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**THE
DUKE
DIVINITY SCHOOL
REVIEW**

Winter 1973

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Volume 38

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Number 1

Contents

We Are Not Alone <i>by William Arthur Kale</i>	1
Man Is Greater Than We Think <i>by Emerson S. Colaw</i>	8
Toward a Christian Understanding of Death <i>by Charles K. Robinson</i>	17
Book Reviews	48

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Published three times a year (Winter, Spring, Fall)
by The Divinity School of Duke University

Postage paid at Durham, North Carolina (27706)

Div. S.
207.756
D877
v. 38-40
1973-1975

We Are Not Alone

by WILLIAM ARTHUR KALE¹

Perhaps all of you are familiar with a popular television program of a few years ago called "Candid Camera." I have not seen or heard about it for a long while, but, as I remember it, this was the program in which Allen Funt and his associates focused a hidden camera on some unsuspecting individual caught in a situation of predicament, or at least involved in an exercise he or she regarded as private. At a precisely-timed moment the camera was revealed and someone shouted, "Smile, you're on Candid Camera."

For some time I have felt that something like a Candid Camera experience is both legitimate and salutary for leaders of church and academy.

I often speculate on the kind of glee I might enjoy if the Dean of the Divinity School were caught off-guard, with his foibles showing.

What would it be like to catch your Bishop in an un-episcopal posture? Wouldn't you like to be able to yell, "Smile, if you can."

I once saw a picture of the great Paul Tillich in the act of leaping into the air. The photographer caught him with arms overhead, his legs bent at the knee, and his entire body suspended momentarily two feet in the air. Of course, I have known bishops and a professor or two who seemed to be up in the air all the time.

There is an imaginary camera behind the topic announced for this Alumni Lecture. It is not my intention merely to affirm that "We are not alone," but to ask whether we can believe it. To have one's eccentricities or inadequacies exposed may be embarrassing, and most of us do not like to be caught off-guard, yet in long-range perspective such an experience can be wholesome and may be decisive.

With this in mind let me describe a "candid camera" experience that happened to me.

On a certain morning this past September I felt an unusually acute sense of loneliness as I walked into York Chapel at the hour of worship for the Divinity community. Around me was movement and con-

1. Address delivered at the Alumni Luncheon, Oct. 31, 1972. (Dr. Kale retired from the Divinity School faculty at the end of the fall semester 1972.)

versation, laughter and informality, acceptance and sharing. Yet I was lonely. It was not a new experience. I had had the same feeling many times before. I knew that my experience was similar to that of all teachers—and all students. I fully understood that regardless of vocational commitment all persons have their moments and days of feeling separated from others. It happens to clergymen, no less than to bankers, bartenders, and bus drivers; to housewives, secretaries, and waitresses; to beauty queens and movie actresses; to the janitor at the court house as well as the editor of the newspaper; to children, youth, and adults; to Americans, Africans, and Asiatics. Every man is alone because he is a man. Aloneness is a fact of life, in both the natural world and the human world.

Long ago I had learned that there are ways of coping with loneliness. One can become intensely busy. Or one can try something different, like skipping out on chapel worship and going for coffee with a colleague. Or one can read Playboy magazine and pretend at being naughty, or sophisticated. Or one can meditate, and try to pray. On the particular morning I have in mind I was not attempting to cope with my feeling; I was merely conscious of its intensity.

What I did not know was that something like a candid camera experience was about to happen to me. It was the day for celebrating holy communion. I was not in the mood for it. I wanted to nurse my private thoughts. I did not want to consider the implications of being "in community." I think I rather enjoyed the pangs of feeling lonely. We were using the "Alternate Text, 1972." At the section for the Affirmation of Faith I began to read, along with others, and, while reading, to compare the phrases of the Alternate Text with the familiar ones I had recited thousands of times. I became so occupied with the exercise of comparison that I really did not consider the full meaning of the revisions. With considerable surprise (an experience not unlike being on "candid camera") I heard on my own lips the last three lines of the Affirmation:

"God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God."

No Allen Funt appeared at that moment, but an impressive thought came to mind. "Smile, if you believe what you have just recited!" But immediately in my reflection I asked, "Can I believe it?" "When will I really believe it again?"

In this experience I was made aware of my continuing negligence

of community. My abuses of community were exposed for a moment. I was caught in the act of misusing community. I realized that for some time I had entertained a troublesome thought, namely, that the community was neglecting me. Beyond this I had cultivated the idea that the community was "using" me. To repeat a cliché, I had "been had." Now I felt used up.

As I left York Chapel on that September morning, of course, I felt a fresh buoyancy of spirit. God's presence was real again. But I was not emancipated from a sense of concern. I knew I continued to be a part of a broken world, a world not in community, but in disunity.

Existence for man today is a continuum of broken relationships, of shifting partnerships, of confused and divided loyalties, of reversals of commitment. In his deepest nature man is aware of disintegration while seeking wholeness, of nonfulfillment while pursuing integrity, of uncertainty while longing for meaning.

Man's Diminished Confidence

For many moons confidence in man's ability to solve life's dilemmas, both individual and corporate, has been on the decline. In a pluralistic society, with sign-posts down or misplaced, our life style is fluid, our objectives tentative, our motivation often ambiguous. We take little for granted. We seek alternatives to what once seemed solid. Our major concern seems to be how to get through each day—how to muster enough confidence to deal with risks, threats, and issues we cannot by-pass and cannot postpone.

Let us credit ourselves at a few points. We have skill as gatherers and reporters of current news, but we are skeptical of our powers as interpreters. We have become a generation of descriptivists. We can report on the changes of a few decades, even centuries. We can point to the shift of the center of political power from Western Europe, where it had been located for hundreds of years. We can indicate the three major directions of the flow of political change in this century: toward the United States, the Soviet Union, and Asia. Simultaneously and with comparable accuracy, we can describe basic changes in economics and note the problems of our capitalistic system. Likewise we can report proudly on scientific and technological achievements.

But are we not also a generation of reluctant prognosticators? In the presence of man's greatest achievements in science and the possibility of greatly enriched human existence for all peoples in all parts of our planet, we are conscious that the fruits of science could be used to extinguish human life. Underlying the glories of techno-

logical advance are the volcanic rumblings of political, economic, and social dislocations. What chance has civilization to survive? What will existence be like, even if the race survives? How should one prepare for the 1980's? Answers to such questions vary, some of them being candidly pessimistic, others favorable yet hesitating. The usual addendum to any comment about the future is a series of short questions: Who knows? Who can tell? We are an uncertain people.

Conditioned by Uncertainty

In hundreds of ways we have become conditioned to live without certainty. We adjust to the unexpected and the shocking. We gratefully describe instances in family and community experience when "we did not panic." We express our mood of intermingled skepticism, fear, and hope through esoteric phrases, epigrams, and neologisms. We have made it fashionable, and at times necessary, to challenge the axiomatic and to publicize the paradoxical.

In earlier periods of great uncertainty men were able to fall back upon certain "truths," which were believed to be supported by institutional and ideological authority. Many persons today, perhaps the majority, acknowledge their skepticism regarding traditions and practices our forebears once cherished and are seeking alternatives which at least point men toward a restoration of confidence in the presence of upheaval.

Encouragement Ahead?

That the Christian church should want to share in the crises of humanity in this period of history is surprising to no one familiar with the nature and mission of the institution founded by Jesus Christ. From its beginning the mission of the church has been to witness to God's active, abiding presence in the midst of man's experience of danger and change. It has felt responsible for announcing to men, "You are not alone." It has sought to report faithfully the intention and achievement of the Founder and Leader of the church who took upon himself the fears, struggles, and hopes of men. Even now, His followers believe, He is at work in the affairs of individual life as well as within the events of political and social life. As members of the Body of Christ, responsible for the fulfillment of a distinctive mission, churchmen feel obligated both to examine and to be involved in the shiftings and risks of these times. The seminary, as the arm and the finger tips of the church, knows a similar obligation and compulsion.

But a candid-camera experience has come for both seminary and church. To each institution and often to the two of them conjoined, the decade of the 70's is saying, "Smile, if you will or can, but hear this: Your uncertainties are showing."

One of the most disconcerting examples of this challenge may be found in the current Jesus Movement. What is this particular generation, different in motivation, intention and life style from the counter-culture of the recent past, saying to the church? Chiefly, albeit too simplistically, these young men and women ask of the church and seminary, "What have you done with Jesus?" The question is not necessarily accusatory. It reflects an anguish of spirit regarding the ministries of the church. These young people yearn for a reality that assures and sustains. The material values so important to their elders do not satisfy. Christianity as taught and practiced in their churches seems esoteric and artificial, oriented more to the life style of professional churchmen than to people confronted by the realities of street and shop, of campus and court room, of politics and pollution.

Is their decision to separate from the worship, work and witness of the traditional congregation not a judgment as well as a challenge? Few persons will deny that the absent youth are sorely missed. No one will argue that congregations can afford to lose them permanently. Unless reconciliation between the practicing institution and the splintered groups can be accomplished soon, the future of the local congregation is in jeopardy.

Perhaps it appears to be ironic, but it is none the less likely that this youth movement, which is momentarily scorned by many adult churchmen and caricatured by others and which may fade away before 1980, is actually confronting American Christianity with a challenge of significant proportions. There are two test areas or battlefronts, worthy of identification.

First, the dropping out of large numbers of intelligent, earnest teen-agers may prove, in the long view, more serious than other losses, such as the decline in membership and financial support. In the decade of the 70's a major task of the church is the initiation and development of a new dialogue with these drop-outs.

A second test area is a theological one. The church must clarify its Christological assumptions. At present the utterances in response to the question, "What have you done with Jesus?" are either vague and hesitating or expressed in the often puzzling jargon of professionals. Perhaps the most damaging indictment of evangelism and Christian nurture in modern Protestant Christianity is the ambiguity of current

answers to the twin questions posed in the district of Caesarea Philippi, according to Matthew's Gospel. Jesus himself asked, first, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" and quickly following he inquired, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:13,15 RSV) Is official Christianity answering that Jesus is the "Man for today"? Can we continue to call Him Lord? If so, Lord of what, or of whom? Can we state, and restate our Christological formulas so that they make sense in an era of secular control? Who knows? In this moment of candid exposure our uncertainties are showing.

Our Dilemma Is Genuine But Not Hopeless

Our dilemma is genuine. Our problems are serious. I offer no simple solution. I am not whistling in the dark and I offer no shallow hope when I repeat, "We Are Not Alone." In this affirmation I am reminding myself and you that help is available.

Help is at hand through associations with colleagues in ministry, both past and present. Let us recall and take comfort in the words of John's Gospel, ". . . others have labored, and you have entered into their labors." (John 4:38b RSV) St. Paul labored, and we have entered into it and benefited from it. St. Augustine labored and we have keener insights into St. Paul's basic thought. St. Francis labored and we have clearer visions of love. Martin Luther labored and we have a re-directed and re-newed Christianity. The Wesleys labored and we have the inspiration of their disciplined lives. Bishop Matthew Simpson labored in 1859 and opened new doors of service for American Methodists. He wrote in that same year, "The Church of Christ must grope her way into the alleys and courts and purlieus of the city, and up the broken staircases, and into the bare rooms, and beside the sufferers" (from "Walks About New York"). Here at Duke, the late Dean Elbert Russell labored, and memories of his dedication and scholarly achievement are clear in the minds of alumni. Gratitude for other Duke-related churchmen and educators lives on in this community and across the nation: William Preston Few, James A. Gray, Gilbert T. Rowe, Frank S. Hickman, James Cannon, Paul Neff Garber. Time will fail me to tell of others—of classmates and neighboring pastors, of other deans and teachers, of laymen who have sustained us in times of discouragement as well as in experiences of stupidity, of family and neighborhood cronies, of authors, entertainers, musicians and playwrights, of politicians and news analysts, of casual acquaintances, and many intimate friends. All these have labored in the comradeship of ministry.

A symbol of our relationships with all these is found in the word "engagement." A brief study of the word will bring us to a good stopping point.

Engagement, as used in instances of courtship and betrothal, means the arrival at "an understanding" and a time of decision by a man and a woman; also the willingness on their part to enter into a binding relationship or commitment and to make public announcement of it.

Engagement, as a term associated with a gear-box, means interlocking and meshing through appropriate shifting.

Engagement, as used in professional life or in a business office, means an appointment with an associate or an outsider with some specific purpose in mind.

Engagement on a battlefield means challenge, confrontation, struggle, advancing, retreating, suffering, death. Engagement, as used in scores of personal and family transactions, means arranging for the employment of servants or helpers, or perhaps taking necessary steps for the use of needed buildings and their facilities.

In all these senses the term "engagement" is applicable to the current relationships we have with other called servants of Christ and His church.

This same term applies to relationships between the church and society, with major emphasis upon commitment. Church and society are not identical. They challenge one another, resist one another, and suffer because of one another. Yet they are enmeshed or engaged. They are committed to each other in this decade. In specific ways the church has suffered shame through engagement with the world, but few can doubt that the glory of the church will be restored through continuing engagement with the world. As in Christian marriage, which "signifies the mystical union between Christ and His church," the relationship of church and society in these times may signify the union between the movement founded by Jesus Christ and humanity for which Christ died.

My moment of termination is not quite at hand. In a final paragraph let me voice what has been tacit from the beginning. The aspiration to enter into the elite fellowship of God's laborers involves more than human and institutional relationships. To belong to this fellowship means living daily with the satisfying awareness of God's sustaining presence. Let us accept the reality of this experience and rejoice in it. "God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God." Smile, if you believe it.

Man is Greater Than We Think

by EMERSON S. COLAW¹

There are plenty of cynics who assert that there is no force capable of healing our divisions or bringing understanding and cooperation into our polarized homes, campuses, nation, and world. They insist that nothing can enable us to work together as races and peoples. So they listen with utter skepticism to such optimistic calls as that of Colonel John Glenn at the beginning of the space age. As he returned to earth from that first momentous earth orbit, he said, "Let man take over." This quote establishes the theme of this address.

Someone has suggested that for the scientist, ambiguity is a vice. He has a responsibility for conducting his experiment, analyzing the results and publishing the conclusions with detached objectivity. However, for the philosopher and theologian ambiguity is permissible, for here mind is encountering mind in the search for elusive truth. And ambiguity for the artist is a necessity, for here we encounter an idea which lends itself to a variety of interpretations.

As a theologian—and those of us who labor in a local parish must carry this designation even though we may not qualify as "professional theologians"—I would suggest that we are permitted some ambiguity when it comes to defining and interpreting man. One author reminds us that the perennial heresy is the affirmation of the divine without reference to the human. I submit to you that what we preach and teach in the local church, how we counsel and conduct our administration, will be *shaped* more by what we believe about *man* than what we believe about God. My concern, therefore, in this address is with the Christian understanding of man.

We live in an era in which there is a low estimate of the human condition. This is due, in part, to the kind of thing that captures the headline. If there is a rape, that is on the front page. The fact that thousands of husbands and fathers are responsible and loving is not "newsworthy." The massacre of the villagers at My Lai is headline news. The story of hundreds of American soldiers sacrificing their

1. Frank S. Hickman Lecture, delivered on Nov. 1, 1972 by Dr. Colaw, pastor of Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

time and resources to help the Vietnamese is found on the back page. A race riot is front page; the daily event in every community of beautiful, interracial, ecumenical ventures rarely warrants the attention of the press. This stress on man's fallen nature, his inhumanity, his alienation from the purposes of God, his bestiality, his depravity, has given our generation a jaundiced view of man.

It was not always so. At the time of the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution there was a flowering of optimism. This gave rise to the notion of humanism. Christian theologians have often attacked humanism as naively optimistic, unrealistic, and destined for disillusionment. Nevertheless, we should give the consequences of this movement the recognition they deserve. Out of this era and mood came voyages of exploration, the subduing of continents, and those inventions that lifted many of the physical burdens from man's back. Humanism also talked about the dignity of every man, and this contributed to the development of democracy with its emphasis upon freedom. It was affirmed that freedom belonged to man, that he could be trusted with it, and that the state existed to serve man's purposes and he was not to be subservient to it. In fact, Voltaire, during this early period, could write of man as the "monarch of the universe."

This mood did not consistently prevail. There were ebb tides. But this confidence in man's ability to solve his problems was a part of the philosophical heritage that imbued our thinking during the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th. In fact, the church reflected some of this when in the earlier part of the 20th century phrases such as "the evangelization of the world in this generation" were heard. And the dean of one of our theological seminaries, Lynn Harold Hough, wrote a book on the subject of "Christian Humanism."

Several things conspired to shatter this optimism. The first was the Great Depression of the thirties when it was driven home to us that we really could not devise an economic system that would guarantee our security. The second was World War II. When it was over, we were aghast at the revelations of man's inhumanity to man. When we saw the pictures of the gas chambers built by the Germans and learned of the destruction wrought by our nation by the unleashing of atomic weaponry against a relatively defenseless people, we asked, "What's wrong with man?" Our confidence in man's ability to solve his problems was shattered. And we entered an era when man's bestiality and depravity were emphasized.

This theme found expression in the theologians. Karl Barth, who did so much to shape the context of theological thought in the post-war

period wrote, "Everything I see is more or less polluted, diluted, devalued. Man never was good; man is not now good; man will not be good. The morality of modern, civilized man is a terribly thin covering of ice over a primitive sea of barbarity."

The novelists echoed this emphasis. The author of "Lord of the Flies" suggested that if a group of boys were placed on an isolated island and left to their own devices, it would be only a matter of time until they would be destroying each other. In "Blood and Sand" the author brings the action to a climax in a scene from the bull ring. The bull is released into the ring and goaded into madness. Then the matador comes out. Unexpectedly the bull turns, catches him on his horns and flings him into the air. Then when he falls to the sand, he is gored into insensibility. As the dying matador is carried from the arena, a great roar bursts from the throat of the crowd and the author records, "We listened to the roar of the only beast there is—mankind!"

Tennessee Williams, the playwright, develops the same theme in many of his dramas. He has one character say, "There is a horror in things; a horror in the meaninglessness of existence. Life has a meaning if you are bucking for heaven, but if heaven is a fantasy, then we are in this jungle with whatever we can work out for ourselves, and the cards are stacked against us." During this period, art, developing the existentialist idea, worked on the same basis. A few years ago, when this mood was at its height, *Time Magazine* carried a prize-winning picture by an English artist, Francis Bacon. It showed a woman who had been shot through the eye. Her glasses were askew on her face and blood was streaming down over her garments. In an interview the artist said he was trying to portray the atrocity and anguish of life, to suggest that man was "a biological accident who must play the game without a reason."

