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Faith and Thought

A Journal devoted to the study of the inter-relation
of the Christian revelation and modern research

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EDITORIAL

In this Number we welcome three new contributors. DAVID F. PAYNE is Assistant Lecturer in Biblical History and Literature in the University of Sheffield. His writing has been appreciated in a number of other journals, and not least important has been his valuable overall contribution to the *New Bible Dictionary*. The Editor regards it a personal pleasure to include his first article in *Faith and Thought*. From the United States we are pleased to include a contribution from Professor SAMUEL J. MIKOLASKI who occupies the Chair of Theology at New Orleans Baptist Seminary. He is widely known as a writer in Theology and related fields, and in England his contributions to the *Evangelical Quarterly* and *Christianity Today* have been specially noted. His present article is to appear also in *Christianity Today*.

The name of Professor EDWARD J. YOUNG of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, is well-known amongst evangelicals, in particular, for his contribution to the field of Old Testament studies. This is Professor Young's first contribution to our Journal, and we accord him a warm welcome to our pages. Dr ROBERT E. D. CLARK of Cambridge needs no introduction whatever to readers of *Faith and Thought*. Over the years Dr Clark has made a grand contribution to the former *Transactions* of the Institute, and for this Journal he has already written a number of valued articles. The Editor would like to put on record the debt of gratitude which he owes to Dr Clark for his loyal support in all matters concerning the Victoria Institute.

Besides a number of Reviews, we publish one written communication. We are glad to note that there are apparently some who take the Journal seriously, and we wish that many more would open up discussion from time to time.

Mr A. H. BOULTON is reluctantly obliged to resign from the Council of the Institute. Those of us who have been privileged to know him

regard his interest in the affairs of the Victoria Institute as that of a man who, more than many of us, is prepared to face up to the implications of Christian belief in the modern world, and who is prepared frequently to re-think the question of Christian strategy. We have been assured that Mr Boulton continues his interest and support. So, on behalf of all other members, we wish him all that is best in his new home on the Isle of Wight.

Plans are already in mind for the next *Annual General Meeting* in London. We hope to be able to notify Fellows and Members shortly of the time and venue. With the New Year, 1964, we shall be reminded that the year following, 1965, marks the *Centenary of the Institute*. We would ask all Fellows and Members to have this specially in mind. We hope to hold meetings in London to mark this great occasion, and at the same time to publish a special centenary number of the Journal. All details will be circulated to members as early as possible.

SAMUEL J. MIKOLASKI, D.Phil.

'Of And About'

THE philosophical issues of the Christian claim to revelation are very much to the fore amongst theologians. The turn of the philosophical wheel of fortune may now, strangely, yield unexpected support for those who claim the indispensable role of Scripture for revelation in contrast to those who claim experience of God alone as revelation. At best it is hazardous to inject personal experiences into an essay, but I beg the reader's indulgence. It has been disconcerting to find my theological stance juxtaposed simply by a change of geography. In Canada, as an evangelical Christian, I stressed the importance of personal faith. Since coming to the southern United States I find myself cast by some into the role of a 'propositionalist' or 'reformation scholastic'. By this they mean one who advocates not personal religion but credal subscription for faith.

The issue can be stated pointedly: can we have the knowledge of God without the knowledge about God? Existentialist theologians answer, or seem to answer, yes. My answer is, no. The issue is not a new one. It shows itself, though in very general terms, in the continuing transcendentalist stress of German theology in contrast to the empiricism that has conditioned British thought. One might recall the indignation of Dr Austin Farrer at the logical and theological ingenuity of Dr Bultmann, the disjunction between the late Dr John Baillie and Dr Karl Barth, or even the questions argued between Drs Barth and Brunner.

The problem is first how to conceive of the infinite and eternal God, and then how to state what the relationship of the impassible God is to the world. Plato made only the world of ideas and the good real; the phenomenal world is fundamentally unreal and unintelligible, he said. The historical character of the confrontationist claim to revelation and experience is not unlike this. The Christian claim to historical revelation must mean that in at least *some* ways and at *some* times and places history does convey the reality and will of God. How often, how much, and how accurately, are the questions that divide us. This brings into view whether Scripture can be, and ought to be, viewed as revelation, or part of revelation, or revelation in part. The existentialist denies that the term revelation can be used in any other fashion than the direct

confrontation of the soul by God. Sören Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Paul Tillich, Nicholas Berdyaev, among others, are claimed to articulate this concept.

The confrontationist says that God reveals only God; that the meaning of the term revelation can be only 'God speaking to me as God and commanding my obedience', to summarise oft-thundered arguments that I have heard. It goes without question that God reveals God. But no pronouncements backed by reddened necks and dilated eyes should deter us from inquiring whether this is all that the term revelation carries for Christians. The apparent simplicity of the dogma is deceptive. We cannot accept the withdrawal to non-rational categories or the rejection of logical procedures too early in the game. Whoever destroys logic will by logic be destroyed.

In one such debate among a group of students, the confrontationist withdrew to the propositional cliché that 'God speaking to me directly' is the only meaning of revelation. When asked how this came, what it rested upon, or to say one thing about God, we got silence—a silence that seems quite appropriate to the totally subjective character of the claim, and not unlike the silence of the ancient sceptics. The argument ended as follows: 'Do you believe in God?' 'Yes,' he replied. 'Well then, do you believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?' we pursued. 'This I cannot say,' he replied. One might concede that this could be an issue of Dr Tillich's doctrine, let us say, but it is evidently a far cry from the claims to faith in God of apostolic Christianity.

To say that we can have the Christian experience witnessed to by the New Testament without the truth from the New Testament that generates it seems to be a very precarious position indeed. It will be contended here that the saving confrontation with God in Christ depends upon, and takes up into it as part of its reality, historical elements such as the written apostolic word. We cannot claim the transcendent experience, the oneness of the soul with God, or of the soul with God in Christ, without the truth that God gives of Himself, especially in the saving events of history, the truth of which comes to us by historical media.

Fact and theory, faith and knowledge go together inextricably in any reasonable and intelligible religion. Especially is this so of Christianity which claims to be an *historical* religion.

The vitality of faith for life is apparent whether one thinks of Aristotle's predication of the *ἀρχαι* upon grounds of a settled conviction

(πίστις), St Paul's declaration that 'faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen', Dr Jung's notice that faith is fundamental to the modern man's search of a soul, A. N. Whitehead's argument that science developed on the medieval faith in a rational God who made an intelligible world, or Dr Bronowski's common sense base of science. The solutions to the basic problems of life, not only at the outset of knowledge, but also at its outer limits (for issues like those of history, communion, sin, and death) are made in terms of faith of some sort.

Christian faith is not hung on a sky-hook, but founded securely in fact. One senses that the writers of the New Testament were terribly empirically minded. 'No belief', said Thomas, 'unless I plunge my finger into the nailprint.' 'That which we have heard, seen, and handled declare we unto you', says the writer of the first Johannine epistle. 'We were eyewitnesses', declares St Peter. *The fact-basis of faith is everywhere apparent in Scripture.* This is to claim that faith without truth is impossible to Christians; and that truth is not some aether that haunts the atmosphere or the brain, but something that is the function of statements and that grasps us *when there is conveyed that which is actually the case.* States of mind are not propositions. If the confrontationist claims truth then he must cast it into propositions. He cannot claim ineffability, truth and non-propositionalism. This conclusion is reinforced rather than undercut by the words of our Lord to Thomas, 'Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed', because *their* faith will not stand in the faith of others, nor completely of itself, but in *the word of truth* which can scarcely therefore fall outside the penumbra of the term revelation.

Far from undercutting knowledge or the truth for faith St Paul vindicates it in 1 Cor. i-ii. Against the wisdom of *the world* Paul puts the wisdom of *God* in the act and word of the Cross. Then by a play on an historic philosophical concept (τὸ μὴ ὄν) he declares that the Christian things that are unreal to the world (τὰ μὴ ὄντα) have brought to nothingness the being or realities of the world (τὰ ὄντα). This happens because the *truth of God* fills the void created by the errors of the world. St Paul says that his speech and wisdom are not of men but of God. It is the wisdom in Christ known to the Christian in a mystery: it is *words which the Holy Ghost teaches*, he says, which issue for the Christian in the *mind of Christ* as against the speech and concepts of the natural man. Now, whatever charge of gobbledygook may be passed by men on such mysteries, let it be clear that the apostle claimed a *divinely articulated*

revelation in human language. This is the claim to the revelational function of language in its truth functions for at least a part of the meaning of the term revelation.

Similarly, when the writer of *Hebrews* says 'He that cometh to God must believe that He is', he does not leave the matter there, but adds the perfectly intelligible proposition, 'and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him'. In other words, it is not some god, nor any god, but the God who in fact *exists* and who is *dependable* of whom he speaks. This is not the reign of silence, nor the stab of conjecture, but the triumph of revelation that gives the truth of what is actually the case. If the revelation is historical why cannot God use such finite elements as language? There seems to be no sound reason for excluding *ex hypothesi* either the fact-basis or the revelational function¹ of language from the faith that is Christian.

For Christians the highest conception of reality is that of persons in interpersonal relations. Such recent readable accounts as Leonard Hodgson's *For Faith and Freedom* and H. D. Lewis' *Our Experience of God* argue this in a highly competent manner.

But the concept of persons in interpersonal relations points up the categories by which we interpret reality as these bear upon the possibility and nature of revelation. Leonard Hodgson has given a very succinct definition of personal life. It is to be the individual subject of experiences mediated through a particular body in space and time. My own definition parallels this in essential respects: to be personal means to be a self, a rational self, a moral self, and a purposing self. Thus we are concerned with the environment (space and time) and the self-moved creature within it (as Plato would put it). The person is not an aggregate of experiences (as the behaviourist says) but the subject of these. This subject has the power of thought and action, in view of moral ends.

Thus, prior to, and more primary than, the questions of the validity and the change by new evidence of such categories as fashion the Ptolemaic, Newtonian, Einsteinian, or post-Einsteinian conceptions of the world, are the categories that make logical thought in the world possible at all. These I would like to call the intellectual and the moral, and the causal and volitional elements of experience.

As a rational creature man grasps the meaning of things, i.e. their sense (which he cannot even begin to do without presupposing the

¹ Note the suggestions of the late M. B. Foster, *Mystery and Philosophy*.

sense he looks for), but this intellectual part cannot be bifurcated from his moral life. He acts in terms of moral ends. In *Logic and the Basis of Ethics*, A. N. Prior renews the claim that ethics cannot be built upon a non-ethical footing. The noetic and the moral go together in experience. Response to the truth is moral as well as intellectual. P. T. Forsyth remarked in an apt aphorism, 'the truth we see depends upon the men we are'.

