity in the manifestation of God's power in conjunction with a proclamation of his nature as living and active among men. This integral relation of the miraculous element with the rest of any portrayal of God's messenger is well brought out by the fact that a denial of the miracle stories of the Gospels has always been accompanied by a change in Christology. This is not to say that the denial occasions the change, but the acceptance of the miraculous is part of the acceptance of a particular Christology.

This view of miracle makes the transition from an admiration of God's regular workings in nature to the awed response to his extraordinary activity far more gradual. The Old Testament and particularly the stories of the Exodus clearly portray this attitude. As F. R. Tennant said 'there seems often to be no hint of even implicit antithesis between the wonder and the order of Nature, no suggestion of unprecedentedness or rarity'. There are, of course, other instances which come near to the bizarre, but it is the deep consciousness of God's all-pervading activity which chiefly rouses the Hebrew imagination. It is not that the

extraordinary event guarantees the truth of doctrines with which it has no immediate connection but rather that the doctrines lead one to expect the extraordinary and make its occurrence a confirmation of faith. The ascription to God of such miraculous activity is part of a whole theology, not its external prop. For the fact of the extraordinary event we turn to historical evidences, for its interpretation to a whole system of belief. Even our assessment of the evidence, as Mozley pointed out, will depend on our theology, since the atheist must needs assume that the testimony of a believing theist is rendered suspect by his belief.

It is this view of miracle which has led Tillich to use the word of any constellation of elements of reality through which we come to grasp the mystery of being. 'The original meaning of miracle', he says, 'that which produces astonishment' is quite adequate for describing the 'giving side' of a revelatory experience? Without denying that a miracle must have an element of the unusual, astonishing and shaking, he points out that an undue stress on the idea of divine intrusion into the natural order can produce an attitude in which the degree of absurdity in a miracle story becomes the measure of its religious value—'The more impossible, the more revelatory.' He insists that a genuine miracle does not contradict the rational structure of reality. Yet the sense which he gives to this statement seems to swing the pendulum too far in the subjective direction. For Tillich asserts that nothing which history or science or psychology can tell us about the events in question can alter our attitude to them as miraculous, revelatory events. Revelation is independent of what science and history say about the conditions in which it appears. Yet if an event is to astonish or shake us it must retain some element of the inexplicable; the Hebrew recognition of God in nature attaches itself to the astonishing elements in the natural surroundings of their life. It is very doubtful if we can now recapture their attitude to the thunders and lightnings of Sinai.

We may thus conclude that since there is nothing intrinsically impossible in the concept of miracle as objectively defined, the miracle as subjectively apprehended can be allowed a real value in the total apprehension of God mediated to us through history. There is no *a priori* reason for rejecting historical testimony to events which appear 'unnatural' and directly caused by God. Nevertheless the value of such miracle depends on the element of mystery, and a full scientific or historical explaining of it will alter and perhaps destroy its religious significance. A belief in miracle is a vital factor in an apprehension of God as

the living God; the presence of such a factor exposes faith to the tests of history and science at least in this respect, yet this is an essential corollary of a presentation of the faith which does not confine itself to statements about an incomprehensible divine abyss.

Professor D. M. MacKay writes: I am glad to be invited to comment on Dr McDonald's valuable paper, which strikes a balance that is in harmony both with scripture and with our scientific knowledge.

I have just one question to raise by way of clarification. At the end of his paper Dr McDonald says that 'God's miraculous activities in nature . . . do not interfere with the cosmic arrangements'. In 'God's greatest act' He 'does not disturb the connections of nature'.

It would seem from this at first sight that if the connections of nature are lawful, it should have been possible in principle to infer all miraculous events on the basis of preceding events. Yet on page 169 Dr McDonald writes: 'There are still activities of God outside that "natural" order, which are "unusual", and it is these activities that we refer to as "supernatural" and "miraculous".'

It is indeed important to emphasise that God's miraculous acts are not presented to us as capricious or irrational, and that in the deepest sense they form part of a single coherent creative conception. Certainly nothing in Scripture leads to the conclusion that the observable changes taking place in a man upon his conversion must necessarily admit of no explanation at the physical or psychological level. I wonder, however, whether it is either safe or needful to assert that none of God's miraculous acts have ever disrupted the pattern which in a scientific sense we would term 'natural'.

Mr Alan Willingale writes: The historical review of the first part (to p. 168) is unobjectionable, except for the refusal to recognise that Nowell-Smith has dug an effective elephant-trap for the blundering Arnold Lunn. The constructive theory of the second part from page 169 disappoints me by its disregard for the pitfalls discovered in the first. I quarrel with the theory on two main grounds.

(1) Despite his denial that God is to be thought of as wholly outside the system of nature and stabbing in (p. 173) McDonald still persists in language which can only be construed in this way. Two words immediately evoke the picture before the definition is reached; 'interpositions' and 'supernatural'. Both imply what T. R. Miles calls an 'obsolete entity' standing outside the world process and thrusting fresh

impulses into its causal chain. God is banished to the uninspected and uninspectable 'other side' and is driven to the expediency of butting in to indicate his presence. The assertion that these 'interferences' are not a series of disconnected raids but steps in a strategically coherent invasion leading to a complete conquest and occupation by means of the supreme miracle of the Incarnation (p. 173) only throws the dualism into sharper relief. Lip-service is paid to the counterbalancing immanence of God (p. 171) in the suggestion that God imparts to the world new impulses which take their place in the cosmic organisms and become subject to its laws. But immediately it is clear that this is a highly qualified immanence because the contrast to the originating God is the 'finite mechanism'. Such a God is excluded from his universe by the evidence of uniformity in nature (p. 172). Apparently he puts himself to great effort to disguise his interjections in the trappings of regularity and only succeeds in displaying his endeavour when the system obligingly vomits them up.

This God wants further demythologising. McDonald puts himself in a nasty dilemma. I like it when he makes the point that God has not exhausted himself (p. 172). But you could equally argue that if he is still producing miracles he must have made an abortive job of creation and is still struggling with intractable material.

(2) McDonald falls back on the old theologian's trick of providing a protective definition. This is one which is prescriptive and not descriptive, an essentialist formula which sticks a pin through the butterfly rather than a nominalist one which affixes a label to a group of exhibits. McDonald tells us how to test a theory of miracle for adequacy but not how to recognise an event as validly miraculous. What I should like to see is a yardstick or criterion by which I could measure the claims of an event which purported to be a miracle. With all his faults this is what Hume tried to do, and it is also the point that Nowell-Smith is making.

Part of McDonald's definition runs: 'although appealing to the senses it is performed for a religious purpose' (p. 169). It is this concessive 'although' that sticks in my throat. With respect, the essential question of miracle is not meaning but evidence. We may go on about the significance of an event only after we have proved its happening the way in which the significance depends. Whatever else it may be, a miracle is an observable event experienced sensuously, and therefore necessarily subject to empirical verification. A cheque of meaning is not much use unless I can cash it at once in terms of sense experience.

The assertion that 'only the one who has experienced a miracle . . . can believe in a miracle' (p. 174) is rather like an advert for a gullible sucker.

If I say 'show me your miracle before you start explaining it' I am met with talk of God's 'immediate agency' in which he 'departs from his ordinary method of acting' (p. 169), of an 'intervention' which 'does not in any way abrogate the causal nexus', an 'inbreaking' which 'does not disturb the connections of nature' or 'interfere with the cosmic arrangements' (p. 174). If, when I ask for an indication of the hand of God I am told that I cannot expect to see it because God slides it in so smoothly that you could never tell the difference, then I am at the mercy of the clairvoyant, the 'special' technician in these matters, who can 'see' what I cannot. Give me Hume's scepticism every time, or perhaps Thomas's. At least he was rewarded.