To emphasize only this aspect of man's nature is, I insist, a distortion. During the last Quadrennium I served as a member of the Theological Commission on Doctrine and Doctrinal Standards. A participant, in a discussion one day, made reference to "Christian Humanism." This is not a contradiction in terms. There must be something of value in man or God could not have been incarnated in human flesh. Psalm Eight reminds us that God has made man a little lower than the angels and crowned him with honor and glory. In the Living New Testament we read in John 1:14 that "Christ became a human being and lived here on earth among us." Paul, in that affectionate letter to the Philippians, suggests that "he was made in the

likeness of man." There is a greatness about man that made possible the incarnation.

Some years ago there was a Conference on Race in Chicago. There was much hand-wringing, justifiably, as theologians, anthropologists, sociologists, politicians and others struggled with this deeply significant issue. Among the speakers was the brilliant, provocative Mr. William Stringfellow, an articulate Episcopal layman who works in Harlem. He was not too hopeful in his address. Then a Rabbi rose to speak by way of rebuttal. "Fortunately," he said, "Moses did not study theology under Mr. Stringfellow. If he had, he would never have left Egypt." Then he went on to say, "Despair of man's power for goodness is the greatest heresy. If man has not such power, then God has spoken in vain." Our Jewish friends have suffered so much through the centuries, and yet have a continuing hope grounded in God's action, that they help us keep things in perspective.

Dr. Georgia Harkness, in her little volume on theology for the layman, brings the necessary emphasis when she writes, "We ought never to think meanly or to speak disparagingly of any human being, including ourselves. This does not mean that we ought to have no humility, for we have plenty of weaknesses to keep us humble. Yet the major note in our doctrine of man may well be man's essential greatness—a greatness not of our own achieving but God's gift." This is it! *Man* is greater than we think because of what *God* has done for him.

Man is great because, first, he can commune with God. Spirit with spirit can meet. In all the created order, only man has a nature that can respond in communion with the Lord of the Universe. The scientist, Professor Millikin, said that science provides a sublime conception of God, for it reveals him in breathing life into matter, culminating in man with his spiritual nature and all his God-given powers! Man has a spiritual nature. And when he links this fundamental nature with the Supreme Spirit of the Universe, he stands tall in unique creaturehood. David Roberts was a teacher at Union Theological Seminary. From our human perspective, he died tragically young. After his death, his wife published some of his sermons under the title, 'The Grandeur and Misery of Man.' She took that from a sentence in which he said there was nothing more real than the misery of man when separated from God and the grandeur of man when restored. There's our greatness! Our spirit can commune with the Divine impulse.

The time has come for us to emphasize man's spirituality. He's

not as strong, physically, as the animal kingdom. Even his intellect can fail. But there is a grandeur in his spirit, and the church must remember that our basic task is to create the conditions in which man can encounter God.

In 1970 the Public Relations Department of the defending champions of baseball's National League coined the title, "The Big Red Machine." This was when the Cincinnati Reds were running away with the race in their division. In 1971, after eight weeks, they languished some thirteen or fourteen games out of first place. The "Big Red Machine" had sputtered and local fans renamed it "The Little Red Wagon." But I never did like the title. A team is not a machine to be turned on and off. It's made up of men who get hurt, become angry, feel frustration, know the bitter smell of defeat and the sweet taste of victory. And the church is not some kind of machine to produce money for headquarters or grind out figures for a statistical column. It's people who dream dreams, have visions, get drunk out of frustration, sweat so their kids can have a chance, one day love, the next day fight with their marriage partner, sometimes come to church when they would rather play golf, finally die of a coronary or carcinoma, and through it all get so hungry for a real taste of God that it's often like a sharp pain down deep in the gut! Frankly, I wouldn't want to serve any church unless it offered an outside chance of a glimpse of God that literally takes away the breath and knocks us to our knees.

Dr. Martin Marty, church historian and associate editor of *The Christian Century*, was in our city the other day. In his address he indicated that the spread of the occult and Eastern religions is giving Christianity a needed nudge back toward its original moorings. He concluded by saying, "We have been so busy in Christianity in recent years that we've stopped meditating. Now the fashionable Eastern religions are teaching the younger generation to be still and know that God is God and to meditate. I do not think that Buddhism is going to replace Christianity, nor that astrology is going to replace Judaism. But rather there will be a kind of rebirth of a sense of wonder and mystery which are dimensions of our faith we have let drop."

In an effort to respond to this movement in the church I serve, we are trying to take a second look at the experiential and emotional developments without falling prey to the excesses of the grope and touch groups or body-celebration traps. We are trying to understand the revival of transcendental impulses and the survival of pentecostal forms even when put off by some of the less lovable aspects.

What all this means is that the church need not be afraid of the dimension of subjective experience, that it understands it exists for one fundamental reason and that is to help create conditions in which we may encounter God. Don't worry about the old arguments of pietism versus activism. This is about as silly as arguing about which is more important, to inhale or exhale. Any religion worthy of the name will include both.

Incidentally, Dr. Thomas Campbell, Associate Professor of church and community at Chicago Theological Seminary, and Dr. Fukuyama, Professor at Pennsylvania State University, set out to survey 8,000 church members with the idea that the pious, devotionally inclined person tends to be conservative when it comes to social issues. They admitted their surprise that the more "pious" showed less prejudice than other members of their social class. They concluded: "It is appropriate to say that prior to the study we would have been very hesitant to come out in favor of 'devotionalism' as an indication of how one can be in the world but not of it. Like other liberal Protestants we were too fearful of devotionalism becoming 'escapism.' But the data simply cannot be denied." Furthermore, they report that going to church does change social attitudes and that a devotional orientation helps.

Efforts to nurture the spirit of man are appropriate and necessary. This is the "Divine Image" which distinguishes him from all other aspects of the created order. Man is spirit; he can commune with God; he can, by the grace of God, survive his own physical death.

In the second place, man is greater than we think because he can *change* at the point of his fundamental nature. This is the traditional gospel assertion. "If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation." Christianity has introduced a whole new rung in the ladder of man's evolution, to which the natural man can no more aspire than a creeping thing can fly. This suggestion by one of our preachers is a fact in which we rejoice, but it also hints at man's greatness, for he is the only part of the created order that can have this happen to him. He can be re-directed, renewed, restored. A fallen, alienated nature can be cleansed, changed, renewed.

There are many implications in this for the church. It is not enough to offer social adjustment without conversion. One of our bishops has reminded us as a denomination that with all our size, and with all our machinery, we must remember the main witness we have to bear. It is that a man may know in his heart that his sins are

forgiven and that he is saved. The language may be archaic but the reality of the change is not!

One afternoon a high school girl stopped in to talk with me about the college she was going to attend. When we finished that part of the conversation I then said to her, "Nancy, how are things going at home?" She said, "Well, I'm having trouble with my mother." I suppose if I had been talking with her mother she might have said, "I'm having trouble with Nancy." But Nancy said, "I'm having trouble with my mother." We talked for a while and then I asked a question which in the context of the conversation was appropriate; I asked: "Nancy, does your mother like you?" She thought for a moment and then responded, "I don't know, but I don't think so." Then I asked the question I really wanted to ask, "Nancy, do you like yourself?" She thought for a long time and then this very sensitive youngster replied in a beautiful fashion, "I like what I'm trying to become."

We can become more than we are! That is the glory of the New Testament affirmation. The material world can be reconstructed, but it doesn't change. Animals can be trained, but they don't change at the point of their fundamental nature. But the gospel permits us to sing, "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, since Jesus came into my life."

One Lenten season my wife and I went to see a dramatization of the life of Christ done by Dorothy Sayers and called "The Man Born to be King." The climactic scene was in the crucifixion. The curtains part and there on the stage are the three crosses. Around the cross are Marcellus and the Roman guard. He is the captain. Then from the wings come the three Marys. They pause. Then the mother of Jesus steps up to Marcellus, the captain of the guard, and she says, "Please, sir, may I approach the cross and minister to the needs of my dying son?" With his spear he pushes her away. "Go away, woman," he says. Then one of the others steps forward. "Please, Marcellus, for old times sake may I approach the cross and minister to the needs of the dying Jesus?" And with his spear he starts to push her away, saying, "Get away woman, I don't know you." But she stops. With a sweeping motion of her hand she loosens her veil so her golden hair can fall down her back and holding it out she asks, "Have you ever seen hair such as this any other place?" And then she thrusts out a foot and asks, "And have feet ever danced for you like these feet?" There is amazement and incredulity on his face. "Mary Magdalene, how you have changed!" Slowly, and with great dramatic emphasis, she turns so her back is toward the audience

and looking toward that central cross and slowly almost as though to herself, says, "Yes, Marcellus, I have changed. He changed me!" That is a part of our greatness. Twice-born men.

And, finally, man is greater than we think because he can choose between alternatives. Frost reminds us in the familiar line that two roads diverged. "I chose the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." Man can make decisions, choose between his options, and the choice has eternal implications.

We can choose to develop our talents or to squander them. Modern advertizing emphasizes our "throw-away culture." Things are to be consumed or even wasted. Talents and abilities, however, are not to be wasted but developed. A youngster in Junior Achievement said that she did not choose to be a common man; "It is my right," she said, "to choose to be uncommon."

Most of all, however, man's greatness rests in his capacity and desire to live in loving *servanthood* to the Lord of Life. It is of interest to me that the Lay Witness Mission Movement, phase II, stresses the idea that once we have encountered Christ as Lord and Savior we must do something about it. We must select an arena of service. All significant preaching comes to this final question: WHOM ARE YOU GOING TO SERVE? It is not just whom are you going to receive. The emphasis falls on service.

Recently I gave a series of lectures in the church where I serve which was titled "Twentieth-Century Saints." We discussed Kagawa, the Japanese who at the age of 21 had earned a Ph.D. at Princeton but then went back to live in the slums of his own country. Laubach, the literacy expert, who brought the light of learning to more than a million people; Helen Kim, who lifted the hopes and dreams of Asian women; E. Stanley Jones, the evangelist who wrote so compellingly about THE WAY; Albert Schweitzer, whose life of heroic service looms large in our century. When I finished I asked, "What do these have in common?" The answer was obvious. They found fulfillment through service: one as a labor organizer; another as a teacher; one as a doctor-missionary; another as a leader of women; one as an evangelist. But each was serving and they were known for that. Their godliness was translated into obedience as they became channels for God's concern for his children.

Some years ago there was a play on Broadway titled "The Cock-eyed Kite." It told a story often repeated in one way or another. A boy in late adolescence discovers that he is an adopted son in the family in which he is being reared. At about the same time he learns

that he has a condition which almost surely means early death. This condition arouses in him an insatiable desire to learn who he is, who is his true father.

In a sense, this is a parable of life. What is man? The answer to that will determine much of what the church does by way of preaching and teaching. I repeat, what we think by way of an answer to that question even sets the direction of such mundane matters as church administration. We dare not listen to the voices of breast-beating despair. There is no redemption in that. We dare not yield to the siren call of self-righteous pride. That leads to destruction. But the discovery of our heritage as a child of God releases potential, sets directions, and moves us to high and lofty accomplishment. There is no place for either false pride nor abject self-humiliation. We are to stand on our feet. For God has bestowed upon us a greatness as he chose human flesh for the incarnation. Rejoice, for we can be vessels of the Holy Spirit; we can live lives of glad obedience; we can celebrate our heritage as "created a little lower than the angels, crowned with honor and glory." Man *is* greater than we think.

Toward a Christian Understanding of Death

by CHARLES K. ROBINSON

Animals recognize and respond to particular threats to their own life-preservation and life-furtherance. But man can recognize in "advance" and respond to (including "merely" pondering) the futurity of his own death as a boundary condition which temporally limits his life and closes the potential contextuality of the field of biological life "back in upon" itself. Only man can say, "I will die." Only man can recognize and attempt to understand the "not yet" as an inevitable "no more." And when man does this—and, however repressed and infrequent, there are always some moments of recognition—he thereby shows—whether or not he is prepared to probe and appropriate the implications for his own self-understanding—that the temporality of his own bio-physically incarnate selfhood is of a higher-order complexity and higher-level integration than that of the bio-physically closed-in temporality which he recognizes and attempts to understand: that the total world of inter-relational interaction in which he exists, lives, and functions as a human being is a more complex, more "ample" and more *temporally-open-ended* world than the temporal potentiality of bio-physical fields.

In such moments of recognition man knows—tacitly at least—that death is not merely an event at the end of life which terminates life, but is a pervasive feature of bio-physical temporality as such. Man is always "already" in the process of dying in a way mysteriously bound up with the process of living. In terms of modern science one can say that "purely biological" fields are not given in our experience. What we find are *bio-physical* fields in which the distinctively biological or "living" vectoral directions of processes "upward" toward more complexly ordered, higher-level integrated goals are inextricably bound up with the distinctively physical or "dying" vectoral directions of processes "downward" toward more randomized, lower-level, more disintegrated states. A bio-physical field is a multi-level, interpenetrating, multi-vectoral field of contextual potentiality for interaction, in which the field-producing agency of the

organism (as ascendantly-indwelling and creatively self-organizing its incarnately "inwardized" and environingly "outwardized" fields) is opposed by the entropic (intrinsically descendant, destructive and dis-organizing) systemic directions of the physical processes upon which it is dependent for the physical basis of its incarnate embodiment and surrounding environment. As Paul put it: "The whole creation is in bondage to decay."

Animals do not recognize or ponder this. Man does. Man's capacity to recognize and ponder in advance human death as a pervasive temporal-process boundary-condition closing-in the total temporal potential-field of bio-physical life itself shows—as said above—that *man transcends death*. However, while this shows—tacitly, whether or not acknowledged explicitly—that man transcends death, its ultimate significance and meaning is shrouded in ambiguity and mystery. It is impossible—both in terms of our incarnate empirical field-situatedness and on principle—to show demonstratively and exhaustively either *how* man transcends death or *whether* man's transcendence over bio-physical death continues *after* the finality of bio-physical death.

The two most basic facts of the relevant evidence for answering the "last" question are the (at least tacitly) experiential fact of man's self-awareness as transcending-in-advance the boundary condition of death and the fact of the final destruction of the bio-physical embodiment upon which man is dependent as a "psycho-somatic unity" (as an agent who transcends but is also incarnately and environmentally dependent upon bio-physical fields of mediating interrelational interaction). Simply to remind ourselves of these two basic experiential facts may suffice to convey the point that the evidence is ambiguous and that no interpretation can be demonstrative. One could indeed go on to write a book in further "examination of the relevant evidence," but I suspect that if such a book were written with sufficient openness and sensitivity one would still "come out" at substantially the same place: namely, the evidence is ambiguous and its most appropriate interpretation is far from "self-evident."

If the relevant evidence is pervasively ambiguous and if we are confronted in regard to the ultimate significance of human death by ineluctable mystery, it would not be surprising if it were the case—as I think it is—that differences in basic human *attitudes* regarding the significance of human *life* are more decisively determinative of interpretations of the significance of human death than are any allegedly "objective" and "value-free" examinations of the evidence. Among

the major attitudes which function decisively in differing interpretations of the significance of human death, I shall consider four.

First, there may be what I would call a "*repressive*" attitude. This attitude manifests itself most directly in the negative fact that one allows during one's life relatively little time for reflection upon death. It may manifest itself indirectly in the appearance of a "positive" attitude of "accepting" death as a purely "natural" phenomenon. Whatever may have been the situation of ancient cultures, in the modern Western world this kind of language functions as the self-deceptive disguise of bad faith. The cultural impact of the Judaeo-Christian tradition—even within the phenomenon of "secularity"—with its *personalizing* impact upon human self-understanding has "raised the stakes" of man's awareness of his co-humanity to the point where every man knows somewhere within the recesses of his self-awareness that personal annihilation would be—or "is" and "shall be," if he believes it—the finally dehumanizing defeat of our endeavor to be and become human.

To say that death is "natural" is merely to point to an obvious empirical fact, *if* by this assertion one *means only* that death is an inevitable result of the bio-physical processes of "nature." However, to say that death *for man* is "*merely* natural" is to tell a lie. The modern man who tells *that* lie knows tacitly at some "gut level" that he is a liar. And to say of the death of a friend that it "does not really matter" whether death is annihilation, is an act of infidelity and treason—not against God, if one does not at all believe in God—but against the friend, against the worth of the humanity of the human. I shall say it once more as plainly as I can: for a modern, relatively personalized man to say that death is "merely natural" for man and that it does not really matter whether—perhaps is even somehow "better" if—death is annihilation, is a repressively self-deceptive lie and an act of treasonous infidelity and bad faith.

And I may add that, in this respect at least, I have far more respect for the personal human integrity of the "secular" philosopher Albert Camus than for many a contemporary "Christian" theologian. Treason is treason, and doing it "in the name of Jesus" does not, in my estimate, make it less—rather more—treasonous. To my mind—or heart, if you like—the most obvious and direct sin of a good deal of contemporary theologizing is not sin against God, but sin against man, including, among a few others, the man Jesus.

A second basic attitude which may be relatively determinative of one's interpretation of death (and which may sometimes function in

partial alliance with the repressive attitude just examined) is that of seeking *autonomy vis-à-vis* death. This attitude may come to expression in various approaches to the fact of death, of which we shall note briefly four.