In addition to these are the issues of, first, a dependable world, regular in its function and thus patient of scientific study, yet, second, the claim that contingency makes upon us with its double issue of moral freedom (that seems to threaten causal dependability) and a teleological interpretation of the world according to the will of God. To be personal and moral must mean that choices are real; it must mean that the course of events might have been otherwise and that this difference would have rested upon the decision of some will.

Other categories which Christians acclaim rest upon these. Some are: Creation, Fall, Grace, Redemption, and Church. All of these turn back upon the conception of reality at its highest as personal; that is, of a creation moved and sustained by God and looking to the sharing of the trinitarian life of God by man.

To speak of persons in interpersonal relations is to raise the question of the meaning of confrontation. What is personal confrontation? Everybody talks of this as if he knows what it is—until precise articulation is required.

There is involved here not only the issue of the divine-human encounter, but also the question how human beings know one another and communicate with one another. Clearly silence is something less than desirable (especially between lovers!), but on the other hand language can include much more than words. Bodily states, such as pleasure, happiness, pain, fear, and disappointment, communicate meanings to others. Facial or bodily gestures do also. Other kinds of symbolic acts are employed by human beings as forms of language. Even the actions we perform in the normal course of living convey meanings to others.

But of the symbols that man employs in very intricate ways to communicate with others, by far the most common and significant is ordinary language. Why should it be thought beneath the dignity of God to employ the language of men to communicate his truth? If Scripture is taken seriously it will be seen that God has used this finite vehicle as one amongst others, yet as the primary one, to communicate His truth.

Surely human confrontations envisage something more than the facings of faces. Something higher, deeper and more meaningful is suggested by the term confrontation. It involves the meeting of minds, of common response to one another—in the truth. Is there ever personal confrontation of any kind unless a word is spoken? Is this not the primary significance of the Johannine employment of *Λόγος* for Jesus Christ as God incarnate? *Logos*, that is, not in any one of dozens of possible ancient usages, but in that usage now intended by the Holy Ghost to John *and to us*. The confrontation of persons involves the communication of truth. Truth is a function of language.

The Christian revelation and message takes this form. How can we escape the revelational function of language unless we substitute the primacy of theistic mystique for the Gospel which calls for repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ the Lord? This is to judge neither the importance nor the efficacy of the former—we leave that to God—but it is to claim that the truth of God, if it is given in an historical revelation, must involve propositions that articulate it. Can there be meaningful existential confrontation that evacuates events of their historicity? This possibility does not seem to occur to the New Testament Christians.

We now turn to two further issues: the problem of language and the problem of history.

Long ago Christians ought to have given up the idea that words have real meanings. However they must hold tenaciously to the idea that theological language ought to have real referents. Words have real meanings neither in common parlance nor in theological language—they have uses. Minds have meanings. Words convey meanings from one mind to another where the passing of the meaning through the symbols moves successfully; that is, where that passage of meaning is neither broken nor distorted. Words store up meanings for minds. This is the positive side of the problem that words are capable of serious ambiguity. Ambiguity need be an insurmountable barrier only if a stable meaning from mind to mind is impossible; that is, if it is not possible to communicate ideas (that are true) from one mind to another.

We are concerned not just with the coherence of our judgments with one another, but with their ontological reference. They must be true; they must express correctly what is actually the case. This was Aristotle's first criterion for the establishment of the undemonstrable *ἀρχαί*, and one may murmur agreement with H. D. Lewis' argument in *Our*

Experience of God when he insists that the Christian is not satisfied if others concede that religious statements about God are meaningful. The question is, are they true?

Are we to say that the truth of God is known only in immediate confrontation but not discursively? Is such a use of the term truth meaningful, and can it be meaningful for a religion claiming an historical revelation? The non-verbal character of revelation, or its mythological form, is set forward very strongly in arguments that anthropomorphise the wrath of God, for example. But, are there not unaccounted-for judgments of value involved in the simple-minded declaration that God is love, but not a sweet potato, or a bowl of jelly, or some such thing? How do we know that God is love?

While the reality that God is love seems obvious, let us say to the non-verbal forms of revelation doctrine that are agapaic, it was not so obvious to philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, or Spinoza who, because they aimed to guard the impassibility of the divine principle, put love, which suggests passibility, in us, not in God. We know that God is love *historically* (probably before we know it existentially) and we know it as truth through the biblical revelation. The question of 'what is appropriate' to God, to put it in the words of Xenophanes, for Christians cannot be separated from the prophetic and apostolic word of truth.

In the dispute between religions and philosophies that denigrate the actual world, that by supramental knowledge, non-discursive and non-propositional forms, and transcendental events, claim revelation, as against a religion that claims that *the historical events and narratives are the actual forms the eternal realities take*, I believe Christians must declare for the latter.

Factuality involves us in the question of the historical events. Theologically, Nicaea settled for the Church that the real incarnation involves Christians in real history. But historical events, like archaeological specimens, are very dead, and very much subject to conflicting interpretations about their significance. What can we say about this?

We are not so prone now to contrast the alleged inexactness of historical conclusions with those of the physical sciences, not because the problems of historiography are less severe, but because the firmness of scientific conclusions has given way to the concept of *trends* of events under scientific study. Witness the work of Dr Bronowski, Dr Coulson, and others in many recent monographs on this question. Nevertheless, the claim to an historical revelation must meet full-face the issue of the

variables of historical interpretation. If the revelation is given finitely, at least history is finite.

Event and interpretation go together in *our* world. This an important vehicle used by God in His revealing activity. The Cross is the vital instance of this. For Pilate the Cross concluded a distasteful bit of judicial juggling. To the Jewish leaders it was a crude but effective way of disposing of a troublesome meddler. And it brought the world of the disciples crumbling at their feet. But what *was* the Cross? That it was the act of God for the world's salvation—this fact, this truth—comes because we have the Cross as the apostolically interpreted event, given to the insight of faith, and enscripturated for our faith also. This is the significance of St Paul's declaration 'we thus judge' in relation to the theology of the Cross.

Christianity has to do not simply with dead events of the past, but with events that are actual in the past and alive in the present because their true significance reaches us today in and by the Gospel. The historical reality is thus vital for faith despite the claim of Dr Tillich that history cannot unseat faith.¹

In the New Testament the events are not abstract and timeless, but real: they are concrete, particular, actual. While the Christian cannot claim to have solved how eternity is related to time, he does make the common sense claim that neither in time nor in eternity are 'events' events unless they happen, and to this he adds the claim to the continuity of that life with the life that now is. While the definition of eternity as unending time is unsatisfactory, the identity and continuity of personal life in both states must be maintained. The historical Jesus and the eternal Christ therefore do go together, indivisibly and irrevocably. This is the theological thrust of the Ascension. And if, as is likely, the understanding of these things will be clearer as we grasp the quality of the life that now is in Christ, we can escape neither the force of its reality nor of statements that say this truly.

To conclude: Can we rest the case for Christianity solely upon unhistorical parables, myths, or events? Is the confrontation of persons meaningful unless a word happens? This seems to demand a language of some kind. I submit that ordinary language, used by men of God in extraordinary ways, conveys the revelation of God in statements that tell the truth. How truth can be disjoined finally from revelation has not been shown. What do the words *truth of person* mean? This

¹ *Interpretation of History*, pp. 242-243, 264; *Systematic Theology I*, pp. 129-130.

difficulty is increased when *truth of person* is contrasted with *truth about person*. Ought we not to grapple with the concept *truth from person*?

What the eternal state will be is not known to us now, nor do we know fully what event means for us both in history and eternity. The living quality of historical events is clearest to us in the saving significance of the Cross; and that life into which the Cross calls us, the fellowship of the trinitarian life of God, is adumbrated in John xvii. But for both we are dependent upon that apostolic word of Scripture that is normative of the vital experience of Christ we now know. We do not imitate the experiences of the apostles, nor is our experience normed by that of our contemporaries. Existentialist theologians are singularly reluctant to advance either their own or some extra-biblical saint's experience as the norm and content of revelation. But references to biblical persons, to the words of the Bible, and to the record to Jesus Christ abound in their writings. In this the Holy Scriptures, whose words give the truth of God, find dramatic vindication of their revelatory function.

The claim of Kierkegaard, and other existentialists, that the knight of faith knows the truth because he grasps the paradox of faith which calls upon him to do the grotesque thing, the irrational or the mad thing, cannot stand if by this is meant that the universal he answers to is only in himself. The moral law of God, the truth of God, or the knowledge of God stands in the universal revelation of his power and righteousness (the distortion, not adequacy, of which is in question) *and* in the specific communication of the will of God by the Logos to men capable of receiving the truth. The universal, the truth, is not given abstractly and timelessly only, but historically and concretely. This is that word of truth of the salvation of God that we have in Holy Scripture vindicated to faith by the Holy Spirit. The vitality of Christian life and witness stands in the joyous fullness of a *Gospel*, not in the dark face of existential leap.

The Purpose and Methods of the Chronicler

THE Books of Chronicles are among the more neglected of the Old Testament Scriptures. They have a rival in the Books of Samuel and Kings, and the interested reader and the historian alike agree that the latter have the greater appeal and value, since they are more vividly and compellingly written, and are moreover of earlier date. The ordinary reader finds little value or interest in the lengthy lists of names and wealth of cultic description in Chronicles; while the academic student since Wellhausen's time has had certain, sometimes grave, doubts whether these 'historical' books have any historical value.

But the neglect of Chronicles in academic circles has been no more than relative. A considerable amount has been written about the various problems posed by the books; and it is remarkable how little agreement scholars have exhibited. The dating of Chronicles veers between 250 B.C. (Pfeiffer) and Ezra's own lifetime (Albright); while Welch has placed the original draft of Chronicles as early as the sixth century. There is general agreement that the two books form a unity with Ezra-Nehemiah; but Welch and Young (for very different reasons) have disputed this. The internal unity of Chronicles has also been called in question; the older view that 1 and 2 Chronicles, at least, were homogeneous was seriously attacked in 1927, and since Welch's Schweich Lectures in 1938 many incline to think with him that there are at least two hands discernible. At the present time, majority opinion would at any rate detach 1 Chronicles i-ix from the remainder of the work.

The number and nature of the Chronicler's sources, especially those he himself named, have been much discussed. Clearly he used Samuel-Kings (though probably not exactly our recension of them), often quoting verbatim; but what else did he utilise? The Chronicler's nomenclature of other works itself raises problems; and in some quarters there has been considerable scepticism about all but his canonical sources. However, it is now made certain by archaeological evidence that he must have had some sources available to him, whatever they were. Our difficulties are caused by the fact that, of the documents he used, only the canonical material is now extant.

