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KING'S

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BOOK REVIEWS

Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament

Peter R. Ackroyd. SCM Press, 1987. Pp. xiv + 305. £12.50

Fifteen of Professor Ackroyd's essays, the earliest read as his 1961 Inaugural Lecture in the Samuel Davidson Chair of Old Testament Studies here at King's College, the latest as a 1986 lecture at Princeton Theological Seminary, are here collected around the theme of continuity within the religious tradition of the Old Testament. All but the last of these have been published before, and are reproduced in this book in substantially unrevised form. Several of them, however, originally appeared in publications which are not easily accessible to British readers. For that reason alone, quite apart from the opportunity which it provides for us to examine in a thoroughgoing way the author's contribution to this aspect of Old Testament studies over more than 25 years of scholarship, this collection is to be welcomed.

There are three major divisions in the book. The first, headed "Continuity", contains five essays which deal with the wider questions of continuity and discontinuity within the Old Testament. There is inevitably some degree of overlap between these essays, but each concentrates on different aspects of the theme. "Continuity: A Contribution to the Study of the Old Testament Religious Tradition" examines three lines of continuity (in patterns of thought, in religious life and practice, and in attitudes to what became the Old Testament writings) which may be said to give some kind of order to the tradition. "The Theology of Tradition: An Approach to Old Testament Theological Problems" is concerned to emphasize the nature and range of the evidence of diversity within the tradition, and to demonstrate the problems inherent in many modern attempts to find unity. "Continuity and Discontinuity: Rehabilitation and Authentication" is more concerned with the attempts made in Old Testament times to overcome breaks in continuity, and the effects of these attempts upon the formation of the literature. "The Temple Vessels: A Continuity Theme" discusses one such attempt in detail. Finally, "The Vitality of the Word of God in the Old Testament: A Contribution to the Study of the Transmission and Exposition of Old Testament Material" further explores the ongoing process of reinterpretation which is evident in many texts, emphasizing that this has taken place as part of "... the life of a real community in which the word of God has been not merely handed down, but creatively applied" (p. 74).

The second edition of the book, "Aspects of the Prophetic Tradition", contains six essays which consider these broader questions in relation to the prophets, and specifically in relation to the Isaiah tradition. "Isaiah 1-12: Presentation of a Prophet" argues that the Isaiah tradition grew to its present immense proportions in part because of the presentation of this prophet in the first 12 chapters of the book. "Isaiah 36-39: Structure and Function" stresses the important role of these chapters in the transition within the book between disaster and renewed hope and salvation. "Historians and Prophets" uses two cases (the reign of Ahaz and the events surrounding the

fall of Jerusalem) in which the Old Testament offers alternative presentations of particular periods in history to elucidate some of the questions which arise out of an examination of such presentations. The thrust of "An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile: A Study of II Kings 20 and Isaiah 38-39" is for the most part clear from its title, although this essay also contains some interesting comments both on the way in which these chapters affect our understanding of the material which precedes them and on the development of the traditions concerning Hezekiah both within and beyond the Old Testament. This latter subject is further explored in "The Death of Hezekiah: A Pointer to the Future?". The concluding essay of this section, "The Biblical Interpretation of the Reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah", is concerned to emphasize the extent to which the Biblical materials are indeed *interpretations* of history, and to indicate that different historical assessments of these kings are possible.

The third section of the book, entitled "Towards the Canon", contains three essays relating to the question of canon. "A Judgment Narrative between Kings and Chronicles? An Approach to Amos 7.9-17" argues that these verses may originally have been found in alternative form in the books of Kings. The existence of such alternative forms of the text illustrates the degree to which canonical fixation of particular texts is the result of chance factors, and warns us against too narrow a view of canonicity and canonical authority. "The Open Canon" develops these ideas, discussing in more detail many of the difficulties which exist in relation to the concept of canon without (in spite of the title) arriving at any definite conclusions. "Original Text and Canonical Text" argues that the authority of the biblical word lies neither in any "original" text, nor in any finally agreed "canonical" form, but "... in the interaction between text and reader, text and expositor, in the creative moment which such an interaction provides" (pp. 233-234). There follows, finally, an "Épilogue" containing one essay, "The Old Testament Religious Tradition: Unity and Change", which addresses the whole theme of the book in a general way and provides a fitting climax to it.

The issues which are discussed in these essays are clearly fundamental to the study of the Old Testament, and the author's treatment of them is always stimulating. The picture which I receive of his own approach to the matter of continuity and discontinuity in the tradition, if I may presume to summarize it, is as follows. The diversity and discontinuities within the tradition must not be underestimated or underplayed: the witness which the tradition provides to the events and personalities, whether human or divine, which lie behind it is truly multi-faceted. Consequently, interpretation of the tradition is a complex affair. Threads of continuity may be detected which help us to make sense of it: ultimate continuity, however, lies only in God himself, the greater reality of which the witnesses are speaking. That there are weaknesses in this position is undoubted. There are also, in my view, a couple of the essays which are weaker than the others: that on Amos 7.9-17 seems particularly speculative. The book could not, however, be read without profit by anyone interested in the nature of the Old Testament literature and in the implications of this for the way in which it should be studied and taught. I would highly recommend it for students and teachers

alike.

Iain Provan

The Jews in Luke-Acts

Jack T. Sanders. SCM Press, 1987. Pp. xviii + 410. £15.00

Why are some passages in Luke's two volumes which record a positive Jewish response to Jesus and to Christian preaching juxtaposed with others which speak of God's rejection of Israel? This question has teased readers of Luke-Acts for a very long time and has received very different answers. Jack Sanders outdoes almost every scholar who has tackled this baffling subject. He insists that once we understand Luke's intentions and methods properly, his portrait of the Jews is clear: they are so consistently and implacably hostile to Jesus and to the church that Luke holds out no hope for their salvation. Indeed Luke is guilty of "anti-semitism".

Luke has had a bad press in some quarters in recent decades. He has been accused of poisoning the purity of Paul's gospel by introducing "early Catholicism" and by appealing to history as "proof" for faith. But the charge of anti-semitism has rarely been levelled at Luke. Most recent writers have accepted that his attitude to the Jews is more carefully nuanced than, say, Matthew's or John's.

So how does Sanders defend his case? At first sight his discussion seems very thorough. In Part I he examines the evidence thematically, with chapters on Luke's attitude to the Jewish leaders, to Jerusalem, to the Jewish people, to the Pharisees and to the "periphery" (outcasts, Samaritans, proselytes, God-fearers). In Part II (which takes up almost half the book) he discusses every passage in Luke's gospel and in Acts which has some bearing on Luke's attitude to the Jews. We are given what the author himself calls a "single-issue" commentary. In fact Part II adds very little, if anything, to the argument. Given the conclusions of the first five chapters, it is easy to predict what Sanders will say in his commentary. The reader turns in vain to Part II for more thorough exegesis of the passages which are the linchpins of the argument.

How plausible is the argument which is set out lucidly and with verve in Part I? Let us take up briefly the charge of "anti-semitism". Sanders concedes (p. xvi) that Luke's "hostility towards Jews was not exactly racial in the way in which we think of racial hatred today, but it was something very close to it". The author "does not know what to call that hostility if not antisemitism". But to label Luke's religious polemic "antisemitic" is almost as absurd as alleging that there are antisemitic passages in the Old Testament prophets. Sanders shows no awareness of the social function of the anti-Jewish polemic in Luke-Acts: it forms part of a much wider concern on Luke's part to legitimate the fledgeling Christian movement as the "true Israel".

