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incorporating the Transactions of the
BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITORIAL

With our next issue we shall distribute as a loose inset the Index to VOLUME XVI, which closes with this present number.

OF the numerical strength of Baptists in the United States we have been told time and again. But what of their contribution to the building up of the American republic; in what ways have the principles of this vast and vigorous company influenced and helped to mould the essential character of their nation? Of these things we have hitherto been told very little. Now, however, enlightenment has come in the form of a significant volume from the pen of Dr. J. M. Dawson, widely known as a well-informed writer, denominational leader and the first executive director of the Baptist Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations. Sponsored by the Historical Commission of the Southern Convention, and the fruit of extensive research, it is entitled *Baptists and the American Republic*.*

Dr. Dawson set himself a number of questions: what pattern for America did Roger Williams give? what debt did James Madison owe to Baptists in securing a guaranteed separation of Church and State, with full religious liberty for all? how did Baptists influence Thomas Jefferson, "Architect of the Republic"? what creative Baptist leaders helped to shape the essential character of America and what Baptists have most acceptably interpreted their principles regarding Church-State relations? Answering such questions as

* Published 1956 by the Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 228 pp., price \$3.00.

these Dr. Dawson indicates the Baptist contribution to the Bill of Rights, the separation of Church and State, national unity and social responsibility and the influence of Baptists upon the thought and actions of Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Henry through the efforts of men of the calibre of Roger Williams, Isaac Backus, John Leland, Luther Rice and Walter Rauschenbusch. By further biographical studies, culminating in the story of George W. Truett, he illustrates the continuing Baptist witness to the ideals first enunciated by Roger Williams, whose greatness is becoming increasingly recognised.

Typical of the Baptist contribution as portrayed in this well-documented volume, is the fact that Thomas Jefferson shows in the Declaration of Independence, of which he was the author, a striking similarity of ideas with those proclaimed earlier by Roger Williams, that he was a student of Baptist literature (including, by the way, the sermons of Robert Hall, wrongly described on p. 28 as "of London"), that he worked with and was considerably indebted to the Baptists of Virginia, notably the able John Leland. Dr. Dawson shows that, contrary to what has been popularly supposed, the shaping of the American republic owes less to deism than to evangelical Calvinism. To Baptists in Britain and elsewhere few of the heroes of this book, apart from Roger Williams, will be well known. They should read these pages, therefore, if only to learn something of the great men who have moulded the American Baptist tradition and, to a considerable degree, as Dr. Dawson's work displays, the character of America itself. Here, then, is a welcome and timely volume which adds to our knowledge both of Baptist and American history, showing how the distinctive ideas of the Baptists have been, as it were, inscribed upon the American flag; ideas which, the author believes, account for the fact that whereas the church organised in Roger Williams' home numbered 13 members, when the Baptist World Alliance met in Atlanta exactly 300 years later Baptists in the U.S.A. totalled 13 millions.

* * *

In 1935 the cost to the Baptist Historical Society of printing and publishing this journal was £74, but by 1955 it had risen to the region of £200. In spite of this, and increasing financial difficulties, membership subscriptions have remained unaltered. Some changes are now, however, forced upon us. Henceforth the annual subscription will be 21/- (\$3.50), but for ministers resident in the United Kingdom it will be 10/6d. The Society asks not only for the continued loyalty of present members but also for an increase in membership and will always gratefully receive donations to its funds and, of course, legacies. Ways and means of commemorating the Jubilee of the Society in 1958 were considered, along with other matters, at a recent meeting of its officers.

Who were the Baptists?

A comment by Dr. Ernest A. Payne on Dr. Winthrop S. Hudson's article in our July issue.

Dr. Payne writes: I am sorry to find myself in disagreement with Dr. Winthrop Hudson, for I have much profited from his writings on the Free Church tradition, particularly in its American setting. His article on the early English Baptists in the last issue of the *Baptist Quarterly*, however, seems to me to be a singular attempt to survey a varied landscape with a telescope fixed firmly towards one part only of the terrain or else to an eye that is closed.

No responsible historian "confuses" or "identifies" the seventeenth-century Baptists with the continental Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. By implication Dr. Hudson appears to be denying all similarity or connection. This is, I am convinced, a misreading of history and would deprive the Baptists of one of the main clues to an understanding of their origin and development. Dr. Hudson bases his argument on four propositions: (1) the early Baptists repudiated the name Anabaptists; (2) they condemned "the (*sic*) distinctive Anabaptist doctrines and errors"; (3) the Westminster Confession became the most widely accepted theological statement of their position; (4) "practically all the early Baptists had been Congregationalists before they had become Baptists" and co-operated closely with Congregationalists during the Commonwealth period. He desires to draw a sharp distinction between the Anabaptists and the Baptists. He regards the former as stemming from "a few university trained humanists" of an Erasmian type, and the latter as an offshoot of English Calvinistic Puritanism in its Congregational form. Only by a very selective process, so I believe, can these positions be maintained.

1. The Anabaptist movement on the continent was a much wider and more complex one than Dr. Hudson's brief characterisation suggests. It included the Swiss Brethren, the Hutterites, the followers of Melchior Hoffmann, the Mennonites and a number of other groups. Even if, with some historians, we call them stepchildren of the Reformation, their debt to Luther and Zwingli is clear. Their origin is not to be sought in Erasmus and the Northern Renaissance, as Dr. Hudson suggests, but in the main impulses of the Reformers' teaching carried further and without tarrying for any. Though they took the Bible as the norm of faith and life, they

were certainly not all "Biblical literalists." They differed, indeed, on a number of matters—on the use of the sword, on Christology and on eschatology. A basic document like Peter Rideman's Confession gives a very different picture from that suggested by Dr. Hudson in regard to original sin, saving faith and the grace of God. What was *common* to almost all the left-wing groups was a belief in a gathered church of believers, a repudiation of infant baptism and a claim for toleration and freedom of conscience. These were the distinctive ideas. The main historical problem is whether the English Separatist and Baptist movement was related in any way to the earlier developments on the continent. Basic similarity is obvious. Further particular similarities are so many that it is difficult to regard them as mere coincidences.

2. The origins of early English Separatism remain in considerable obscurity. Can it really have been accidental that the first gathered churches appeared in Kent and East Anglia where in the middle of the sixteenth century there were colonies of Dutch refugees, some of whom are known to have been Anabaptists? There is now no doubt that a number of English men and women accepted and suffered for Anabaptism in the time of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary. That many seventeenth-century Baptist churches grew out of the soil of Stuart Separatism or, as Dr. Hudson calls it, Congregationalism, is of course true. But that does not dispose of the likelihood that they and their predecessors had been influenced by the continental radicals. Ideas had legs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as they have today. Separatism itself, even if narrowed to an outgrowth of Puritanism, was treading a path similar to that trodden earlier by many in Germany and Switzerland.

3. Dr. Hudson plays down the influence on Smyth and Helwys of the Dutch Mennonites and pays little attention to the General Baptists. Indeed, he appears to suggest that almost all seventeenth-century Baptists were Calvinists and alike in their church polity. It was the General Baptists who were the earliest champions of the three distinctive ideas already noted: the church as a gathered fellowship, believers' baptism and freedom of conscience. Further, not only were many of them emphatically Arminian, but they included not a few who believed in the sleep of the soul after death; whose Christology was of a Hoffmanite kind; and who held other views which had been put forward on the continent two or three generations earlier. Commonwealth Baptists were a very varied and radical group. In their very diversity there are parallels to the earlier movement. That after the Restoration the main stream of Baptist life become more homogeneous and "respectable" is true. But the Baptist history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as that of the earlier period, cannot be understood by ignoring its diverse heritage.

4. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the name "Anabaptist" had become one of abuse, wildly used and suggesting violence and antinomianism. The excesses to which some of the successors of the Swiss Brethren were driven by persecution in Holland, and the tragic episode of the Münster siege, resulted in widespread disgust and fear. That the early English Baptists were anxious to repudiate the name "Anabaptist" was natural. It was repudiated on the continent on theological as well as prudential grounds. Helwys and his fellows certainly adopted a more positive attitude to the civil authorities than did many of the continental radicals, though Hübmaier should be remembered. The English Baptists protested their loyalty to James I and Charles I. Later most of them approved what Cromwell did, though many become his critics when he was appointed Lord Protector. They endured the Stuart restoration, but hoped and sometimes intrigued for a change of government. When they declared—as they did repeatedly—that they were falsely called Anabaptists, various motives were at work. But this does not really touch the question whether the Baptist movement as a whole had any links with or dependence upon the earlier developments on the continent. The English Baptists stood, as did the continental radicals, for gathered churches, for the baptism of believers and for freedom of conscience.

5. I do not know the grounds on which Dr. Hudson makes the assertion that "practically all of the early Baptists had been Congregationalists before they became Baptists." Smith and Helwys, of course, had been leaders in the Gainsborough and Scrooby churches before they went to Holland. The earliest Particular Baptist churches originated as offshoots of the London church ministered to successively by Jacob, Lathrop and Jessey. As the Baptist movement spread, however, a surprising number of Baptist leaders, and no doubt the members of their congregations with them—appear to have moved over directly from the Church of England. But even if Dr. Hudson is right on this point—which I doubt—it does not prove that Baptists are merely an offshoot from the Congregationalists or that their history can be rightly understood without any reference to the left wing of the continental Reformation.