The Rev. H. D. McDonald replies: I have been invited by the Editor to reply to comments made on my article which appeared in the last issue of *Faith and Thought*.

The Rev. M. H. Cressey has written what I consider a valuable statement which could well find a place in some issue of the *Journal* on its own account. In most of what he says I am in complete accord. And as a matter of fact I have done something on the same line in my book, *Theories of Revelation* (pp. 44-68). Professor D. M. MacKay and Alan Willingale have also made points which demand notice. Professor MacKay makes reference to my remark that 'God's miraculous activities in nature . . . do not interfere with the cosmic arrangements' while I state at the same time that, There are still activities of God outside the 'natural' order, which are 'unusual', and it is these activities that we refer to as 'supernatural' and 'miraculous'! Professor MacKay wonders whether it is either safe or needful to assert that none of God's miraculous acts have ever disrupted the pattern in a scientific sense we would term 'natural'. I certainly take this point, and grant the force of what he says. On the other hand, I wish to make clear that a miracle as God's immediate act is not so termed because it is something violently at odds with God's usual running of the universe. It is not, so to say, the throwing of a spanner into the cosmic wheel.

Alan Willingale, as we would expect, is not to be found on the side of the angels! In spirit he is with Hume. Although he uses such terms as 'gullible sucker' and 'theological trick' he has unfortunately misread the position and has not thought through the implications of his criticisms. He regards our terms 'interposition' and 'supernatural' as

somehow banishing God to the 'uninspected and uninspectable "other side"' so that God has to be thought of as 'driven to the expediency of butting in to indicate his presence'. But such terms cannot be discarded if we are to take God's transcendence seriously. Mr. Willingale would seem to prefer to follow Tillich. He charges that our 'counter-balancing' stress on the immanence of God is given mere 'lip-service'. Our immanence is 'highly qualified'. Of course it is—I, at least, am no pantheist. God cannot be identified with His universe. I do not find myself in a 'nasty dilemma'. There is no reason at all to draw the conclusion that if God works miracles we must consider Him as having made an abortive job of creation and as still struggling with intractable material. This is a queer suggestion.

Having quoted what he allows is a 'part' of my definition of a miracle: 'although appealing to the senses it is performed for a religious purpose', Mr Willingale adds that this concessive 'although' sticks in his throat. I am indeed sorry for the inconvenience. If, however, Mr Willingale had really swallowed what we had said and digested it, the result would have been otherwise. The essential question of miracle, he says, is not meaning but evidence. A miracle must be of such a nature that it can be cashed in terms of sense experience. To this we reply, 'Of course'. But even then the 'strangeness' of a sensuously experienced event may not lead to the declaration that here is an immediate act of God. Mr Willingale wants a neat set of criteria by which a 'miracle' may be identified. I regret my inability to meet his demand. All I know for sure is that a miracle is a direct act of God, which not every one who sensuously experienced it recognised as such. The result of God's direct act finds its place clearly and "smoothly" within the general order of nature. By the direct act of the Son of God five loaves and two fishes were multiplied to meet the need of above five thousand people. But the bread and fish had to be eaten and digested in the normal and natural way.

I must express my thanks to all who have taken the time to read and comment on what I have written and especially would I acknowledge the generous words of Professor MacKay for his reference to my 'valuable paper, which strikes a balance that is in harmony both with scripture and with our scientific knowledge'.

Genesis and its Underlying Realities

J. M. CLARK

(Vol. 93, no. 3. pp. 146-158)

Mr H.L.Ellison writes: The very simplicity of Genesis 1-11 has repeatedly drawn people either to read into these chapters what is certainly not on the surface, or to find a meaning for them other than that which seems the obvious one. Those who indulge in this intellectual exercise must, however, expect that their evidence will be closely scrutinized. Mr J. M. Clark assumes that Genesis ii. 5 is the continuation of the narrative of i. 1-ii. 3. This is possible, but the Hebrew could have made this a great deal clearer. Further, by postulating further creation after the seventh day, he assumes that the translation 'rested' for *shabat* is correct, when in fact that of 'desisted' in the sense of ceasing to continue is generally accepted as being the meaning.

In certain ways his theory is reminiscent of that propounded by Rendle Short, that *homo* existed before Adam, but that Adam was the first true *homo sapiens*; but his theory equated Genesis i. 27 with ii. 7, 21, 22.

'Mist' and 'flood' are not synonyms, and we have no right to choose the former because it happens to suit a theory. In fact the meaning of 'ed is not certain, but the whole trend of modern scholarship seems to be away from 'mist'. Personally I do not know how Genesis ii. 10-14 is to be understood, but it gives no support for a river 'whose head waters were located in distant lands'.

A corner stone of his theory is that Adam and man are in Hebrew interchangeable. In the first place 'adam, except where humanity is seen in its first representative, expresses 'mankind' rather than an individual man. In the relevant section, however (i. 1-v. 5), 'adam is used thirty-four times. In twenty-five of these it has the definite article (I include the three cases with 1^o, which by analogy with parallel passages must be read *la*, viz. ii. 20, ii. 17, 21) and in these it must be rendered 'the man', not Adam. In four of the remaining cases, viz. i. 26, ii. 5, v. 1 (second mention), v. 2, it must be rendered 'man'. There remain only five cases where the rendering Adam is justified, viz. iv. 25, v. 1 (first mention), v. 3, 4, 5. The usage of the AV may be ignored.

The inference is that at first Adam and mankind were coterminous. The creation of Eve (however we are to understand the story) does not

alter the picture, for the body-stuff of Eve is derived from Adam; she is so to speak merely an extension of him and the bringing of God's creational purpose to a head (Gen. i. 27, v. 2). Once there were children, the first man is no longer coterminous with mankind and so what was a title becomes a name.

Strangely enough Mr Clark's theory ultimately brings us to the traditional position in the end. He has little to say of the Flood. Genesis gives us no indication, in spite of the claims of warring parties, as to the extent of the Flood, but it does clearly imply that all human beings, except those in the Ark, were wiped out. If that is so, and if the line of Noah had not intermarried with 'the daughters of men'—I express no view on the interpretation—then all that survived the Flood were in fact descendants of the couple who had been in the garden. Thus, whatever our judgment on the hominids who preceded Adam (this lies outside my competence), there is no reason for questioning the Biblical statement, 'He made of one every nation of men' (Acts xvii. 26, RV), a verse missed by Mr Clark, presumably because he was using the AV.

One more comment. He refers to the climatic changes caused by the flood. Such changes may have taken place, but we have no right to assume them in the interests of a theory. All that we have a right to assume is the washing away of the garden, and that only because exploration has found no trace of it.

We shall probably do best with these early chapters of the Bible, if we respect their simplicity. Their transmission is far more complicated than Mr Clark realises. His theory of simple transmission raises major linguistic problems. It is far better to treat them as revelation, as *Heilsgeschichte*, and to accept their more obvious lessons and meaning as that which we are intended to derive from them.

Alan Willingale writes: I can only say on this paper that only a person determined at all costs to defend Paul's archaic exegesis would be prepared to resort to such perverse literalism. It seems to me that the saner course is frankly to admit that, whatever the merits of Pauline Christology and soteriology, they cannot rest on the anthropology he takes from Genesis. His doctrine of salvation, if it is valid at all, is valid *despite* the appeal to Adam, and not *because* of it.

The distinction between Man and Adam is to my mind wholly without merit, and the attempt to give the 'first man' birth-certificate status, crazy.

R. E. D. Clark writes: I have found Mr Clark's paper extremely interesting. The suggestion that there is a gap between the creation of man in Genesis i and the story of the garden of Eden in Chapter 2 is well worthy of consideration and is new to me.

I wonder, however, whether a scheme of interpretation such as the following would not meet the facts better. Would Mr Clark or others like to comment upon it?