Neither of the two passages to which Sanders appeals in proof-text fashion to confirm Luke's antisemitism will bear the weight he has placed on them (p. xvii and p. 317). Acts 18.6 is alleged to state that Jews are guilty of "the sentence of death". But in this passage in good Lucan fashion a biblical idiom is being used to state that Paul is

not responsible for the ultimate fate of those in Corinth who have opposed him (see Ezekiel 33.4 and also Acts 20.26). In Luke 19.27 Luke is alleged to "call down the sentence, 'Slaughter them!' on those Jews who refuse to accept Christ as their ruler". This verse is certainly a puzzling conclusion to the parable of the pounds. It may be an allegorical hint at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. But it can hardly be antisemitic: the good servants commended by the returning king (Jesus) cannot be Gentiles – they are *Jews!*

Sanders' solution of the riddle with which we began this review is novel. Indeed it is the central pillar of his case; on examination it proves to be in poor condition. Sanders' key to the riddle is to separate speech from narrative (p. 50). In what they say on the subject in "speeches", Jesus, Peter, Stephen and Paul present "an entirely, completely, wholly, uniformly consistent attitude towards the Jewish people as a whole" (p. 63). In the story line, however, we find a quite different situation: in numerous passages in Luke-Acts there is a positive response on the part of many Jews to Jesus and to Christian preaching. The enigma is resolved, Sanders claims, by observing that in the final scene in Acts the distinction has ceased to exist: the Jews have *become* what they from the first *were* – intransigent opponents of the purposes of God.

This separation of "speech" and "narrative" is artificial, to say the least; it will undoubtedly call down the wrath of narrative critics. But quite apart from that issue, in the final scene of Acts Luke is much more ambivalent to the Jews than Sanders allows. Although Paul is under house arrest in Rome, he speaks to large numbers of Jews, "seeking to persuade them about Jesus by appealing to the law of Moses and to the prophets". "Some were won over (*epeithonto*) by his arguments, while others disbelieved" (Acts 28.24). In the light of Acts 19.8 (a strikingly similar passage) the clear implication is that some of the Jews became converts. The citation of Isaiah 6.9-10 which follows may well be addressed to the Jews who "disbelieved" (*ēpisteuoun*). In such a large book Sanders' failure to discuss these crucial verbs is almost incomprehensible. He contents himself with a brief footnote (p. 366, n. 245) which refers to some secondary literature!

In the final verse of Acts Luke portrays Paul preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered. But to whom? Sanders assumes "Gentiles only", although Luke does not say so explicitly. The western textual tradition tries to clear up the ambiguity by stating that Paul spoke to both Jews and Gentiles! Modern readers have to learn to live with Luke's ambiguity.

In short, as so often in Luke's two volumes, in his closing scene he is annoyingly imprecise. He seems to juxtapose rejection of the Jews with hope for their salvation. (Sanders misses the importance of the phrase "the hope of Israel" in Acts 28.20, and also in 23.6; 24.15f, 26.6f.) So we are back with the riddle with which we opened this review. One strand of the evidence *does* support Sanders' case – but as an explanation of *all* the evidence, it simply will not do.

Graham Stanton

The End of the Ages Has Come

Dale C. Allison, Jr. T & T Clark, 1987. Pp. xiii + 194. £13.95

The question of the eschatological teaching of the NT is a topical one in recent years and scholars have produced a host of books, monographs and articles on various aspects of the issue. Allison's book is a welcome addition to the scene in that it not only makes its own distinctive contribution to the issue of eschatology, but also stands as a helpful survey of much that has gone before. It is very readable and systematically presented, moving through the major NT writings as it covers the theme. The thesis of the book may be conveniently set out in the form of four propositions: (1) The NT speaks of Jesus' death as part of the "Great Tribulation" and his resurrection as part of the general resurrection; (2) Realised eschatology (as personified in the work of C. H. Dodd) does not adequately explain this witness within the NT; (3) Jesus himself thought of his death and resurrection in terms of tribulation/vindication; (4) The Church's interpretation of Jesus' passion and resurrection is dependent upon the prevailing pre-Easter eschatological expectations of Judaism. In many ways it is the last of these propositions which is most important, a fact which can be seen in the subtitle Allison gives to the book: "An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus".

It can readily be seen how critical the relationship is between Jesus' eschatological teaching and that of the Church. As Allison says (p. 3): "This book thus concerns a point of continuity between the pre- and post-Easter periods and attempts evaluation by reference to the problem of promise and fulfilment in messianic movements in general".

Allison begins his study with a detailed discussion of the idea of a "Great Tribulation" within Jewish literature. This is perhaps the most original and creative portion of the book, with the diversity and variety of eschatological expression within Jewish literature being a key note. Certainly Allison's point is correct, although greater care should have been taken to apply the same rigorous method of investigation to other themes within this literature as well. For instance, the interpretation Allison offers concerning messianism lacks the same sensitivity to diversity. He is too quick to place many Jewish documents into a "Messianic file" when they actually demonstrate the same sort of diversity and variety he finds with respect to their eschatological content. This means his final analysis of the Jewish material is in need of a slight modification, but this in no way invalidates the main thesis of the book. Having established this theme (Chapter 2), the rest of the book is divided into two main parts. The first (chapters 3-8) follows this theme of the "Great Tribulation" through the NT materials, while the second (chapters 9-12) attempt to analyze the implications of the NT evidence for an understanding of how eschatological expectations functioned in the life of the early Church. It will be helpful if we take these two sections in turn.

When examining the major NT documents themselves, Allison follows the order: Mark, Matthew, John, Paul, Revelation, Luke-Acts as he pursues his study.

Special attention is given to the redactional forces in operation in the composition of each of these NT books with Allison making some interesting and thought-provoking observations about the distinction between traditional material and redactional material. Generally Allison tends towards accepting many of the eschatological sections of the NT evidence as traditional and pre-Easter, thus bringing them closer to the thought of Jesus himself. There is some good, solid discussion here and much that will be of benefit to the serious student.

However, it is within the second section that Allison draws all the threads together and seeks to demonstrate how the Jewish background of "Great Tribulation" helps provide a means of tracing eschatological development within the thought of the early Church. For a student still reeling under the mass of literature surrounding the problem of the "Delay of the Parousia" Allison's book will appear as a gift from above which deals with the question fairly and sensibly. Of special note is chapter 12 entitled, "Correlations: From Expectation to Interpretation", which offers a very helpful suggestion about the sociological role that eschatological expectation plays in the life of the Church. Some parallels within Church history, including the cargo cults, the rise of Seventh-Day Adventism, etc. are profitably discussed.

The book contains a good "Summary and Conclusion" section as well as a short excursus on "Belief in the Resurrection of Jesus". It should prove to be immensely valuable to any student wishing to find a friendly guide through the tangle of eschatological materials, both primary and secondary, which are so central to NT studies today. It is comprehensive and up to date in its bibliography and contains a full and extensive set of indices.

Larry Kreitzer

The Glory of Christ in the New Testament. Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird

Ed L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright. Clarendon Press, 1987. Pp. xxviii + 311. £35.00

When George Caird (Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis of Holy Scripture, Oxford) died unexpectedly in 1984, this volume of essays, originally designed as a *Festschrift* for his 70th birthday, was recast for a different purpose, *in memoriam*. Most of the contributors were either Caird's pupils (like the two editors) or his colleagues at Oxford or McGill Universities, and they clearly remember Caird with considerable affection as well as scholarly respect (the volume opens with a magnificent "Memoir" by H. Chadwick). The title may be said to represent one of Caird's abiding interests, ever since his own 1944 PhD thesis on "The New Testament Conception of Doxa" (rumoured, incidentally, to contain no footnotes at all!).