6. Dr. Hudson makes much of the adaptations of the Westminster Confession published by the Particular Baptists in 1677 and by the General Baptists in 1678. The common sufferings of Dissenters at this time have to be borne in mind, and the desire of Baptists to present a united front with Congregationalists and Presbyterians. There are significant differences in the three Confessions. The leaders of the General Baptists were anxious to repudiate Socinian tendencies and the views of Matthew Caffyn. But the latter was in Christology a Hoffmanite. Whence did he get his notions? The preface of the 1678 Confession goes so far as to state: "We are

sure that the denying of baptism is a less evil than to deny the Divinity or Humanity of Christ." But these Confessions are not evidence of the almost complete identity of Baptists and Congregationalists. To understand the full pattern of Baptist life and thought earlier Confessions have to be examined as well. The so-called "Orthodox Creed" of 1660, an important General Baptist document, does *not* state, as did the Westminster Confession, that "it is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of magistrate." It does contain a brave assertion that where the civil powers infringe conscience, God and not man must be obeyed. Even more important is the fact that the General Baptists, eighteen years later, in their adaptation of the Westminster Confession, placed a re-drafted and strengthened section on "Liberty of Conscience," immediately after that on the "Civil Magistrate." This more radical note is an essential element in the full Baptist tradition and it runs back directly, I believe, to far earlier pleas. Where did Helwys learn the things he set out in his *Mystery of Iniquity*? His references to Turks and Jews suggest a continental background.

The religious life of the seventeenth century was like a tumultuous sea, blown upon by winds from several directions. That one strong current of air came from the Anabaptist movement of the previous century I am convinced. Nor need Baptists be ashamed to admit it. I am no more interested than is Dr. Hudson in establishing a "succession" in any outward or exclusive sense. But to speak of "harm" and "unhappy consequences" if there is any recognition of a connection between Anabaptists and Baptists seems to me to be historically unsound. It also implies an unjust reflection on a very notable movement to which all the churches of the modern world owe a debt.

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."¹ 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."²

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."³ 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."⁴ 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."⁵ 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

¹ *Kerygma and Myth*, 3.

² *op. cit.*, 3.

³ *op. cit.*, 3.

⁴ *op. cit.*, 6.

⁵ *op. cit.*, 6.

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

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!"⁷ Nor can the death of Christ be explained "as a transaction between God and man through which God's claims on man were satisfied."⁸ 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."⁹ 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."¹⁰

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."¹¹

The crucial question now arises: "Does this drastic criticism of the New Testament mythology mean the complete elimination of the *kerygma*?"¹² "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."¹³ "If the truth of the New Testament proclamation is to be preserved, the only way is to demythologise it."¹⁴ 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

⁶ *op. cit.*, 7.

⁷ *op. cit.*, 7.

⁸ *op. cit.*, 7.

⁹ *op. cit.*, 8.

¹⁰ *op. cit.*, 8.

¹¹ *op. cit.*, 8.

¹² *op. cit.*, 9.

¹³ *op. cit.*, 9.

¹⁴ *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."¹⁵ 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."¹⁶ 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*."¹⁷ 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-

¹⁵ *Myth in the New Testament*, 14.

¹⁶ *Kerygma and Myth*, 14.

¹⁷ *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."¹⁸ 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."¹⁹

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.

¹⁸ *op. cit.*, 19.

¹⁹ *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."²⁰

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."²¹ 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

²⁰ *Kerygma and Myth*, 32f.

²¹ *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*."²² 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

²² *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."²³ 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

²³ *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."²⁴ 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."²⁵

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

²⁴ *op. cit.*, 41.

²⁵ *An Existentialist Theology*, 178.

and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side."²⁶ 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."²⁷ 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,²⁸ 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

²⁶ *Kerygma and Myth*, 10, n. 2.

²⁷ *An Existentialist Theology*, 167.

²⁸ *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.

Theology and Logic

A LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EXEGETICAL METHOD OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND'S INTERIM REPORT ON BAPTISM

MANY winds have blown, from many directions, since Theology was the acknowledged Queen of the *sciences*, the fitting crown and fulfilment of a rigorous philosophical discipline, but few among them have influenced Theology so deeply as the movement which began with the rediscovery of Kierkegaard, and which has either (according to one's point of view) driven a destructive wedge between Theology and all rational philosophy, to the complete confusion of apologetics, or has rescued Theology from the barrenness of an arid rationalism and reasserted revelation. Either way, the relations between Theology and Logic have in recent years become decidedly strained.

It has been pure gain to be reminded that life is not an exercise in logic. Theology has profited deeply by the lesson that reality is always existential, never merely theoretic; that logical and psychological analysis, useful as a transcript of experience, is never its substitute. On the other hand, a morbid love of paradox for its own sake, an uncritical tolerance of the incomprehensible and the illogical under the deceptive guise of "tension," a tacit agreement with the earlier Logical Positivists that Theology belongs to a realm beyond truth and falsehood, the destruction of the foundations laid by Natural Theology for human responsibility, for man's capacity to receive revelation, and for the doctrine of the incarnation, and a revived preoccupation with typological and analogical modes of exegesis are among the less happy consequences of the disparagement of reason in theological method. It had seemed possible to hope that whatever the pitfalls for Dogmatic and Philosophical Theology, at least Biblical Theology would remain free from the vagaries of paradox, fallacy, and "meaningless statement," safe under the firm control of philological, grammatical, literary and historical disciplines. The hope has proved unfounded; disregard of logic has invaded exegesis itself, and the hard-won gains of generations of painstaking scholars who strove to rescue Biblical interpretation from mere subjectivism seem to be again imperilled.

The only satisfactory proof of this is to take a piece of sustained and detailed exegesis and attempt a formal logical analysis of its *method*. An excellent example is provided in the Interim Report of the Church of Scotland's Special Commission on Baptism. With the substance of the argument we are not here concerned, but only with its exegetical method. Since the subject is our Lord's own teaching on how men come to salvation, and the pamphlet is the work of a group of highly qualified and representative scholars, the example is neither trivial nor exceptional; while by confining our analysis to that section of the Report (pages 22-25) which professes to offer "detailed evidence" of the thesis "that little children share in Christ's Baptism" we avoid the suspicion of unfairness in applying strictly logical tests to Theological material. The results are disconcerting.

The first statement consists of two main propositions said to be "in line" one with another :

- a. (i) we have to be baptized as little children and (ii) we can only enter into the kingdom as little children.
- b. The Synoptic Gospels give children a decided place in the kingdom and in the Church.

a. (i) and b. simply restate the point in dispute. Whatever force lies in this first argument arises from the apparent equivalence of a. (i) and a. (ii), plus the fact that a. (ii) sufficiently resembles a saying of Jesus to win our emotional assent to anything said to be its equivalent. But immediately we notice that "as little children" means in a. (i) *when* we are little children, and in a. (ii) *after the manner* of little children, the apparent similarity disappears, and we realise that we have been imposed upon by an ambiguous middle term. b. has been implanted, but certainly not proved.

Next we are told :

- c. The kingdom reverses the usual order of things so that the first shall be last and the last first.
- d. Therefore ("for") children have a unique place in the kingdom.

Again an echo of Jesus wins emotional assent; but d. follows from c. only if "to be last" means "to be a little child" and "to be first" means to have a place in the kingdom. This might conceivably be so, but no proof is offered, and it makes nonsense of c. Statement d. (i.e. b.) remains unsupported.

Now follow five statements :

- e. Matthew records that Jesus said : "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes."
- f. Jesus also said, from the same Psalm : "Out of the mouth of babes Thou hast perfected praise."

- g. Whether Jesus had His own childhood in mind is uncertain (with a reference to *Luke* ii. 49).
- h. Conclusion : ("It seems clear that . . ."). The relation of little children to the Father is mediated through the sonship of Christ.
- i. Little children may not know what they are saying but Jesus is Himself their cry to the Father.
- j. In the language of St. Paul, It is through the Spirit that we cry "Abba, Father."

It is impossible to detect by what rule of inference *h.* follows from *e.*, *f.* even with the help of the uncertainty, *g.* One of its terms (mediation through Christ's sonship) appears in neither premise; the other (the relation of little children to the Father) occurs in the premises only if "babes" in *e.* and *f.* refers to "little children." In fact "babes" in *e.* refers to the disciples returning from their mission (and is the antithesis of "wise and prudent"); in *f.* it refers to children old enough to shout Hosanna in the Temple Courts, though by *h.* and *i.* it has come to mean little children who may not know what they are saying. *h.* is thus a glaring *non-sequitur*. The precise function of a stated uncertainty (*g.*) in the presentation of evidence is not clear, but whatever the quotation of *Luke* ii. 49 is intended to convey, it clearly has to do not with Christ's infancy but with an utterance made after His formal admission as a Son of the Law—and is utterly irrelevant to *h.* *i.*, as an unsupported restatement of *h.*, adds nothing to the argument. *j.* is yet another instance of the quotation of an admitted authority to lend illegitimate support to a conclusion not yet established—illegitimate because "the Spirit" in *Galatians* iv. 6 is not identical with "Christ" in *h.*, and "we" does not refer to "babes" but to believers. Finally, even had *h.* been irrefutably established, it would not by any means carry with it the truth of the original thesis for which evidence is being offered.