Autonomy is expressed in the *stoic* attitude toward death which accepts the reality of death, interprets death as annihilation, acknowledges annihilation as the final negation of the human and faces the prospect of annihilation with—insofar as possible—the attitude of autonomous detachment. Death is regarded as the final evil, and the attitude toward death is consistent with the general stoic attitude toward all evil and suffering: emotional detachment insofar as possible. The would-be autonomous attitude may also be expressed rather differently in endeavors—not much in style these days, but still found—to formulate arguments for the *intrinsic* (autonomously self-sufficient) *immortality* of the soul or self. Similar in intent and more in vogue are efforts to investigate the possibility and perhaps to confirm the reality of “*survival*” through *psychic research*. (In addition to questions of validity, these endeavors raise many questions of significance, which we cannot take time to examine here, including such questions as these: Assuming the reality of survival, would those “survivors” who “lingered,” as it were, at the boundary of this world so as to “communicate” through a “medium” and provide us with—what always seems to turn out as—very “mundane” information and “bland” speculations, likely be the “best,” or perhaps the “worst,” “authorities” as to the full range and richness of “life on the other side”? Would discarnate, disembodied existence be, in the long run, “heaven” or a nightmarish condition of “hell”?) Lastly, I may mention as an expression of the attitude of would-be autonomy vis-à-vis death, science-fiction type dreams of technological achievement of a *this-worldly* “*immortality*” (through quick-freezing and later revival, possible break-throughs in bio-chemistry, etc.) as imaginatively projected, for example, in Harrington’s book *The Immortalists*. (That the indefinite—though still on principle limited in view of the second law of thermodynamics—prolongation of this-worldly life under the basic conditions of our present existence is a finally nightmarish blueprint for hell is a point which perhaps does not need to be made at length for this audience: human mortality is more than our having-to-die some day and is mysteriously connected with the meaning-distorting powers of our human misuse of freedom in sin.)

A third basic attitude which may be “determinative” of one’s interpretation of death is the *tragic* attitude which sees death within

the over-all ambiguity of the mystery of the reality of overwhelming human suffering. The word “determinative” is placed in quotes to indicate the point that the intrinsic conflict-sensitivity—ambiguities, ambivalences, dilemmas, paradoxicalities, ironic reversals and, above all, all-encompassing and ineluctable mystery—which is intrinsic to tragic sensibility precludes any fully articulate and determinative resolution of the issues of the ultimate significance of human suffering, including death. I believe that a tragic attitude toward death is not only compatible with, but also preconditional to—though not in itself constitutive of nor in itself productive of—any full, existential, inwardizing appropriation of the classical Christian view of the significance of death in terms of tragic crucifixion and God’s transtragic gift of resurrection.

A fourth attitude which may be “determinative” of one’s interpretation of death is a *transtragic* attitude which sees death as victoriously overcome by the mysterious presence and agency of a higher Reality victorious over overwhelming human suffering. The word “determinative” is placed in quotes to indicate, again, the point that ambiguity (including the dialectical possibility of doubt), mystery, indemonstrability of the “that,” and impossibility of a full articulation of the “how” and the “whence” and “why” are intrinsic within a transtragic view of death. (“Transtragic” taken in such a way as to remove the meaning from essential involvement with the sphere of the tragic—with its ambiguity, mystery, etc.—seems to me to comport with neither the general character of the human situational plight, including “epistemological plight,” nor the Biblical interpretations of the history of the Hebrews and the history of Jesus.)

A transtragic view of death—whether valid or illusory—is indeed phenomenologically a more complex, higher-order, higher-level integrative perspective upon death than is a “merely” tragic view. However, the higher-level transcendence of a *transtragic* view does not remove—rather paradoxically augments and enhances—one’s sensibility to ambiguity and mystery, and, as *transtragic*, incarnately indwells tragic sensibility to the mystery of the reality of overwhelming human suffering, including the sufferings which are our human lot through mortality and death.

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The culturally—and of course to me personally—most influential transtragic view of death, with emphasis on both “trans” and

"tragic," is the *Christian* view of God's victory over death through One for all in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

Human death is itself viewed ambiguously: In one sense death is the *appropriate* destiny of man who in the transcendent mystery of his freedom tends to distort in un- and anti-loving ways the basic modes and direction of his existence. Death is, mysteriously and yet not inappropriately, the "wages of sin." The dark truth about man is not that he is "like a mere animal," but that he is capable of ugliness and perversity beyond the range of the capacities of animal agency. Yet, on the other hand, and despite the "aptness" of death for man as sinner, death is seen as an evil, *inappropriate* as the *ultimate* destiny of man. "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied." These two paradoxically opposite views of death—death is the appropriate destiny of man as sinner; death is so inappropriate as to render faith illusory and futile if death be the final destiny of man—find their paradoxical integration in one and the same perspective which is the ultimate perspective for Christian faith: a historically, experientially, contextually *mediated I-Thou relationship* with the eternal Thou who *discloses* his presence as sovereign, winsome, unconditional, steadfast, never-to-be-ended *holy Love*.

A set of interrelated, coimplicate, partially overlapping, ambiguous and yet persuasively evocative potential-contextual fields—concretely-historically given and mediated—are *seen* by the actualizing-perspective of our faith-response as human agents, as mysteriously pointing-toward higher-level integration *by* a transcendent personal Agent who seems to be interactively *disclosing* his immanent agency to us through the mediation of these contexts within the potential fields of our history.

One must say that this faith-response and self-involving, responsibly-free commitment, which integratively interpret the transcendent significance of what is immanently given in the experiential field in ways which "go beyond" the phenomenological immediacy of the "merely given," is on principle fallible and is incapable of exhaustive demonstration. However, recollection of the work of Kurt Gödel in logic may suffice to remind us that the phenomenological and epistemological meaning of the preceding sentence is generally applicable to all human knowing situations.

Moreover, the voluntaristic and fideistic attitudes of much modern

theological writing ought not to be allowed to obscure for us the point—whatever *we* may or may not be able to make of it—that neither the New Testament writers nor, for the most part, the experiential testimony of earlier ages of Christianity is appropriately interpretable—as a phenomenon—in terms of any radically voluntaristic and irrationalistic “epistemology” which sees the Christian “faith stance” as that of man standing at the brink of an abyss, grabbing himself by the scruff of his volitional neck, and hurling himself outwards in a blind leap, “hoping against hope” that there just “might” be Someone “there” to catch him before he is shattered on the rocks!

Whether or not we find ourselves indwelling an analogically similar contextual situation (though I have a private, indemonstrable suspicion that most, if not all, who read this have in some moments at least—whether still appropriated or by now more or less repressed—been “arrested” by such a contextual perspective), the amplitude and confidence of the New Testament writers, as well as a remarkably extensive Christian testimony throughout the intervening ages, attests not a will-to-believe “despite the evidence,” but rather a sense of *being recipient* of the presence of a Thou who conveys the *assurance of unending Love*: “Have you not read in the book of Moses how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” (Mk. 12:26-7)

Abortion, infant mortality and extreme mental retardation confront us with instances in which we may be empirically uncertain whether or not we are dealing with “personal” life. But the “birth-right” of Christian faith—however easily sold for a mess of “pottage”—includes the confident assurance that whenever *God* takes up a personalizing relationship with a developing organism (and we do not need to claim to know “when”) God’s relationship is a *never-to-be-severed* relationship such that literally *nothing* will ever be able finally to separate the creature from the finally-fullfilling power of the Agapē of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Within classical Christianity God’s victory over death through his resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is understood as having cosmic “metaphysical” significance. But—at least in the New Testament—the metaphysical significance (the significance for our understanding of *what is ultimately real*) is predominantly understood not impersonalistically or subpersonalistically—in magic or legalistic-juridical cat-

egories—but rather in the most highly personal and *interpersonal* terms.

The issues of the significance of *Jesus'* life are the personal-historical issues of the significance of *human* life; the issues of *becoming*—through a moment-by-moment acceptance of the personalizing power of God—*fully* personally-interpersonally *human* by the decisive exercise of self-involving responsible-freedom in a series of crises-calling-for-decision within a shifting temporal-historical horizon of life-contexts which—in the “highs” of abundance, bliss and goodness (e.g., “the temptations in the wilderness” following upon Jesus’ baptismal experience of unique Sonship with God) as well as in the “lows” of privation, anguish and suffering of evil (e.g., Gethsemane and the cross)—militate against and put-to-the-test-of-temptation one’s developing maturation of humanness in faith, love, trust, obedience and worship.

Hence man’s ambiguous, mysterious, self-involving responsibility in and for his own “tragic plight” is viewed in Christianity, as in Judaism, as paradoxically related to—though by no means simply equivalent with—the peculiar category of “*sin*” as an enigmatic relational-reality which at one and the same time manifests man’s relationship to the Transtragic (God) and man’s tragic cut-off-ness from the Transtragic.

The category of sin is related to and presupposes the categories of morality and guilt. Sin includes moral guilt: self-involving, responsibly-free violation of moral sensitivity to the imperativeness or obligatoriness of inter-human need (whether through action or failure to act) and/or moral de-sensitization (through repression of tacitly emerging moral sensitivity). But the category of sin is phenomenologically—whether valid or illusory—a higher-order, dimensionally more-complex, higher-level integrative category of personal awareness than the categories of morality and moral guilt.

“Sin” is a religious, not a secular, category. The category of sin arises and functions in a meaningful way only within the perspective of a theistic (or minimally “henotheistic”) understanding of relationship to a God who is the ultimate Source of man’s moral sensibilities as both personal and righteous. (Hence pantheistic reinterpretations of “Christianity” lose—among other things—the semantic, relational context in which the category of sin can meaningfully function.)

The concept of the *universality* of sin as pertaining to all human agents is an ambiguous—though not thereby necessarily invalid—concept. It can have appropriate applicability if one is also convinced—

as Paul and Augustine were—that at some tacit level all men have some (God-given) potentiality for awareness of God and that insofar as men do not acknowledge any such awareness at the explicit level they are in some manner engaged in repression of that potentiality for awareness. In addition or alternatively, it can have appropriate applicability if one is also convinced (as basic to the understanding of the Hebrew prophets long before Jesus) that any violation or repression of moral sensitivity is *de facto*—recognized or unrecognized—a violation of the righteous and holy will of God such that to be guilty of *immoral* disrelationship toward one's neighbor is *eo ipso* to be also guilty of sinful disrelationship toward God.

Biblical theism “raises the stakes” of the moral category of guilt to that of the theological category of sin. “The fool hath said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” But from the perspective of Hebrew prophecy “the fool” does not thereby “transcend” the category of sin (unless one wants to say that he “transcends” it “downward”). He simply forfeits the capacity to recognize himself for the fool he is, but does not thereby evade ultimate accountability before God.

One further point should be mentioned here, though it cannot be followed out at length. It is a gross historical-phenomenological mistake to imagine that “all” that Biblical theism did in relation to the categories of morality and guilt was to interpret these antecedently-given human understandings of interpersonal relationship within the “additional dimension” of relationship to God—though this “addition” would indeed itself be of profound significance. In terms of human cultural history, the very *content* of what “morality” has come to mean has been decisively shaped by the Biblical developments in understanding and appropriating the implications of the imperative-ness upon human life of the righteous, holy, loving will of God. It is deceptively easy for modern Western men and women—inside as well as outside the church—to tend to take as immanently-humanly “self-evident” the imperativeness of responsive sensitivity to inter-human need as demanding something more or less like “agapē” love, and to lose sight of the historical conditionedness of these notions—even in modern Western “secularized” culture—in historical processes which first took on their decisively originating shaping in Biblical history. At some *tacit* level perhaps all men *have* always in some sense “known”—however repressed—that they “ought” to “love” their neighbors. But, in any case, at the *explicit* level at least, these notions, however “evident” to us, have a definite history and that history is, in its origins, Biblical history.

Sin, then, is a theistic theological category of anthropological understanding: a negatively self-involving, responsibly-free disrelationship to the sovereign will of the holy loving God. Any effort at an exhaustive "explanation" of the "mystery of sin" is in effect a denial of the validity of the category as relating the mystery of the unfathomable depths of human freedom to the Mystery of the Unfathomable Depths of the Freedom of God. But all genuine mystery involves some (conflictingly revelatory-concealment of) semantic significance. If "sin" were sheerly and unconditionally unintelligible the concept would be meaningless. The mystery of the reality of sin has a partially intelligible setting in the basic situation of our humanity, which does not remove the mystery but rather points toward the human agent-field correlation within which the mystery of the reality of sin manifests itself.

The relative discontinuity (*vis-à-vis* continuity of reality-reference to any and all realities other than its own transcendence) of the unique (originatively differentiating), irreversible *self-centeredness* of selfhood and the relative indeterminacy (*vis-à-vis* determination by any and all processes other than its own agency) of the affecting (spontaneously changing), uncoercible *self-determining power* of freedom constitutes the basis within the *essential* nature of the transcendent agency of individual human agents of the possibility of sin such that (Kierkegaard and Reinhold Niebuhr), while no particular instance or manifestation of sin is strictly "necessary," *that* a human being shall—in whatever particular ways—sin is so "probable" as to be for all practical purposes, humanly speaking, "inevitable." (Indeed the pervasively decisive victory of God through Jesus over all temptation-to-sin is seen in Christian theology as the Miracle of all miracles in an impenetrable mystery of the Incarnationally-unique, interpersonally-indwelling relation of God's imperatively-empowering grace and Jesus' finite, human, responsibly-free self-involvement in acceptance of his unique election by the Father.)

The setting of sin in the basic situation of our humanity may also be considered from the other "side": that of the *field* interconnectedness of human life. Every to-become-human being is born into a world which, as the potential-contextual field of human interrelational interaction, is "already" antecedently distorted and perverted by the consequences of human sin (Rauschenbusch). The interhuman field situations in response to which the newborn organism will eventually become a human agent, a person, are ambiguously both humanizing and dehumanizing, personalizing and depersonalizing. The antecedent

extensionality of the potentializing contexts of the interhuman field will—with a pure inevitability, applicable even in the case of Jesus—mediate to the child the temptation-to-sin constituted by the actualizing perspectives of human agents who are themselves “ahead” of the child in already being sinners.

The relatively pervasive continuity (*vis-à-vis* the relative discontinuity of the irreversible self-centeredness of selfhood) of the *mutual co-involvement* of other human agents in their field-mediated, self-openingly interpenetrating interrelationship of *community-in-sin* and the relative determinacy (*vis-à-vis* the relative indeterminacy of the uncoercible, self-determining power of freedom) of the *reciprocal co-responsibility* of other human agents in their field-mediated, responsively affected interactions of *destiny-in-sin* inevitably tempt the child, as an emerging self becoming in freedom, toward “crossing the gap of indeterminacy” and entering into the mutuality and reciprocity of communal destiny in sin. (The “matter of fact” language of the preceding sentence points toward the darkest, ugliest, sickest aspect of what happens real-ly, which is nevertheless universal and, as far as the human mind can see, inevitable. Such is the paradoxical mystery of the reality of sin.) Thus “the sins of the fathers” and mothers are “visited upon the children,” not only “unto the third and fourth generation,” but unto all generations.

That we who are already (partially) human shall tempt those who are becoming human is perfectly *inevitable*. That we are nevertheless *responsible* is, however, also, unfortunately, part of the paradoxical mystery of the Christian understanding of sin. “Temptations-to-sin are *sure* to come. Yet *woe* to him by whom they come! Better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should tempt one of these little ones to sin.” (Lk. 17:1-2)

Dying mortality is the relatively appropriate destiny of man as *sinner*: as relatively un-faithful, un-loving, mis-trusting, dis-obedient and idolatrous (when lifted up “high”) or blasphemous (when cast down “low”) *vis-à-vis* the holy, living God of mysterious love. Death is not the direct-primary enemy of man. The direct-primary enemy of man—which in subverting the humaneness of the human makes death relatively appropriate—is *sin*: the unrealistically-disproportional self-centered, ir-responsible misdirection of freedom *vis-à-vis* others and the Other. Jesus’ *direct* and *primary* struggle and victory is *vis-à-vis* *peirasmos*: the temptation-toward-sin of crises (of goodness and evil, of joy and suffering, of ecstasy and agony, of the Presence-of-God

and Forsakenness-by-God, of Heaven and Hell) which tend seductively to lure and entice the will of man away from the propriety of the sole ultimacy of the will of God. His direct and primary victory is the victory of God's power to personalize the human perfectly, completely, once-for-all-decisively "against the odds" of the profoundest extremities of *peirasmos*: the trial-of-temptation of the highest Heaven and the lowest Hell.

In dying Jesus is *indirectly* victorious over death because he is *directly* victorious over the depersonalizing power of the Last Temptation: no temptation can lure him away from ultimate devotion to the obscure will of the now—temporarily—Hidden God. Death "has no claim over him" because—unlike the many—it is in no way appropriate for him. Jesus, the One, dies *fully ready—beyond temptation*—for everlasting life *as blessedness*. "Therefore God has highly exalted him." And as the Son of Man goes, so may the sons and daughters of men go, insofar as they are willing to receive the tried-and-victorious power of his life, death and resurrection.

Thus the Christian transtragic attitude toward death is primordially grounded in what is (fallibly, indemonstrably, but experientially-verifiably) known to be experience of I-Thou relationship with the living God of holy love. In this experiential context the Christian knows himself as sinner, as one who has—in tacitly self-deceptive as well as more explicitly recognized ways—violated God's holy love, and as one for whom death is appropriate. But in this same experiential context the Christian also knows himself as a sinner forgiven, as one for whom Christ died, as a forgiven sinner whom God wills to redeem and prepare for unending joyful communion with himself, with Jesus as the Son of Man, and with the sons and daughters of men. Death is seen as tragic. But tragedy is seen not as final, but as penultimate. God's self-revealing holy love is seen as alone ultimate, and ultimately to be all-victorious because already once-for-all decisively victorious in the tried-and-perfected conquest of temptation-to-sin in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth and thereby victorious over death in his resurrection.

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Leibniz's view that "this is the best of all possible worlds" scarcely accords with ordinary (philosophically unsophisticated!) sensibilities. The relatively full articulation of "the tragic sense of life" may indeed be a rare and prodigious human achievement. But more ordinary humane sensibilities show at least some tacit rapport with

tragic sensibility to the mystery of the reality of overwhelming human suffering :

The most basic and pervasive features of the human ("field") situation in the world are *unfitting* for the adequate fulfillment of human existence. The sense of dimensional *disproportionality* and temporal *untimeliness* haunts man's sense of a comprehensive and ineradicable inappropriateness of the field of human agency as unfitting for man's deepest needs and highest aspirations. Human sensitivity has not awaited the discovery of the second law of thermodynamics in order to glimpse the unnerving recognition that all human life—like all animal life, but with the uniquely privileged burden of self-awareness and anticipative contemplation—is the effort to race against time "up the down-staircase" in which all we do and are and aspire to become is radically vulnerable and at best shut-up within the limits of mortality and bondage to decay.