This volume contains 21 diverse essays (with plenty of the now obligatory footnotes). Most have some connection with the theme of Christology, and the

emphasis on “glory” in the title is reflected in a number of contributions on transfiguration (eg Hooker on Mark 9) and on Johannine Christology (by M. Hengel, F. Watson, A. Harvey, M. Wiles and others). Otherwise, the collection is, as is usual in such cases, very much a “mixed bag” both in subject-matter (including topics like “Words for Love in Biblical Greek” (J. Barr) and “Reflections on so-called “Triumphalism”” (C. F. D. Moule)) and in quality (some are decidedly “flabby” or simply restate previously published opinions; others make quite significant contributions to debate).

Since it would be tedious in a review simply to list all the contributors and their essay-titles, and since there is always a danger that the best essays get lost in such inaccessible tomes (who but the wealthier libraries will be able to afford this?), I will simply comment on what appear to me to be the most important essays. The longest and most erudite is Hengel’s discussion of the Cana miracle of John 2 which has some well-aimed swipes at Bultmann and hypothetical source-criticism and some interesting observations on Dionysiac symbolism, though it still leaves this rather mysterious pericope somewhat obscure. Also on the Johannine material, Harvey develops some intriguing suggestions on Christ as “agent” and “Son” (thus being one with and vested with the authority of the sender/Father); but his thesis depends quite heavily on rabbinic conceptions of agency, and it could be questioned how much John was really in touch with these. Watson presents a provocative reading of John’s Christology as adoptionist, the Word descending on Jesus at his baptism rather than being incarnate at his birth. Some intriguing evidence is put forward in support of this thesis (though I personally doubt that it is compatible with John 1.14 and it would have to account for the curious fact that the Gospel never explicitly says that Jesus was baptised!).

Among the other creative essays here, mention should be made of W. Houston’s thoughtful observations on hermeneutics and Christological interpretation of Old Testament prophecies, and N. T. Wright’s reinterpretation of 2 Cor 3.18 (we see the glory of the Lord reflected in other Christians). But to my mind the jewel in the crown is a fascinating essay by Robert Morgan on “The Historical Jesus and the Theology of the New Testament”. As in some of his previous work, Morgan is concerned with the character of New Testament theology as *theology* and here in particular how it should relate to historical research into the life of Jesus. This is a notorious problem for anyone who understands doing New Testament theology as being concerned with “the Christian truth about Jesus” (“in having to do with Jesus, we have to do with God”) which is clearly not the same as the historian’s Jesus. How such faith and history are to be related is of course *the* theological issue posed by historical New Testament research in the last two centuries. It is Morgan’s achievement not only to shed considerable light on the issues at stake here but also to propose a Christian theological solution to the particular problem of how to structure a New Testament Theology: he suggests a method which retains the traditional Christian framework (the faith framework of the evangelists) but critically assesses these with the aid of such “hard historical information” as historians can provide. The result would be, he insists, a “reasonable faith” which has not been banished from theology by the

historian’s “faithless reason”. The proposal probably sounds a lot neater in theory than it ever could be in practice (what if some of the historical data is really incompatible with the faith framework? And are there such nuggets of historical information which can be isolated from the historian’s non-theistic approach?) and no doubt others would define the role of New Testament theology quite differently; but this essay is a really serious theological contribution to a critical issue for the church today and deserves wide-spread attention.

One of the sad results of Caird’s death is that it left unfinished his own *New Testament Theology* which would perhaps have been the climax of his contribution to New Testament studies. The manuscript is now being completed by one of his pupils and this is somehow strangely appropriate since one of Caird’s lasting contributions to New Testament scholarship was to inspire the enthusiasm and hone the talents of a series of gifted research students. The exacting standards he set in philological and historical method, his independence of mind and the sparkling lucidity with which he wrote will continue to challenge and inspire even those who never encountered this formidable scholar.

John Barclay

Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ

Klaus Wengst. SCM Press, 1987. Pp. viii + 245. £8.50

Peace is a very contentious issue. Wengst shows us (for a very few it may be a reminder) something of the variety of people’s experience of the law and order imposed under Roman rule in the Mediterranean world of the first century CE. For a proper historical awareness the account he presents and the material on which he bases it are very important; and for any theological and/or political stance attempting to root itself in Christian origins, his book must be an essential starting point. The sources and analyses of them have of course been available for a long time; but it has been all too easy for commentators and writers of New Testament “background” books to rest satisfied with a conventional chronicle of campaigns and successions and an abstract sketch of formal structures of administration. With an ear attuned to current resonances Wengst gives us a lively, readable and well warranted account of much more of the wider Roman world and then of the early Christian integrally bound up in it and reacting to it.

Eulogies of the empire from the pens of Aristides and Plutarch are complemented with somewhat more realistic assessments from Seneca, Josephus, Pliny junior and Tacitus in the main. I would myself prefer Philo, *de legatione*, to have been included, and more attention paid to Dio, largely relegated to footnotes. Even the wealthy beneficiaries could show a still more critical awareness. Wengst includes just two hostile “voices from below”, (52-54), Calgacus in the words of Tacitus, and IV Ezra. Missing is any reference to contemporary Cynics (despite the listing of Ramsay MacMullen in the very full bibliography), or, for that matter, to James and his similar social awareness.

After the destruction and conquest by the Roman armies came the payment, of course, in taxation, hitting the poor hardest (poll taxes, taxes on produce). More significant still was the economic exploitation, sucking wealth into Italy and Rome, turning the provinces to cash-cropping – and ruining the rural economy of Italy itself. There was a genuine rule of law – but one from which somehow it was the rich who mainly benefited. Yet I think Wengst might well have included from, say, Pliny junior, an indication of just how quiescently law-abiding much of the Empire was, how few troops a governor had at his disposal (e.g., Letters, X xxvii/xxviii). But rightly, the cults of Rome and the Emperor are treated quite briefly. The ideological oppression, and even its internalisation, is much less important than the socio-economic.

Only now, when the scene has been set in the first third of the book, do we turn to a consideration of the response to all this of Jesus and of early Christians. Much debated words of Jesus (on “rulers of the gentiles”, “repaying to Caesar”, and so forth) are interpreted as a trenchant critique of power and its exercise at the time. I would only add that available Cynic parallels would even more strongly support this as the most likely way the words would have been “heard”, at least when they reached the Greek cities. There is no ground for supposing that Jesus saw a realm of Caesar’s where God’s writ of justice was not to run.

Paul appears from his own writings as one dealt violently with by Roman as well as by Jewish authorities (e.g., II Cor. 11.23-27). The insistence on civil obedience, Rom. 13.1-7, (following Jewish – and Stoic – tradition) comes from one who has often flouted as well as implicitly rebuked “the powers”. But perhaps Wengst, even while quoting I Thessalonians, underestimates Paul’s insistence there, too, on responsible citizenship (compare recent writing by A. J. Malherbe, not included in the bibliography).

Luke, in Flavian times, presents the Empire in a much more favourable light (if with just some very “gentle” criticism to suggest a sense of realism). Clement of Rome accepts the Empire’s authority structures as a godly ideal. Revelation (perhaps wrongly set by Wengst in Domitian’s rather than in Trajan’s time) presents a quite other picture. The seer is aware of the symbolic clash between Christians and the imperial cults; but it is Rome’s exercise of social and political and economic power that is the main target. The image of the conquering lamb contradicts ordinary experience, where lambs do not conquer, and the saints will rule without subjects, and images of power are subverted – if not very effectively.