The next paragraph is particularly involved but its main assertions may be summarised thus :

- k. Jesus said : "Whosoever receives one such little child in My name receives Me."
- l. Rabbis, Zadokites and Essenes used the phrase "in my name" to signify the adoption of a foundling child.
- m. Rabbis, Zadokites and Essenes circumcised and baptised such adopted foundlings and brought them within the Israelite, Zadokite or Essene communities.
- n. Peter used the same phrase on the day of Pentecost of baptism in the name of Christ.
- o. Conclusion : "We are to see here . . ." in the fullest sense reception in Jesus Christ and entry into the kingdom . . . baptismal initiation.

- p.* This is an act in which we are concerned not only with the child but with Christ Himself.

The valid conclusion from *k.*, *l.*, *m.* (plus the assumption that the practice of the Rabbis, Zadokites and Essenes strictly defines the only possible meaning of the phrase "in My name" on Christ's lips) would be that Jesus regards the *adoption*, with circumcision and baptism, of foundling children as a kindness done to Himself, and so a duty binding upon the Christian. But this will hardly do, not only because the implied assumption begs the whole question upon which evidence is being offered, but because neither circumcision, nor the limitation of Infant Baptism to foundling children, is part of the thesis. The conclusion *o.* is therefore helped out by the strictly extraneous and certainly inaccurate *n.*—extraneous because Peter's words were certainly addressed to other than foundling children, and inaccurate because Peter did not use this particular phrase whose meaning is being defined. The use of another phrase by another speaker on another occasion does nothing to establish the meaning of this phrase on this occasion by Jesus, especially when evidence already given (*l.*, *m.*) purports to show that the phrase means *not* Baptism but adoption accompanied by circumcision and Baptism. *k.*, *l.* yield a striking new example of the principle of "Inasmuch . . ." for which all readers will be grateful; apart from this the paragraph proves either far too much or nothing at all.

The conclusion *o.* ("We are to see here"—in the phrase "who-soever receives one such little child in my name"—"in the fullest sense reception in Jesus Christ and entry into the kingdom . . . baptismal initiation") occupies so prominent a place in the rest of the discussion that closer attention must be paid to its validity. The premise *n.* is introduced to suggest by simple juxtaposition that since the phrase "*en* to onomati" is used by Peter at Pentecost in connection with Baptism, then the phrase "*e pi* to onoma" used here by Jesus is also a baptismal phrase. The appeal to analogous usage is a legitimate linguistic argument, but it must be accurate, fair and consistent. "*E pi* to onoma" occurs nine times, in contexts having to do with the coming of false prophets, doing miracles, preaching, speaking and teaching "in the name"—never with Baptism; Peter's phrase, "*en* to onomati" is also used of coming, working, miracles, preaching, giving cold water, exorcism, God's sending the Comforter, giving thanks, having life, asking, praying, and doing all "in the name"—it is by no means usually, or often, a baptismal phrase; "*e is* to onoma" is the more frequent baptismal phrase, and *Matthew* shows Jesus using it in *Matthew* xxviii. 19, but this phrase again is used also of believing, being gathered together, receiving a prophet, or righteous man, and giving water 'in the name.' Vincent Taylor is obviously justified in doubting whether any distinction

between these prepositional phrases can be sustained (*Mark*, 407), but that is not our present business: logically, the appeal to analogous usage is here quite inaccurate and wholly unfair. It is also inconsistent: Jesus Himself uses "receiving" to mean "welcoming" a prophet, or righteous man, the disciples on their mission, and its antithesis is "rejecting" those disciples and their mission—and the appeal to analogous usage for this phrase would definitely *exclude* the meaning "entry into the kingdom . . . baptismal initiation." Finally, if "receive one such little one" means reception into Christ, into the kingdom, and Baptism, then plainly "receiveth Me" *in the same sentence* (and especially in view of *p.*, regarded as an admonitory version of *k.*) must mean receiving Christ into Christ, the kingdom and Baptism! The conclusion *o.* is hatched in a veritable nest of logical fallacies.

The logical process becomes even more obscure when we turn to *Matthew* xviii: "Whoso shall put a stumbling block in the way of one of these little ones that believe in me; it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck. . . ." Here all turns, logically, on the meaning of "little ones who believe." Once again we have innuendo: a theological aside flirts with the idea that the giving of a cup of water which *Mark* couples with this saying *may* have affiliations with Paul's reference to Jews and Gentiles being baptized into one body and being made to drink of one spiritual drink; but the suggestion once implanted is immediately dropped, as it ought to be, and takes no further place in the discussion.

Instead, *Matthew's* phrase about little ones who believe "into" Christ is said to be a difficulty, because *Judaism* does not speak in these terms about children—it being assumed that "little ones who believe" must refer to children, and that Judaist usage is regulative for our Lord. The difficulty is then met by either of two possible interpretations, each of which would justify Infant Baptism. (i) The phrase "believe into" may be equivalent to Baptism, as it is in *Galatians* iii. 24f. "If this is so, then to put a stumbling-block in the way of little children, that is, to hinder their being baptized, is a terrible crime." Which is to say, by the definition now established, "to hinder the little ones who are baptized into me from being baptized is a terrible crime": it is also a logical one of the first order!

But (ii) the phrase may on the other hand refer to actual belief in Jesus, in which case *Matthew* wants us to see that "the rational order is reversed in relation to Jesus Christ," and "take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones" is a warning, for those who find it difficult to comprehend the faith of an infant, that despising an infant's faith is perilous—it is against the heavenly ordering of God. The dilemma is thus presented: these sayings refer either (i) to Infant Baptism, or (ii) to infant belief in Christ, and so to Infant

Believers' Baptism. The fallacy of the false dilemma will deceive no one. Not only is one member of it (i) itself a logical howler, but the alternatives are not exhausted. T. W. Manson has proposed a treatment of these words, "little ones who believe," which is in close accord with Synoptic origins, usage and thought, which denies that "children" are meant at all in Matthew's version (*Sayings of Jesus*, 138). It is not necessary to insist that Manson is right: the mere existence of a third possible interpretation destroys the dilemma and the whole argument fails. We are as far as ever from "evidence" in support of the thesis.

Finally we are directed to *Matthew's* record of the blessing of the children. First come "two important facts" about these passages: (i) The whole context, *Matthew* xvi. 13-xx. 28 is liturgical. A scholar's opinion that this section forms a distinct account of the Church's worship is mentioned only to be rejected once its suggestion has been implanted; and the equivalence of "reception of little children" and "baptism of little children" is asserted—although this is the point to be established—in order to give the whole passage a *baptismal* reference. This assumes that in a supposedly liturgical passage *everything* must have liturgical reference—which a glance over these chapters will show to be absurd. But if anything between xvi. 13 and xx. 28 be admittedly non-liturgical, then the passage in dispute may be non-liturgical also: its liturgical, and baptismal reference must be proved, not assumed as here.

(The passage includes—taking up the cross, what is a man profited, Transfiguration, coming of Elias, the treatment of John Baptist, healing of the lunatic, faith like mustard seed, payment of tribute, cutting off the hand and foot, the lost sheep, forgiveness of injuries, the great commandment, warning against riches, the labourers, the request of Zebedee's children).

(ii) The second "important fact" concerning this passage is that it follows upon the blessing of marriage, thus:

- q. The sayings about children follow closely on the teaching concerning marriage; the blessing of children follows naturally upon the blessing of marriage.
- r. The same procedure is seen in *Ephesians and Colossians*.
- s. Conclusion: ("It is not surprising *therefore* that") the Synoptic account of the blessing of the infants has been taken from very early times to refer to Infant Baptism.

To this type of logic nothing at all would be surprising. *s.* is made to appear as a conclusion from *q.*, *r.* simply by the surreptitious introduction of the word "therefore." Apart from this, and the *possibility* that "children" in *q.* refers to infants, there is not the least connection, logically, between *q.*, *r.* and *s.* All that *r.* adds to *q.*

is the fact that the movement of thought from marriage to children was as "natural" for Paul as for Jesus (or *Matthew*). But even cursory attention to *q.* suggests that the word "blessing" cannot possibly imply Baptism—what is the Baptism of marriage?

These preliminaries done, "three main things" are said about these passages recording the blessing of the children. (*a*) We are told that Professor Cullmann has asserted the baptismal meaning of the passage, and that his interpretation has been widely accepted. No evidence being offered on either point (except that the passage has one word in common with certain baptismal passages), the thesis gains no further support except a certain air of prestige.

(*b*) Another dilemma is offered: two interpretations are mooted, either of which will justify Infant Baptism. (*i*) *Mark* and *Luke* speak of Jesus laying His hands upon the children in the same way that He touched and healed the sick. "If so we may use for our understanding of it the incident of the healing of the little boy at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, when the father said . . . 'I believe, help thou my unbelief' . . . and Jesus laying His hand on the boy raised him up." This conjunction of ideas defies logical analysis, but it appears to mean that since the laying of Christ's hand on the lad (he is no longer a child, *Mark* ix. 21) helped the father's faith, the laying of His hands upon infants implies that they have, or can have, faith, and so Baptism. If this is the intended argument, it stands self-refuted, another glaring *non sequitur*. This interpretation leads more logically to the conclusion that the laying of hands upon the sick means Jesus *baptized* each patient as His mode of healing them.