When we examine what secular experts have to say about prehistory we find that, as Mr Clark points out, they are agreed that man has been on earth for a very long time. But they also seem to be settling down to the opinion that man acquired the use of language very recently¹—indeed at a time around that for the biblical date of Adam. If this be so, then we may suppose that man then learnt to use his brain and mind in a new way.

Before that, we may think of man as an animal. He lived in communities and may have had habits not unlike those of the apes. He was able to use primitive tools and to make noises which expressed hunger, fear and so on. But he was strictly speaking an animal. His mind (and brain) was *capable* of being stimulated to think in terms of abstract concepts and *physically* his mouth could have been used for speech, but he did not in fact think abstractly or speak. We may compare him with a deaf mute, or a child brought up amongst animals at the present day. Like *Peter the Wild Boy* he would only make grunting noises.

How did the new use of the mind, which came in so recently, start in the first place? It seems unlikely that a group of wild people, who had been deprived of human contact, would discover the art of speech (though the possibility cannot be ruled out). Speech is clearly a power which is handed on from generation to generation. Even in the case of some birds, W. H. Thorpe's work shows that if they are deprived of contact with their own species they do not spontaneously discover their natural song—they may in fact be trained to sing in a way that is most uncharacteristic of their species.

According to Genesis i. 24 God made all the beasts of the field. We might very well suppose that man (in the above sense) was one of these. He could use tools of a primitive kind and had some artistic sense.

¹ See, for example, W. M. S. Russell, 'The Affluent Crowd', *The Listener*, 12 November, 1964, p. 753. This view is attributed to Gordon Childe. Claire Russell thinks that war and language appeared together, and in the recent past. See also R. Paget [Sir], 'Is Language Good Enough?', *Nature*, 1945, 156, 209, who suggests that speech started 6-8,000 years ago.

But like the animals he knew nothing of right and wrong: he could not speak and could not think in abstract terms. But God said: 'Let us make man—that is the man-like animal already present in the world—in our image.'¹

God took one of these 'men' and placed him in a secluded garden, as Mr Clark suggests. There He revealed Himself and taught the man to speak,² so that in the end he was able to give names to all the creatures in the garden. Having learnt how to speak, he began to use his mind in a new way (just as we do when as tiny children we become aware of the world around us, including the demands of others). In particular, he was able to understand the meaning of 'Thou shalt not', and so the possibility of obedience and of sin became open. Later he sinned—and this was the first sin, for we now do not think of animals as sinning against God.

Mr Clark rightly points out that, according to Romans v, there is a close similarity between the ministration of sin and death from Adam and the ministration of grace from Christ. Now the spreading of the good news of what Christ has done for man comes through personal contacts—through preaching and teaching. In a similar way, when Adam and his descendants mixed with the man-like animals who were already on earth, they passed on to them the power of speech and with it the power to think abstractly and to know the difference between good and evil. Sin, then, started with Adam and we all inherit it today.

But Adam is also said to have handed on *death* to the human race. Now 1 Corinthians xv. 22 makes it clear that the death which we inherit through Adam is done away in Christ. This does not mean that Christians do not suffer physical death. In the same way animals and man-like creatures died long before the days of Adam. Even in the Genesis narrative the warning that death would follow the eating of the forbidden fruit was not apparently fulfilled in a physical sense. Physical death is a mere symbol of a more terrible and everlasting death. In creating man in His own image God intended that he should have eternal life and He endowed him with this life, but this was forfeited through sin. Through Adam death came upon all men, for that all have

¹ In making man in the image of God, man's physical appearance was not changed. The point of Gen. i. 26 seems to be that in giving man dominion over the earth, he became like God (see *IVF Commentary*).

² In Gen. ii. 7 the words 'and man became a living soul' are rendered '... a speaking spirit' in the *Targum*. J. H. Hertz, Pd (Ed.), *Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, Genesis, 1940.

sinned. It was God's will that none should perish—that all mankind should have eternal life and He created man to possess this life. But that gift of life was destroyed, first of all, by Adam and later by each one of us, for we have sinned too. But what Adam did is done away in Christ.

Mr Clark presses the point that Adam was *created* in the garden. Again (though with reservations in the case of Eve) this need not be taken in a purely physical sense. The creation of man in God's image made him a 'new creature'. We may compare the language used about Adam with that used about the non-Christian who becomes a believer. He too is a 'new creature', is 'born of God' and becomes a son of God (as was Adam). This view in no way strains the language of Genesis v.

It seems to me that an explanation along these lines enables us to take the biblical teaching about Adam and the fall in a more natural sense than that suggested by Mr Clark—not that his view is impossible. The most difficult point might be the interpretation of Genesis i. 26 and it would be interesting to know if linguistic experts have any view as to its possibility or otherwise.

With regard to the great ages of the patriarchs, it seems to have been a habit to name cities after the men who had founded them in the first place,¹ and if this is so the great ages may be accounted for without a special miracle. We should then interpret the 'sons' of the cities as the more prominent citizens who achieved fame in later years.

J. M. Clark replies: Taking Mr H. L. Ellison's comments first, my own approach is that Scripture must sometimes be viewed in two different ways. Firstly, we wish to find what the originator intended to convey, and secondly, we need to consider what additional meaning has been woven into the originator's work by the Holy Spirit.

In the case of the early chapters in Genesis, we began with a historical narrative in which the obviousness of racial merge and intermarriage is taken for granted by the originator. As a result of this and possibly of changes in language and phraseology, the work has come down to Moses and now to us with the historical meaning almost completely swamped by the powerful spiritual arguments which are implicit in the narrative. If we insist on a simple view, the historical work is likely to become completely submerged by the spiritual message, and we may

¹ See H. J. T. Johnson, *The Bible and the Early History of Mankind*, 1943, pp. 98 ff. for examples.

well find ourselves left with a historical anachronism, quite irreconcilable with the observed findings of several branches of science. Thus we end up with the false view that God's revelation in nature (including anthropology, linguistics, archaeology, etc.) is at variance with His revelation in Scripture.

I would be interested to know why '*adam*', without the definite article, must be rendered 'man' in the one case and 'Adam' in the other, rather than vice versa. The *inference* that Adam and man are coterminous is undeniable, but if the biblical writers really meant to say this categorically then they are astonishingly difficult to pin down, particularly as this matter is considered to be of fundamental importance to theology. Even in the 'first father' reference in Isaiah xliii. 27 there is a let-out clause in that the context of the statement refers to Israel. In Acts xvii. 26 the source of oneness is inferred rather than disclosed, but it is noteworthy that the statement would be fully endorsed by most anthropologists today without any reference to the Bible at all.

The universality of the flood typifies to my mind the universality of judgment on sin, and the sheer impossibility of escaping it except by implicit reliance in faith on God's chosen vehicle of redemption, in this case an ark. Once this point is established the universality of the flood would seem to cease to have any significance. There are serious technical difficulties to a *universal* flood in the purely physical sense. Verses like Acts ii. 5 suggest some caution in basing arguments for physical universality on eyewitness comments appearing in Scripture.

By denying Adam 'birth certificate status', *Alan Willingale* is himself making the greatest possible distinction between Man and Adam. It is the distinction between reality and unreality, fact and fiction. With our mind so conditioned, we shall naturally find Paul's appeal to Adam ineffective, and no doubt his other appeals as well.

