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In The Study

WE must be grateful to G. R. Beasley-Murray for his flowing translation of a significant study in the field of baptism.¹ This work, by a continental Roman, devotes half its pages to a careful exegetical examination of the key passages in the Pauline epistles, and gives pride of place to the first eleven verses of Romans 6. The remainder of the book uses the results thus established as the basis for a more systematic theological construction. The soteriological content and implications of baptism are carefully plotted in dialogue with other contemporary theories. The relevant consequences for a right understanding of Paul's total theology are briefly indicated.

In general, Schnackenburg should command assent. He states with unusual clarity and force conclusions that would be widely accepted by scholars on all sides. But if this book says nothing new, this is perhaps the measure of how far things have moved in the last fifteen years. What we have before us is the revised edition of a study first prepared in 1947. How widely it has been revised I do not know. But if we may take it that the main lines of the argument have remained constant, it must initially have done a great deal to affect contemporary trends. The imprint of its origins are still clear in that its controversy is mainly with scholars of the last generation. Nevertheless it is immensely valuable to listen in to the establishment of positions now too easily taken for granted.

Three specific comments may be advanced. Schnackenburg devotes a considerable amount of space to a critical rebuttal of the *Mysterienlehre* of Dom Odo Casel. This basic concept of the Christian Mystery has had considerable influence in sacramental theology. The conclusions that stem from it and even more the perspective and mode of understanding which it advanced are, I would suppose, accepted and used by many who are not wholly conscious of the kind of approach and argumentation that led Casel to his position. This is not to say that his emphasis lacked truth and was completely unbiblical. It is rather to suggest that if Casel's insights are to stand and be truly fruitful they may need transplanting to a more scriptural soil.

The second comment is not unrelated. Dom Odo was wrestling

¹ R. Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul*, Basil Blackwell, 35s., 1964.

in part with the problem of the relation between past and present, between the saving work of Christ in history and its sacramental effectiveness in the Christian today. Schnackenburg expounds this from the point of view of Pauline theology in terms of corporate solidarity, representation, the Adam-Christ comparison. He is quite clear that it is faith and baptism that admit a man into the saving work of Christ. True enough. But is this all the truth. Did nothing happen to us at Calvary? Was the Cross only *for* us? The *crux interpretation* that is 2 Cor. 5:14 remains. In his discussion at this point, the relentless exegete for once leaves a lingering impression of evasion.

We appropriate salvation by faith and baptism. This demands the final comment. Why not faith alone? Why add baptism? Here Schnackenburg seems to me unnecessarily obscure. He talks about entrance into the Church, and gives the unequivocal impression that it is in these terms that the question must be answered. But, as I read him, he has not followed through to the necessary conclusion. Surely the truth of it is this. Baptism is necessary because salvation is both corporate and somatic.

Baptists will do well to read this book. To catch up with Rome is sometimes to catch up with Scripture.

Seldom can the series *Studies in Biblical Theology* have done us greater service than in the provision in translation of some of the New Testament essays by two members of the school of Bultmann.² Ernst Käsemann writes diversely of the charismatic nature of ministry in the infant Church, of the error of defining the New Testament canon as the foundation of the unity of the People of God, of the richness of the Christologically determined Pauline understanding of the Lord's Supper, of the problems of eschatology posed by the presence in Scripture of the second epistle of Peter. Ernst Fuchs wrestles with the problems arising as the Church moves from the New Testament to proclamation in so far as these centre on the person of Jesus. Both scholars are engaged in an exegetical task with important contemporary implications.

In 1953 Käsemann delivered in Jugenheim the lecture which marked the initiation of what is now called the new Quest of the Historical Jesus. The text of it is now before us. Käsemann argued that we need not and we dare not dismiss the question of the earthly Jesus. We need not do so; for certain characteristic features of his preaching stand out clearly. We dare not do so; for to sacrifice the identity between the earthly and the exalted Lord is to sacrifice the Gospel. Jesus made no explicit claim to be Messiah; but the authority and freedom he displayed involved

² E. Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*. S.C.M. 18s. 1964. E. Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*. S.C.M. 21s. 1964.

inescapably if implicitly such a claim. In 1956 Fuchs took up the theme, in a lecture now also before us. He affirmed that not only the words of Jesus but also and more significantly his gracious activity of a fellowship and forgiveness which made those words concrete imply a Christology which is more than messianic. The proclamation of the early Church is thus in true continuity with the conduct of the historical Jesus.