Implicit within the dynamics of tragic sensibility is indeed some obscure, *contrasting* vision of a "Higher Possibility" for the humanization of life which would be—at least "more"—*fitting* for man's deepest needs and aspirations. But the tacit sense of a higher possibility functions within tragic sensibility simply to focus the sense of the tragic plight of human life: man knows himself as cut-off-from the higher possibility. Man cannot convert the higher possibility into actuality. The higher possibility remains an impossible possibility for autonomous human achievement. Need may father the wish but cannot produce the fulfillment.

"*Natural theology*" can be produced by what appears as relatively "autonomous" human reasoning: a reasoning which has been, I suspect, usually in part at least a response to some dawning of *tragic* sensibility. (By "natural theology" I mean here primarily the genuine item, whose authentic credentials include its development apart from any cultural contact with Hebraic or Christian understandings—not the hybrids which often result from ambivalent response to exposure to Judaeo-Christian tradition!) For brief outline purposes the most typical development of natural theology may be characterized in terms of the conceptual formulation of four major "attributes of Ultimate Reality" which emerge out of an awareness of contrast with four features of creaturely reality: *all-inclusiveness* ("unlimited all-encompassingness," etc.) in contrast with finitude; *eternalness* ("everlastingness," "ever-enduringness," etc.) in contrast with transitoriness; *absoluteness* ("self-sufficiency," etc.) in contrast with relativity ("con-

ditionedness," "derivativeness," etc.); and *omnipotence* in contrast with necessitization ("fate," etc.).

These typical attributes of Ultimate Reality formulated in the development of natural theology are often explicitly articulated primarily as a reflective response to *cosmological* considerations. But while some explicit cosmological views (including the three propounded by contemporary physicists) provide a more evident spring-board for natural theology than do some other views, I suspect that the evocative source of natural theology is more primordially rooted in what might be called "intuition" or "existential insight," which itself arises out of at least tacit sensitivity to some of the more evident features of the human tragic plight. "Finitude," "transitoriness," "relativity" and "necessitization" may come to be recognized and objectifiable through meditative reflection upon man's cosmic "field-situation." But, more primordially, these terms characterize features of anthropological self-understanding. The "cool" detachment of cosmological natural theology is antecedently rooted in the vulnerably-engaged, restless dis-ease of the human spirit: the recognition that all is *not* "well with *man* in the world."

Natural theology may illuminate man's tragic plight in making it all the more clear: that man is indeed phenomenologically *cut-off-from* Ultimate Reality; that autonomous human religiosity *cannot bridge* the gap; that the higher possibility for the humanization of life which man only dimly conceives can be achieved *neither* by human autonomy itself *nor* by "Ultimate Reality" as "autonomously" conceived by man; that man's plight is too radical for "salvation" to be a possibility either for *man* himself or for a *sub-personally* conceived Ultimate. Thus natural theology illumines man's tragic sensibility to the mystery of the reality of overwhelming human suffering by exhibiting man's radical *need* for higher-order conversions of humanizing transformation, but provides no ground for hope that any relevant conversion may be forthcoming.

Natural theology in relation to tragic sensibility can be seen as a ground for *hope* if and only if it is seen as a manifestation of something *more* than "natural" and *beyond* man's apparently "autonomous" powers. But it can be seen this way only through a radical *conversion* of man's understanding of Ultimate Reality. And this man cannot produce. If the Ultimate *is* radically Personal, man can only come to know this if God reveals *himself* to man.

Allow me, for brevity's sake, to act as though I were not a twentieth-century man—which perhaps I am not—and speak of God's

self-revelation straightforwardly as though I believed it—which in fact I do:

God manifests his *holiness* which—despite his immanent, *all-inclusive* relational participation with all things creaturely—radically *differentiates* the God-ness of God from the creatureliness of creatures: God in his transcendence is radically other. Yet in *manifesting* his transcendent holiness in relational encounter with man God *relates* himself to human life to *sanctify* what—indeed “in itself”—neither is nor can be “holy.”

The recognition of God as “the Holy One of Israel” also converts and personalizes the significance of God’s “all-inclusiveness” into “omni-presence”: a personalizing presence so omni-comprehensive as to be indiscernibly operative even in and through God’s “withdrawal of his presence” in the experiential manifestation of his absence. And, beginning with the Abrahamic conviction that “through your offspring *all* the families of the earth shall bless themselves,” on through the Deutero-Isaianic servant poems, and reaching its climactic focus in the significance of Jesus as interpreted in the later Pauline theology, the sanctification of human life being accomplished by the holy living God is promised as yet-to-become *universally* “all-inclusive.”

God manifests his *comingness* in which—despite his *ever-enduringness* as the “self-grounded sustaining ground of the stability of all that is”—he dynamically *changes* his modes of manifestation within human historical temporality. God is the “God who acts”: who “has come, comes, and is yet to come.” God’s advent may itself be not only manifest but also hidden: in contemporarily indiscernible *pre-venience* of his gracious coming, God himself “prepares the way” for yet-future manifestations of his coming.

The recognition of God as “the coming One” also converts and personalizes the significance of God’s “ever-enduringness” or “eternalness” into “trustworthiness”: the “stability” of God is not that of “static, inalterable substance,” but rather the utterly steadfast, faithful, abiding personal reliability of God in and through all creaturely changes and in and through all variations in God’s own changing temporal modes of manifestation and hiddenness. God’s love is *chesed*: the “steadfast-love” of the Lord which “abides forever.” God’s ever-enduring trustworthiness in relation to man is manifest in the intention and power of his *pre-destination* of all human life toward a universal consummation in which freedom shall find its beatific fulfillment in response to God’s steadfast-love.

God manifests his *condescension* in which—despite his *absoluteness* as “the Most High” who is the originating source of all creatures, who are absolutely-dependent upon their Creator for their very existence—God himself places himself in *dependent* relationship to his human creatures. The incomprehensibly exalted Most High condescends to come down to us, dwelling in our midst (manifestly or hiddenly): the Creator himself “vulnerable” to the actions and passions of creatures, for their sake. The primary corporate manifestation of the condescension of the Most High is God’s *covenanting* relationship with man in which man not only comes to know his dependence upon God but God commits himself irrevocably to vulnerable dependence upon man in genuine mutuality and reciprocity. Indeed the asymmetrical character of this covenant-reciprocity appears in the paradox that whereas man may *de facto* “renounce” the covenant through disobedient infidelity in sin, God the Most High—though indeed he may withdraw his manifest-presence, abandon us, hand us over to oppression, and “renounce” us for a (negatively) kairoitic “time”—will not renounce his covenant nor abandon us forever, but will himself in his proper-time again renew his covenant-relation. Even though man be unfaithful to the God who has con-descended to him and go “whoring” after false gods and idols, God himself will remain steadfastly faithful and will condescend again to seek and to save the lost. God is the One who sticks to it. The “Hound of Heaven” disappears to reappear again. He keeps on bugging man.

The recognition of God’s condescension to man also converts and personalizes the significance of God’s “absoluteness.” God is known as a personal Knower whose “absolute perspective” includes and immeasurably transcends all relative human perspectives. God is “the all-knowing One” who *knows* us as we cannot know ourselves. Indeed the Biblical “knowledge of God” is pre-eminently the knowledge that *we* are known *by* God: we are perfectly known by the perfect Knower “from whom no secrets are hid.” Moreover, God’s knowing-of-man is not aloof or static but intimately relational and dynamic. Covenant is established by God’s *election*: God speaks his vocal Word, addresses man, calls man, mysteriously names himself to man, and re-names those whom he elects and calls. God’s election inaugurates the perfection of the personalization of human life: God himself evokes man toward becoming “in the image of God.” And though man forsake his covenant-election, “the election and call of God are irrevocable.” God’s election is finally once-for-all fulfilled in One. But the electing “work” of God’s Holy Spirit shall not be accomplished

until "the many" have been brought into full acceptance of the power of that victorious fulfillment.

The climax of God's self-revelation is God's manifestation of his *righteousness* in which—despite the ultimate spontaneity and freedom of God's *omnipotence* as sovereign Lord over all—God discloses his *ordering* will for human life which addresses man's freedom as the "must" not of "necessity" but of a "divine imperative" which requires man's spontaneously-free response. The omnipotently sovereign "Lord God the Almighty" *cares* about the ordering of creaturely life. God's covenanting relationship with man involves also his *law-giving* for interhuman life. The long history of detailed particularities in the development of the understanding of Torah and in the later rabbinical interpretations of legalistic requirements may indeed represent, as Jesus thought, an autonomous human distortion of the demand of God's righteousness. The prophet Micah could also say: "He hath shown thee, O man, what is right. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" Yet there is a relevant truth behind even the distortive proliferations of ceremonial and legalistic "requirements": What is "trivial" in the eyes of man may not be trivial in the sight of God. The imperativeness of the omni-sovereign righteous rule of God relates to the total ordering of human life such that the need of the most "insignificant" man, woman, or child constitutes a "moral obligation."

The recognition of the righteousness of God also converts and personalizes the significance of God's "omnipotence." God himself in his transcendently sovereign freedom chooses to exercise his all-mighty Lordship over his creatures not in arbitrariness, nor primarily in manipulation, coercion and "force," but rather in *mercy*. His mercy is manifest in his forgiveness of the unforgivable (which is precisely the status of sin as sin vis-à-vis the righteousness of God). His mercy is manifest also in his gracious gift of empowerment toward conformity with the demand of his righteousness, which is just not an autonomous human possibility. Righteousness is just not a human prerogative or autonomous "possession." Thus even Jesus of Nazareth, "the righteous One," knows—whether or not anyone else knows it or not—that "his righteousness" is precisely *not* "his": "Why do you call me 'good'? No one is good but God alone!" (Mk. 10: 18)

The radical conversion and personalization in "Biblical man's" understanding of God, evoked through God's own personal self-

revelation, also produces a *correlative conversion* in human (individual and corporate) *self-understanding*. (Thoroughgoing "existentialist" reinterpretations of the status of "self-understanding" radically distort the Biblical perspective upon converted self-understanding in at least two fundamental respects: The Biblical view of the conversion of human self-understanding assumes this conversion as dependent upon the irreversible priority of God's self-revelation as converting our human understanding *of God*. The conversion in self-understanding is *itself* understood in terms of *relationship* to the reality of God. A conversion in self-understanding by itself "alone" is like a "cut flower." One need not be entirely surprised when a cut flower withers and dies.)

In contrast with an awareness of the *righteousness* of God, man is enabled to recognize his own *sinfulness*. In the *contingent* (never strictly "necessitized") perversion of the possibilities of the power of his own responsible freedom man has "already" oriented his life away from direction toward God and direction toward his neighbor by the righteousness of God. Insofar as man recognizes the profound depths of his own antecedent history in sin he recognizes also the "bondage" of his will: his misdirection of life is *irreversible*. He has helped to forge his own chains which he cannot now break. He has dug himself into a pit that he cannot raise himself out of. He has done and left undone what he cannot now undo and re-do.

In contrast with an awareness of the *holiness* of God man is enabled to recognize the *profanity* of shared inter-human life. Vis-à-vis God's holiness, the very *commonness* of human existence is perceived as somehow "in-curved *back in* upon itself *away-from* God." The meaning of "profanity," like the meaning of "holiness," can be conceived only if and insofar as it is perceived. The person who has—in his own best understanding of his own life—never experienced God can attain some abstract conceptual notion of the meaning of "sin" and "righteousness," but not of "profanity" or "holiness." Profanity and holiness are related to but by no means identical with sinfulness and righteousness. (In the awareness of sinfulness and righteousness volition is primary. In the awareness of profanity and holiness perception is primary.)

Only the man or woman who has—even if unacknowledged—been granted *some* experience of God can have any comprehension of the meaning of Isaiah's vision in the temple: "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. . . . 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is filled

with his glory.' And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called. . . . And I said, 'Woe is me! For I am lost: for I am a man of *unclean* lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of *unclean* lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!' Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal. . . . And he touched my mouth and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin forgiven.' And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.' And he said, 'Go and say to this people. . . .'

In contrast with an awareness of the *condescension* of God, man is enabled to recognize his own inordinately prideful *self-exaltation*. Man's ascendant-aspiration toward would-be *autonomy*—individual and corporate (including national and all other "in-groups" as *over-against* "out-groups")—in and under its legitimacies also expresses itself in an ultimately un-realistic *distortion* of the prerogatives of creaturehood toward *idolatrous ultimatism* of what *prima facie* cannot be Ultimate. *Vis-à-vis* the condescension of the Most High who, in manifold ways and finally in Incarnate union with a human life in "the form of the Servant," renounces the exercise of his own prerogatives as Creator alone exalted over all, man is enabled to see and acknowledge the facticity, unfittingness, irony, tragedy and sinfulness of his own hubris.

In contrast with an awareness of the dynamic *comingness* of God, man is enabled to recognize his own *despair*. Only the advent of the living God as the Giver of *hope* empowers man to see in retrospect his own antecedent *inertialization* of life's possibilities. What was seen as the inescapable futility of the repetitiousness of life—in which there neither is nor can be any really "new thing under the sun"—is now seen as a *blasphemous* "hardness of heart" in shutting out the ever-renewing possibilities of the living God who wills to be for man the Giver of eternally-worthwhile life.

The radical conversion and personalization in "Biblical man's" *understanding of God* and the correlative conversion in man's individual and corporate *self-understanding* are teleologically oriented toward a "third" conversion: the conversion of human being in becoming toward full creaturely-personalization. It is not only the self-understanding of humanity which needs conversion; it is *humanity* itself which needs conversion. A radical transformation is needed which can only be accomplished by God himself through man's responsively free acceptance of the gift of the Giver: God's *de-*

liverance of human fallenness in bondage and lostness and God's *reconciliation* of human alienation in enmity and namelessness, through God's empowering *reversal* of human sinfulness into fitting worship, humility and hope, faith and love, trust and obedience.

The gift may and may not be received. But it is freely offered by the eternal Thou who in his advent says:

"I know you. I created you. I have loved you from your mother's womb. You have fled—as you know now—from my love, but I love you nevertheless and not-the-less and, however far you flee, it is I who sustain your very power of fleeing, and I will never finally let you go. I accept you as you are. You are forgiven. I know all your sufferings. I have always known them. Beyond your understanding I have always shared them. I also know all the little tricks by which you try to hide the ugliness you have made of your life from yourself and others. But you are beautiful. You are beautiful more deeply within than you can see. You are beautiful because you yourself, in the unique person that only you are, reflect already something of the beauty of my holiness in a way which shall never end. You are beautiful also because I, and I alone, see the beauty you shall become. Through the transforming power of my love you shall become perfectly beautiful. You shall become perfectly beautiful in a uniquely irreplaceable way, which neither you nor I will work out alone, for we shall work it out together. Your life from now on will not be easy. You will continue to suffer. You will continue to experience temptation. When I grant you some moments in which you seem to have come beyond suffering and temptation, rejoice. And if you do not forget me again, I will give you joy even in the midst of suffering and the power of obedience even in the midst of temptation.

"You will awake on some morrow to find that you no longer find me. Instead of fulfillment there will be a void. Instead of my Presence there will be my Absence. From my side I shall still be present to you. But you will not perceive our relation that way. You will perceive my Absence. That will be the Crisis of temptation and you will have a choice to make.

"If you choose wrongly, that will delay the business to be transacted between us. But, even so, your choice will not be the last word between us. For your sake, I must have the last word, for I am the first and last Word for your sake and for all. If you choose rightly, that will facilitate matters between us, speeding up the process of perfecting your faith and purifying your love. For I am like a refiner's fire. That will not be pleasant for you. But it will be worth it. For I am holy,

in a way you cannot now understand, and the last distortion of unlove must finally yield. I sovereignly will to give you, and all, eternal life. But the eternal life I will to give you can only be blessedness and joy when you are utterly perfected in faith, love, trust, obedience and worship.

“When you perceive only my Absence, then you must choose. One choice will be to get along without me. You can do that. You can do that because, if that is what you opt for, I shall empower you, for a while, to do just that, though you will scarcely realize that it is I who empower your ‘autonomy.’ The other choice will be for you to hold on to me even when I am no longer ‘there’ to be held on to.

“If in the darkness, when you are all alone, and I am gone, and there is only anguish and Forsakenness, you will not let me go, but continue to wrestle with my impalpable Presence even in my Absence; if you continue to call me ‘my God’ even when my Presence has vanished and you are alone and wracked with pain; and if you simply will not give up and call it quits; if you will not let yourself off the hook by letting me off the hook; if you steadfastly insist upon remembering our former communion; if you remain unswervingly *faithful* to the vision of my Presence which I give you now; if you remain *obedient* to the commissioning obligation which I lay upon you now; if you continue to *trust* me, against all temptation to take the easy, tension-reducing ‘out’ of ultimate despair; if you just go on *loving* me when you cannot have me and *loving* your fellow-sufferers when you cannot sense my compassion; if you go on stubbornly *worshipping* me in the night when there is no light to behold my face; if you say, ‘Though I have the world and have not Thee, I have nothing, yet if I have nothing in the world and still have Thee, I have all’: then, having been willing to learn what it means to be crucified-with my Messiah, you shall learn also what it means to be raised-with him, for he is the Pioneer and Perfector of faith whose victory was once-for-all perfected through suffering and temptation.”

Insofar as this conversional metamorphosis of human *agents* is accomplished, the need for a “fourth” conversion becomes evident: Insofar as men and women become, by God’s grace, “fit for the kingdom of God,” it becomes clear that the pervasive “*field-situation*” of human life in the world—fitting for man-as-sinner—is unfitting for the *final* fulfillment of the kingdom of God. The final achievement of God’s purpose to bless his human creatures requires God’s radical metamorphosis of the basic conditions of super- and sub-ordination in the creaturely field-situation in a world. Analogically this may be some-

thing "like": subordination of everything physical to the living, subordination of all life to the creaturely-personal, and subordination of all creaturely-personal life to the worship and adoration of God as Blessed Holy Trinity whose self-giving agapē Love shall encompass and govern all that is and shall be. "For the creation waits with eager longing for the manifestation of the sons of God; for the creation was subordinated to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subordinated it in hope: because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage-to-decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19-21).