I am not really qualified to discuss R. E. D. Clark's linguistic theory, but feel it could raise something of a theological problem by postulating two different classes of men. One view is that man has been in America for 20,000 years, based on the multiplicity of racial stocks, language stocks, and dialects (K. Macgowan, *Early Man in the New World*, 1950). There is difficulty in relating Adam's cultural climate to such an early date as this. However, if the linguistic theory were correct, it would probably be substantiated before long by archaeological discoveries, and the conflict over Genesis would then very likely come to an end. But is this necessarily a good thing? Surely Scripture has been designed to produce this very conflict in the scientific age, and has

done so most effectively? Have we any right to assume that this conflict has yet exhausted its purposes? No scientific discovery has revealed God, and no such discovery ever will. The reason for this is that science is a tool for extending man's physical vision, and functions quite independently of his moral bias. As a means of discovering God, it is unsuitable and unacceptable, for 'the just shall live by *faith*'. And this is a perfectly general principle, applying just as much to the scientific fields of anthropology, archaeology, and biblical higher criticism, as to more fundamental subjects such as astronomy and particle physics. It is worth reflecting that we are the first people in any age who have had *any* means of checking the veracity of the Genesis narrative. We find that we are placed in the position of having to exercise faith; but this, after all, is the position man has always been in, before there was any scientific discovery at all! In designing the Universe, and in designing the Bible, the Creator has made full allowance for the scientific explosion and all its effects. He is still invisible to the wicked, and yet ever within reach of *all* those who will reach out in trust.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Roads Converge. A Contribution to the Question of Christian Reunion, by members of Jesus College, Cambridge. Ed. P. GARDNER-SMITH. Edward Arnold. Pp. 253. 30s.

The title of this book is somewhat misleading. Dr C. H. Dodd in his *Introduction* describes it as having 'something of the character of a report on work in progress', and it is an apt description of this collection of essays by distinguished scholars, dealing with aspects of Biblical criticism and historical studies.

The book must be taken on two levels: first as a collection of diverse essays, and second on its own assessment of itself as a contribution to the question of Christian reunion. On the first level, it is the introduction and the three following essays on Biblical criticism which are infinitely the most satisfying part of the book: each essay being an invaluable survey of a particular field of Biblical studies. The Vice-Principal of Ripon Hall contributes a survey of a century of work on the Synoptic Gospels which serves to emphasise how odd was that judgment of an earlier generation of evangelical thought, which admitted lower criticism as permissible, but rejected the higher criticism as definitely improper. Looking back, we now see how inevitable and essential were those processes of sifting and weighing which led up to the schools of source- and form-criticism, if our faith was not to acquire a permanent question mark against its foundation documents. It was essential that someone should have set out to understand the processes by which the Gospels were put together: and equally essential that others should try to visualise the way in which men thought, the forms and environment of the Church's growth which inevitably would have influenced the shaping and selection of the first Gospel material. If occasionally the plain man is left with the feeling that the mountains have been in travail and have brought forth a mouse, and that after all the first wild careless raptures are over the result is not so different from that which plain common sense might have guessed; that very feeling only serves to emphasise the vital importance of the painful years of criticism in making surer the documentary evidences of the faith. The *fact* of inspiration is evidenced not by Bible study but by the plain results in the lives of men: but through Biblical studies we may have gained a far surer insight into the *processes* of inspiration.

Similar thoughts accompany the powerful pleas of the Bishop of Woolwich on behalf of the historical importance of the Johannine material, and for a re-assessment of the new dimension and insight which John brings to the material; and also Dr Beasley-Murray's study of the apostolic writings, which goes back beyond them to 'the creative effect of the word of Jesus' as the source of apostolic tradition, and reminds us that the apostolic Christology leads inevitably to the Deity of Christ.

The remaining essays, historical and topical, are more directly relevant to the book's ostensible claim for itself: yet the fact that in making this claim the book should start with the present state of Biblical studies is itself immensely encouraging. 'All Christians take their stand on the *same* Gospel, enshrined in the *same* Scriptures', writes Dr Dodd. 'In theory, therefore, the closer they come

to a true understanding of the Scriptures, the better they should understand one another.' Yet many of the remaining essays merely serve to emphasise how very far off that understanding still is: to underline John Lawrence's discovery that, however adequately a Christian may be able to expound his own position, he invariably renders himself foolish when trying to expound his brother's.

The value of these later essays is therefore more in the light they cast upon their authors' own positions than as an objective contribution to the study of unity. There are too many logical leaps for them to be satisfactory in the latter function. The visible church means an organised church: therefore an invisible church must imply a church without organisation: but the New Testament surely shows how necessary organisation is: therefore the idea of the invisible church must be dismissed. Or again: the New Testament clearly contains instructions for proper government of churches: therefore continuity of government is essential: therefore the apostolic succession is essential. Of course, scholars of the calibre of those represented here do not argue like that—and yet there are passages in several of the essays which read dangerously like these caricatures.

In short, we still need those who will apply to their ecclesiology the same ruthless objectivity as has been applied to Biblical criticism. Of course, the process may be just as painful: it may be more painful, for the vested interests are even nearer home. Canon Max Warren, in his dynamic linking of unity with mission, approaches this viewpoint: but not all the other essayists. The editor himself brings the issue unintentionally to a head in his own essay. In the study of Scripture, in theological thought, there must be change: 'The labours of the critics cannot be ignored . . . There must be change, even in the field of theology' (p. 139). Yet, as touching the episcopacy, some must 'consider the possibility that their ancestors were unwise to break with a tradition hallowed by so many centuries of Christian history' (p. 140). The juxtaposition is a little unfair to the author: and yet the nagging doubt persists. Is not the episcopacy at least as expendable as the Scripture?

F. ROY COAD

Type and History in Acts. By M. D. GOULDER. S.P.C.K., 1964. Pp. 252. 27s. 6d.

Sir William Ramsay, in a book written in 1915 entitled *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, wrote: 'Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense. He . . . proportions the scale of his treatment to the importance of each incident. . . . In short, this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians' (p. 222). Half a century later we read this book by Mr Goulder which presents a thesis which involves the complete negation of that submitted by Ramsay. It is to be doubted however whether the author's approach to the book of Acts will prove widely acceptable, especially by Evangelicals, but many will be impressed by the brilliant ingenuity of some of his reasoning.

Mr Goulder, who is Principal of the Union Theological College in Hong Kong, wrote this book when a rector in Manchester. One is not surprised to learn that his tutor when at Oxford was Dr A. M. Farrer, because just as Dr

Farrer, in his book *St. Matthew and St. Mark*, contended that these Gospels could only be understood when interpreted typologically, his pupil now contends that the same is true with regard to the Acts of the Apostles. From the statement of Acts i. 1 relating that Luke's Gospel describes 'all that Jesus began both to do and to teach', Goulder alleges that the theme of Acts is that of the re-enactment of the life of Jesus in the persons of His followers. The way therefore, according to Goulder, in which Luke has depicted the careers of these disciples is as being replicas of the actual experiences through which Jesus Himself passed, and with particular emphasis on Jesus' death and resurrection, which were undergone 'in type' in these men's life-story. Thus, an imprisonment followed by an escape from prison, whether it be that of the apostles as a whole (Chap. v), or just of Peter (Chap. xii), typifies death and resurrection. The fact of Eutychus falling into the street 'from the third loft' is an allusion to Christ's being in the grave for three days. Paul's shipwreck (Chap. xxvii), typically speaking, is his 'death', which was preceded significantly by his 'instituting the Eucharist' (v. 35); his being saved from drowning was his 'resurrection'; his staying for three days thereupon with Publius (though a trifle out of the correct order) was his 'three days in the grave', and his going up thereafter to Rome, 'the Eternal City', was his 'Ascension'. Goulder claims that his contention that Luke, in the book of Acts, was endeavouring to make these points explains why his story ends where it does; for to have described Paul's martyrdom would have wrecked the symbolic picture. It might be indicated however that there is a much more probable explanation as to why Luke's story ends where it does, which is that it finishes up by describing Paul's circumstances at the time of the book's composition.

Probably the most convincing part of Goulder's thesis is his claim that Luke, in describing Paul's journey to Jerusalem at the close of his third missionary tour, was conscious of the analagous journey which Jesus made to Jerusalem when going to His death, a point which was well brought out in the commentary on Acts written in 1901 by R. B. Rackham.

