

## The Significance of Rudolph Bultmann

THAT Bultmann is one of the most significant figures in contemporary theology is not to be disputed. Some would claim that he is the most significant figure, for they say that he has inaugurated a completely new phase of theological thinking. Those who found in Barth and Brunner emancipation from the shallowness of liberalism are now required to recognise that these stars are already setting and that Bultmann is the new luminary who is destined to dominate the theological firmament. Whether this is claiming too much, only time can show. But it is certainly true that Bultmann is not only a first-class New Testament scholar, to whom all specialists are indebted, but also an original and stimulating systematic theologian. His *New Testament Theology* is a mine of scholarly treasure, and no one could browse in his recently published *Essays* without finding himself illuminated both in mind and spirit. One can say all this without committing oneself to his peculiar position. Though by no means convinced of the soundness of Bultmann's attempt to demythologise the New Testament, the present writer has no doubt at all that he has started something that was worth starting. An original thinker has an immense value whether he persuades us or not, for he leads us to review our conclusions by compelling us to ask searching questions that had not occurred to us concerning what we thought to be already assured. Bultmann is a thinker of this order; he stabs his readers awake and gives them vividly to realise how the Gospel, though once and for all delivered to the saints, can still stimulate fruitful debate.

There is one respect in which Bultmann should win the interest of every minister of the Gospel. It has often been true of Continental theologians that they have been out of touch with the working Church and have failed to relate their findings to the practical task of preaching the Gospel and edifying the people of God. But Bultmann's aim throughout his attempt at theological reconstruction has been to meet the needs of the time. Demythologising and all that

goes with it seems as academical as anything could be, but its author has in mind in advocating it the urgent need to find a way of commending the Gospel to the modern world. Christians who served in the last war, both chaplains and combatants, had forced upon them the immense difficulty of convincing the outside world of the relevance of the Faith to the men and women of our time. It was to this problem of communication, so familiar to every working minister, that Bultmann has sought to address himself. He has endeavoured to find a way of presenting the Gospel that first appeared nearly twenty centuries ago in a form that can be understood and welcomed by people living in our very different world. He considers the New Testament to have become strange and unintelligible to an age that has passed through a momentous political and social revolution and the thinking of which has been profoundly affected by the modern scientific and technological outlook. The urgent problem today, he thinks, is to find a way of re-presenting the Gospel. We may not approve the solution he offers, but if we are candid we are bound to admit that he does confront us with some fundamental and momentous issues. It would be a grave mistake to regard him as a destroyer of the Faith. Whatever we may think of his performance, there is no doubt that it is his intention to help the Church in its great evangelistic task.

#### THE MYTHICAL VIEW

Bultmann starts from the position that the New Testament *kerygma* is clothed in a mythological dress that has no meaning for modern man. Here we have the cosmological myth of the three-storied universe : man lives on the earth, but above him dwells God in heaven and below him the demons in hell. Man is thus not in control of himself, for he is exposed to invasive spiritual forces from both above and below. History is under the control of the supernatural powers of Satan, sin and death. The End is imminent; it will be inaugurated by a cosmic catastrophe and followed by the descent of the Judge, the raising of the dead and the last judgment.

According to Christian preaching, Christ has appeared in the last time, in the fullness of time. He has died the death of the sinner and thereby made atonement for sins. His resurrection marks the beginning of cosmic catastrophe. Death is abolished, and the demonic forces are rendered powerless. The Risen Christ now exalted to the right hand of God to be Lord and King will soon return, then will follow the resurrection of men and the final judgment and also the final abolishing of sin, death and suffering. Those who have been joined to the Lord by Baptism and the Eucharist are assured of resurrection to salvation. They already experience the first instalment of salvation through the Spirit, and this guarantees their final salvation.