As for the historical value of Chronicles, Pfeiffer could still write, less than twenty years ago, 'It is an error to consider the Chronicler as a

writer of history. It is futile to inquire seriously into the reality of any story or incident not taken bodily from Samuel or Kings. His own contribution should be classed . . . as historical fiction' (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 806). But long before the second World War the critical pendulum was beginning to swing away from such thorough-going scepticism as this. The general attitude of today is well expressed by Rowley: 'There is a certain idealizing of history. Nevertheless the Chronicler had access to sources not elsewhere preserved in the Old Testament, and where his particular interests are not concerned, it is probable that we may find some reliable . . . material' (*The Growth of the Old Testament*, pp. 163 f.). Albright would go much further than this, and on more objective grounds: 'Every pertinent find has increased the evidence . . . for the care with which the Chronicler excerpted and compiled from older books, documents and oral traditions which were at his disposal' (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, v (1942), p. 53). Unfortunately, pertinent finds are rare, and for much of the Chronicler's work there is no confirmation as yet. But in view of such archaeological evidence, Bright in his *History of Israel* has treated the Chronicler with respect, assessing each item of information from him on its merits; and time and time again the conclusion is that the balance of probability supports the Chronicler's accuracy. Such may be the trend of opinion; but not all would share the faith in the Chronicler exhibited by the Albright school. It is certain that there is among scholars considerable difference of opinion in detail as to what is fact and what fiction in the Books of Chronicles.

But of all the problems of Chronicles, probably the one which has received the widest variety of proposed solutions is the question of the writer's purpose. To name but two suggestions, there is the anti-Samaritan-polemic hypothesis of Torrey, and the pro-Levite-propaganda theory of Pfeiffer (who goes so far as to suggest that the Chronicler was threatening that the Levites would go on strike unless their conditions of service improved!). The weakness of both of these theories is that they entail so much reading between the lines. Torrey, for example, speaks of a 'half-concealed polemic', remarking that the Chronicler, was of course much too shrewd . . . to introduce into his history any open polemic against the Samaritans' (*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, xxv (1909), p. 200). The polemic is more than half-concealed, one feels; and it is by no means self-evident, despite Torrey's 'of course', why it required concealment at all. Nobody would suggest that the Chronicler approved of the schismatic worship

of the north; but the evidence suggests that he was ignoring the Samaritan cultus rather than attacking it. As for Pfeiffer's proposition, none can deny that the Chronicler was very interested in the Levites (and the view that he himself was a Levite has much to commend it); but it may be doubted whether a blatantly un-historical portrayal of the Levites and their status would have had much value or effect as propaganda. It seems that both Torrey and Pfeiffer may have confused the Chronicler's interests and presuppositions, on the one hand, with his purpose and aims on the other. There is virtual unanimity between scholars about his interests—the cult, the theocracy, and the house of David. But was his aim to bolster up belief in, or support for, any of these; or do these recurrent themes simply indicate which historical aspects most appealed to him?

While the quest for a biblical writer's purpose is an important and profitable study, there does exist the danger of overlooking the obvious. Concerning the Chronicler in particular, the quest for his purpose is often based on the premise that he was no historian (cf. the quotation from Pfeiffer, above). If he was writing historical fiction, clearly he must have had some justification for it, and felt it would serve some purpose. Thus we find ourselves returning to the question of historicity. Did the Chronicler himself think he was a historian? Or was he consciously a propagandist, disinterested in historical truth? Some analysis of his work is essential, not only in order to ascertain the historical value of it for us, but also to gain some insight into the writer's mind and outlook. Why is it that he is not generally viewed as a reliable historian?

Some of the charges of inaccuracy brought against the Chronicler are relatively trivial—for instance, the fact that his battle scenes appear rather unrealistic and idealised. The chief problems are the figures he records, which are at times impossibly high, and moreover at variance with those of Samuel-Kings sometimes; the fact that a number of unsupported stories of the Chronicler fit his philosophy so remarkably that they could well be inventions to lend support to that philosophy; thirdly, that there are occasions (not frequent, admittedly) where it is very difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile Chronicles with Samuel-Kings; and finally that his cultic description seems totally anachronistic.

Many writers have treated the numerical issue as paramount, and taken it by itself as proving conclusively that the Chronicler was careless of historical truth. But the matter is not so simple, as is made clear by some very pertinent remarks by H. L. Ellison (in the *New Bible Commentary*) and E. J. Young (*Introduction to the Old Testament*). The numbers

found in Chronicles are not uniformly higher than those of Samuel-Kings; they are not invariably astronomical; and here and there they seem to be based on sources not utilised by the earlier account. 1 Chronicles xxi. 5 (compared with 2 Sam. xxiv. 9) will serve as a good illustration of these three facts. However the figures are to be explained, a charge of gross exaggeration does not cover all the facts. In view of the frequent differences in spelling of names between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles, one feels that the strong probability of errors in transmission must be taken into account. That the numbers in Chronicles present problems is undeniable; but the relevance of these problems to the question of historicity is uncertain.

It is also unsafe to assume that because the Chronicler had a clearly discernible motive for telling some story he must therefore have invented it. It is evident that he included the report of Manasseh's misadventure and subsequent repentance to prove a point, i.e. the doctrine of divine retribution and reward; but that in itself does not prove the tale to be a fiction. To this day, historians select material that is likely to support their theses; the invention of suitable material is a rarer phenomenon. If, then, we approach each unsupported story of the Chronicler with this sole criterion, whether or not his motive for including it is transparently clear, we shall have no way of telling what is selected and what invented material. Archaeology may yet provide some answers; the criterion of historical probability may be utilised; but we have not always adequate criteria on which to assess the record, and it is therefore vital that some assessment of the Chronicler himself be undertaken. If he counted himself a historian, and if he had regard for historical verity, then we may well find his writings valuable and generally reliable records; but if on the other hand he was heedless of historical accuracy, then of course we may brush his unsupported statements aside as quite untrustworthy.

Three pertinent questions about the Chronicler suggest themselves: what exactly was his attitude to sources; did he hope to supersede Samuel-Kings; and what was his attitude towards historical truth?

It is none too clear how many separate sources the Chronicler names. He alludes to Samuel-Kings under several titles; and indeed Wellhausen concluded that by all his references to sources he meant the same, single work. But an examination of such references indicates that at least the 'Acts of Uzziah' (2 Chron. xxvi. 22) and the 'Chronicles of the Kings of Israel' (2 Chron. xxxiii. 18) can have been no part of Samuel-Kings. Torrey and Pfeiffer, however, contended that the Chronicler 'invented'

sources; they were particularly suspicious of his 'Commentary on the Book of the Kings' (2 Chron. xxiv. 27). But there is no logical reason why the Chronicler should have used at least one source (i.e. Samuel-Kings, or its component parts) with extreme care, frequently quoting verbatim, and at the same time invented others. Whatever we make of the Chronicler, we must presume that he was at least consistent. Furthermore, there is no logical reason why he should have needed to invent sources at all. It is sometimes suggested that he referred to non-existent sources in order to lend verisimilitude to his 'history'. But his use of references to other works does not support this thesis, which assumes that by them the Chronicler means 'My material comes from X', or even, 'If you don't believe me, see X'; whereas in fact he means 'If you want further information, see X'. Thus the source references lend no credence to his own statements whatever, and to invent them would have been pointless. If verisimilitude had been his intention, moreover, he would surely have given references every time he borrowed from earlier biblical works; but this is far from being his standard practice. The evidence, internal and external, indicates that he did make considerable use of source material; and one can find no plausible reason why he should have invented the names of non-existent works.

Relatively few writers seem to have asked themselves the question whether the Chronicler hoped to supersede Samuel-Kings; but Torrey did give an answer, and a categorical one: 'It is certain that he did not mean to supplant the books of Samuel and Kings; he intended rather to supplement them' (op. cit. p. 163). His certainty seems well-founded; it is scarcely possible that the Chronicler can have hoped to eliminate the earlier biblical books, which must by his lifetime have possessed canonical authority. And in view of the whole range of his sources, it is highly improbable that our writer can have entertained for a moment any thought of superseding other works. Apart from the general unlikelihood, there is definite evidence against it. First, as we have seen, he himself refers readers to other sources for information. Second, here and there in his narrative he presupposes information contained in earlier works; thus he can commence his story proper (in 1 Chron. x) with an account of the battle of Gilboa and Saul's death there, without laying any foundations for this situation.

We may well share Torrey's certainty on this issue; the Chronicler cannot have hoped to supersede his sources. From this conclusion it follows that one can no longer accuse the Chronicler of distorting

history by his omissions (such as his lack of reference to David's adultery and murder and Solomon's apostasy). In any case, he did not consistently include the good and omit the bad points of these monarchs; while this is in general true, he included for instance the story of David's census and excluded the story of his generous treatment of Mephibosheth; and we must conclude that it was the writer's principles of selection, cultic and institutional matters having priority, that prompted his inclusions and omissions. It may be admitted, all the same, that did we not possess Samuel-Kings, we should have a rather different impression of David and Solomon than we do. But we do possess Samuel and Kings; and did not the Chronicler's first readers too have access to the earlier biblical books, or at least thorough acquaintance with their contents? Can the writer have hoped to persuade his readers that David was innocent of the seduction of Bathsheba and the murder of her husband? Surely not. Unless his express design was to supplant the earlier work, we can acquit him of any charge of distortion. It may perhaps be asked why he should include so much from Samuel-Kings if he wished merely to supplement, not to supersede. A ready answer is that he needed such material to fill out his history and to lay foundations for and to connect up his own contributions. For instance, he included the story of David's census (although detrimental to the great king) to lay a foundation for the choice of the temple site, and that in turn to lay a basis for all the cultic organisation he attributed to David. But it is not entirely fair to the Chronicler to compare his history with Samuel-Kings alone, and to speak of fresh material in Chronicles as being his own contribution. Since we possess none of his other sources, it is natural for us to speak in this way; but it is quite conceivable (unless he was Ezra, as Albright has suggested) that none of the material was his own contribution, only the compiling and editing and re-styling. If so, we can say that his purpose was to produce, utilising many sources, a history emphasising certain aspects of his nation's past.

What of his concern for historical truth? We have already suggested that in view of the existence of canonical and other records, the Chronicler could not have hoped to distort history by omissions. But he could, on the other hand, have been guilty of sins of commission, by incorporating fictitious details and stories. It is often argued or assumed that he had no regard for historical accuracy, and might well have acted in this way, relating imaginary incidents just to support his theological view-point. But a comparison of Chronicles with Samuel-Kings, and with relevant parts of the Pentateuch, shows that for the most part the

writer was scrupulously careful to record with accuracy. In many cases where there are noteworthy changes, it is of interest to note that he kept as closely as possible to his source. His description of the accession of Joash, for instance, certainly introduces the mention of Levites, and sets them in a prominent position; but all the detail of 2 Kings xi is included. The name 'Carites' no longer appears, it is true, but they still figure in the narrative, as 'captains of hundreds'. Similarly where Manasseh's reign is concerned; a falsifier of history would surely have found it easy enough to gloss over the length of the reign, or else to dispute or disregard the king's wickedness; the Chronicler accepts both these features of the story as incontrovertible facts. Pfeiffer himself, for all his disparagement of the Chronicler, points out how careful he was not to attribute to Moses any non-Pentateuchal cultic regulation (with a single exception). Welch attributes to his hypothetical reviser (the second hand in Chronicles) a similar meticulous care; for when this reviser was faced with data which offended him cultically, he was happy to add and to distort, we are told, but it appears that time and time again he left the original data in the text. In his discussion of Josiah's passover (2 Chron. xxxv), for instance, Welch states that the reviser 'objected to the presence of cattle among the paschal victims, and therefore he turned them into burnt offerings, though the law did not provide for sacrifices of that character at passover' (*The Work of the Chronicler*, p. 146). But surely it would have been so much simpler quietly to excise the offending animals from the text? It is particularly remarkable that the priestly reviser should have failed to remove or to transform 2 Chronicles xxix. 34, with its disparagement of the priests.