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Bultmann, John A. T. Robinson, *et al.* to the contrary notwithstanding—the conceptual frameworks of 20th-century science and geometry offer a more viable, cogent, open-endedly comprehensive and analogically suggestive framework for the Christian conviction of resurrection and the life of the world to come than did even the "primitive cosmology of the three-story universe." Paul's cosmology, for example, presumably included the assumptions (1) that heaven—or whatever "place" God has prepared for us—must be separated by some intervening spatial distance from this world, (2) that some sort of "spatial migration" will be necessary in order to get there, and (3) that our present bio-physical body is "composed of" elements. His faith in God's power to sustain our personal selfhood (or "inner man"), to transport us to the place He has prepared for us, and to create for us a new and more appropriate embodiment (no longer "in bondage to decay") was not, apparently, decisively hampered by these "problematic" aspects of (then) contemporary cosmological notions.

The contemporary cultural irony is, however, that multitudes of educated present-day Christians find the viability and credibility of the most basic convictions of classical Christian faith substantially—often decisively—hampered, constricted and even rendered utterly incredible (for a truth-concern which wants to be "honest to God") by the grossest misconceptions of what the reigning cultural authority of "Science" has established about reality. Perhaps the most pervasively influential—and tragic—phenomenon of "cultural lag" (over half a century "behind the times") in our time is the continuing cultural dominance of the older notion of "science" (modelled on the classical physics) which assumed that the "lawfulness of na-

ture" was a *rigid*, basically static determination of all processes in totally (pre-) determinate, totally closed causal systems.

This older interpretation of "natural law" in terms of inalterable rigidity has been replaced (in physics and in other sciences insofar as they have been willing to appropriate the implications of the revolution in physics) by an *open-ended, multi-dimensional, flexible, multi-level, interactive, functional* interpretation of the "lawfulness of nature": Agent-field situations at whatever level or levels of reality are on principle capable of functioning as *open to* interrelational interaction with the field-producing and field-affecting agency of *higher-level agents* at *any* higher level of reality *without* "violation" of the spontaneity and integrity of the lower-level agents or of the functional (including systemic) agent-field principles under which they "normally" (i.e., apart from being-affected-by higher-level agency) operate. As at no time before in the modern epoch, the basic scientific understanding of the world is itself conceptually open to the viability of the basic Biblical understanding of the "God Who Acts."

By way of illustration, I may briefly point out that contemporary science (including its geometries) provides an analogically suggestive basis for cogently *conceivable* credibility at each of the three "problematic" points mentioned in regard to Paul's own "primitive cosmology of the three-story universe":

(1) It is conceptually conceivable that the total dimensionality of "worlds" may include the total dimensionality of n number of dimensions and that the larger, more comprehensive "other world" (or "worlds") is immanently present to, continuous with, and inclusive of this world, such that, whereas from our perspective within this world our dimensional-temporal situation is intrinsically self-enclosed; from the other side of the more-inclusive dimensional world our situatedness in this world is immediately open and accessible with no gap or discontinuity at all.

(2) It is conceptually conceivable that no migration across any intervening, separating distance is involved in "getting to" the other world, but that we are always already at its boundary and that God—if indeed God lives—will scarcely be confronted with any technological problems "getting us there" on the other side of death.

(3) The mediating, interrelationally-interactive function of the bio-physical embodiment of our human agency does not consist in the "atomic composition" of its "elements" (which are in any case constantly shifting and being replaced throughout our earthly life), but rather in functional, dimensional-temporal, organizational patterns of

interrelational-interaction with other agents. In an age in which such patterns as DNA are understood to facilitate and direct bodily reproduction and in which human cloning is considered on the frontiers of technological possibility (and in which science fiction writers imaginatively envision the radio-transmission of bodies from sending to receiving sets through coding, transmission and decoding of patterns of organization—concerning which my doubts are scientific and philosophical rather than theological!), it is scarcely inconceivable or incredible that God—if indeed God lives—could not only continue to sustain the creaturely reality of human selfhood beyond the final functional disintegration of our bio-physical embodiment at death, but could also “manage to find some way” of providing the human agent with a new transformed organizational pattern of interrelational-interaction with other persons in the field-context of a larger dimensional-temporal world.

In this context it is interesting to note that Paul’s understanding of our future resurrection embodiment exhibits a temporal development in the direction of what in contemporary parlance would be called the notion of a “redundant life-support system”! In I Cor. Paul uses the metaphor of “sleep” to make the point that at death God continues to sustain the individual personhood of the human agent *without embodiment* and “moves” the human self closer to his own Presence—“asleep in Christ”—but Paul continues to regard God’s creation of a new “spiritual body”—i.e., a higher transformed mode of embodiment not characterized by “mortality” and “bondage to decay”—as a future event which must await Jesus’ Second Coming. However, in II Cor. (4:7-5:10) Paul makes use of a “redundant system” notion to give intelligibility to his altered conviction that Christians at death do not have to await the event of the Second Coming in a discarnate state but rather are *immediately* given a new and better *embodiment* already “prepared” for us by God: he compares our present mode of embodiment to an “earthly tent” in contrast with the transformed higher-level embodiment which awaits us as an “eternal heavenly dwelling” and affirms his conviction that our immediate prospect beyond death is not that of “unclothed nakedness” in a discarnate state but rather that of being “further clothed so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee, is God himself.”

The repeated phrase, “if indeed God lives,” in the foregoing is employed neither idly nor rhetorically. That question is *the* question.

Despite the culturally prevalent assumption to the contrary, Christian theism "has never had it so good" in terms of what would be called in classical terminology the "apologetic situation" in relation to contemporary culture as represented by science. Notions which were problematic in Newtonian-Laplacean or even primitive cosmology are rendered analogically intelligible vis-à-vis some aspects of the conceptual frameworks of contemporary science. However, analogical intelligibility cannot on principle be "demonstrative": either in the sense of explicitly articulating and "explaining" everything in exhaustive fashion or in the sense of "proving that" the holy living God lives! Vis-à-vis the epistemological situation in contemporary physics in which it appears to be the case that the advancement of knowledge and intelligibility is paradoxically correlated with an enhancement of the sense of mystery, it would be exceedingly odd for any theologian to suggest that the advancement of analogical intelligibility in theology in any way "reduces" the mystery of the Mystery beyond mysteries—the holy living God. In theology more than any other discipline it should be said on principle that to "solve" a "problem" is not to eliminate or reduce Mystery.

In a cultural context in which science is widely misconstrued as having "disproved" the viability and credibility of Biblical theism, "Christian apologetics" may serve the limited, "preparatory" function of correcting some misinterpretations of science, removing some misconstrued barriers or obstacles to Christian belief, and of pointing to the analogical suggestiveness of some aspects of scientific knowledge. But to remove misplaced "locations" of the "offense" of Christianity serves simply to clarify "where" the true, essential offense or scandal of Christianity lies: the conviction that the Ultimate Reality knows and cares for us and out of his love for us became uniquely Incarnate in a single human life with decisive consequences for all human life here and hereafter.

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Perhaps God might—instead of creating a real creaturely world for the sake of creatures—have chosen to dream a magnificent Dream in which there would be no creatures but only phantasms in the mind of God. This would have "cost nothing"—either for creatures (who would not *be*) or for God. But in the real world which God has created and is creating, living creatures must pay a price for their creaturehood—and so must the living God.

The Creator in creating, sustaining, empowering and directing a

creaturely world confers upon the creaturely world capacities to exist and function in partial independence of himself. This involves at least two principal kinds of consequences:

(1) The ontological status of creatures is *not* merely that of "ideas in the *mind* of God." God confers upon creatures a *relatively* "autonomous" status over-against and in independence of his *knowing*. This does not exclude the viability of God's *omniscience*. Theism understands God as knowing *all* that is knowable: including not only (a) all that is actually real in any "now," but also (b) "perfect memory" of all that has been, and (c) perfect knowledge of all possibilities and all possible "options" for finite agents as well as for himself in all possible situations. God's knowledge of (a) and (b) will include total knowledge of all active and interactive tendencies of creatures, which, as illumined by (c)—including his own "options" as Agent—means that God's anticipation of the future will be maximal, incomparably transcending creaturely powers of anticipation.

(2) The ontological status of creatures is *not* merely that of "expressions of the *will* of God." God confers upon creatures a *relatively* "autonomous" status over-against and in independence of his *willing*. Not only does God know his creatures as having (being by him given) a reality in themselves which is partially independent of his knowing (and foreknowing); God also wills his creatures as having (being by him given) a finite and conditioned but genuine and real power of spontaneously-creative self-organization and self-determination which is partially over-against and independent of his willing.

Hence, while Schleiermacher's famous phrase, "*absolute* dependence," is omni-relevant within the framework of his deterministic pantheism (as also within the framework of deterministic theism, such as that of Calvin), the phrase has only a qualified relevance within the framework of a non-deterministic theism. Within the latter framework: creatures are "absolutely dependent" upon God for their power-to-exist, which is a pure gift of "grace" from the Creator who alone has the power of absolute creation ("out of nothing": that is, dependent upon no power other than his own power in conferring the power-to-exist); but creatures are not "absolutely dependent" upon God (nor upon other creatures) for how they exist.

That I "have" (receive as a pure gift) the power-to-exist, including my spontaneously self-determining power, is absolutely dependent upon God, my Creator. *How* I use my spontaneously self-

determining freedom partially to shape my own destiny is not "absolutely dependent" upon God; though it is "*relatively dependent*" upon God (as well as upon other creatures), and presumably dependent in many ways that I cannot know, much less specify.

This does not exclude the viability of God's *omnipotence*. Deterministic pantheism must (as Schleiermacher clearly saw and clearly stated) interpret the divine omnipotence so as to exclude on principle any notion of "the self-limitation of the divine sovereignty." So must deterministic theism. Non-deterministic theism, on the contrary, assumes the basic presuppositional principle that God—in the very "act" of creating a real creaturely world, such that there is an asymmetrically-reciprocal transcendence not only of God-beyond-the-world but also of the world-over-against-God—has "voluntarily" taken upon himself "limitations" to the exercise of his own sovereignty: so that creation itself is seen as a manifestation of God's "gracious condescension" in *limiting* his own sovereignty *for the sake of creatures*, that creatures can exist with a genuine reality and creaturely integrity of their own in partially shaping their own destinies.

On the assumption of the *self-limitation of the divine sovereignty*, God's omnipotence means in part the following:

(1) God himself is the *only ultimate Source* of all creaturely power, including the creaturely power-to-exist and the creaturely power of spontaneous self-determination.

(2) God both can and does exercise not only general but also particular *providence* in differentially empowering, influencing and directing the courses of creaturely events.

(3) God's power is utterly *trustworthy* and perfectly *sufficient* for the final accomplishment of his ultimate and comprehensive purposes, which include the final maturation of his personal creatures and their beatification in a perfect and never-to-be-ended eschatological consummation for all.

(4) How God's power, which "is made perfect in weakness," can accomplish this without violating the integrity of the freedom of the personal creatures he has created is and must remain a paradoxical "mystery." The mystery is, however, illumined—without being exhaustively specifiable or eliminated—insofar as the individual has *experienced* in his or her own life the *persuasive victory* of God's Agapē in *overcoming* the *resistance* of his or her own freedom, and has come to understand "existentially" that personal freedom can find its adequate *completion* and *fulfillment* in *no way other* than responsive acceptance of the transforming Love of

God: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless *until* they find their rest in Thee."

(That universal single predestination is *possible* in a way that does *not* require *determinism* can also be exhibited in a limited-analogical way in the second law of thermodynamics in contemporary physics: the field option-responses of individual agents include spontaneous indeterminacy and hence an unpredictability within limits; nevertheless the over-all direction of the "destiny" of all physical processes has a single all-comprehensive vectoral direction toward one "final state" of all entities in the whole.)

God's power to win without coercion—the persuasive power of God's *Agapē*—involves his omnipresent condescension to creatures. For this, *God*—as well as creatures—must "pay a price."

The *condescension* of God is so relating himself to creaturely agents as to place himself in dependence—a "superordinately asymmetrical" dependence, to be sure, but a genuine dependence nevertheless—upon creatures, and the all-inclusiveness of God's *omnipresent* relation to creatures so as to place himself in participation in, with, under and through their agencies, perspectives and experiences must, if we take these convictions seriously, imply that God participates immediately in all creaturely experiences of *suffering*: God is himself affected by not only all creaturely actions but also all creaturely passions, including the negative as well as the positive, the bitter as well as the sweet.

This view is not merely the consistent "conclusion" from philosophical reflection upon the implications of Biblical theism but is required if one is to take seriously—and not merely dismiss as "primitive anthropomorphism"—the pervasive use of the language of feeling (including: anger, yearning and *compassion-for-the-sinner*) by the Biblical writers. That some instances of the employment of feeling-language by Biblical writers are crude and distortive of an adequate understanding of God's self-revelation need not be disputed. But a wholesale rejection of feeling-language and of the view that God suffers in and through the sufferings of his creatures is a rejection of an essential part of the very "heart" of the Biblical understanding of God's relationship to his creatures.

Such a wholesale rejection did take place in the early Church in the Patripassian controversy and the early dominance of the doctrine of God's "impassibility," in which a consensus emerged which declared as "heretical" the view that the Father suffers. This decision of the Church, however, was basically conditioned not by reflection

upon Scripture but rather by an uncritical acceptance of the dominant secular philosophical assumption that it would be “unworthy” of Divine Reality to suffer or to experience any passion or to be in any way affected by processes and events in the cosmos or, in fact, to be subject to any kind of *change* whatsoever. Whatever may be said in favor of this static, non-relational view of Divine Reality as a philosophical conception, it must be emphatically said that it is categorically incompatible with the Biblical view of God.

It may indeed be—from the standpoint of human perspective and antecedent expectations—“unworthy” of the “Most High” to “con-descend” to participate in creaturely experiences, passions and sufferings. But in the Biblical view, *that is what God does*, nevertheless, and no matter how “scandalous.” *Patripassianism* is *essential* to the heart of the Biblical understanding of God and reaches its climactic focus in the understanding of the Incarnation in which the active agency of God himself is acknowledged as mysteriously involved in and mediated through all Jesus’ actions as human agent and, as the other side of the same coin, the passive agency of God himself as involved in and mediated through all Jesus’ *passions* as human agent—even Jesus’ final Passion in the experience of Hell as Forsakenness by God. Jesus’ experience of Forsakenness is totally “empathized with” by God himself: even though Jesus himself experiences only God’s Absence, God himself is totally, though unperceivably, Present.

Patripassianism, the suffering of God, as Biblically understood, is not simply “meaningless suffering” nor a pervertedly distorted “suffering for the sake of suffering.” God is neither sadistic nor masochistic! The Biblical view of God’s suffering may be called a “*teleological Patripassianism*”: both creaturely suffering as such and God’s participative involvement in creaturely suffering are, under the wisdom and sovereignty of God, subordinately related as *means to ends*.

I cannot in this essay even outline an over-all approach to the so-called “theodicy question.” But several brief comments may serve at least to recall some relevant points already indicated in this essay.

God “cannot” create “round squares.” Analogously, God cannot create a *history ex nihilo* and hence God “cannot” create “immediately perfected personal beings.” The second phrase in quotes is as logically self-contradictory and meaningless as is the first phrase in quotes; for “perfected personal being” involves as essential to its intrinsic *meaning*: “having become maturationally perfected through uncoercibly *free* response to temporal, historical crisis-situations of

being-put-to-the-test with the finally-completing result—however long the ups and downs of this may take—that the perfected personal being has come-to-be *beyond* temptation-away-from undistorted-interpersonal-relations.” Thus to say that “God cannot create ‘immediately perfected personal beings’” is to say that “God cannot do logical nonsense.” If this is a “limitation” upon God’s power it is a “quixotic” limitation.

The point of positive significance is that God purposively wills that there shall finally come-to-be personal beings who are steadfastly and untemptably perfected as finite, unique creaturely reflections of God’s (Trinitarian!) Personalness, completed “in the image of God.”

The “function of suffering” is *not* such that “all” instances and particularities of all sufferings “automatically” make a necessary—or even a contingent—“contribution” to this perfection of the creaturely reality of spontaneity at every level, including self-centered freedom at the human level. God is not the “Author” of all particularities of suffering; and God cannot “coerce” the nature of spontaneous creaturely response to suffering. Yet, as far as the human mind can see, the perfecting of finitely-free, self-centered creatures is only *possible* through response to suffering.

Teleological Patripassianism illumines the significance of tragedy (the mystery of the reality of overwhelming human suffering) in at least these fundamental respects:

(1) God himself suffers in and through the sufferings of his creatures.

(2) God’s creation of a world which inevitably involves suffering is teleologically for the sake of creatures.

(3) The pre-eminent—though presumably not the only—purpose and goal of God in creation is that there shall finally come to be personal creatures who reflect his image in finitely perfected ways, which cannot come to pass without immense suffering and the trial-of-temptation constituted by suffering.

(4) Experiences of overwhelming goodness, as surely as experiences of overwhelming evil, constitute for man, individually and communally, trial-of-temptation (toward inordinate pride, selfishness and idolatry) which must be conquered for the perfecting of the personal.

(5) The basic conditions of our present existence in which the needs and aspirations of human life at its best are subordinated in dependence upon and vulnerability to powers which negate and tend

to defeat the highest humanity of the human is "unfitting" as the final destiny for mankind, but "fitting" as the "beginning place" for the commencement of human becoming which must inevitably be a becoming-in-sin as well as a becoming-toward-the-glory-which-is-to-be-revealed.

(6) "The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18) when "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus-Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11) "so that God may be everything to every one" (I Cor. 15:28).

(7) The tempting-power of good and evil has already once-for-all been decisively conquered in one human life, and this perfectly-victorious power of God through Jesus as "the Pioneer and Perfector of faith" may be—by the grace of God through the Holy Spirit—offered to our human responsively-free receptivity, insofar as we are willing dependently to receive his power whereby we also may become the sons and daughters of God.

(8) Nothing—not even our obstinacy in sin—"will be able," finally and eternally, "to separate us from the Agapē of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39).

(9) "For God has consigned *all* men to disobedience in order that he may have mercy upon *all*. For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. 11:32, 36)

Book Reviews

The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring. Edited by James M. Efrid. Duke University Press. 1972. 332 pp. \$14.75.