The origin of these themes may be found in contemporary Jewish Apocalyptic and the redemption myths of Gnosticism. "To this extent," says Bultmann, "the *kerygma* is incredible to modern man, for he is convinced that the mythical view of the world is obsolete."<sup>1</sup> The question then arises whether the New Testament embodies "a truth which is quite independent of its mythical setting. If it does, theology must undertake the task of stripping the *kerygma* from its mythical framework, of demythologising it."<sup>2</sup>

Now modern man, Bultmann asserts, cannot be expected to accept as true the mythical view of the world. "To do so," he says, "would be both senseless and impossible"; senseless, "because there is nothing specifically Christian in the mythical view of the world as such," for "it is simply the cosmology of a pre-scientific age"; impossible, "because no man can adopt a view of the world by his own volition."<sup>3</sup> No meaning can be attached to such phrases in the creeds as, for example, "descended into hell" or "ascended into heaven," because we can no longer accept the mythological three-storied universe. Nor can we any longer believe in spirits, whether good or evil; we do not ascribe sickness, for instance, to the machinations of demons, but to natural causes. As a result the miracles of the New Testament have ceased to be miraculous. Moreover, the mythical eschatology of the New Testament is untenable, because the parousia of Christ never happened as was anticipated.

But it is not only science that challenges the mythology of the New Testament. Modern man has a different way of understanding himself: he thinks of himself as a unity, solely responsible for his own feeling, thinking and willing. "He is not," says Bultmann, "as the New Testament regards him, the victim of a strange dichotomy which exposes him to the interference of powers outside himself."<sup>4</sup> A sundering of interior unity he would regard as schizophrenia. He also finds "what the New Testament has to say about the 'Spirit' and the sacraments utterly strange and incomprehensible."<sup>5</sup> What is incomprehensible is how "Spirit" can possibly penetrate his being and influence his own mind and spirit. Neither Baptism in water nor the partaking of food in the Eucharist can convey anything spiritual.

Again, death is a natural event and cannot be regarded as the punishment of sin. "Human beings," says Bultmann, "are subject to death even before they have committed any sin. And to attribute human mortality to the fall of Adam is sheer nonsense, for guilt

<sup>1</sup> *Kerygma and Myth*, 3.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, 3.

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *op. cit.*, 6.

<sup>5</sup> *op. cit.*, 6.

implies personal responsibility, and the idea of original sin as an inherited infection is sub-ethical, irrational, and absurd."<sup>6</sup>

The doctrine of the Atonement is equally objectionable. The guilt of one man cannot be expiated by the death of another who is sinless. "What a primitive mythology it is, that a divine Being should become incarnate, and atone for the sins of men through his own blood!"<sup>7</sup> Nor can the death of Christ be explained "as a transaction between God and man through which God's claims on man were satisfied."<sup>8</sup> This would make sin "a juridical matter," "an external transgression of a commandment," thus making nonsense of all our ethical standards. Moreover, if Christ were the pre-existent Son of God, death could mean very little for him since he would know that he would rise again.

"The resurrection of Jesus," Bultmann goes on, "is just as difficult, if it means an event whereby a supernatural power is released which can henceforth be appropriated through the sacraments."<sup>9</sup> Here is an incredible nature-miracle, and modern man "cannot see how an event like this could be the act of God, or how it could affect his own life."<sup>10</sup>

Gnostic influence has made Christ into a God-man, and death and resurrection into a cosmic event in which all men are involved. This is incredible, "because it regards man's essential being as nature and redemption as a process of nature."<sup>11</sup>

The crucial question now arises: "Does this drastic criticism of the New Testament mythology mean the complete elimination of the *kerygma*?"<sup>12</sup> "You cannot," Bultmann says, "pick and choose, selecting some features of the *kerygma* and subtracting others (such as the Virgin Birth or the Ascension)." "The mythical view of the world must be accepted or rejected in its entirety."<sup>13</sup> "If the truth of the New Testament proclamation is to be preserved, the only way is to demythologise it."<sup>14</sup> It is important to understand clearly what Bultmann means by demythologising. The proper use of criticism, he maintains, is not to eliminate myth but to interpret it.