For Christians the implication would seem to be that we are most loyal to Jesus the Christ when we look at the world from among the oppressed and the marginalised. In 140 pages of text and 60 of notes the picture has been effectively painted, and the implications made clear, for any of us willing to accept them.

F. Gerald Downing

Julian of Norwich

Grace Jantzen. SPCK, 1987. Pp. x + 230. £8.95

This study of the 14th-century mystic who, as well as occupying a salient position as a later Middle English prose writer, has in recent years attracted an increasing amount of general interest aims, in its author’s own words, “to integrate the findings of scholarship with the interests of contemporary spirituality”. It is divided into four parts: “Background and Biography”; “Julian’s Spirituality”; “Julian’s Theology of Integration”; “Wounds into Honours” (the last treating Julian’s teaching on sin and suffering, spiritual growth and healing). In reading continuously I became aware of what is perhaps the result of over-light editing at the revision stage, in that occasionally points that have earlier been thoroughly rehearsed are introduced as if new, giving a slight sense of repetitiousness, but this is a minor criticism of what is in all major respects a thoroughly pondered and planned exposition. As befits a book aimed at a wide readership, quotations from Julian’s text are from the most up-to-date modernised version, by Colledge and Walsh. The form of reference by chapter number provides for readers who may wish to refer to the original Middle English. It is regrettable, though, that references to Julian’s text could not have been given in parenthesis on the page after the relevant quotation, rather than among the end-notes. As it is, the process of cross-referring to the context is physically a very awkward one.

The bibliography, which does not aim at comprehensive inclusion of the many short pieces on Julian, will be for the general reader a useful guide to the main secondary literature and for the Middle English student a useful source of reference to other relevant theological material from the period.

In Part One the author confronts the problem of finding an appropriate cultural and biographical context in which to consider a text about whose writer little more is known than the date of the experience which led to its writing, her age at that time, and that she became, at some unknown point of her life, an anchoress in Norwich at the church from which she is assumed to have taken her name, a writer, furthermore, whose text tells nothing of contemporary events and circumstances. Starting from the assumption that the 20th-century reader must take account of such background where it can be discovered, the author provides an account of significant events of the time likely to have impinged on Julian and her readers, alluding particularly to the effects of the Black Death as documented in Norwich, the plundering of Norwich during the Peasants’ Revolt, and the persecution of Lollardy. It is thought-provoking to see Julian’s text against this background, but we should also bear in mind that we do not know how much of her life Julian spent in Norwich. The author has generally been skilful in negotiating the risk which such a method necessarily involves, that it too easily admits inference, but there remain places where a suggestive “could have” becomes a questionable “would have”. In considering Julian’s personal biography, the author gives a useful and judicious review of the possibilities for education available to her, facing the puzzling paradox created by Julian’s own reference to herself as unlettered and the

knowledge of scripture and teaching which her text reveals, pointing out that the disclaimer may refer simply to a lack of formal training in Latin, and that it does not, in any case, refer to the later phases of her life but to the time of her vision. Unlike some previous commentators on Julian, who have been eager to marshal the available evidence in support of the probability either that she knew Latin and had read widely, or that she would have had little chance of access to books and may have been illiterate, the present author is content to rest with the position that it is not demonstrable, though it may well be the case, that Julian could read Latin for herself, and to concentrate instead on illustrating Julian's affinity with patristic and spiritual works of the early Christian and medieval tradition, however acquired. The consideration of Julian's life of enclosure concludes that we cannot know when she entered the anchorhold or what she did before that. It is pointed out that none of the conflicting attempts to base arguments about the time of her entry into the anchorhold on reference in the text will stand up to investigation, and that consideration of the various possibilities for her life before that must be speculation useful only in so far as it prompts consideration of what we know about women's life-styles in the period. The author does not incline to the view frequently proposed, most recently with confidence by Colledge and Walsh, that Julian was a nun before her enclosure. The chapter on the life of an anchoress is liberally illustrated from two earlier well known rules for anchoresses, Aelred's rule for his sister, and the 13th-century *Ancrene Riwele*. For the benefit of readers not familiar with the latter text it may have been helpful to point out that the existence of several 14th-century versions of it do make it a legitimate frame of reference for Julian's text, though it cannot be known how far it might have been kept in the 14th century, nor whether Julian herself knew it. On this last point the author is wise to refrain from speculation, since the published arguments in support of the probability are hardly convincing.

In Part Two Julian's visions are considered in the context of the life of prayer and devotion which, as her text clearly implies, she practised, in whatever form, both before her visionary experience and in the interval between the writing of the shorter account of it and the longer version which contains the fruits of her extended reflection on its significance. The thrust of the argument is that experiences like Julian's are misunderstood if they are taken as psychological phenomena occurring in isolation rather than in the context of a life-style of belief and devotion.

Part Three has as its main propositions that Julian is an outstanding example of an integrated theologian for whom daily life, religious experience and theological reflection cohere into a theology which finds its focus in the passion of Christ, and that in her understanding and evaluation of doctrine Julian holds in tension the three criteria of natural reason, church teaching and experience. There is a detailed exposition of Julian's reflections on the Trinity and the Creation: the two are connected since her thinking on the Trinity is developed in terms of nature, mercy and grace for the protection, restoration and fulfilment of humanity. Included here is an analysis of Julian's distinction between substance and sensuality: substance the created nature constituting the essence of humanity as rooted in God; sensuality

including the psychology and physicality of individual human beings. This analysis makes clear that the problem of sin and evil does not, for Julian, lie in a body-soul dualism.

Julian's meditation on the problem of evil and its remedy is probed further in Part Four, which explores in detail Julian's equation of sin with non-being and her famous vision of the lord and the servant. The assurance which Julian derived from this complex and long pondered vision, namely that God does not attach blame, is linked with the term projection in psychoanalytical theory. It is argued that the concept behind this modern notion is one with which Julian was familiar, in that she suggests that a frequent reaction to failure is frustration projected as a notion of God's anger.

These two last parts are the core of the book, whose value is that, unlike most other writing on Julian, it does not neglect her theological teaching in order to concentrate on her spirituality, and that it sets out her theological thinking as a whole, not treating it as derivative, though introducing skilfully deployed comparisons to locate Julian's work in relation to other medieval theological and spiritual teaching.

Throughout these last two parts Julian's analysis of the human condition is presented, as in Julian's own text, in the first person plural. The effect is to elide the "we" of the original text and the reader of the present book. The choice of this rhetorical strategy is a good one, conveying the quality of Julian's text more aptly than use of impersonal or third person constructions would have done, but modern readers may well be brought up short by the requirement to locate themselves within this ellipsis. This may well have been what Dr Jantzen intended. The book is written from the presupposition that Julian's text has a bearing on contemporary spirituality. Students of literary history who may not wish to take this kind of interest in the text would be making a mistake if they were deterred from reading this book on that account. It is the most useful as well as the most thought-provoking full length study of the subject which has yet been attempted.