The review of a *Festschrift* volume is hardly ever a fair one, because the reviewer cannot deal adequately with every contribution. Each essay goes in a different direction and makes different demands on the reader. On the other hand, this very diversification adds to the richness of the volume. The reader is bound to find some articles which appeal to him. This review article hopes to be fair to the variety by attempting to characterize briefly and succinctly what the reader can expect from each contributor. Then we will single out certain themes suggested by the volume and draw the readers into some dialogue.

The opening—and longest—article has given the name to the volume. D. Moody Smith deals with the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. It is clear, complete and competent. The precise emphasis is on the way the New Testament writers read their Old Testament, but Smith fills in the necessary background by describing how the Old Testament is viewed in Judaism, including Qumran. We will return to his final point, "the importance of the Old Testament for the New."

Gene Tucker, formerly of Duke Divinity and now of Candler at Emory, exemplifies the methodology of form-criticism and tradition-criticism at work on the Rahab saga in Joshua 2. Whatever the reader's involvement with Joshua may be, one should emphasize the importance of this two-fold methodology, which goes beyond the atomizing involved in minute

analysis of individual units, in order to arrive at the broader implications of the text when it is viewed as a whole.

Frank Eakin of the University of Richmond takes up a venerable *crux interpretum*: was the purpose of Jesus' parables really to harden his hearers (Mk. 4:10-12; Lk. 8:9-10; Mt. 13:10-15)? Appropriately, he begins with a treatment of the "mother" text in Isaiah 6, and argues for differentiation in answering the question. Jesus (as well as Isaiah) spoke meaningfully to his audience, but at the same time the Church's confrontation with Israel's disbelief in Christ influenced the way in which Jesus' words were cast. Obviously, the judgmental aspect of the divine message came to expression in the Synoptic formulation.

Donald Williams of Southern Baptist Seminary shows the way in which Israel's worship can enrich Christian worship: the aspect of "re-presentation," or contemporizing, which has been so underlined in modern biblical studies. He also insists upon dramatic presentation as an element that should be incorporated into Protestant worship: visible drama, symbolism, architecture—in general, an attitude of flexible adaptation.

Bruce Cresson of Baylor University gives a useful summary of the history of Edom on the basis of historical, archeological, and biblical (especially Obadiah and other prophets) data.

Max Polley of Davidson College revives his 1957 Duke doctoral thesis as he describes the views of H. W. Robinson (whose private notes were available to Polley in 1959 and again in 1965) on the organization of Old Testament theology. The problem resides in the conflict between the historical and the systematic—how can Israel's encounters with Yahweh be

systematized, even in biblical categories? We shall return to this problem.

Marvin Pope of Yale University translates and comments on a Ugaritic text (discovered 1961) which deals with a heavenly banquet provided by El, the father of the gods.

John Strugnell, formerly of Duke and now at Harvard University, has a brilliant analysis of two difficult texts in Ben Sira 36:18-21, and his solutions are convincing.

William Brownlee of Claremont, formerly of Duke, presents an essay on anthropology and soteriology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament.

Orval Wintermute of Duke University studies the various styles of Gnostic exegesis of the Old Testament (especially Genesis 1-3), as these are found in three Nag' Hammadi Codices.

James Charlesworth of Duke University traces the various meanings of *b'wt'* in early Aramaic-speaking Christianity. It means not only "petition," but also "consolation," and even "resurrection."

Hugh Anderson, formerly of Duke and presently of the University of Edinburgh, deals with a topic similar to that of Moody Smith noted above: Mark's treatment of the Old Testament. He argues "that on balance the Jesus of Mark's Gospel appears as one who in his teaching supersedes and transcends Scripture more than as one who makes the Scripture point to himself as its fulfillment." Hence the Synoptics do not all subscribe "to the same degree and in the same way to a promise-fulfillment schema."

James Efrid of Duke University, and editor of this volume, contributes a note on the Codex D variant reading, *dounai*, in Mark 5:43, as illustrative of the Aramaic usage of the active infinitive for the passive meaning (the "hidden third-person plural indefinite," as Stinespring has called it).

The final article of the volume is by W. D. Davies of Duke University

on the moral teaching of the Early Church, which he describes as a "coat of many colors." Nevertheless certain themes stand out, even if there was no "clearly defined body of teaching on morality." W. D. begins far back in the heritage of Christianity: "Law is integral to the Gospel of the New Testament as it was to that of the Old"—in the sense that Jesus took the place of the Torah. Three factors, his earthly ministry, the Risen Lord, and the Spirit "became the source of the demand under which the early Church lived." He goes on to discuss the vertical dimensions and the horizontal dimensions of Christian morality. The former involves "not only the imitation of God's act through dying and rising with Christ but also the imitation of the Jesus of history." The horizontal dimension is human, societary: common life, a specific moral teaching (here the parallels drawn up between Paul and Matthew are telling). Finally, the church drew on the moral teaching in Judaism and Hellenism because she recognized a certain continuity (probably the doctrine of creation) with them.

The above summary conveys some idea of the rich fare offered in this *Festschrift* volume. Within the limits of these few pages I would like to single out two topics that grow out of this volume and also touch on the theological task of the minister: the relationship between the Testaments (see M. Smith above) and Biblical Theology (see M. Polley above). Both preaching and pastoral insight are affected by the way in which the minister forms his values relative to the Testaments—and with those judgments he is also forming his theology.

The faith-stance of the Christian affirms that Jesus the Messiah completes and perfects the Old Testament. But how is this to be explicated? The history of exegesis shows many ways in which the Old Testament has been heard by the Christian community. Sometimes the "completion" brought by Christ has meant in fact a

displacement or cessation of the Old Testament. So strong is the explicitly Christian emphasis that the Old Testament reality disappears, or becomes a mere foreshadowing, a glimmer, of the Christian reality. On this view, of course, there is an effective muffling of the Old Testament message.

On the other hand, there have been times in which the Old Testament in all its rigor has been applied straight-away to current situations. One of the most moving passages in Alan Paton's *Too Late The Phalarope* is the scene in which Ps 109 is drummed out against the "sinner." And we are acquainted in America with the colorful applications which the Puritans made of the Old Testament. The same is true in the medieval period, when the religious orders were justified by an appeal to the Levites. Whatever the dubiousness of such applications, they point to a fundamental fact: the way in which the Christian hears the Old Testament is ever variable, even if his faith in the New Testament as the perfecting of the Old is his theoretical position.

No one would claim to be exempt from the prejudices of his own time, so there is no need for an apology for the following point of view. I would argue that the 20th-century Christian has more to gain (within his faith stance) by keeping the Old Testament in *tension* with the New Testament, by hearing and evaluating Israel's encounter with Yahweh on the level(s) where it was experienced in Israel. I say levels, because Israel re-interpreted much of the earlier data of tradition which it received, and all these levels of understanding are important. When we slip over too easily to a New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament, we tend to miss the gut-level, existential, encounter which the Old Testament man had with the Lord—which is where we are at, or should be at, in our circumstances.

This is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer meant when he wrote in *Letters and Papers from Prison*: "I don't think it

is Christian to want to get to the New Testament too soon and too directly." The "coloring" which we give to Jesus Christ—hence, of our faith—will be the richer for appropriating also the insights of the men who lived without him. Again, as Bonhoeffer said, "It is only when one knows the ineffability of the Name of God that one can utter the name of Jesus Christ. It is only when one loves life and the world so much that without them everything would be gone, that one can believe in the resurrection and a new world." To be specific, one must descend into Sheol (as the psalmist very often did!) in order to comprehend the eternal life promised by and in Jesus Christ. The "tut-tut" attitude apropos of the Old Testament is simply inappropriate for the Christian when he reads the Old Testament. He dare not put himself in a superior position, as though the promise of eternal life has changed human reaction to the mystery of man's confrontation with death. Similarly, the "Name" theology of the Book of Deuteronomy, which struggles with the problem of how God is present to his people, is a necessary ingredient in the self-understanding of the Christian who utters the Name of Jesus Christ.

The "crisis" of biblical theology, to which Brevard Childs has pointed so sharply, is more evident in considerations of methodology than in exegesis itself. At least, there has been no slackening in the pace of studies and monographs dealing with the theology of the Bible. One neuralgic point in methodology is organization.

How does one organize what is the precipitate (liturgical, legal, historical, etc.) of Israel's encounter with God? As Polley points out in his article, H. W. Robinson was convinced of the need to combine both the historical and theoretical/systematic dimensions. In recent times, Walter Eichrodt has chosen the covenant idea, out of which he has described, with attention to historical develop-

ment, the theological spin-offs of the Old Testament. G. von Rad's approach has been primarily confessional, i.e., it is what Israel believed and confessed about the Lord that is the proper object of Old Testament theology. Others would even question if Old Testament theology is possible—systematization, such as theology practices it, is simply foreign to the Old Testament.

At the present time, it would appear safe to say that no single presentation of Old Testament theology—no matter how faithful it is to the biblical thought categories—has succeeded. This is perhaps as it should be: Eichrodt and von Rad are complementary. In his recent survey (*Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*), Gerhard Hasel agrees to a "multiplex" approach to Old Testament theology and to the relationship between the Testaments. But he will not relinquish the idea of a "hidden inner unity" behind all this. He also claims that God is the "center" of the Old Testament. It is hard to disagree with this latter statement, but it really is not very helpful for biblical theology (except perhaps as a caution to the theologian who might think his analysis has captured Yahwh?). There seems to be a richer future in understanding and accepting the differences and tensions within biblical thought, for both Testaments, and in living out the dialectic provided by these perspectives.

Roland E. Murphy

In Search of Foundations: English Theology 1900-1920, by Thomas A. Langford, Abingdon. 1968. 319 pp. \$6.95.

In this work Dr. Langford has carefully limited his purpose and chosen to concentrate on theological developments in two decades which constitute a well-defined period in English history. Insisting at the very outset that theology has its setting in history, he begins his study with a

chapter which is concerned to indicate how, between 1900 and 1910, English society experienced the passing of an old order and faced a series of serious crises. The nineteenth century had been characterized by grandeur and meanness (p. 15), but also by a degree of comparative continuity. With the Edwardean age, marked "by mimicry which tended to mockery" of the Victorians (p. 16), a new age—as the author calls it—dawned upon the English as upon other European peoples. New problems confronted them—poverty, which, though certainly not new, was possible on a new scale, unemployment, the erosion of family life. The Irish problem continued to fester, and the Boer War brought into radical question an earlier confident Imperialism. The advent of more and more pervasive technology began deeply to change the ways of men, and science threatened older ideas in all spheres. In this new age, as Langford calls it, there was a loss of purpose; a hungering optimism came to be dogged by spiritual inertia and secularism (p. 19). The Christian churches were divorced from the masses, who were finding the Gospel which Christians tepidly proclaimed less appealing than that of the emerging Socialism. The first decade of the twentieth century saw, therefore, the shifting and sifting of foundations in all spheres—in literature, art, science, and, inevitably, in religion. Langford—and he is in very good company—emphasizes the specific year 1910 as a watershed, although he does acknowledge that the strict isolation of any single year is hardly realistic. In such a time of change and of "the breaking of the nations," one question emerges as the crucial one for theology: What is the source and nature of authority in the Christian life (it is no accident that the date of publication of the influential and significant volume *Foundations*, edited by B. H. Streeter, was 1912 and that of *Lux Mundi*, edited by Charles Gore, 1890)? This in turn, in the author's

view, was particularly centered in the question of Christology.

After the presentation of the historical setting of his theme, the author proceeds in the second chapter to examine the immediate philosophical and theological inheritance with which Christians could face the challenge to authority. The Victorian Era had been sundered by two incompatible currents, those of Darwinism and Platonism interpreted by Hegelian Idealism. Extremely interesting pages examine why Hegelian Idealism became so influential. It supplied an intellectually respectable antidote to a growing rationalism, and a reason for clinging to religious emotions and values even when the traditional dogmas of the Christian faith, which had hitherto supported them, seemed to be crumbling. At the same time, for obvious reasons, it was easy for Hegelianism to accommodate itself to evolutionary ideas, and—even more importantly for disturbed Christians—to the emerging scepticism, born of biblical criticism, about the “historical” Jesus and the beginnings of Christianity. “From a religious perspective,” the author writes, “this philosophy could reaffirm what its proponents insisted was the essential meaning of Christian Faith, in spite of unsettled questions about historical accuracy, namely, that history was a continuum through which the Divine Life and Will were manifested” (p. 60). And again to Hegelian philosophy “the truth that was manifest in historical events was itself transhistorical, and in this sense all historical events were temporary and partial expressions of the Absolute. Seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, the historical was an important avenue through which the Eternal Reality makes itself known, but no historical event could itself contain the final Truth, thus, specific historical events are important only as they function as the media of the rationally true,” (pp. 60-61). Further British neo-Hegelianism—the author occasionally forgets his precise title “represented a

reaction against the individualism of the preceding generations” (p. 61). A period that had seen the founding of the Ethical Society at Toynbee Hall in 1886 would find a societary emphasis congenial. Further, along with Hegelian currents, there were increasing evidences of a developing study of psychology—in the work of Ward and James especially—and this, like Hegelianism, was to prove both a challenge to and an instrument of theology.

The philosophic and psychological influences, which we have noted, conditioned the work of theologians at the turn of the century. In *Lux Mundi* (1890), there was an attempt at a fusion of immanent views rooted in Hegelianism and the evolutionary concerns of Darwinism (pp. 66-68). This led to the tendency to identify the human spirit with the Absolute. The emphasis on immanence invaded discussions of Christology, Personality and History (see the work of Bradley, Pringle-Pattison and Haldane, and the reaction to this in Hastings Rashdall, the account of whose work is excellent (pp. 72ff.)). The author shows how the insistence on the Incarnation in C. C. J. Webb took place when the continuity of man with Nature, and ideas such as that men are merely “adjectival expressions of the Absolute” were common. Webb’s work raised the question of the nature of history and its significance for Christianity. Is the centre of Christianity the principle of incarnation, philosophically interpreted or is that centre a concrete historical person? (p. 77). Idealism, in time, brought forth a reaction in G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, in whom ethical questions became powerfully active also. The reasons for the decline of idealism are clearly indicated.

The first two chapters, then, set forth the world within which Christian thinkers were to move and with which they had to come to terms both socially, politically and philosophically. After these rich introductory chap-

ters, the author moves to deal in detail with the three areas where the challenge to Christian theology emerged most potently—the Authority of the Canon, with which he deals in chapters four and five (pp. 88-142), Doctrines of the Church, chapters six and seven (pp. 143-184), and Christology, chapters eight and nine (pp. 185-259). In the discussion of the authority of the Bible and the Church, he divides his materials between those produced by Nonconformists and by Anglicans, and by Anglicans and by Nonconformists respectively—a change of order itself probably deliberate and highly significant. (The rigid division between Nonconformist and Anglican theologians might perhaps seem curious to American readers, as it did to the reviewer at first encounter. But, while such a division would have to be very seriously questioned in a discussion of a later period, it is, unfortunately, justified in the period which is under consideration.) It is impossible to summarize the various emphases and currents in the works of individual theologians, who emerge in these eight chapters, which constitute the central core of the book. The arrangement tends to a slight repetitiveness, perhaps, because—since theology is a robe without seams—the same theologians who are significant in one of the areas dealt with are usually significant in all. But this very repetitiveness in fact makes the details memorable and convincing: the central emphases recur and make an unmistakable impact.

First, then, the Authority of the Canon, Biblical Criticism in its various forms made it difficult to accept “the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture” as W. E. Gladstone had thought of the Bible. Where, then, was the Rock, the authority for Christians? The questions raised by the Enlightenment, which was, in this context, more important than the Reformation (pp. 96ff.), came home to roost under the aegis of Biblical Criticism. Could the historical Jesus be substituted for

the Bible as the source of authority (a favourite answer of Nonconformists) or the Atonement. (Scott Lidgett, Peter Forsyth, for whom “the principle of authority is ultimately the whole religious question” [p. 107] and who has “won a distinctive place among the thinkers of the era,” [p. 104]. The New Theology [R. J. Campbell and others] had succumbed to the spirit of the age: Forsyth insisted that between Christ and culture—any culture—there was inevitable tension.) The same question of Authority was faced squarely by John Oman in *Vision and Authority* (1902), and in his later works, particular praise is given to his *Grace and Personality* (3rd ed. 1925).

The question of biblical authority was faced differently by Anglican theologians, who it is noted, unlike Nonconformists, were not so solely dependent on Scripture, but relied on a three-pronged “Authority”—the Bible, the Creeds, and Reason. The developments from *Lux Mundi* (1890) to *Foundations* (1912) are traced and the rich variety of Anglican thought, in Gore and Inge, and in the conservative periodical *The Churchman*, and others, revealed: the emphases on the Infallible Book and the apostolically founded community giving place in *Foundations* to that on religious experience (p. 127), under the impact of German Theology, and Biblical Criticism, *The Golden Bough* of Frazer and the pervasive immanentism, as in Inge. In a careful assessment of *Foundations* (p. 131), the author points out the important fact, not often recognized, that “Consistently in *Foundations* the effort was made to free the idea of authority from identification with either an external institution or with autonomous experience,” and that its effect was “to add to the perplexity of the time” (*ibid.*). It was to be expected that there should be a reassertion of the old foundations, as in the work of Gore, Frank Weston, and others; and the further counter-reaction of Bethune-Baker and Wat-

kin was equally predictable in the painful controversy over ministerial subscription to the creeds.

In the same systematic and sustained manner, the various doctrines of the Church in Anglicanism and Nonconformity are delineated. The discussion of the ministry in Gore, Hatch, Lightfoot, Rashdall, Moberly and Stone was really concerned with authority. Is there an *essential* ministry in the Church which is the seat of authority? Or was there a truly *sacramental* ministry in the Church? Was the Gospel—as Gore maintained—continued and preached through the sacramental life of the Church? Could authority be ascribed to the Church and its Ministry in the light of historical investigations, and under the pressure of the criticism of the world? (pp. 160-167).