Now according to Bultmann, mythology is not what it appears to be, viz. primitive cosmology; it must be understood anthropologically or existentially. "By that," as Prof. Henderson explains, "Bultmann means that although in a myth a man appears to be

<sup>6</sup> *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>10</sup> *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> *op. cit.*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> *op. cit.*, 9.

<sup>14</sup> *op. cit.*, 10.

describing the world, he is in fact really describing his own existence. The belief in demons, for instance, is not so much primitive physics or medicine, as man's realisation that his life is limited and conditioned by factors which are beyond his control, which often frustrate his purposes and are essentially indifferent to him."<sup>15</sup> The New Testament mythology is, therefore, only properly significant in so far as it offers to modern man an interpretation of his own existence, concerning which he must make a decision either for or against.

Demythologising is not, however, a new device for dealing with the difficulties which the New Testament proclamation raises. Again and again the Church has resorted in the course of its history to the method of allegorisation. The older liberal theologians sought to eliminate mythology altogether as something relative and temporary. Bultmann remarks, for instance, "how Harnack reduces the *kerygma* to a few basic principles of religion and ethics. Unfortunately this means that *the kerygma has ceased to be the kerygma*; it is no longer the proclamation of the decisive act of God in Christ."<sup>16</sup> For Bultmann, however, demythologising is not so radical as this, for he thinks that we can "recover the truth of the *kerygma* for men who do not think in mythological terms without forfeiting its character as *kerygma*."<sup>17</sup> This can be done only by means of an existentialist solution. The mythology of the New Testament, with its source in Jewish apocalyptic and the Gnostic redemption myths, must be interpreted existentially.

#### MYTHOLOGY INTERPRETED

Here we reach the constructive side of Bultmann's theology, where he makes considerable use of the modern existentialist philosophy, especially that of Heidegger. In a recent book, *An Existentialist Theology*, Dr. John Macquarrie has furnished a careful account of this attempt to clothe New Testament theology in the dress of Heidegger's philosophy, but a mere sketch will have to suffice in this paper. It might seem that Bultmann is engaging in the dangerous enterprise of seeking to accommodate the Christian Gospel to contemporary philosophising. He could reply, however, that the first of the existentialists, Kierkegaard, was a Christian, and that it was Christianity that made an existentialist philosophy possible.

Heidegger distinguishes between two types of existence—existence as inauthentic and fallen, and existence as authentic. Corresponding to these, Bultmann speaks of life without Christ and life with Christ. The mark of life without Christ is anxiety or careful-

<sup>15</sup> *Myth in the New Testament*, 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Kerygma and Myth*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> *op. cit.*, 15.

ness. Man feels himself to be at the mercy of forces that are indifferent to him or on occasion hostile to him; he therefore seeks security by reliance on the visible and tangible things of this world. But he is like the rich fool of the parable and fails to realise that the form of this world passes away and with it the man who holds on to it as his security. There is a further consequence of the inauthentic life: the urge to seek this kind of security brings men into competition with one another for earthly possessions, whence comes hatred, strife and envy.

Now in contrast with the life without Christ is the life with Christ. The characteristic of this life is faith; it is trust not in what one has or has achieved but in the grace of God. This "means faith," says Bultmann, "that the unseen, intangible reality actually confronts us as love, opening up our future and signifying not death but life."<sup>18</sup> The grace of God forgives sins, i.e. sets a man free from the past in which he has endeavoured to find his security in himself, for this is the essence of sin. Along with faith goes obedience, for faith lays a man open to God and gives him the power to serve Him. The believing man still lives in the world, but he lives in it as though not of it, thus he controls the world and is not controlled by it.