Perhaps the chief interest of these two collections of essays for many will be that they introduce us to the heart of an ongoing debate which is of primary importance for our day. From that point of view it is to be regretted that some more recent contributions of the authors are lacking. Käsemann seems to have moved towards a greater scepticism about the real continuity between the earthly Jesus and the *kerygma* of the Church. Fuchs on the contrary has underlined the continuity by carefully relating the message of Jesus and the *kerygma* of the Pauline epistles. Over against both the reader will wish to set Bultmann's reaction to the whole discussion. The latter has shrewdly put his finger on an important ambiguity. We may admit that there is historical continuity between the words and acts of the historical Jesus and the Christ-*kerygma* of the early Church; we can see how it was that the Proclaimer became the subject of the Proclamation. But this does not mean that the *kerygma* simply echoed the message of Jesus; nor does it follow that there is a material continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ.

One word of warning. The reader will need to remember, especially in dealing with the essays of Fuchs, that all this moves within the broad context of Bultmannian understanding. The approach is existential through and through. A particular understanding of history lies at the heart of it all. Allied to this is the adoption of what is called a hermeneutic of faith, or, in other terms, faith's "doctrine of language". A difficult concept! But it demands our study. For it bears crucially upon much contemporary continental understanding of the exegete's task.

The hermeneutical problem is a desperately difficult one. How far can scholars in this land go on ignoring it? The question is prompted by the reading of a new biblical commentary.³ Canon Montefiore is disarmingly explicit in confessing: "In keeping within the British tradition of writing commentaries, I have tried to confine myself entirely to exegesis, and I have not touched on the more difficult problems of hermeneutics". Perhaps this is as it should be so far as a contributor to Black's New Testament Commentaries is concerned. But where are the commentaries that take us further?

³H. W. Montefiore, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. A. & C. Black. 30s. 1964.

I hope it is not simply the result of this particular frustration that I lay down this volume with disappointment. It is indeed solid exegetical fare. It pays particular attention to textual variants and problems. It is the fruit of wide reading and sober scholarship. It is prefaced by an adequate introduction that argues strongly and in detail for Apollos as author of the epistle. It amply betrays the commentator's close attention both to Philo and to the Old Testament. All this is right, proper—and totally uninspiring.

For somehow this commentary never really seems to get off the ground. It is pedestrian; and as such is quite out of harmony with the epistle. The author of Hebrews get perilously near the pedestrian many times, but never, I fancy, quite capitulates to it. It may be that we need a hermeneutic if this letter is to come alive. Meanwhile, the beginner for whom (among others) this commentary is written will be grateful to Montefiore for a thread to lead him through the maze. He is not, however, likely to appreciate being confronted with words such as "sclerogenic", "homoioteleuton", and "hysteroproteron" (*sic*).

Even philosophers can do better than that; and by contrast a book⁴ that enables us to listen in to the ongoing debate between philosophers and theologians provides almost inevitably a stimulating experience. Here are four main conference papers, prepared comment thereon, and excerpt from ensuing discussion. Sceptics and believers grapple with each other and with the basic question of the reality of God. Is the "Christian" theistic assertion a rational one? On what canons of rationality is it justifiable?

H. H. Price writes in somewhat outmoded fashion of the compulsion of religious experience and seeks to illumine the state of faith from within. William Alston combats the claim that the Freudian psychological explanation of religious belief renders such belief unacceptable. Alasdair MacIntyre argues that it is now impossible to believe in Christianity if one truly understands it, and that controversy must be pinned to the issue of criteria of intelligibility. Brand Blanshard launches an unrestrained attack on irrationalism in modern theology as exemplified in the writing of Karl Barth. Thus the ground that is ploughed up covers much of the important field of contemporary debate, and the discussion initiated revolves in the main round real focal points of significant enquiry.