Janet M. Cowen

Ambiguity and the Presence of God

Ruth Page. SCM 1985. Pp. ix + 230. £10.50

No book that I have reviewed has taken me as long as this one. Several times I have felt ready to write, and then been taken by uncertainty, by a confusion about what it is that I want to say. The "ambiguity" of the book's title was, it seemed, manifested in ambiguity of response. Partly, this is because it is not an easy book to read. Not because the ideas are particularly complex but because the language in which they are expressed is frequently unwieldy, cluttered with philosophical verbiage. After reading a chapter, a page, or even a paragraph, I remained uncertain about what was meant and where the thrust of the argument would take me.

Dr Page is concerned with a metaphysical view that she terms Ambiguity, a view of the world as marked in its

essence by change, diversity and polyvalence. She admits that she recommends Ambiguity because she is personally persuaded by it. She is not setting out to prove its existence. Nevertheless, if she is proposing a new metaphysical order or disorder, it seemed fair to expect that she would engage with a more traditional metaphysic. But there is no reference to Heraclitus in the index, and only three to Plato; none to Aristotle or Aquinas and, perhaps more remarkably, none to Heidegger or to Rahner.

Starting from the threefold nature of Ambiguity, Dr Page proceeds to argue that order in knowledge is something we create not something that is found. It is constructed from our perceptions and understandings and the way in which we structure them. There is no absolute truth because this is “an ambiguous, unfinished world whose chief discernible characteristic is its plasticity to various orderings”. We need not resign ourselves to everything being relative and to the replacement of knowledge by description. Dr Page offers us “relativity” which “accepts that judgement, knowledge, morality, religion, aesthetics and all our other activities are dependent on our personal and social space- and time-bound conceptions, but yet demands that we choose and follow the best we know”.

The consequence of this for Christianity, whose divine revelation is totally subject to historical forces, is the absence of any timeless version of Christian truth to which our theologies approximate. Theology is the subject of an interlude between the first part of the book, in which Dr Page sets out her ideas of ambiguity and relativity, and the second part in which she is concerned with the presence of God characterized as companionship. She explores in considerable detail the requirements of theological building blocks. They must be, as far as may be possible, appropriate, adequate, applicable and coherent. And sometimes they must be genuinely new, not expressed in a way that suggests that every possible theological category has been used. Here her writing is almost lucid, yet as we turn towards God's relationship to the present time and place of believing as the theological centre of gravity and revelation as the record of human perception of that relation, there is a most amazing sentence:

But since the world is at any moment a temporary congeries of natural and human contingent orders patient of different interpretations and in the process of change, the closure of revelation into concrete expression is vulnerable both to change of interpretation in line with changed circumstances, and to its insufficiency for meeting a new contemporary situation. [p. 115]

Dr Page frequently expresses a hope that she will persuade others of the validity of Ambiguity as a metaphysic, and that it will have an effect on theology. She has not done her cause any good by writing in this frequently impenetrable style and SCM's editors should have told her so. If she has said anything of lasting value, and Maurice Wiles thinks she has, it is, alas, lost in this sea of sub-theological verbiage.

Martin Dudley

The Logic of Theology: A brief account of the relationship between basic concepts in theology

Dietrich Ritschl. SCM, 1986. Pp. xxvi + 310. £12.95

As an ordinand, seconded from Westcott House, I heard Dietrich Ritschl lecture at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey in 1974. As hard-up theological students and aspiring theologians, we marvelled at the prestige of German theology as his Mercedes swept up the drive. This book was already in the making then. Ritschl began working on it in 1969 at Union Theological Seminary and it grew over a period of 15 years. For publication he pruned the material drastically, having developed “a considerable aversion to the verbosity, the repetitions and the superfluous didacticism” of most (German) theology. This engaging confession sets the tone for the autobiographical asides sprinkled throughout the book. They come across as rather self-indulgent.

The tautologous title will irritate purists. The subtitle is at the same time pretentious in its echo of Schleiermacher (*Kurze Darstellung*) and too modest in its delimitation of the ground covered. The book is more of a general orientation to Christian theology. The first part attempts a reconnaissance of the territory of theology, asking the question, “What is the case?”. In it Ritschl argues for the inclusion of questions of cosmology, anthropology and epistemology in the scope of theology. Analysis of the reality of the world must be allowed to influence our theological positions – not merely unconsciously, as in ideology, but through disciplined reflection. Theology and church tend to operate with “a colourless, timeless and fleshless image of humanity”, ignoring the fact that people are different from one another and change through life. For Ritschl, who is a trained and practising analytical (Jungian) therapist, psychotherapy can teach the church to speak realistically and therapeutically or curatively to the needs of humanity, rather than idealistically and moralistically as now. The narrative basis of religious language should be identified and the structure of memory and hope that is unique to the Christian worldview should be articulated. Thus understood, theology engages in the “secondary verification” of those “implicit axioms” or “regulative statements” that find their primary verification in worship. Doctrines are not propositional answers to metaphysical questions but pointers, clarifications, invitations. The concept of revelation is best avoided, for few can appreciate the complex historical and philosophical factors behind that misleading word.

The second part is an approach to the content of theology, asking the question, “What shall I think?”. Ritschl wants to make the election of Israel and the Christian church his starting point. Consequently, Christian theology will be a continuous dialogue with Judaism. This commitment must be allowed to determine the content of doctrine: thus Ritschl finds the notion of incarnation unhelpful in so far as it implies that God's presence in Christ was greater than his presence in Israel. Ritschl enters a caveat against objectifying Christological concepts such as incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, so that the dynamics of human involvement become reified and take on a life of their

own. In the third part, which is concerned with practice and answers the question, "What shall I do?", Ritschl offers in place of detailed prescriptions two guiding principles: a basically therapeutic attitude towards humans and a basically doxological attitude towards God. Picking up earlier points (as he does throughout the second and third parts), Ritschl distinguishes three types of theology. First, biblical theology naïvely applied to today's problems. Second, academic theology, which is concerned with critical verification and does not necessarily imply practice. Third, theology as practical wisdom: drawing, of course, on the Bible and informed and chastened by academic discipline, it eschews confessional polemics, intra-disciplinary infighting and reputation building. It aims to be therapeutic to all concerned and to offer itself up to God. Pastoral experience and insight is its indispensable prerequisite.

For whom is this book intended? All who are committed to Christian theology today will find food for thought here. But beginners will find it too abstract and allusive, while professionals will be disappointed and frustrated by the brevity and fragmentary nature of much of the material. The further reading appended to most subsections is largely German: again, unhelpful for students, superfluous for scholars. The format of the book, with its cross-referencing and use of four different types (often all on the same page) is not a success. It seems gimmicky and contrived and, ironically, reinforces the impression of diffuseness and fragmentariness in a work dedicated to coherence and integration. The standard of proofreading is poor.

Paul Avis

The Incarnation. Collected Essays in Christology

Brian Hebblethwaite. CUP. Pp. viii + 184. £7.95

This book provoked in me a feeling that the era of the 1970s liberal Christologies was well and truly over, even if (as Canon Hebblethwaite points out) there is still great persuasive force in the idea of a non-incarnational Christology for Christian believers. All the articles in this collection of essays bar one were written from 1977-82. All bar two concern liberal Christology in general, and that corpus of writings in particular which began in 1970 with Norman Pittenger's *Christology Reconsidered* and ended with the publication of *The Myth of God Incarnate* in 1977. Thus there are 10 articles on Wiles, Hick, Lampe, Robinson and Cupitt, nine written from 1977-82 and one written for this book analyzing their respective replies to Hebblethwaite's criticisms. The other two stand on their own. One expounds Austin Farrer's Christology, and the other (which was part of the MacKinnon Festschrift) examines the relationship of theories of truth to Christology.