This, in brief, is the Christian proclamation when the *kerygma* has been demythologised. Bultmann maintains that the process of demythologising is to be traced in the New Testament itself. We find, for example, realised eschatology in the Johannine writings. And St. Paul advances, for the most part, beyond the Gnostic idea of redemption as concerned with quasi-physical entities. To be "in the Spirit" is to lead a new life initiated by an act of decision. "Hence," as Henderson puts it, "in the paradox of *Gal. 5. 25*, 'if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit,' the imperative appears alongside the indicative."<sup>19</sup>

There is a limit, however, to the extent to which Bultmann is prepared to take the demythologising process. It indicates the point at which he parts company with contemporary existentialism. According to this philosophy, though man is regarded as in some sense fallen, he can yet of himself achieve authentic existence. When he comes to realise what real existence is, he can achieve it by his own act of decision. But Bultmann will have nothing of this; it is not enough to say to fallen men, Become what you are; for he cannot raise himself by the hairs of his own head. Nothing will suffice save an act of God, and this has taken place in the event of Jesus Christ. "Faith for the Christian," says Bultmann, "means faith in Christ, for it is faith in the love of God revealed in Christ. Only those who are loved are capable of loving. Only those who have received confidence as a gift can show confidence in others.

<sup>18</sup> *op. cit.*, 19.

<sup>19</sup> *Myth in the New Testament*, 17.

Only those who know what self-commitment is by experience can adopt that attitude themselves. We are free to give ourselves to God because He has given up Himself up for us."<sup>20</sup>

But though the event of Jesus Christ cannot be demythologised, the New Testament presentation of Christ can. He is set forth as pre-existent and a miracle-worker, and this is done in order to show that Christ was more than an historical figure, the means whereby we are enabled to pass from inauthentic to authentic existence. In Henderson's interpretation of Bultmann's terminology, "the mythological is there in order to show that the historical is also eschatological."<sup>21</sup> This is a good example of what demythologising means; it is not the eliminating of mythology but its interpretation.

Now the Cross, too, has its eschatological meaning besides its historical, and this is expressed in the mythological conception of the sacrificial death of the sinless pre-existent Son of God as a satisfaction offered to God's justice. Bultmann is critical of this mythology, because it only gives assurance of the forgiveness of past and future sins. He claims that the eschatological meaning of the Cross is the present breaking of the power of cancelled sin. The Resurrection goes, in Bultmann's view, along with the Cross; together they form an essential unity, because just as one is called to be crucified with Christ in order to die to the world and its securities so one is called to rise with Christ here and now and enter upon authentic existence. The Resurrection has no doubt some kind of historical basis, but what really matters is its significance as an eschatological event. There is no proof, indeed, of the eschatological significance of the one event of the Cross and the Resurrection, and the one cannot be taken to bolster up the other. When the redemptive act is proclaimed, the hearer is not required to assess historical evidence, he is called to make an existential decision, for life or for death.

#### APPRAISAL

Such is Bultmann's position, so far as a brief summary can present it. We now pass to attempt some kind of estimate of its value. If we have lived long enough to see the rise and fall of many theological movements, we may be tempted to say that here is just another bubble on the surface of theological debate, which will have its day and then be superseded by some new fashion. But genuine movements of religious thinking never entirely pass into the limbo of forgotten things. They add something to the sum of our understanding and alter the course of our reflection in significant ways. Moreover, they always compel us, if we are open-minded enough, to review our convictions and opinions and see familiar things in

<sup>20</sup> *Kerygma and Myth*, 32f.

<sup>21</sup> *Myth in the New Testament*, 18.

new aspects. And the more radical they are, the more they summon us to better thinking.