(*ii*) Alternatively, we are told *Matthew* tells of the same incident in terms of the Temple liturgy—they brought forward the children as lambs to the altar; "suffer them to come unto me" means proselytisation, or at least full participation in Christian worship; the blessing corresponds to that at circumcision or the redemption of the first-born, with the laying on of hands and the Aaronic Benediction; and the similarity to earliest accounts of Baptism is so strong as to constrain us to read the incident as intended to speak of Baptism. Here are five wholly unsupported statements whose truth and relevance cannot be tested because the evidence for them is lacking. They are in no sense evidence for the thesis under discussion; they merely show how if that thesis be accepted *Matthew's* account could be understood by one determined to find in it a baptismal implication. This of course is legitimate enough, logically; but no reason is given why the simple, obvious interpretation of the incident cannot be accepted, why these two expositions are the only ones available, or (for that matter) why since *Mark* and *Luke* disagree so widely with *Matthew* on the meaning of the incident, we should accept either.

(c) The third "main thing" to be said about these passages is logically the most curious of all. Five passages (*Matthew* xviii. 3, *Mark* x. 15, *Luke* xix. 17, *John* iii. 3 and *John* iii. 5) are printed in parallel columns, each passage divided into four main clauses, after the manner so familiar in Synoptic study. This once more is prefaced by the innuendo that "a number of scholars" see behind all these verses the same basic incident; this being patently untrue it is at once denied, but the suggestion being implanted we are readier for the more moderate assertion that all five passages say precisely the same thing. "This becomes clear when they are placed in parallel columns." In fact the only things that become clear are that each begins with "Verily" and each ends with "cannot enter—or see—the kingdom." The first three speak of conversion "as" little children but say nothing about Baptism; the last two refer to birth of the Spirit and of water and say nothing about conversion "as" little children. The assertion that all mean the same thing, new birth through Baptism as a little child, is the merest assertion; the typographical trick of printing texts side by side does not in the least establish their identity, or even their theological affiliation, and in this case the "appeal to inspection" singularly fails: the five passages patently do *not* say the same thing. In any case the assertion here made constitutes the very point upon which, once more, evidence was to be led—that the Synoptics support the contention that little children share in Christ's Baptism.

Whatever we may decide about the doctrine here under discussion (or about any doctrine which needs these methods of argument to support it) no conscientious student of the New Testament can feel happy about the prevalence of this type of exegesis—so persistently subjective in its judgments, so careless of the rules of logic and the consistent definition of terms, so ready to depart from the plain meaning of the text in favour of abstruse theologising far over the heads of the unsophisticated readers for whom the New Testament was written, and withal so ready to appeal to methods like innuendo, the insinuation of inferences without committing oneself to them, the simple juxtaposition of texts without proof of their inner relationship, the offering of alternative interpretations "without prejudice" so long as the debating-point is gained—all suggesting that the expositor is determined to find a given meaning whatever the Scripture says. This is no isolated or merely individual judgment: again and again in reviews of new work one comes upon comments which admire the "powerful argumentation," the "brilliant tour de force," the "learning, ingenuity and thoroughness which just fail to convince," testifying to an abundance of technical scholarship that nevertheless does not carry illumination or conviction. This way lies exegetical anarchy, new justification for the old jibe that one can prove anything from the Bible. Unless exegesis:

adheres with rigid loyalty to the strict discipline which seeks only what the writer meant his immediate readers to understand, refusing to force words to the limits of their meaning, and cultivating an alert and tender logical and exegetical conscience, Biblical Theology will drift into the confusion that already besets dogmatics and philosophy, where words mean very much what their users want them to mean, and agreement is precluded by lack of common methods of discussion. Logic, it is true, will not impart *life*, nor keep us in the *way*, but it is the surest intellectual safeguard of the *truth*.

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William Steadman's Hampshire Years

ON 20th August, 1788, William Steadman set out on foot from Leominster to walk to Bristol where he had obtained an entrance to the Baptist Academy. Born of poor parents and largely self-educated, Steadman was converted during a Baptismal service he attended and was himself baptised in April, 1784. Though he taught for eight years in Monkland and Eardisland his predilection was for the ministry and he entered the Bristol Academy with great anticipation.

A chance meeting with a member of the Steele family brought him a preaching engagement at Broughton and led to his acceptance of that pastorate in 1789. Henry Steele had filled the pastorate for forty years, and was succeeded by his nephew, William Steele, who served for thirty years, dying in 1769. Anne Steele, the hymn-writer, was his daughter. Her Bible, the gift of Mrs. Ann Dutton, another Baptist hymn-writer, is still a treasured possession of the church.

Until settling at Broughton, Steadman's reading had been chiefly classical but a chance reading of Edward's *Life of David Brainerd* opened a new field of influence and experience. Chiding himself for what he felt to be wasted years of vanity and pride; mourning time spent in criticism of others and neglect of his own ministry; "My time at Bristol might have been better improved," he lamented, "though I think in conscience I was as diligent and as serious as most there; yet I might have done more; and the barrenness of my soul in divine things now fills me with shame. . . . I am ready to think Brainerd exercised more grace, manifested more diligence, and did more work, in one week of his life, than I have in the whole time since I entered the ministry."

Seven years later, when he was at Plymouth Dock, he speaks of Brainerd as bringing revival into his ministry and, later still, when commending the life of Whitefield, he recalls: "Have met with nothing since the reading of Brainerd's Life, twelve years ago, that has affected me so much."

Days of prayer and self-examination led Steadman to seek for more dynamic results in his ministry: "Shall I always labour,

study, pray, preach in vain?" he wrote in his journal. "Yet, surely, my work is with the Lord, and my reward with my God. But, O Lord, if I may be allowed to make one request, let me see some good effects attending my labours; let me see the members of this church active, zealous, affectionate christians: let me see some sinners converted by my ministry before I die." Brainerd's life led him to seek out in Scripture passages that "speak of the spread of the Gospel" and led him also to seek out in the district such villages where the need for Gospel preaching was indicated: "I endeavoured to enlarge my sphere of labour; went more frequently to Winterslow and Wallop and sought an introduction into several other villages. . . . In some of these places my efforts to introduce the Gospel succeeded, in others they proved abortive; but even there I felt a satisfaction in having made the attempt. My strain of preaching at home was somewhat altered, becoming more earnest and pointed, more evangelical and spiritual."

The spirit of revival which affected the young pastor was not appreciated by the members of his flock who spoke "in frigid strains" saying: "It is no purpose to trouble oneself about souls . . . leave it to Him," and he adds his answering challenge to his own soul: "Thus the devil teaches men to pervert the truths of the Gospel, and endeavours to press into his service truths he cannot erase!"

Among his ministerial neighbours was one who shared his concerns and understood him perfectly; Rev. J. Saffery of Salisbury who had been sent into the ministry from Meeting House Alley, Portsmouth, a church rich in sanctified endeavour. Steadman and Saffery concluded that if God were laying upon their hearts a new concern for souls they must reach out beyond their immediate district, and in the winter of 1792 they visited the churches of the Portsmouth area, preaching daily in the churches and conducting simple Gospel services in the homes of the people. This evangelistic enterprise confirmed their opinions of the "ill effects of high Calvinism," though Steadman still wondered whether they were right in sounding this "new note" and wrote in his journal: "Whether I shall take such another journey without a more express call of Providence, I cannot say." That "express call of Providence" was nearer than he knew and came through the founding of the B.M.S.

On the last day of 1792 Steadman read the "Account of the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen." William Carey, it will be remembered, had preached his "deathless sermon" in May and the Society had been inaugurated October 2nd, 1792. Steadman's reaction was one of thrilling acceptance and he wrote in his journal: "It revived me, and did my heart good to think that God had put it into the heart of any

to attempt that good work; and I cannot but look upon this as one of the many favourable indications of the approach of the universal spread of the Gospel and of the latter day glory." In the week following, Steadman wrote to William Carey enclosing a half-guinea subscription for the Society, meanwhile hoping he did it "prudently and with proper views."

In acknowledging the gift, which Carey passed on, Andrew Fuller informed Steadman of the plans which Carey and Dr. Thomas had made for their journey to India. He enclosed a Gospel hymn translated from the Bengalee of Ram Ram Boshoo, a Hindu christian. "It did my heart good to read it," recorded Steadman, adding, "Jesus Christ is blessed by heathens! O when shall all the heathens call Him blessed?" At once, Steadman challenged his own flock in the little church at Broughton with the story of the Society and, much to his surprise, they responded with a gift of almost seven pounds. Steadman next approached Salisbury, where his friend Saffery was pastor, and later toured the village churches of the Salisbury Plain, reading Fuller's letters and seeking help for the pioneer work—that "pious design" as Fuller had called it.

At the invitation of Dr. Ryland and Andrew Fuller, Steadman visited Northampton in order to gain first-hand knowledge of the movement and was surprised to find that Fuller and others looked upon him as the natural successor to Ryland, who was leaving the Midlands for the presidency of Bristol College. Samuel Pearce had other plans for Steadman and sought by every means in his power to persuade him to join the missionary band in India, supporting his plea with the claim: "That in all our connexion there was no man known to us as you, provided you were disposed for it." Steadman was "disposed for it" but there were many obstacles in the way and, reluctantly, Steadman turned down the suggestion of service abroad, determined to evangelise at home with a zeal no whit behind that of his colleagues serving in India. Out of a meagre salary of £40 per year he managed, in spite of family responsibilities, to rent rooms in the villages around the Hampshire-Wiltshire borders in which to preach the Gospel and, when his own money proved insufficient to meet the need, he travelled far afield pleading the cause of "the destitute towns and villages." His pastoral zeal was infectious and his work "gave an impulse to all the country so that all the younger ministers, both Baptists and Independents, and a number of members of their churches as occasional preachers, started in every direction." His journal reveals moments of rapturous enthusiasm and periods of acute depression as the following extracts reveal: "Went to W . . . and conversed with several poor afflicted people and felt some satisfaction in attempting somewhat for God"; "was greatly dejected. . . . I find I am still alone in attempting to

promote the interests of Christ." As early as 1796 Steadman was following the example set by Robert Raikes of gathering children together for religious instruction on Sunday afternoon and during the week, though his church questioned the wisdom of spending two shillings per week on the new enterprise and he confessed sadly: "I thought I should have no difficulty in obtaining it, but find myself mistaken and am apprehensive I must drop it on account thereof! Whatever attempts I make for good are either openly opposed, or else neglected; so that I give up all hope of success in any of them."