Goulder believes that, in writing Acts, Luke has subordinated historicity to the exigencies of this typological scheme. Goulder's canon for estimating the historical accuracy of the various Lukan narratives in Acts he expresses as follows: 'The more completely . . . an incident or detail falls into pattern as an antitype, the more suspicious we shall have to be of its historicity' (p. 182). Applying this canon, the following conclusions emerge (all of which are stated with complete dogmatism): The Ascension of Jesus is unhistorical; Luke's description of the suicide of Judas Iscariot is unhistorical; the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost is unhistorical; (Luke 'presented the spiritual truth in a form which the uneducated could grasp', p. 187); the story of the imprisonment and release of the apostles in Chap. v is 'one of the most clearly non-historical paragraphs in the book' (p. 188). As to the sermons recounted in Acts, 'St. Luke wrote the sermons out of his head' (p. 82); and as to the letter stated by Luke in Acts xx to have been issued from the council of Jerusalem, 'we know that no such letter as he gives us was in fact sent round to the churches'.

It is difficult however to understand, were the book of Acts so erroneous in its statements of fact, how it could have proved itself so acceptable to the early

Christians, and have been accorded canonical status by them so readily. A vastly more likely hypothesis surely is that Luke described the events as he did because this, he well knew, was how they actually occurred.

STEPHEN S. SHORT

Suicide and the Soul. By JAMES HILLMAN. Hodder and Stoughton. Pp. 191. 25s.

On Tuesday she was a tall, beautiful, calm, golden girl. On Wednesday, she was a corpse, a suicide. Her action penetrated into my life, cutting across every daily activity with an unswerving directness. This is, at once, the shock, the horror, the compassion of suicide.

Fortunately for the living this first impact wears off, but the experience is not forgotten, not even in the conscious mind. How different from the death of an old friend by accident, from the death of a mother or father after years of fruitful life, from the death of remote foreigners killed in political wars where right cannot be discerned from wrong. Why does the suicide's death shriek so loud?

In this book, Mr Hillman ponders this very question. His point of view is that of the lay analyst, and as such he understandably bangs away at the medical profession, at their determination to prolong the life of a patient irrespective of whether that life is worth anything to the patient. It is as if a man who wishes to descend from a train is forced back up again to continue his journey goodness knows where or to what end. The medical man with his hospitals, laboratories, surgery and drugs, prowls round on guard against any soul wishing to expire, or merely expiring. Not so the lay analyst. His interest is not to cure the suicide impulse nor the diseased mind, but merely to allow the psyche to be heard, preferably by the patient himself, and if the suicidal act is to be committed, to let it have meaning for the analyst if for no one else.

I find Mr Hillman's point of view to be stimulating and to have just that ring of truth about it. He has a potent message and he sends it without mercy. He tumbles all my tidy conventional attitudes, but I am glad to see them go. I want to be analysed. I feel the lay analyst prising my lid off, ready to stir my stuff with his spoon, to let my psyche speak or even squeal.

And yet at the end of it all I am still very confused. So much talk of 'the Gods', too many assumptions about the soul. There were passages in italics which drove me frantic as I couldn't see why these particular passages were more significant than the surrounding text. There is so little fact. Perhaps I was expecting the type of analysis of suicide which Mr Hillman derides as useless. Statistical information of the 'how many, what age group' type. I know that I will never feel the same again about such information, for, as Mr Hillman points out, it is collected with the express intention of preventing suicide and so must be prejudiced from the start. All the layers of conventional morality that cover my soul, however, tell me that suicide *ought* to be prevented, and although one feels that a soul should be allowed to enter death in its own good time, so many suicides cannot be other than temporary aberrations.

PETER KANER

John Wesley. By V. H. H. GREEN, D.D., F.R.HIST.S. Nelson. 25s.

This is one of a series of books on Leaders of Religion designed by the publishers to provide a basic history of Christianity in Britain by means of biographies of Churchmen notable for their contribution to the development of Christian religion in this country, or representative of some phase or movement within the Church.

Other volumes deal with Augustine of Canterbury and Bishop Colenso. Books on John Wesley are numerous indeed, but Dr Green has set himself to bring out facets of Wesley's life and character which are not usually prominent in previous accounts of his life and labours.

To this end he has used material from the unpublished diaries etc. of the Oxford years of his subject, and has also emphasised the tentative love-episodes of that period and the later unfortunate *contretemps* of his intended marriage to Gracc Murray, her hurried wedding to his hitherto friend John Bennett, the resultant partial breach with his brother Charles—the hymnwriter who had encouraged this match and his disastrous marriage—dare we say 'on the rebound'?—to Molly Vazeille, a lady apparently totally unsuited to the restless, strenuous life of the prophet-evangelist.

From the opening chapter of life at Epworth Parsonage, to Oxford and the Holy Club, and the foundation of the 'Methodist' group, we are given insights into the deep spiritual exercises, extending over the visit to Georgia and the disillusioned return, until that night at Aldersgate Street where, his 'heart strangely warmed', he received what many would call the assurance of salvation.

We are shown, however, that his whole life had been leading up to this crisis, from the early conviction of his mother that he was spiritually as well as literally a brand plucked from the burning in his remarkable rescue as a child from a burning house, through the struggles to attain by asceticism and strict attention to the 'Means of Grace' to an assurance of salvation, while still preaching with some power and acceptance the evangelical faith in which he had not yet himself found serenity. Once launched however on his career of itinerant ministry, of establishing Methodist societies into their 'classes' and 'bands', doubts and hesitations seem to have had no place, and the opposition of some of the clergy, failures among his own converts, disputes with the Moravian brethren who had earlier been of great spiritual help to him, and later the break with Whitefield over the perennial stumbling-blocks of 'Arminian versus Calvinist' could not deter the one whom Dr Green calls 'the horseman of the Lord cantering towards eternity'.

We are told of his endeavours to impose on his followers the same stringency of conduct, fasting, prayer, and plain dress as he adopted himself, and of his autocratic handling of the affairs of the Society until the setting up of the first 'Conference'—itself a selection of his own nominees.

The closing years, venerable and venerated, are described and the effect of the life evaluated. Dr Green attaches less importance than have some historians to the effect of Methodism in taking the heat out of the revolutionary situation of the eighteenth century, but he points out that the 'Methodists' energies were to be deployed in works that improved rather than changed society'.

We are not told as much as in most Wesley biographies of the great numbers

of persons who experienced conversion in the evangelical sense as a result of Wesley's immense labours, but this is no doubt due to the Author's concern to bring out the complex and indeed paradoxical personality of perhaps the greatest traveller for his Lord since the Apostle to the Gentiles. John Wesley's life covered practically all the eighteenth century (1703-91). That the religious state of Britain was very different at the end from that at the beginning was due in no small measure to one who, though obviously 'of like passions unto ourselves', was completely devoted to what he believed to be the will of God; and the world-wide influence of Methodism to this day is his monument.

A. E. DALE

The Framework of the New Testament Stories. By ARNOLD EHRHARDT. Manchester University Press, 1964. Pp. x+336. 37s. 6d.

Dr Arnold Ehrhardt, Bishop Fraser Senior Lecturer in Ecclesiastical History in the University of Manchester, has been rightly described as a twentieth-century Erasmus. His earlier academic career, which culminated in his appointment at an early age as Professor of Roman Law in the universities first of Freiburg and then of Frankfurt, was abruptly terminated in 1935, when the Nazi régime took an unhealthy interest in him. Seeing what was afoot, he crossed the border into Switzerland a few yards ahead of the Gestapo, and began a second career as a student and then teacher of theology. He studied theology at Basel (under Karl Barth and Karl Ludwig Schmidt) and Cambridge; he then took orders in the Church of England. He is internationally known as an authority on early Church history. While his native land has fully rehabilitated him and given him the rank of Professor Emeritus, he remains loyal to the country and church of his adoption, and no member of the teaching staff of Manchester's theological faculty is better loved by his colleagues and pupils than he.