The first thing that calls for notice in Bultmann's presentation of the Gospel is its philosophical setting. He has made use of a type of philosophy that has a considerable vogue on the Continent but much less on this side of the Channel. Theologians have often sought to dispense with philosophy, fearful lest the purity of the Gospel should be tainted if contained in the earthen vessels of human thinking. But can the theologian express himself at all, it may be asked, without making use of the thought-forms of his day? Yet even if we suppose that he can, does not his discarding of philosophy imply a philosophical position that calls for justification? If he insists that the revealed Faith stands secure of itself without extraneous support, he is surely in danger of denying the reasonableness of the Faith and of falling back on a species of authoritarian dogmatism. Bultmann himself complains that "the last twenty years have witnessed a movement away from criticism and a return to a naïve acceptance of the *kerygma*."<sup>22</sup> There is, of course, the ever-present risk of forcing the Gospel into the Procrustean bed of some philosophical system. This only means to say, however, that philosophy should enter the household of faith not as mistress but as servant. Surely if she can help to explicate and commend the Faith, she is entitled to a ready welcome. Bultmann thinks that the Gospel can best be commended to the modern world in the terminology of existentialism, and this is not an unreasonable thing to claim. He can, of course, have in mind only the cultured world that is familiar with the current philosophical outlooks. Existentialism would doubtless do little or no service in the attempt to commend the Gospel to the plain man, for he would probably find it more unintelligible than the so-called unintelligible Christian faith. But the preacher would find in Bultmann's existentialist presentation of the Gospel many new insights that could make him more effective in the discharge of his ministry. One can profit from Bultmann's theology without using his particular language.

Now existentialism is better fitted than most philosophies to give significant expression to the substance of the Christian faith. It is not a metaphysic in the usual sense of the word but an anthropology—an attempt to explore the nature of man and to determine how he can find satisfying adjustment to his existence. What is significant in it is not necessarily its constructive contribution (for in some forms it is frankly atheistic) but its analysis of the being of man as confronted with the ultimate issues of life and death. Here is a philosophy that seeks not the contemplation of all time and existence from without but the understanding of man's situation from within. Despite all our advancing knowledge, man is shown

<sup>22</sup> *Kerygma and Myth*, 12.

more and more to be the unknown, and until he can come to some kind of reckoning with himself he will become more and more a lost creature, less and less able to control his life and destiny. We have already seen how Heidegger sees man as a fallen creature, doomed for ever to live the inauthentic life until by an act of decision he sets himself free from the illusion of false security. Such terms as 'fallenness' and 'decision' have a familiar ring, and it is easy to see how a Christian theologian like Bultmann can complete the existentialist analysis of man's plight by showing how the Gospel answers human need at the deepest level. Heidegger's way of salvation is that a man should face the fact of his own death and so realise the nothingness of his own existence. The Christian existentialist can show the more excellent way of Christ, whereby the believer can find the authentic life by fellowship with God in Christ and through it with other men. But the inauthentic life has to be differently interpreted, for within the Christian scheme of things both 'fallenness' and 'decision' have quite another character. Yet it is a defensible claim that the existentialists have provided a new insight into the dark mystery of man's nature. No one, I think, could read and ponder Macquarrie's book already referred to without finding himself in a better position to speak in his preaching to man's real condition.

The attempt to present the Gospel in the terms of some philosophy or other is always open to the charge of turning the Gospel into a philosophy, so that instead of the proclamation of the saving acts of God it becomes the announcement of a body of timeless truths. Bultmann can defend himself from this charge, for he makes it clear that for him the essence of the *kerygma* is its proclamation of "the decisive acts of God in Christ." Yet it may be questioned whether he gives to history its full and proper place. The point at issue here is not just that Bultmann is a somewhat radical New Testament critic who finds little historical material in the Gospel story. It is that he attaches little importance to the historical in itself. The event of Jesus Christ is of course an historical event, and it is essential that it should be, for God acts in Jesus Christ. But the Cross, for example, has in his view only a secondary significance as a fact of history; what matters is its eschatological significance. "To believe in the cross of Christ," he says, is "to make the cross of Christ our own, to undergo crucifixion with him . . . the cross is not just an event of the past which can be contemplated in detachment, but the eschatological event in and beyond time, for as far as its meaning—that is, its meaning for faith—is concerned, it is an ever-present reality."<sup>23</sup> Bultmann's indifference to history comes out still more clearly in his view of the Resurrection. He regards it as a myth, and this explains why he ties it up with the

<sup>23</sup> *op. cit.*, 36.