Throughout, the debate proceeds at a deep level. Its progress should be a matter of concern to all thinking Christians. The least satisfying contribution is that of Blanshard, who completely misunderstands Barth and whose presentation is rightly and mer-

⁴ (ed.) John Hick, *Faith and the Philosophers*. Macmillan. 35s. 1964.

cilessly cut to pieces by the commentators. The most significant contribution is that of MacIntyre; and it is handled with appropriate seriousness. The dialogue will and must go on. To contract out of it would be suicidal. If it is to bear fruit it must be conducted in the truly modern categories that this published discussion so illuminatingly deploys.

We need our apologists who stand on the frontiers and carry on the dialogue, but we need also our systematic theologians. The Professor of Systematic Theology at Lund increasingly demands the attention of the English-speaking world as his books become available in translation; and the most recent⁵ of them is assured of a welcome. It is divided into two parts, one concerned with the Gospel, the other with the Church; but from first to last the necessary inter-relationship is carefully maintained. The Gospel is discussed in three sections. One deals with preaching and sacraments, one with Christ under the Law (His human nature, His Cross), one with Christ and the renewal of creation (His divine nature, His Resurrection). A similar threefold division is observed in connection with the Church. The first section treats of the Spirit and the Word, the second of the Church and creation, the third of Man in the Church. It will be readily apparent that the two major parts of this volume correspond to the second and third articles of the Creed. The exposition of the first article belongs to a previous work entitled *Creation and Law*.

Here is a Lutheran re-stating characteristic insights and emphases of the great Reformer in opposition to basic positions of Bultmann, Barth, and much of contemporary theology. It is fashionable to start with the second article of the Creed and comprehend all things in heaven and earth from the perspective of Christology. It is fashionable to decry the traditional distinction between Law and Gospel and make the Gospel alone determinative for preaching and ethics. Wingren will have none of this. Not surprising then that he stands firm for a futuristic element in eschatology that comprises something more than the revelation of what is already wholly true and wholly accomplished. Not surprising either that he inveighs against Marcionite and monophysite tendencies in much modern thinking.

Wingren writes necessarily against his own Swedish background. His problems are not always ours, and some of his broadsides need redirecting if they are effectively to combat British dangers. The Lutheran preoccupation with the Word is always evident, and partly as a consequence his presentation of the Ministry seems thin and unbalanced. The Lutheran tendency to class church order with the *adiaphora* lurks always in the shadows, and carries with

⁵ G. Wingren, *Gospel and Church*. Oliver & Boyd. 50s. 1964.

it the usual theological blind spots. But Wingren's forceful exposition of the work of Christ is extremely valuable, and his setting of it within the necessary context of creation has significant implications for preaching, for ethics, and for a right understanding of the relationship between the Church and the world. This is a book that requires to be read a second time. That is the measure of its importance.

The question of law and grace is at this juncture a problem not only for theology but also for ethics. At present moral theology is not in favour in Protestant circles. It carries ominous historical associations of legalism and casuistry. But more important than the emotional reactions these catchwords conjure up is the reasoned opposition that sees a basic threat to the Gospel in anything that might recognize natural moral qualities in man as man. So we have turned to ethics—theological ethics, ethics of grace. We have decried principles, and favoured the obedient response to the challenge of the present moment, the creative, unpredictable reaction to the personal demand of the living God. Love has been enthroned. And between the heights of love and the harsh realities of every ethical dilemma there has often been little but confusion and shadow.

Canon Waddams⁶ has written under the constraint of contemporary need. He is no blind uncritical traditionalist. He seeks to refurbish the hallowed armoury of moral theology, and to present it as at once true to Scripture and relevant to our modern situation. Whether or not his thesis commands agreement, few will, I think, dispute that it is good that this book should have been written. It is timely contribution to a significant ongoing debate.

