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CHRISTIAN AND ATHEIST? AN INTRODUCTORY ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND THE THEOLOGY OF THE 'DEATH OF GOD'

David A. Pailin

ANY theology which claims to be about a 'dead' God seems from the start to be a most unusual and perhaps a self-contradictory project. Even if the ontological argument cannot demonstrate that God actually does exist,¹ the argument does suggest that his existence must be conceived as a uniquely 'necessary' or non-contingent existence. The concept of 'God', that is, is in part the concept of something whose existence is absolutely non-dependent and ultimately self-determined. If, then, God did once exist, his existence must have been from eternity. If he has now ceased to exist, it must be because he chose to annihilate himself. But can we accept that God, who may be described ontologically as the 'power of being' or 'the ground of being' or 'being-itself', has the power to commit suicide? I think that it can be reasonably argued that if God does exist, he must exist and cannot cease to exist. At least, if he does cease to exist, it will be the end of all things—including the theologians who want to describe the event! If God really did die, the universe would disappear just as our friends' holiday slides fade to nothing when the projector's bulb mercifully burns out! There could be no witnesses and no obituary notices for God's death because there would then be no universe, no-thing at all.² Nevertheless a few theologians, mainly American, have recently been using the slogan 'God is dead' to describe their understanding of the contemporary situation. Although the theologians who either use the slogan or have it applied to their writings present widely different theological positions, they also have a certain unity in that they reject more or less the views of God which have traditionally been regarded as the essence of Christian theism. These theologians have even attained the hall-mark of twentieth-century recognition—the ascription of a technical title. Montgomery describes the movement as a 'new theological science' and bestows upon it the name of 'Theothanatology'!³

Deaths are usually accompanied by mourning, and the greater the deceased, the greater the consequent mourning. The theology of the 'death of God', however, proclaims this death as 'Gospel'—as good news to be received with joy. When Altizer entitled one of his books *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* he really meant each term in that title. He was offering a 'Gospel' to contemporary man which was both truly 'Christian' and 'atheistic'. Clearly something rather unusual in Christian thought is happening here. In this paper I want to consider the question, What are the various 'death of God' theologians really trying to say when they proclaim that 'God is dead'? The

question is not made any easier to answer by the fact that the recent publications in this field have mostly been written in the heat of controversy and under the glare of popular interest, neither of which provides a suitable environment for a cool and clear presentation of a carefully thought out position. When we have decided what these different radical interpretations of Christianity have to say, we still have to ask how far they can be regarded as *Christian* positions. In spite of the appearances, the 'death of God' theology should not be condemned out of hand—it represents a serious attempt to understand the meaning of the Gospel for man today. It may not provide a wholly satisfactory position but neither does the theism against which it protests. At the end of this paper I will very briefly indicate how this material may lead to a positive recognition of the truly living God and of the Christian life today.

I—BACKGROUND

The claim that God is 'hidden' or 'absent' or 'indescribable' or even 'dead' is not a wholly new claim. As we shall notice when we turn to the different types of the 'death of God' theology, the claims which are currently causing controversy can generally claim a long, if not always respectable, ancestry. Buber and Hegel may be acceptable enough predecessors but Blake and Nietzsche are not particularly good examples of mental stability. When the current writers, however, claim that they express a position previously expounded by some earlier writer, we should be careful not to let such references give authority to the position being advanced today until we have decided whether the two views really do correspond. For instance, while references may be made to Barth or Bonhoeffer or Tillich, it is by no means clear that they would accept one of the current theses as implied in their thought. Barth, indeed, has repudiated the 'death of God' position of one of his former pupils as a 'betrayal'. Tillich might have claimed that he was most authentically Tillich when he was most radical, but we may still question whether he would accept the radicalism of Altizer and Hamilton as a proper development of his thought.⁴

The diversity found within the 'death of God' theology appears less surprising when we consider the diversity of its background. Among the ancestors to which it may—and often does—refer are Blake and Bonhoeffer, Nietzsche and Buber, Wittgenstein and Tillich, Hegel and Barth, Camus and the Bible! With such a variety of ancestors, a diversified offspring seems inevitable. Since most of this material is especially significant only for one or other of the types of 'death of God' theology, we shall consider it later. Here, however, I want briefly to notice four elements which lie behind all this theology.

First, of course, there is Nietzsche's famous story of the madman. A similar theme had appeared nearly a century before in Jean Paul's novel *Siebenkäs*. There the 'dead Christ' announces that 'there is no God' and that 'we are all orphans, I and you, we have no father'. Each of us is ultimately 'alone' in 'the broad tomb of the universe'. The only relief from this shattering nihilism lies

in man's failure to perceive the true nature of reality. He finds happiness as he still believes in an 'infinite Father', not recognizing that his belief is completely illusory. His peace depends upon the true nature of existence being hidden from him.⁵ In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche tried in 1882 to bring his contemporaries to see that 'God is dead' but it was a 'madman' who proclaimed this truth and the people 'laughed' at him. He had 'come too early'. Men were not ready to recognize the reality of their situation. Nevertheless, though they may not yet recognize it, the truth is that 'God remains dead. And we have killed him'. Men themselves must 'become gods' and accept full responsibility for history.⁶ Thus Nietzsche announces, clearly and triumphantly, that man is now in charge. God no longer poses a threat to his life. Man is free from the terror of such ultimate oppression. He is summoned, radically and seriously, to fulfil for and by himself the function of 'God' in life—and to do it, fully conscious of what he is doing. In Nietzsche's proclamation that God is dead and his recognition of the implications of that proclamation, the current radical theology sees an understanding of the fundamental reality of contemporary 'secular' life.

Secondly, the 'death of God' theology uses an understanding of existence which is displayed in certain modern novels. Presumably the theologian adopts these insights not because they are in themselves authoritative but because they express a self-understanding which corresponds to his own attitude to the world and which, he believes, is also true of many of his contemporaries. When Tillich discussed man's sense of his finitude, he referred to the existentialist analyses of Heidegger and Sartre.⁷ Here man is 'thrown' into existence. He appears 'by chance', has no 'right to exist' and survives in a 'haphazard' and 'inconsequential' way.⁸ The end of *The Roads to Freedom* is the recognition that 'the darkness . . . alone was living'.⁹ The mood of this existentialist analysis is out of harmony with the self-understanding of the 'death of God' theologians. They prefer the less anguished recognition of a god-less reality which can be found in Hemingway and Camus. Anselmo is not torn with despair as he admits that he alone is the final source of forgiveness for his deeds.¹⁰ Pilar, equally without despair, sees that human fellowship must now take the place of communion with God.¹¹ For Camus's 'Outsider', the question of belief in God is not only meaningless but also boring. There is nothing in it to get concerned about—even in the face of imminent death.¹² Although life is evil and estranged, we must 'try to do what good' we can with 'quiet courage'. There are 'more things to admire in men than to despise'.¹³ The recognition that life has no transcendent reference is not the occasion of frantic wailing. We accept it calmly as a fact—with neither the despair of a Sartre nor the mad joy of a Nietzsche—and equally calmly accept responsibility for our life. In this kind of literature, then, the 'death of God' theologian finds expressed the quiet confidence which, in his view, underlies secular life today.

The third factor in the background is an optimistic sociological view of modern life, both as what it is and as what it is to become. On the basis of these insights, the 'death of God' theologians have built up a concept of 'secular, urbanized man'. It is to this concept of man that their theology is

addressed. It is not made clear whether this 'secular man' actually does already exist anywhere in a pure form. Since man is largely dependent both on his environment and upon its history, it would seem likely that this 'secular man' is really a projection from certain elements in contemporary life. These elements may, however, be becoming increasingly dominant characteristics and, to the extent that this is true of any individual, the 'death of God' theology may speak to his condition. What is more questionable is the optimism which seems to determine the selection of the sociological material used by this theology. At times it looks as if the 'death of God' theologian has decided *a priori* that modern life is basically good (in opposition to most traditional theology which, on an equally *a priori* basis, seems to have assumed that it was basically evil) and has then looked for evidence to fit his assumption. Thus while Harvey Cox points to the way that modern city life may lead to the fulfilment of personal and individual life, he does not seem to notice that the same factors can also lead to the destruction of such life. Both the optimist and the pessimist can find in sociological studies evidence which supports their attitude to secular life. The 'death of God' theologian seems unjustifiably partial in his use of this material.

The fourth factor in the background to this theology is the teaching of Karl Barth. Although Barth is unwilling to acknowledge paternity of radical theology, nearly all the leading 'death of God' theologians either studied directly under Barth or have been deeply influenced by his thought. They follow his rejection of religion as unbelief. In place of the liberal religion which is man's creation and the expression of man's basic idolatry, the 'death of God' theologians emphasize, with Barth, the sovereign freedom of God's Word. This Word is not determined by man nor does it submit to his 'use' of it for his own purposes. It is a Word which comes to him from beyond in unpredictable grace and speaks liberation to him in his particular situation. In the 'death of God' theology the Barthian insistence on the intrinsic freedom of the life-bearing Word is further developed. The current radical theology feels under no necessity to bind the present Word to conformity with its self-revelation on past occasions. The 'Word' is held to be so sovereignly free that it can proclaim the 'death' of the 'God' of any of its former expressions! The Barthian assertion of the utter freedom of the 'Word' over against the human bondage of natural theology is thus extended to cover the possibility of negations of previous revelations. Barth might not like this development of his position but it is hard to show why it is improper. This is one indication, perhaps, of the problem of establishing limits if, with Barth, we completely reject the controls offered by a natural theology.

We now turn to the 'death of God' theology itself. Its propounders can be divided roughly into three groups. These groups may be called the linguistic radicals (in particular, van Buren), the soft radicals (Vahanian, Gregor Smith, the early Hamilton and Cox) and the hard radicals (the later Hamilton and Altizer).¹⁴ I prefer, however, to use three different titles for the sections: The 'Death of God' as Silence, The 'Death of God' as Absence, and The 'Death of God' as Immanence. These titles roughly indicate what we find in each type.

II—THE 'DEATH OF GOD' AS SILENCE

The recognition of fundamental difficulties in the use of the concept 'God' is by no means new. The apophatic tradition in Orthodox theology is a standing witness to this recognition.¹⁵ In Western Christendom, scholastic theologians were well aware of the problem and discussed at some length the possibilities of univocal and analogical descriptions of God. Aquinas argued that we could only describe God by using 'the method of remotion' since the 'divine substance' is beyond our apprehension. We can only attain 'some knowledge of it by knowing *what it is not*'.¹⁶ Aquinas regarded this *via negativa* as compatible with a *via analogiae* which allowed for apparently more positive elements in descriptions of God's nature.¹⁷ Although Duns Scotus argued that we can speak univocally of God,¹⁸ Occam suggested that the univocity of Duns Scotus was basically the same as Aquinas's view of analogy.¹⁹ While it was recognized that there are problems in talking about God, such talk was not considered intrinsically impossible. Even the strictest *via negativa* was a 'way' of talking about God. Most theologians before and since the Reformation have, at least formally, recognized that their descriptions of God are not literal or direct, but this has not greatly restricted them.²⁰

Kant, the father of modern thought, suggested that the difficulties were considerably more intractable than had been generally appreciated. He held that we cannot know 'things-in-themselves' (i.e., as noumena) but only things as they appear to us and interpreted by our *a priori* structures of understanding (i.e., as phenomena). If we try to talk about noumena, we fall into confusions and contradictions.²¹ Kant was prepared to use the word 'God' to represent a regulative 'ideal' of our pure reason and a conceptual 'postulate' of our practical (or moral) reason but he denied that we can ever describe the nature of God's actual reality—except, perhaps, so far as is involved in indicating its essential incomprehensibility. For instance, God's 'knowledge' and creativity, together with God's awareness of the objects of his knowledge and creativity, belong completely to the realm of noumena. Consequently both the nature and the objects of God's knowledge and creativity are unknown and unknowable by us who have knowledge only of the phenomenal and of our ways of understanding it.²² In his Bampton Lectures, Mansel, following Hamilton as much as Kant, similarly argued that 'the fundamental concepts of Rational Theology' are 'self-destructive'. Internal contradictions are necessarily involved if we attribute the notions of 'the Cause, the Absolute, and the Infinite' to 'one and the same Being'.²³ The only knowledge of God to which we can pretend is that which God has been pleased to give us by revelation. This knowledge we must accept as true on the authority of its being revealed. The contradictions in it must be accepted as due to the limitations of our human understanding, not as inherent in God himself.²⁴

From a very different standpoint, Kierkegaard emphasized this major problem inherent in talk about God when he wrote that God and man are 'absolutely different' so that God is strictly 'the Unknown'. We cannot even claim that God is disclosed when we talk of the 'absolutely different' for 'the Reason cannot even conceive of an absolute unlikeness'.²⁵ Otto similarly,

though again from a very different approach, talked of God as the 'totally other'.²⁶ If this is really the case, it is not easy to see how any talk about God can be significant. Feuerbach recognized this problem and suggested that we have misunderstood what we are doing when we talk about God. In fact our talk about God is not about some external, transcendent and unknowable entity but about our human ideals: 'God is the highest subjectivity of man abstracted from himself.'²⁷ Thus our descriptions of God are objectifications of our understanding of our essential and ideal natures.

The contemporary 'death of God as silence' theology is a radical treatment of these problems involved in talk about God. Its results bear some resemblance to Feuerbach's approach, if not necessarily to his particular solution. Here the claim that 'God is dead' is the claim that the word 'God' can no longer sensibly and meaningfully be understood to refer to some external, objective entity as conceived in traditional theism. Since we cannot talk sensibly and meaningfully about such a being, we must perforce be silent about it. On the other hand, this theology recognizes that statements about 'God' have some significant function in our discourse and self-understanding. It tries, therefore, to discern the 'proper' meaning of statements about God, a meaning which does not pretend to give a factual description of a transcendent deity.

The most famous work of this brand of 'death of God' theology is Paul van Buren's *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*. To be fair to van Buren we should recognize that he has never formally included himself in the 'death of God' movement. Indeed, he has suggested that its slogan is itself meaningless. Before the current movement had properly begun, he wrote that today 'we cannot even understand the Nietzschean cry that "God is dead" ' for 'the word "God" is dead'.²⁸ If the word 'God' means nothing to us, the claim that he is dead means nothing either. In spite of this, our inclusion of van Buren within the 'death of God' school is not unreasonable. If he is correct that 'the word "God" is dead', at least as that word has been traditionally understood, then theism's claim to describe 'God' must be rejected. The 'death' in this case is not of a being named 'God' but of the theology which has been under the delusion that it talked about a being at all. Van Buren's book seems to have aroused much less interest in Britain than in the U.S.A. This is probably because the position which it represents is not new to British theology. The application of the techniques of linguistic analysis to theological utterances has largely been pioneered in Britain. Wisdom's paper, 'Gods', appeared in 1944-5 and Flew's use of Wisdom's parable of the gardener—and the first responses to it—appeared six years later.²⁹ These discussions indicated the difficulty of regarding theistic assertions as factual assertions about a transcendent being. In consequence, a number of philosophers and theologians have tried to salvage something that could be called 'theology' by offering new interpretations of the content and logical status of theological statements. Unfortunately, many of the proposed solutions have seemed to offer salvation to statements about God only at the cost of converting them into statements about something else!

One such interpretation of language about God was Braithwaite's paper,

'An Empiricist's View of Religious Belief'. The title of this lecture, delivered in 1955, makes it quite clear that Braithwaite was here approaching the problem of statements about God from an empiricist position, using as his criterion of meaningfulness a modified version of the verification principle. This was the 'use principle' which stated that 'the meaning of any statement is given by the way in which it is used'.³⁰ Braithwaite argued that statements about God are not factually significant descriptions of a being but are to be understood basically as moral assertions—where a moral assertion is understood as the expression of 'an *attitude* of the man making the assertion'. Thus an assertion about God is interpreted as stating 'the asserter's intention to follow a specified policy of behaviour'.³¹ Talk about God, then, is an indirect way by which we express the fundamental attitudes which govern our behaviour. If I confess, for instance, that 'I believe that God is a loving Creator', I am not describing the nature of some transcendent entity, I am informing you about the policy which governs my behaviour, *viz.*, that I intend to regard life as fundamentally structured by love and to live by this attitude. The word 'God' thus ceases to refer to some entity and becomes the sign that I am talking about my basic attitudes and behaviour policies. Thus in Braithwaite's paper 'God' may be said to have 'died' as the word 'God' ceases to designate a being.³²

Van Buren's *Secular Meaning of the Gospel* expounds a view which closely resembles Braithwaite's position. Although van Buren refers to Wittgenstein and claims to use the tools of linguistic analysis, his approach is much closer to the Logical Positivist or Verificationist position than his comments might suggest.³³ As Braithwaite starts from the 'empiricist's' position, so van Buren starts by adopting what he regards as the position of 'secular' man. Since all utterances about the transcendent and the supernatural are unacceptable to this secular man, van Buren rules them out.³⁴ This somewhat arbitrary assumption alone clearly involves the rejection of any traditional understanding of theistic statements, but van Buren does not stop here. On the grounds that it is ridiculous to claim to have literal descriptions of an ineffable being, he rejects 'simple, literal theism'. He rejects 'qualified, literal theism' on the grounds that the qualifications empty the statements of any content.³⁵ Having dismissed the traditional views of statements about God as untenable, van Buren attempts to determine their 'real' meaning. To do this he adopts the modified form of the verification principle used by Braithwaite: 'the meaning of a statement is . . . identical with the function of that statement'.³⁶ He then examines statements about God and decides that their function is to express particular perspectives of life. He holds that 'statements of faith are to be interpreted . . . as statements which express, describe, or commend a particular way of seeing the world, other men, and oneself, and the way of life appropriate to such a perspective'.³⁷ What this does is to add the notion of 'perspective' to Braithwaite's 'behaviour-policy' interpretation of theological utterances. Since, however, a 'policy' is the way in which we actualize an attitude or standpoint, van Buren's notion of 'perspective' probably only indicates what is already implicit in Braithwaite's position. As for the word 'God', van Buren makes it clear that it must not be understood

as 'a proper name, calling up the image of a divine entity'. It is a word which denotes whatever the individual regards as 'the goal of human existence, . . . the truth about man and the world, . . . the key to the meaning of life'.³⁸ Thus the word 'God' ceases to refer to some being and becomes a cipher for *whatever* a man considers to be his ultimate concern. To say that 'I believe that God is *x*' is, therefore, to say that '*x* is ultimate for my attitude to and way of life'.

What we find in Braithwaite and van Buren is an indication that the traditional understanding of talk about God cannot be reconciled with an empiricist (or 'secular') and verificationist position. If such assumptions are granted, talk about God will remain meaningful only at the cost of radical reinterpretation. Braithwaite and van Buren attempt this in terms of the assertion of behaviour policies and of 'historical perspectives'.³⁹ Here the 'death of God' is the 'death' of the traditional understanding of talk about God. When men have regarded their descriptions of God as descriptions of some divine being, they have misunderstood the meaning of their statements. They have not been describing any-thing at all: they have been claiming ultimacy for some ethical stance or universal way of looking at things.

The kind of 'death of God' position we find in van Buren is open to several criticisms. In the first place it seems to assume uncritically that the secular rejection of all transcendent and supernatural references must be accepted. This position is not self-evident and needs to be justified—especially when it provides the basis of an interpretation of religious statements. Furthermore, van Buren's suggestion that the word 'God' refers to 'the goal of human existence' indicates some kind of transcendent reference, even if it does not refer to a transcendent, supernatural deity. Secondly, in spite of his references to Wittgenstein and linguistic analysis, van Buren basically follows a more rigid verificationist approach. That is, he comes to statements about God with a predetermined canon of meaningfulness. The inadequacy of this canon is seen, I think, if we compare the difference between the assertion that 'I love my wife' and my behaviour towards my wife. The assertion is connected with the behaviour but the behaviour is not the same as the assertion—e.g. my 'love' is not identical with the facts that I buy her flowers, clean her shoes, give her money for luxuries, etc. I do these things *because* I love her—these things are the practical implications of the fact of my love—but to identify the two is to identify the cause with the effect. Van Buren—and Braithwaite—are unable to avoid this error once they have accepted the 'use principle' of meaning. It seems to me that, difficult as factually descriptive talk about God might be, our fundamental historical perspectives and behaviour policies are, for theistic faith, derived from constative statements about God and do not replace them. What, in the end, this brand of 'death of God' theology does is to isolate one element involved in or implied by theistic utterances. It then claims, because this seems to be the only element that fits its predetermined canon of meaningfulness, that this element is the *whole* meaning of such utterances. It is not enough, however, for us to note the inadequacies of this position. We must meet the problem that lies behind these positions, the problem of the internal coherence and comprehensibility of statements about

God, by showing how these statements are to be understood in all their fullness. So far this has not been satisfactorily accomplished. Until it is accomplished, language about 'God'—and so its object—will be in effect 'dead' for many people. God is 'dead', that is, because the language about him is so clearly and deeply unsatisfactory that 'silence' seems to be the only proper attitude.

III—THE 'DEATH OF GOD' AS ABSENCE

The trouble with traditional Christian theism for this brand of 'death of God' theology is not that it is meaningless but that it makes assertions about God which are incompatible with the Gospel and with contemporary secular life. It is not easy to decide which of these two factors is finally determinative—whether the 'real' Gospel is found in the end by examining the given 'Word' or by sociological investigation into the structure of contemporary life. The 'death of God as absence' theology suggests that its 'Gospel' is true in both respects—that the Gospel given to the Church is a Gospel which affirms secular life today. This Gospel proclaims man's freedom and responsibility as the one to whom God has given dominion over life. The traditional concepts of God in Christianity have contradicted this Gospel. The radical theology which we are to consider in this section announces that these traditional views of God do not correspond to anything that now exists, even if they might have corresponded to something in the past. 'God' is declared to be 'dead' in that certain old concepts of God are now declared to be untrue. The 'true' God, however, still exists—as the one who is primarily to be understood in terms of his absence from life. This 'death' of God is, furthermore, regarded as God's affirmation of the significance of man's freedom and responsibility, an affirmation which he expresses in his utter refusal to intervene in human affairs as a *deus ex machina*.

This type of the 'death of God' theology is not without its antecedents. Certain biblical passages may be interpreted as expressing its point of view. The two creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2 suggest that man is given 'dominion' over the rest of creation and even, perhaps, that man determines values in the created order.⁴⁰ Isaiah 45:15 combines the notions of God as 'Saviour' and yet as 'hidden' when it declares 'Truly, thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour'—though the context does not suggest that the being 'hidden' is an essential part of the activity of being 'Saviour'. This is the relationship this type of radical theology seeks to establish. The cry of dereliction, however, may provide fundamental support for this position since it may indicate that even when a man is completely obedient to God, God will not intervene on his behalf but leaves him totally responsible for his decisions and totally open to their consequences. At the climax of his total obedience, Jesus felt most deeply the absence of God—and yet this situation is the saving event.

The jump from the cry of dereliction to Bonhoeffer's experience is possibly

not very great. Certain passages in Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison*, especially the letters of June and July 1944, provide the immediate inspiration for this type of radical theology. In these letters Bonhoeffer, it seems to me, expresses a position which is significantly different from that contained in his earlier writings. Some of these earlier works indicate an idea of 'religionless' Christianity but it is a 'religionlessness' of thorough-going Christian discipleship in the contemporary world, a refusal to use Christianity as a way of avoiding the costliness of true grace. In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer summons men to an utterly serious discipleship within a truly reformed Church. The ways and values of the world are not affirmed but denied: the disciple is to 'remain in the world to engage in frontal assault on it . . . as a stranger in this world'.⁴¹ The pre-war Bonhoeffer recognized the autonomy of man but regarded it as a consequence of man's sinful presumption and 'fall'.⁴² It is probably very dangerous to speculate on what Bonhoeffer's prison experiences meant for him, but it seems to me that the brute facts of this existence made him question his earlier views. He began to ask if Christianity must not be even more radically 'religionless' than he had previously supposed. His 'suspicion and horror of religiosity are greater than ever'.⁴³ He begins to see, in spite of all the horrors of war and of life in a Nazi prison, that the Christian is not compelled, because of his Christianity, to denounce the modern world. The autonomy and maturity of modern man are not to be interpreted as the consequence of man's fallen sinfulness but as the fulfilment of God's creative and saving will. Thus he declares that it is *God* who is teaching men that they 'must live as men who can get along very well without him'.⁴⁴ The true call of Christian discipleship is not to world-renouncing obedience but to autonomous, mature responsibility for the world. 'The God who is with us is the God who forsakes us. . . . The God who makes us live in this world without using him as a working hypothesis is the God before whom we are ever standing. Before God and with him we live without God.'⁴⁵ Here the 'death' of God is God's deliberate decision to allow man to be completely free and responsible. Nevertheless, God still lives. While he does not intervene in human life, he exists as the ultimate norm for man's decisions, the basis of his freedom and the one to whom he is finally accountable. In this way Bonhoeffer combines his view of the saving 'absence' of God with his desire to find God 'at the centre of life'.⁴⁶

The lack of references to Martin Buber's *Eclipse of God*,⁴⁷ which appeared in 1952, is surprising for it contains many ideas similar to those found a decade later in the 'death of God as absence' theology, especially in works like Hamilton's *New Essence of Christianity*. In his book Buber examines Nietzsche's claim that 'God is dead' and suggests that contemporary man will understand his existence only when he recognizes that he lives in an age of God's self-concealment, an age of 'a divine silence'. God, who can be known by man only as and when he takes the initiative and speaks to man, is not addressing man at the moment as his 'eternal Thou'. The present age is marked by the 'eclipse of the light of heaven, eclipse of God'.⁴⁸ Buber is somewhat confused about what has brought about this situation. On the one hand, he seems to suggest that God is responsible for this 'eclipse'. It is due to

something which has its origin 'not in human subjectivity but in Being itself'.⁴⁹ Later, in another essay in the same book, Buber suggests that God's silence may not be due to God's choice but to man's present inability to enter into I-Thou relationships. Contemporary man is so obsessed with I-It relationships that his ears are closed to all encounters with that 'Thou' which can never become an 'It'.⁵⁰ Whichever way we interpret the 'silence', Buber suggests that at present there is no 'word' from God to man—at least no 'word' that man hears. This situation is described as an 'eclipse' and one of the characteristics of an eclipse is that it is temporary. Whether the barrier that creates the eclipse is due to God or to man, Buber considers that it is not eternal. 'The eclipse of the light of God is no extinction; even tomorrow that which has stepped in between may give way.'⁵¹ The great difference between Buber and the theologians of the 'death of God as absence' is one of tone. They see this situation of the 'eclipse', 'silence' or 'absence' of God as the basis of salvation and a reason for joy: Buber is less confident. He faces the situation with a quiet confidence in God but he does not seem at all happy about it.

We now turn to the four major representatives of this 'death of God as absence' theology. They are Gabriel Vahanian, William Hamilton (in his early book in this field, *The New Essence of Christianity*), Ronald Gregor Smith and Harvey Cox. Since there are considerable divergences in their points of view, we will deal with them separately.