Cross so as to present the Cross and the Resurrection not as two saving acts but as a single redemptive act. "Indeed," he says, "faith in the resurrection is really the same thing as faith in the saving efficacy of the cross, faith in the cross as the cross of Christ."<sup>24</sup> This I take to mean that to be crucified with Christ is at the same time to rise with Him to the newness of life, and therefore it is of no importance whether the Resurrection is an historical fact.

It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the historical Jesus has, for Bultmann, little importance in comparison with the Christ of faith. What matters about the Jesus of history is not so much what He was or what He did but what He taught. He presented the world, it would appear, with a practical philosophy of an existentialist type, and herein is His great service to the human race. But can we really account in this way for the New Testament faith in Christ? Is it possible to explain the Christ of faith without reference to something unique in the person of the Jesus of history? Bultmann denies that Jesus had any Messianic consciousness, but is the person of Christ credible without accepting something of the kind? Why should men have decided for Him unless He was invested with some impressive numinous quality? Bultmann would say that there is a reason why they should have decided for Christ or against Him, but it is not Christ Himself. Men should make their decision because they are summoned to do so by the New Testament witnesses, and behind their testimony he is not prepared to go.

Bultmann also betrays the same attitude to the work of Christ as he does to His person. The existential importance of God's redemptive act in Christ need not be questioned. When St. Paul spoke of "the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me" (*Gal.* 2. 20), he was recognising the existential significance of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But we are bound to ask whether we have exhausted the full meaning of the work of Christ when we have brought out its existential significance. Or to put the point in another way, we are bound to ask whether the work of Christ could have existential meaning for us if it had not first an objective significance independent of us. It is surely the testimony of the New Testament that in the Cross of Christ God wrought a redemptive act which is a fact of history however much it may transcend history. As Macquarrie puts it, "To preach the cross as saving event is to propagate an illusion unless the origin of that saving event was an actual happening—namely, God's once-for-all act at Calvary."<sup>25</sup>

We turn, finally, to the consideration of Bultmann's treatment of the subject of myth. Myth he interprets in the sense adopted by the 'History of Religions' school. "Mythology," he says, "is the use of imagery to express the other worldly in terms of this world

<sup>24</sup> *op. cit.*, 41.

<sup>25</sup> *An Existentialist Theology*, 178.

and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side."<sup>26</sup> This definition is obviously not wide enough and does not, in fact, cover all that Bultmann himself comprehends within the conception of myth. As Macquarrie points out, besides myth as he defines it he takes in "everything in the New Testament which implies those first-century concepts which now belong to a world that is no longer, and are not acceptable to the modern mind."<sup>27</sup> And Henderson makes the further point that Bultmann does not object to the various elements he includes within the category of the mythological for the same reason. Following Henderson,<sup>28</sup> we may distinguish four reasons for Bultmann's objection to what he regards as mythological: (i) Myth proper, i.e. myth as he formally defines it, he objects to just because it represents the divine and other-worldly in human and this-worldly terms, such as the representation of the transcendence of God in terms of a spatial heaven above the earth. (ii) He regards as mythological the conception of the Holy Spirit and grace as quasi-natural powers, whereas they are spiritual entities. (iii) The miracles of Jesus he regards as mythological because they do not fit into the scientific conception of the world as a closed causal system. (iv) Demonic possession and certain notions of original sin are in his view mythological because they deny human freedom—a conception which is strongly underlined in existentialism. There is a common principle underlying these objections. As an existentialist Bultmann claims that we should regard the universe not as spectators but as those involved in existence. Such myths, however, are cosmological and assume the standpoint of an observer, hence they must be demythologised, i.e. interpreted in existentialist terms. But apart from this consideration, Bultmann is convinced that the mythological is quite unintelligible to modern man and therefore a stumbling-block in the way of his acceptance of the Christian faith.