The reviewer must declare an interest; he is not only one of Dr Ehrhardt's colleagues but played a small part in furthering the publication of this volume, in which Dr Ehrhardt has brought together twelve papers which have appeared in various periodicals and *Festschriften*. Some of them were originally written in German, but they have been translated by the author into English for republication. The title which Dr Ehrhardt has chosen for the volume is a deliberate echo of that of K. L. Schmidt's *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* ('The Framework of the Story of Jesus'), published in 1919. In the preface Dr Ehrhardt expresses his great indebtedness to Schmidt's teaching, friendship and influence; he stresses 'the fact that the following essays were all written in conscious consideration of my obligation to Karl Ludwig Schmidt'.

The titles of the essays are as follows: 'The Theology of New Testament Criticism', 'The Gospels in the Muratorian Fragment', 'Jesus Christ and Alexander the Great', 'Greek Proverbs in the Gospel', 'The Construction and Purpose of the Acts of the Apostles', 'The Birth of the Synagogue and R. Akiba', 'Jewish and Christian Ordination', 'Christianity before the Apostles' Creed', 'Creatio ex Nihilo', 'Christian Baptism and Roman Law', 'Holy Sacrament and Suffering', 'Social Problems in the Early Church'.

There is no space here to review each of the essays with the thoroughness it deserves. A few remarks on two or three must suffice. 'The Gospels in the Muratorian Fragment' first came to the knowledge of members of the New Testament and Early Church Seminar in the University of Manchester when, under the guidance of Dr Ehrhardt and the reviewer, they were studying the Muratorian Canon together. It turned out that, in an article contributed to *Ostkirchliche Studien* in 1953, Dr Ehrhardt had dealt with some of the crucial issues raised at the beginning of this document. As the article was unknown and inaccessible to the majority of the members, Dr Ehrhardt's colleagues and disciples urged him to consider reissuing this and other recondite articles in a more accessible form. (They like to regard this volume as evidence of their persuasive power!) The Muratorian Canon, Dr Ehrhardt thinks, was not translated from Greek into Latin; the extant Latin text (transmissional corruptions apart) represents the original wording, and it belongs to the time when the Roman Church was beginning to be Latin-speaking rather than Greek-speaking—under Victor I (186-197), the first Latin-speaking Pope, or his successor Zephyrinus (197-217). One token of its Roman provenance he finds in the statement that Paul took Luke with him *quasi ut iuris studiosum* ('as a law student')—a phrase which some editors have unhesitatingly emended into something else. Dr Ehrhardt's expert knowledge of Roman law does good service here; the term *iuris studiosus* was used of a legal expert who acted as assessor of a Roman official and issued documents either in his superior's name or in his own name in accordance with the opinion (*nomine suo ex opinione*) of his superior. That the author of the Muratorian list envisaged Luke as serving Paul in this capacity is suggested by his statement that Luke composed his Gospel *nomine suo ex opinione*—'in his own name in accordance with the opinion (of Paul)'. The Muratorian author wants to invest Luke's Gospel with apostolic authority, and the way in which he contrives to do so, says Dr Ehrhardt, 'is exclusively Roman' (p. 18). Characteristic of Roman law also, he points out, is the emphasis which the list puts on eyewitness testimony where this can be asserted, as in its account of John's Gospel.

Another reference to eyewitness testimony appears in the essay on 'The Construction and Purpose of the Acts of the Apostles'; Dr Ehrhardt mentions that the historical worth of this book has been more readily conceded by historians than by theologians, who, he thinks, expect a historical writer to achieve an unrealistic standard. 'I feel that the attacks upon those who insist that the author of Acts was an eyewitness suffer frequently from an imperfect knowledge of what may be expected from an eyewitness after a lapse of anything up to twenty years' (p. 101).

The longest essay in the volume is that on 'Christianity before the Apostles' Creed'. One interesting point made here is that the earliest credal formulae may have taken shape not (as is usually held) as baptismal confessions but as confessions of faith to be used by martyrs in the age of persecution. (The one need not exclude the other.) But the main interest of the article lies in its portrayal of the doctrinal variety in the Church of the first Christian generations—a variety attested in the New Testament itself, e.g. in the Elder's exclusion of those who did not bring 'the doctrine of Christ' with them and his own exclusion by Diotrephes, in Paul's denunciation of those who brought 'another gospel' to

the churches of Galatia and Corinth, and in the enigmatic appearance of Simon Magus in Acts viii—an appearance in which Dr Ehrhardt discerns more than meets the eye at first, and relates to the influence of Samaritan thought on some phases of primitive Christianity. His contention that at Alexandria Gnostic Christianity arrived earlier than Catholic Christianity follows the thesis of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* ('Orthodoxy and Heresy in the earliest Christianity')—a work to which Dr Ehrhardt pays a warm, but no means uncritical, tribute.

The essay which comes closest to the primary interests of the Victoria Institute is that on 'Creatio ex Nihilo'. Its thesis is that the two statements 'God created this world out of nothing' and 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth', 'so far from being identical, are largely contradictory, and that the first involves us in consequences which Christian theology has to qualify and often to avoid altogether' (p. 200). In other words, Greek philosophy and biblical revelation do not mix easily. It would not be easy even to state the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* in biblical Hebrew; it can easily be stated in Hellenistic Greek, but the New Testament writers do not state it. Hebrews xi. 3 means that by faith the 'invisible things' of God are understood from His visible works (cf. Rom. i. 20), and in Acts xvii. 22 ff., which is a Christian answer to Greek thought, the goal of the argument is the resurrection of Christ, whereby He 'has taken up His earthly body—the vestiges of the created world—into the reality of the Godhead' (p. 230). Perhaps it all depends what one means by 'nothing'; it is a term (or a non-term) which is a notorious producer of logical fallacies. At any rate, we cordially agree with Dr Ehrhardt's conclusion, 'that space and time must be related to the basic facts of Christ's incarnation and resurrection. If this demand is neglected, science will do no more than add to the many deceptions of "this aeon"', (p. 233).

F. F. BRUCE

Man's Search for Meaning. By VIKTOR E. FRANKEL. Hodder and Stoughton. Pp. 137. 16s.

In many systems of psychotherapy much value is placed upon the insight of a patient into his own condition. Such insight has two important contributory parts. It requires both an awareness of causation, the reasons why ways of behaving have become what they are; and an awareness of new possibilities, the changes in behaviour which might lead to once unobtainable achievement.

The second of these often follows the first—it is synthesis succeeding analysis (using the word in a general sense)—and patients may from time to time be led to remark, 'I see how inappropriately I have behaved up to this point, but how should I behave in the future, and why?'

It is as difficult to deal with this question as it sometimes is to lead patients to ask it, for new incentives and new values must be formed, able to take the place of the old and stable enough to maintain new but persistent patterns of behaviour. How this may best be done has been the subject of much thought and investigation, but new ventures will long merit the attention of those with interests in this field.

Viktor Frankel, in originating the technique of Logotherapy (therapy through meaning), offers an important solution to the problem. Born of his experiences in Auschwitz concentration camp, where he was subjected to extremes of degradation and many times close to a horrible death, logotherapy is based upon his subsequent conviction that it is through the discovery of meaning in events within and without oneself that many conflicts may be resolved, many anxieties set at rest, and new and constructive ways of living revealed.

He sees the 'Will to Meaning' as a primary motivational force in Man as important as the Freudian Pleasure Principle or the Adlerian Will to Power. Indeed, the last two may emerge as compensations for the frustration of the first. Many forms of neurosis stem, in Frankel's view, from this frustration, particularly those characterised by lack of personal values and by trivial aspirations (a state which he terms the 'Existential vacuum'). It is the aim of logotherapy to cure such disorders by assisting patients to find meaning in life. Frankel summarises this aim by quoting the words of Nietzsche, 'He who has a *why* to live can bear with almost any *how*.'