The Barthian element in the 'death of God' theology is at its purest and most influential in Vahanian's works. In two books on this topic,⁵² Vahanian examines contemporary culture and suggests that we belong to a 'post-Christian era' in which 'God' no longer has a significant place. Modern man recognizes that God is not necessary for his epistemology, his science or his existential self-understanding.⁵³ Contemporary culture is based upon 'immanental values' which secular man self-consciously fashions for himself.⁵⁴ Thus the reality of God represented by liberal Christian tradition is 'culturally irrelevant: God is *de trop*, as Sartre would say'.⁵⁵ This situation is not hostile to true faith in God for 'God dies', according to the biblical view, whenever he 'becomes a cultural accessory or a human ideal'.⁵⁶ Contemporary culture, therefore, condemns the liberal view of God and leads us to 'wait without idols' for the utterly transcendent God to break into our lives. In an introduction to his translation of Barth's *The Faith of the Church*, Vahanian wrote that Barth 'is a man who took his "glorious liberty" seriously when he declared that he had been impelled to become "*simultaneously* very much more churchly *and* very much more worldly". . . . In preserving the radical *otherness* between God and man, Barth's intention indeed is to assert and preserve the inalienable condition of the freedom and necessity which properly is man's. . . . The glory of God and the glory of man, although different, actually coincide.'⁵⁷ This description also outlines Vahanian's own position. But while he affirms the significance of man's life, he does not accept that contemporary secularism is the true expression of this significance. Consequently he condemns much of the 'death of God' theology for surrendering 'to the secularism of our time' and for viewing this secularism 'as

the remedy instead of the sickness'.⁵⁸ Vahanian thus rejects as utterly false the views both of those who attempt to 'use' God for their own purposes (the liberal error) and of those who deny God's existence and attempt to base life only on humanity (the secularist error). When Vahanian says that 'God is dead', he means that the 'God' of liberal Christian tradition and so-called Christian culture is no longer significant. This realization, however, opens the way for the advent of the true, living God, a transcendent, sovereignly free God who can never be objectified, who condemns the attempts of religion and culture to apprehend him and who simultaneously affirms and negates secular culture. This is a very Barthian position. It is also not unlike Tillich's concern for 'the God behind god', the Ultimate who 'shakes the foundations of religion' and stands in judgement over our attempts to grasp him in theological systems and religious organizations.⁵⁹ The 'death of God' here is the utter absence of the real God from all the points at which man has attempted to apprehend and use him. When we recognize that this God is 'dead', then we wait to be apprehended and to be used by the living God.

William Hamilton, in his *New Essence of Christianity*, exhibits a different view of contemporary life. He shares Vahanian's view that God is known only as he addresses us and makes himself known to us as the 'Thou' which can never be an 'It'.⁶⁰ He does not share, however, Vahanian's rigid separation between God and the world—nor does he share Harvey Cox's rather uncritical affirmation of contemporary life as the realization of the Kingdom of God. Hamilton considers that our view of God must both be relevant to and be influenced by our understanding of present existence. It is in terms of our present state as well as in terms of past revelations that we will understand the nature of the reality and will of God for us. The basic obstacle in the way of belief in God seems to be the depth and extent of suffering in the world.⁶¹ Since traditional Christian belief about God offers no satisfactory solution to this problem, Hamilton suggests that belief in the reality of God can only be preserved by affirming the 'death of God'. This seems absurd until we realize that Hamilton uses 'death' in a metaphorical way to express a state which in fact is far from 'death'! By the 'death' of God, he does not refer to 'the non-existence of God' but to 'a growing sense . . . that God has withdrawn, that he is absent'.⁶² The 'death' of God is more than a Tillichian 'death of the idols or the falsely objectivized Being in the sky'; it expresses 'the death in us of any power to affirm any of the traditional images of God'. While God may be real, the enormity of evil and suffering in the world indicates to us that God has withdrawn, absented himself, departed from the world: the 'cry of dereliction from the cross is sometimes the only biblical word that can speak to us'.⁶³ On the other hand, Hamilton also asserts that our experience of the absence of God is conjoined with a sense of his presence as a 'wounding' and unavoidable 'pressure'. Thus our present experience is one of a 'curious mixture of the disappearance and presence of God'. While God 'seems to have withdrawn from the world and its sufferings', he also confronts us as 'the one whom we struggle to elude' in vain.⁶⁴

Hamilton sees a solution to this paradoxical experience of contemporary man in terms of God's affirmation of the maturity and responsibility of man.

God has 'withdrawn' from the world in order that man might exercise his freedom without restriction and find maturity in responsibility for his world. To give man the confidence to do this, God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ in terms of humility, weakness and suffering. God has here declared the 'death' of the God who seems to pose an ultimate threat to man's existence. As God reveals that he deals with man in terms of 'humiliation, patience, and suffering', so these 'are also the ways the Christian man is to deal with the world'. The Christian, then, follows God not as he imposes alien patterns of behaviour on others but as he makes it clear that "'we want you to be yourself"'.⁶⁵ At the same time, Hamilton recognizes that while some men today can apparently 'live without God and without despair', it is also true that many of us 'cannot do so. We are afraid of ourselves without him.'⁶⁶ The proclamation of Jesus as Lord reminds us that while God withdraws from the world, he does not also necessarily withdraw from the self. Hamilton does not seem very sure at this point but he appears to consider that God will possibly always continue to make himself known as the 'pressure and . . . wounding' of one whose nature, forgiveness and will is declared in the crucified Jesus.⁶⁷ Faith in this God gives man the confidence to face the world from which God is recognized to have withdrawn—to accept the 'death' of God as traditionally conceived and to see this 'death' as making possible the freedom, maturity and responsibility which God wills for man. The 'God' that is 'dead' is the transcendent, omnipotent being whose nature prevented the actual fulfilment of God's will for man: in Jesus Christ the true 'God' has published the death-certificate of this false picture of 'God'.⁶⁸

A very similar position to Hamilton's is expressed in the Bishop of Woolwich's lecture, 'Can a Truly Contemporary Person not be an Atheist?'.⁶⁹ Dr Robinson holds that God as traditionally posited in Christian faith is now seen to be 'intellectually superfluous, . . . emotionally dispensable' and 'morally intolerable'. God is not a reality to be '*used or needed*' by man.⁷⁰ So far as this concept of God is concerned, many contemporary Christians are and must be 'atheists'. At the same time they also feel that 'in grace and demand' the true God '*will not let us go*'—'God is a reality of life whom one cannot ultimately evade.'⁷¹ This 'true' God is the God of the New Testament who summons man to 'freedom' and 'maturity' and to 'share the terrible freedom of love'.⁷² The God who is 'dead' is the pseudo-God who pretended to fill the intellectual, emotional and moral gaps in the boundaries of life. The God who lives is the God who stands at the centre of life as suffering but transforming, as humble but victorious love.⁷³ In order to be true to himself contemporary man may have to be 'atheist' so far as the view of God traditionally offered by Christianity is concerned. His affirmation of the ultimate significance of love and of persons, however, is itself an affirmation of the true nature and reality of God. Here the 'death' of God is not so much the 'absence' of God as the final condemnation by God of false concepts of his nature. This is a 'death' which expresses the New Testament understanding of God. He is an 'absent' God in the sense that he is recognized to be unnecessary and unavailable for man's use in contemporary life.

Ronald Gregor Smith's *Secular Christianity* is another British contribution

to the 'death of God as absence' theology. On the one hand, Gregor Smith argues that the nature of this world can never demonstrate the existence of God. The proofs of the existence of God are not only philosophically unsatisfactory: their conclusions could never in any case indicate the God who is 'not an element in the world'.⁷⁴ The only way that God can be known is in faith's response to an 'historical' and personal encounter with God in our present.⁷⁵ On the other hand, Gregor Smith is equally emphatic that 'God' is to be encountered. We should not confuse a rejection of the way we traditionally express our knowledge of God in terms of a 'specific metaphysic' with the rejection of belief in the historic reality of God.⁷⁶ Gregor Smith thus affirms a 'death of God' in the sense of a 'procedural' atheism but is emphatically opposed to the 'experiential atheism' found in the nihilism of Jean Paul and Nietzsche.⁷⁷ Although we cannot describe God as an object, we can speak about him in terms of his personal acts and as the one who encounters us in our present with the same personal reality as was revealed in Jesus Christ. God 'is constantly himself and is never other than he is in Christ'.⁷⁸ In particular God is encountered as the one who condemns, forgives and liberates us from our past and calls us to fulfil the possibilities of our future by accepting full responsibility for it in obedience to his call.⁷⁹ Gregor Smith expounds his position in rather paradoxical language which I do not find easy to understand. What I understand him to mean is that by faith in Christ we recognize that God is not part of the world—that God is absent from the world so that his reality and will cannot be inferred from it nor be empirically verified by it.⁸⁰ This recognition, which is summed up in the cry of dereliction, frees man to recognize the summons of God in the call to live, as Christ lived, 'entirely by faith, and thus entirely freely for the world, and entirely freely for God'.⁸¹ Thus our recognition of God's total absence from the empirically observable world prepares us for the recognition of God's presence in a transcendent call to existential commitment. In the end we accept the call that comes to us as God's call as a matter of faith.⁸² This is the stand we make and feel ourselves compelled to make by a reality that we encounter in our present—either as a direct 'word' or as a 'word' that is mediated to us through the record of Christ's life. This 'historical reality', however, 'cannot be pinned down'. It is true for others only as it encounters them in their present and evokes in them the faith that it has evoked in us.⁸³ What we find in Gregor Smith, then, is the expression of 'the death of an *idea* of God'⁸⁴—of the traditional Christian idea of God as working in his world in ways that would seem to be empirically observable. But whereas Vahanian waits for the transcendent God to break in at some future time and whereas Hamilton and Robinson see him only as a present pressure upon man to recognize in faith and in action his nature revealed in Jesus Christ, Gregor Smith sees God as a living God encountering man in his present existence with a transcendent word of judgement and of grace. This God is absent from the world in that he does not guide its affairs: he is present in that he calls men to be open to life and to guide its affairs according to his will. For Buber, God today is 'silent': for Gregor Smith he speaks a word which by faith alone man accepts as his word.

The most famous statement of the 'death of God as absence' theology is probably Harvey Cox's *The Secular City*. The subtitle of this book is 'Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective', and at times the book seems to be a rather uncritical attempt to produce a theological rationale for the contemporary situation revealed by sociological investigations. Cox holds that the 'almost certainly irreversible' development of secularization is a practical exposition of the biblical faith.⁸⁵ His exegesis of the Exodus and Sinai Covenant records in defence of this view seems to me more ingenious than ingenuous, but he is on stronger ground when he seeks support for his point of view in the Creation narratives. In any case the Christian faith has, intentionally or not, played an important part in bringing man to his present state of dominion over the world, whatever may be the biblical support for this. Cox further holds that the process of secularization has liberated man from any need to submit to the control of a religious or metaphysical world-view.⁸⁶ Consequently, we must surrender 'our religious and metaphysical versions of Christianity' and discover how 'to speak of God in a secular fashion'.⁸⁷ Cox's initial assumption, then, is that the current secular situation provides the norm by which we determine what is to be regarded as the truth of Christianity for today. This assumption appears liable to lead to the surrender of any critical function in Christianity. When the secular attitude determines the way we understand Christianity, it is not easy to see how Christianity can challenge that attitude, indicating where it may offer a false or inadequate apprehension of life. Since Cox's assumption seems to make such fundamental criticism impossible, I find it hard to accept as a basis for understanding Christianity. Even less satisfactory is Cox's application of his assumption. He considers secularized urban life and points out where its characteristic features can be seen to make possible a more authentic personal life than was possible in tribal and town cultures. He presents a hopeful and attractive picture, but only, I fear, by a selectivity which ignores the elements of despair and frustration in modern life. He sees the anonymity and mobility of urban life as making possible the fulfilment of a truly free and individual personal life.⁸⁸ This possibility is certainly there in these features—but the same features may also lead to a loneliness and rootlessness which utterly destroys the individual person. Cox sees the works of Camus as 'personifications of the buoyant reasonableness and calm sense of assurance which characterizes the best in our epoch'.⁸⁹ This may mark 'the best' but we should not forget or ignore the other side. Other contemporary secular men see their situation not in these terms but in terms of Beckett's *Endgame* where, as Mascall points out, 'poor blind Hamm being wheeled by Clov round the walls of the little room that is his world, and his parents Nagg and Nell confined to their dustbins, are not conspicuous examples of liberation'.⁹⁰ Cox's attitude reflects a sociological optimism which seems blind to the moral and personal collapse that is found in contemporary society simultaneously with moral and personal integration. Secular life has examples of inauthentic as well as of authentic life.

With the background of this highly optimistic view of contemporary life, we now turn to see what Cox understands to be the role of God in secular

culture. He does not content himself with finding a way to reconcile the secular world and biblical Christianity: he positively proclaims the secular world as the authentic expression of biblical Christianity.⁹¹ The pragmatism of modern man, which ignores metaphysical 'ultimate' questions, expresses the biblical view of truth as *functional*. The profanity of modern man, which refuses to anchor its values in a transcendent realm, expresses the biblical view of Creation which makes man the source of value and meaning.⁹² At first sight these claims seem to leave no place for God. This is the position of ideological 'secularism', but Cox disagrees. He grants that we can no longer talk meaningfully to modern man about 'God' as a being among others or as the supreme being of metaphysics, but he holds that the word 'God' makes sense for 'urban-secular man' as the 'name' of 'the One who discloses himself through the Biblical witness'.⁹³ But if the word 'God' names what confronts us and yet cannot be described, how do we know when and where the name is properly applied? How do I decide if it is 'God', 'Satan', 'Humanity' or my 'Id' that I am encountering? Cox's answer seems to be that we speak of God properly when we speak of those activities which are 'making and keeping life human'.⁹⁴ This is described as a 'political' way for talking about God—for Cox sees 'politics' as bringing 'unity and meaning to human life and thought'.⁹⁵ (This is a delightfully idealized view which unhappily seems to bear little relation to the brute realities of political life!) Thus, to speak of God in a secular fashion 'entails our discerning where God is working and then joining His work'—in other words, we speak of God when we speak of those points in contemporary life where life is becoming integrated and meaningful. Since the biblical view is that man is God's 'partner, . . . charged with the task of bestowing meaning and order in human history', we 'speak of God to secular man by speaking about man'.⁹⁶ But if Cox has reduced the word 'God' to be a 'name' for those points where man is making life human and meaningful, doesn't this mean that the 'God' of theism is 'dead'? The function that theism regarded as peculiarly the function of 'God', namely, the giving of ultimate meaning and value, has been completely taken over by man. Nietzsche's story seems to have been actualized: man now fulfils the functions of God. On the basis of the secular, pragmatic view of truth which regards a thing as existing only so long as it has a function, it would seem, then, that God can no longer be held to exist.

Cox, however, does not agree that this is implied by his position. He holds that we must distinguish between 'the hidden God or *deus absconditus* of biblical theology' and 'the no-god-at-all of nontheism'. While 'God' is not to be used as 'the kingpin in an ontological system' nor as one who can be coaxed 'into watering my corn' (i.e. the God of metaphysics and the God who is a being among others), God exists as the one to whom man is finally accountable and responsible. Thus God is not 'simply a different way of talking about man'. He is neither an object of man's knowledge nor an objectification of some human ideal: he is the one to whom man is ultimately 'response-able'.⁹⁷ In his sovereign freedom God meets man wherever he chooses. In particular, secular man meets this transcendent God when he encounters those limits to life which both halt him and challenge him to exert

his freedom.⁹⁸ These descriptions justify Cox's claim that he asserts a *deus absconditus* and not the 'no-god-at-all' view of nontheism. God has a function, even if a rather eschatological function: although man gives value and meaning in life, he does it in response to God's call to partnership, in the freedom which God makes possible and as the one who is finally responsible to God. Unfortunately Cox also makes some other statements which do seem to assert a 'no-god-at-all' nontheism. Thus he suggests that the difference 'between men of biblical faith and serious nontheists' is not that they encounter different realities. They 'encounter the same reality' but give it different names and respond to it differently.⁹⁹ This may be understood to suggest that the difference between the two lies in the individual's attitude and in the meaning that he consequently imposes upon his experience. If he adopts the theistic position, it is because he chooses to interpret his experience in terms of a God to whom he is responsible: if he adopts the nontheistic view, it is because he regards himself as responsible only to himself and his fellow men. There is nothing in reality, however, which shows which is the correct attitude to adopt. Again, when Cox seems to want to talk of 'God' as the 'name' which points to that which has historically brought 'liberation' to man, I wonder whether 'God' is made equivalent to 'liberator', whatever the liberating agent may be.

My conclusion, then, is that Cox's position indicates a more radical denial of God than he seems ready to accept. Cox sees the loss of a transcendent source of meaning and value for life as man's call to mature responsibility for life.¹⁰⁰ For Cox this 'responsibility' implies a hidden God to whom man must finally make his 'response'. Here Cox is reading into the word 'responsible' more than secular man would probably accept. For secular man, the notion of 'responsibility' does not imply a transcendent being to whom, in the end, I render my accounts for ultimate judgement, it is simply a way of expressing my feeling that I must take life seriously. Indeed, Cox himself seems to be confused at this point. When he allows that man is the proper source of value and meaning, it is difficult to see what sense there is in retaining God as an accountant who finally checks his valuations. If the source of value is man, is it not man who must provide the accountant? Or does God merely check that man's practice has been in accordance with his professed values? Cox's attempt to preserve the existence of God in terms of an eschatological functionary appears to be even less satisfactory in view of his affirmation of a secular and pragmatic view of truth. I doubt whether this view of truth is really consistent with talk about God as a being who encounters man in the demands of humanity and to whom man is finally accountable for his use of his liberty and power.¹⁰¹ Having declared the death of the metaphysical concept of God, traditional in Christian thought, the logic of Cox's position really leaves us, it seems to me, not with a *deus absconditus* but with a 'no-god-at-all' nontheism. The word 'God' will still find a function in this secular, pragmatic situation, but only when it is 'reduced' to a word which reminds man of the seriousness with which he should approach life. Cox's position may only be internally consistent when he stops denying that God is another 'word' for a human ideal and allows that

man has become everything—the basis of the idea of a final norm as well as the source of the values and meaning which are judged by that norm. Cox may want to be a ‘death of God as absence’ theologian but the logic of his position really forces him into a much more radical position in which God becomes the postulate of an ideal by which man controls his value-giving decisions. God’s existence, then, belongs not to himself as a being but to his function as a postulate used by secular man.

To sum up this section, the ‘death of God as absence’ theology sees in contemporary secular culture the affirmation of the freedom and significance of man’s life. This affirmation challenges the traditional Christian picture of God, a concept derived from an unsatisfactory amalgam of Old Testament views with Greek philosophy, as one whose present actuality threatens man’s personal existence and denies it any true significance. The challenge is met by declaring that ‘God’ is ‘dead’ in the sense that he refuses to interfere in human affairs. He has put man in charge of life: he functions now only as the one who gives man the challenge and the confidence to exercise his freedom and authority over life. God thus declares to man his ‘absence’ so that man may fulfil his true destiny as created *in imagine Dei* by running the world by himself. But while this position may express a Christian understanding of the doctrines of creation and salvation by grace, it is not a completely satisfactory position. On the one hand, it is in danger of losing ‘God’ altogether and adopting in effect a Feuerbachian interpretation where talk about God is understood to be a disguised way of talking about the ideals of man and of man alone. Here man’s secular life achieves final significance at the cost of losing God completely. On the other hand, the ‘death of God as absence’ theology may fail in the end to affirm the significance of secular life by its emphasis on the function of God as the final judge. It may offer an apparent significance to life by dismissing God from the immediate stage of human affairs but deny it final significance by preserving in the wings a God who still poses a transcendent challenge and ultimate threat to human existence. The ‘death of God as absence’ theology, then, does not seem altogether to have solved the tension involved in a contemporary understanding of Christianity, the tension between the real significance of secular life and the real existence of God. This tension is not diminished when God is regarded eschatologically. The solution requires, as Bonhoeffer saw, an affirmation of God at the centre of life which is simultaneously an affirmation of the significance of that life as secular. We need a way of talking about life that is lived both ‘before God’ and at the same time ‘without God’. When Hamilton, in *The New Essence of Christianity*, suggests that we must understand God in terms of the suffering and humiliation of Jesus, then I think we may be on the right lines. A formal conceptual structure for such a view of God is provided by Hartshorne’s dipolar panentheism. We must now turn our attention, however, to the more radical ‘death of God as immanence’ theology which attempts to solve the tension in the ‘death of God as absence’ theology.

IV—THE 'DEATH OF GOD' AS IMMANENCE

The basis of this, the most radical of the 'death of God' positions, is the claim that 'God' no longer is to be regarded even as the judge or transcendent norm which finally gives value to or threatens human life. Man is regarded as not only the creator of values but also as the only judge of those values and their application. Man's autonomy is complete. There is nothing beyond man and mankind which judges man's use of his autonomy. Here we have a thorough and consistent exposition of Nietzsche's claim that 'God is dead' and that man has to fulfil his function in the universe. This position is expounded by Thomas J. J. Altizer and in the more recent publications of William Hamilton. What is initially puzzling about their thought is their claim that the 'death' of God is an 'event'. They consider that the freedom and maturity of secular man today can be affirmed only if we proclaim more than the 'death' of the traditional concept of God or the temporary absence of God. Altizer and Hamilton apparently accept the traditional picture of God as a true description of what God once was like. They claim that this God lived and has died—that he no longer exists and never will exist again. This 'death' is something which has 'occurred' as an event in which God may, I think, be said to have committed suicide so far as his traditional theistic nature is concerned. Irrevocably God stopped being 'God'. For man this means that now there is nothing outside himself—nor ever will be—to which or to whom he is accountable. God has 'killed' himself so that man can have no transcendent reference beyond his own humanity. The function of God as the ground of life is now to be found by men in man, regarded both individually and corporately. On the other hand, Altizer also sees the power of life with man now as the presence and activity of 'God'. Thus, paradoxically, we find in Altizer that the 'death' of God is declared to be an 'event' while 'God' is still described in terms of immanent activity.

Before we examine Altizer's view of God as both 'dead' and as immanently or incarnately active, we will consider Hamilton's later position. In *The New Essence of Christianity* he affirmed the 'death' of God as his absence or withdrawal.¹⁰² This view he now rejects in favour of a 'hard' radicalism which declares not only 'a loss of the idols, or of the God of theism' but also 'a real loss of real transcendence' which is an absolute 'loss of God'.¹⁰³ Hamilton claims, however, that his position is to be distinguished from that of the atheist in terms of their memories. The atheist holds that God not only does not now but also never did exist. Hamilton accepts that God was once the proper object of worship but claims that he is such no longer. God did exist in the past but now he has 'disappeared' permanently and will not return. While Hamilton declares that this disappearance is an 'event' and is properly to be described as a 'death', he also confesses that we cannot fix its occurrence at any one time. It may be regarded as a continuous act of divine incarnation or as decisively effected in the incarnation in Jesus. On the other hand, the event may be dated in man's realization of his autonomy in the nineteenth century or in man's experience at the present time. It seems to me that Hamilton here expresses fundamentally a thoroughly atheistic position. His universe is

essentially a 'god-less' or 'transcendent-less' one: Hamilton and the 'atheist' do not differ about the nature of this reality but only in the fact that the atheist says that this always was the case while Hamilton wants to remind us that man has not always recognized that it was the case. The fact that Hamilton does not forget that men once genuinely believed that there was a god and acted accordingly does not, it seems to me, show that he is not an atheist existentially as well as intellectually. As for the different times which Hamilton gives as dates for the death of God, these seem to me to mark different stages in man's recognition of the transcendentlessness of his world. The change is in man's understanding rather than in 'God's' nature. As for the function previously fulfilled by God, Hamilton holds that for the Christian the story of Jesus provides the point of orientation for life while the human community must provide the forgiveness and grace needed for life.¹⁰⁴ Hamilton thus affirms a world and a human life which is completely without God. He sees this as an affirmation of 'great liberation and joy' which makes possible the fulfilment of the Christian faith as the sole activity of man. At the same time that he proclaims that God is now no longer needed, Hamilton also declares that this situation may allow us 'to see that He is to be enjoyed and delighted in' and so brings us 'to stand before Him once again, delighting in His presence'.¹⁰⁵ That is, when man stands at the centre of a godless world, feels no need of God at all and is conscious of no activity by God, *then* he may find 'God'. It is an odd position and I do not pretend to understand the paradox. Perhaps we must wait a little longer for a thoroughly consistent and clear exposition by Hamilton of his position.

For Hamilton, Jesus, a fully human Jesus of Nazareth, provides the standard for the Christian attitude to life. The Christian clings to Jesus although he has no place for the activity of the Spirit of God. For Altizer, his fellow hard radical, the spirit of God is central while its historical expression in Jesus is no longer normative. Indeed, Altizer's position might be caricatured as a combination of a crudely literal and universalized understanding of 'the Word became flesh' and Hegelian dialectics! The background to Altizer's work is very varied. He has been greatly influenced by the work of Mircea Eliade in the history and phenomenology of religions and by his own studies of Eastern religions, especially the atheistic forms of Buddhism. In *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, which he understands to express a position that is at once 'the Gospel' and 'Christian' and 'atheistic', he claims that his analysis is based upon 'the Christian visions of Blake, Hegel and Nietzsche'.¹⁰⁶ We have already considered Nietzsche but we must look briefly at the other two before we proceed to examine Altizer's own position.

Since he writes on different levels of meaning, Blake is notoriously difficult to expound. In his poems, however, we find two claims that are important for Altizer's position. The first is that the God of traditional Christian theism is to be identified with Satan:

... Satan, making to himself Laws from his own identity,
Compell'd others to serve him in moral gratitude and submission,
Being call'd God, setting himself above all that is called God¹⁰⁷

and again:

... if he has not the religion of Jesus, he will have the religion of Satan. . . . Every religion that preaches Vengeance for Sin is the religion of the Enemy and the Avenger, and not of the Forgiver of Sin, and their God is Satan, named by the Divine Name.¹⁰⁸

The second is Blake's claim that it was to this Satanic God of traditional Christian religion that Jesus was crucified:

... Jesus died because He strove
Against the current of this Wheel: its name
Is Caiaphas, the dark Preacher of Death,
Of sin, of sorrow, and of punishment,
Opposing nature. It is Natural Religion.
But Jesus is the bright Preacher of life. . .¹⁰⁹

Later in the same poem Blake claims that man exists only because God loves and so 'dieth for Man, and giveth . . . Himself eternally for Man'. Such self-giving love may be 'Death' for the 'Divine Image' but it means life for man.¹¹⁰ In this obscure, tortured, visionary poetry Altizer sees a prophetic insight into what theology today must declare: the total rejection of the God of traditional theism and the total affirmation of the Gospel of Jesus, the Gospel of life made possible through the self-negating love of God.

Hegel, for a different reason, is hardly less difficult (some would say more difficult) to understand than Blake. He speaks, however, of the Absolute Spirit in terms of an immanent, historical process. Through the dialectical development of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, the Absolute Spirit of the Hegelian metaphysic comes to self-consciousness. Hegel speaks of this Spirit as 'God' and suggests that

God is God only so far as he knows himself: his self-knowledge is, further, his self-consciousness in man, and man's knowledge of God, which proceeds to man's self-knowledge in God. . . . God is, in point of content, the essential and actual spirit of nature and spirit, while in point of form he is, first of all, presented to consciousness as a mental representation.¹¹¹

For Hegel, the infinite God does not exist as a supreme being 'beyond' or 'outside' this universe; the infinite spirit is to be found by a comprehension of the 'spirits' of this world. Hegel sometimes puts his position by stating that 'God himself is dead'—but this 'death' is not the end, it is the way to a 'resurrection' where God is apprehended in the dialectical processes of history.¹¹² Altizer finds in the Hegelian dialectic a framework for his own understanding of the reality of God. Like Hegel he holds that the infinite, supreme being is 'dead': in his place, also like Hegel, he finds a dialectical process immanent in nature by which the Spirit or 'Word' creates progressively fuller expressions of life. Indeed, my biggest problem with Altizer is to understand why, in *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, he commits himself so completely to the Hegelian dialectic as, apparently, the absolutely necessary mode of the 'Word' or Spirit's kenotic and totally incarnate life.