Such a light as his zeal had kindled could not be hid under the bushel of mistrust and, if his own people were blind to their pastor's qualities, an ever-widening circle of influence was being confirmed. From Exeter, Bristol and Plymouth, from the Midlands, and from his beloved Herefordshire came requests for his services, and always his ministry brought help and blessing. These invitations were but the prelude to a Macedonian call he was to accept in company with his friend Saffery. By 1796 the band of missionaries serving the Society in India "found themselves competent to their own support and, in consequence, most generously declined further aid from the funds of the Society at home." The General Committee therefore decided that it would be "a legitimate application of the funds, to attempt the evangelisation of some of the less enlightened parts of our own country and Cornwall was the first field selected for the experiment."

In June the two ministers began their itineration of the West Country and the experiment succeeded all their expectation. In chapels and halls, in private homes and in the open air they preached the Gospel; in almost every case being received with great acceptance during the three months' mission.

On his return to Broughton, Steadman set out his views on the enterprise in a report to Dr. Rippon, afterwards published in Vol. ii of the *Baptist Register*, and his pungent comments reveal an insight into evangelistic method which was far in advance of the majority of his ministerial colleagues.

"Whilst it is readily allowed," he wrote, "that the millions of heathens abroad call loudly for our help: do not the hundreds and thousands of little better than heathens at home call loudly for our pity too?" If only "pious and charitable gentlemen" could finance such schemes, and churches were willing to release their ministers for several weeks each year, he averred, great blocks of territory much neglected could be reached with the Gospel. "The obligations of real Christians to labour to the utmost to bring others to an acquaintance with the Gospel, appear to me to be so numerous, so powerful and so obvious that I feel surprised that the godly amongst the Baptists, and other denominations, have made so few

efforts to accomplish it. Nor can I conceive of any more effectual means of doing it, than that of itinerant preaching, carried on either by stated ministers, who may pretty frequently make excursions in the villages around them, or at other times take a more extensive circle, and leave their own immediate charge for a season, which in many cases, may be done without any real injury to it."

Many years later, when he had assumed the Presidency of the Northern Education Society (now Rawdon College), Steadman wrote: "The experience I gained . . . contributed not a little to fit me for the stations I was designed to fill." The evangelist-pastor had seen very clearly the challenge of the multitudes, and his whole life was afterwards devoted either to evangelism or to the training of evangelists. To the last the fire burned with a zeal neither sorrow nor disappointment could quench, as these words from Rev. J. O. Barrett's recently published history of Rawdon College indicate: "He (Dr. Steadman) had done a notable work for Baptist Ministerial education in the North, contending in the early years with a strong prejudice against an educated ministry . . . for thirty-one years he had lived for the Academy, sparing no effort to equip his men for their work. . . . To these labours he added the care of a large church, and evangelistic work in Allerton, Brierley, Birkenshaw, Bowling, Cutler Heights, Heaton, Low Moor and other places. He was also chiefly responsible for the formation of the Itinerant Society of Yorkshire Baptists formed for evangelism, and its first Treasurer." Such was the man, and such the motive which pulsed through his ministry; setting a seal upon village work which was to become a pattern for the new evangelism.

WALTER FANCUTT

Some Modern Religions, by J. Oswald Sanders and J. Stafford Wright. (Tyndale Press, 2s.).

This little book, in the Foundations for Faith series, concisely outlines the origins and main tenets of certain modern deviations from the historic Faith and compares their doctrines with New Testament teaching. Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Spiritualism, Christiadelphianism and Theosophy are dealt with, and there are short notes on nine others. The whole is well done and the book will be found useful for those who want to know something about these cults and where they deviate from orthodoxy.

The Preacher's Appeal to Intellect

“BE ready always,” wrote the Apostle, “to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you. . . .”¹ The question which arises, particularly for the preacher, is, Can this be done? To what degree and in what sense can preaching be a process of reasoning? This question has theoretical interest, in the light of contemporary philosophy and theology; and for those of us who have the job to do it has also some practical importance.

Contemporary philosophers and theologians, although poles apart in every other respect, seem to be at one in minimising the part which reasoning can play as a means to the attainment or communication of a knowledge of God. To begin with philosophy, it is now two hundred years since David Hume wrote²: “If we take in hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.” Drawing their inspiration from Hume, the Logical Positivists of today similarly limit the scope of reasoning to mathematics and science and consider the only possible forms of verification to be either analytical or empirical. Ayer, for instance, lays it down that “all utterances about the nature of God” are “nonsensical.”³ They have no meaning because there is no way of determining their truth or falsehood. Some propositions can be verified by an analysis which shows them to be tautologies and, therefore, indisputable (e.g. $2 + 2 = 4$ or “white swans are white”); other propositions are verified by empirical observation or experiment which shows them to have a high degree of probability as forecasts of sensation (e.g. “This table is hard” is verified by the sensation of bumping into it, and the oftener you bump the more confidently you assert that it is hard.) Statements about God, such as we make from the pulpit, are verifiable in neither of these ways and, according to Ayer, are consequently meaningless. It should be

¹ 1 Peter iii. 15.

² *Inquiry into Human Understanding*.

³ *Language, Truth and Logic*, 2nd ed., p. 115.

noticed that he brings the atheist and agnostic under the same condemnation as the theist; it is just as nonsensical to say "God does not exist" or "God may or may not exist" as to say "God does exist," if there is no way of verifying these statements. Bertrand Russell sums up the view of this school to which he himself belongs: "They confess frankly that the human intellect is unable to find conclusive answers to many questions of profound importance to mankind, but they refuse to believe that there is some 'higher' way of knowing by which we can discover truth hidden from science and the intellect."⁴

If he accepts this, the preacher need not conclude that he must stop talking about God altogether, but only that he must stop trying to give a reason. He may still appeal to the hearts of his hearers and try to inflame their passions or arouse their fears; he may still appeal to the will and send them off in all directions to do things. But he is wasting his own time and theirs in making any appeal to intellect, if the Logical Positivists are correct in their account of reasoning and verification.

REASONING AND VERIFICATION

But are they correct? Consider, first, reasoning. When they say that the only meaningful propositions are those of mathematics or science, they restrict the scope of reasoning to these two activities. But, surely, propositions other than those of mathematics or science have meaning. Professor Ayer himself seems to think so in the introduction to the second edition of his book, where he qualifies what he has said about meaning in the first edition: "I do not overlook the fact that the word 'meaning' is commonly used in a variety of senses, and I do not wish to deny that in some of these senses a statement may properly be said to be meaningful even though it is neither analytically nor empirically verifiable."⁵ So, it would appear that, after all, when we talk about God, we are not necessarily talking nonsense.

To reason is to think consistently, and it is possible to do this in more than one way. We use not one logic, but many. There is a method of reasoning appropriate to mathematics, and there are others appropriate to science, art, ethics and religion respectively. No method of reasoning is entitled to set itself up as the arbiter of what has or has not meaning, what is valid or invalid as argument, beyond its own field. It is one of the achievements of modern Logic to have shown that there is not one set of laws of thought applicable to the whole field of reasoning, but many different sets of logical criteria, each applicable within its own field. The logic appropriate to any activity is determined by the purpose which that activity is

⁴ *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 863f.

⁵ P. 15.

designed to serve. Suppose you are playing a game with the alphabet, the point of which is to find an adjective for each letter; then, if you say: "I love my love with an A, because she's adorable, with a B, because she's bashful, with a C, because she's cute," you are reasoning correctly and, within the limits of the game, what you say has meaning; but if you go on: "And I love her with an E, because she is fluffy," you are reasoning incorrectly, and what you say is meaningless. But in a game the 'point' may be of your own invention, whereas in other methods of reasoning the 'point' is given; but, with this difference, the analogy holds good. The purpose served by science, for instance, is the prediction of events in the physical world, and there are logical criteria, appropriate to scientific argument, which determine how this purpose can best be served. If you turn from science to musical composition, however, you find another method of reasoning in operation. "The patterning of a Bach fugue, for instance," wrote Professor Dorothy Emmett in a recent article, "could be called supremely rational, since it does the job intended and it is possible to see the principles on which it does it."⁶ But the reasoning of a composer is governed by different logical criteria from those of a scientist in his laboratory or a child at play. In ethics the purpose of reasoning is to determine duty, what ought to be done. The moralist may answer this question, first, by referring to some rule, generally regarded as right in his community (e.g. that a promise should be kept). But it may be that he considers some such rule, or a particular application of it (e.g. where great evil will follow from keeping a promise) unsatisfactory, and then he will consider the rule as to what is right in the light of more general considerations as to what is good. In all this he is using a method of reasoning different from that of the scientist or the musician, but it is reasoning none the less.