Such pieces of evidence lead to the conclusion that the Chronicler (and a later editor too, possibly) was careful not to change the data gleaned from earlier records. Against this one has to set the fact that there are here and there in Chronicles details difficult to reconcile with Samuel-Kings. The argument that here, at least, the Chronicler has deliberately distorted facts to achieve some purpose of his own seems plausible enough, until one stops to ask exactly what that purpose was in each instance; for there are passages where the alterations serve no discernible theological motive. Why, for example, did he find it necessary to revise the details of the death of Ahaziah of Judah (2 Chron. xxii. 7-9)? The changes concern nothing but venue and chronology, and it is difficult to account for them. Or again the genealogy of Benjamin in 1 Chronicles viii. 1-5 is considerably different from the lists of names in Genesis xlv i. 21 and Numbers xxvi. 38-40 alike. Major textual disorder

may account for both of these variations in Chronicles; but another possible explanation for the Chronicler's alterations presents itself when we read 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 5-7, and observe that the writer appears to retract from Jehoiachin's reign to Jehoiakim's the date of the first deportation to Babylon. Here, to be sure, a theological motive for the change is readily found; but there is evidence that the Chronicler did not invent the story in the fact that Daniel i. 1 f. also refers to the incident, giving slightly different details. This evidence points to the conclusion that the Chronicler not only utilised sources other than Samuel-Kings, but also sometimes, for reasons known to himself, preferred them to the biblical records. If so, it would appear that he took pains to record what he believed to be historically accurate, even though it occasionally involved alterations to the canonical material.

Thus there is good reason to accept the general reliability and historicity of Chronicles. Why, then, have so few scholars of the last 100 years been willing to concede this? Undoubtedly because of the wealth of cultic detail in Chronicles, which so little accords with generally held views of cultic developments in Israel. Pfeiffer, indeed, complained that Albright's early dating (which has much to commend it) was 'revolutionary in its implications', and added, 'only scholars who reject the Wellhausen theory *in toto* could accept Albright's dating' (op. cit. pp. 811 f.). How much more revolutionary the suggestion that the Chronicler's cultic data may be viewed as historically accurate! But the only reasonable alternative theory is that he was attempting to bring up to date all cultic description, crediting David and his successors with the cultic organisation of his own post-exilic era. Such methods might be expected and even forgiven in a historian of ancient times. However, the evidence does not really support this view. *Ex hypothesi*, the Chronicler should have been following P, the latest Pentateuchal code; but this is just what he did *not* do. To quote Snaith, 'The relation of the Chronicler's writings to the JEDP scheme is confused' (in H. H. Rowley, ed., *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, p. 110). Many attempts have been made to solve this problem, without much success. So great are the difficulties that Pfeiffer came to the conclusion that the cultic detail of Chronicles must be invented—mere propaganda to raise Levite status. Welch's solution is less drastic: for him, the data according with D was from the original Chronicler, and the data according with P from the reviser, who was also responsible for the non-Pentateuchal data, which he introduced in an effort to harmonise conflicting Pentateuchal regulations. This hypothesis means separating

Ezra-Nehemiah from the original draft of Chronicles, however, and if we may quote Pfeiffer on a different issue, "To suppose . . . that two distinct authors . . . may have used similar "style and diction", is to discard one of the fundamental canons of literary criticism' (op. cit. p. 805).

It is surely a far simpler expedient to suppose that the Chronicler was accurately reporting cultic developments as they had occurred. Why otherwise should he have portrayed Hezekiah's passover celebrations (2 Chron. xxx) as such a highly irregular proceeding? This passover took place in the 'wrong' month, it lasted twice as long as was normal, and the conduct of both priests *and* Levites was reprehensible. There seems no adequate reason why the Chronicler should have invented such improbable details. We have already noted the care with which he avoids attributing non-Pentateuchal legislation to Moses; an indication that his interest in historical accuracy extended to cultic matters. When discussing the cultic aspects of Manasseh's reforms, he does not claim (as a historical novelist would have done) that the altars of the host of heaven were done away with; as Ellison points out, Manasseh would not have dared to offend his Assyrian overlords by so doing. Ellison further suggests that in 1 Chronicles xvi. 7 the writer is careful not to name David as the author of the three post-davidic psalms that follow (*N.B.* the AV rendering obscures this fact by inserting the words 'this psalm' in italics).

In short, there is evidence to suggest that the Chronicler was not heedless of historical accuracy in his description of cultic matters. Moreover, it is highly probable that he had access to temple archives, especially if he himself was a Levite. Indeed, how else would he have come by his registers and genealogies of cultic personnel?

It is high time that the Books of Chronicles were used as a corrective to Pentateuchal criticism. To suggest that the cultic data of Chronicles may be accurate is 'revolutionary in its implications', no doubt. But to anyone who accepts more traditional views of the authorship of the Pentateuch, there is nothing inherently improbable in this view. Even those scholars who accept, more or less, the Wellhausen division of documents are not bound by his dating of JEDP. More recent years have seen many attempts to redate Pentateuchal strata, and there has been a widespread recognition of the presence of early elements in all the strata. There is no real obstacle to holding, for example, E. Robertson's Pentateuchal hypothesis together with an acceptance of the historicity of Chronicles.

These various considerations suggest that the Chronicler was a serious historian, who sought to give his readers a reliable account of certain aspects of the history of Judah and the dynasty of David. That there are certain difficulties in his account—though their number and importance should not be exaggerated—must be admitted; but an examination of the rest of the evidence, and an assessment of the Chronicler's methods, render it most unlikely that he was prepared to invent material to suit some purpose of theological outlook or propaganda. We may therefore place confidence in the reliability of his information, even when it is unsupported by Samuel-Kings.

E. J. YOUNG, Ph.D.

Some Thoughts on Old Testament Scholarship

ONE who reads the Book of Psalms attentively must be struck with the strong emphasis that is found therein on the study of the law. The righteous man is characterised in the first Psalm as one who meditates in the Law of God day and night. Application to the Scriptures is stressed in the longest of the Psalms, the one hundred and nineteenth. That the man who would live godly in Christ Jesus must be well versed in the Scriptures goes without saying.

It soon becomes apparent, however, that mere cursory reading of the Bible will not meet the needs of the Church nor of the individual Christian. There must be a more careful and painstaking study of the Bible. The Bible is written in Greek and Hebrew, and the study of these languages raises many problems. What does the Bible say? What is the relation of the Bible to the many recent discoveries? All these questions and many more simply point up the need for Christian scholarship.

We shall be concerned in this brief article with the philosophy that underlies Christian scholarship. What is a Christian scholar, and what is Christian scholarship? Questions such as these will occupy our attention and we shall even engage in some apologetic for Christian scholarship.

The Basis of Christian Scholarship

Christian scholarship must approach its task with certain presuppositions. It cannot agree with those who insist that their only desire in research is without any preconceived biases to follow the facts wherever they lead. There is a type of scholarship which prides itself upon its objectivity. It has no desire to be guided by any presuppositions; it has no bias or prejudice. Rather, it will follow the facts wherever they may go. It treats the Bible like any other book, fully confident that in so doing it is able to explain the Bible. Above all it wishes to reject any presuppositions upon which its research is to be based. Theology is not to guide study, it says, for it desires to be purely objective. Facts and facts alone are its only concern. Wherever they point, it will follow,

irrespective of the consequences. Its only desire is objectivity, a disinterested, dispassionate search for truth. Truth, and truth alone, is its concern.

Now this sounds quite commendable. What could be more admirable than a disinterested following of the facts, with no theories or preconceived notions of our own to get in the way? Admirable as this sounds, however, it is not admirable at all, and the reason why it is not admirable is that it paints a false picture of the situation. It might indeed seem at first blush that a truly objective method of research would divest itself of all theories or presuppositions and simply plunge in after the facts, boldly following them to whatever consequences they might bring. As a matter of fact, however, such a method is not objective. It is a method deluged with presupposition. It is a method which has already erected a presupposition which is to guide its research. That presupposition is simply that it will reject all presuppositions and follow facts. It presupposes, apparently without realising that it is so doing, that it is perfectly capable in its own strength and ability not only of meeting and recognising the facts but also of interpreting them correctly. It has, in other words, itself adopted certain presuppositions, and these govern its investigation. Those who follow such a method of study never come to the conclusion that the Bible is a special revelation from God, for they have already ruled out the view that the Bible differs from other books. Even this type of study, then, which seems to be objective, is in reality not objective at all. It too has its presuppositions, and they guide it in its procedures.

No scholarship can be without presuppositions. What kind of book is the Bible, and how is the Bible to be studied? In answering these questions, scholarship may appeal to the human mind as the ultimate and final basis of predication, or it may declare that wisdom and knowledge belong to God. If scholarship assumes the ultimacy of the human mind it will never come to the conclusion that the Bible is the Word of God, for it has already made the human mind capable of judging God. Christian scholarship indeed has its presuppositions; it believes that this is God's world, and that He is the Creator of all things. It regards the Scriptures as unique. They are unlike all other books, for they are the revelation of God Himself. How does the Christian scholar come to this knowledge? He comes to it, for God himself has made it known that the Bible is His Word. Christian scholarship believes that man's final persuasion of the divinity of the Bible lies in the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit. In other words, it is God who testifies to His word, and

the renewed soul receives the Scriptures as God-given. Christian scholarship, therefore, believes the Bible to be the Word of God, and seeks to think God's thoughts after Him as they are made known in the Bible.

In thus describing the basic presupposition of Christian scholarship we would point out that not all Christian scholars are consistent. Not all follow their presuppositions as they should. In particular, elements of anti-theism may enter into a man's thinking when at one point or another he becomes inconsistent. The man who is willing to assert the presence of historical errors in the Bible, for example, is one who, whether consciously or not, has set himself above the statement of Christ. 'The Scripture cannot be broken' and the express declaration that all Scripture is God-breathed. There are many Christian scholars who do not exhibit a consistently Christian method of study, for at one point or another they depart from the position required by genuine Christian theism. A truly Christian scholarship, however, is based upon the assumption that God is the Creator and that in His written Word He has spoken in a special way.