For Altizer, the 'God' who is 'dead' is the God who exists as 'the transcendent enemy of the fullness and the passion of man's life in the world'.¹¹³ His death makes possible the affirmation of the liberation of humanity from the

threat of meaninglessness. The Christian life is centred, not on a transcendent, unchanging deity, but on the living 'Word' which continually reveals itself in new forms and acts as a 'dynamic presence' in the world.¹¹⁴ This 'Word' is the incarnate presence of 'Jesus'¹¹⁵ and is to be located today in the areas of authentic life outside the Church. (Altizer seems to believe that the 'life' found within the Churches is so 'dead' that if we look for the 'Word' within them, we will be forced to admit that now it is 'lifeless and silent'. This corresponds to Nietzsche's comment that the Churches are now 'the sepulchres of God' but I think that we may reasonably dissent from this wholesale condemnation of the Churches, even though we must also admit that many do not display any great sign of the presence of the Spirit of life.) So far Altizer's position seems reasonable: in effect he has rejected the static, unchanging God and replaced him by an on-going, dynamic, creating and fulfilling 'Spirit' or 'Word'. The problems arise when Altizer tries to explain this replacement not in terms of a correction in man's understanding of God's nature but as an actual event. He claims, that is, that the Word did once exist as a transcendent being of 'primordial holiness' but that 'in the Crucifixion the Word . . . finally died to its original form'.¹¹⁶ The Incarnation and Crucifixion are seen as a complex event in which God irrevocably lost or surrendered his transcendence so that now he is 'manifest only at the centre of the radical profane'.¹¹⁷ Whereas God has traditionally been regarded as 'a wholly self-sufficient, self-enclosed, and absolutely autonomous Being', Altizer holds that in the Incarnation God, in an act of complete love, 'has negated himself' so that 'his Word is now the opposite or the intrinsic otherness of his primordial Being'. In other words, God 'has ceased to exist in his original mode' of being¹¹⁸: from the time of his kenotic incarnation, God is to be found only in the spirit of Jesus in the world. Altizer thus sees the Incarnation as a temporal, total and irreversible act of God which changes both the character and the mode of his being. This is what I find difficult to accept. I can accept that God in a sense 'negates' himself in the Incarnation by explicitly defining his nature (for a definition is a restriction), but I do not see why God must cease to exist as a separate entity because of the Incarnation. When Altizer writes that 'God himself becomes fully incarnate in the "Word" or "Body" of Jesus and thus . . . ceases to be present or real as the God who alone is God',¹¹⁹ I suspect that he is expressing a crude and materialistic view of both God and the Incarnation.

Further problems arise when we notice that while the present, dynamic 'Word' is given the name 'Jesus', the historical Jesus of Nazareth does not provide any norm for discerning its contemporary form. Whatever brings energy and fulness to life today is identified with the 'Word' that is 'Jesus': there is no need to show that it preserves any 'semblance of his former visage'.¹²⁰ For Altizer, the Christian must be totally open to receive the 'Word' in whatever form it presents itself. Such openness is only possible by repudiating any view of the finality of past revelations. At this point the Hegelianism of Altizer's thought becomes very clear. He holds that the 'Word' actualizes itself according to a dialectical process in which it successively negates its own past forms. God is thus presented as a being who has a

history: he is not the 'impassive and immobile' God of traditional religion. He is one who 'acts in the world and history'.¹²¹ His historical activity, however, follows the dialectical process of the co-incidence of opposites so that in his history God 'negates himself, gradually but decisively annihilating his own original Totality'.¹²² Altizer illustrates this process in terms of a development in the concept of God: the Creator-God comes to be identified as an alien and utterly oppressive Satan and then this Satan-God is itself negated by the God incarnate in Jesus who frees the world from the threat of an alien transcendence by an act of complete self-negation.¹²³ For Altizer, this process is not just in man's concept of God, it corresponds to changes which occur in God himself. My problem with Altizer here is that I do not see why 'God' must obey the Hegelian dialectical process in order to be alive and to have a history. While the dialectical approach may provide a framework which helps us to understand how man's *concept* of God has developed, why have we to hold that God's own being must follow that process? If Altizer considers, with Hegel, that life, including the life of God, as well as thought, must follow a dialectical process, he must justify his view. In *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* he seems content to assume its truth and show that it fits his reading of the facts.

Altizer's view of the 'death' of God depends upon his commitment to the dialectical process. He claims that the 'death of God' is not the denial of a concept, the repudiation of a false view of God, but is the real death of a real God. The event is to be understood both cosmically and historically: it is the decisive point in the Spirit's irreversible 'descent . . . into flesh'.¹²⁴ Although no historical revelation can claim finality in the sense of precluding future developments, the event of the life and death of Jesus decisively declares the unaltering, self-negating character of God. God is the one who progressively annihilates himself by negating his transcendent and primordial power and by becoming increasingly united with man.¹²⁵ The 'Word' gradually becomes incarnate in every part of human life. This process is the death of the alienating, threatening, primordial, transcendent God who imprisons humanity in obedience to his will.¹²⁶ It is the affirmation of God as a life-giving, life-enhancing Spirit which now finds its reality only in incarnate forms. This view of God is a proclamation of 'the Gospel' as it liberates man from the threat of transcendent alienation. God is a Spirit who denies his transcendent power and seeks ever fuller incarnation in the historical and natural realm. Man is thus liberated to bring to consummation the activity of this Spirit within his world and within himself. Altizer stresses that the radical Christian lives by faith. He 'wagers' his life upon the view that the incarnate Christ is not 'the same yesterday, today, and forever', fixed in a single, past epiphany, but one whose 'contemporary presence' is found today wherever there is true life and energy.¹²⁷ Altizer thus calls the Christian to say 'Yes' to life in all its contemporary secular forms as the realm of Christ's incarnation for our day. *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* closes with these words:

Finally, radical faith calls us to give ourselves totally to the world, to affirm the fulness and the immediacy of the present moment as the life and the energy of Christ. Thus, ultimately the wager of the radical Christian is simply a wager

upon the full and actual presence of the Christ who is a totally incarnate love.¹²⁸

I find a great deal that is attractive in Altizer's 'death of God as immanence' theology (in spite of the oddities and looseness of its language¹²⁹), especially its emphasis on the present activity of God within the secular world. It seems to me to offer more hope of making sense of a Christian affirmation of the world than the 'death of God as absence' theology, which still leaves a transcendent, omnipotent, alien God hiding off-stage, but threatening to bring down the curtain whenever he chooses. Hamilton's 'death of God' as a total absence which can never be altered seems to me even less satisfactory. It is an atheistic humanism of a completely godless world. What puzzles me is why Altizer wants to call the 'death of God' an *event* in which God really died. Although his 'God' has died, he certainly 'won't lie down', but is very active in incarnate forms. In his own terms, Altizer is talking not about the *end* of God but about his '*metamorphosis*' from a transcendent into an immanent form. Even if we talk of God's 'self-annihilation', and so see the event as due to God's own choice, what Altizer is asserting, it seems to me, is that God has decisively declared that he is no longer the alien, transcendent God of theism but is an immanent Spirit of life. I find it hard to understand this in terms of a *real* change in God—that once he had this primordial character but now he has it no longer. I do not find it easy, that is, to accept that there has been an act or process of conversion in God. What would make sense to me is the claim that in Christ God has decisively revealed that his nature is—and always has been—one of self-denying love and life-giving activity. But in that case, the 'death' is not an event in God—except in so far as an act of decisive self-revelation is an act of self-restriction—but in man, by 'killing off' man's false concepts of God's nature. There is a tantalizing comment on p. 145 of *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* which suggests that my position might not, in the end, be so very different from Altizer's. Here he hints that the primordial threatening God is in fact a projection of our own sense of alienation. This would suggest that this God has only existed as a creation of our minds—and has been 'killed off' by God's self-revelation in the Incarnation. I'm not sure, however, if this passing comment should be taken to indicate Altizer's basic view of God. If it does indicate it, I think Altizer ought to use very different language when he speaks of God elsewhere, to show that this is his meaning.

V—THE CHRISTIAN SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 'DEATH OF GOD' THEOLOGY

In this already over-long paper I have been primarily concerned to suggest what is meant by the different theologians who announce today that 'God is dead'. Before we finish, however, I want briefly to suggest how the different positions covered by this slogan may be accepted by the Christian as opening the way to a coherent and adequate expression of his faith. In the first place the 'death of God as silence' theology indicates the fundamental problems that are inherent in the concept of God traditionally offered by Christian

theology. These linguistic criticisms are not wholly destructive. While the analyses reveal where the accepted conceptual framework of theism breaks down, they also indicate, in their attempts to determine the real meaning of theological statements, something of the complexity of those statements. We should not reject out of hand those interpretations of theological statements which see them as expressing historical standpoints, on-looks, perspectives or behaviour policies. These interpretations locate certain elements that are part of the complex structure of a statement about God. They are inadequate interpretations because they mistake the part they have discerned for the whole, but they are valuable interpretations because they help us to discover what is involved in talk about God. Thus the 'death of God as silence' theology, it seems to me, does not force theology into permanent silence about God. It suggests that certain traditional ways of talking about God are 'dead ends' but it also indicates certain paths that may be worth exploring further. As we explore these paths, so we may hope to discover a way to talk about God that is meaningful, is internally consistent, and corresponds to the reality of God for man.

The 'death of God as absence' theology indicates the clash between the secular affirmation of human life, which some Christians, at least, share, and the traditional descriptions of God in Christian thought. The living presence and activity of this 'God' seem to imply a fundamental negation of the significance of human life. God is all and man is truly nothing. The only way for the Christian to affirm the significance of contemporary secular life, according to this brand of 'death of God' theology, is by claiming that God is 'absent' from the world. His absence not only allows but forces men to assume responsibility for history. By claiming that God absents himself from the world, the Christian thus finds a way to affirm, at least temporarily, the significance of his secular life. The 'death of God as immanence' theology seeks to achieve a similar affirmation by locating God in the historical process. God has identified himself with man: he is not an alienating 'other' but a life-giving 'presence' within existence.

I believe that both these 'death of God' positions are correct in seeking to find a way to harmonize the secular affirmation of the significance of this life with Christian theism. I also believe that both of them in the end fail. The 'absence' theology fails because it leaves the transcendent, alienating God hiding in the wings, always liable to break back into life and posing an ultimate threat to the significance of the secular. The 'immanence' theology fails, as an expression of Christian theism, because it so fully identifies God with the contemporary forces of life that it denies him in effect any independent existence. The total no-god-at-all nontheism of Hamilton's later position seems to me to be the end-point of this type of 'death of God' theology. But if God is so totally rejected, what ground is left for affirming the real and ultimate significance of secular life?

The 'death of God' theologians may truly be called 'Christian atheists'. They are 'Christian' because they cling to a 'Christian' affirmation of life and a commitment to an ultimate reality revealed in Jesus. They are 'atheist' because they reject the theistic conceptuality that has traditionally been used

to express the Christian belief in God, a conceptuality which has been moulded by a metaphysical structure which is really alien to the Christian experience of God. This 'Christian atheism', however, is a highly unsatisfactory position to be in. What it points to is the need for a conceptuality which will both allow God to be truly God and yet will preserve the significance of secular life. I believe that Schubert Ogden has indicated where such a conceptuality may be found. In his paper in *Concilium* for June 1966 and in the leading essay in his volume *The Reality of God*, he suggests how the dipolar panentheist conceptuality, developed by Hartshorne, together with certain existentialist emphases, may meet our needs.¹³⁰ The combination of these two elements provides a way of talking about God that preserves both the identity and otherness of God and the significance of secular life. Unfortunately in this article I have no room to develop his answers nor to comment upon them. Another article would be needed to demonstrate the Christian position to which the 'death of God' theology points. In the meantime—and probably much more important—I refer you to Ogden's own material.

NOTES

¹ This is disputed by some modern theologians who have attempted to revive the ontological argument—see, for instance, C. Hartshorne, *The Logic of Perfection*, Open Court, Illinois 1962 and S. M. Ogden, *The Reality of God*, S.C.M., London 1967. I consider, however, that all the argument shows is that if God exists, then his existence is some kind of 'necessary' or 'non-contingent' existence. That is, the ontological 'argument' defines what we mean by 'God' but does not show that such a 'being' must exist.

² I am not asserting here that the universe does depend upon God. I am only claiming that if God does exist, then it will depend upon him. There is a possible alternative to this—namely, to say that the universe is not dependent. This alternative would imply that there never has been a God. Thus we must say either that God exists eternally—that he always has existed and always will—as Being-Itself (so far as it is meaningful to talk of existing 'always') or that God never did exist. I cannot see how any attempt to say that God did once exist and does so now no longer can be ontologically satisfactory. The contingency or internal necessity of the world must be taken radically seriously.

³ J. W. Montgomery, *The 'Is God Dead?' Controversy*, Zondervan, Michigan 1966, p. 9. Montgomery rejects two other titles, 'Theothanasia' and 'Theothanatopsis'!

⁴ Altizer and Hamilton dedicate their volume *Radical Theology and the Death of God* 'in memory of Paul Tillich'.

⁵ R. Bultmann refers to Jean Paul's *Siebenkäs* in his essay 'The Idea of God and Modern Man', in *Journal for Theology and the Church*, vol. 2, p. 83f. Ronald Gregor Smith gives a long extract from the piece in his *Secular Christianity*, Collins, London 1966, p. 161ff.

⁶ *The Portable Nietzsche*, translated and edited by W. Kaufmann, Viking, New York 1954, 95f.

⁷ P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, volume 1, Nisbet, London 1953, p. 210; cf. M. Buber, *Eclipse of God*, Harper, New York 1957, p. 65ff., where he discusses the view of existence in Heidegger and Sartre.

⁸ J.-P. Sartre, *Nausea*, Penguin Books, 1965, p. 124.

⁹ J.-P. Sartre, *Iron in the Soul*, Penguin Books, 1963, p. 349.

¹⁰ E. Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Penguin Books, 1955, p. 42f.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 87.

¹² A. Camus, *The Outsider*, Penguin Books, 1961, p. 72f., 114f.

¹³ A. Camus, *The Plague*, Penguin Books, 1960, p. 186, cf. p. 251f.; p. 112; p. 251.

¹⁴ cf. Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. 14f. Montgomery does not seem to see the fundamental difference between van Buren's position and that of Altizer and the later Hamilton.

¹⁵ cf. the articles on the 'death of God' theology in *Sobornost*, Series 5; No. 4, for Winter 1966.

¹⁶ Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 14, 2; in *ibid.*, I, 30, 3 he speaks of 'the mode of supereminence'.

¹⁷ cf. *ibid.*, I, 32–35; cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Qu. 13.

¹⁸ cf. Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, edited by A. Wolter, Nelson, London 1962, pp. 20–21.

¹⁹ cf. Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, edited by P. Boehner, Nelson, London 1957, pp. 106–112.

²⁰ This problem is much discussed in modern theology—see, for instance, Tillich's discussion of symbol.

²¹ cf. Kant's discussion of the 'antinomies' of Pure Reason in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by N. K. Smith, Macmillan, London 1958, p. 384ff.

²² cf. *ibid.*, p. 89f.; Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, translated by T. K. Abbott, Longmans, London 1909, p. 196, p. 214, p. 235.

²³ H. L. Mansel, *The Limits of Religious Thought*, Oxford 1858, p. 47; cf. p. 47ff.

²⁴ cf. *ibid.*, p. 141f.; p. 149f.; p. 229ff.; p. 259ff.

²⁵ S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, translated by D. F. Swenson, Princeton 1936, p. 37, p. 35.

²⁶ cf. R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, translated by J. W. Harvey, Oxford 1950, p. 25ff.

²⁷ L. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, translated by G. Eliot, Harper, New York 1957, p. 31.

²⁸ P. van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, S.C.M., London 1963, p. 103.

²⁹ J. Wisdom, 'Gods', reprinted in *Logic and Language*, First Series, edited by A. G. N. Flew, Blackwell, Oxford 1955; A. G. N. Flew *et al.*, 'Theology and Falsification', reprinted in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, edited by A. Flew and A. MacIntyre, S.C.M., London 1955.

³⁰ R. B. Braithwaite, 'An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief', reprinted in J. Hick, *The Existence of God*, Macmillan, New York 1964, p. 235.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 236, p. 238.

³² Braithwaite's paper has also been reprinted, together with certain criticisms of it, in *Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy*, edited by I. T. Ramsey, S.C.M., London 1966. Here Braithwaite replies to his critics and admits that the 'empiricist' approach in his paper leads to certain inadequacies in the interpretation of faith-statements.

³³ cf. van Buren, *op. cit.*, p. 14ff.

³⁴ cf. *ibid.*, p. 1f., p. 4, p. 193ff.

³⁵ cf. *ibid.*, p. 97ff.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 104; cf. p. 170.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 156; cf. p. 199.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 145, p. 147.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 199.

⁴⁰ cf. Genesis 1:28; 2:19f.—this interpretation depends upon the significance of the 'naming' activity in this passage.

⁴¹ D. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, S.C.M., London 1959, p. 238f.

⁴² cf. D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, S.C.M., London 1959, p. 73, p. 87, p. 92.

⁴³ D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Fontana, London 1959, p. 44, letter dated 21 November 1943.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 122, letter dated 16 July 1944; cf. p. 106f., letter dated 8 June 1944.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 104, letter dated 25 May 1944.

⁴⁷ R. Gregor Smith, *op. cit.*, refers to it on p. 44.

⁴⁸ Buber, *op. cit.*, p. 66, p. 68, p. 23.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵⁰ cf. *ibid.*, p. 129.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² Gabriel Vahanian, *The Death of God: The Culture of our Post-Christian Era*, Braziller, New York 1961; *Wait without Idols*, Braziller, New York 1964.

⁵³ cf. Vahanian, *Wait without Idols*, p. 46.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 233.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 31f.

⁵⁶ Vahanian, *The Death of God*, p. 231.

⁵⁷ K. Barth, *The Faith of the Church*, translated with an introduction by G. Vahanian, Fontana, London 1960, p. 12f.

⁵⁸ G. Vahanian, 'Swallowed Up by Godlessness', printed in *The Christian Century*, vol. lxxxii, p. 1506—for 8 December 1965.

⁵⁹ cf. P. Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, S.C.M., London 1949, p. 21.

⁶⁰ cf. William Hamilton, *The New Essence of Christianity*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1966, p. 34ff.

⁶¹ cf. *ibid.*, p. 42ff.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 53f.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 56f.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 61ff.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 103.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 64.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 64; cf. p. 85ff.

⁶⁸ I am not at all happy with Hamilton's choice of terms. He does not really mean 'death'—for 'absence' or 'withdrawal' are very different from death. Further, I am not happy about

the term 'withdrawal', for it suggests that once God was present and now is not. Although this may fit in with Hamilton's statements about a possible future return of God (cf. p. 62), I would suspect that the truth is more likely to be that God is 'absent' and always has been. The 'withdrawal' is not in God but in man's experience of God. In earlier times man thought that God was present but now he recognizes that he is not present. It probably makes more sense to say that man misunderstood the situation in earlier times rather than that God has changed. On the other hand, perhaps we should admit that if God is considered to act according to personal grace, he might come in and withdraw according to man's need. The problem with this view is that it is hard to reconcile with the enormity of evil in the world—and it is this fact of evil that leads Hamilton to speak of the 'absence' of God.

⁶⁹ J. A. T. Robinson, 'Can a Truly Contemporary Person not be an Atheist?', printed in *The New Reformation?*, S.C.M., London 1965; on p. 14 Robinson calls Hamilton's *New Essence of Christianity* a 'seminal book'.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 115, p. 118.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 115, p. 119.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 120.

⁷³ *cf. ibid.*, p. 120ff.

⁷⁴ R. Gregor Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁷⁵ *cf. ibid.*, p. 122f.

⁷⁶ *cf. ibid.*, p. 159.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 166; *cf.* p. 159–166.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 192; *cf.* p. 136, p. 122ff.

⁷⁹ *cf. ibid.*, p. 135ff.

⁸⁰ *cf. ibid.*, p. 53–8.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 156.

⁸² *cf. ibid.*, p. 93, p. 130.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 202ff.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 167—here Gregor Smith is talking about Hamilton and Altizer.

⁸⁵ Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, S.C.M., London 1966, p. 20; *cf.* p. 20ff.

⁸⁶ *cf. ibid.*

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸⁸ *cf. ibid.*, p. 39ff.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 78.

⁹⁰ E. L. Mascall, *The Christian Universe*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1966, p. 49f.

⁹¹ *cf.* Harvey Cox, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–84. Here one of the ambiguities of *The Secular City* appears. Earlier (*cf.* p. 4) Cox has argued that we must interpret our Christianity in terms of our secular situation. At that point, it seems that contemporary secularization determines our understanding of the Gospel. Here, however, it seems that Cox allows that the Gospel is determinative and, on the basis of the Gospel, judges that contemporary secularization is a true expression of the Gospel. The ambiguity lies in the fact that Cox never makes it clear to his readers (nor possibly to himself?) whether the Gospel is in the end interpreted by canons provided by secular culture or whether the Gospel provides canons by which we judge the validity of secular culture.

⁹² *cf. ibid.*, p. 74.

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 245; *cf.* p. 248.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 255.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 254.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 256.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 257–9.

⁹⁸ *cf. ibid.*, p. 260ff.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 260.

¹⁰⁰ *cf. ibid.*, p. 79ff.

¹⁰¹ *cf. ibid.*, p. 245ff, p. 257ff, p. 265ff.

¹⁰² *cf.* Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁰³ W. Hamilton, 'The Shape of a Radical Theology', in *The Christian Century*, xxxii, 6 October 1965.

¹⁰⁴ *cf.* W. Hamilton, 'Thursday's Child: The Theologian Today and Tomorrow', printed in Altizer and Hamilton, *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis 1966; and Hamilton's talk on the BBC Third Programme on 5 October 1966.

¹⁰⁵ Hamilton, 'The Death of God Theology', printed in Altizer and Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas J. J. Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, Westminster, Philadelphia 1966, p. 23.

¹⁰⁷ William Blake, 'Milton', f. 9.

¹⁰⁸ William Blake, 'Jerusalem', f. 52.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, f. 77.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, f. 96.

¹¹¹ Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, translated by W. Wallace, Oxford 1894, p. 176.

¹¹³ cf. W. Kaufmann, *Hegel, Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1966, p. 162, p. 99f.

¹¹⁴ Altizer, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 18.

¹¹⁶ cf. *ibid.*, p. 25.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 54.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 51.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 67, p. 69.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 73.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 74.

¹²² *ibid.*, p. 80, p. 89.

¹²³ *ibid.*, p. 89.

¹²⁴ cf. *ibid.*, pp. 92–101.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 103.

¹²⁶ cf. *ibid.*, p. 104ff.

¹²⁷ cf. *ibid.*, pp. 113–127.

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 137f.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 157.

¹³⁰ cf. the review of Altizer's book by Robert McAfee Brown in *Theology Today*, vol. xxiii, July 1966.

¹³¹ S. M. Ogden, 'The Christian Proclamation of God to Men of the So-called "Atheistic Age"', in *Concilium*, vol. 6, June 1966; S. M. Ogden, *The Reality of God*, S.C.M., London 1967.

ADDITIONAL NOTE:

Dorothee Sölle's *Christ the Representative, An Essay in Theology after the 'Death of God'* (S.C.M., London, 1967) appeared in Britain after this article had been written. Although it contains a number of illuminating insights, the book is not easy to understand because of certain faults in its composition. In the first place, there seem to be gaps in the argument as presented. For instance, while man's nature is defined in terms of being replaceable but not replaceable, it is not made clear why man needs an *actual* representative in order to be fully personal. Thus there is a gap between the potential representability which is the essence of man's nature (as defined in Part One of the book) and the need for the actual representative function of Christ (as described in Part Three) which Sölle herself does not bridge. The intervening section on the theological history of the notion of representation is interesting in its own right but it does not complete the argument. Secondly, the fundamental notion of 'representation' itself seems to be used in different ways—as God's 'representative' Christ plays God's rôle for him in the world but as man's 'representative' Christ provides the image with which man can come to identify himself. The notion of 'identity' also is not at all clear although apparently of major significance for the essay. Thirdly, Sölle makes statements, especially when talking about God, which appear to be meaningful until we try to pin down their precise meaning. The more they are analysed, the more elusive and obscure they become. It is, admittedly, not really fair to take statements out of their context, but this point can be illustrated by asking what is the 'cash-value' of "Ever since Jesus claimed this once enthroned God for the everyday life of ordinary people, God has become indistinguishable. This representative identification with God, carried through by Christ provisionally and as forerunner, is the transcendental possibility of love" (p. 138) or of "His [*sc.* Christ's] identification with God takes place, so to speak, behind the ontological problem of God's being (a problem clearly insoluble with the means available to our ontology), and makes that problem anachronistic, since God is present in Christ's playing of his part, though no longer as the directly experienced God" (p. 140f.). These and other statements may express something very important but greater clarity would be most welcome. This fault Sölle shares with too many contemporary radical theologians—as also the next fault, that of failing on occasions to indicate reasons for her fundamental assertions. It may, for instance, be correct that "The fact that Christ identified himself with God is the only possible ground for believing in God today" (p. 139f.) but Sölle would be more likely to convince her readers if she offered reasons to support her claim. Finally, at times she seems to be so fascinated with her basic 'model' of representation that she is unable to see where it does and it does not fit the reality she is describing. Thus it sometimes appears that she wants to make the model fit in all respects, even though this leads to difficulties. This is to misunderstand the function of an illuminating model. While, then, Sölle's book contains a number of valuable points and should not be ignored, it is a pity that it is not the result of considerably clearer and tighter thinking. Even though it is called an 'essay' and so does not pretend to completeness, its present form leaves too many puzzles to be solved by its readers.

With hesitations appropriate to these criticisms, I think that Sölle's thesis is as follows (most of the clues being found on p. 131ff.): The essential characteristic of significant life as a person is that of being replaceable but not replaceable. One person can 'represent' another person but he can never completely replace him in the way that one sparking-plug can replace another sparking-plug in the engine of my car. There is always something unique

and irreplaceable about a person that is not true of a material object. It is this characteristic which distinguishes meaningful life from non-meaningful existence. Now, contemporary man finds himself in a situation where God is not immediately given. The present world is literally a godless world. But, for Sölle, if there is ultimately no god, it will follow that all life is a meaningless existence and there are no such things as persons but only replaceable objects. In that case, man must see that he is only another replaceable part in the machine of the universe. The human "longing for meaning" for our individual life as persons thus "forces us" to find something to represent 'God' so that the meaningfulness of life may still be maintained. Sölle admits that this is a "non-logical conclusion". (This is a point which needs much more explication than she offers. For one thing, the fact that man is able to ask about the significance of life suggests that whether there is a God or not, man in some way transcends the causal nexus to which he belongs. The possibility of meaningfulness does not necessarily require a transcendent 'god' but only an ability in man to transcend his situation—and this is what we are given in man's question whether there is meaning.) Sölle, moreover, moves from this 'non-logical' demand for a representative of God to assert that this is the function fulfilled by Christ. Christ represents God in and to a world where God is absent and so preserves the possibility and meaningfulness of personal life. At the same time, Christ acts as the representative of man with whom men can identify themselves and so hope to share in the meaningful life displayed by him. Since "a new kind of existence in the world" has appeared in Christ (p. 133), men cannot be without hope that meaningful life is a real possibility for them also.