Within some of these fields (e.g. science or ethics) questions arise which cannot be answered in terms used by the method of reasoning appropriate to that field. Suppose the question is asked: "Why do trees bloom in the spring?" The botanist explains the mechanism of it. But the questioner may persist, "Yes, I know all that. I accept the reasons you have given me. But what are the reasons for your reasons? Why do trees bloom in the spring?" All the scientist can say is that he has given you his explanation and you are going beyond the limits of reasoning when you ask him to explain his explanation. Indeed you are going beyond the limits of *his* method of reasoning. But you are not asking a question which is meaningless. Suppose, again, the question is asked: "What ought X to do?" The moralist answers the question by reference to what is right or good or both. But if the questioner asks now: "But why ought he to do what is right and good?" the moralist will reply

⁶ "Reason in Recent Theology," *Political Quarterly*, June, 1955.

that this is not a genuine question. What you are asking is: "Why ought he to do what he ought to do?" because 'what he ought to do' is, by definition, what is right and good. But when a man asks: "Why ought I, or anybody else, do what is right or good?" he is not talking nonsense; his question does mean something; there is something he wants to know; though if he is ever to discover it, he will have to go beyond the limits of that method of reasoning appropriate to ethics. It is this kind of question—the question which takes you beyond the limits of the other methods of reasoning—with which religion is concerned.

There is a point which should be made with some emphasis. If we ask the philosopher to concede that there is a method of reasoning, appropriate to religion, just as there is a method appropriate to science, art or ethics, we must be prepared to accept his demand that religion should confine its activities to its own field and not trespass on others. In other words it must answer questions which go beyond the limits of science or ethics and not intrude within these limits. An illustration will make the point clear. The fundamentalist says, "Everything in the Bible must be taken as true." But much of what the Bible contains is not specifically religious, it is not about what Paul Tillich calls the "revelatory situation" between God and man; it consists in statements of fact or ethics. But if the fundamentalist says: "You must believe this because it is in the Bible," concerning the account of the creation or the record of some historical incident; or if he says: "You must regard this as right because it is laid down in the Bible" concerning some ethical statement or command; then he is applying a criterion "because it is in the Bible" to the questions of fact or morality, in determining which other methods of reasoning are appropriate.

The point could not be better put than it is by Toulmin: "Of course 'theological' arguments, and 'religious' questions and answers—those with which we are concerned here—are on quite a different footing, as a matter of logic, from scientific and ethical arguments, questions and answers. But it is only if we suppose that religious arguments pretend (say) to provide exact knowledge of the future—so competing with science on its own ground—that we can be justified in attempting to apply to them the logical criteria appropriate to scientific explanations; and only if we do this that we have any grounds for concluding (with Ayer) that 'all utterances about the nature of God are nonsensical,' or (with Freud) that religion is an 'illusion.' Provided that we remember that religion has functions other than that of competing with science and ethics on their own grounds, we shall understand that to reject all religious arguments for this reason is to make a serious logical blunder . . ."⁷

When all this is said a question remains, and it is an exceedingly

⁷ *Reason in Ethics*, p. 212.

difficult one. Suppose "religion" is recognised as a distinct method of reasoning, which is as philosophically respectable as the others; then what are the logical criteria appropriate within this field? How, in other words, do you decide the issue of truth and falsehood as between one theological system and another?

This brings us to verification. The Logical Positivist is right when he demands that statements, if they are significant and not merely utterances of subjective emotion or private opinion, must be verifiable. There must be some way of testing their truth or falsehood, otherwise they can contribute nothing to knowledge. But need we restrict verification any more than reasoning to those forms of it which are appropriate to mathematics or science? Scientific hypotheses are 'proved' or 'disproved' by means of controlled experiments. The tests appropriate here can be applied with a rigorous exactness, and the scientist can say with a high degree of probability what is and what is not to be regarded as an established conclusion in his field of knowledge. How much easier life for us would be if there were some equally 'objective' method of deciding the theological issues on which we differ! One thing we can say, however, is that verification by controlled experiments is not the only test of truth. Paul Tillich puts it well: "It is not permissible to make the experimental method of verification the exclusive pattern of all verification. Verification can occur within the life-process itself."⁸ He calls this "experiential verification" and he says of it: "This test, of course, is neither repeatable, precise nor final at any particular moment. The life-process itself makes the test. Therefore, the test is indefinite and preliminary; there is an element of risk connected with it. Future states of the same life-process may prove that what seemed to be a bad risk was a good one and vice versa. Nevertheless the risk must be taken . . . experiential verification must go on continually . . . whether it is supported by tests or not." He says that "Physicians, psychotherapists, educators, social reformers, and political leaders" have to use this method as well as theologians.⁹ So, although we find it so difficult to agree among ourselves as to the tests which we will accept in determining the truth or falsehood of each others' theological ideas, we can at least comfort ourselves with the reflection that, when we talk to men about God, we are not talking about that which admits of no verification.

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

Now we turn to theology. Kirkegaard, a hundred years ago, wrote a great deal about the essential unreason of Christianity. He described Christ as the "Sign of Contradiction" (cf. *Luke* ii.

⁸ *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, p. 114.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

34), and explained: "To be a sign of contradiction is to be another thing which stands in opposition to what one immediately is. Immediately, He is an individual man, just like other men, a lowly, insignificant man; but the contradiction is that He is God."¹⁰ The God-man is the absolute paradox. As such, He is, and always will be, an offence to reason. Reason cannot accept Him, only faith. The Gospel, according to Kirkegaard,¹¹ "says to every individual, 'Thou shalt believe' . . ." It is God's absolute imperative, with no apology nor explanation offered. Faith means believing in spite of, not because of. It involves absolute self-commitment, without reason, even against reason. Only where there is such self-commitment can there be a radical transformation of the existence of men and women in Christ.

Kirkegaard would seem to have regarded any attempt to give a reason in preaching as a kind of treachery to the Gospel. He declared that, if Christianity ever lost its power to offend, it would, at the same time, lose its power to save; for then it would no longer demand that total surrender through which alone there can be transformation of existence. When we attempt to win men for Christ by giving a reason we are misrepresenting Christianity as "an easy thing, a superficial something which neither wounds nor heals profoundly enough."¹²

This is the background of contemporary theology and the most influential theologians nowadays draw their inspiration from the melancholy Dane. It is relevant to consider what these contemporaries say about (a) natural theology, and (b) preaching.

In their famous discussion of natural theology, despite the heat that was generated, Barth and Brunner seem to have been at one on the main point.¹³ Reason, since human nature of which it is a part is totally corrupt, cannot bring men to a saving knowledge of God. "There is," says Brunner at any rate, "a 'general' revelation of God in the natural world, but only the 'spiritual' man, enlightened by the 'special' revelation in Christ, can discern it. The 'natural' man, blinded by sin, cannot see the revelation of God in creation by any exercise of his unregenerate intellect."

Now, it is certainly the case that, while there are 'evidences' of God in nature, there are no 'proofs.' If we tried to argue conclusively from the order and beauty in the world, for instance, or from the fact of personality, to the existence of God, we should be attempting a syllogism which had more in its conclusion than its premises; and this is necessarily so with any attempt to 'prove' a transcendent God from natural premises. But what about the

¹⁰ *Training in Christianity*, p. 125.

¹¹ *The Sickness unto Death*, p. 200.

¹² *Training in Christianity*, p. 139.

¹³ *Natural Theology*, comprising "Nature and Grace" by Brunner and "No" by Barth.

'evidences' of God? The question, of practical importance for the preacher, is, Is it only the converted Christian whose attention should be drawn to these, and are we wasting our time, if we talk about them to the unbeliever?

It would almost seem so from some of the things which Bultmann says in a powerful passage on preaching. Preaching " thrusts upon the hearer the decision question."¹⁴ It is not a preparatory instruction which precedes the actual demand for faith, but is itself the call for faith or the challenge to give up one's previous self-understanding . . . the salvation-occurrence is nowhere present except in the proclaiming, accosting, demanding and promising word of preaching . . . in the proclamation Christ Himself, indeed God Himself, encounters the hearer. . . ."¹⁵ This is a very high view of preaching, but it leaves us wondering. If the point of our preaching is simply to thrust the decision-question on men, to demand faith, to present Christ as the 'sign of contradiction,' then we are indeed wasting time when we try to give a reason. Surely, there is more to preaching than this? You may feel that we are failing to observe the difference between the 'kerygma' and the 'didache'; but while that distinction is useful in theory, in actual practice it is impossible to hold apart the two functions of herald and teacher. The preacher is called upon to be both, and at one and the same time.

Undoubtedly the end of preaching is to bring men to decision. And, if they make the act of commitment at all, they must do so freely; not because they are coerced by their own reasoning or ours, but in faith. But it flies in the face of facts to say that men and women come, and must come, to this decision apart altogether from any process of reasoning. Some may, but many do not. It is after a process of reasoning that many embrace the Faith, just as, when their faith is challenged later on, it is with the help of a process of reasoning that they retain it. The preacher can and should help them here.