As the argument is developed, we are led to consider natural law, conscience, ethical realities both human and distinctively Christian, virtue and vices as traditionally categorised. The discussion then moves to more concrete issues in the sphere of sex, of war, of penal law, of property and wealth. Throughout, there is a freshness of thought that seldom fails to stimulate, and a determination to be practical and specific that hardly ever shirks an issue.

The result is an interesting blend of strength and weakness. The strength lies not merely in the firmer foundations upon which this revised moral theology is erected, but also and more particularly in the rigorous analysis that is pervasive. Christian talk about ethics needs this recall to the past, this familiarity with ground that past ages have so thoroughly explored and so minutely mapped, this advance from obscure generalities. In this field, dis-

⁶H. Waddams, *A New Introduction to Moral Theology*. S.C.M. 16s. 1964.

criminating knowledge, based on sensitive, painstaking and wide-ranging enquiry, is a tremendous aid to responsible action.

But the weakness is, I fancy, to be located at two points. Christian ethics are from first to last communal ethics. There is an individualism inherent in this treatment that never quite gets counterbalanced. Canon Waddams is not unaware of what is at issue; and in a certain sense the very fact that he is dealing with moral theology forged by the Church herself over many centuries provides something of a built-in safeguard. But the approach and perspective still seem in the end to be alien to a truly biblical and theological construction. Perhaps this is bound up with the other weakness of this study. It never quite reaches a satisfying relationship between Christian Ethics and Moral Theology. Sometimes the question is solved by a distinction between principles and application. At other times Moral Theology is used to include both. Again it is recognized that there is an extremely close relationship between moral theology on the one hand and ascetical, sacramental, and pastoral theology on the other. Yet Canon Waddams, for quite understandable reasons, decides to take the other studies for granted. This might be defensible, if he built solidly upon them. My uneasiness comes from the suspicion that he really fails so to do. Is a more radical reform required? Has moral theology to be thought into and out of these other disciplines—and so constructed upon a broader and more integrated base? It is here that modern Protestant Ethics seems to have the advantage. It is in the realm of application that moral theology appeals. Are they in the end mutually exclusive possibilities? I wonder!

In 1963 more than one hundred and fifty Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars met at Harvard. The addresses and papers delivered, together with a summary of seminar discussions, have now been published.⁷ The whole forms an exciting collection, not least because it contains three lectures delivered by Cardinal Bea against the background of the first session of the second Vatican Council.

The seminars explored problems of record and interpretation in biblical studies, of the definition of symbol and sacrament, of reform in the Church, and of conscience in a pluralistic society. Among the papers which underlay this exploration, many will find of special interest the careful examination of features of mediaeval reform offered both by Gerhart Ladner and by Martin Schmidt, and the essay on contemporary scriptural interpretation offered by James Robinson. Of special significance is the paper on the Apostle Paul and the introspective conscience of the West, pre-

⁷ (ed.), S. H. Miller and G. E. Wright, *Ecumenical Dialogue at Harvard*. Harvard University Press. 40s. 1964.

sented by Krister Stendahl. Stendahl is possibly the most important figure in American New Testament studies at this time. His article on Biblical Theology in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* is already a classic. The present contribution was earlier published in an expanded form in the *Harvard Theological Review*, and made an immediate and widespread impact.

That such a colloquium could take place at all is an encouraging sign of the times. Free and honest talk does not necessarily solve problems. It does reveal exactly what they are; and it does deepen the will to press into them, and perhaps beyond them. It is good that this book has been produced. It were better if it should be read by both Protestants and Romans this side of the Atlantic.

N. CLARK.

SOUTH PARADE, LEEDS (2)

NOTES (*Continued from p. 81*)

⁴⁷ Father and son, both named Edward, are apt to be confused by unwary students. Baines junior, with whom we are at present concerned, received a knighthood in 1880 and served on the Schools Enquiry Commission, 1865. He wrote several tracts on the subject.

⁴⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, March 25, 1843.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, April 15, 1843.

⁵⁰ Hamilton, incidentally, was brother-in-law to Acworth, Giles's predecessor at South Parade.

⁵¹ Giles kept up the attack after he had left Leeds and published a tract while at Sheffield in 1852.

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