Here again the argument needs further explication. If God is absent from the world, how can he be represented in it? The religious situation does not seem to be like that of an absentee ruler who needs a vice-regent to exercise his authority but rather like that where somebody today takes it upon himself to tell us what King Arthur would say about present-day British policies if he were present. The fact of the matter is, however, that King Arthur is not alive, so far as earthly policies are concerned, nor can we be certain that such a person ever did live. He may even be a wholly fictitious character. Thus we cannot check whether the contemporary spokesman for King Arthur is correctly expressing his views—whereas we can, presumably, hope to be able to appeal from his vice-regent to the ruler himself. Thus when Sölle claims that Christ represents God but does not replace God and is dependent on God's acceptance of this representation, we have no way of checking these claims in our situation in a world where 'God' is not directly given at all. If the claim that Christ is God's representative can be confirmed in any way (cf. p. 143ff. where Sölle seems to hint that the past event of the Resurrection and present experiences of salvation may offer confirmation), then God is not as totally absent as we were first led to think for there are some things in our world which indicate his present activity. This, I fear, suggests that Sölle's position, while a stimulating response to the 'death of God' situation, is one that can never be confirmed because of the way it understands that situation. If it cannot be confirmed by reasons and evidence, then it can only be entertained by faith—and by a faith which is absolutely unsupported by antecedent arguments. This may be the position that confronts us, but it is not an easily acceptable one. It involves asserting that God exists and that Christ is his representative although nothing in the godless world supports either claim. The claim that there is value or meaning in life is thus something imposed on life by faith and has no grounds outside our interest in having such a faith because we want our lives to be meaningful. If others are not attracted to risk their lives on such an arbitrary faith, (cf. p. 144), we cannot be very surprised. In any case, the fact that Sölle sees meaning in life only if there is a God may itself indicate that, in spite of the 'death of God' experience, there are aspects of life which do point to a 'God'. Natural theology may not be so impossible after all and the world may not be so completely 'godless'.

Since it is difficult to see what Sölle means by 'God', it is also difficult to appreciate what she understands by the 'death of God'. From many of her statements it appears that 'God' is the name of a supernatural person who can be described in similar ways to any human person. He is described as not permitting us to see himself (p. 132), as 'absent', as not intervening to establish his cause, as leaving people in the lurch (p. 137), as having changed and as needing actors to take his part (p. 140). Such descriptions could easily be applied to some absentee feudal monarch: does Sölle intend us to have such an anthropomorphic view of God? If these descriptions of God are to be regarded as metaphorical descriptions, we need some indications of the kind of reality to which they are applied. If Christ 'represents' God, we will only appreciate his function if we know who or what is the 'God' he 'represents'. Sölle's apparent attempt to declare this an insoluble question (cf. p. 140f.) rules out the meaningfulness of any talk about God since it declares in effect that we do not know what that talk is about. In spite of the anthropomorphic way of talking about 'God', the concept of 'God' sometimes seems to be understood by Sölle as equivalent to the 'unconditionality' which belongs to certain actions and values in this life—or, perhaps, to the ground of this unconditionality (cf. p. 127ff. and also p. 10 where God is "the absolute" and p. 147 where the 'identity' of God is connected with the recognition of man's individual irreplaceability). The highly personal language used of God, however, suggests that the ground of unconditionality is some kind of personal being (cf. the statements on p. 149).

As for the description 'the death of God', this seems to be applied to three distinct situa-

tions. In the first place, it is a "theological expression" for a contemporary "psychosocial condition" in which man experiences himself as "insecure and alone". This is in contrast to the "naive, undisturbed ideological confidence" of both theism and atheism. It is a state of basic "uncertainty" where man can neither affirm nor deny the purposefulness of life (*cf.* p. 11f.). At this level the phrase 'death of God' refers to man's self-awareness of being radically unsure, a condition well described in existentialist literature. Sölle further suggests that this existential uncertainty "makes impossible . . . the leap into faith." This, however, would seem to contradict her thesis about the significance of Christ as the Representative. If the leap of faith is impossible for contemporary man, then it is useless to present Christ as God's representative to him for he will be unable to make the act of faith necessary for accepting Christ as such. The only remaining possibility for the significance of Christ for contemporary man is to hold that Christ the Representative can 'grasp' the man and so 'draw' him into faith apart from any willing choice. In this case, man's existential self-awareness is not a complete apprehension of his situation and God (or God's power) is active in the world—but both of these propositions seem to be denied by Sölle.

The existential view of the 'death of God', where 'God' refers to the possibility of certainty in life, leads to the second view of the situation which is similar to the 'death of God as absence' theology. Here it is claimed that God can no longer be experienced "as present and immediate", he "no longer presents himself to us directly" but has "left us" and "does not permit us to see himself" (p. 132). Man has now taken over what previously were regarded as the functions of God (*cf.* p. 131f.). Although Sölle claims that this means that "God has changed", it is not clear whether the situation is due to God's initiative or to man's activity. When we are told that "God does not permit us to see himself", it appears that the change is due to God. This seems to be Sölle's main way of understanding the situation: God's 'absence' is due to God's absenting himself (*cf.* p. 137ff). Whereas Bonhoeffer, for instance, attributes this withdrawal to the needs of man's maturity. Sölle leaves this act of God as an unexplained fact. In another passage, however, Sölle seems to suggest that the loss of God's immediacy is due to the development of man's "critical consciousness" (p. 140). Here, then, it is not so much that God has withdrawn as that man has made himself by his intellectual development increasingly unable to perceive God's presence. (This is the same kind of confusion as is found in Buber's understanding of the 'eclipse of God'.) Sölle does not make any definite predictions about the future but she is not committed to the view that God's withdrawal is permanent. On the contrary, she leaves open the very real possibility that one day the "living" but "inactive" God (p. 174) will be fully present in his fulfilled Kingdom (p. 147f.). This is what Christ makes possible as God's representative for, as such, his position is essentially 'provisional'—he allows God "time to appear" (p. 137). Unfortunately, Sölle links all this with God's coming to "identity", and I am not sure what this means, although it is obviously a basic concept for her.

The fact that she talks of God's appearing and not of his re-appearing (p. 137) makes it possible that God's attaining identity is to be linked with the third view of the 'death of God' which can be isolated in the book. This is a kind of 'death of God as immanence' position—though Sölle has reservations about the notion of 'immanence'. Her statements on p. 147f indicate that she is concerned to preserve a differentiation of God from the world and history. The notion of God's immanence, however, does not mean that God cannot be distinguished from the processes in which he is present, and so it does not seem unfair to use the term to describe the way in which Sölle sometimes speaks of the receptive presence of God in the world. Thus she states that "God suffers by reason of his unrealized, or only partly realized, existence in the world. . . . He has become dependent; he has mediated himself into the world" (p. 149) and again "In Christ God himself left the immediacy of heaven, abandoned the security of home, for ever. He mediated himself, went out from himself into unrecognizability, into non-differentiation" where he is powerless (p. 141). Such statements as these are not easy to understand, but they indicate that at times Sölle does not see the 'death of God' as an absence but as a yet unfulfilled involvement in the world and history. If there is any 'absence', it is God's absence from heaven and power and fulfilment (his attaining identity?)—but in the world and history God is very much present. This interpretation of the 'death of God' makes sense of Sölle's claim that while Christ is God's representative, the term 'Christ' is a "cipher" for the "new being" and is not to be exclusively connected with the Christ of the Christian Church (*cf.* p. 135, 148). The final sentences of the book, however, speak of God's presence in the world as something in which he is completely passive, receiving all that man inflicts and making no positive effort to bring about the "new being": "When the time was fulfilled, God had done something for us for long enough. He put himself at risk, made himself dependent upon us, identified himself with the non-identical. From now on, it is high time for us to do something for him." (p. 152). This is to treat God as a totally inactive receptor. Such a being may offer some kind of significance to personal actions by experiencing them but apparently can provide no purposeful power and direction to life. Sölle's immanent God is certainly not the dynamic, creative force we find in Hegel and Altizer. If this is all that 'God' is, we may well ask if Sölle's 'God' has stopped being 'God'—or ever really was 'God'.

Sölle is not at all clear about the time of the 'death of God'—but since she is also not clear about the meaning of the 'death of God', this may be expected. At one point, she says

that the 'death of God' is an event which has occurred in "the last two centuries of European history" (p. 10), and later she connects the event with the development of thought and technology since the Enlightenment (p. 130f.). This harmonises with the psychological view of the 'death of God' but it does not so easily fit in with Christ's action in putting "himself in the place of God" (p. 143). If God were not then "absent", there would be no need for such presumptuous behaviour. The place of Christ as the representative of an absent God seems to require an earlier date for the event than the Enlightenment. This is given on p. 137 where Christ is described as acting for God because God fails to act for himself. This implies that God is already 'dead' in the time of Christ. Where the 'death of God' is understood as a type of receptive presence, Sölle again generally gives the time of Christ as the crucial date. It is "from the time of the man Jesus of Nazareth" that man has realised that God is not to be identified with a heavenly monarch (p. 138). Again, "only since Christ has God become dependent on us" (p. 151)—a view which suggests that the 'death' is primarily a change in God and not just in man's awareness of God. On the other hand, what is said about God's coming to identity suggests that the 'death of God' describes a situation that has always been the case, even if it has not always been recognised by man (*cf.* p. 147).

Christ the Representative is by no means a clear and easy book but it does attempt to relate Christian belief, centred in Jesus Christ, to the existential experience of contemporary men. It fundamentally fails because it does not show why contemporary men should pay any attention to Christ as the "representative" of the non-experienced God. If the claim of Christ to be the 'representative' of God can be upheld, then a new possibility of self-understanding is opened up for contemporary men. Unfortunately, in spite of the Barthian confidence in the self-authenticating power of the Gospel as proclaimed, I do not think that it will be enough simply to declare to contemporary man that the God he cannot find directly in his experience is to be found mediated in Christ. Man wants to know how the unknowable God, of whose very existence he is uncertain, can be known to be represented in Christ. If radical uncertainty is his basic characteristic, he is not likely to risk himself totally in faith to the bare claim that Christ is God's representative. Dorothee Sölle may be convinced that "metaphysics makes no sense to the secular intelligence" (publisher's blurb on the cover of the book). I suspect that this Barthian and Positivist conviction is quite mistaken and that only on the basis of some kind of meaningful metaphysics will contemporary, secular man be able to hear the challenge of the Christian Gospel.

JOHN WESLEY'S FIRST MARRIAGE

Frank Baker

TO those familiar with the story of John Wesley's frustrated courtship of Grace Murray and his rebound into the jealous arms of Mrs Mary Vazeille the title may sound a trifle odd. 'But Wesley was married only once', they will say. 'What is the man talking about? Surely not about Grace Murray!' That, however, is the case. The fascinating book which Professor Augustin Leger entitled 'Wesley's Last Love' could more correctly have been entitled 'Wesley's First Marriage'. In this lecture I am not attempting to psycho-analyse either Grace Murray or John Wesley, nor even to recount in minute detail the tortured twistings of their strange love affair. Rather I am trying to throw light on the forgotten marriage laws of Wesley's England, and the way in which he became entangled in them. It is a study of Wesley's first marriage as a legal contract rather than as a personal relationship.

An understanding of Wesley's relationships with Grace Murray and his rival John Bennet is impossible without ridding ourselves imaginatively not only of twentieth-century social customs but of twentieth-century laws. We have become accustomed to a legal system which makes divorce easier and marriage harder than they were during the first half-century of Wesley's life. The line of demarcation in English marriage law is 1754, when Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act came into operation. This 'introduced for the first time the principle that marriage was a civil contract in which the State as well as the Church was concerned'. Previously marriage law was an ecclesiastical jungle into which only the bravest dare venture at peril of their sanity as well as their fortune.

The curious may follow, in the pages of that great ecclesiastical jurist—and Wesley's opponent—Bishop Edmund Gibson, how in 1541 King Henry VIII secured the legalization of marriages celebrated in the Church of England and consummated, even though there existed a previous contract of marriage, so long as this had not been consummated. This was a minor aspect of the severage of the umbilical cord which joined the Church of England to mother Rome, though Roman law remained the happy hunting ground for legal precedents. Gibson's *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani* also shows how seven years later this Act was repealed in order to safeguard such unconsummated contracts of marriage, or 'spousals'. 'The King's Ecclesiastical Judge' was empowered to try all contested cases, and where the existence of a contract was proved 'to give sentence for matrimony, commanding solemnization, cohabitation, consummation and tractation [i.e. treatment], as becometh man and wife to have'. Refusal to comply with his order was punishable by excommunication and permanent imprisonment. A further Act of 1603 made bigamy a capital felony, and insisted that private spousals or marriage con-

tracts were true marriages, even though they did not have the full weight of marriages duly solemnized in the Church.² Such private marriages remained legal and binding until 1754.

It is necessary to distinguish between a private *promise* of marriage and the private marriage itself. Writing of marriage contracts in his *Ecclesiastical Law*, Richard Burn put the matter thus: 'Spousals *de futuro* are a mutual promise or covenant of marriage to be had afterwards; as when the man saith to the woman, I will take thee to my wife, and she then answereth, I will take thee to my husband. Spousals *de praesenti* are a mutual promise or contract of present matrimony; as when the man doth say to the woman, I do take thee to my wife, and she then answereth, I do take thee to my husband.'³

Like Gibson, Burn urged that contracts of marriage ought to be undertaken before witnesses and in the presence of a congregation. Nevertheless, though ecclesiastically irregular, a marriage contract made in words of the present tense was until 1754 a legal marriage, with or without a written agreement, with or without witnesses, with or without a religious ceremony, with or without consummation. Even though it was somewhat simpler to nullify a marriage unaccompanied by these features, especially consummation, the essential element was the declaration of the two contracting parties. In 1749 John Wesley entered into such 'spousals *de praesenti*' with Grace Murray, so that she thus became his legal wife, technically subject to all other matrimonial procedures and duties under pain of death.

Wesley realized the legal ramifications of what he was doing on this occasion far more clearly than the vast majority of his contemporaries, let alone the post-1754 general reader. Especially was this true because he had been vicariously dragged through the tangled undergrowth of English marriage law as a young Oxford tutor many years before he met Grace Murray. He had served as intermediary in a dispute which to some extent foreshadowed the circumstances of his own tragic experience, and whose outcome undoubtedly furnished one of the reasons why he was content to leave his own lawful wife in the arms of another. After a brief introductory glance at Wesley's own first marriage, we will return to it after studying this earlier incident which gives it much fuller significance, yet has so far remained unknown to his biographers.

* * * *

Twice-widowed Grace Murray, the 32-year-old housekeeper at Wesley's headquarters in Newcastle, engaged in a remarkable triangular dance with him and one of his preachers, John Bennet, linking hands first with one and then with the other until the spectators grow dizzy. In August 1748 Wesley lay ill in the Newcastle Orphan House, and his enforced leisure gave him more appreciative eyes for his housekeeper, who also served as his nurse. About 12 August he spoke the first tentative words: 'If ever I marry, I think you will be the person.' Shortly afterwards he proposed to her 'more directly', and she gave him a 'voluntary and express promise' of marriage. This was a contract *de futuro*.⁴

Less than a month later, on 7 September, Grace Murray similarly promised herself to John Bennet, to whose enquiry 'Is there not a contract between you and Mr Wesley?' she answered, 'There is not.' This she did 'partly out of love to him [i.e. Bennet], partly out of fear of exposing' Wesley. To their request for his blessing Wesley returned 'a mild answer, . . . supposing they were married already'. In fact this was yet another contract *de futuro*.⁵ The following spring and summer Grace Murray accompanied Wesley on his biennial preaching tour around Ireland, both as 'servant and friend' and as 'a fellow-labourer in the Gospel'. During this time she exchanged no correspondence with John Bennet, and his name so seldom cropped up in their conversation that Wesley was convinced that no obstacle remained to his renewed and deepened affection. In Dublin, about the middle of July 1749, they took a step from which in his mind at least there was no drawing back: 'The more we convers'd together, the more I lov'd her; &, before I return'd from Ireland, we contracted by a Contract *de praesenti*.' Whether or not they privately used a part of the 'Form of solemnization of matrimony' in the *Book of Common Prayer*—and this remains at least possible—Wesley and Grace Murray alike repeated a formula in words of the present tense signifying that henceforth they were man and wife, probably the words, 'I take thee to my wedded wife' (or 'husband').⁶

Hardly had Grace Murray set foot on English soil, however, before a passing fit of jealousy caused by gossip about her newly-espoused husband prompted her to write to Bennet. He renewed his pursuit of her to such good effect that on 2 September she completely ignored her Dublin contract, which in fact constituted a legal marriage, and said, 'I *will* marry John Bennet'—the 'will' implying futurity rather than insistence. This took place, strangely enough, in Wesley's home town of Epworth, and apparently with his acquiescence, for Bennet had persuaded him that Grace wanted to renounce her employer in favour of another of his lay employees. On the face of it this seemed a more suitable match, and Bennet claimed that Grace was much more deeply in love with him than with Wesley. It seems certain that Wesley already knew from a study of the standard work on marriage contracts, Henry Swinburne's *Treatise of Spousals*, that a contract *de praesenti* could in fact be dissolved by mutual agreement, provided that sexual intercourse had not taken place.⁷

The following day, however, Grace herself told Wesley that she loved him better than Bennet, but was afraid that Bennet might 'run mad' if she didn't marry him. In the light of this revelation Wesley pondered the advisability of pressing his legal rights, and her legal duty. After three days of hesitation, on 6 September he urged her to make up her mind. She replied, 'I am determin'd by Conscience, as well as Inclination, to live & die with *you*.' Wesley nevertheless gave her time for still further consideration. Then on 21 September they solemnly renewed their Dublin contract *de praesenti*, this time in the presence of a witness, another of his preachers, Christopher Hopper. Wesley rode off contentedly, assured that there could now be no possible hitch; they were legally married, in fact twice legally married, even though as yet there had been no church ceremony and no consummation.⁸

Wesley had reckoned without a strange series of misunderstandings and manœuvrings which culminated two weeks later, on 3 October 1749, in the solemnization of Grace Murray's marriage to John Bennet. The consummation of John Wesley's first marriage was frustrated alike by John Bennet's near-blind frenzy of desire, by Grace Murray's vacillation and her vagueness about her true legal standing, by Charles Wesley's impetuous fears for Methodism, and by John Wesley's deliberate sacrifice of dreams of domesticity to the claims of his apostolic ministry. Wesley knew without any shadow of doubt (as Grace Murray possibly did not) that in the eyes of the law they had been married ever since their first contract *de praesenti* in July, particularly as two months later it had been confirmed before a witness, and thus made easily susceptible of proof. There would have been little difficulty in overthrowing her union with John Bennet as bigamous. Experience had already taught him, however, to what extended heartache and frustration such matrimonial litigation might lead. This knowledge reinforced the urges of Christian charity and the desire to protect the good name of Methodism, and so for the third time he was content to let her go.⁹

* * * *

It was through one of the least-known members of the 'Holy Club' that Wesley had been introduced to a similar tragic matrimonial entanglement in 1731. One of his Oxford notebooks summarized the important events of that year, including the following cryptic note: 'July 29. Mr. B. married Mr. G.'s wife.'¹⁰ 'Mr. B.' was John Boyce, son of Sir John Boyce, three times Mayor of Oxford. He had matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, in July 1727, aged 16, and became one of Charles Wesley's pupils, graduating in 1731. While still an undergraduate he had fallen in love with Margaret Hudson, a girl of his own age, the only daughter and heiress of Dr John Hudson, late Librarian of the Bodleian. Her twice-married, twice-widowed mother, Mrs Hall, strongly disapproved of their courtship, and the couple had not seen each other for sixteen months when Mrs Hall and Sir John Boyce suddenly brought them together. Less than a week later, on 29 July 1731, they were married in the parish church at Cowley by Fifield Allen of Christ Church.¹¹

Mrs Hall and her daughter lived at Eynsham, and the 'Mr. G.' of Wesley's note was their vicar, the Rev. John Goole. At the time of the wedding he was away in Oxford. On his return he at first refused to believe the shattering news, for he was himself espoused to the girl by a contract *de praesenti*. When the 40-year-old widower had first 'addressed himself' to Margaret Hudson, aged 18, at Eastertime 1730, she first blew hot, then cold. A year later, however, she welcomed his advances, and although they agreed to defer a public ceremony until she was 21, on 10 June 1731 they entered into a 'most binding and sacred engagement', in which they used the office of Matrimony in the *Book of Common Prayer*. At the time, however, neither of them realized that this contract, made in words of the present tense, did in fact constitute a valid marriage, although the word 'spouse' was used between them.¹²

Once convinced that his betrothed had indeed married Boyce, Goole complained in writing to her mother, and on 15 September served a writ on Boyce and his bride, suing them for damages of £3,000. This may well have hastened the ailing Mrs Hall's death shortly afterwards. In November 1731 the Court of Common Pleas awarded him £200 damages, the cost of the expensive trousseau which he had bought.¹³

Meantime Goole's attention had been directed to Henry Swinburne's *Treatise of Spousals*, and he realized that his case was far stronger than he had originally thought. Even a hasty glance at the preface would convince him of this:

There is no difference in substance betwixt *spousals de praesenti* (which make up a principal part of this book) and matrimony; only the publick office, and the greater solemnity of the act, together with the benediction of the minister, are by law requisite to compleat the matrimony, before it be capable of those legal effects of dower and legitimation of issue. But *in foro conscientiae* [before the tribunal of conscience] they are as much man and wife, as if all legal requisites and solemnities had been performed. Nay, as to some legal effects also, a contract *de praesenti* has the same force that a lawful *marriage* has; for the contract is indissoluble so long as the parties live; and if either party shall after such contract attempt to marry elsewhere, that marriage is null and void *ratione praecontractûs* [by reason of a precontract].¹⁴

This made him seriously doubt whether it was legally possible for him to agree to the negotiated settlement being urged by Sir John Boyce, and he told Boyce's emissary that 'he believed he should be obliged to part Mr. Boyce and Miss Hudson'.¹⁵

Goole sought legal advice from Dr Henry Brooke, a barrister better known to later generations as the friend of John Wesley and the author of *The Fool of Quality*, a novel so successfully abridged by Wesley that it became a best-seller. Boyce also consulted Brooke. He told them both that in his opinion Goole was unable to release Margaret Hudson from her contract in order to legalize her subsequent marriage to Boyce, but that the case was 'nice', so that it was desirable to secure other opinions. For these Boyce offered to pay, whereupon Dr Brooke drew up the following 'State and Queries' for submission to Doctors Commons, the London headquarters of the Doctors of Civil Law:

A.B. Single woman, aged nineteen and upwards, without consent of friends, enters into an absolute contract *de praesenti* of marriage with *C.D.* After such contract *A.B. de facto* [actually] marries *E.F.*

1. *Q[ue]ry*. Is it in the power of *C.D.* to give *A.B.* such a release from the contract aforesaid, as will make her marriage with *E.F.* legal and valid?

2. *Q[ue]ry*. If such a release may by law be given by *C.D.*, would it not be proper for *A.B.* and *E.F.* to solemnize matrimony over again?¹⁶

John Wesley was enlisted as Brooke's envoy. He duly visited London, secured the opinions, and on 17 January 1731/2, made certified transcripts.

That from Dr William Strahan confirmed Brooke's own judgement :

A contract *de praesenti* is a real marriage, and only wants the outward form and ceremony: and it is not in the power of the contracting parties to release one another from such contract. I don't think the woman's being a minor . . . will much vary the case. For she was of sufficient age to contract matrimony; and altho' she ought not to have entered into such contract without the consent of her parents or guardians, yet the want of such consent does not destroy the contract, no more than it would destroy a marriage solemnized in the face of the church.

Dr George Paul's opinion was to the same effect :

By the canon law, as it is received in England, and become part of the laws of the realm, a contract in words of the present time, seriously and solemnly made, is, in truth and substance, matrimony indissoluble. It has been the general opinion of learned divines and lawyers, that, *tho' there should be no evidence, according to the rules of the law, of such spousals*, the parties having really, tho' secretly, contracted themselves, yet they are thereby become so far man and wife before God, that neither can, with a safe and good conscience, marry elsewhere, so long as the other party liveth.

A woman may contract herself absolutely when she is *pubes*, which is deemed at law a ripeness of age fit for marriage, in women at 12, in men at the age of 14 years.

Upon the whole case therefore, I am of opinion, that *A.B.* aged 19, by entering into an absolute contract of the present time with *C.D.*, may be compelled, by ecclesiastical censures, to solemnize a marriage with him in the face of the church; and that the marriage with *E.F.* will (upon proper proofs of the above-stated contract) be adjudged null and void in law.¹⁷

These opinions were placed before both Boyce and Goole at a meeting in Dr Brooke's chambers, with Wesley also present. Boyce clearly recognized the weakness of his position, and seemed determined not to cohabit with Margaret Hudson until it had been legally settled whose wife she was, though he was later dissuaded from that honest course, especially as she was already pregnant. Boyce also agreed to let Goole have copies of the legal opinions in return for copies of Margaret Hudson's letters to Goole, the attested copies in each case to be prepared by their mutually acceptable go-between, John Wesley. Accordingly Wesley's diary for 17 January 1731/2 records: 'Monday 17th. 12½ at Mr. Goole's, in talk. 1 dinner. [2?] read M. Hudson's letters; in talk. 4¼ set out.'¹⁸

John Goole sought a final decision at the highest level, the Court of Arches, constantly insisting that this was his moral duty, in order to warn the Boyces and those similarly placed of the mortal as well as immortal danger of living in sin.¹⁹ By this time Margaret Hudson was well on in pregnancy, and bore a child as the case against her was in its opening stages; he was baptized John on 14 May 1732.²⁰ [Incidentally it is remarkable how many Johns appear in this story: Goole, Boyce, and their intermediary Wesley were all named John; so was Margaret Hudson's father; so was Boyce's father, and now his son; so also was the man who later stole John Wesley's own wife from under his nose.]

The case dragged on. By the time it came to trial in June 1733, Margaret Hudson was nearing the birth of her second child. These two children seem to have furnished strong though irrelevant arguments in her favour, supporting the pressure and possible bribery that Goole suspected. Certainly trickery was used against him; apart from the lavish and unimpeded blackening of his own character, her advocates managed to find a weak link in the ecclesiastical law. Her minority was no more a defence than the lack of witnesses, but Swinburne's *Spousals* made it clear that 'when these words of the present time are uttered in *jeast* or *sport* . . . such wanton words are not at all obligatory in so serious a matter as is matrimony'. Accordingly she pleaded that her contract was undertaken as a joke—even though it involved the solemn use of the prayer book and the acceptance of expensive presents. The Dean of the Arches, Dr John Bettesworth, was clearly much in sympathy with the young woman. Even Dr Paul forsook his earlier written opinion and signed the final judgement that the 'pretended marriage contract . . . was and is null and void and altogether invalid in law'. Goole even had to pay the legal costs on pain of excommunication.²¹

Immediately this sentence was passed John Goole declared that he would publish his vindication. In six or seven weeks it was ready, and on 26 July he sent it to Wesley, asking him to read it, and to communicate the contents to Boyce. On 1 or 2 August Wesley replied:

Sir,

I sent Mr. Boyce word yesterday, that I was apt to think you were so far from the desire of revenge, which he had been informed you everywhere shewed, that if he could propose any other way of satisfying that desire of clearing your reputation which a Christian ought to have, you would yet desist from your design of publishing your case.

Goole did indeed ask Margaret Hudson (now legally Boyce) to sign a testimonial to his 'justice, fidelity, and honour', but heard nothing until October, when the desired satisfaction seemed no nearer. In December 1733, therefore, he set about publishing *The Contract Violated*, which in his dedication 'to all lovers of truth, sincerity, and honour' he described as an 'unparallel'd case'.²²

The *Gentleman's Magazine* entered a simple announcement of Goole's 170-page pamphlet in the issue for May 1734. His avowed end of seeking to expose the dangers of secret marriages, however, as well as the sluggishness of the ecclesiastical courts, was more fully served by the *Grub Street Journal*, which serialized the case. Issue No. 248 for Thursday 26 September 1734 described it as 'of such an extraordinary nature that it deserves to be more generally known. It may hinder persons from rashly entering into private solemn contracts; in the performance of which they will probably meet with great difficulties and inconveniences. And it may divert those who have been perfidiously deceived, from vainly exposing themselves to very great trouble and charge by seeking a redress at law.'²³ John Wesley learned the second lesson, if not the first.