There are two types of argument which the preacher can use, viz. (1) *The conditional argument.* The preacher cannot demonstrate the existence of God, but he can ask his hearers to accept it as hypothesis. If God exists, then what follows? The most obvious example would be—if God exists, then there is some sort of 'explanation' of the order and beauty in the world. But if He does not, how are you to account for them? Or again, if Christ rose from the dead, then there is an 'explanation' of the rise and growth of the Church; but if He did not, then how are you to account for it? No one supposes that this kind of argument can establish demonstrably the existence of God or the resurrection, but it has

¹⁴ *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 303.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 301f.

helped many to attain or regain a belief in them. (2) *The exposure of rationalisation*. Reasoning can be a retreat from truth as well as a means to it. The intellectual doubts which many people say stand in the way of their acceptance of Christianity may be simply the rationalisation of their reluctance to accept it on grounds other than intellectual. Christianity may make moral demands upon them which they are unwilling to concede. Reasoning can be a means, not of bringing the unbeliever to Christianity but, at least, of driving him out of the retreats in which he hides from its claims. Of course, if he is minded to escape from Christianity, he will not be particularly amenable to reasoning which undermines his intellectual doubts and, if driven from one position, he will quickly take up another. But, if preaching is preparing the way of the Lord, a clearing of the path for Christ as the 'sign of contradiction,' then the kind of reasoning which shakes the unbeliever's confidence in his own rationalisations has a purpose to serve and is part of the preacher's job.

W. D. HUDSON.

Horses and Chariots, ed. J. Eric Fenn. (British & Foreign Bible Society, 1s.).

In this, the Bible Society's Popular Report for 1956, the editorial secretary maintains the high standard of previous years, giving against the background of world events a comprehensive and absorbing account, well illustrated by photographs, of the work of the Society in all the lands through another twelve months. The story of how the Scriptures are being offered to men of all nationalities, sometimes in turbulent circumstances—and especially by the valiant company of colporteurs—is a thrilling one. As presented skilfully here it should prompt its readers to give all possible support to the work of one of the most significant societies associated with the Christian Church. The Golden Jubilee of the Baptist World Alliance is mistakenly referred to on page 69 as the Silver Jubilee.

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with the real difficulties, and presents its own standpoint (as well as that of others) in an admirably balanced and unpolemical manner. The book is well-produced, and convenient to refer to; a brief summary of the argument precedes each major section, and there are three indices and two appendices on the Gospels.

D. R. GRIFFITHS.

Baptism as Cleansing

WHAT is the symbolism of Baptism? What is signified by the use of the water? Most Baptists would reply at once by reference to Paul's teaching that immersion represents the death of the believer to sin and his rising again to a new life, and at the same time his union with Christ in appropriating the benefits of His death and resurrection (*Rom. vi. 1-11*). Probably most of our baptismal sermons are preached on that great, central and fundamental theme. But is that the complete answer? Not according to the New Testament. As we all know there are several passages where the symbolism attached to Baptism is not that of death and resurrection but that of cleansing. Am I wrong in my impression that these are avoided, or should I rather say neglected, among us? A search among literature immediately available to me confirms this opinion. For example, an examination of McGlothlin's *Baptist Confessions of Faith* has yielded small harvest. An early General Baptist Confession signed by John Smyth and others, which is practically a word for word reproduction of a Mennonite Confession, contains this clause :

“ The whole dealing in the outward visible baptism of water, setteth before the eyes, witnesseth and signifieth, the Lord Jesus doth inwardly baptize the repentant, faithful man, in the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, washing the soul from all pollution and sin, by the virtue and merit of His bloodshed; and by the power and working of the Holy Ghost, the true, heavenly, spiritual, living water, cleanseth the inward evil of the soul, and maketh it heavenly, spiritual and living, in true righteousness or goodness. Therefore the baptism of water leadeth us to Christ, to His holy office in glory and majesty; and admonisheth us not to hang only upon the outward, but with holy prayer to mount upward, and to beg of Christ the good thing signified ” (*op. cit.*, p. 62).

But this lead is seldom followed. The Particular Baptist Confession of 1644 includes among the “ things signified ” by Baptism “ the washing of the whole soul in the blood of Christ,” with reference to *Rev. i. 5*; *vii. 14*; *Heb. x. 22* (*op. cit.*, p. 189). The Somerset Confession of 1655 (*op. cit.*, p. 208) says that Baptism “ signifies and represents ” among other truths, “ a washing away of sins ” (*Acts*

xxii. 16). More modern works are equally blank. It is indicative that in the many-volumed *Expositions* of McLaren not one sermon is included on any of these texts. I even read a manuscript not long ago by a Baptist author who deemed it his duty to deny vigorously that the idea of cleansing could be applied to Christian Baptism. On the other hand, Wheeler Robinson in *Baptist Principles* and Henry Cook in *What Baptists Stand For* (p. 140, 2nd edition) do refer to the point briefly, though perhaps as fully as the size and purpose of their books allow. One of the reasons for the general neglect may be that some of the passages raise complicated exegetical problems.

In the Bible a wealth of symbolism is attached to water. Water was very precious and meaningful to those who lived in "a dry and thirsty land" (*Psalms* lxiii. 1). The lack of it is a metaphor of spiritual need and its presence of spiritual refreshment and life. Here are some instances out of many: *Ps.* xxiii. 2; *Isaiah* xxxv. 6-7; xli. 17; xlv. 3; xlix. 10; lviii. 11; *Ezek.* xlvi. 1-12; *John* iv. 11-15; vii. 37; *Rev.* vii. 16; xxi. 6; xxii. 1-17. It is a symbol of moral cleansing in *Ezekiel* xxxvi. 25 and of professed innocence in *Matthew* xxvii. 24. There seems to be a reference to Baptism in the mysterious Johannine saying that a man must be "born of water and of the spirit" if he would enter the Kingdom of God (*John* iii. 5). If this is a true word of Jesus, Nicodemus would no doubt associate it with John's Baptism of repentance. If, as seems more likely, it is an interpretative comment of the evangelist, he is insisting that Christian Baptism as a rite does not bring the new birth of itself but must be associated with spiritual change. It is interesting to compare *Ezekiel* xxxvi. 25: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean. . . . A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

Our present concern is with the New Testament passages where the reference is to the baptismal waters as an instrument or symbol of cleansing.

1. "Why tarriest thou? Arise and *be baptized and wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord," says Ananias to Brother Saul (*Acts* xxii. 16). 2. In *1 Cor.* vi. 11 there is similar use of the straightforward metaphor: "Such were some of you: but *ye are washed*, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." In "the name of the Lord" in both these passages may well be a reference to the customary baptismal formula. In neither is there any lurking ground for a belief in the efficacy of the rite in itself. Baptism is a spiritual experience linked with justification and sanctification.

3. The real complications begin with the next passage, *Ephesians* v. 25ff.: "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with *the washing of water by the*

word," etc. There is, perhaps, a glance here at the bride's bath before marriage, suggested by the context, but there seems little doubt—though it has been doubted—that Paul's primary reference is to Baptism.

Scholars have engaged in much debate as to the significance of *loutron*, here translated "washing," which occurs in the New Testament only here and in *Titus* iii. 5. It seems doubtful if it can properly be rendered as bath or laver (R.V. margin) if by that is meant a vessel. It means rather the process or act of washing.

And what does "by word" or "with word" mean? For there is no article in the Greek, and that is one of the difficulties. *Rema* means a spoken word. Here it may refer to a "word" spoken by the candidate, his baptismal confession of faith, or the formula spoken by the one baptizing, or perhaps, more generally, the proclaimed message of the Gospel. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* gives the sense as, "that He might set apart and consecrate the Church by cleansing it of guilt by Baptism in accordance with the divine promise" or "on the ground of the preached word of the Gospel." By the addition of *en remati* the apostle is stressing that the rite by itself does not effect the cleansing, unless associated with the "word," in whatever sense we take it.

4. *Titus* iii. 5 is another hotly contested text. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Taken by itself the phrase "the washing of regeneration" is very difficult and has been interpreted in a sense out of harmony with the teaching of the New Testament elsewhere. But of course the phrase does not stand by itself. I read the whole passage as a clear assertion that in the process of our salvation the initiative is with God and not with us. Its reason lies not in our deserts but in the mercy of God, and Baptism is not only a human act of confession but a means of grace to the believing soul. The Baptism which in New Testament times was invariably associated with the Christian new birth is here by hendiadys made one with it, but the writer nevertheless emphasises that the regeneration is not occasioned by the rite itself but by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

A Lutheran friend of mine, of considerable eminence in his Church, once said to me that his main difficulty with the Baptist position was that we seemed to lay all the emphasis on the human side of Baptism. It was the faith of the candidate that was all important to us and we tended to forget the grace of God behind and in it all. Baptism, he urged, is a sacrament in which God too is acting in mercy and love. A sermon on this text might enable a Baptist to do justice to the truth in that protest, while positively presenting the share in Baptism of both the Holy Spirit and of the believing candidate.

5. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and *our bodies washed with pure water*" (*Heb.* x. 22). It seems that the sprinkling and the washing here are technical liturgical terms and that a reference is intended, after the manner of the writer, to the consecration of priests as described in *Exodus* xxix. 4-21. Transferred to New Testament terms the reference would be to the blood of Christ's new covenant (cf. *1 Peter* i. 2) and to the washing of Baptism. Christians are to be clean without and within like the priests of the old covenant. The washing of the body is symbolic of the cleaning of the inner being.

6. "The days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (*not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God*) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (*1 Peter* iii. 20f.). Peter is employing a rabbinical kind of typology between the waters of the Flood, on which the ark floated to safety, and the waters of Baptism, Selwyn in his commentary translates thus: "And water now saves you too who are the antitype of Noah and his company, namely, the water of baptism." But Peter guards against misunderstanding. It is not really the water which saves but the response of the soul to God who raised Christ from the dead.