Frankel's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, has two main parts. The first of these is a vivid and moving account of his time in Auschwitz. Implicit rather than explicit in this is the genesis of those ideas which form the basis of his thinking and his therapy, but in retrospect one realises how fully their emergence has been conveyed. In circumstances which deprived him of almost every responsibility which gave him status as a man, he nevertheless came to recognise the one of which his tormentors could not rob him—his choice of attitude to them and any other circumstance he might encounter. Selecting those values which could make his attitudes most constructive—thoughts of loved ones, the pleasure of a tree or sunset, even grim humour—he built them into his ultimate assurance of the all-embracing value of life itself and all that it entails, including suffering.

The first people to benefit from his ideas were fellow prisoners, but later he elaborated these ideas into a systematic theory and technique. It is with these that the second part of the book deals. It is the shorter part and gives only an outline with examples of his treatment of a few patients. We are enabled to grasp several essential concepts of his philosophy and to savour the atmosphere of his techniques, but for more detailed knowledge and answers to a number of questions which arise we must look to a more comprehensive book. Nevertheless we gain a clear picture of a man and a very humane system of therapy both geared to the helping of disturbed minds in ways which have high regard for the personal responsibility of human beings.

Largely existential in his approach, Frankel yet recognises that the values which any patient sets before himself during the curative process may be of religious origin. His rationale could be of equal significance to patients and therapists of wide differences in belief—or non-belief; it presupposes only that the meaning of life lies within us all but remains to be detected, by doing a deed, by experiencing a value or by suffering.

Frankel often aims to bring about this detection by paradox, by getting a patient to see clearly what stops him from suicide, or what it is that makes his condition that little bit more bearable than someone else's, for example. Less retrospective and less introspective than psychoanalysis, logotherapy compels a

close look at what is positive even in troubling situations and, once clear values begin to emerge, places its emphasis upon the future assignments of the patient with life.

Some therapists may find it hard to see what Frankel does that they do not do already without giving it this name. Some sceptics may ask in what way this is anything more than a scheme of rationalisation. Experimentalists may ask by what criteria does Frankel assess the results of his therapy. One can conceive of a variety of responses to this book which may be answered elsewhere but not within it. This is not Frankel's fault, for it was intended to be an account of Auschwitz and the evolution of his thought with but an added comment on his philosophy and work. If what he says is right, meaning is central to Man's existence and we may well be stirred by what we find here to learn much more of how our need for it may be put to therapeutic use.

This book will have great interest and value for any who wish to know more of those who have learned essential truths about the nature of suffering, mental or physical, and how to endure it. It will have something important to tell those who seek to know of practical and constructive systems for easing emotional disturbances. It will hold much for those who, while no more neurotic than the rest of us, yet wonder if there is not some way to alleviate the boredom, depression and aimlessness to which the human mind is subject.

JOHN BEDWELL

Objections to Roman Catholicism. Edited by MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE. Constable 18s. Pp. 184.

This Volume is the third of a series, the previous members of which were *Objections to Christian Belief*, by Christians, and *Objections to Humanism*, by Humanists. The present book is a collection of seven essays by Roman Catholic men and women (six lay, one archbishop) on their difficulties in holding the faith as usually presented, while still maintaining it. The most remarkable fact about this book is perhaps that it should have been written at all! As the publishers say, 'it demonstrates the radical change that has been coming in the public image of the Roman Catholic Church since the initiative of Pope John XXII', and we may say also the courage of the authors and the Editor who himself contributes a clear-sighted introduction.

The first article, by Margaret Goffin, deals with *Superstition and Credulity*, particularly in such matters as the grossly materialistic pictures of the fate of the lost, and the purchase of Indulgence, either by money or by wearing certain garments, medals, etc, or by visits to shrines. She rejects these, but justifies prayers to the saints on the argument that in the Incarnation God 'has deified humanity in identifying it with Himself'—a statement which will scarcely commend itself to the evangelical believer who holds that the Body of Christ consists of 'them that are His' and excludes those who refuse to receive Him. Mrs Goffin finds superstition in the obsession with technical details such as the sort of water to be used in baptism, the invalidity of unction on painted lips and the insistence on an exact form of words at the consecration of the elements, but she still feels that 'the Mass as it now stands . . . contains no hint of superstition or

idolatry'. She repudiates the view that prayer to the Virgin Mary or the Saints is effective on the ground that they can 'get round' the Son, or that God is less loving than they are, but if this is accepted, why go to any other than the 'One mediator between God and man, Himself man, Christ Jesus'?

Mrs Goffin deals faithfully with the stories of relics and visions and takes a parting glance at the ambivalent attitude of the churches (not only of Rome) to the civil power.

This last is the subject of the second article, by John M. Todd on *The Worldly Church*. He draws attention to the 'feudal traditions' of the Church; 'seeking to exercise the . . . Church's duty to rule over all things and all men, the Church's prelates have striven to see that the Church is always present in the world . . . with a certain air of authority' and the Church for this purpose has in practice meant only the Cardinals, Bishops, etc., and not the whole body of the faithful. He points out that while Christianity is involved with the affairs of this world, e.g. being a good tax gatherer rather than not a tax gatherer, and yielding to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, she should not seek to usurp the place of Caesar, or to invoke Caesar's power to suppress freedom of conscience whether in religion or in the affairs of daily life. He invokes the Fathers of the early centuries to shew that the danger of too much pomp and not enough gospel was recognised then and that the desire to be the church of Constantine rather than the church of Peter, i.e. to dominate rather than to pastor, was condemned by such men as Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas. Père Cougar is quoted with approval as seeing in the Lollards, John Hus, and Luther, and other reform movements a similar attempt to return to Peter as against Constantine, to the Shepherd, rather than to the feudal ruler.

Frank Roberts deals with *Authoritarianism, Conformity and Guilt*. He sees clearly the point of view of the Protestant who regards 'Catholicism as a way of life in which assent and obedience are valued more than understanding and consent', in which the sins which are most feared are such as eating meat on Fridays or missing Sunday Mass, rather than lack of charity, self-seeking, and similar faults. He notes also the failure of the Roman Church to be in the van of such movements as the abolition of slavery and of the abuse of child labour. The basis of these attitudes he finds in the imposition of a rigid pattern of behaviour on young children in their plastic years which emphasises the form duties of religion rather than the claims of Christian conduct. In the psychological effects of this upbringing on vocation to priesthood, celibacy, etc., accepted in terms of self-sacrifice, remorse and reparation instead of as a positively chosen way of life, he sees the dangers not only to religion but to mental health.

Professor Finsberg deals with *Censorship*, and the *Index* of prohibited books, and shews the inconsistencies of its application and the hardship thereby imposed on would-be authors and publishers. He relates recent as well as earlier instances, and asks with some force 'To pen the flock with high walls instead of leading them forth into green pastures, to condemn rather than to warn, to crush the heretic instead of refuting the heresy . . . are these what the Church's Founder contemplated when He sent His Apostles forth and commanded them to teach all nations?' He concludes that 'immense issues are at stake. The Church has undertaken to enter into a dialogue with the contemporary world in terms that

the contemporary mind can understand. . . . She needs no other armoury than that of her abiding truth.' If by that he means the truth of God as revealed in our Lord, few readers of this *Journal* will disagree.