Christian scholarship therefore is not ashamed of its presuppositions. In fact it glories in them, for it knows well enough that all approaches have presuppositions, whether consciously or unconsciously adopted. Christian scholarship knows where it stands and what it is seeking to accomplish. It understands that there is really but one alternative to the position which it has adopted. If it does not proceed upon the assumption that God is the ultimate source of meaning in life, and hence the ultimate point of predication, it knows that the only alternative is to believe and assert the ultimacy of the human mind. The human mind, however, is something created and finite, and from a finite source knowledge of the ultimate meaning of life can never come.

Christian scholarship therefore, if it is to be truly Christian, will, in consistency with its basic presupposition, acknowledge the Bible to be the Word of God. To discover in what sense the Bible is God's Word it will turn to the Bible and allow the Bible to speak for itself. What the Bible has to say about itself, Christian scholarship will willingly accept. In other words the Bible is the norm which must guide genuine Christian scholarship. For that matter the true Christian scholar will be guided by what the Bible has to say on all subjects. An illustration will make this clear.

The nineteenth century witnessed a continual production of theories concerning the origin of the Pentateuch. These theories were inter-

esting, and some of them were ingenious, but they all had this in common, that they were willing to contradict explicit statements of the Bible. In the Pentateuch we often read that Moses spake, but these theories were perfectly willing to assert that he did not speak. When in the book of Deuteronomy, to take an example, we read that the Lord spake unto Moses, the theories we are now considering had no hesitation in asserting that Deuteronomy was produced in the seventh century B.C. If it was a work of the seventh century B.C., however, it would follow that the Lord did not speak to Moses, as Deuteronomy claims. Hence, whatever else may be said of these theories, they were not Christian. They were willing to assume that their originators had a better knowledge of the situation than did the Scripture itself. And that is a bold assumption. This is not to say that the men who advanced these theories were themselves not Christians. On that point no man can judge. God alone is able to pass judgment upon the human heart, and we are not for a moment saying that the advocates of the positions which we are now discussing were not Christians. But, if they were Christians, in advocating these theories, they were acting in a manner quite inconsistent with their Christian beliefs. And whether the men themselves were Christians or not, their theories were not Christian theories, for they went contrary to express statements of the Bible.

The same may be said of some of the views that are being presented today, views which are widely acclaimed and even received with favour by some evangelicals. These theories have not the slightest hesitation in overriding express statements of the Bible. For that reason they are not in accord with Christian presuppositions and consequently they may be dismissed as mistaken explanations of Israel's history and religion. This is not to say that there is no value in them or that they should not be studied. But the unlearned reader who simply reads the Old Testament itself and believes it to be true has a far more profound insight into the truth of Israel's history and religion than he will find in the positions advocated by some modern scholars. One of the saddest signs of the times is that some evangelicals do not seem to recognise that fact.

May the writer be pardoned for mentioning personal experiences? Every now and then following a lecture, some young student will approach and say something like, 'Why didn't you pay more attention to Mowinckel, or, Do you not think that Von Rad's writings are showing us some exciting new things in Old Testament studies?' Now, surely, we should pay attention to what modern scholars are writing, and

surely we can learn from modern scholars, but when we are making a serious effort to understand the history of Israel and its religion we shall learn far more by a serious exegesis of the Old Testament, an exegesis undertaken in a believing spirit, than we will from the writings of men such as Von Rad and Mowinckel who hold an extremely low view of the Bible. Christian scholarship rejoices in the confines that the infallible Word of God places upon it. It wishes to be true to the Bible.

And this brings us to what is probably the heart of the matter. True Christian scholarship will be characterised by humility. What, however, do we mean in this connexion by humility? We mean simply obedience to God. The humble scholar is the one who is truly obedient to God. But how shall one be obedient to God? The answer is that to be obedient to God means to do His will. We learn of His will, however, in His Word. Hence, we shall follow His Word in all that it says. Even though we may not always understand all the factors involved, we shall, if our desire is truly to be Christian, allow the Word of God to be our guide in all things. Its statements will direct our investigation, and we shall never dare to go contrary to those statements, for we know that they were breathed forth by Him who is truth itself and cannot lie. Christian scholarship then would be bound by the Bible, and rejoice that such is the case.

An objection is likely to rise at this point. Is this not obscurantism, it may be asked, is it not fundamentalism? What about the great gains of nineteenth-century scholarship? Are we to throw them by the board? In answering these questions we would point out that names in themselves are not too important. It matters not if unbelievers call Christian scholarship obscurantist. After all, some of the most obscurantist positions imaginable are those held by the 'advanced' scholars of the nineteenth century. What about Wellhausen's view of Genesis, a view which he claimed was held by all scientific scholars? Can one imagine anything more obscurantist than that view, namely, that from Genesis one could learn nothing concerning the background of the patriarchs? This position, so confidently and almost arrogantly advanced by Wellhausen and others, is now completely shown to be false, and those who today, had they been living in Wellhausen's time, would probably have gone along with him, are perfectly ready to acknowledge that Genesis does give an accurate picture of the patriarchal background. We who believe the Bible need not fear the term obscurantist.

Nor need we really be afraid of the term fundamentalist. Better to be called a fundamentalist than to be found in the ranks of those who

deny the Bible. In the long run the truth will prevail, and if Christian scholarship continues in devotion to God's Word, it need not fear what man can say. Its purpose in the last analysis is the glory of God, and in seeking to accomplish this purpose it may well expect opprobrium.

It may be thought that what we have written involves too negative an attitude toward that scholarship which is not based upon Christian presuppositions. We must therefore indicate some of the areas where we believe that one can learn from such scholarship. For one thing, unbelieving scholarship is not always consistent with its basic presuppositions. Just as fallen man is not as bad as he can be, so also non-Christian scholarship is not completely consistent with its own basic assumptions. The result is that it often says things which in themselves are good and true. In the writings of Von Rad, for example, although we think that the basic position is wrong, there are nevertheless many fine things that are said. Sometimes in the exegetical sphere, for example, there is at least a formal agreement with what a Bible-believing scholar might assert; in this respect one can learn much from Von Rad's writings, even though, when judged from the Christian position, the basic approach must be regarded as seriously mistaken.

Furthermore, many gifted researchers who may not themselves embrace Christian presuppositions have nevertheless done remarkable service in the fields of archaeology and language. Of course even in these fields, basic presuppositions are important, and the Christian would maintain that only upon theistic positions do these fields of study have meaning. This is true, and yet many gifted men have performed remarkable service in these areas. We may think of the tremendous amount of excavation that has been done, and the extremely difficult work of deciphering the cuneiform languages. For all of this we should should of course be profoundly grateful.

It must be recognised that if non-theistic presuppositions were correct, this positive work could not be done. For then there would be no true meaning in life. The fact that serious philological and archaeological work can be done is in itself an argument in favour of the theistic position. Certainly the Christian scholar recognises with gratitude the fact that much work has been done in these fields, sometimes by Christians and sometimes by non-Christians. The Christian recognises truth wherever it is to be found and understands full well that even a man whose basic presuppositions are false will himself act contrary to those presuppositions and say and do much that in itself is true.

True Christian scholarship therefore is willing and glad to recognise the debt it owes to all who have advanced the cause of learning. In itself, however, it would hold as the great goal to be achieved the glory of God. In all that it does it strives to bring glory to God, the Creator. The Christian investigator, whatever be the field in which he is working, will realise that this is God's world, and in his endeavour to arrive at the truth will be guided by the Bible itself. He will not proceed in his investigations contrary to the Bible, but will permit the Bible to be His guide.

The Requirements for Christian Scholarship

With respect to the Bible Christian scholarship has many tasks to perform. Perhaps one of the greatest of these, if not the greatest, is that of exegesis. What can be more important than to know what God has said in His holy Word? But how should exegesis be undertaken? Christian exegesis should seek first of all to understand the meaning of the text. It is not concerned to assert what the original writer should have meant, or should have said, and above all it will not emend the text or interpret away the meaning of that text in the interests of some supposed theory; it wants, first and foremost, simply to know what the Scripture says.

This, however, brings immediately to the fore the great distinction between Christian and non-Christian scholarship. For Christian scholarship believes that the true author of Scripture is the Holy Spirit, and therefore, without the Holy Spirit it cannot know the true meaning of the words of Scripture. It labours in dependence upon the Spirit of God, praying for His illumination and guidance so that it will rightly understand what He has written. For the words of the Bible are words indicated of God's Spirit, and he who would understand them must be taught of the Spirit. The "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" [1 Cor. ii. 14]. Inasmuch as these things are 'spiritually discerned', the unbeliever cannot understand them. Without the Holy Spirit we can do nothing, and unless the Spirit of God be with us in our labours we shall fail in our attempts to explain the Bible.

The blessing of God's Spirit, however, cannot be made a substitute for hard work. We must be taught of God, but we must also apply all the talents and abilities which God has given to us in the endeavour to understand His Word. Certain requisites must of course be present. Unless we have a sympathetic understanding of Scripture we shall not

properly exegete it. For this reason, it is well to read over and over again the Scriptures which we are working on. The continued and the repeated reading of the Bible is of inestimable value. It enables one to keep in mind the context in which a particular verse is found and so not to treat that verse in an atomistic fashion. All too often it appears that some commentators treat individual verses in isolation from their context. This of course is not warranted.

Whereas reading large sections of Scripture and in particular the constant reading of those sections with which we are working will keep before our eyes the context of particular verses, it goes without saying that more than this is necessary for exegesis. Christian scholarship must have a knowledge of the original languages of Scripture. An Old Testament student is immediately faced with the array of languages that confront him. There is Hebrew with all its cognates and semi-cognates; and there are the multitudinous modern languages, each one of which seems to call for a reading knowledge. In fact, if one is going to deal seriously with the Semitic languages, he must be a master of the modern tongues, at least as far as a reading knowledge is concerned. The first Semitic language that an Old Testament scholar should learn, it has been facetiously said, is German, and there are times when one is tempted to think that there is more truth in that statement than appears upon the surface.