Until the 1754 marriage reform, however, others continued to fall into the

same trap, and the unfortunate results occasionally appeared even in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which Wesley frequently read. He would surely shake his head in sympathy in 1740 when he read of a young man whose secretly contracted wife was similarly married in church to another man. High ecclesiastical authorities again supported the first husband, but he refused to press his claim, saying, 'I knew I could have done myself justice afterwards, but that being impossible without exposing her to the whole nation, I chose rather to suffer myself than that she should.'²⁴

* * * *

In a similar position to this young man John Wesley found himself a few years later. Repeatedly Grace Murray urged that their Dublin contract should be sealed by public matrimony, but Wesley insisted that three prior steps were necessary: he must get the matter straight with her other suitor, John Bennet; in accordance with a long-standing agreement he must secure the consent of his brother Charles; and he must seek the understanding prayers of the Methodist preachers and people. Grace agreed to wait for a year. And so at her request they renewed the contract *de praesenti* at Hindley Hill, Northumberland, with trusty Christopher Hopper as witness. That on this occasion they used a part of the prayer book order receives some confirmation from one of her letters four days later: 'If Mr. B[ennet] comes . . . I must not see him. It will tear my soul to pieces; seeing I can by no means help him now. For whom God hath join'd together, no man can put asunder.' An hour after the simple but solemn ceremony Wesley took horse for Whitehaven 'with not one uneasy thought, believing God would give us to meet again, at the time when he saw good'. This was on Thursday 21 September 1749.²⁵

A tiny cloud of foreboding on the horizon, however, loomed nearer, heavy with tragedy. The following night Wesley was disturbed by a dream in which John Bennet hinted that Grace Murray was living with him. On the Saturday, without any conscious realization of what he was doing, Wesley began his first letter to his doubly-contracted spouse with the lines:

There is I know not what of sad presage

That tells me we shall never meet again.²⁶

On Sunday words in the first lesson pierced his heart like a sword: 'Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke!' Immediately, he says, 'a shivering ran thro' me, & in a few minutes I was in a fever'.

Wesley had written other letters, designed to hasten the date of his public union with Grace Murray. That to John Bennet, however, went astray, and the one to Wesley's brother sent Charles into a panic of activity to prevent a step which he was convinced would ruin their work. On the Monday Charles burst upon John in Whitehaven, denouncing this unsuitable match with a woman already betrothed to another. For some reason, possibly because Charles was too heated to think clearly, John was unable to convince him that his own marriage contract with Grace Murray was both prior to Bennet's and more binding. In any case Charles did not possess John's intimate knowledge and vicarious experience in this matter. Eventually they

agreed to sleep on it, and then to submit the issue to their venerable friend, the Rev. Vincent Perronet of Shoreham.

The following day, however, Charles unexpectedly left ahead of John, and when John arrived at Hindley Hill it was to hear that Grace Murray had ridden off behind Charles two hours earlier. The foreboding grew stronger. He exclaimed with Job, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away! Blessed be the name of the Lord!' Abandoning his first intention of pursuing them, yet realizing that this was 'giving up all', he returned for his week-end activities in Whitehaven. On Sunday 1 October, he confessed, 'I was in great heaviness; my heart was sinking in me like a stone.' Only in the services did he find any relief. That night he prayed for a sign of God's will, and in a dream saw Grace Murray executed. The following evening he received a message from his old pupil and friend George Whitefield pressing him to come to Leeds, where Charles also would meet them. Accordingly the following day, Tuesday 3 October, he rode to Leeds, arriving at nightfall. He did not know it, but this was his wife's wedding day.²⁷

Charles Wesley was determined to save John from folly and the work of God from disruption. Leaving his brother at Whitehaven he had ridden post-haste to Hindley Hill, bursting in upon a Grace Murray already perplexed and distressed by John Wesley's foreboding letter. He gave her a pastoral kiss, said 'Grace Murray, you have broke my heart!', and promptly fainted. On recovering, he handed her an accusing letter which he had written the previous day, and was thus delivering in person. She apparently assumed that it conveyed the sentiments of John as well as of Charles, and agreed to go with him to Leeds to meet the two claimants to her hand. Nearing Durham, they learned that Bennet was at Newcastle, and on her request (or at least with her agreement) turned north once more to seek him out. Charles Wesley similarly took Bennet by storm, to such effect that on the following morning, Tuesday 3 October, he and Grace were married by the Rev. Richard (?) Brewster in St Andrew's Church, Newcastle.²⁸

When John Wesley arrived for the Leeds rendezvous Whitefield tried to break the news gently: he was certain that Charles would not show up until he had seen Grace and Bennet married, in spite of Whitefield's own attempts to persuade them to wait. He himself was quite convinced that Grace was Wesley's wife, but (as he expressed it) Charles's 'impetuosity prevail'd & bore down all before it'. Sure enough, Charles did not arrive for their meeting on Wednesday. On Thursday morning an advance messenger brought the news—'they were married on Tuesday.' An hour later came Charles himself, still hot with indignation against his brother. He called John a villain and renounced all ties of Christian friendship, while Whitefield and John Nelson tried tearfully to reconcile them. At length Charles was brought to his senses, seemed 'utterly amaz'd' to discover the true contractual relationship between his brother and Grace, and began to lay all the blame on her.²⁹

Little by little, patiently and painfully, John Wesley was able to unravel the tangled threads and to see how a series of misunderstandings in the minds of all the chief participants had led to this bewildering and saddening mix-up. Describing his interview the following day with Bennet and Grace, when for a

long time they 'sat weeping at each other', John Wesley summed it all up: 'Between them both, I knew not what to say or do. I can forgive. But who can redress the wrong?'³⁰

Certainly John Wesley himself was not prepared to redress the wrong. Better than most people he knew that the law was fully on his side. He would have had far less difficulty than John Goole in proving his contract *de praesenti* with Grace Murray, and thus annulling her bigamous union with Bennet. Granted, there remained a little uncertainty as to how an ecclesiastical court would react, even in the clearest of cases. In his favour, however, were not only the strongest legal arguments, but his own prestige, over against that of his lowly preacher. Surely he must have won his case! Yet there seems no evidence that he ever seriously pondered bringing the matter before the courts. Swinburne's *Spousals* allowed for the dissolution even of a contract *de praesenti* by the mutual agreement of the parties before consummation. This course would bring least suffering to the two friends who had thus injured him, least damage to the work of God. This course he followed. He bowed his head to the bitter blow and poured out his heartbreak in tear-stained verse.³¹

It would be pleasant to end our story with a paragraph describing how all concerned lived happily ever after, but this would fall short of the whole truth. A hasty summary of their fortunes, however, seems in order.

John Goole later repented the publication of *The Contract Violated*, terming it 'an inaccurate apology, wrote perhaps under too quick a sense of irreparable wrongs'; he himself faded into obscurity, and his death is not recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.³² John Boyce left the area to become rector of Saintbury, Gloucestershire, where he died in 1776, seventeen years after his wife Margaret. Their first child survived to young manhood; two other boys, including their second child, William, entered the Anglican ministry and served their father's parish for a time; three others of their eight children died in 1748, probably during some epidemic.³³ John Bennet remained on friendly terms with Charles Wesley, but his relationships with John were always strained; he left the Methodists to become an independent minister, and died in 1759. Grace survived him until 1803, writing in her diary on the 48th anniversary of their marriage, 'What seas of grief God has brought me through none but he and myself know.' Their first child, born 22 August 1750, was also christened John; another son lived to write a biography of his mother.³⁴

As for the bereft John Wesley, yet another convalescence gave him leisure to study yet another widow who used a gentle hand in nursing him, and to whom he proposed marriage. Once more he was married under a cloud of secrecy, which has not yet been fully pierced, with results that were notoriously less congenial and less fruitful either for him or for Methodism than his marriage with Grace Murray might well have been. That, however, is another story.

¹ *English Historical Documents*, Volume X, 1714–1783, ed. D. B. Horn and Mary Ransome, London 1957, pp. 242–7.

² Edmund Gibson, *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani*, 2nd edn, London 1761, pp. 416–447, 1274–77; cf. Henry Swinburne, *A Treatise of Spousals*, London 1686, pp. 231–2, and

William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4th edn, London 1771, vol. 1, p. 439.

³ Richard Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law*, London 1763, vol. 2, pp. 16–19.

⁴ A Leger, *Wesley's Last Love*, London 1910, pp. 1–3, 12, 59; John Wesley, *Journal*, Standard edn, ed. N. Curnock, London 1938, vol. 3, pp. 365–7. For the various editions of Wesley's account of his relations with Grace Murray, see Frank Baker, *Union Catalogue of the Publications of John and Charles Wesley*, 1966, p. 208. The original manuscript is in the British Museum, but Dr Leger's version is reliable and reasonably accessible.

⁵ Leger, op. cit., pp. 2–4, 11–12, 60; Wesley, op. cit., 3:376; John Bennet, MS. diary in

⁶ Leger, op. cit., pp. 5, 62–3.

⁷ Leger, op. cit., pp. 5, 62–3.

⁸ Swinburne, op. cit., p. 236.

⁹ Leger, op. cit., pp. 7–8, 12, 62–3, 77; cf. Bennet's diary, 2 Sept., 1749.

¹⁰ Leger, op. cit., pp. 63–98, especially pp. 78, 87, 89.

¹¹ *Wesley Studies*, London 1903, pp. 53–4; the notebook is in the Methodist Archives, London.

¹² John Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, 'John Boyce'; Oxford Historical Society, vol. 41, pp. 347 ff.; Rawlinson MSS., Bodleian 15072, vol. 5, pp. 30 ff.; MS. letter of Charles Wesley, 11 June 1731, in Methodist Archives, London; *Dictionary of National Biography*, 'John Hudson (1662–1719)'; John Goole, *The Contract Violated*, London [1734], pp. 3–5, 41, 46, 60–79, 88–9.

¹³ Goole, op. cit., pp. 2–20, 28, App. 5–10, 14–31; Foster, op. cit., 'Goole, John'.

¹⁴ Goole, op. cit., pp. viii–ix, 21–4, 32–8; 'Goole and Boyce', eight documents forming a file of forty pages in the Court of Arches archives, Lambeth Palace Library, London, especially 3 November 1732, items 5–8.

¹⁵ Swinburne, op. cit., pp. [iv–v].

¹⁶ Goole, op. cit., pp. 37–9, App. 58, 61.

¹⁷ Goole, op. cit., pp. 39–40, 43, 48–50, App. 2–4.

¹⁸ Goole, op. cit., App. pp. 2–4.

¹⁹ Goole, op. cit., pp. 42–3, 76–8, App. 2–4; Wesley's MS. diary, Methodist Archives, London, transcribed by the Rev. Wesley F. Swift.

²⁰ Goole, op. cit., pp. v, 42–5; cf. pp. 67, 75.

²¹ Court of Arches, 'Goole and Boyce', especially Goole's deposition, 3 November 1732, item 4.

²² 'Goole and Boyce', Court of Arches; cf. Goole, op. cit., pp. 44, 62–75, 87–9, App. 32–6.

²³ Goole, op. cit., pp. [iii], v–xii; the prohibition of its publication and sale in Oxford caused difficulty and delay; see pp. xv–xvi.

²⁴ Copy in Rawlinson MSS., vol. 5, p. 42, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

²⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1740, pp. 172–5; cf. 1748, p. 329, and 1751, pp. 328, 570.

²⁶ Leger, op. cit., pp. 14, 62–3, 89.

²⁷ cf. Shakespeare, *Richard II*, II, ii, 142–3; 'Farewell: if heart's presages be not vain,/We three here part that ne'er shall meet again.'

²⁸ Leger, op. cit., pp. 63–6, 79–86.

²⁹ Bennet, MS. diary, 3 October 1749, which names 'Mr. Bruister'; for the probable identification with Richard Brewster see Venn's *Alumni Cantabrigienses*; no suitable candidate offers in Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses*.

³⁰ Leger, op. cit., pp. 87–8.

³¹ Leger, op. cit., pp. 89–98.

³² Leger, op. cit., 98–105.

³³ Rawlinson MSS., vol. 5, p. 31, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

³⁴ D. MSS., 'Boyce', Society of Genealogists, London.

³⁵ William Bennet, *Memoirs of Mrs. Grace Bennet*, Macclesfield 1803, pp. 22–4, 71; cf. John Bennet's MS. diary, Methodist Archives, London.

THE FULNESS OF THE CHURCH

Wilfred Tooley

ALL the major denominations of the Christian Church with the exception of Quakers and Salvationists regard participation in the Lord's Supper as a responsibility of membership. This immediately involves defining such membership and here there is wide divergence. The Orthodox, Roman and Anglican Churches relate baptism to confirmation with subsequent communion (though the age for confirmation ranges widely). Free Churches have tended to delay 'full membership' until the candidate has attained 'years of discretion', which has generally been interpreted as anything from about 15 years. No regulations are, however, laid down apropos the Lord's Supper though the tendency is to encourage 'first communion' after acceptance into 'full membership'.

There is thus some justification for raising the question of who is to celebrate the Lord's Supper and for asking whether the Protestant Churches are justified in making the sacrament an esoteric culmination of attaining years of 'maturity', a sort of *rite de passage* into Christian adulthood.

The Anglican position on who may share in the Eucharist is plain and well known: 'And there shall none be admitted to the holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.' Confirmation is thus made the predominant element in Christian initiation, a fact made clear in the rubric for the service of 'The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of riper years and able to answer for themselves', which reads: 'It is expedient that every person, thus baptized, should be confirmed by the Bishop so soon after his Baptism as conveniently may be; that so he may be admitted to the holy Communion.' Baptism is thus made a preliminary and subordinate rite and there is some ambivalence here between the Church's liturgical action and its Article of Religion, No. XXVII, according to which 'they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church'. Not grafted very securely, one may respond, if they can't share in what has been the distinctive act of Christian worship throughout the history of the Church.

There is no authoritative declaration in Methodism on who is entitled to a place at the Lord's Table. It is stated explicitly enough that it is 'the privilege and duty of members of the Methodist Church to avail themselves' of the two sacraments, but the phrase 'member of the Methodist Church' begs the question.

The phrase is actually defined in Paragraph 2 of the 'Deed of Union' as follows: 'the expression "member of the Methodist Church" means a person recognized as a member of the Methodist Church in accordance with any rules for the time being in force with respect to membership of the Methodist Church.' Despite the term 'Church', this definition clearly implies a 'society concept' and Paragraph 33 of the 'Deed of Union' dealing with the 'Basis of

Membership' supports this assumption: 'All persons are welcomed into membership of the Methodist Church who sincerely desire to be saved from their sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and evidence the same in life and conduct.' This must by definition exclude infants and this is seen clearly in paragraph 'c' of the same clause, which relates Baptism to the Basis of Membership and is thoroughly unsatisfactory. The clause simply states that the sacrament is administered to infants and that proper pastoral care should be given 'to all who have been dedicated to God by this sign'. The only qualification is that for those who have not received Christian Baptism 'that Sacrament should be administered either before or in connexion with the Recognition Service'.

Thus in the 'Deed of Union', Baptism is interpreted primarily as dedication, and many of the unsatisfactory features of the present service of Infant Baptism must stem from this. It is significant, for example, that the first words addressed to the parents are, 'You are come here to acknowledge that this your child belongs to God, to dedicate him to God in Holy Baptism . . .' Similarly there is no point at which the parents are required to state their faith either in the words of the Creed or the Lord's Prayer. Both of these are, however, included in the Baptismal service for adults.

Nevertheless, it should be added that, despite the weakness in our basic doctrinal document, various Conference statements on Baptism produced in recent years make it quite clear that now, for Methodists, Baptism is a service 'of reception into the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church'.³ The need is for our baptismal liturgy to be brought into line with our theological insights and, as part of this liturgical renewal, Methodism must know who does and who does not participate in worship at the Lord's Table. I believe there are some grounds for considering Baptism rather than Confirmation or Public Reception into Membership as the door to the Lord's Table.

Despite the continuing argument, writers of the calibre of J. Jeremias, E. Stauffer and others have gone far towards establishing the practice of Infant Baptism in the early Church. Stauffer developed the thesis by a careful examination of the *οἶκος* formula in the Old and New Testaments, and Jeremias in his work reaches his conclusion by way of copious examples from early Christian inscriptions.⁴

There is, however, no direct evidence in the New Testament on whether children shared in eucharistic worship. The only eucharistic passage explicitly mentioning the presence of a child is the reference to the *παιδάριον* in John 6:9. C. H. Dodd accepts without reserve the eucharistic nature of this episode and its possible association with the liturgical tradition represented in the *Didache*, but his only comment on the *παιδάριον* is that 'this individualizing of actors [i.e. Andrew and Philip] in a story is often, though not always, a sign of legendary development. The same may be said of the *παιδάριον* . . .'⁵ Dr Alan Richardson, however, takes up this reference to the *παιδάριον* more positively and suggests that if this episode does reflect a liturgical tradition (granted by Dr Dodd) then it is a tradition where the offertory was presented by a representative of the people, i.e. a deacon.⁶ This does have the attraction of trying to explain the significance of the inclusion of the boy, though it

raises a further point, namely, why has it to be a child who makes the offering? Does this reflect a liturgical tradition?

All this, however, can only be conjecture and we are on firmer ground when we remember that, since the Eucharist was always 'paschal' to some extent, the family nature of the Passover celebration with its father-son dialogue must have left its influence on the 'family' nature of the Christian Eucharist. We would quote Dr Dodd in another context, commenting on Romans 16:5: 'The family element in its [i.e. the church's] organization was congenial to the idea of the Church as God's own household . . . and its central rite, the Lord's Supper, took over something of the family character of the Jewish Passover.'⁷ This final comment is borne out by the evidence of the early church orders and of comments and assumptions made by the Church Fathers. Thus in the *Didache* eucharistic rite the strong Jewish overtones are unmistakable and this is especially true in the eucharistic prayers which are based on Jewish models. The *Didache* is quite explicit as to who may partake: 'Let none eat or drink of your Eucharist save those who are baptized in the Lord's name.'⁸

There is also in the *Didache* a close relationship between the reception of the Eucharist and the bestowal of immortality, a theme which is frequently echoed both by the Church Fathers, e.g. Ignatius of Antioch: 'the medicine of immortality';⁹ and in such fixed liturgies as that of Serapion of Egypt: 'make all those who partake to receive the specific medicine of life unto the healing of every illness'.¹⁰ It is clear that this interpretation of the Eucharist certainly led to children being given communion *in extremis*,¹¹ and Cyprian's letter 'De Lapsis' (A.D. 251) shows that 'it was even customary to admit little children to communion'.¹²

Thus the conclusion that 'Communion was in the early church an integral part of the triple initiatory rite—Baptism—Confirmation—Communion'¹³ seems justified, and the Orthodox Church has in this respect remained loyal to the early tradition. What this means for the education of children in the faith is best expressed by A. R. Browne-Wilkinson: 'Baptized children were probably present at the Eucharist with their parents from the beginning, and that they should communicate was an ancient and general custom. Thus it was by gradual habituation rather than by special and separate training that children were ordinarily accustomed to learn their worship. At the Reformation it was evidently expected that this policy would be retained. Children, it is enjoined in the Baptism office, shall be called upon to "hear sermons", that is, presumably at the Communion Service, there being no indication of any other occasion.'¹⁴

There is, however, another feature of early eucharistic practice that is important for its bearing upon the participation of children. This is the close relation between the Eucharist of the gathered community and the daily worship and devotion of the faithful. Justin Martyr testifies to the practice of taking the elements to the homes of those absent¹⁵ and the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, which set the practice for the subsequent liturgies of both East and West, reveals clearly that the Eucharist was celebrated daily in the homes of Christians: 'let each of the faithful . . . before he taste all

else take care to receive the Eucharist'.¹⁶ The Eucharist is thus not only the culmination of worship but also the daily devotional sustenance of the believer. Thus, also, the customs associated with Christian meals were closely connected with the Eucharist and this is most evident in connection with the Agape.

The connexion cannot be traced here in detail but the picture that emerges is of the closest inter-penetration of ideas and associations related to the Eucharist proper, the customs associated with Christian meals, and to the Agape, so that 'in fact it is often difficult to disentangle the Love Feast or Agape from the Eucharist, in practice'.¹⁷ This accords with the New Testament evidence presented by such scholars as J. Jeremias, E. Schweizer, and C. F. D. Moule, who recognize within the New Testament a variety of forms of eucharistic worship. Moule's conclusion is that the Eucharist 'most probably' took place as part of a real meal and only gradually became a self-contained ritual. There was, however, 'an uninstitutional freedom and flexibility',¹⁸ and it is for this that one would plead today, both in the light of the current renewal of worship and against the wider ecumenical dialogue.

One would first plead that, *in principle* and in line with the earliest tradition of the Church, we accept the Sacrament of Baptism as the primary rite of initiation into the 'One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church', entitling a member so received to a place at the Lord's Table. This significance of Baptism is, of course, being rediscovered as the Protestant Churches re-examine the place of children in the life and worship of the Church, and in this regard it is worth quoting the Sunday School Commission Report presented to the Methodist Conference in 1961. This began by presenting the theological basis of the role and place of the child in the Church. 'It is also high time for the Church realistically to fulfil its own obligations towards those children and young people. They ought to be cared for, not because they may in time become the Church of Tomorrow, but because they are here and now a part of the Church of Today.'¹⁹ The report thus recommended that children share in the worship of the Church, and added the following interesting comment: 'it is important that they be enabled to participate *fully* in the adoration, thanksgiving, confession, petition, and intercession of the Church and in the hearing of the Scriptures . . .'²⁰ It seems a fair question to ask how this can be achieved if children are debarred from the Lord's Table where all these aspects of Christian worship focus in Christ.

One reason for the absence of young people and children from any eucharist in Methodism is the adult esoteric approach which has caused the service to become a rigid and over-formalized act of worship. One would agree with the comment of Trevor T. Rowe: 'We have become over solemn about the Lord's Supper. Christ is present and we should greet Him with joy.'²¹ One would also subscribe to Eric James's assertion that 'the Eucharist is not primarily a service. It is the meeting of a community',²² and the purpose is to refer its life to God. If the presence of young people served to diminish the formal propriety of the present pattern of the Eucharist, this would be a contribution to the life and worship of the Church. Too often Eric James's words are clearly untrue and the last thing one can say of the Eucharist is

that it is real live 'meeting'. The Eucharist ought to embody the too frequently unexpressed theological truth that worship is not the formal assembly of the spiritually mature but rather an inchoate assembly of saints and sinners, the *simul justus et peccator*, old and young, mature and immature, gathered at a meal with the Risen Christ, there to receive his blessing and to offer themselves to God as Christ's Body: 'Christian corporate worship is above all the Body of Christ taking visible form.'²³

Similarly, in order—rightly—to assert the centrality of the Eucharist, we have obliterated the variety of eucharistic worship. It is unrealistic to expect the same pattern of words to express the rich variety of emotions and aspects of our faith experienced and symbolized at the Lord's Table. Thus the same form of words cannot possibly reflect the emotions of the worshipper as he exercises the vigil of Holy Week, then exults in Christ's resurrection on Easter morning, and later asserts Christ's lordship over 'all things' on Ascension Day. Pastoral experience suggests that it is this rigidity that prevents the Lord's Table from being the centre of life and worship for many Christians. One can learn here from the eucharistic genius of the Orthodox and Roman Churches in whose worship children have shared for centuries. Thus the three different liturgical forms of the Orthodox Church—that of St John Chrysostom which is the basic pattern, that of St Basil used on ten occasions of the year, and that of Pope Gregory the Great restricted to Holy Week and week-days in Lent—reflect the changing pattern of the Christian Year in a changing pattern of response. Similarly it was Evelyn Underhill who was able to write of the Western Mass that it reproduces 'the successive notes of expectancy, joy, penitence, grief, and triumph which mark the Christian Year rising to a climax in the ancient and beautiful ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter . . .'²⁴ 'Roman Catholicism weaves into this great act of adoration all the varied responses and apprehensions of men.'²⁵ Whilst this eulogy cannot be accepted uncritically, it is this variety of which Evelyn Underhill speaks that is missing in contemporary eucharistic worship.

The third need is to relate the 'great eucharist' of the whole Christian community to the private worship of the Christian family. I have already referred to the close inter-penetration of these two elements in the primitive Church, a feature which is also embedded in the New Testament, and one sympathizes with Professor Moule when he asserts, on the basis of the biblical evidence, that we stand today in some danger of defining too precisely what is and what is not 'sacramental worship'.²⁶ In terms of contemporary churchmanship, there is great need for worthy and relevant forms of family worship related to the worship of the whole congregation. In this way, the family at some point in the week can transmute the power of the Church Eucharist into the intimacy of the family circle with their own equivalent worship, where the dignity and meaning of the action would be undergirded by their joy, good spirits, and common family affection.

It is perhaps this lack of an obvious relationship between the present 'communion service' of the Church and daily family life that has made the former into what Dr John Robinson describes as 'a pot plant in the sanctuary of the Church'.²⁷ It is insufficient to tell people in liturgical sermons that there

is such a relationship, that the roots of their liturgical actions are embedded in their actions in the world; this must be seen and symbolized. Nor can we expect that alterations to the present structure of the service (in vocabulary and symbolic action—and both are long overdue) will succeed in showing that the Eucharist is primarily a secular rather than a religious activity. Dr Robinson is surely right: 'even for most church people, I doubt if the scales can fall from their eyes until they can see it [i.e. the eucharist] growing naturally again out of the ordinary sharing of ordinary life.'²⁸ It is for this reason that one would plead for a re-discovery of family eucharistic worship related in shape and symbol to the Eucharist of the whole Church, in which children would share as baptized (though unconfirmed) members of the Church of God.

It is perhaps only in these ways that we will overcome at the level of the local congregation (which will remain for a long time yet, wherever our *avant-garde* thinking may eventually lead) the unfortunate relegation of the Eucharist into a religious ceremony restricted alike to Sunday and to the church building and thus safely shielded from the thrust of the secular and never able to break out of the sacred. It is essential, however, that forms of worship evolve which are appropriate to the different 'levels' of celebration so that too rigid a distinction between sacramental and non-sacramental be avoided. If the worship and life of ordinary Christians is to be truly sacramental, then the eucharistic worship in which they share must not stand over against 'other' worship but must rather be the spring from which the whole stream of discipleship flows. 'Communion' stands not as a religious 'topping out' ceremony, celebrating the attaining of an agreed level of Christian maturity, but rather as the balanced diet enabling the baptized member of Christ's Body to 'grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ'.

While Infant Baptism will continue to need its completion in some form of 'confirmation', there are solid grounds for relating the Church's worship at the Lord's Table to the former rather than to the latter.

NOTES

¹ *Book of Common Prayer*, 'The Order of Confirmation', final rubric.

² 'Deed of Union', Paragraph 33 (b).

³ Eric Wilfred Baker, *Ministry, Baptism, and Membership in the Methodist Church*, quoting the 'Statement on Holy Baptism' adopted by the Methodist Conference 1952.

⁴ J. Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries*, (S.C.M. 1960), *passim*.

⁵ C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, p. 206.

⁶ A. Richardson, *The Biblical Doctrine of Work*, 1952, pp. 73-4.

⁷ C. H. Dodd, 'Romans', *Moffat New Testament Commentary*, p. 237.

⁸ On the evidence of the *Didache*, see *Liturgy and Worship*, ed. by Lowther Clarke (S.P.C.K. 1932), p. 89f.

⁹ *Ad Eph.* xx, 2.

¹⁰ *Liturgy and Worship*, p. 93.

¹¹ J. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, gives illustrations of this practice: see pp. 90, 92, n.7.