Earlier Nonconformity had given answers to the questions raised by Anglicanism in a not insignificant way (perhaps the author does not sufficiently recognize this), but in the period of our concern, Biblical Criticism, the decline and depreciation of liturgical life and especially of the Sacraments, the revolt against dogma and the disinclination for theology and a living preoccupation with social concerns—all these had led to a shallow ecclesiology. The politics of dis-establishment, missions ("the evangelization of the world in this generation"), the creation of international groupings in Congregationalism and Methodism apparently dominated Nonconformist life. Theology was generally discounted. Ecumenism in Nonconformity was primarily pragmatic in origin rather than theological—born of the recognition of the value of the strength brought by union, of common concerns, and of organizational efficiency. There were largely unheeded voices, especially that of Forsyth. Oman's influence at this point we must regard perhaps as ambiguous. True to his philosophy, he defined the Church simply as "the community of those who have acknowledged Jesus as the truth" (p. 176). Continuity among

Christians lies not in the apostolic succession but in the fellowship of those who know "the obedience of the free among the free." All external marks for the community of the free are not essential. Gore's concepts are rejected outright. For Oman, of course, a "State Church" was a contradiction in terms (pp. 178ff.).

Anglicanism and Nonconformity, then, were divided over the authority of the Bible and the Church. The same disunity emerges in the third sphere dealt with in detail—the sphere in which all the theological issues of the era are drawn together (p. 185). The discussion of Christology centered on three themes—that of Immanence, Kenosis, and the History. It is not possible here, in a field where, perhaps, the theology of the period was most impressive, to follow through the work of Illingworth, Gore, Inge, Forsyth, Scott-Holland, Fairbairn and others, to name only a few. At first the reaction to an earlier Deism, to the influence of Spencer and Darwin, and the desire to conform or, perhaps, more fairly, to speak to the spirit of the time, led to an emphasis on the continuity of Christ with humanity (thereby the dignity of humanity was preserved and the call to social amelioration was bolstered). At the same time the emphasis on the doctrine of the Logos, which made the centrality of the Incarnation more congenial than that of the Atonement as the foundation of theology) emerged in the work of Gore and others, even as Inge found the historical element in theology more and more uncongenial. True, Inge stressed the Incarnation, but for him "the incarnation as a historical event is a symbol and not a cause of man's redemption" (p. 194). Writing of the historical propositions in the creeds he urged: "Whether these physical manifestations were *necessary* (his italics) it is impossible for us to know: but at most they can only be *efficacia signa*, not the efficient causes, of our redemption. It cost more than this to

redeem our souls." But it was in the development of the theory of Kenosis that the issue of Christology in the English setting came to its most clear and characteristic expression. In this area the lines between Anglican and Nonconformity theology largely disappear: (is it because in the deepest depths they were at one?). Forsyth and Gore lie down together. Later in Chapter 11, the author indicates how the Christological question faces the question of the "Jesus of History": Ritschl's influence became pronounced.

The book leads up to the 1914-1918 War. This, which is rightly recognized to be The Great War—indeed, still "The War"—in the English consciousness, is treated with moving penetration, and a final chapter summarizes the ground covered in the work. There are appendices on Browning, Quakerism, and, most helpfully, Catholicism.

The above must suffice as a crude summary of the work. Written in a readable style, sometimes eloquent and pithily alive, it is comprehensive and yet lucid. It does not skip complexities but moves from specialized concentration on narrow, if significant, details, to the larger and essential issues to reveal their inner coherences. For these reasons this volume by an American is fresh and illuminating: it is not surprising that, often as I read, the refrain came to my mind: "What know they of England, Who only England know?" This interpretation of English theology should be required reading for all students in the field and especially in this country where, it sometimes seems—am I right in so thinking?—the English theological tradition is under some eclipse. Because I find this interpretation of the period so satisfying, any criticisms I have are, on the whole, marginal. I shall first indicate some questions which arise to one who, while not a student of the period, was theologically largely reared on the works dealt with here and who has continued to "listen

in," sporadically at least, to the discussion.

There are naturally some judgments passed which are open to debate. It is difficult to concede, for example, that Henson and Inge were even "possibly among the prophets." Brilliant as they were and pungent, they were curiously too much "accepted" by the Establishment to qualify as prophetic. "The Gloomy Dean" especially—to judge at least from his later works and from popular reaction to him—hardly concealed what one could only judge to be a contempt for the masses which his cold intellectuality could not redeem. That Forsyth was a prince among theologians I concede, but perhaps greater recognition might be given to his curious ineffectiveness to influence theological development despite his brilliance and profundity—a profundity born of a deep conviction of sin. There was often a scintillation in his style which dazzled, but did not illumine. There are some perhaps surprising omissions: no reference to Samuel Butler, Edmund Gosse (*Father and Son*—a classic illustration of the work's main motif). And more important, attention should have been given to the impact of the discovery of the *Didache* in discussions of the structure of the Church. It should not be overlooked that that discovery produced a spate of books, for some years, comparable to that which accompanied the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in our time. I should also be inclined to give to the early David Lloyd George a greater role: had not the seeds for centralization already been laid by him in the period before 1914?

And this reference to Lloyd George raises a difficulty perhaps *not* insignificant. The title of the work is *English Theology*. The article "English" may be simply accidental: occasionally the author uses "British" as its equivalent (see, for example, p. 240). In fact a goodly number of the significant theologians treated would find it difficult to conceive of themselves as Englishmen—Forsyth, Fairbairn, Oman,

Caird—to name the obvious ones. This would not be important except for one fact. The author does indicate the interaction of English and European, particularly German theology; he notes especially the influence of Hegelianism, Ritschlianism, and, although twice only, reference is made to that of Schleiermacher. Perhaps the interaction with German influences was greater even in the strictly English world than is indicated. For example, the Cambridge three (whose paramount significance deserves even more recognition than is accorded to them) were concerned to counteract Baur. But Scottish Theology was probably even more open to European influences (it is no accident that it was A. E. Garvie who did most to introduce Schleiermacher and Ritschl) and a greater caution at this point in tracing Scottish influences might have led to a greater attention to the influence of German theology on that of the period. I note this because one of the distinctive values of this work, apart from its illuminating treatment of its specific theme, is its recognition that theology can only be interpreted against its full historical setting. Time and again the author turns aside to indicate how the larger world, at a particular time “determined” or at least informed the thought of theologians. As examples of this, note the following: his insistence on p. 51 that while the crisis of culture arose from the crisis of faith, the crisis of faith was also part of the crisis of culture; on p. 75 the interesting observation that philosophy, which in turn influenced the theological categories employed, entered the university in reaction to the stark harshness of urban life; on p. 76 the emergence of emphasis on personality is connected with that on the continuity of man with nature outside the theological world; on p. 87 the impact of social change is clearly recognized: the quotations from Gilbert Ryle on p. 87 n. 68 are applicable to theology *mutatis mutandis* as they are to philosophy: they de-

serve quotation—“This laicizing of our culture and [the] professionalizing of philosophy together explain much of the change in style and direction of philosophy in (roughly) the post-Victorian English-speaking world.” (*The Revolution in Philosophy*, pp. 2-3); on pp. 120f. the interpretation of Inge’s “inwardness” over against the decline in traditional outward norms; on p. 127 the reference to the influence of James Frazer “who stressed the universality of religious experience”; on p. 144 the relationship between criticism of the centrality of the Apostolic Ministry and the growing democratization of English life, sociological factors colouring the theological; the infringement of the social concerns of Christians both Nonconformist and Anglican, on their theology which is recognized throughout. I have tabulated these examples to illustrate perhaps the most notable aspect of this study—its historical sensitivity.

This very historical sensitivity presses me on to a final question. The period isolated by the author is undoubtedly well-defined in English history, but is it so well defined in English Theology? Part of the strength of this volume is its awareness of the continuity in change which is characteristic of all English life. It has often been remarked that continental theology differs from English in that the former is the more original, the latter the more conservative. This is not accidental. English theology has been in defence of the Tradition as much as in its elucidation and critique. Bearing this in mind, one may ask whether the first two decades of this century were distinctive: do they stand out—from what preceded and from what came after? Certainly Pusey wrestled with German scepticism in the mid-nineteenth century: true “demythologizing” as a term, which has been almost ubiquitous in our time, does not appear in this volume; and *The Library of Christian Theology*, in which “experience” is the governing principle, as it has been

between 1910 and 1920, appeared in the twenties, and Barth was not translated into English until 1933. As far as the *content* of theology in this period is concerned, there were anticipations of it before 1900 and adumbrations of it after 1920.

Nevertheless, in one thing the author seems particularly justified. The mark of the period is unmistakable—the intensity of its enquiry. The theologians of the period were explorers (p. 54), see pp. 54, 113, 239, 258; they were caught at the juncture of two approaches to existence—the Christian and the secular (see pp. 262f.), when the permeation of culture by Christianity was being radically questioned. Behind the judicious calm of the pages of this volume, we are to recognize the spiritual agony of Christians living when “one world was already dead and another powerless to be born.” Perhaps Henry Jones’s Gifford Lectures, 1920-21, epitomize the period, when he spoke of faith that enquiries, provided we set the enquiry in a context of religious bafflement and even despair. The answers these theologians gave are no longer always adequate. But two things remain with us—the questions they asked and—dare we hope it?—the spirit in which they faced them. In a Christmas letter for 1972 a friend wrote to me that Christian theologians have refused to take radically the results of Biblical Criticism which, in his view, involve the abandonment of Christianity. It cannot be asserted of the figures dealt with in the pages of this book that they did not take these results seriously. (How difficult it was for them, see, for example, M. Ramsey in *Theology*, March 1972, *The Gore Lecture*.) In this sense, and in the rich variety of ways in which they proceeded to meet their difficulties, they are models for us. Most of us are no longer as rooted in the tradition as they were, and, since the issues they wrestled with are now pressing upon us with an ever increasing and even desperate urgency, it is to be hoped

that the author will go on to do for the decades following 1920 what he has done for the two decades preceding that date and even to provide his own interpretation of the issues involved. Our gratitude for this volume cannot but call for more of the same.

W. D. Davies

The Politics of Doomsday: Fundamentalism of the Far Right. Erling Jorstad. Abingdon. 1970. 190 pp. \$4.95.

This lively monograph, written by a teacher of history at St. Olaf College, deserves more attention than it has received so far. Whereas most books on fundamentalism have stressed its theological creed, this one lays major emphasis upon the ultra-conservative political views of its adherents. In developing his fascinating account, Professor Jorstad concentrates upon the writings of four leading right-wing fundamentalists: Carl McIntire, Billy James Hargis, Edgar C. Bundy, and Verne P. Kaub (died in 1964).

The chief ideologist of this group is McIntire of Collingswood, New Jersey, founder of two radical-right interchurch agencies—the American Council of Christian Churches (1941), and the International Council of Christian Churches (1948)—and editor of the *Christian Beacon*. When he first launched his “Twentieth Century Reformation,” his primary concern was to uproot religious liberalism, but since about 1950 he has been increasingly propagating against the so-called Communist conspiracy in America. A hawk of the hawks, he urged this nation to use its atomic bomb on Communist Russia before that country could perfect a similar weapon. During the period of the McCarthy hysteria (1950-54), he accused such eminent clergymen as Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam and E. Stanley Jones of being tainted with Communism. Upon the appearance of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (1952), he

found it infected with the spirit of Communism, "the work of Satan and his agents." A favorite target was of course the Federal [National] Council of Churches, which allegedly contained a nest of Reds, or at least Communist sympathizers.

Much more of the same is fully documented in Jorstad's incisive exposition. Unquestionably, therefore, a positive correlation exists between the McIntire brand of biblical fundamentalism and politics of the far right.

H. Shelton Smith

A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities.
Robert T. Handy. Oxford. 1971.
282 pp. \$7.95.

In this incisive volume, Professor Handy, who is one of Union Theological Seminary's popular teachers, restricts his narrative in two respects: first, he focuses primarily upon the activities of "the English-speaking evangelical denominations"; second, he devotes major attention to the role of those denominations in shaping a Christian society since 1800.

Pre-Civil War evangelical Protestants were tantalizingly vague in their idea of what would constitute a Christian America, but they believed that such an America would at least be predominantly Protestant, chiefly Anglo-Saxon, and loyal to the principle of religious liberty. Thus implicit in their view was tension between Jews and Gentiles, Roman Catholics and Protestants, and Anglo-Saxons and other races, especially blacks. The sharpest racial tension, of course, resulted from white Protestantism's dogma of Anglo-Saxon superiority.

By the dawn of the twentieth century, Protestants (both conservatives and liberals) were romantically confident that America was well on the way to becoming a truly Christian nation, and their leading spokesmen urged their fellow churchmen to ful-

fill the nation's high mission of Christianizing the world. Even war was sometimes held to be a Christianizing instrument. In the opinion of the editor of the *Methodist Review*, the Spanish-American War was "one of God's most efficient agencies for the advancement of true Christian civilization." Similarly Lyman Abbott, editor of *The Outlook*, called the First World War America's "twentieth century [Christian] crusade."

In their postwar enthusiasm, the Protestant high command launched the Interchurch World Movement (December, 1918), believing that it would decisively accelerate "the Christian conquest of the world." Unhappily, however, the movement speedily collapsed as the nation returned to "normalcy." In the backwash of a rejected League of Nations, a Teapot Dome scandal, a revived Ku Klux Klan, and a nation-wide spasm of race riots, Protestant optimism faded. Thus by the middle thirties, says Handy, "the Protestant era in American life had come to its end." Protestants would, of course, continue to fight for their particular version of the faith, but henceforth they would accept the principle of being merely one tradition in a religiously pluralistic society.

Professor Handy chronicles the Protestant era with characteristic sensitivity. Rarely does one find a book with such an array of arresting quotations. The volume is both lucid and illuminating, and it contributes richly toward an understanding of the quest for a Christian America.

H. Shelton Smith

Abortion: The Personal Dilemma.
R. F. R. Gardner. William B. Eerdmans. 1972. 288 pp. \$5.95.

Abortion: The Agonizing Decision.
David R. Mace. Abingdon. 1972.
144 pp. \$3.75.

Extensive public discussion of abortion in the modern era is just entering

its second decade. Yet, since the American Law Institute published its "model bill" in 1959, there has been a deluge of books and articles—medical, psychological, social, legal, religious—which range from plumbing and gossip to serious inquiry to strident advocacy. Many of them aren't worth the time required to read them or the effort necessary to produce them. Both of these books, however, are exceptionable to that otherwise richly deserved rule.

R. F. R. Gardner is a practicing obstetrician and gynecologist who is also an ordained minister. His book, *Abortion: The Personal Dilemma*, is marked by this double-authority; and he seems equally at ease whether discussing medical journals or the Bible.

Although Gardner addresses himself principally to a British audience, the major portion of what he has written is not slave to that culture or tradition, and can be read with profit by American Christians who want to see how one who identifies himself as "a Christian gynecologist" examines the medical, social, and religious issues raised by abortion. There is not space here to detail Gardner's discussion; but I can commend his book as a clear and honest attempt to treat seriously the tragedy presented by unplanned and unwanted pregnancy.

William Barclay wrote recently that "it is one thing honestly to say that we will abandon the demands of Christian morality; it is quite another to abandon them and to deceive ourselves into thinking that we are still keeping them." Gardner's book is a gentle challenge to the former inclination, and a compassionate corrective to the latter.

David R. Mace is a behavioral scientist who teaches in a medical school and who, in an earlier book, undertook an explicitly *Christian* response to contemporary sexual mores. In *Abortion: The Agonizing Decision*, Mace argues that he wants to take a religiously neutral position in order to

provide knowledge and some help to the woman who is faced with a personal decision about abortion.

The format of this book is a narrative re-telling of Mace's counseling with "Helen," a fictitious character who represents "many women in one." We are not told what choice "Helen" eventually made—that "doesn't really matter," says Mace; what does matter is whether she clearly understood the several ingredients in this decisional mix, and with that knowledge (not simply information) was able to make a choice she could "live with comfortably." Accordingly, the reader is allowed to accompany "Helen" and Dr. Mace through the process: an initial conversation, a conference on abortion (with speeches discussing medical, historical, legal, moral, and counseling aspects of abortion), and a concluding conversation.

Among all the books and articles on abortion which I have read, this is one I would recommend for reading to any women coming to me for abortion counseling. It doesn't answer all the questions (that is not its purpose); yet it raises major inquiries in such a way that genuine and informed and compassionate discussion of issues and options can usefully proceed.

The imminence of marketable prostaglandins (the so-called "morning after" drugs) renders continuation of the abortion debate in its conventional mode somewhat problematic. Still, the basic questions are important enough to keep asking. The debate is not yet archaic; and, meantime, books which assist us to achieve some clarity and coherence in moral reasoning vis-à-vis our selves and our bodies will provide a helpful and useful service. Both of these books, in my opinion, do just that.

Harmon L. Smith

New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus. Joachim Jeremias. Fortress. 1971. 330 pp. \$10.00.

We of the English-speaking world are indebted to John Bowden and to

Fortress Press for making available simultaneously with the German edition the English translation of Joachim Jeremias' *New Testament Theology*. Making readily accessible the fruits of Jeremias' remarkably diverse and detailed scholarship, this volume is the outstanding work to emerge in its field in at least a decade.

Although the English edition does not so state, this volume is the first of a series and deals only with the Proclamation of Jesus. If the subsequent volumes are of the calibre of this one, we shall soon have a New Testament Theology which can compete with the standard work of Rudolph Bultmann.

Readers who have been frightened away from German scholarship by the turgid, opaque prose of Conzelmann and Kasemann will be pleased to note the contrast in style in this work. Jeremias is always lucid, always careful, always well-documented. Stylistically the work is a breath of fresh air from the continent.

Further in contrast to his German contemporaries, it is cause for rejoicing that Jeremias considers the proclamation of Jesus to be a part of New Testament Theology. Bultmann and Conzelmann devote only a few pages to this topic in their Theologies.

In evaluating Jeremias' volume, the reviewer is faced with no small problem due to the author's disconcerting practice of plunging directly into his material without providing preface or introduction. The reviewer thus confronts the task of evaluating how well the author has fulfilled the goals he has set for himself without knowing exactly what these are or knowing within what limits he has decided to work.