At any rate, the Old Testament scholar must be a linguist, able to handle the requisite languages with facility. And above all he must know Hebrew. Now, despite what is sometimes said to the contrary, Hebrew is not an easy language for an English-speaking person to acquire. It is true enough that in two or three years one may obtain a reading knowledge of certain parts of the Old Testament, but this is not the same thing as a genuine mastery of the language. Such a mastery comes only after years of hard work. There is, however, one practice which will greatly facilitate one's learning of Hebrew. Let the student early acquire the habit of daily reading the Old Testament aloud in Hebrew. It is the practice of reading aloud which is all-important. If the student will daily read from the old Testament in Hebrew, he will discover that the language will take on life and meaning. At first this reading may be confined to a verse or so, but after about two years of study, at least one page of the Old Testament should be read aloud daily. This is an exercise which will pay rich dividends. For such reading should also be devotional. If there are words which the student does not understand, let him glance at an English translation. Thus, his

vocabulary will rapidly increase, and he will obtain the necessary background for serious work. Such reading, however, valuable as it is, is not sufficient. There must accompany it a solid study of the structure of the Hebrew language, such as can be obtained only by careful study of the grammars and in particular of the usage of the Hebrew vowels in the syllables. And this can be furthered by a profound knowledge of Arabic grammar, which, in this writer's opinion, is indispensable for Old Testament study. In particular, a knowledge of Arabic syntax is essential. Side by side with this there must also be a knowledge of the cuneiform languages. An Old Testament scholar, in the nature of the case, cannot master the cuneiform languages and at the same time do justice to his own field. But for the sake of background purposes he should keep up constant reading of cuneiform texts, and he should certainly know at least as much grammar as is found in Ungnad's *Grammatik*. This will be of tremendous help in understanding the structure of Hebrew itself.

With respect to a knowledge of the other cognate languages, who can say how much the Old Testament scholar should know? Certainly he should be acquainted with Aramaic, but men's gifts differ. Some learn languages only with great difficulty; others seem to pick them up with little effort. The present writer makes bold to say that no language is easy. Those who boast about their linguistic attainments may very well be questioned. Possibly some men may acquire a language easily, but when men speak of themselves as masters of twenty or thirty languages one may be pardoned for entertaining doubts. The more one works with a language the more one realises how little he really knows about it.

Serious students of the Old Testament, however, will not flee from hard work, for one cannot engage in genuine exegesis of the Old Testament unless he has a fairly thorough knowledge of the Hebrew tongue. Such a knowledge, among other things, will help him to recognise the folly of emending the text whenever he does not understand it. A dark day truly came over Old Testament studies when commentaries such as those of Bernhard Duhm could be written. Duhm's emendations seem to be almost legion, and many of them are without value. Difficult forms are not necessarily incorrect, and only as a last resort should one consider emendation. Indeed, one of the greatest tasks lying before Old Testament scholarship is the explanation of difficult forms in the Old Testament. Sometimes this can be done by a comparison with similiar forms in Arabic or in the cuneiform languages. But a more precise knowledge of Hebrew is an essential if one is

to avoid the unwarranted examples of emendation which appear in some of the commentaries and in the *Biblia Hebraica*.

One of the crying needs of the day is for thorough commentaries upon the books of the Old Testament. But such commentaries can be written by conservatives, only if they have a profound knowledge of Hebrew. A knowledge of Hebrew, however, is not in itself sufficient. One who writes upon the Old Testament nowadays must also have a knowledge of archaeology. This does not mean that he must himself be a professional archaeologist, but he must know of recent discovery and its bearing upon the Old Testament. At this point, the theistic presuppositions of conservative scholarship must be guarded. A study of the texts of the ancient Near East reveals the fact that there are many formal similarities between these texts and the Old Testament. It would be a mistake, however, merely to assume that the Old Testament derived its content and even its form of expression from the surrounding ancient environment. One must remember that the Old Testament is a revelation from God, and that therefore it is to be interpreted on its own terms and not merely as a piece of literature from the ancient east.

This point can be easily illustrated. Much has been said about the relationship of Genesis i to Enuma Elish. Some have claimed that the latter is the Babylonian Genesis or Creation Account, and have held that Genesis was really derived from it. If, however, we believe that Genesis i is a divine revelation, must we not maintain that the information which it contains was given to man by God? And is it not to be expected that this information, being handed down from mouth to mouth, would in the course of time, and not very much time at that, have been corrupted and rendered impure by the admixture of other elements? Hence, it is what we might expect if we discover that there are elements of superstition in Enuma Elish. But to assume that Genesis is dependent upon this document is certainly to refuse to do justice to Genesis.

One cannot take too seriously the claims of Scripture to be the Word of God. Hence, the exegete must always take into consideration the biblical theological significance of the passage which he is studying. Now, Biblical theology is a term that is bandied about quite frequently these days; there is good biblical theology and there is bad, and the bad, of course, is not really biblical theology at all. True biblical theology is concerned with the study of divine revelation in the various epochs or periods of redemptive history. It is this basic point which must be

kept in proper emphasis. Even some conservatives seem principally concerned to find Christ everywhere in the Old Testament. In a certain sense, of course, Christ is everywhere, but we must certainly be on guard against a reversion to allegorical interpretation. Concern for biblical theology in biblical proportions, however, will prove a great asset for interpretation of the Scriptures.

Not only is concern for biblical theory essential, but it is also essential that we consider in our interpretation each verse in the wider context of the entire Scripture. In true study of Scripture the analogy of Scripture must ever be brought into play. To state this in slightly different terms, we must study and know systematic theology. With the advent of the neo-orthodox emphases genuine systematic theology has fallen into disrepute in some circles. This, of course, is to be expected, for in its very nature systematic theology presupposes that the entire Bible is the Word of God, and that is a position which neo-orthodox, despite its frequent assertions, does not really take seriously. Possibly systematic theology has fallen into disrepute because it is not really understood by many. We are not concerned in the true study of systematic theology merely to state that a certain doctrine was held by Calvin and Luther—but to discover what the Bible has to say about these doctrines. What, for example, is the teaching of the Bible on the doctrine of justification by faith? To answer that question is to engage in the study of systematic theology. Systematic theology is no less biblical than is biblical theology. It is, indeed, the queen of the sciences, and if our exposition is truly to do justice to the Scriptures, we must know what the doctrines of the Bible are. This is certainly one of the reasons why Calvin's commentaries have so greatly excelled. The same can be said for Luther's commentaries and for those of Charles Hodge. These men were theologians, and they knew what the Word of God taught. A knowledge of systematic theology will protect one from going astray doctrinally, for when isolated parts of the Bible are studied apart from the context of the entirety of Scripture, error is likely to creep in. We tend to emphasise one aspect of truth at the expense of others, and when we emphasise one verse or section of Scripture to the neglect of others, our exposition is likely to be faulty. Systematic theology can keep us from falling into this error.

Christian scholarship also needs discrimination in its judgment. It must first of all have a genuine understanding of the Christian presuppositions and must know what it means to believe in an all-powerful God and in the truth that the Bible is His Word. And it must also be able

to detect what is contrary to the Word of God. We are commanded to try the spirits whether they be of God. It is a great mistake to think that everyone who happens to write a book or an article on some Biblical subject is thereby making a contribution to knowledge. Such is not the case. The present writer confesses to sadness of heart at the lack of discernment displayed upon the part of some evangelicals who ought to know better. In part this lack of discernment is due to simple ignorance of the contents of the Bible on the one hand, and ignorance of systematic theology also. Indeed, we should not even make this distinction, for he who is ignorant of systematic theology is really ignorant of what the Bible teaches. But whatever the reason, there is abroad a surprising lack of discernment as to the nature of much that is being written today.

It may be that there is a tendency to look upon all scholarship, whatever be the presuppositions that govern it, as a kind of social club or Kaffeklatsch in which believers and unbelievers alike have fellowship, and that everyone who is a scholar or who writes a paper or book is making a contribution or having an insight. Such a position, of course, is not in accord with the facts. As far as the truth is concerned much that is written today is worthless. Many articles upon the Old Testament seem to this writer to be in vain. One may seriously ask how the whole Wellhausen emphasis brought glory to God. Did it ever bring blessing to any soul? Did it really contribute to a basic understanding of the Scripture? Did it exalt the Word of God and honour Him, or was it nothing more than a finely spun theory that exalted man alone? It is a grave mistake to think that everything that is written is significant and a real contribution. Much of it is almost without value and of no great help in properly understanding the Word of God.

The Christian scholar need not endeavour to read everything. Scholars who seek to read everything are notably superficial when it comes to really fundamental matters. If a man tries to read all that is written in his field he simply cannot have the time to do the solid research that is needed if he himself is to produce something worthwhile. Discernment is needed that he may concentrate upon those works from which he may truly derive profit.

The Challenge of Christian Scholarship

The Christian scholar is fighting a battle and in these days he is likely to be a lonely figure. The religious world today is being engulfed by

the neo-orthodox emphases that so many are making. Even evangelicals and Bible believers are aping the language of the neo-orthodox. Thus, for example, no longer do we have a discussion with a person; we have a dialogue; we no longer have a divine revelation, we have the Hebraic Christian tradition. But perhaps the saddest thing in the scholarly world has been the manner in which some evangelical scholars have looked with welcome to the appearance of neo-orthodoxy as though it had somehow brought about a true return to the Word of God. And the superficial manner in which many evangelicals have handled Barth's distinction between *Geschichte* and *Historie* is nothing short of tragic. Here a radical form of unbelief has been welcomed into the Christian fold as though it were an ally. It would almost seem that God has placed a veil over the eyes of some evangelicals.

In such times, however, despair is not the keynote. Never was the need of God's Word greater than it is now. The ignorance of Scripture abroad today is nothing short of appalling. When a reformation comes, it will, we believe, be the work of the Spirit of God. And one means which the Spirit will use is consecrated Christian scholarship. The Christian scholar need not fear if terms of opprobrium are heaped upon him. He is in the service of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He knows that in himself he is weak and helpless; he realises how great his ignorance is. In himself he may not have the wit, the genius and the brilliance to match the minds of this world. That, however, is not his task nor is it his responsibility. His task is to be faithful to the Lord of glory. He is to study the Scriptures that are alone able to make one wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.

The glory of God is the ultimate aim of Christian scholarship, and this is to be accomplished through the edification of the church. The Christian scholar is not writing primarily to convince 'destructive' critics. No doubt God will at times use his arguments to convince even opponents of His Word. But first of all Christian scholarship exists for the benefit of the Church. It is to aid Christ's little ones in the knowledge of Him that Christian scholarship has a place. It is to help believers get straight in their minds the message of Christianity. And it is to fight the battles of the Church.

Conclusion

In the face of the terrible wave of neo-orthodoxy that today is engulfing Christendom, what is the Christian Church to do? Christian

scholarship should give the answer. In giving the answer, however, it relies not upon human wisdom, but upon the Word of God. Relying upon the Holy Spirit and trusting the Scriptures as God's Word, it will point out to the Church how great a departure from the truth neo-orthodoxy is and how great are the errors that characterise much that is written today. In particular it will warn the church against the position of those who say that the Bible is not infallible and inerrant and will call the Church to take her stand upon the unchanging rock of Holy Scripture.