¹² J. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 85. This is also supported by Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, p. 99: 'The sense of the life-giving quality of the supper led also to the custom of infant communion of which Cyprian is a witness.' Walker goes on to affirm (p. 274) that various considerations 'led to the general abandonment by the Western Church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the practice of infant communion which had been universal'.

¹³ *Liturgy and Worship*, p. 457.

¹⁴ *id.*, p. 436. We may also note that earlier the Lateran Council (1215) had defined the

duty of communion as beginning with 'years of discretion'. The meaning was disputed but 7-10 was the usual age for Confirmation. We may note in passing that, later, Wesley himself was not opposed to infant communion. Colin Wilbur Williams after examining this issue asserts that 'Wesley was willing to admit baptized children provided they received instruction as to its meaning' (*John Wesley's Theology Today*, p. 164, note 49 and references to the *Journal*).

¹⁵ Justin's *First Apology*: 'And when the president has given thanks . . . those that are called by us deacons give to those present . . . and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.'

¹⁶ *Liturgy and Worship*, p. 102.

¹⁷ *id.*, p. 110.

¹⁸ C. F. D. Moule, *Worship in the New Testament*, p. 21.

¹⁹ *The Way Ahead*, p. 8.

²⁰ *op. cit.*, Recommendation No. 10, p. 20.

²¹ T. T. Rowe, *The Lord's Supper* (Worship Today Series No. 1), p. 22.

²² E. James, Prism Pamphlet No. 1, 'The Roots of the Liturgy', p. 11.

²³ E. Schweizer, *Worship in the New Testament*, quoted by Moule, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

²⁴ E. Underhill, *Worship* (London 1929), pp. 255-6.

²⁵ *id.*, p. 259.

²⁶ Moule, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

²⁷ J. A. T. Robinson, *The New Reformation?*, p. 84. Dr Robinson's own family experiment described on this page is clearly an attempt to express this inter-penetration of the eucharistic worship of the family and the gathered church.

²⁸ *ibid.*

OUR USE OF THE CREEDS IN WORSHIP: SOME THOUGHTS

David Tripp

IN those of our churches where the complete Order for the Celebration of the Holy Communion is used, the Nicene Creed is familiar to Methodist worshippers; and where Morning Prayer is retained the Apostles' Creed is similarly known. Of course, both these Creeds are known to us who exercise the Ministry of the Word through our theological studies. In our Senior Catechism and our Manual of Membership the Apostles' Creed is used as the basis of doctrinal instruction. How significant, though, is the Creed to our church-members? Is the repetition of the Creed in our services, where it still occurs, much more than just another detail in the respectfully neglected mass of our 'Methodist heritage'? For the preacher, this is a problem that touches his responsibility for the Word: what, if anything, should we do with the Creed? In the following pages, I hope to raise some points that help to illuminate the matter.

1. The Beginnings of the Creeds

The New Testament appears to echo, at various points, the use in the primitive Church of brief summaries of the faith as ejaculations in worship, as well as a watchword of embattled Christians. Whether or not this was so cannot be strictly proved, and in any case the history of the Creeds as we know them begins with the development of the liturgy of Baptism. Candidates for Baptism were asked if they were prepared to confess the faith, and had three questions to answer: on belief in God the Father, in God the Son, in the Holy Spirit and the Church. Each diocese or group of dioceses had its own form of these questions, since the early Church saw no need for a central authority to regulate the details of Christian worship. The emergence of what we know as 'the Historic Creeds' from this great variety of local forms can now best be studied in the second edition of Dr J. N. D. Kelly's *Early Christian Creeds* (1960). The two forms which have survived are the so-called Nicene and Apostles' Creeds. The former is an eastern baptismal confession, expanded by the Council of Nicaea (325) and, probably, the Council of Constantinople (381), to safeguard the Faith against the misinterpretation of Christ's Person by heretics. The latter seems to be a form of the Old Roman Creed, and to have spread from Rome to the rest of the Western Church in the course of its development. The myth of its apostolic origin is certainly very old, and equally certainly false. The brevity of this latter Creed, compared with the Nicene, is due to its not having been so much expanded, to its being still a typical baptismal confession. It has never been used in the Communion Service, only in Baptism and the Monastic Office—

in which point the Church of England has preserved the Roman use.

The other important credal formulations have not had the same place either in the instruction of young Christians or in worship, although their importance for theology is very considerable. The definition of Chalcedon, which decided the basic premisses of orthodox Christology, was never used for either of the former purposes. The so-called Athanasian Creed, which is not by Athanasius and is not a creed but a metrical definition of the doctrine of the Trinity, has been used in worship, but not as prominently as the Nicene and the Apostles'. Its use in the worship of the Church of England has not always been free of controversy.

After these creeds come the definitions of the Faith prepared by the various denominations at and after the Reformation. These, except for the catechisms, are more for the theologian and the preacher than for the private Christian, and are not for use in worship. The exception which proves this rule is the Standard Sermons of John Wesley, and it must be remembered that our official Standards of doctrine define not so much our doctrinal peculiarities as our *essentially pastoral use* of doctrine.

2. Which Creed?

Various attempts have been made to compile new Creeds. These vary greatly in character and purpose. Some have been intended to express alterations in Christian belief to suit the fashions of the age; these do not concern us here. The majority of the 'new Creeds' that appear these days are meant to express the Faith in terms which our age can understand. Assuming that in these experiments great care is taken to explain, and not to change, our doctrines—and 'saying the same thing in other words' is fraught with problems of an amazing complexity—what do we make of such essays in evangelism?

We must distinguish here between occasional experiment and stable custom. A healthy congregation will every now and then find itself driven to experiment with its worship, both to remind itself of the revolutionary nature of its Faith and to show the world around that its acceptance of the Christian tradition is not just the result of mental inertia. Creeds can be experimented with on this basis. If this is done responsibly, with an eye on the Bible and the traditional Creeds, it can be of great value to the spiritual alertness of our congregations. Such experiments must, of course, always be explained. Furthermore, experiments mean very little without the background of settled custom, well understood. To invite a congregation to use one of the 'new Creeds' when they are not familiar with one of the old ones as part of their worship is to act unrealistically. It would be, naturally, even more foolish to try to replace the old Creeds. We cannot produce overnight, or within one generation, a formulation mature enough to have a lasting place in Christian worship, to carry the weight that the traditional Creeds have borne. Long, continued experiment, with constant consultation between congregations, theologians and the courts of the Church—and all this, so far as possible, on an ecumenical basis—might in time produce a credal form capable of serving the Church as the old Creeds do, embracing

the sound results of theological debate this side of the 4th century, and excluding heresies that have threatened the Faith since the age of the great Councils (Pelagianism, for example). In the meantime, however, we have only two Creeds, both of which have some authority in the Church and have proved themselves usable in worship, the Nicene and the Apostles'. Has either of these Creeds any advantage over the other?

The Apostles' Creed is certainly shorter than the Nicene, and free from such awe-inspiring expressions as 'of one substance'. The Nicene, on the other hand, is longer and less simple. Its extra length allows it to do more justice to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit than the Apostles' allows room for. The very simplicity of the Latin Creed—we might justly speak of its undeveloped state—is deceptive; for, after all, to speak of God at all is to express a belief that is certainly not simple, even though a simple faith can apprehend it with a personal depth denied to a superficially intellectual flight from responsibility. Furthermore, the Nicene Creed avoids the dubious phrase, 'resurrection of the flesh'—the translation, '... of the body' is wrong, and the interpretation '... of the whole personality' is a definite change of the meaning.

There is another dimension to the problem: which Creed is more representative of Christendom? In this respect, we must emphatically prefer the Nicene. The Apostles' spread from its place of origin because of the growing influence of one church. The Nicene, however, was used by councils of the whole Church to express the Faith of orthodox Christendom; it is a standard against which even the Apostles' Creed must be tested. Even today, the Nicene Creed is better known to Christians in general; every Christian church that uses Creeds is familiar with it, while the Eastern churches do not use the Apostles' Creed at all. In the Peterskirche in Heidelberg, the recitation of the Creed is prefaced with the words: 'Let us with the whole of Christendom confess our common Faith . . .' Whether or not these or similar words are said, they express the sense in which the Creed is to be used; and such an intention fits the Nicene better than the Apostles' Creed.

3. *Some Practical Possibilities*

From the service of Baptism, the Creed found its way into the Eucharist, where it was recited in some churches just before the Communion but more often, as in the Eastern, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and Methodist Communion services to this day, after the reading of the Gospel. This custom was thus appraised by the late Dr J. E. Rattenbury in his book *Vital Elements of Public Worship*, (first edition, 1936, pp. 152-154):

Having been instructed from God's Holy Word, it is fitting that we should give utterance to our acceptance of its truth by means of the Creed which so sublimely states the essentials of Christianity. The objective character of worship is maintained by the contemplation of God and his nature. . . . The reverence of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, one God, but contemplated in His creative, redemptive, and sanctifying power, the source of all Grace and Glory, will bring us to our knees in devout and adoring love.

Where and how the Creed should be used in our Communion-, Baptism-, Confirmation-, Covenant- and Ordination-services, and so forth, is a question that must be discussed at the highest level; but all of us share the responsibility for deciding the place which the Creed is to have in our preaching-services.

As we all know, the Apostles' Creed is recited twice daily, at Morning and Evening Prayer, in the Church of England. It is generally agreed by liturgists that the Common Prayer is no model for preaching-services—among other things, it is not itself such a service!—whatever treasures it may contain.

The Creed could be said before the Lessons, as is sometimes done in the Dutch Reformed Church, to define the framework of Christian belief within which the Lessons are to be understood, the Sermon delivered and the whole act of worship offered.

A second possibility is to place the Creed between the Lessons and the Sermon, as in the Anglican Communion Service and the Morning and Evening Services in the Scottish *Book of Common Order*. In this position, the Creed is a summary of Bible teaching on a more comprehensive scale than is possible in two or three Lessons, with the Sermon following to illuminate and enforce selected themes.

A third, and in my opinion the best, position for the Creed is after the Sermon, where it can serve as an affirmative response in which the congregation identifies itself with the Gospel as proclaimed in Lesson and Sermon.

The Creed could be used in at least two ways: either as a straightforward corporate confession of faith, or as the opening of a prayer. (The *Book of Common Order* allows the Creed as a prayer, prefaced with the words, 'Hear us, O Lord, as, with Thy whole Church, we make confession of our faith: We believe . . .'.) If the Creed is used to introduce a prayer, the prayer itself could begin with some such expression as, 'In this Faith we pray for . . .' Since the Creed is the common watchword of all Christians, such a following prayer could most fittingly be the Intercessions for the Church Universal.

Whatever we do with the Creed, it must *never* be allowed to be an isolated scrap of decoration. It must be *used* in some way, so as to fit logically into the development of the service, and so as to help the Minister or Class-Leader when he explains the rationale of the Order of Worship. Whatever place or function is assigned to the Creed in our worship, it must be used 'reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God'—or not at all.

4. *A New Translation of the 'Nicene' Creed*

Even if we renounce the attempt to write a new Creed, we still have to ask which translation of the Nicene Creed we shall use, in order to secure that it is not only faithful to the original text but intelligible in itself. As I hope to show, the translation in our present Communion Service could do with some improvement. It is regrettable that the Church of England Liturgical Commission did not take the opportunity offered by their revision of the Anglican Communion Order to revise the translation of the Creed thor-

oughly. Such a revision must begin with an examination of our present version, testing its fidelity to the Greek original (with an eye constantly on the Latin translation in which the Creed first came to England) and also its intelligibility. Attention must be paid, not only to the wording, but also to the arrangement in lines and the punctuation.

Article I—Belief in God the Father

- (a)—the Being of God: 'I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,'
- (b)—his work in creation: 'Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.'

Is not the singular, 'I believe', incongruous at the beginning of a *corporate* Confession of Faith? In such a context, the form originally used by the Councils, 'We believe', seems more fitting. 'Almighty' is also slightly misleading. The real force of *Pantokrator* is not so much 'possessor of all power' (though that theoretical omnipotence is included) as 'Ruler of all', which emphasizes the purposeful way in which God uses his power.

Article II—Belief in Jesus Christ

- (a)—the Son as a Person of the Trinity: 'And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father;'

'God of God' is not in the final Greek form; it stood alone in the Creed of Nicaea, was replaced by 'Light of Light, Very God of Very God' in the Creed of Constantinople. The Latin form combined both versions at this point, with a result that may be repetitive, but is better left unchanged. The 'of' in 'begotten of' and 'God of God . . . Very God' should be rendered 'from'. 'Before all worlds' sounds very up to date in the space age, but it ought to be, 'before all ages', since it refers to the eternal generation of the Son. For clarity, 'Very' should become 'True'.

- (b)—the Son as the agent of Creation: 'By whom all things were made.'
- This looks like a relative clause referring to the Father. In fact, it is about the Son. For 'by', read 'through'.

- (c)—Christ's saving Incarnation: 'Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man, And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father.'

The often repeated 'who' is typical of Greek and Latin; but in an English translation it is better to start main clauses in a context like this with 'He', when possible. The Greek original reads: ' . . . was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin'. The Latin paraphrase is less open to misunderstanding, and may perhaps best be rendered into modern English by ' . . . took human nature, through the Holy Spirit, from the Virgin Mary'. The phrase, 'according to the Scriptures', is a reference to Christ's fulfilment of the Old Testament, not to the Gospel narratives, and is better translated accordingly.

'At the right hand . . .' might also be an improvement.

(d)—the Son and the last things: 'And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.' The 'quick' are, of course, the living. The kingdom belongs to Christ, not to the dead; this ambiguity is not present in the Greek and need not be in the English. The last sentence is an allusion to Isaiah 9:6-7 and Daniel 7:27, and it is worth preserving the allusion.

Article III (i)—Belief in the Holy Spirit

(a)—the Being of the Holy Spirit: 'And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life,'

'And I believe' is peculiar to the English translation, and is needed because of the long gap between the opening of the Creed and this point, caused by the expansion of the second Article. 'Lord and Giver of life' is not one title, but two: 'Lord' is a divine title of the Spirit, while 'Giver of life' describes His functions.

(b)—the Holy Spirit as a Person of the Trinity: 'Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who, with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified,'

'And the Son' is, of course, a bone of contention. The phrase was added by a group of Spanish bishops as a further point against Arianism, but has never been authorized by an ecumenical Council and is not accepted by the Eastern churches. We should seriously ask ourselves if this addition ('the *Filioque*') ought to be abandoned. 'Together' goes with 'worshipped and glorified', not with 'the Father and the Son'; but it can be attached to the latter phrase if another adverb—say, 'likewise'—is added.

(c)—the Holy Spirit and the Old Testament: 'Who spake by the Prophets.' 'spoke through' is better modern English, and more comprehensible than 'spake by'.

Article III (ii)—Belief in the Holy Spirit's work in the Church

(a)—the Church: 'And I believe one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.' 'And I believe' is, in this case also, a necessary addition. The right translation of the Greek is, 'believe *in*', despite the distinction made by many interpreters between the types of belief expressed in the Creed. 'Holy' was accidentally left out of the English version by Cranmer, but rightly restored in the Methodist form.

(b)—the One Baptism: 'I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins',

(c)—the Consummation of History: 'And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen.'

'Look for' has come to mean 'seek', but the Greek verb means 'look forward to'. Once again, 'world' should be 'age', however strange the expression may be.

A new translation along these lines might look like this :

We believe in one God, the Father, Ruler of all,

Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible :

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages;

God from God,

Light from Light,

True God from true God

begotten, not made;

being of one substance with the Father;

Through him all things were made;

He, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven,

and took human nature, through the Holy Spirit, from the Virgin Mary,

and was made man;

he was also crucified for us under Pontius Pilate,

he suffered and was buried,

and he rose again the third day in fulfilment of the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven,

and sits at the right hand of the Father;

And he shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead,

and of his Kingdom there shall be no end :

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord,

the Giver of life,

Who proceeds from the Father and the Son;

He, together with the Father and the Son, is likewise worshipped and glorified;

And we believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church;

We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins;

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the age to come.

Amen.

MANY STREAMS: ONE SOURCE

*A sermon preached before the University of
Cambridge on Whitsunday, 14 May 1967*

N. Allen Birtwhistle

There are varieties of gifts,
but the same Spirit.
There are varieties of service,
but the same Lord.
There are varieties of work,
but all of them, in all men, are the
work of the same God.

1 Corinthians 12: 4

There is a double meaning here.

Most modern English translations follow the Authorized Version and emphasize the diversity of the gifts and services in the Church. But the Vulgate¹ may have preserved the more important sense, for *διαιρέσις* can also mean division. It is the thought of the distribution of the gifts, to different individuals, by the same donor, that seems to be uppermost. It is not merely that various members of the Church possess distinctive talents for the different ministries they have to perform: even more, St Paul has in mind the sharing out of many gifts by the same hand of God. The two ideas are fused in Charles Wesley's line:

Divers gifts to each divide.²

There are many streams: one source.

Our endless debates on religion are apt to become too subtle and the resulting statements too complex. But now and again brevity comes to our aid and a whole wide range of controversy shines in the light of one clearly uttered thought. So the present discussion on the ministry is illuminated by these words: many gifts, but one Spirit; many ministries, but one Lord; many kinds of work to do, but one God.

* * * *

For the past seven or eight years, in one commission or another, in all denominations and all over the world, groups have been grappling with stubborn questions about the nature of the Church and of the ministry and how ministers should be trained—grappling, but not making enough progress.

In my office as Secretary for Ministerial Training in the Methodist Church I have shared in some of those groups, and too often it has seemed that the pace of change in the world around us has exceeded the speed of our deliberations. Our hard-won proposals appear out-of-date even before they can be

applied. That such important decisions should not be reached too hastily is no doubt prudent, but there are heavy penalties for delay. At a time like this, any establishment that is not seen to be transformed at ever-diminishing intervals is likely to be regarded as irrelevant. The Church is taken by many to be the archetype of perpetual immobility, the Ark of God anchored without hope of movement in stagnant by-waters. In their mind she is the supreme example of an organism once skilfully designed to fulfil her purpose but now unable to adapt herself to her changed environment. For them she is an unprofitable encumbrance on society.

One of the most recent statements of this view is in a massive study on how men are trained for the ministry in America.³ The usual points are made with some vigour. We are reminded that the Church, which occasionally intrudes itself into daily life with its Greek and Semitic idiom delivered in Tudor prose and elevated tones, can no longer be taken for granted. What place have its improbable stories in a scientific age? How can pastoral imagery help those who live in teeming cities, alternately threatened with nuclear war and promised a life of unlimited leisure in an automated world? 'Theological education,' the writer concludes, 'isolated from those who ask such questions, is useless.'

We must all agree with that remark. And probably the other comments are a fair summary of what many people think. But it is far from being the whole truth. The Church, we agree, has been slow to change. She does continue to use ancient buildings and equally long established words—though among them are some that have force and meaning for us still: home, love, death, life, sin, healing, forgiveness. She apparently offers men in their recurrent predicaments the same recurring remedies, much as a lighthouse may continue down the years to emit the same signals to save men's lives. But in fact she is as far from immutable indifference to the changing pattern of the world as any advertising agent or manufacturer. That is shown by all those commissions examining every aspect of her life. It was shown by the Second Vatican Council and the reports it published. Rome now speaks of the pilgrim church, on a journey, always in need of purification, and quotes Luther's description: *ecclesia semper reformanda*.

In fact the real cause for astonishment is not the rigidity of the Church but the amount of change that has come over her in the last five years, not all of it without pain. It is one thing to keep on changing the design of a commercial product; it is quite a different matter to keep on reconsidering a man's whole way of life and the basis of his faith. This is what is happening to ministers today. If the present situation constitutes a crisis for the Church as a whole, it is the ministry that feels the main impact, and those engaged in ministerial training feel it most of all. They are constantly having to ask anew the question: How should we be preparing men for the changes that will come over their ministry in the next forty years?

The crisis goes deeper and is more urgent than we sometimes think. It is imperative that at times we stand back from the struggle and see what it is, or ought to be, about. While controversies continue as to whether or not the ministry should be episcopally ordained, and whether women should be

admitted to its ranks, and—in one branch of the Church—whether priests should be required to remain celibate, far more radical questions are waiting to be answered. Some, for instance, are asking whether we need a ministry at all.

Perhaps for our present, limited, purpose we may be permitted to put aside a full discussion of the question as to whether or not there should be a Church. It is of some importance, but we must start somewhere. In the past, if such a question had been raised it would have received a crisp answer from those who believed the Church to have 'privileged access to divine inside information'. Today, when revelation is more often regarded as a personal meeting with God made possible in the believing community, we are just as sure that that believing community—the Church—is needed. Perhaps this is part of the reply to those who, having condemned the Church as being merely structured for survival, propose to establish a non-church and plan for it a structure so that it may survive.

Much nearer the heart of the matter are those who say: Today, ministers try hard to prove that they belong to the laity—the *laos*, the People of God; on the other hand, laymen are aware that they have a ministry to perform; so what is the difference between them?

* * * *

What is at stake is the concept of vocation. With that go all the questions we ask about the nature of the service, the ministry, into which each of us is called today.

When the enquiry is approached from this end, and the sociological changes in our community are kept in mind, we reach ideas about team ministries, comprising ordained and lay members, and about the need for ministers and laymen to be trained to take their proper place within such teams.

The ordained ministry, we may think, is nothing if not sacramental. There is growing acceptance of the belief that the Reformers were right to associate the Word with the sacraments in the work of the ministry. So it would appear that there are good reasons for ordaining to the ministry of the sacraments many who at present are confined to that of the Word. Beyond this it seems unnecessary to insist on a precise statement of the difference between the ordained minister and the layman. Do we need to say more than that

There are varieties of gifts
but the same Spirit;
... varieties of ministry,
but the same Lord?

We are dealing with the language of signs and symbols, and to forget the fact can be disastrous. It could be claimed that the Church herself is a sacrament of the Presence of God almost identical with the Eucharist. We too, as well as the broken bread, are the Body of Christ. To talk like this about the Church and the ministry is completely to shift the ground of the discussion from legalism and the priority of structure to more ultimate concerns.

If I had been asked only a short while ago what I thought to be the most critical issue as regards the ministry, almost certainly I would have replied: The concept of authority. Now I am convinced that it is not. There is a more fundamental concept still: one that is vital to the whole idea of vocation. It is the concept that most sharply divides Christianity from Buddhism; the clasp that binds into one volume the Old Testament and the New. It is the concept of grace. The ministry itself, like the sacraments we dispense, is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace which is one of the varied gifts of God.

Our response to authority is obedience. No minister, least of all a member of that disciplined Order of free men, the Brotherhood of Travelling Preachers founded by Mr Wesley, would belittle that response. But our response to God's offer of grace is acceptance. There could hardly be a more elemental relationship than that. From it spring the reason for our obedience and the power to be obedient to our vocation. So it brings its own demand. Saved by grace we may be, but never against our own will. We have a choice to make, and we must persist in it, and some have to tell others about it.

Two hymns, associated with the festival which we celebrate today, follow this lead. Charles Wesley's conversion hymn, written at Whitsuntide in 1738, has the verse:

And shall I slight my Father's love?
Or basely fear His gifts to own?
Unmindful of His favours prove?
Shall I, the hallowed Cross to shun,
Refuse His righteousness to impart,
By hiding it within my heart?

Perhaps the wording is archaic, but the experience is authentic still—as also is that of a hymn by Philip Doddridge, *The Saviour when to heaven He rose*, which is sung at the beginning of every Methodist ordination service, with its lines about the pastors who continue the apostles' work:

From Christ their varied gifts derive,
And fed by Christ their graces live.

* * * *

When we turn from this view of the ministry to ask what, briefly, are the main adjustments in ministerial training which are needed to meet the changing situation, not surprisingly we find them easier to summarize than to put into effect.

Few would now dissent from the view that we should in every possible way develop joint training between the denominations until fully ecumenical colleges are regarded as normal. Nothing will do more to bring about the reunion of the Churches. A start has been made, here and there, by exchanging students and staff, and here in Cambridge a Presbyterian and a Congregational college are to be united. There is some hope that the not too distant future might see the union of some Anglican and Methodist colleges. But formidable difficulties are met by those who would go further.

If ministers are to go out of college equipped for their work in the world of today, it seems clear that the curriculum must be wider than in the past. The traditional disciplines of biblical study, theology, church history, and all that can be comprehended under the wide term 'Pastoralia', still have pre-eminent value, even if the approach to them and their relation to each other need further thought. But they are no longer enough. In some colleges philosophy and psychology, liturgy, worship and the spiritual life, have long been added. There is a growing acknowledgement that an understanding of the scientific and political thought of our time, the principles of educational method and the findings of sociology about the structure of modern society are equally valuable. As in every other educational field, time is the chief enemy, but the pressure for a more broadly based curriculum also leads to a demand for more staff which can only be met by having larger colleges and making greater use of university facilities.

There could, with advantage, be more cooperation in the training of ministers along with students preparing for the medical and teaching professions, not so that ministers may be amateurs practising the skills of others but so that they may do their own work more effectively.

The whole movement of thought today, with its emphasis on the secular aspects of Christianity and our need to learn from the world, calls for more in-service training. Some would have us go the whole way and in the service of the non-church abolish all theological colleges. A more moderate view, while appreciating the value of much that is learnt within college walls, would encourage students to spend more time learning their work in the factory, the school, the hospital, the shop, and the homes of the people.

* * * *

'Vitals in religion are few', wrote Benjamin Whichcote, leader of the Cambridge Platonists: truth 'lies in a little compass and narrow room'. There is an echo here of an earlier Cambridge voice. It was a favourite theme of Erasmus: 'Those things which concern faith or belief, let them be contained in a few articles.' A Jesuit in our own time has expressed the same belief: 'The distinctive message of the Church can be reduced to very little. All men are invited in Christ to build communities and to value presence. This is their vocation, whether they know it or not.'

In all our thinking about the ministry it may be that the words we have chosen from St Paul will be of more help towards renewal than much tinkering with structures. Given that there are many kinds of work to be done but the same God, it may be that the heart of the matter is to be found in the Whitsuntide events described in the Epistle to the Ephesians⁴:

He ascended into the heights
With captives in his train;
He gave gifts to men . . .

And these were his gifts:

Some to be apostles, some prophets,
some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,
to equip God's people for work in his service.
to the building up of the body of Christ.

Here, as the Authorized Version has it, is 'the work of the ministry'.

With this in mind, it would seem that we are called to be completely committed and utterly detached: fully committed to the belief that God makes his gifts to men, and calls us into his service; fully committed to the work he has put into our hands—that of equipping his people for the work they have to do in his service, and at the same time totally detached as regards all that men have added to this simple view. Such an approach quite literally takes the magic out of the ministry, but the harmony and wholeness, which come from the one Spirit, are restored.

We are called to be committed and yet detached. How men become aware of a sense of vocation varies greatly. There are still some who could say with Charles de Foucauld: 'The moment I believed there was a God, I knew that I could do nothing else than live for him alone; my religious vocation dates from the same moment as the gift of faith.' Others, perhaps the majority today, might say: 'As long as there are gifts in the Church that are not being used, and needs in the world that are not being met, I am called into the service of God.' What does it matter? It is not the nature of the call that is at issue here, but the mode.

We who are called to live consciously in time and eternity have to care for those who share with us that existence. But we, who claim to believe that God is everywhere, seem strangely reluctant to admit that he is where he really is; in the most alarming place of all: in our own hearts. A minister, presbyter if you prefer the term, is an ordinary man who has accepted this shattering truth.

¹ *Diuisiones uero gratiarum sunt...*

² MHB 720. This hymn also takes up other ideas that occur in this sermon: that we are the body of Christ,

and that we all have work to
 Hear us who Thy nature share,
 Who Thy mystic body are,
 do which God has appointed for us,
 Placed according to Thy will,
 Let us all our work fulfil.