Mrs Rosemary Haughton's contribution on *Freedom and the Individual* will probably appeal to non Roman Catholic readers strongly. She faces squarely the charge that the Church has restricted the freedom of the human spirit, substituting the compulsion of fear for the spontaneity of love, and finds the allegation largely proved. Further she sees that a considerable proportion of Catholics prefer to have it that way, and fear the shaking that any freedom of thought and conscience may involve. She notes that Christ said 'If ye love me keep my commandments', whereas the Church seems to say 'Keep the commandments, especially those of outward observance, and we will count it as love to God'. She believes that a real 'conversion' has taken place in the Roman Church in this respect, but is not unaware of the possibility of 'a relapse, a loss of vision . . . a new and worse decay'. Coercion of conscience by moral if not by physical pressures is still admitted to exist, and the Passion of Christ to be represented as a cause of guilt to be expiated rather than as an expression of love which should evoke love in return. She concludes: 'For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back to fear, but you have received the spirit of Sonship.'

F. G. Pollard writes on the *Reactions of Existentialism against Scholasticism*. He stresses 'the responsible part the human psyche . . . has always played in the mediation of revelation to mankind' and condemns the view of Thomas Aquinas that 'prophets are more acted upon than act'. No doubt a response from the human spirit to the Divine approach is called for, but has the author given enough weight to Peter's dictum that 'holy men of old spake as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit'? He carries the existential argument to the point of saying that 'Revelation must be considered as a continuing inward and spiritual event arising out of the Divine-human exchange or dialogue'. He claims that the church 'merits to be the true Servant and Mother of mankind', for 'it is in her womb that transcendent man is brought to birth'. But he admits that 'where the patriarchal or paternal element of hierarchy and organisation becomes unduly prominent then authority tends to lose its pastoral character and become an instrument of oppression'. We can agree with him in that one cannot 'travel the road to the celestial city by just knowing the way'. The necessity of entering by the narrow gate and undergoing the experience of the Cross is not sufficiently realised. There is much in this essay with which the Evangelical Christian will disagree, but again, it is a sign of the changed times in the Roman Catholic communion that it can be written at all.

The last paper, on *Contraception and War* by Archbishop Roberts, has already evoked reaction from the Order to which he belongs, but it deals with some of the most practical and immediate applications of the new thinking which has given rise to these papers. The Archbishop states that large numbers of Roman Catholics cannot accept the position that contraception is contrary to natural law, and therefore wrong in all its forms for all people everywhere, even if it be accepted that it may be wrong for those whose Church obedience condemns the practice. He faces with integrity the various contradictions which have taken place in the Church's 'ipse dixit' on this subject and others, and pleads for clarification of the questions that arise in consequence.

He then turns to questions of conscientious relation to war and to preparations for total war, and, after discussion of points involved, pleads for a declaration by the Churches and the United Nations that an individual has a right to follow his own conscience in these matters.

He urges a serious approach to disarmament and asks Catholics to be willing to 'co-operate with all their fellow men because they are actually or potentially God's children as we are'. He concludes 'That war with ourselves is part of our fight for peace—It is a fight in which we must expect to get hurt'.

These essays deserve careful study, and some of the points made merit the attention of other churches than that with which the authors are primarily concerned. 'Authority' comes easier than pastoral care; while formality rather than spirituality is not peculiar to one communion. The subjects considered may well, as the publishers suggest, be debated in suitable circles, and any further thoughts of the authors will be awaited with interest.

A. E. DALE

Jesus and the Son of Man. A. J. B. HIGGINS, Lutterworth Press, London, 1964, 45s.

A century of lively discussion has now been devoted to the Son of Man theme in the Gospels. The question of integrity in this case is especially crucial because the title is just about the most pretentious one which could be applied to Jesus. If he in fact used it regularly of himself, then the intensity of his transcendent claims upon mankind becomes clearer. But if this be not the case, the historical worth of Gospel testimony is called into question, for the title is on no other lips than His. Son of Man is a most comprehensive ascription, covering both the humiliation and glorification of the Lord Jesus, and presenting him in the royal robes of his divine majesty. Therein is contained the seeds of all subsequent N.T. Christology. So it is with lively anticipation that we turned to this thorough examination of our subject.

The thesis is most disappointing. None of those sayings which refer to the earthly ministry of the Son of Man are deemed authentic. Only the eschatological sayings are genuine, and these only in the form which distinguish the Son of Man from the speaker (so Luke xii. 8 f.). The word 'and' in the book's title is deliberate. Up to this point, Higgins' conclusions are markedly similar to Bultmann's, who excises the same group of sayings from the record. But our writer diverges from the consensus of radical German criticism in one respect; he holds that for Jesus 'Son of Man' was a concept or idea, and not an objective personage. Thus there can be no question of identification of Jesus in present or future with this figure, which was for him a mental idea. In his exaltation Jesus would function in a 'Son of Man' fashion. There is nothing essentially new in the thesis. R. H. Fuller expressed the same thought briefly in *The Mission and Achievement of Jesus*, page 108. Neither is the thesis particularly compelling or profound. It is as likely that Matthew x. 32 'I will acknowledge' is the original and correct version of Luke xii. 8 'the Son of Man will acknowledge', as the reverse. The theory which understands the ambiguity of Luke's form by postulating a second individual is possible but hardly probable. It raises more

problems than it solves (Cullmann). Higgins' reference to the title being a 'concept' hardly eases the problem for him. He simply cannot evade the objection that the identification of Jesus and the Son of Man is made in the Gospels, and seldom elsewhere. To assign a large creative role to the primitive Church in the invention of inauthentic Son of Man sayings lacks any evidence. Several times the author balks at positing a hellenistic origin for the sayings as Bultmann does, and prefers a Palestinian source. But his whole case is a web of speculation, which enjoys no objectifying criteria. The choice is really between Bultmann, who accepts none of the sayings to refer to Jesus, and Cullmann, who takes them all seriously. Higgins does not help us choose.

The answer no doubt lies elsewhere, Jesus saw his mission in terms of the Son of Man, under the twofold structure of suffering and glory. Indeed it is more than likely that the writer of Daniel describes his vision partially in terms of the Servant Songs themselves (see M. Black, 'Servant of the Lord and the Son of Man', *S.J.T.* 6 (1953), 1 f.). Before the time of Jesus the two ideas, of Servant and Son of Man, had already been brought together. It became, therefore, on Jesus' lips the most comprehensive title for his total ministry.

Higgins begins his book by asserting, 'It is not necessary to salvation to believe that Jesus called himself the Son of Man'. We surely hope he is right if only for his sake. But a matter of considerable importance is nonetheless at stake. For despite his protestations of regarding the Gospels highly for our knowledge of the historical Jesus, Higgins finds them in this case to be liberally sprinkled with post-Easter doctrines. To say these are 'ultimately rooted in the teaching of Jesus himself' is a fine catch phrase, but one which in the light of these conclusions really bears little meaning. The fact remains that for Higgins the Church placed on Jesus' lips words he could not espouse.

The danger in this sort of criticism is often the same. We worship a docetic Christ; one born and raised in the *kerygma*, not in history. Higgins thinks he is still in contact with history. A higher regard for the documents, and weaker passion for novelty, would lead to happier conclusions.

C. H. PINNOCK

We have also received the following books:

The Young Man Mark by E. M. Blaiklock, Paternoster Press, Exeter, 112 pp., 5s., in which the author examines, from a devotional point of view, the various scenes of the second Gospel. It is finely written, and deserves the attention of all who would sincerely come near to the Christ of Mark's Gospel.

The Persian Šūfis by Cyprian Rice, O.P., George Allen & Unwin, 103 pp., 15s. This is a study of some of the dominant aspects of Persian Islamic mysticism. The author believes that greater attention to the message of Islamic ascetics and mystics will promote a better understanding of the problems confronting those who look for greater unity between eastern and western Christendom.

The Structure of Luke and Acts by A. Q. Morton and G. H. C. Macgregor, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 155 pp., 21s. is a further treatment of the question of scientific technique in the study of New Testament origins and compilation.