#### THE NECESSITY OF MYTH

Bultmann's treatment of the mythological has given rise to a lively controversy, which has served to bring out how much more complex the subject is than his views would indicate. We can do no more here than make a few observations. Myth, it may be maintained, cannot be dispensed with, for it is in a real sense the language of religion, and this is as true of Christianity as of religion generally. It is not always necessarily significant, as, for example, when it appears in certain pagan mythologies. But it is significant when it embodies some truth that cannot be otherwise represented. When Plato felt himself obliged to resort to myth, he was only

<sup>26</sup> *Kerygma and Myth*, 10, n. 2.

<sup>27</sup> *An Existentialist Theology*, 167.

<sup>28</sup> *Myth in the New Testament*, 46.

following a course that religion must always follow when it seeks to depict what cannot be factually related. Whatever interpretation we may choose to adopt, could we dispense with the story of the Fall in *Genesis* iii or the eschatological imagery in which the New Testament treats of man's final destiny? Christianity, however, is an historical religion, and Bultmann may be fairly charged with regarding as mythological much that could well be judged historical in some sense or other. The miracles of Jesus cannot be dismissed as unhistorical just because they do not fit into the scientist's scheme of things. The Resurrection may well be beyond rational explanation, but it would be unhistorical to dismiss out of hand what is so central in the New Testament as a fact testified to by many witnesses. After all, the supreme miracle is Jesus Himself, and it is not surprising that the miraculous should belong to His coming and departing as well as to the course of His life and work.

It may be questioned if Bultmann is right in supposing that myth is unintelligible to modern man. Myths are still a mode in which men today find it natural to express themselves. If many have discarded religious myths, it is noteworthy that they have adopted myths of a secular kind, like the Nazi myth of blood and soil and the Communist myth of the classless paradise. And it may well be that the age-long myths of the Christian religion are not nearly so mysterious to modern man as Bultmann alleges. The Babylonian three-storied universe cannot, of course, be accepted literally by those who have been reared in the era of science, but are they so lacking in poetic sensibility that they fail to recognise that the ancient cosmology enshrines a spiritual meaning? Some today lack perhaps the sense of the supernatural, but must we take it as impossible to unfold to our generation the truth that has embodied itself in a tale? One is tempted to set over against Bultmann the findings of another distinguished modern, the psychologist C. G. Jung. Myth-making he considers as native to man, hence he regards the unconscious as the historical deposit of racial myth-making tendencies, and it is these that mould our mental atmosphere. We are not here concerned with the truth of Jung's highly speculative theories but with the fact that a psychologist of outstanding insight sees myth as indispensable to man's understanding of himself and his environment. If man must needs resort to myth-making, he must also have a capacity for interpreting the myths he creates. Myth cannot be to him a completely foreign language but something which he is capable of interpreting without necessarily regarding its forms as literally true. The mythological elements of the Bible are not so darkly mysterious as Bultmann would have us believe. The real difficulty with modern man is that he has become so immersed in secularism that he has lost his native sense of the supernatural, and it is this that has made him unresponsive to mytho-

logical language. If we could but find a way of quickening his religious sensibility, we could reveal to him the inwardness of much that now seems to elude his grasp.

Bultmann, we may be sure, has not said the last word on the momentous issues which he has raised. How to present the Gospel to the modern world is one of our most urgent problems. Whatever else Bultmann may have done or not done, he has at least compelled us to think the question through in thoroughly radical fashion, and for this we must be grateful.

W. E. HOUGH

*Winning the People for Christ*, by L. R. Misselbrook. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 2s.).

For those who want some guidance on how a local church may seek to evangelise its neighbourhood here is an impressive account of what has been done by Leavesden Road Baptist Church, Watford. The principles from which Mr. Misselbrook and his people started will appeal to almost everyone, especially those who are suspicious of campaigns and imported evangelists: that evangelism is the constant and normal activity of any church, that it must be centred on the local church, must be done by the church members themselves and should flow through, not special weeks, but the normal, steady activity of the church. This interesting book gives a fairly full description of the way in which this church set about the task and while, as its author states, these methods may not prove successful in other situations, a study of these pages may point the way to other churches. Certainly every reader will wish this particular church well in the enterprise to which it has so ardently given itself.