Jeremias begins by dealing with the language and style of the sayings of Jesus, in a search for criteria for authentic words of the Lord. Jeremias' conclusions will be of interest even to those who are unable to follow the details of his linguistic arguments. While some may take issue

with his conclusions at particular points—I, for example, find his treatment of the synoptic problem too facile—these forty pages provide a valuable general treatment of what Jeremias calls the *ipsissima vox Jesu*, the way of speaking preferred by Jesus. Jeremias concludes the section with a principle of operation which guides the remainder of the book: "In the synoptic tradition, it is the in-authenticity, and not the authenticity of the sayings of Jesus that must be demonstrated." p. 37)

With this guiding principle Jeremias attacks the synoptic accounts of Jesus' ministry, beginning with the baptism by John. He finds the decisive stimulus to Jesus' activity in his baptismal experience of a call—the descent of the spirit and the proclamation that he is God's chosen Servant. Jesus became conscious that God had revealed Himself to him as only a father (*Abba*) can disclose himself to a son. Jesus responds, as we learn from the temptation narrative, with a decisive "Yes" to this call, rejecting the "easy road" of political Messianism.

In his third chapter Jeremias deals with the content of Jesus' ministry, which is characterized by the manifestation in word and deed of the authority Jesus possesses by virtue of the eschatological indwelling of the spirit. The miracle events witness to the destruction of the power of Satan; Jesus' attitude toward the Torah reveals his commission to fulfill the Law, that is, to "fill it out" to its complete eschatological measure. The central theme of Jesus' public proclamation is the dawning of the kingly reign of God. Even more shocking that Jesus' startling assertion that the time of salvation has dawned is his disclosure of the mystery that salvation is destined *only* for the poor and sinners. The end time brings a reversal of conditions—those who thought they were damned are saved. This is God's nature, to be merciful.

Those who in faith respond to Jesus' personal appeal to repentance

are gathered by him into a community, the new eschatological people of God. The lives of the members of this community are characterized by a new relationship to God. They, like Jesus, can call Him *Abba*, Father. A new law, the law of love, rules the life of the man who belongs to the new kingdom. His life becomes a life of discipleship. His motivation for action is gratitude for the grace of God. The reign of God takes concrete form in his daily life.

Jeremias concludes his volume with a discussion of Jesus' self-testimony to his mission and an analysis of the Easter events. Jesus' self-consciousness is expressed in the title Son of Man, the only title whose authenticity is to be accepted. Its background lies in Jewish apocalyptic, particularly the Similitudes of Enoch where is found an expectation of a superhuman, transcendent, universalistic Messiah, who possesses certain of the features of the Servant of God in Second Isaiah. It is this figure with whom Jesus identifies himself in his future exalted state. Jesus expected and announced his suffering and death as outlined in Isa 53, thus attributing atoning power to his death. His resurrection and exaltation to glory as experienced by the disciples provided a real experience of the dawning of God's new creation and thus initiated the history of the Church.

In a work of the scope of this volume which reaches such "conservative" conclusions, it would be easy to single out specific issues where Jeremias stands on uncertain footing. For example, I find his position that Jesus identified himself with the Servant very questionable. Jeremias' understanding of Jesus' attitude toward Torah shows a lack of appreciation of the convincing work by W. D. Davies on this issue. At one point in particular, however, Jeremias has ignored to his detriment recent scholarly effort. He seems to dismiss redaction criticism in its entirety. He views the Gospel of Mark as merely a complex of tra-

dition with no systematic structure. Differences between Matthew and Luke are attributable to the earlier history of the tradition and not to redactional activity. Even the M material reveals "unconcerned juxtaposition of conflicting traditions." In the light of recent work, this rejection of an entire methodology surely cannot be tolerated.

Despite these reservations, one can only rejoice at the emergence of this extremely significant volume. It is a must for anyone who wishes seriously to confront the proclamation of Jesus and its meaning for his day and ultimately for ours.

Robert E. Price

The Future Shape of Preaching. Thor Hall. Fortress. 1971. 140 pp. \$3.50.

Much traditional literature in the field of homiletics has consisted of lofty theologizing about the preaching event or utilitarian accents on "how to"—dealing with matters of content, construction, style, and delivery of the sermon. Addressing himself to the new ecology of the preaching enterprise in a time marked by the "desacralization of existence and a pluralization of society," Dr. Hall moves in this book far beyond a mere nostalgic yearning for or an attempted resuscitation of the old. He examines the emerging new ecclesiology that is more sociologically astute and theologically sophisticated, evidenced in a steady proliferation of books on church renewal that have rigorously examined the nature of the church in terms of its purpose, mission, and form. He gives sustained attention to a "between the times" theological methodology for the present day. Of special significance for preaching is Dr. Hall's concern to gauge the impact of electronic media upon the contemporary consciousness, with particular reference to Marshall McLuhan's views regarding present-day cognition and perception. We all know that many things have happened since 1900—and most of them plug

into walls! McLuhan sees in current media development, with its combination of instantaneousness and extension, what Dr. Hall terms "a reassembling of the fractured human sensorium into a new organic oral-visual unity." Meaning that is communicated immediately and in a communal kind of experience is contrasted to individualistic perception fostered by the static printed symbol. The extension of our senses in the human community has issued in a collective awareness that McLuhan believes will have a universalizing and integrating effect upon human society. All of this, Dr. Hall affirms, calls for preaching that is oriented toward both mainstream Christian thought and the secular mind set. He thus phrases one of the pivotal concerns of the book:

... I would suggest that the greatest weakness in contemporary homiletics lies in the fact that, until now, it has not gone deeply enough into the analysis of the methodological, the hermeneutical, and the linguistic problems which continually undercut the effectiveness of Christian communications. (p. 45).

Indeed, the author sees the homiletician often retreating from the complexities of these problems into simplistic and commonplace solutions.

As he engages in a serious re-thinking of the sermon, Dr. Hall urges that it not be thought of in terms of "Print oriented sensory organization," with a premium upon literary and stylistic excellence or structural clarity, nor should it be approached as the explication of rules, laws, or static ideals. Rather, it must seek to mediate and be fully responsive to the requirements of authentic communication, with a form that is "open, flexible, entirely responsive . . . non-interfering in relation to the purposes which the preacher is seeking to accomplish" (p. 134). For Dr. Hall the sermon is essential in worship, for it helps to provide "the full spectrum of the con-

stitutive word-event," and it represents "the explicit, human, contemporary kind of encounter with the gospel" (p. 104). The preacher serves as a "theological prompter" in guiding the congregation to its Christian identity and orientation as the people seek to correlate theological interpretation and secular involvement. This requires of him a knowledge of contemporary concerns in their personal and social dimensions and an understanding of the religious consciousness of the congregation. The author emphasizes that in the preaching enterprise the minister will not ignore the literary artists as his valuable collaborators, for they too stake out a broad and deep claim for concern and relevance and clarify the human situation to which the word of God is addressed.

This book is an effective expression of the author's serious and sustained interests and of his productive gifts and graces. It is a courageous and provocative exposition of the contemporary situation in homiletics, marked throughout by the awareness that "the re-thinking of the preaching event has only begun" (p. 137). Dr. Hall takes seriously the preacher's role as a "boundary man" whose ministry must be shaped by both the historic Christian tradition and the vitalities at work within the present cultural situation. Yet he is too astute to settle for an uncritical presentism and an easy relevance that merely proclaims secularism in a Christian idiom.

Dr. Hall has performed a most valuable service in relating McLuhan's insights to the tasks of the homiletician. He is deeply aware of the basic epistemological consequences of an electronic age marked by communication's swift simultaneity. His perspective observations might have ranged further in helping us to determine how far we should accept electronic man at face value. McLuhan seems to have almost unbounded faith that "the computer promises by technology a Pentecostal condition of universal understanding and unity" (p. 14). While we fear

neither knowledge nor entertainment, there are dangers when the average American, "plugged in" to his culture and receiving a massive and continuous exposure to communication, becomes a repository for undigested knowledge and undifferentiated data. Today we are as much surfeited with pictures as with words and are victims of over-reception, so that the uncritical acceptance of projected images may stultify our autonomous judgment and cultural individuality. In dealing with the impact of the media upon us there is also the question of how much contemporary man's feeling for life must be negated as well as affirmed, for the claims of culture require of us a responsible *no* as well as a sensitive *yes*.

This is an extremely valuable and provocative book that speaks to the contemporary situation of homiletics as few volumes I know. The author is an able craftsman, a competent theologian, a versatile and innovative thinker, and this book merits serious reading and wide circulation.

John W. Carlton

Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet to Politicians. Ronald N. Stone. Abingdon. 1972. 272 pp. \$8.00.

It is appropriate and timely that this appraisal of Reinhold Niebuhr should appear shortly after his death in 1971. A most carefully documented and close study (albeit written in somewhat pedantic style), Professor Stone of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary has traced the shifts and turns of Niebuhr's thought, who always had the courage to change, in an explication of his political ethics for American foreign policy.

Stone follows the major motifs in the shifts from Niebuhr's early liberalism, through the Marxian phase into "realism," which combined elements of liberalism and pragmatism. (This reviewer well remembers the comment Niebuhr made at a conference in Washington: "Let's be pragmatic as

hell." The analogy may not have been accurate, since hell is hardly pragmatic, but the point was seriously made, much to the horror of an ultra-conservative "observer"). Yet his thought is not halcyon or "tossed by every wind of doctrine." The more apt analogy is of a deepening stream, and always an integrity and theological honesty, in his restless, brilliant quest for the meaning of Christian existence and the norms of Christian action in the 20th century.

It is no secret, of course, that Niebuhr broke from the isolationist pacifism of the early 30's and led the theological movement to support intervention in World War II. His Christian realism led him to advocate a "balance of power" policy during the Cold War, and even toward the end of his career, during the Vietnam War, while highly critical of Nixon's administration, the author points out, interestingly enough, that he "did not advocate, and could not advocate without contradicting major motifs in his political thought, an admission of defeat at the hands of the Viet Cong or an immediate withdrawal" (p. 194). He sought a compromised, negotiated peace which would protect the imperial interests of all the major powers, including the United States.

What also emerges from Stone's study is the Scylla-Charybdis style of Niebuhr's thought: he charted his course of policy between two opposing perils more than by dead reckoning by one positive ideal in the stars. As the perils changed, his course changed. This was but one feature of his contribution to our American conscience. The title is apt: "Prophet to Politicians." And the content fulfills admirably the intention of the title.

Waldo Beach

The Preacher and the New English Bible. Gerald Kennedy. Oxford. 1972. 183 pp. \$5.95.

What is G. K. trying to do in this volume? In the Foreword, remember-

ing that the New Testament was written in the *koiné*, "the Greek language of the common man"—and not in Holy Ghost Greek, as too many folk think—he decided to examine texts—not the text—in this contemporary translation. He wisely concentrated on the four Gospels. What is his purpose? He tells us: "I have not aimed at presenting sermons for my fellow preachers, but only at providing a spark which may set their minds aflame. Such sparks may come from a conversation, a newspaper story, a billboard, a book, a personal experience, or the New English Bible" (p. viii).

The book opens with a short, simple, worthy dedication:

THIS IS FOR
HALFORD E. LUCCOCK
OF BLESSED MEMORY

There is a second dedication: a lovely, homey one to Mary Kennedy, his wife, slipped in to his comment on Luke 1:27 (p. 95).

There are pluses galore in G. K.'s handling of his subject. Here are five which impressed me.

First, each Gospel is provided with a brief introduction, occasioned by a verse in the Gospel. They help us understand each writer's motivation, viewpoint, slant, angle, even bias. Matthew refuses to separate O. T. and N. T. He knows the importance of our heritage. Mark's *portrait* (not *photograph*) sees God in action, through Jesus, in the human situation. Luke is ecumenical, both *across* racial barriers and *within* the social milieu, with Jesus as the loving, yet austere, Lord of life. John writes the story, and the meaning, of the Incarnation: revelation, God taking the initiative; the quality of eternal life, which can begin on earth; the indwelling of the divine in the human, that is, in us.

Second, there is a lesson, by examples, for each of us on the value of arresting sermon titles, an art in which I am not particularly skilled, but still learning. Harry Emerson Fosdick

sometimes used questions: How Much Do We Want Peace?; What About God?; What Keeps Religion Going?; What Are You Standing For?. His successor, R. J. McCracken—a classmate of mine in the Divinity Hall of Glasgow University—published a volume of sermons: *Questions People Ask*. All twenty-one titles ended, naturally, with a question mark. Ralph W. Sockman, preacher to the nation, used paradox and/or alliteration in his titles: The Conservative Revolutionary; The Good Tempter; The Peaceful Sword; The Meek Master. G. K., himself usually uses short, pithy titles: Hypocrisy in Reverse; Holy Pragmatism; You Scoundrel; Boys Shouting in the Temple; Think Small; I Am Guilty (Carlyle Marney would add "responsibly" before "guilty"?); Get Lost! Theology Became Biography; Pressed into Service. And on, and on, and on. He has a feeling for, and a knack with, the simple word, which, in company with one or two others, must give us pause. Work on titles. Your sound choice of one may woo, win, frighten, embarrass folk to come and hear you share the good news.

Third, there is a breadth and a width to G. K.'s reading which is somewhat awesome and disconcerting. How can *he* find the time to read, and many of us cannot? He makes it, out of the same twenty-four hours God gives you and me each day. He is no name-dropper, but he is acquainted with Pascal and G. K. Chesterton; with Agatha Christie and Robert Frost; with Einstein and Kagawa; with Toynbee and Loren Eiseley. To sit under him as one's minister must have been a liberal education, at the very least.

Fourth, this man, from reading *and* listening, has a mind stored with pertinent, memorable illustrations, the support material for the religious proposition. Here's a frinstance: "A visitor to the Grand Canyon looked at that mighty panorama and said, 'Man, something happened here.' That

is what men say when they read the Gospel of Mark" (p. 59). Doesn't this make you ready to go back to Mark and read it again? Here's another: "A main problem of any society is how to be both merciful and just. Usually the man who insists on justice is lacking in mercy. The lady who had her picture taken objected to it, saying, 'I do not think you did me justice.' 'Madam,' was the reply, 'you should ask for mercy rather than justice.' So should we all." The initial chuckle is countered by the last four words.

Fifth, the book is full of flashing, telling sentences. Space is running out on me, so let me give you but one example: "Long prayers are bad enough in any case, but when they are done to impress people, they are unbearable" (p. 79). Every word is understandable; the impact is tremendous. Let me say, as I've said before, style is the bridge between the pulpit and the pew.

These are some of the pluses. Are there no minuses? Of course, there are. The primary one is the curse, the bedevilment, of the small text: a few words plucked out of context, which are then used to prime one's own theological pump. When one is as well schooled, soundly trained, and alert to theological substance as G. K., then the resultant sermon may well be Christian and orthodox. But more than some of these delightful reflections on the NEB were not derived from the context of the chosen text. In the Foreword, G. K. pleads for biblical preaching: "The Bible, of course, is the Christian's guidebook" (p. vii); "The Bible is primarily the Christian preacher's book, and when our preaching ceases to be biblical, it ceases to be relevant" (p. vii). Yet, go back to the second paragraph in this column, and you will notice where "the sparks," may set our minds aflame, are due to five other sources as well as the NEB. The fact that one starts from an announced biblical text is no guarantee, *per se*, that the sermon will be biblical in its content. In fact, one may preach

a biblical sermon without a single specific reference to the Bible. G. K. can, because he is steeped in the Word revealed in the Scriptures. But, in this volume, he makes dangerous use of allegory to guarantee contemporary relevance, and some of his deductions are non-sequiturs. Exegesis should precede exposition and application. Beware of the small text, even more of the truncated text.

Yet, this minus does not invalidate the pluses. Buy the book; but use it cannily. The author draws on his storehouse of treasures: biblical and other, things old and new, which are relevant because they are eternal. I'm going to keep this book by my bedside, for refreshment and inspiration, grateful for it and for Gerald Kennedy.

James T. Cleland

Women Priests: Yes or No? Emily C. Hewitt and Suzanne R. Hiatt. Seabury. 1973. 128 pp. \$2.95.

Much more than a book for Episcopalians struggling with the issue of full ordination for women, this compact work surveys the most troublesome problems facing all religious groups as they anticipate and experience the increasing participation of women. The authors are both ordained Episcopal deacons. Ms. Hewitt, a candidate for the Th.D. at Union Theological Seminary (New York), lectures in religion and education at Union. She was the guest editor of a special issue of *Theological Education* (Summer, 1972) devoted to women in theological education. Ms. Hiatt is on the faculty of the Episcopal Consortium for Theological Education in the Northeast.

The authors first focus on the question: "Can women take on new roles and tasks in society and still retain their 'femininity'?" They describe the existence of the woman problem in society today by quoting Dorothy Sayers' *Are Women Human?* With her usual wit, Ms. Sayers explains that if we had a man problem instead

of a woman problem then we would be reading books such as "History of the Male" or "Males of the Bible."

Although women are becoming more and more accepted in positions of leadership in business and the professions, many churches still have official barriers to their participation as ministers. The influence of taboos and magic associated with women and a longing for the good old days of patriarchal authority in family and church are two factors which the authors believe account for the hesitancy of both laity and clergy to accept women ministers. The authors give most serious consideration to the threats to male egos which women priests may provoke. Will men leave the church? Deciding against ordination for women on the basis that men are not stable enough to cope with any threats involved, they conclude, would be an insult to the men of the church.

Brief treatment is given to the witness of the Bible and to theological issues. The question of whether woman was created subordinate to man, the meaning of the Fall, and the implications of the question "Is God a male?" are matters which deserve much more analysis. The thorough footnotes and suggestions for additional reading encourages the reader to pursue more detailed discussions on specific points.

In one chapter, "The Practices of

the Churches of God," the Anglican churches are compared with Catholic and Protestant bodies. Here the ecumenical dimensions of admitting women to ministry are surveyed. Since this work was designed especially to foster discussion and decision within the Episcopal churches, a chronology of major Anglican documents and action concerning women in holy orders from 1862 to 1972 and the Report of the Joint Commission on Ordained and Licensed Ministries 1970 were included.

The value of this book is twofold. First it presents the many objections to women in the ministry and deals with each realistically in terms of the biblical and historical traditions of the Christian faith and the current situation in which the churches find themselves today. The arguments which the authors give in favor of women in the ministry demonstrate a thoughtful and prayerful approach to a current dilemma. The second value is that it gathers together much material needed to stimulate further debate on whether women should be admitted to ordained ministries and if they are, how the ministries of women can help all. Christians understand more fully the meaning of being one "in Christ."

Martha M. Wilson