R. E. D. CLARK, M.A., Ph.D.

Men As Trees Walking¹

UNTIL the present century it was commonly taken for granted that people born blind have the same ideas of space as those who can see. Philosophers, notably Locke, Descartes, and Leibnitz, in discussing the concept of space, assumed that both sight and touch give rise to the same basic ideas of space and distance. This assumption seemed to be confirmed by the fact that the congenitally blind do, in fact, speak of space just as we all do. Bishop Berkeley, however, in his *Essay Towards a Theory of Vision* (1709) put forward the suggestion that tactile sensation gives rise to a psychological world of space, and that only later do we learn to line this up with sight. But he gave no evidence for this view, and, in fact, as we shall see, the situation is the other way round.

The blindness of the congenitally blind, when due to cataract, can be remedied by surgery. But with very rare exceptions² this has only been possible in recent times. In the early days of the operation a number of people, including intelligent adults, received sight for the first time, most of them towards the end of the nineteenth century. If we include a few spontaneous cures, records of about eighty cases have now been published. Further cases are likely to be excessively rare, because in most Western countries congenital blindness must be reported, so that cures are now effected in early years before an infant is old enough to describe what it is like to be without sight.

It is a matter of great interest to psychologists to discover how a sightless person reacts to a newly acquired sense. In Germany M. von Senden devoted many years to the study of this subject. In 1932 he published a detailed survey of all known cases—a monograph of considerable length.

This book formed the basis of D. O. Hebb's epoch-making discussion of perceptual learning in infancy (*Organisation of Behaviour*, 1949), so that its importance eventually came to be realised. The book was

¹ The author is indebted to Dr Leon Morris, and Mr Haddon Wilmer, for their helpful discussion in the preparation of this paper.

² The first known case was in Arabia, in 1020.

exceedingly rare in Germany as sales had been small and all the remaining copies at the publisher's warehouse were destroyed in the Leipzig raid in 1943. All von Senden's original notes and case records were destroyed in another raid. Miss Sylvia Schuppe of the British Museum was able at last to discover a micro-film copy and laboured for ten years to get it published. Finally, in 1960, an English edition appeared.¹

The picture which emerges is surprising. In none of the many cases studied did a sense of touch, in the absence of sight, give rise to a concept of a three-dimensional world. Or, if it did, as the philosopher G. J. Warnock thinks possible, it was of a kind very difficult to translate into that with which sighted people are familiar.

The blind-born, von Senden believes, have no sense of depth or space or even of distance. He cites many remarkable quotations illustrating the point. A boy knew that his room was part of a house but could not conceive that the house would look bigger than his room. A building a mile away was thought of as near at hand 'but requiring the taking of a lot of steps'. Up and down movement in elevators gave rise to no sense of height, or even of change in position. It was thought that the sun or a candle were touching a person who felt their warmth. The moon seemed a rather mythical object, but a blind person thought that it could be more easily investigated by means of elongated arms than by sight. The statement that it was a long way off conveyed nothing. A blind person had often been told that trees are taller than men, but the statement was not understood. After the operation, 'when she saw that a tree was ten times as tall as her father and mother she thought that her eyes were playing a trick on her'.

A more recent case, aged 52, in which the patient had been able to see for nearly a year in early childhood, follows the same pattern.² Psychological tests were applied. On being presented with the Necker cube and the Staircase illusions, the man experienced no reversals. These illusions depend upon the fact that objects are seen in depth, but after recovery from blindness no sense of depth is present.

Again, touch alone gives no sense of shape or of how parts are joined together. There seems to be no general picture in the mind of a cube, or even of flat shapes like circles, triangles or hexagons. The blind person is conscious of smooth surfaces (which he finds 'beautiful'),

¹ M. von Senden, 'Space and Sight', *The Perception of Space and Shape in the congenitally Blind before and after Operation*. English translation, Peter Heath. Methuen, 1960, 42s.

² R. L. Gregory and J. G. Walker, *Recovery From Early Blindness*, E.P.S. Monograph, No. 2, 1963.

spikes or corners and edges but, owing to the fact that one can only feel a part at a time, objects larger than those which can be held in the hand are not sensed as a whole. There may be no idea, for instance, of how the parts of a frequently handled pet dog are related together.

After sight has been restored, those who were blind have great difficulty in recognising that what they see corresponds to the shapes they have previously handled. A week after a man's eyes had been opened he was shown an orange and asked its shape. His newly acquired sight gave him no clue—he could only discover that it was round by feeling. And later, on looking at a square and at a triangle he said that they were round. When corrected he said: 'Oh yes, now I understand. You can see how they feel'.

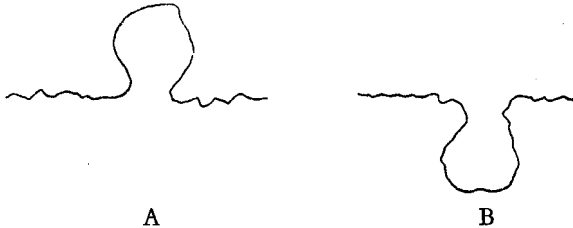
For many months such patients wonder why sight is supposed to be useful. They find it incredibly hard to discern shapes. The new sense brings uncertainty. There may even be a refusal to use it unless compelled. One blind man who knew his way about perfectly became lost and had to ask his way home when he was given his sight.

The blind soon learn to use the same language as other people. But often it is a form of words without awareness of the meaning. When they first realise that other people have a sense which they lack they attempt to understand it as a kind of touching. A number of these people thought that those who had sight were rather to be pitied than otherwise. Their curious faculty only worked at times which they called 'day', and failed altogether at times which they called 'night', but a blind man could go anywhere at night.

After sight has been restored it usually takes several months before its value is appreciated. During this learning period the eyes can be observed endlessly 'feeling' round the contours of objects.

The reason for this wandering of the eyes may be illustrated by reference to the writer's own experience. He has had four diathermy operations for detached retinas which have involved both eyes—two operations in 1950, one in 1952 and one in 1958. In three instances the area of detachment passed the macula. The interest of such operations is that they are equivalent to an experiment in which the retinas are removed and replaced in a new position. This means that previous to an operation the sight of, say, a straight line stimulated certain nerve endings and the messages transmitted to the brain were interpreted as 'straight line'. But after the operation the same straight line would stimulate different nerves and the corresponding message would normally have been interpreted in some other way. The result is that, after

an operation, shapes as seen by the 'bad' eye, are distorted. After the 1952 operation this effect was strongly marked. A straight line, for instance, appeared as A below, the main loop being at the point at



which I was looking directly. This, of course, caused a good deal of strain. It was impossible at a glance to see the shape of an object through the eye. But by looking along the contours of objects, the main bend moved along and it became possible, very rapidly, to distinguish between the permanent and objective features of a shape and the subjective distortions. Over a good many months the distortion died down slowly. It is interesting to note that the other eye compensated for the distortion—a straight line appearing as in B. When both eyes were used together the shapes of large objects could be recognised easily enough, but when objects subtending a small angle at the eye were observed (e.g. a preacher's face in the pulpit) the eyes became dominant alternately with somewhat startling results!

In view of these experiences, we can understand something of the confusion that a person who sees for the first time must feel. He will see a welter of colour and shape. But the mind will not have learned how to interpret the messages passing through the optic nerves. By moving the eyes rapidly from side to side and up and down some parts of the picture will retain permanence and some will move with the eyes. In this way it would be possible to make out large shapes, but for finer details to be perceived much time, patience and practice of eye movements would be necessary.

Now let us consider what von Senden has to say about how blind people group objects together.

Those of us whose dominant sense is sight group things together when they *look* alike—for instance, things of the same colour, or shape, or things which move in similar ways, etc.

Blind people do the same in principle, but they depend almost entirely upon a sense of feeling (taste and hearing only enter to a limited

extent). The resulting classifications or *schema* differ greatly from those of sighted persons.

One such schema is that of the 'sequence-circle' with reference points—something which by continuous touching will bring you back to the part you first touched—one or more points in the schema must be distinctive so that you know when the 'circle' has been completed. (The 'circle' has, of course, no relation to a geometrical circle.) A wheel, with some point suitably marked, would fall into this schema; but so also would a living room—for a blind person would obtain his bearings by touching the sides of the room until he is back at the starting point again. Other schemata result from similar feelings—hard, soft, cold or warm things may each be classified together.

But structural plans are also represented. One of the commonest of these is that of a trunk or cylinder round which you can put your hands. But in this schema, if you lift your hands upwards, you find that they are suddenly stopped by branch-like objects which come out of the trunk. On the ends of these you can sometimes feel smaller movable objects.

In this schema the blind classify such objects as umbrella-stands, candelabras, men and trees. There is no confusion between them, of course, for polished wood, glass, skin and bark feel quite different. But they belong to the same structural pattern.

Thus men and trees are grouped together. Both have a central trunk and objects coming out of it (limbs or branches) with further smaller objects attached to these in turn (fingers, leaves and twigs). But they differ in their feel and in the fact that limbs move more than branches.

To people with sight men and trees bear no resemblance whatever. But of one congenitally blind girl we read that after she had received her sight 'one of the most important pieces of information that she imparted to a blind friend was the discovery that men do not look like trees at all'. We have already noted that the factor of size does not enter the picture—of the same girl it is stated that if she had remained blind 'she would have gone through life with the vague impression that the tallest tree was about ten feet high'.

With this background of recently discovered knowledge it is instructive to turn to the New Testament. Many of our Lord's healing miracles were concerned with the restoring of sight to the blind (Matt. ix. 27; x. 46, 52; xi. 5; xii. 22; xv. 29-31; xxi. 14; Mark viii. 22-26; x. 46-52; Luke iv. 18; John ix. 1-7, and parallel passages). In only one

instance (John ix) is a man specifically stated to have been born blind, and in a few others we are given very brief details of what happened. But apart from the simple statement 'now I see' in John ix there is only one first-hand description of his experience by a blind man who was cured (Mark viii. 22-26).

In this one case the miracle is recorded as having taken place in two stages. Firstly, the man's sight was restored. When he opened his eyes he looked round half dazed and probably felt as bewildered as modern patients have done. Jesus said: 'Do you see anything?' He replied, 'I see men, but they look like trees, walking.'

The association of trees with men is quite unnatural except for the blind: a man with sight never confuses them. And it is obvious, too, that the man thought that men were about the same size as ordinary trees. The fact that this surprising confusion is mentioned in the gospel is a strong indication that the miracle happened as recorded.

But what did the man mean? His words *might* reasonably be taken in the sense, 'Now that I have it, sight is not much use to me after all. I cannot distinguish men from trees except that men walk and trees do not.' But with so little evidence available, we cannot be dogmatic.

Jesus laid His hands on him again. This time when he opened his eyes he looked intently or steadily (*dieblephen*) 'and was restored and saw everything clearly'. The implication seems to be that at the first stage, he did *not* look steadily—his eyes were wandering, seemingly aimlessly. This, as we have noted, is the natural reaction of those who first receive their sight. Nothing would be more natural than to say to such a man, 'Do you see anything?', meaning, 'Do you recognise anything?' Again, the story rings true.