"Answer," *eperotema*, usually meaning "question," is a difficult word in this connection. *Thayer-Grimm's Lexicon* suggests that it may mean "earnest seeking" and proposes to translate "Baptism now saves us not because in receiving it we have put away the filth of the flesh, but because we have earnestly sought a conscience reconciled to God." But it might be better to take the word as referring to the questions put to the candidate for Baptism, and so his confession of faith. There is some evidence in the papyri for the use of the word for the sealing of a covenant. "The (baptismal) pledge of a good conscience toward God" it might be rendered. The reality of Baptism is not the external washing but the inner cleansing, the response of the spirit to God in Christ.

It is thus at least clear that in the early Church one way of thinking about Baptism was to regard it as a ceremonial cleansing which symbolised the purification of the spirit. Three New Testament writers, possibly four if *Titus* is not Pauline, use the image. Each is careful to guard himself against misunderstanding as to the efficacy of the rite apart from the faith of the recipient, which suggests that alien Hellenistic conceptions were already beginning to infiltrate into the sacramental doctrine of the Church.

Reviews

Reformers in India, 1793-1833, by Kenneth Ingham (Cambridge University Press, 1956, 150 pp., 18s.).

The writer of this important monograph is now Senior Lecturer in History at Makerere College in E. Africa. He has provided for the first time a detailed account of the work of Christian missionaries on behalf of social reform in India from the time Carey landed there to 1833, when the Act renewing the East India's Company's Charter made licences for missionaries unnecessary. Successive chapters deal with their attitude to caste, idolatrous festivals and the practice of sati, education, the status of women, languages, literature, journalism and translation, and medicine and agriculture. The book is naturally of special interest to Baptists for "the versatile and wholly indefatigable" (p. 118) William Carey, appears on almost every page. The Serampore missionaries inevitably claim considerable attention for they were pioneers in all these fields. The importance of William Ward's *Account of the Writings, Religion and Manners of the Hindoos* is duly recognised, as is the standard of scholarship and the incisiveness of the *Friend of India*. It is also good to be reminded of the considerable part played by James Peggs, the General Baptist missionary to Orissa. The only major Baptist name that one misses is that of Hannah Marshman, who should surely have appeared in the chapters on education and women. In an appendix, Dr. Ingham provides a valuable list of all the Protestant missionaries at work in India during the period, together with a map showing the stations of the different societies. There are also some useful bibliographical notes dealing with unpublished as well as published material. Unfortunately Dr. Ingham was in touch with the B.M.S. during the evacuation of its headquarters to Kettering. He was apparently not informed that many of the early letter-books and other material are in safe keeping at Regent's Park College, Oxford. This makes the section on B.M.S. records inadequate and misleading. It is also strange to find that no use was made of C. B. Lewis's life of John Thomas or of the biographies of Carey by George Smith and S. Pearce Carey. These, however, are only minor omissions since Dr. Ingham had access to the *Periodical Accounts* and *Reports* of the Society and to the files of many of the Serampore publications. This is a very welcome study. One is again filled with amazement at what the pioneers undertook and accomplished. One cannot but wonder why subsequent generations of Baptists, and their colleagues of other denominations, in India and in other places, have so few comparable achievements.

ERNEST A. PAYNE

Christology and Myth in the New Testament, by Geraint Vaughan Jones. (George Allen & Unwin, 21s.).

The sub-title of this book (An Inquiry into the character, extent and interpretation of the Mythological Element in New Testament Christology) indicates at once how closely related it is to the "de-mythologising" controversy. It is one of the most extensive and thorough investigations of the problems involved by a single author, as distinguished from the various symposia which have appeared. Though Mr. Jones restricts his work to the field of Christology, he also has a good deal to say about cosmology, the problem of evil and eschatology. The author naturally takes the work of Rudolf Bultmann as his starting-point, and expresses gratitude to his former teacher for his incisive challenge to Christian preachers and theologians. But while he agrees with Bultmann, in broad terms, that much of the language of the New Testament is "mythological," and that this presents a challenge which must not be evaded, he also differs from him on a number of important issues: (1) Mr. Jones criticises Bultmann's too sweeping and indiscriminating use of the term "mythology." (2) Bultmann's extreme historical scepticism with regard to the Synoptic Gospels and the tradition enshrined in them is rejected, and a far more decisive place is given to the witness of these Gospels in the general setting of N.T. theology. (3) Our author holds that Bultmann over-estimates the value of the existentialist philosophy (of Heidegger's type), as a means of de-mythologising. (4) A profounder appreciation of the value of mythological language is given us here. "A Christianity which jettisons the so-called mythological element in the N.T. Christology instead of retaining it in the knowledge that it is mythological not only impoverishes itself but weakens its own historical-biblical roots" (281).

The main body of the book is divided into four parts: (i) Prolegomena; (ii) The Problem of the Mythological; (iii) Kyrios Christos; (iv) The Myth as Logos. In the two chapters included under (i), Mr. Jones gives us a careful and illuminating survey of Bultmann's standpoint. He shows the mingling of several different strands in his thought, examines his terminology, and defines his affinities with and differences from earlier Liberalism. Among the main criticisms offered is this: "Ultimately the existential encounter between the ever-contemporary Cross and the Christian to the exclusion of the 'historical' Jesus must lead to a kind of mysticism without factual content" (42).

Part Two offers a preliminary survey of the "mythological" elements in the N.T. and discusses their interpretation by means of modern philosophical categories. The author assembles the passages which he considers to be most mythological in background and content, and argues that the conceptions of Christ as personalised Logos, as pre-existent Co-Creator of the universe, as principle of cosmic cohesion, and the "kenotic" conception, are mythological in form, and that they do not occur in the earliest records of the kerygma nor in Jesus' own view of Sonship. He holds firmly to the unique Sonship of Christ. The language of the N.T. may be interpreted in such a way as to disregard its mythological content without sacrificing its essential meaning which is "the affirmation of the supreme Lordship of Jesus Christ over all life and his pre-eminence over nature both human and cosmic" (100). An interesting account is given of Thornton's argument in *The Incarnate Lord*, as an example of a philosophical de-mythologisation of the Gospel in contemporary terms.

Part III comprises four chapters which are in various ways explicative of the Lordship of Christ. The first enquires into the N.T. usage of the word Kyrios, and suggests that it is the most comprehensive Christological term, because it "belongs to the human series in so far as it refers to a historical personality, and also to the more-than-historical and more-than-personal dimension through transcendence over history." Mr. Jones argues

for an "anagogic" Christology (i.e. one which emphasises the "taking of the Manhood into God") rather than a "katagogic" (which represents a pre-existent Divine being "descending" to live a human life). Chapters 2 and 3 in this section deal with various aspects of the Lordship of Christ in relation to Creation. Chapter 2 deals with His transcendence over the created order, the main themes being the cosmic centrality of Christ and the redemption of creation. It is acknowledged that Bultmann is largely right in stressing that modern faith considers the experience of redemption existentially rather than cosmologically. Chapter 3 deals with the immanence of Christ in creation, and seeks to preserve a balance between the two aspects of Christ's solidarity and continuity with humanity on the one hand, and "discontinuous newness which implies interruption and transcendence" on the other hand. Jesus both belonged to creation and embodies what is beyond it. The fourth chapter in Part III, entitled "The Lordship of Jesus and the New Testament Mythology of Evil," gives a good account of the N.T. conception of evil, dealing especially with the emphasis on demonic powers. It is argued that, while these beliefs are mythological in form, there is much in them which corresponds to the tragic realities of our world. The author makes a plea for a realistic conception of Christ's lordship over evil; he boldly takes Barth, Cullmann, and Brunner to task, for misleading teaching as to Christ's victory over evil.

The main contribution of Part IV is to defend the significance of mythological language as "pictorial, symbolical, and archetypal," differing definitely from abstract and conceptual thought, but still playing an important part psychologically in the maintenance of the Christian faith. It provides "permanent points of reference without which Christianity would dissolve into metaphysics or ethics." Thus, while it is to be interpreted, poetically and metaphorically, it may become the vehicle of Divine address and challenge to us, and so the "mythos" may become the "logos."

The above summary, sketchy and selective as it inevitably is, will give some indication of the scope and thoroughness of this discussion. Readers of theological journals know how well-versed Mr. Jones is in the philosophy and theology of Continental thinkers, and he has chosen a theme for this book which affords him ample opportunity of conducting a discussion toward which many contributions have been made outside Britain. But we are greatly indebted to him not only for the way in which he has laid others under tribute, but also for his own resolute and penetrating thinking. The only misgiving which we have about the book is that the extreme concentration of thought together with the use of a somewhat recondite terminology may make too heavy a demand upon many potential readers. In some parts the material might perhaps have been differently arranged to advantage; some of the transitions of thought from the New Testament to modern philosophy and theology, and back again to the N.T. are apt to be rather disconcerting. On a number of points of detail, readers may well feel moved to disagreement, or may at least desiderate fuller consideration, e.g., does not the author lay too much stress on the teaching to be found in the Synoptic Gospels and the earliest form of the kerygma? Do not these point beyond themselves and call for fuller theological articulation? Even so, are there not the hints of a Wisdom-Christology in the Synoptic Gospels themselves? Is the kenosis passage of *Philippians*, ii necessarily as "mythological" as is often supposed? (especially if the suggestion made by Wheeler Robinson and others be accepted, that the verb "kenow" echoes the verb in *Isaiah* liii. 12, used of "emptying oneself to death," and the primary emphasis in the passage should thus be on the Crucifixion rather than on the Incarnation). Other controversial issues are raised at various stages of the argument. But this is a learned and valuable contribution which grapples

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