The debate aroused by *The Myth* was a very British, and indeed English, one. There are few references to German theologians in this book; occasionally Moltmann and Jüngel make a brief entrance and then swiftly exit. However, it is a narrower debate even than this. For Hebblethwaite realizes correctly that much of

the liberal corpus of the 1970s was a critique of the English Anglican Incarnationalism written before 1960. His way of answering that critique is by showing the continued relevance and power of that inheritance.

It would thus be possible to portray this book as part of the continuing exposition of Anglican Incarnationalism which was described by Michael Ramsey in *From Gore to Temple*. The tradition reasserts itself after the stormy years of the 1970s, and non-incarnational Christology is once more abandoned, as it was in England after the 1920s. Certainly the great strength of this book is the way article after article combine a passionate defence of the traditional Anglican approach to Christology, a great and reasoned clarity of style with a comprehensive survey of the liberal position. If nothing else, this book is an admirable resource for teachers of doctrine on Anglican Christology of this period.

But the value of this particular book goes beyond its particular context, although it is a great pity that this book was not published in 1984 when the debate was fresher in people's minds. Liberal theologians now address other questions, as Hebblethwaite himself notices: and his recent book on truth shows how the liberal/conservative debate is now located in the fields of religious language and epistemology. Lampe and Robinson have died, Goulder has left the Church, and Hick writes within an American context on world religions. The value of this collection, however, is that it restates Anglican Christology in a fresh and easily understandable way. It is, in the main, a work of apologetics, avoiding technical terms and closely reasoned argument: aimed, I would think, at the clergy, students, and laity, rather than the professional theologian. On those terms, then, how does the book succeed?

One difficulty with a collection of essays is that the same point is apt to be made in passing in a number of articles, but never developed. Thus it is crucial to Hebblethwaite's argument that the religious value of an Incarnational Christology is that God meets us in person in the Incarnation of Christ. But, says the critic, we no longer live in Palestine at the time of Christ. No matter, says Hebblethwaite: the spiritual and sacramental presence of the ascended Christ allows a personal commerce with God now, even if the glorified and risen humanity of Christ is only part of our future expectation and is not manifest to us now. This is a fair point, and one well taken. The problem is that this insight is made in several articles, but never developed extensively in any of them. Thus questions of the relationship of the Spirit to the risen Christ in the Church; the status of the concept "The Body of Christ" as eucharistic presence or in ecclesiology; or the way in which sacramental encounter differs from encounter with the Word in preaching or with a meeting with the earthly Jesus – these are not questions which are fully explored, or sometimes even asked.

But this is to be too negative. The value of the book is that there is a resolute defence of Chalcedonian language; the Trinitarian implications of Christology; an exploration of kenosis and pre-existence; hermeneutics and the place of the creeds; and the nature of truth claims

in Christology. The dominant theme is a welcome stress on the intra-Trinitarian life of God as the necessary grounding for a full Christology, which allows a proper appreciation of the costly love which the Incarnation reveals in God's care for his world. At times Hebblethwaite passes over too quickly the implications for divine being which a kenotic theory requires, but that is work for another day.

It is important to be clear what this work is not. It does not build on recent New Testament studies which show Jesus as the Jewish rabbi in a divided community fearful of its survival (Rowland, Sanders, Dunn, Harvey, Riches). It does not explore the relationship of time and eternity within Christology, as Professor Colin Gunton has done recently in *Yesterday and Today*. Nor is it particularly welcoming to Pannenberg ("the extremely difficult and roundabout conceptuality of *Jesus, God and Man*" pp. 155), and Moltmann has an ambiguous compliment paid to him ("There is much in that book with which we might wish to quarrel but the central chapter... constitutes a remarkable attempt to think through what it means for our concept of God to say that Christ's Cross is God's Cross in our world" p. 41). Only Jüngel, von Balthasar and perhaps Schillebeeckx are continental theologians whom Hebblethwaite is glad to commend. It is rather to T. F. Torrance, A. Farrer, and C. F. D. Moule that Hebblethwaite looks for inspiration.

So this collection of essays serves two purposes, and can be commended for them both. It provides an excellent overview of the debate in England from 1970-82 on the Incarnation, which was primarily though not entirely an Anglican debate. Secondly, in a restrained and clear way it restates traditional Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy. It is not an original book; it ignores the Continent overmuch; and at times the chapters repeat but do not develop points made earlier. But it is a delight to read, exploring the religious and moral force of the Incarnation, and can be warmly commended as an Anglican apologia for traditional Christology. I hope it is widely read.

Peter Sedgwick

Themes in Theology. The Three-Fold Cord

Donald M. MacKinnon. T. & T. Clarke, 1987. Pp. viii + 243. £14.95

Our distinguished author's deep commitment to the traditional scheme of the Trinity and Incarnation, conceived as a base to be maintained and not abandoned, unites the essays collected in this stimulating volume.

Part A comprises six papers on problems within philosophical theology, with special reference to *theologia negativa*. In "The inexpressibility of God" we are warned against "reducing the divine eternity to terms of the recognizable". The transcendent is not to be levelled down "to the form of a magnified, supra-human reality". We pass to "Kant's philosophy of religion", and are reminded that it was in the context of competing religious authoritarianisms that Kant insisted that no

form of religion could be valid which failed to acknowledge the sovereignty of moral principles. Kant is found to end in the tradition of negative theology in that he "can neither accept a religious faith that presupposes a divine self-revelation nor completely subordinate the entertainment of its possibility to morality as an instrument that serves the effective extension of the latter's authority". Kant reappears in the third essay, "Reflections on time and space" as treading "the narrow path between idealism and realism"; and profound questions concerning the relation of the temporal to the eternal are raised. In addition to recalling some unjustifiably neglected thinkers, the paper on "Some aspects of the treatment of Christianity by the British idealists" adverts to the service performed by Green and Edward Caird on behalf of those post-Tractarians whose teleological inheritance from Butler had been eroded by Darwin. The investigation of "Metaphor in theology" which follows is notable for its insistence upon the fact that "the saturation of our religious and theological speech by the consciously or unconsciously metaphorical, is perfectly compatible with the allowance that such speech is intentionally referential". The section ends with "Reflections on mortality". Since death deprives us of the context of genuinely human life, "any hereafter which we can represent to ourselves in significantly human terms is inadmissible". Here "an essentially negative theology must be enabled to have the last word".

Part B contains two essays: "Power politics and religious faith" and "Creon and Antigone", which endorse Dr MacKinnon's contention that "any serious theological work must take account of the over-all ecclesial, and human context in which it is carried on". We thus proceed from an historical study in which righteous anger is displayed against Constantine's slogan, *in hoc signo vinces*, to a discussion of nuclear power which tends in the direction of unilateralism, whilst appreciating the statesman's responsibilities.

Part C gathers pieces on "The Myth of God Incarnate", "The relation of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity," "Prolegomena to Christology," "Teilhard's *Le Milieu Divin* reconsidered," "Crucifixion-Resurrection," and "Edward Schillebeeckx's Christology". The author confesses that this group of essays is informed by an impatience with those who shrink from the task of theological reconstruction, and with those who are unwilling to rethink *ab initio* the proper relations of church and state. He concurs with Charles Raven that we may not think of the universe as no more than the stage set for the drama of redemption – a point at which he feels Teilhard may still assist us; he urges a fresh review of kenōsis as "the conception which alone enables us to approach the *arcana* of the divine condescension" – and he will not permit "the rhetoric of *Christus Victor*" to obscure that reality; and in the review of Schillebeeckx he underlines the importance of a "proper hermeneutics".