³ *Education for Ministry*, by Charles R. Fielding, published by the American Association of Theological Schools (Dayton, Ohio, 1966).

⁴ Ephesians 4: 8, 11, 12.

SHORTER SURVEY

John T. Wilkinson

THE Church of England: 1900–1965 (S.C.M. Press, 55s.) forms a worthy memorial to the late Canon Roger Lloyd, Sub-Dean of Winchester Cathedral, who died while this book was in the press. Though he was author of a considerable number of important works, this will long be regarded as his greatest achievement and will remain a standard work. First published in 1946 under the title of *The Church of England in the Twentieth Century*, it formed two volumes, covering the period 1900–1939, which have long been out of print and unobtainable. It now appears in a completely revised form and a section covering the years 1939–1965 has been added, the whole being published as a single volume of more than 600 pages. Although a scholar of no mean reputation, Canon Lloyd asserts in the preface that it is not a work of professional history, but rather ‘a meditation on an historical theme’, and therefore in its treatment of the subject it is selective. He endeavours to produce a picture of the Church of England showing its outstanding features, and in so doing he eminently succeeds. He describes movements and delineates personalities. With critical judgement he traces, for instance, the importance of Anglo-Catholicism on the one hand and the modernist controversy on the other. Archbishop Temple and Archbishop Fisher claim special attention as great leaders, but there are also significant estimates of many lesser-known figures. Throughout the book strands of theological development are carefully evaluated. It is an impressive book with wide horizons and ecumenical outlook, and it should be widely read.

The Glory of Man (S.C.M. Press, 18s.) forms the Bampton Lectures, 1966, by Canon David E. Jenkins, Fellow of Queen’s College, Oxford. It is an exceptionally important book. In its freshness of thought and close-knit argument it provides a much-needed antidote to the present somewhat ephemeral theological debate. It is essentially a christological study but with a new emphasis which has roots firmly embedded in the ‘givenness’ of Christian truth. The starting-point is the ‘recognizably given’, namely ‘being a person’, a fact that is ‘self-evident, universal and inescapable’. ‘Personalness’ in the universe cannot be understood apart from the things we know concerning Jesus of Nazareth. ‘The things concerning Jesus have a strong claim to be considered as weighty data for our understanding of man and the world because at their heart and as their foundation there lies the creative impact of the actual historical Jesus’ (p. 22). Mr Jenkins repudiates the fashionable theological assertion that the historicity of Jesus can be regarded as secondary or indeed as largely irrecoverable. ‘The records as they stand require an historical creative personality before they will permit of a creative responsive community.’ The rehabilitation of the Jesus of history is one of the finest and most cogently argued truths in these pages. Mr Jenkins regards

the christological controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries as of greatest importance in the establishment of this fact, and comes down firmly on the side of the Definition of Chalcedon concerning Jesus as 'truly man and truly God'. 'The structure was evolved against the grain of thought of the time.' This truth at once assumes an anthropological significance: the Incarnation is a declaration about man, for Jesus revealed man's essential nature and thereby unfolded the glory of man so that man 'reflects divine qualities and is heading for union with the divine personalness who is God'. This book stands as a challenge to the tendency of much current debate. 'To oppose transcendence to immanence or insist on substituting involvement language for all detachment language is simply a mistake arising out of a combination of misunderstanding and ignorance of the authentic implications of the authentic Christian tradition. . . . Transcendence without immanence makes nonsense of God, immanence without transcendence makes nonsense of man. Both are quite untrue to the givenness of Jesus Christ.' This is a book to buy and to read—and read again.

'Without a grasp of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the medieval history of Christian thought is not only left incomplete, but, perhaps worse, the Reformation and Counter Reformation seem to appear out of the black night of an unknown and therefore unbeloved period.' This sentence from the preface indicates the purpose of *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought* (Lutterworth Press, 35s.), in which, by selection of key documents fully annotated, Heiko A. Oberman, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Harvard, shows that 'a definite and geographically extensive continuity exists between the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century Reformation in the shape of the ongoing intellectual quest'. Despite the inability of the conciliar movement to secure administrative reform, the challenge to the corruption of the papal curia continued both within the Church of Rome and outside it. Therefore it should be realized that 'the procession of the Forerunners of the Reformation is properly conceived of as a *two-pronged movement*, providing context and antecedents for both the Protestant and the Tridentine Reformation'. To illustrate this movement documents of varied types from biblical commentaries, treatises, letters, sermons and a papal bull have been selected, and the major European countries are represented in the selection. These documents are assembled under five headings: Scripture and Tradition, Justification, The Church, The Eucharist, and Biblical Exegesis, and while the writers include such familiar figures as Hus, Erasmus, Biel, Cajetan and Thomas Bradwardine, there are lesser-known names: Wessel Gansfort (Netherlands), Sylvester Prierias (Italy), John Brevicoxa and Jacobus Faber Stapulensis (both of France). Each section contains a valuable Introduction. For any revaluation of the Reformation movement in the 16th century this work is both essential and timely.

Through the centuries the figure of Martin Luther has been a subject of controversy. During the last fifty years or so, however, considerable change has taken place in the attitude of Roman historians and theologians. Since 1904 when Denifle made his violent attack on Luther, Roman Luther-

scholars have passed 'from destructive criticism to respectful encounter'—a process which has received a new impulse under Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council. A valuable study of this development is provided by Professor Richard Stauffer's *Luther as seen by Catholics* (Ecumenical Studies in History, No. 7) (Lutterworth Press, 12s. 6d.). The first part examines the work of Denifle and Grisar and that of English-speaking Roman Catholics who have taken over their position as 'accusers' of Luther; the second part deals with German and Anglo-Saxon attempts to reassess Luther's person and work, by Roman Catholic scholars who have sought to do justice to Luther by their rejection of the polemical attitude. Such attempts are a primary sign of closer co-operation amongst Christian scholars. An appendix examines the position in France. This fully documented work should be in the hands of every student of Luther and the Reformation.

Philip Melanchthon (1496–1560), the compiler of the Augsburg Confession as the basic creed of Protestantism, is recognized as the first systematic theologian of the Protestant Reformation. His treatise on Christian doctrine, *Loci Communes*, was originally published in 1521, but over the years Melanchthon made a number of changes which reflected the development of his thought. Issued in its final form in 1555, but not until now translated into English, it is now available in 'The Library of Protestant Theology', edited and translated by C. L. Manschreck: *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes, 1555* (Oxford University Press, N.Y., \$7.00). In view of the strong vein of humanism in his thought, the differences between the early and later *Loci* have caused some to suggest that Melanchthon drifted away from the evangelical position established by Luther; but it should be remembered that Luther himself regarded the *Loci* so highly as to declare that this work should be esteemed next to the Bible. A careful study of this work is essential for an understanding of this important Reformation leader.

The Genevan version of the English Bible (1560) was destined to have great influence, and for some time it even rivalled that of the King James version of 1611. A history of this earlier version is being prepared by Lewis Lupton, and the first volume, bearing the title *The Quarrel* (Fauconbridge Press, n.p.), outlines the preliminary controversy leading to the Frankfurt crisis in 1555 and to the departure of Knox and Whittingham to Geneva. The book contains a useful summary of English and Continental Bibles of the 16th century, and is fully illustrated. The origin of Mr Lupton's book was a chance encounter with a Geneva Bible in a Chichester bookshop which resulted in a new interest in the Reformed Christianity of the 16th century. This fact has given an autobiographical touch to the book, and being an artist and with knowledge of the crafts of printing, engraving and book-binding of that century, the author practises the same himself, and has produced his volume in beautiful format, though the content of the work is somewhat marred by the occasional references to the writer's own ecclesiastical opinions. Later volumes are promised and will be awaited with interest.

First published in 1954, Dr J. T. McNeill's book *The History and Charac-*

ter of Calvinism—‘a first hand discussion based on primary sources’ (*Times Literary Supplement*)—is now issued as a Galaxy Book (18s.) by the Oxford University Press (N.Y.). The work has been described as ‘the historical reference volume on Calvin in the English language for years to come’.

In Scotland Lady Glenorchy (1741–1786) was the counterpart of the Countess of Huntingdon in England and was the founder of a number of churches more democratic than was usual. A great admirer of George Whitefield, she aligned herself with the Calvinist wing of the Evangelical Revival. Unlike the Countess of Huntingdon she sought to link the churches which she founded both in Scotland and England with denominations already in existence, or so to frame their constitution that they might later become thus identified. Wesley met her on the occasion of his twelfth visit to Scotland in 1770, but theological differences prevented her enlisting under his banner. Had she done so, Methodism in Scotland would have been a different story. In *Lady Glenorchy and her Churches* (The Research Unity, Crieff, 7s. 6d.) Dr D. P. Thomson provides an interestingly written and fully illustrated account of this remarkable woman.

Historians have long regarded the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832 as a major turning-point in English history. It has become a tradition that England was on the brink of revolution during the reform struggle and the question is raised as to why revolution did not occur. In *The Reform Bill of 1832*, edited by W. H. Maehl, Jr. (European Problem Studies) (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y.) differing answers to this question are provided by selections from the writings of English and American historians, representing four main lines of interpretation in the writings of the Reform Bill period: (1) The Whig School, (2) the Tory opposition, (3) the historians of the Working-class Movement, (4) the more recent revisionist historians who single out points in the traditional accounts for re-examination. This is a useful conspectus on the subject.

A number of books concerning preaching have reached us. In *Preaching the Old Testament* (Epworth Press, 7s. 6d.) William Cosser insists that the Old Testament must take its rightful place in modern Christian preaching, not only as containing background material but because the two parts of the Bible are interrelated. Containing sound scholarship, the book attempts to face the difficulties of Old Testament interpretation which sometimes deter the preacher and it leaves the impression that for most preachers the Old Testament is a mine of material largely unexplored.

First published in 1956, *Worship and Preaching* (Epworth Press, 15s.) by Thomas M. Morrow has been completely revised and is now issued with additional material. R. J. Billington deals with the subject of Worship, and J. B. Bates writes on Children’s Worship. It has useful appendices on the Use of the Christian Year, the ‘Thou–You’ debate, and a list of recommended books. *The Preacher’s Handbook, No. 10* (Epworth Press, 21s.) is edited by David N. Francis who will shortly leave the Local Preachers’ Department after a distinguished service, fulfilled not least in his literary ministry. The sections of the book focus attention on Preaching, Worship, and the Gospel—each with three articles by able contributors. The final

article on 'New Trends in Theological Thinking' will prove particularly useful.

The Holy Spirit in Christian Preaching, by J. Ithel Jones (Epworth Press, 7s. 6d.), is the substance of the Gay Lectures given at the South Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1965, in which the author, who is President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, endeavours to trace the significance of the Holy Spirit not only in the preparation and utterance of the preacher himself, but also in the experience and response of the congregation listening to him. Even though in the final analysis the workings of the Spirit must remain mysterious, an impact becomes revealed 'not through abnormal phenomena and ecstasies but through setting men on fire with love'. The book has its basis in sound scholarship.

In a small but attractive meditation, *The Spirit's Guidance of the Church* (Epworth Press, 2s. 6d.), Ernest G. Loosley, one of our veteran ministers, being deeply impressed by Charles Wesley's line, 'By Thine unerring Spirit led', and believing that 'the influence of the Spirit upon the life of the Church was dynamic and not static', seeks, by the selection of 'certain experiences that bear the marks of divine leading', to illustrate from biblical material the movement of the Spirit in the Church's witness.

In *Fifty Key Words in Theology* (Lutterworth Press 8s. 6d.), Professor F. G. Healey, of Westminster College, Cambridge, has provided a commentary on the basic theological terms, which should prove of great value to the general reader for an understanding of words often used by theologians without explanation. The considerable use of cross-references adds to the value of this book which all preachers would do well to possess.

First published in 1957, many readers will welcome the publication in a cheap edition (S.C.M. Press, 12s. 6d.) of *Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases*, by Professor Ian T. Ramsey (now Bishop of Durham), of which book Professor H. D. Lewis, of London University, wrote in review: 'No one, to my knowledge, has brought out so well, or in a way so easily apprehended by the general reader, the significance of noting the peculiar character of religious claims.'

Paul Blanshard on Vatican II (Allen & Unwin, 36s.) is a comprehensive report on the Vatican Council of 1962-5 by one who is regarded as one of the leading critics of the Roman Catholic Church in the English-speaking world and who was a correspondent at the Council's sessions. It contains an intimate assessment of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, and, as a record of events, seeks to appraise the Council in the light of American values. At the end of the Council the author came away convinced that its members were men of high Christian integrity, and rejoiced that 'the Church they represented could no longer be described as a monolithic glacier of reactionary thought'. He affirms that 'the Roman Catholic Church can never be quite the same after Vatican II'. In the book every aspect of the work of the Council is summarized and discussed, and a final chapter consists of a 'balance-sheet' in which the author estimates the significance of the Council, its advances and its failures. In his view 'it accomplished great things but it also dodged, evaded and by-passed several vital issues'. Aside

from the important fact that valuable and critical issues were ventilated, four specific gains can be described as 'credits': liturgy reform, admission of possible mistakes in the past, limited religious liberty and the commitment to social reform. Balancing these four substantial 'credits', however, are four equally substantial 'debits': continued opposition to birth-control, reassertion of Catholic claims on the public treasury, the continuation of papal autocracy, and discrimination in mixed marriages. Blanshard also notes three important omissions, 'as falling between credit and debit status', from this preliminary balance-sheet—the collegiality of bishops is not to be listed as a definite 'credit', nor is the movement towards Christian unity, nor the statement on the Jews. This book falls into the category of essential reading in this age of growing ecumenical understanding.

The prayer of Christ for unity is the prayer of all Christians, and Father Titus Cranny, Director of the Unity Apostolate of the Franciscan Society of the Atonement, has written a meditation in exposition of the Prayer of our Lord—*John 17: For we are One* (Unity Apostolate, Graymoor, Garrison, N.Y., n.p.). The work includes chapters on comments on the Prayer from the early Christian Fathers and a few later writers, together with its significance for Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI. A further chapter shows its meaning in the life and vocation of Father Paul, of Graymoor, Founder of the Society. The final chapter deals with the meaning of the Prayer of Christ for today. Whilst Catholic in tone, this book is meant for all Christians.

Convinced that the Fourth Gospel is marked by a strong vein of anti-semitism, Dr Dagobert Runes has issued the King James version of the Gospel from which he has removed all passages which appear to denigrate the people of Israel. By so doing in *The Gospel according to St John* (Philosophical Library, N.Y., \$2.75) he seeks to offer the message of Jesus without adulteration 'by hate and revulsion against the people of the Saviour'. He declares that he has done this 'without the slightest wish to impugn its beauty or its divine inspiration', and has so edited it 'in conformity with the true ecumenical spirit of Pope John XXIII'. The fact, however, that in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is represented as pronouncing invective against the leaders of the people quite as strong as any to be found in the Fourth Gospel, suggests that such a policy of exclusion, however laudable its motive, is somewhat arbitrary. It should also be remembered that it is in this very Gospel that the great saying is preserved that 'salvation is of the Jews' (4: 22).

Somewhat apprehensive on account of the expansion of the ecumenical movement, the latitudinarian character of the World Council of Churches and the indication of a trend towards reunion with Rome, J. W. Davies, trained in the Moody Bible Institute and as an evangelist linguistically well equipped, having served widely throughout India, believes that the times call for a closer examination of the Scriptures regarding the Church and its future. His book *The Lord of the Churches* (Pickering and Inglis, 21s.) is divided into two sections: 'The Churches: their Chart and Compass' and 'The Churches and their history', the latter being a study of the Seven

Churches of *Revelation* 1–3. The whole exposition is heavily weighted with scripture references, and the passage from *Revelation* is interpreted in terms of prophecy: e.g. the development and influence of the Papacy. These pages, however, can afford a starting-point and substance for many a sermon on the nature and significance of the Church.

The formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925 by the union of Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists was an almost unprecedented event in the history of the Church. The Canadian experience of a Union covering forty years has significance far beyond the boundaries of Canada itself. The Union was accompanied by a schism—a danger that is always possible in every project of union—but the overwhelming verdict of those within the United Church is that union across denominational lines has been ‘an enriching and fruitful experience’. In *The Canadian Experience of Church Union* (Lutterworth Press, 13s. 6d.) (Ecumenical Studies in History, No. 7) Dr Webster Grant, Professor of Church History in Toronto University, surveys these years of union and gives a careful analysis and a considered assessment of its importance.

Issued under the authority of the Voice of Methodism Association is *Weighed in the Balance* (price 6d.) which consists of a series of brief studies of the Report *Towards Reconciliation* (1967) regarding Anglican–Methodist Union. Not unexpectedly intransigent in its attitude to the Report, it is the work of a number of eminently sincere writers who declare that the questions of episcopacy and the meaning of ‘priest’ are their chief stumbling blocks in the way of acceptance of the ‘Service of Reconciliation’ including the proposed ‘Declaration’. It would seem, however, that, despite the lucid statement within the Report, the attempt at mutual accommodation therein expressed has not been fully discerned: ‘The common intention which the Service requires of participants is . . . to commit our continuing differences to God, and on this basis to commit ourselves, with our differences, to each other’ (p. 15). ‘There is no attempt in this Service to define the relation of one ministry to the other or to pronounce on the question whether the action which God will take in response to our prayer will be of the nature of an ordination or not. To do that would be to judge the issue which some would settle one way and some another, but *which we can all agree is properly left in God’s Hands* (p. 29: italics ours). In the light of the fully admitted ‘liberty of interpretation’, the writers of these studies should give deeper consideration to the statement of intention so clearly set down in the Report.

‘All Christians are called on to minister. . . . One cannot be a Christian without serving, and all of us who are Christians, and so in the Church, are also in the world whether we like it or not.’ So writes Professor J. A. Bailey, of the University of Michigan, in *The Ministry of the Church in the World* (Oxford University Press, 9s. 6d.), in which, despite the difficulties involved, he insists upon the importance of a right understanding of the basic truths of the Bible. Such problems as the liberal interpretation of the story of creation, the miracles of Jesus, the Christian attitude to the world and the biblical view of the end of the world must be faced in the light of the findings

of modern biblical scholarship. The book is lucidly written and bears the mark of sound learning. It could well be taken as a basis for group studies.

Edited by Dr L. G. Champion, Principal of Bristol Baptist College, *Outlook for Christianity* (Lutterworth Press, 35s.) is a volume of essays presented to Dr Ernest A. Payne on the occasion of his retirement from the office of General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. In addition to his tireless attention to immense denominational activities, Dr Payne has manifested a deep interest in ecumenical issues, and as a church historian possessing an exceptionally wide and accurate knowledge he has won distinction and esteem. Thirteen writers, representing six branches of the Christian Church, combine in this tribute, which opens with a brief memoir by R. L. Child. Dr Kenneth Latourette writes on historical perspective; Visser 't Hooft on the ecumenical task; and Bishop Oliver Tomkins, of Bristol, on aspects of Christian unity. Kenneth Slack writes of the Church in Britain and John Huxtable on Christian Education from 1902 to 1912. Neville Clark examines the crisis of biblical theology and S. F. Winward writes on Free Church worship. Bishop Newbigin surveys the mission of the World Church and Professor J. Skogland, of Rochester U.S.A., writes on Baptists and World Christianity. Leslie Wenger of the Baptist Mission in Pakistan deals with objections to Christian missions and Principal Mervyn Himbury, of Melbourne, with the prospects for Christianity in Australia. Finally a selected list of Dr Payne's writings (1924-1966) is added. This book forms a collection of essays eminently readable, valuable in their content and most fitting as a memorial to Dr Payne's work.

A number of smaller studies are to hand. In the Beckly Social Service Lecture, 1966, on *Dangers and Hopes at the United Nations* (Epworth Press, 2s. 6d.) Lord Caradon puts forward three positive propositions: 'first, the dangers of the world are so great that they can be overcome only by international action; second, that international action is required not only in peace-keeping and peacemaking but in the desperately urgent task of narrowing the now growing gap between the rich and the poor; and third, that we need to bring to the future a new motive of international service'. He proceeds to survey the main obstacles with which the United Nations is faced—the use of the veto and the retention by many governments of old national obsessions—and finally examines the dangers of the world: poverty, population, revolutionary youth and racial conflict. All these things present new opportunities and new challenge for advance.

Under the title *What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?* (Epworth Press, 2s. 6d.), which is the second Charles Ryder Smith Lecture (1967), Dr John S. Whale seeks to show that the Christian faith is a debtor both to Jew and to Greek. 'The emphatic distinction between reason and revelation—between *scire* and *credere*—is a recurrent theme of Christian doctrine from, say, Justin Martyr in the second century to Ritschl in the nineteenth.' With typically scholarly acumen and insight, Dr Whale asserts that revelation and reason are not to be set against each other, even though at first sight it might appear that modern scholarship, belonging to the region of the Academy, challenges 'the total scriptural authentication of the revelatory Event'.

In *Reconciliation in Changing Britain*, by Professor R. Tudor Jones (Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2s. 6d.), which is the Alex Wood Memorial Lecture for 1966, the author appeals for a growth of common understanding between the various factions within these islands. 'The disappearance of the British Nation and the emergence of the "nations of Britain" as fellow-partners in a common human enterprise could indeed be a most memorable turning point in our common history', but the process must be controlled by the faith that the basic reconciliation is that in which God is reconciling the world to himself.

Mr Gilbert Thomas, reviewer, essayist, literary critic and poet, has steadily won appreciation since his first volume of verse appeared in 1912. His lyrical poems are marked by a Wordsworthian simplicity, and throughout reveal a salutary independence of successive literary fashions. His latest volume *One Man Speaks* (Epworth Press, 6s.) contains a single poem, autobiographical in character, which bears some resemblance in its general structure to the late Poet Laureate's *The Everlasting Mercy*, though it is marked by a deeper tone and more intimate spiritual quality. (Mr Thomas is the author of *John Masefield*, in the 'Modern Writers Series'.) The poem, which is fascinating in its descriptive detail, was first broadcast in September 1966. It tells the story of the author's spiritual pilgrimage from his earliest days through more than half a century and breathes the vitality of a deepening experience of Christ. For Mr Thomas, Christ is the

Companion who sits with me in the evening;
Greets me in the morning;
Often during the heat and burden
Of the day, drops in with smiles,
Sometimes with courteous correction,
Always with understanding,
Encouragement and love.

It is a moving tribute to the significance of Christ at least for one man.

RECENT LITERATURE

Edited by John T. Wilkinson

The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in Acts, by Eldon Jay Epp (Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series, 3) (Cambridge University Press, 1966. Pages xvi, 210. Price 45s.)

The Western Text, of which Codex Bezae (D) is the most important manuscript representative, continues to present the most fascinating, and the most intractable, problem in the textual criticism of the New Testament. It is now recognized that no one scholar will solve it; only the patient accumulation of detailed studies, carried out from a variety of angles, is likely to succeed. Dr E. J. Epp, Associate Professor in the University of Southern California, has made one such study. He has not solved the whole problem, but he has made a valuable contribution to its solution. He cuts down the field to Acts (where the problem of the Western Text is most acute), and he cuts down the witnesses to D. He does not deal, except incidentally, with philological and historical questions, but, looking at the text of D, asks what characteristic theological tendencies it expresses. An answer to this question could throw light on the origin of the Text.

It must be said at once that Dr Epp has done his work well. He discusses an immense number of variants, and, though some scope remains for disagreement, his comments are always as sensible as his statement of the evidence is accurate. The Cambridge Press deserves a word of praise here too; in a very complicated piece of printing I have noted only one misprint (in the Hebrew on p. 52), and here the error could have been taken over by the author from Blass, whom he quotes. The result can be summed up in a word: the tendency of D is anti-Jewish. This is expressed in three ways. In comparison with other texts, (1) the Jews are represented as more hostile to Jesus, and emphasis upon Jesus as Lord and Messiah underlines their guilt; (2) the Jews are represented as making a smaller response and a less significant contribution to the Christian faith, whereas the place of the Gentiles is magnified; and (3) the leaders of the Jews show more hostility to the apostles, who themselves are made to stand out more clearly as the leaders of the Church.

There is much to support this conclusion, but the evidence cannot be listed in a review; I must confine myself to criticisms, though with the hope that they will not have the effect of concealing my high opinion of Dr Epp's work. (1) Dr Epp does not carry through completely his intention of confining his study to D. He deals with some passages where the text of D is wanting, and in others, where he thinks that D does not give the original form of the Western Text, he corrects it by other witnesses. Perhaps he is right to do this—certainly it is always perfectly clear what he is doing: but at the present stage of the discussion it might have been better to focus attention on D as a single delimited witness. (2) For Dr Epp, there is one tendency in D, and it is anti-Jewish; no other tendency has a chance. Yet he himself shows (e.g., pp. 117ff.) that other tendencies exist (e.g., emphasis on the Holy Spirit, on faith, repentance, preaching), and it may be that some of these are almost, if not quite, as important as the anti-Jewish tendency. (3) It may be that Dr Epp takes the Western editor too seriously. Long ago, W. L. Knox

told me that the Western Text reminded him of a rather foolish Sunday School teacher trying to make the Bible stories 'more interesting for the children'. There is much truth in this. D, and its allies, multiply pious and impressive words, and thus have the effect of heightening any existing tendencies. There is an anti-Jewish tendency in Acts anyway; D makes it clearer and stronger. 'Tendencies', beyond the tendency to exaggeration and verbosity, may be taken with one or two grains of salt.

In conclusion, however, it must be repeated that this is a first-rate piece of work. It is not every man's meat, but no one seriously interested in textual criticism can ignore it.

C. K. BARRETT

The Ten Commandments in Recent Research, by J. J. Stamm and M. E. Andrews. (Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series, No. 2.) (S.C.M. Press, 15s.)

The German original of this work appeared in 1958, and a French translation quickly followed in 1959 with very slight modifications. In 1962 a revised and enlarged German edition appeared. Now we have an English translation of this second edition, with additions by Dr Andrew. This effort to keep the book in line with its title has produced a most useful summary of material.

The greater part of the book (75 pages) is given to introduction. Here Stamm gives special attention to the work of Mowinckel and Alt. The latter's achievement in connecting the Decalogue as apodictic law with the feast of Tabernacles, he regards as a fundamental contribution to the understanding of the Decalogue. The largest additional section by Andrew follows at this point, giving the views of Gerstenberger, Fohrer, Reventlow, and McCarthy. The introduction is concluded with an appraisal of views surveyed, in which the reader is warned against too sharp a distinction between Covenant and Commandment: 'God's grace cannot be abstracted from the demand made on us' (p. 71).

The second part of the book is given to exegesis; the commandments are taken one by one and the light of recent writings allowed to shine upon them.

The book is well documented, so that at any point the reader knows how to embark on further study. The reviewer noticed very few omissions in the authors consulted: the introduction makes no mention of Morgenstern's *The Decalogue of the Holiness Code* (HUCA 26, 1ff.), and the exegesis makes no use of the suggestions of Kessler's *Problematik des Dekalogs (Vetus Testamentum VII, 11ff.)* and the subsequent note by Petuchowski (VII, 397f.), nor Watt's note in *ZATW* 74, 144f. This is not a specialist's book. It grew from lectures given to parish clergy, and all such will find it most helpful and illuminating.

H. COOK

History and Theology in Second Isaiah, by James D. Smart (Epworth Press, 35s.) In this commentary on Isaiah 35, 40-66, first published in America two years ago, the author makes a spirited attack on practically all the familiar assumptions accepted by most commentators on Deutero-Isaiah during the present century.

It has long been generally assumed that the prophet was concerned with the Babylonian exiles of the 6th century B.C., among whom he lived, and who are to be regarded as representing the pure faith of Israel in contrast to those left behind in Palestine. Dr Smart points out the paucity of the evidence for this assumption, which in his view places too great a reliance on the Chronicler's scheme of 6th-century history. In fact, we do not know the geographical location of the prophet, though the author considers it most probable that he lived in Palestine.