Part D, "Epilogue," resumes the theme of the vulnerability of God as expressive of his essential being, and reminds us that all our thinking about the transcendent yet involved divine being must take due account of the fact that we are those who live in the century of Auschwitz.

Dr MacKinnon is appreciative of all he has learned from others, but he remains his own man, correcting and reproving where necessary. Thus, he finds the authors of *The Myth of God Incarnate* “by no means at ease in handling the history and sense of such notions as substance” (which, given the subject, some may consider an understatement as fatal as a tap from an elephant’s paw); and he can descend upon Schillebeeckx from a great height thus: “The way in which Schillebeeckx has recourse to this particular phrase [i.e. ‘Jesus as eschatological Lord’] is neither worthy of his stature as a theologian, nor indeed required to get him out of difficulties that he is treating more effectively elsewhere”. Profoundly aware of mystery, and of the consequent limits of human awareness and understanding, Dr MacKinnon is not one to invent mysteries. Never afraid to nail his colours to the mast, he will, above all, permit no skirting of the scandal of particularity where the Incarnation is concerned.

In passing, a formidable agenda of work to be done is presented: on Teilhard’s vision; on the place of silence before mystery and *contra* idolatry; on the analysis of “fact”; on Kant and eschatology; on the Holy Spirit and the mission of the Incarnate; on Moltmann *vis à vis* the idealist-realist debate; on Christ and time. In return, we would presume to ask Dr MacKinnon for more. There is, as we have said, much here on God’s condescension (which is grace – than which, *pace* the quoted Newman, there is no higher gift); there is also the spectre of Auschwitz and all it represents. What, then, needs to be *done* in the God-ward direction in order to atonement, having special regard to God’s holiness? At this point P. T. Forsyth, to whom passing reference is made, may come to our aid. Again, we should welcome Dr MacKinnon’s observations upon James Denney’s remark that it is “the doctrine of the Atonement . . . which makes it inevitable that we should have a Christology”.

With our author, we regret that so many in the west have discussed the attributes of the one God independently of the fact of the divine tri-unity; and with him we urge a close *theological* (not simply a missiological/pragmatic) investigation of church establishments which, incidentally, are varied and not Anglican only. The issue should be pressed to the Trinity itself, for only when we take full account of the fact that God calls his Church into being by the Spirit through the Word, and gives it to his Son as bride, shall we have the basis for a proper consideration of church order, and the resources for witnessing to and, if need be over against, the powers that be.

For all the modesty with which he presents his deepest convictions, there is a steadiness of course here which would regard alien gusts as merely providing further occasions of wrestling. At the end of “Power politics and religious faith” he observes that “we have all of us to reckon with the fact that for all our boasted openness of mind, we are likely to continue to prefer the quick, seemingly satisfying answers of the *simplificateur*, whether theoretical or practical or both, rather than acknowledge the tragic stuff of which human existence, in its simultaneous *grandeur et misère*, is fashioned”. Perhaps; but Donald MacKinnon will be among the last to succumb to the preference here prescribed.

Alan P. F. Sell

Atonement. From Holocaust to Paradise

Ulrich Simon. James Clarke, 1987. Pp. 138. £5.95

Professor Simon squirms at the memory of a Baltimore dinner party, when, “as a favour to myself”, his hostess “put on” Mozart’s *Requiem* as background musak. “Pearls,” he mutters, “must not be cast before undiscerning swine.” This book suggests that he would, however, have kept a most civilised conversation going. He is familiar with a range of writing. A paraphrase of “Expostulation and Reply” occurs as incidentally as an echo of E. M. W. Tillyard’s literary criticism. He is so much at his ease in *Cymbeline* that he dares promise the “golden lads and girls” the “fulfilment” of “their wishes, their very selves”, with never a hint that, as chimney sweepers, they must come to dust.

That nice accommodation, like the rest of Professor Simon’s allusions, is being deployed in the service of an argument. Wordsworthian sensitivity to “this mighty sum of things forever speaking” is adduced so that we may be aware of the unity of the universe we inhabit. A Tillyardian “chain of being” is to be recognised in the play of Nature, in those wild creatures who “dramatise for us a sinless existence in no need of atonement”. The brothers’ dirge is deprived of its punning menace so that it shall present a view of decent warriors, artists, and inarticulate folk, rewarded as they pass from this life. Against our distrust of a world where a virus “breaks down our immunity”, a mind is left vacant by “some imbalance in or after conception”, and, “worst of all”, a cancer intrudes in “an orgy of expansion”, Professor Simon is setting the significance of art. Not those of literature only. He places the cosmological oddities of Dante and the secular redemptions of Goethe with the struggles of Michelangelo and the reconciliations of Monteverdi and Beethoven and Verdi. He, too, has a use for Mozart. These are “priests of music”. And the extremely complex substance of atonement “can only be stated musically”. Who but the least musical of us “can fail to be ‘atoned’ by being attuned to the great masses of Haydn”?

Art, which declares what God is doing, which “undoubtedly resolves and takes away sin and guilt”, is, equally, prophetic of the evil which we are bringing about. *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* shewed that “the drug addict must murder in an orgy of violence”. *The Devils* announced the institutionalisation of evil, in which “supported by the control of the media and military force, the godless authority rules and darkness covers the world”. Too few of us listen or read. “Many contemporary Christians are Marxists and, like them, show themselves incapable of understanding the past.” Pandemonium is upon us as the Sex Pistols “shoot out ecstatic invitations to a dance of hell”. This is not time to entertain Origenesque doctrines of *apokatastasis* which “even Karl Barth flirts with”.

These generalising denunciations become particularised when Professor Simon speaks of Barth’s time and our own. It is, indeed, only when he writes of Nazi atrocities that he does particularise dates, places, names. The Nazis made a difference. “The very devilishness of the tormentors of our age enforces a far greater sensitivity to the measuring of sin and thus to the

quality of both justice and mercy.” Modernistic interpretations of atonement may have “instinctively followed a subjective line”, but “concentration camps may be said to have ended the subjective phase”. We must now enquire not how human beings viewed themselves and their actions, or how we may understand them, but how God sees them. “One lesson, one poem, one account from the endless pages of notes taken from survivors, witnesses against the blasphemous notion that forgiveness through human effort is possible.” Our soteriology is defined by the camps. How shall we speak as we contemplate “the Holocaust”?

Professor Simon’s precise attention to our use of language enables him to avoid all vulgar theologies of holocaust. If “holocaust” is our word for a whole burnt offering made to God, then it certainly cannot be referred to what the Nazis thought they were doing. But if “holocaust” is the word for what is received by God, then we may believe that “the souls of the righteous are tried by God as men try gold”, that, in the furnace, they are acceptable. God discerns atonement. The line of the sacrifice of Abel, of the *Aqedah*, of the Cross, is continued by God in the camps: “the crucified and the gassed became one”.

Not everyone is sensitive to this line of atonement. The Jews shrink from extending to Christ the categories of *kippur* and pasch. The victims of Plötzensee did not appreciate their suffering as a participation in “the priestly act of the lamb”. But Professor Simon points to “outstanding Jews” who have acknowledged their share with Jesus: “St Teresa of Avila, Mandelstamm, Edith Stein, Raissa Maritain, Levertoff, etc.”. And how shall we be brought to their hope that we have a part in this line from Holocaust to Paradise? Augustine’s great talk of the Vandals as “citizens to be”, or Luther’s announcement of God’s seeing us with Christ-coloured spectacles, might assist others; Professor Simon maintains his tone in suggesting that Shakespeare’s prompting in his tragedies, and even more, perhaps, Verdi’s powerful reworking of Shakespeare’s design, may stir a sense of our own mortality, and so of the significance of dying offered in the crucifix, and, in the end, of God’s seeing us and accepting us.

Hamish F. G. Swanston

Authority in the Anglican Communion. Essays presented to Bishop John Howe

Stephen W. Sykes (ed). Anglican Book Centre (Toronto), 1987. Pp. 286

It is said of Nero that he fiddled whilst Rome burned; it could perhaps be said of Anglicans that they appear to engage in self-teasing internal and ecumenical controversy about the nature of “authority” whilst the contemporary world heads towards the increasingly complex disintegration of human and ecological decay. It is, perhaps, with a certain a priori impatience that the reader turns to this collection, edited by an acknowledged master in Anglican studies, Professor Stephen Sykes of

the University of Cambridge. The 1988 Lambeth Conference will mark an important staging post on the road from the 1948 Conference which served to focus the starting point of contemporary discussion of the meaning and unity of the Anglican communion. The contributions to this volume provide what amounts to a diverse, international commentary upon a sphere of discourse over which the dedicatee, Bishop John Howe, Executive Officer of the Anglican Communion 1969-71 and Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council 1971-82 and to the Lambeth Conference 1978, exercised an important influence. What is of special value in *Authority in the Anglican Communion* is the recognition, dear to the heart of the editor, of the international character of the Anglican Communion and the absence of any desire for formal ideological or juridical hegemony embodied in the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In the absence of such a centralised authority the articulation of a coherent alternative becomes a priority. The justification of the necessity of such inter-ecclesial coherence can of course be generated dogmatically without difficulty; the effort required in moving from such an ideological plane to the sphere of efficient, benign praxis is another matter.

The contributions are grouped under three subheadings concerned with the theology, the structures and usage, and the future of authority, respectively. Professor Sykes introduces the volume with a typically informed and judicious appraisal of the contextual significance of the problem of authority in Anglicanism and reiterates themes familiar to those acquainted with this distinguished theologian’s work. In particular Sykes draws attention to the responsibility of the church towards the task of finding men and women “who will be capable of rising to the religious and ethical challenges of the future of humanity” (22). There is indeed a tension throughout the work between the seemingly trite and parochial concerns of ecclesiastical polity and the agenda of the world which manifests itself in different ways. Thus in the first part on “The Theology of Authority” Professor John E. Skinner of the Episcopal Divinity School provides a heavy-handed account of the relation of ideology, authority, and faith which uses some interesting etymologically-derived concepts along with trenchant assertions, of which the following are a representative example:

“Ideology is fundamentally a cloak for unbelief. It hides its failure to acknowledge the ultimate identity of creator and redeemer, fact and value. In a desperate manner, ideology seeks to protect its adherents from the ultimate meaninglessness of a facticity devoid of value through the projection of quasi-objective structures of value and worth offered as opiates for a pervasive despair. Ideology is the expression of human sin.” (37)

This invites the examiner’s injunction: “Discuss critically”; we leave Professor Skinner’s argument to the sociologically-informed reader to disentangle. Dean R. C. Craston, Vice-Chairman of the Anglican Consultative Council revisits P. T. Forsyth’s understanding of the “Grace of a Holy God” as the source of authority and pays generous respect to the spiritual autonomy of the Gospel that resists all forms of structured encapsulation. Bishop H. R. McAdoo,

formerly Co-Chairman of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, reviews the progress of the Commission's Agreed Statement *Authority in the Church*, setting it in the context of the whole period from the Conference of 1888. He adopts what could be termed a "soft" conception of "comprehensiveness", citing Peter Baelz's comment that it springs "from a proper recognition of the *complementarities* of the Christian response to the gospel, not from an easy-going accommodation and compromise" (89). It is to Stephen Sykes' credit that his critique of "comprehensiveness" never postulates such a resolution, as he recognises more fully and consistently the sheer *incommensurability* of elements within the traditions of the Christian church that resist mutual assimilation. Bishop McAdoo's final suggestion that renewal could be generated through a realisation of the contemporary significance of the Cambridge Platonists has all the charm of the *simpliste* pneumatological realism all too popular in a contemporary church apparently subsisting at some distance from the real demands of a critical modernity. Professor J. F. Booty draws some interesting parallels between the holistic pre-modern thought of Richard Hooker and post-industrial problems of cultural fragmentation which would merit fuller development.

In part two on "Anglican Studies and Usage" Philip H. E. Thomas has put his unrivalled knowledge of historical sources to good effect and has produced a very well researched outline of the patterns of constitutional authority which makes very clear the diverse yet mutual problems of indigenisation which affect all churches within the family of the whole Anglican communion. K. S. Littleborough of Adelaide provides a clearly-argued and realistic appraisal of the Bishop-in-Synod as the organ of the dispersed authority clearly influenced by the distinctive Australian experience in the post-war period. Likewise, but in a more distinctly historical manner, Bishop Michael Nuttall of Natal outlines the evolution of the provincial synod in Southern Africa in a way that gives close insight into the interaction of church growth, national politics and the social policy and their consequences for the enabling of an indigenous ordained ministry. This contribution is of interest to all those concerned with the current crisis in South Africa. John S. Pobe of the World Council of Churches in Geneva has provided a well-documented article of some general importance which, though slight in scale, gives first hand insight into the problems experienced in the enculturation of Anglican patterns of ministry into traditional African society. To this diversity is added yet a further dimension by Gavin White of the University of Glasgow who compares recent Anglican discussion of collegiality and conciliarity with that in Russian Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. White rightly draws attention to the considerable intrinsic interest of Australian religious practice and the hint of the emergence of a "quasi-imperial Anglicanism" in that country.

The contributions to part three, "The Ecumenical Future of Authority", are slighter in importance. Professor Günther Gassmann, Director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches comments in general terms upon the efficacy of ecumenical dialogues in relation to the issue of authority and upon the interdisciplinary analysis of "reception" not

only as an elite, quasi-academic activity but in terms of the wider church body, that is as exemplified in the Faith and Order document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. The brief contribution of Cardinal Willebrands and the longer, perceptive essay by Professor J. Robert Wright cast light upon Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in the aftermath of ARCIC I and afford some initial insight into the increasingly important role of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and the need, perhaps, for greater realism as regards the relation of the somewhat isolated position of the ecumenical sphere of discourse to the *actual* power structure of the Roman Catholic Church and from the historic diversity of Anglicanism.

Professor Sykes comments in his conclusion upon catholicity and authority in Anglican-Lutheran relations and detects in this context a number of themes that illustrate this writer's preoccupation with systematic theology, sociological realism in ecclesiology and with Christian identity which "is not a harmonious state of equilibrium, but one in which paradoxes are constantly arising to provoke disquiet and tension" (282).

As we hinted above this book is best justified by its reflection within the bounds of a single volume of something of the international character of the Anglican Communion. In a world increasingly unified by its global crisis yet fraught by the increasing fragmentation of the human community then it is earnestly to be hoped that this particular manifestation of the Body of Christ may survive and serve to strengthen the endangered bonds of residual "species-being". Inasmuch as it contributes to this, *Authority in the Anglican Communion* may have made a very small contribution to the unity of the coming Kingdom.

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- Godfrey Ashby. *Sacrifice. Its Nature and Purpose*. SCM Press. Pp. 149. £7.50
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