The validity of the Cyrus references is also questioned, and the argument advanced that the passages which have been taken to allude to him related, in their original form, to Israel as the transformed and glorified Servant of the Lord.

The Servant Song theory is dismissed as an 'absurdity'. These passages are not in any sense to be isolated, but form an integral part of the alternation to be seen in the prophet's thought between Israel as she is and as, by the transforming power of God, she is to be. It is this eschatological hope that dominates his prophecies. He looks for an imminent turning-point in history in which 'Israel, the blind and helpless worm, is to become a mighty nation'. God's word has power to bring his purpose to fulfilment, but Israel's sin can delay, though not defeat it.

The assigning of chaps. 56-66 to a later Palestinian imitator or interpreter of the prophet, whom Duhm first designated Trito-Isaiah, is seen as yet another mistake, hindering us from discerning the almost perfect unity of chaps. 35, 40-66.

It will be seen that Dr Smart follows C. C. Torrey in some of the latter's conclusions, but departs from him in retaining the dating of Deutero-Isaiah as c. 538 B.C. Some may perhaps wonder whether a Hebrew prophet at that particular time, wherever he may have been situated, would have been able to forbear saying something about the current world upheaval, or would have seen no sign of the divine hand at work through the human instrument of Babylon's overthrow. In this and at many other points readers may find themselves in some disagreement with the author, who at times seems unduly scathing in his dismissal of points of view contrary to his own. Yet the vigour and enthusiasm with which the book is written, its emphasis on the eschatological as against the historical interpretation of the prophet's message, and its stimulating challenge to old assumptions, are all greatly to be welcomed as a fresh contribution to what is likely to be a continuing debate.

S. C. THEXTON

Principles of Christian Theology, by John Macquarrie. (S.C.M. Press, 50s.)

This is the most significant one-volume systematic theology to come from a writer in English for many years. Readers of Dr Macquarrie's earlier books will not be disappointed in their expectations of this volume. It is divided as follows. After a brief but crucial discussion of the author's theological position and method, Part 1 consists of chapters on Philosophical Theology. These include much that has often been termed 'prolegomena' as well as themes obviously suggested by the title. Part 2, called Systematic Theology (not Dogmatics, for reasons stated) wisely begins with the Tri-unity of God and then discusses the central doctrines about the Creator, the Person and Work of Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Last Things. Part 3, Applied Theology, contains all that is said in this volume about Church, Ministry and Sacraments. The author explains that in thus dividing his book he does not minimize the place of these doctrines. It is debatable whether his method is wholly successful at this point.

Macquarrie acknowledges a debt to Heidegger, Bultmann and Karl Rahner which will be plain to students of those authors. But this is no case of slavish dependence; at every point the author's own position is clear and distinctive. In particular, his main purpose is to offer a theology which is both existential and ontological. It is this fact which should demand the attention of all who believe (as does this reviewer) that existentialist philosophy is a reliable tool for the present use of theology only if the ontological foundations of Christian belief in God are always borne in mind. This sustained effort to do justice to both sub-

jectivity and objectivity is paralleled by another aspect of this work. At every point Dr Macquarrie seeks to affirm and interpret both the transcendence and the immanence of God. No theology which does not attempt to do this can be either satisfying or contain within itself that element of incompleteness which is a necessary element in the ongoing theological task of the Church.

In the last part (Applied Theology) the writer reaches conclusions, for example about the seven sacraments, the Mother of our Lord, the ministry and other matters, which some readers will meet with surprise. (I think it is partly because of the tentative nature of some of his findings that these matters are dealt with in this separate section.) What cannot be denied is that the author himself draws these conclusions from his earlier presuppositions and affirmations. There is much more that ought to be said: for example, about the emphasis upon the significance of other religions than Christianity. It must suffice to express the hope that this learned and readable book, which combines assurance with modesty, will be taken seriously by all who are (positively or negatively) concerned about what is somewhat ambiguously termed 'new theology'.

FREDERIC GREEVES

Tradition and Traditions, by Yves M.-J. Congar. (Burns & Oates, 90s.)

Scripture and tradition are traditionally important topics in the so-called Catholic-Protestant debate. 'Catholics' are said to rely on both scripture and tradition; Protestants on scripture alone. Anglicans, one would gather from the Articles, should fall into the latter class, but they are often suspected of wandering out of it. But we are increasingly aware that this is a crude over-simplification of the issue; the positions thus described are so extreme that neither has any difficulty in caricaturing the other. The Council of Trent at first sight equates tradition with scripture in importance, but it is now seen that its 'both . . . and', which was there substituted for a proposed 'partly . . . partly', at least leaves open the possibility of believing that one Gospel is communicated in two ways, so that it could be found in either. In a remarkably similar way the Second Vatican Council rejected the phrase 'double source of revelation' and thus opened up further possibilities of agreement. Meanwhile much Orthodox and Protestant work, especially in World Council circles, culminated in a very careful statement at Montreal. Thus, if the problem has not been solved, the area in dispute has at least been narrowed.

The Roman ecumenist Fr Congar published two volumes on this in French, a historical one in 1960 and a theological one in 1963. They are now published in English in one volume. They are very detailed and well documented, and the historical data in them may well have influenced the Vatican Council. The theological section amid much else includes an account of the World Council work in preparation for Montreal. But the book was written too soon to include the findings either of the Council or of Montreal, so that it lacks the climax to which we now know the narrative should lead. The writer is charitable and well-intentioned, and says many things that will allay Protestant fears; we should therefore listen patiently when he blames Protestants for neglect of the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the Church. To Protestant eyes, however, he seems singularly blind to the difficulties of his own position. He constantly refers to the *magisterium*, but never defines it, let alone defending it. He refers to the Assumption as a crucial example, but never faces its difficulties. In long passages he writes with enthusiasm of all the forms, such as liturgy, which tradition assumes, but we never learn what decisive criteria are to be applied to this mass of material. The book is so detailed and involved that it can hardly be recommended to the general reader.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE

Infant Baptism Yesterday and Today, by Cyril E. Pocknee, (A. R. Mowbray & Co., 6s.)

It is accepted as an obvious fact by many Christians that we are living in a pagan country. Yet if we count the number of those who in infancy, or later, received the Christian rite of initiation, Christianity ought to be the religion of the great majority. What is wrong? Every section of the Church—with a due recognition of the problem—is seeking to bring home to its members the true meaning of Baptism and also to ensure that sacramental vows be not lightly undertaken. Dr Pocknee is the chairman of the Baptismal Reform Movement in the Anglican Church, a movement which was founded by a group of parish priests in 1946. The present pamphlet embodies a series of addresses given at conferences of Anglican priests and also Free Church ministers during recent months. It is historical in basis and challenging in thought. A foreword by the Bishop of London commends the book as timely and helpful, although the bishop realizes that the arguments and suggested policy will not be acceptable to all. It is the final chapter that demands most attention. Under the title, 'Towards a Pastoral Policy', Dr Pocknee makes many practical suggestions which he thinks would preserve the true character of the sacrament of Baptism. He rejects the idea of abolishing infant baptism. But he thinks that a clear distinction should be drawn between Infant Baptism and Infant Dedication. He believes that a considerable number of parents who bring their children for infant baptism really desire only to dedicate their child to God and imagine that this is all that is implied by the sacrament of Baptism. To the baptismal sacrament he would add Infant Confirmation, affirming that this was the practice of the Church, both East and West, for many centuries. Then he argues that the linking of the naming of the child with the rite of baptism is a mistake since for many the sacrament is little more than such a naming. Finally, in the matter of godparents he thinks that the Church has remained medieval, and points out that originally it was the parents of a child who acted as its baptismal sponsors. It is on the latter that the responsibility should be placed for there it truly belongs. A small book but one whose importance cannot be measured by its size.

H. G. MARSH

The Church Inside Out, by J. C. Hoekendijk. (S.C.M. Press, 15s.)

The Humiliation of the Church, by Albert H. Van den Heuvel. (S.C.M. Press, 15s.)

These two books contain speeches and reprints of articles by two Dutch theologians who have served in the World Council of Churches.

Dr Hoekendijk was Secretary for Evangelism. He believes (1) that the Church is in the world for the sole purpose of carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth; that the Church is the Church only to the extent that she lets herself be used as part of God's dealings with the world; (2) that there is need for the recovery of the biblical sense of salvation; the subject of evangelism is 'The Christ'; the aim is the establishment of 'Shalom'. 'Peace' for the author is the keyword. *Kerygma* is the proclamation of peace; *koinonia*, the corporate participation in peace; *diakonia*, peace shown by way of humble service.

It is here that the Church has failed. We live in a post-Christian, post-ecclesiastical, post-bourgeois, post-personal, post-religious world. The Church is out of touch. The Gospel must be presented in a religionless form. There are pleas for change in type of buildings (not cathedrals, but chapels) for the laity, who alone can be 'worldly', for the house-church and for open communion. In the world of to-

morrow (and tomorrow is already here) some things must be left behind. The future is open—many things are possible. The slogan must be 'Safety last'. For a time, Christians will be an ever-decreasing minority, thinly spread throughout the world. The way leads into the desert, but the Lord will make it into The Promised Land.

The second book is the product of five years' work in trying to interpret the anger and the disillusionment of the younger generation to the leaders of denominations. There is an acknowledgement of the temporary value of what is written. The book begins with long quotations from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was one of the first to evaluate the process of secularization as a liberation. The distinction is drawn between secularization, which is liberation from the control of metaphysics and theology, and secularism as a fixed ideology tending to pagan or nihilistic totalitarianism.

There is a chapter on preaching, about which there is very little to say. Often the best sermons are by God's unexpected preachers, the satirists and comedians. Worship must be made relevant to the daily life of people, and Christian festivals should be a manifestation of the cosmic joy they represent. Concerning the meaning of 'ecumenical', the author uses Visser t' Hooft's classification of Erasmian, church-centred and pietist, and defines the positive goal as an authentic Christian community in each place. In an appreciative but critical evaluation of the 'Honest to God' debate, the author considers that the real weakness of the book is the desire to systematize, and the failure to begin from God's self-disclosure in Christ. Other chapters describe (1) the tensions and frustrations in the ethical situation today, (2) the failure of the Church to connect with the young, and (3) the need for a total renewal, so that the Church may be a worthy witness to the Gospel.

FRANK M. KELLEY

Towards a Theology of Involvement, by Benjamin Reist. (S.C.M. Press, 35s.)

This volume is, for the most part, a careful study of the two great works of Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (1912) and *Historical Relativism and Its Problems* (1922). Troeltsch had three main concerns: he probed the past, and classical Protestantism in particular, in order that he might understand the contemporary world and offer a theology of social concern for the contemporary situation. Dr Reist follows the same course, learning both from the insights and from what he deems to be the failures of Troeltsch's theology. The author traces the changes in Troeltsch's later thought and shows how his attempts at a theology formed in the light of the history of religions inevitably failed and led to a Christianity of radical religious individualism, which could provide no satisfactory basis for a theology of involvement. Nevertheless Troeltsch asked the right question but Bonhoeffer and others have given a rather different answer. The answer was necessarily different, for the whole concept of a 'Christendom' had gone. The context of the questioning had radically changed; Troeltsch had looked for a new compromise, where Bonhoeffer saw the need for a change more radical than anything previously envisaged.

In the closing chapter Reist turns to the contemporary scene, contrasting the answers offered by Paul Lehmann, one of his teachers, and Gerhard Ebeling, and reviewing the contextual theology of Marty, Berger and Cox. The method of involvement for the Church, Reist concludes, cannot be forecast on the basis of past history. 'This involvement', he writes, '... is marked by unprecedented unpredictability. ... Today theological reflection must know that its task unfolds in the midst of uncontrollable transition. The fact is that the world has come

inside the church' (p. 221). Dr Reist has performed a useful service in bringing before us once more the work of a great scholar of the generation before last. In spite of the 'new reformation' we shall still need to read Troeltsch and the historians, and it may well be that future historians will find that the 'new reformation' is not so discontinuous with the past as it sometimes seems.

BERNARD E. JONES

I and He, by H. D. McDonald. (Epworth Press, 18s.)

The Time of our Lives, by Jack Mole. (Epworth Press, 18s. 6d.)

H. D. McDonald, who, I believe, has recently been awarded a Doctorate in Divinity by London University, uses a title which is almost the reverse of John Oman's *Grace and Personality*. Part 1 is a study of human personality, and discusses the reality, freedom and bondage of the Self. Part 2 expounds the grace of God, the grace which man needs if his self is to reach true satisfaction and fulfilment. Through experience of the grace of God and 'in the perception of faith' man comes to know God. One's awareness of oneself is akin to one's awareness of God.

Dr Mole's book falls into three parts. A short first section looks at Human Nature and Human Values in the Twentieth Century. A longer second section deals with the problem of Time, and passes in rapid review Bergson, Janet, Burgelin, Marcel, Sartre, and Berdyaev. In the third section Dr Mole outlines his proposed solution to the problems raised in the earlier sections. He argues for Co-existentialism, that is, 'to live in the present'. The book demands, and deserves, careful reading and sustained attention.

J. LESLIE WEBB

Insearch: Psychology and Religion, by James Hillman. (Hodder & Stoughton, 21s.)

The lectures gathered in this volume were delivered to ministers interested in analytical psychology and pastoral counselling. Dr Hillman deprecates recent trends in pastoral interest which have led the minister to adopt psychoanalytical method and the jargon that accompanies it. He recalls ministers to their traditional task of the cure of souls, at the same time offering the insights he has gained from his own study of analytical psychology. He calls for the rediscovery of the *soul* and affirms that the individual should be treated as a *soul* rather than as a *psyche* or a *mind*. Soul-sickness is the care of the minister as mind-sickness is that of the psychiatrist. The minister is not called to amateur psychiatry but to the *imitatio Christi*. As the ministry of Jesus consisted in preaching, wandering, visiting, telling tales, conversing, arguing, touching, praying, sharing, weeping, suffering, dying—in short, living to the full his own destiny—so the minister will serve best by living out his own vocation. But this book is by no means a 'Keep Out' sign erected by the psychologist; rather it is an attempt to show that there are areas where the minister can do more for the individual than the psychologist, but only if he remains a minister. In an interesting section on the unconscious world of dreams Dr Hillman shows how dreams reveal to a man something of his own soul; indeed he cannot reach the depths of his own soul unless he comes to terms with the world of his dreams. The pastor must come to terms with his own soul before he can help others to find theirs. In a closing lecture on the inner femininity Dr Hillman points out that this is the source of religion for a man or a woman. We need to cultivate our own unconscious femininity. If God is love and God is the depth of our being, this thesis is understandable. The author does well to remind

us that it is the way of the unconscious to symbolize and mythologize. Demythologizing may help some people to find God but in the end we find God experientially rather than conceptually, and experience must include the mythology of the unconscious. The word 'insearch', which gives the book its title, is a word coined to describe the attempt to plumb the depths of one's own being in order to find the ultimate reality of one's own soul. This is a stimulating book and a welcome corrective to some of the contemporary emphases in pastoral counselling. Dr James Hillman, an American psychologist, is the Director of Studies at the C. G. Jung Institute in Zürich.

BERNARD E. JONES

Sex and Christian Freedom: An Enquiry, by Leonard Hodgson. (S.C.M. Press, 9s 6d.)

Dr Hodgson's theological enterprise spans half a century. Brought up on Victorian morals in the last years of the 19th century, he now expounds the freer understanding of sex accepted by the modern Christian. He tells the story of the gradual transition from a sex ethic based on a rigid code to the Christian ethic of freedom and he skilfully cuts a long story short. He is conscious of the dangers of going to the extreme of denying the need for any rules of thumb in ethics, while avoiding the other extreme of code compliance. The overwhelming impression of the book is of compassionate understanding both for the man who insisted that the failure of a first marriage meant that he could not contemplate a further marriage because of his Christian standards and for the woman who found vital satisfaction and grace by means of a relationship that would have been described by some as illicit. It emerges quite clearly that a sympathetic understanding of the person in his situation is the first requirement of the Christian moralist. It is sometimes the obvious that needs emphasis.

In a closing chapter on 'The Cure of Souls' Dr Hodgson gives useful practical advice to ministers and counsellors. He sees the moral choices that an individual must make as growing-points in the Christian life. No longer can the minister lay down hard and fast rules of behaviour. 'What we have to do is to try to listen with understanding sympathy to what we are told and be prepared to start with each person *at the point where he or she has reached* in the order of learning.' He records the delightful story of the man of whom the Oxford Grouper asked searchingly whether he was not troubled by impure thoughts, and who replied, 'Not troubled a bit. I rather like 'em.' This is a refreshing book with the right emphases and one can recommend it without reserve. Nevertheless it might be a good thing to impose a five-year ban on the writing of books on sex, to give Christians a chance to catch up on their thinking about other moral problems.

BERNARD E. JONES

A Theology for Christian Education, by Nels F. S. Ferré. (The Westminster Press, \$4.95)

The twentieth century might not unfittingly be called *the* Century of Education. For what has happened over the last fifty years is not simply a vast expansion of educational opportunity—the 1944 Act is the outstanding example—but, much more important, the growth of a new understanding of the complexity of the educational process and a new awareness of its strategic function in human society. It is this new understanding and awareness that sustains the disciplines of the psychology of education, the sociology of education and the philosophy of education. But we need more than this. In the mid-century we have had, contrary to all expectation, a lively and serious debate, set off by the theological and educational

revolutions of the post-war decades, about the nature and place of religion in education. What we need, if this debate is to come to an enduring conclusion, is a further discipline—a theology of education. Here lies the importance of Dr Ferré's *A Theology of Christian Education*—a rich and stimulating pioneering work.

Religious education—in church or school—can only proceed effectively if it is sustained by sound theological insight. For many years now I have found Dr Ferré's theological work most illuminating in dealing with the needs of teachers, and particularly in helping student teachers to realize the relevance of Christianity for themselves as persons and as teachers. His *Christ and the Christian* and *Reason in Religion* have been my stand-by—here is a theological interpretation of Christian convictions true to the central Christian emphasis, open to the insights and enquiries of our own day and (most important) significant in the classroom. I have often wanted something from his pen dealing with Christian theology in the light of our widening educational experience. Here it is.

The book falls into two parts, and in both Dr Ferré has in view the American situation where religious education is undertaken in the church school, an integral part of the work of the local Christian community. Part one deals with the nature of practical theology, its main tasks and its relationship with the 'differing perspectives' that bear upon it—science, psychology, sociology and philosophy, with their varying schools of thought. It ends with a consideration of Christian philosophy which 'sees all knowledge through the lens of Jesus Christ as God's universal love'. In the second part, Dr Ferré offers us his theology of education; here those concerned with the practice of education will find Dr Ferré an exciting guide as he seeks to formulate Christian theology 'from the perspective of God as Educator'.

A brief review is quite inadequate to do justice to this profound and stimulating book. I will here only call attention to the way in which Dr Ferré applies the central argument of *Christ and the Christian* to the theological needs of all who are concerned with religious education—minister in church and teacher in school—and especially to his important and central chapter, 'Learning from Jesus'. It is part of his wider approach to the educational significance of the doctrine of the Trinity—God as Educator, Christ as Exemplar, the Holy Spirit as Tutor. I know many teachers, puzzled in their efforts to see the relevance of Christian theology in the classroom, who will find the second part of this book what they have been waiting for.

I would only add two comments. My first is to ministers and laymen who are concerned with the 'renewal' of the life of our local churches. If this renewal is to take place, it will need to be sustained by a genuine adventure in education—in church, Sunday School and small group—and nothing, it seems to me, is as imperative as its serious undertaking *now*. We need to think through afresh both the contents of what we teach and the methods by which we teach. Here is a book to be taken seriously; it offers a sound theological guide for such urgently needed work. My second comment is to teachers in county schools. The twofold theological and educational 'revolution' of the last decade has shown the weaknesses of the earlier Agreed Syllabuses and the need for new ones that shall be both theologically and educationally sound. We know what we want to do as educationists; but where is the *theological* insight we so desperately need? Here is a theologian who understands (the book was made with the continuing criticism and questions of practising teachers) and brings the wealth of his technical theological studies to bear on the classroom situation. He is aware of the theological debate and the secular insights of our time; and he shows how the life and teaching of

Jesus—central, as far as biblical material is concerned, in all religious education in the classroom, as the latest Syllabuses make plain—lies at the heart of all Christian theology and can be dealt with honestly and creatively.

Dr Ferré's book is one which all ministers and teachers should read—and read again.

ALAN T. DALE

Issues in Science and Religion, by Ian G. Barbour. (S.C.M. Press, 45s.)

This is a much more comprehensive work than the title suggests. The historical survey traces the relationship between Christianity and the natural sciences from the Middle Ages to the present time, paying particular attention to the 19th century and the effects of evolutionary theory.

Most of the book deals, however, with the 20th century. Dr Barbour, a professor of physics as well as a trained theologian, is well equipped to guide the reader through such topics as the interaction of experiment and theory, objectivity and personal involvement, and the interpretations of indeterminacy. The final section on God and Nature examines, under the heading of Classical Views, the ideas of Barth where God is Sovereign Redeemer; the neo-Thomist views in which God is Primary Cause; the views of William G. Pollard in which God is Controller of Indeterminacy. These views have in common God's sovereignty over nature, whereas the next group of views examined by Barbour are those in which, he maintains, nature has been abandoned as a sphere of God's operation. These are the views of Bultmann, Heim and the Linguistic Analysts. Afterwards Barbour examines the views of Whitehead and Hartshorne, maintaining that these 'process views' are more successful than the others in developing a theology of nature.

Barbour's own contribution to a theology of nature shows not only the influence of Whitehead but also his sympathy with Teilhard de Chardin's view that the higher is already existent in the lower in rudimentary form. Earlier, Barbour has quoted with approval the statement of W. E. Agar: 'We accept the proposition that mental processes cannot emerge from non-mental'. Barbour does not, however, allow his case against reductionism to rest on simple statement and quotation. Indeed, his arguments are strong and persuasive and are, in themselves, sufficient to make the purchase and reading of the book worth while.

The book has been carefully written. There is, however, a slight slip in the discussion of Heisenberg's Principle when it is stated on p. 281 that position uncertainty gives velocity uncertainty. And although the account of Darwinism is good, it should be pointed out that there is now experimental evidence which strongly suggests that the development of resistant strains of bacteria is not always a clear example of inheritance.

VINCENT PARKIN

Not to Destroy but to Fulfil, by Eric J. Sharpe, C. W. K. Gloorup. (Lund, Price 35 Sw. Cr.)

J. N. Farquhar's book, *The Crown of Hinduism*, can still be regarded as a significant landmark in the history of modern missionary thinking, and Farquhar himself was the outstanding representative of that shift in thought from the earlier evangelical attitude which could see nothing good in non-Christian religions to the more sympathetic approach which came in at the end of the 19th century. It is, therefore, as Mr Sharpe says, surprising that 'his name is scarcely mentioned in modern missionary literature'. This is no doubt due to the change of theological climate in which the trend exemplified by Kraemer displaced Farquhar's 'fulfil-

ment' concept. But now that the old 'Liberalism' appears to have been resurrected, in another form, in the 'New Theology', this re-examination of Farquhar's thought is particularly timely. In any case, the issues raised by a study of his work are of perennial importance in the life of the Church. Arriving in India at a time when so much of the missionary effort was centred upon education, Farquhar found college teaching a straitjacket which hindered his evangelistic purpose. He gained greater freedom in the work of the Y.M.C.A.; but, with the rise of Indian nationalism and the Hindu renaissance, he came to the conclusion that, in this situation, literature was likely to be the most effective instrument of evangelism among educated Indians, and in *The Crown of Hinduism* he concentrated his expert knowledge and great abilities upon this task. In these days when so many Christians are obsessed with the 'problem of communication' this valiant attempt to commend Christianity in terms congenial and comprehensible to Hindus should be of more than merely historical interest.

It is a pity, in the circumstances, that Mr Sharpe has not given us his own full appraisal of Farquhar's thought. This book really falls between two stools. It is sub-titled, 'The Contribution of J. N. Farquhar to Protestant Missionary Thought in India before 1914'; but the framework of the book is biographical; and the consequence is that we are given neither a portrait of Farquhar the man nor that thorough critique of his thinking which Mr Sharpe is obviously well equipped to give. He makes a qualified defence of Farquhar's use of the word 'fulfilment' to describe the relationship of Christianity to Hinduism; he is obviously conscious of gaps and defects in Farquhar's theological emphases; but he tends to report the criticisms of others, of which the most penetrating is that of A. G. Hogg, rather than making his own. None the less, this book is a fitting and overdue tribute to a great missionary, and one that ought to be read by all who are concerned with the Church's missionary task.

ERNEST LONG

Christian Initiation in Spain c. 300-1100, by T. C. Akeley. (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1967, 35s.)

From one point of view, much of the liturgical history of Churches in communion with Rome since the early middle ages has been one of steady pressure to conform to the Roman rite. Mr Akeley's study of one part of the ancient Spanish liturgical tradition is in tune with the more recent interest in liturgical practice which emphasizes the virtues of being 'completely orthodox, catholic and legitimate' in upholding universal characteristics in liturgy while allowing for local variety.

The Spanish tradition was virtually suppressed in favour of the Roman after 1100, though partly rehabilitated around 1500. Mr Akeley's thesis is that Spanish practice differed in parts from Rome but was not merely a variant on the Gallican tradition as is usually assumed. Rather, it had some life of its own and indeed varied locally in at least three different sub-traditions within Spain itself. Hence there is a further body of support for those supporting 'fluidity' against 'monolithic' rites. Despite the dates in the title Mr Akeley's evidence comes mainly from the period after 700, though clearly he would have liked to get back to the period before 300. In fact we know practically nothing about Spanish Christianity before that date, so that the publisher's talk (sometimes reflected in the book itself) about 'a new link back to apostolic times' is highly suspect. One is bound to add that there are other remarks which seem to offset the author's praiseworthy attempts to discern how general historical conditions affected liturgy. For example he refers

without very marked distrust to the traditions of the visits of St Paul and even of St James to Spain. He also commits himself to the questionable principle (with reference to certain baptismal rites) that 'To learn the *full* understanding of these matters in apostolic times we must know *all* of the ways in which post-apostolic understanding evolved'. This is just the kind of approach which has made for suspicion of liturgical history. Fortunately it has not much affected the more solid part of this book: the examination of the evidence for 700–1100 from which the thesis of 'fluidity' receives reasonable confirmation.

HENRY D. RACK

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- EPWORTH PRESS: E. G. Loosley, *The Spirit's Guidance of the Church*, pp. 25, 2s. 6d. J. Ithel Jones, *The Holy Spirit and Christian Preaching*, pp. 78, 7s. 6d. William Cosser, *Preaching the Old Testament*, pp. 80, 7s. 6d. Gilbert Thomas, *One Man Speaks*, pp. 35, 6s. T. Morrow, R. J. Billington and J. B. Bates, *Worship and Preaching*, pp. 176, 15s. J. S. Whale, *What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?* (Ryder Smith Lecture), pp. 24, 2s. 6d. (ed.) D. N. Francis, *Preacher's Handbook: No. 10*, pp. 219, 21s.
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- LUTTERWORTH PRESS: F. G. Healey, *Fifty Key Words in Theology*, pp. 84, 8s. 6d. J. W. Grant, *The Canadian Experience of Church Union* (Ecumenical Studies in Church History), pp. 105, 13s. 6d. R. Stauffer, *Luther as seen by the Catholics* (Ecumenical Studies in Church History), pp. 82, 12s. 6d. (ed.) L. G. Champion, *Outlook for Christianity: Essays presented to Dr Ernest A. Payne*, pp. 186, 35s.
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