In these few words, recorded only by St Mark, we seem to have as good evidence as we could desire that the miracle was genuine.¹ Not a single ancient writer, so far as we know, had an inkling of understanding about the psychological world of men born blind—for no confusion would have arisen in one who had previously seen (at least beyond the time of infancy). Besides—the cure of a man born blind would have made a more startling story. But there is no mention of this. According to the gospels Jesus often cured blind people, so there

¹ The word used, *apokatestathē*, translated 'restored', seems to be used in the same sense of 'cured', and should not necessarily be taken to imply that the man had previously seen. The sense could be 'restored to what it ought to be'. Thus, Mark iii. 5 uses the same word in connexion with the cure of the withered hand which was restored 'whole as the other', i.e. 'as it ought to have been' and not 'as it was before'.

would have been little point in finding out whether this man in particular had never seen before, or had been blind since infancy.¹

Finally, it is worth comparing the case reported here with the much more detailed one in John, chapter ix. We note that in neither instance, so far as we are told, did the men ask to be cured. In other cases such requests were common, as in the story of blind Bartimaeus. This is natural, because a man born blind, or blind since infancy, might have little wish to see and, indeed, might have little or no conception of what seeing means.

Again, in neither case do we read that the men thanked Jesus for what He had done, or praised God for all around to hear—though again these features are common in the records of other miracles. As we have noted in the modern cases, men who have received their sight for the first time have no cause to feel thankful until much later on. In John ix it is noteworthy that Jesus waited for some time before finding the man again to tell him about the possibility of belief in the Son of Man. Immediately after he had been cured he would have been too dazed to appreciate what Jesus wished to tell him, so that the need for delay is easy to understand—we only read of delay in the case of one other miracle (John v. 14). Unfortunately, we have no record of what the man said when he first saw, but this is natural since neither Jesus nor his disciples were present at the time of the cure.

¹ This conclusion may be compared with that of Professor R. H. Fuller (*Interpreting the Miracles*, 1963, p. 34) who thinks that the miracle is one of the three least evidential in the Marcan record. It exhibits 'the pure form of a Hellenistic wonder-story, without any modification', and probably entered into the Christian tradition 'from a popular source outside Palestine in the Greek-speaking world'. The only evidence offered is that Form Criticism supposedly points to this conclusion (but why should not a *true* story be told in the form current at the time?) and that there is a story that the Emperor Vespasian cured a blind man by the same technique using spittle. But Vespasian did not come to the throne until around forty years after Christ's death; would there not, therefore, have been ample time for such stories of the Gospel to have reached Rome by this time, and for flatterers to have applied some of them to the Emperor?

CORRESPONDENCE

Capital Punishment

Professor GORDON H. CLARK

TIMOTHY C. F. STUNT writes: Although Professor Clark prefers to centre his discussion of the death penalty on theological principles and to ignore the 'so-called practical considerations' of deterrence, miscarriage of justice and the exemption of the wealthy from capital punishment, he claims to offer a 'token response to these more superficial contentions'. In this reply to his paper I shall seek to deal first with his use of Scripture; secondly, to investigate his theory of Civil Government, and thirdly, to consider some of the 'superficial contentions' which, whether we like it or not, we must examine if we are to consider the question properly.

Professor Clark admits that a man need no longer marry his brother's widow, 'because the purpose of preserving his name and tribe is no longer in effect'. It is claimed, however, that the death penalty still remains, though Professor Clark is less explicit as to what its purpose is. Sometimes he regards it as a deterrent in terms of a utilitarian philosophy of the protection of society (e.g. 'Once a murderer is executed, he is effectively deterred from murdering again'). On other occasions he treats the death penalty in terms of retributory justice for an offence against God himself (e.g. 'This divine declaration [Gen. ix. 6] not only authorises capital punishment, but also gives its justification: man was created in God's image and murder is a direct affront to God. Also implicit is the authorisation of civil government, for unless God gave the right of capital punishment to individuals in the first place [compare the theory of civil arrest], one would be at a loss to explain governmental authority.') In his treatment of the relevant passages in the Old Testament, Professor Clark seems to distinguish between these two motives. The motive of protecting society may be adapted and the laws incumbent upon such a motive abrogated or replaced, while the retributory motive apparently remains unaffected by the new covenant. How far the death penalty was regarded in the Old Testament as a measure to protect society is uncertain. It must, however, and apparently Professor Clark would here concur, be still a consideration in the ethics of capital punishment. Consequently it seems very strange to regard the

questions of deterrence and the miscarriage of justice as matters of 'superficial' importance. Professor Clark's use of the Old Testament is somewhat selective. God's treatment of Cain, the first murderer, is 'an exception'. Similarly the death penalty seems still to be required for murder, but apparently not for rape or adultery. He omits any reference to Ezek. xxiii. 11: 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' The question seems to be whether or not our legal code is to be based upon Deut. xix. 21: 'Your eye shall not pity; it shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand.' Apparently for Professor Clark the answer is that we accept the clause 'life for life' but not the rest. For it is unlikely that he would have us revert to the law of mutilation. He seems to have forgotten that the *lex talionis* was designed to restrict vengeance at a time when vengeance tended to take *more* than an eye for an eye. Would he have us re-introduce such a law to bring back the full force of the retributory element in punishment which he seems to value so highly? Such an attitude would at least be consistent, while the laws of this country are so inconsistent that it allows *two* men to hang for the murder of one man.

When we come to the New Testament Professor Clark again seems somewhat selective. He makes no mention of the words of the Lord in Matt. v. 21-28 where the man who wishes to murder (or even is merely angry) or to commit adultery, is guilty of those crimes that at the time bore the death penalty. How far, then, the new covenant has altered our attitude to the law, must inevitably be the final issue. Professor Clark believes that whatever may be altered in terms of the protection of society, the element of just retribution must remain and therefore the death penalty (though apparently only for murder). This would explain his attitude to the woman taken in adultery. For him it is evidently unthinkable that the woman should go 'scot-free'. Although such an encounter with Christ could hardly fail to have redeemed her from her sin, it is still insisted that she must have been punished.

Again and again Professor Clark mentions the wrath and judgment of God and seems to assume that therefore we should judge likewise. With the passage from Luke 4 where the Lord stops reading before the words of judgment, Professor Clark scorns those who despise judgment and the wrath of God, but admits the fact that the Lord stopped there because 'he wanted to read only so much as he was to fulfil during his earthly ministry'. He never faces the position that one can perfectly well believe in final judgment without necessarily believing in human

society's duty to execute it now in the form of the death penalty. The whole point of the argument from this passage is that as God has deferred the day of final judgment, so it is hardly for humans to usurp His position while He waits in mercy for men to repent.

As has been said, the final issue is the way in which we interpret the function of government under the new covenant. As Professor Clark says 'the *locus classicus* is Rom. xiii'. Here the ruler is described as 'the minister of God, an avenger for wrath upon the wrongdoer' (verse 4). Paul is referring here to the Christian's duty of obedience to the higher authorities. These, he says, rule by God's institution. This is hardly to say that their deeds or laws are either God-fearing or righteous. In the light of the conduct of Nero, Domitian, and Diocletian such an interpretation is confirmed. In so far, however, as an ordered society is the result of his rule, the Christian values the authority of his ruler. In so far as the ruler punishes evil in a retributive way we may be sure that it is an expression of the wrath of God, and consequently we are bound to behave well both to avoid 'God's wrath and for the sake of conscience' (verse 5). However Paul is dealing here with unbelieving rulers, and we have no reason to believe that Christian rulers will behave, or that they ought to behave in the same way as pagan rulers are portrayed as behaving in the writings of the New Testament. Indeed we trust that the Christian ruler will not imprison, exile, or kill God's people as the authorities in the New Testament did to Paul, John, and Stephen. How far the Christian ruler obeys the command in the previous chapter of the letter to the Romans: 'Never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord"', is the crucial question. Here is the weakness of Professor Clark's whole position. He writes: 'Also implicit (in Gen. ix. 6) is the authorisation of civil government, for unless God gave the right of capital punishment to individuals in the first place (cf. the theory of civil arrest), one would be at a loss to explain governmental authority.' Now under the New Covenant the right of capital punishment to individuals is expressly done away with, so according to Professor Clark's theory of the origin of governmental authority the Christian ruler must forego his right to punish retributively. In a democracy where the ultimate source of authority is the people, Christians are not the people to be calling for retributive punishment and vengeance, if they are preaching a gospel of forgiveness.

On the other hand, if one does accept Professor Clark's view that the Christian ruler must enforce retributory punishment as God's

representative, the question must arise what law he is to enforce. As a Christian, he knows that all the sins catalogued in the last verses of Rom. i. (evil, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, gossip, slander, hatred of God, insolence, haughtiness, boastfulness, invention of evil, disobedience to parents, foolishness, faithlessness, heartlessness, and ruthlessness)—all these are, according to Paul, in verse 32, 'such things that those who do them deserve to die'. On the other hand if he goes by the Mosaic Law he must enforce the Death Penalty not merely for murder but for adultery, sorcery, striking or cursing of parents, and for sacrifice to other gods. Even then his interpretation of that law, as a Christian, will mean that whoever is angry with his brother will be in effect as guilty of murder as the man who looks at a woman lustfully is guilty of adultery with her. Perhaps sufficient has been said to indicate the impossibility of the Christian ruler or the Christian member of a democratic society thinking in terms of retributive justice.

This leads us to the third and last section of our subject, the 'so-called practical considerations' that Professor Clark classes as 'superficial contentions'. If we accept the doctrine of civil government as interpreted above, our theory of punishment will be motivated by two factors: first, the safety and welfare of society, and secondly the reform of the criminal. The latter will necessarily be a part of the former as the reformed criminal will contribute to the welfare of society. And lest it be said that this is not a distinctively Christian approach we will add immediately that the basis for the reform of a criminal will be a specifically Christian one. As far as the safety and welfare of society is concerned the question is, how effective is the death penalty. It may be effective in two ways. First as a deterrent in the sense that Professor Clark sees it. 'Once a murderer is executed, he is effectively deterred from murdering again.' As this could be said of the death penalty if it was the punishment for any crime, it is hardly a valid argument. Incarceration is just as effective and avoids, as we shall see, the problem of miscarriage of justice and makes possible the reform of the prisoner. How far the death penalty may be regarded as a deterrent in the usual sense of the word is disputed. During the last century execution was prescribed for a huge range of crimes from murder to a five shilling theft. Each time it was proposed to reduce the number of crimes so punished there was an outcry that there would be a vast increase in the number of these offences. The same argument is used over the abolition of the death penalty. Today, as in the last century, this claim is quite

impossible to substantiate. Just as the incidence of theft did not increase when the savage code of the last century was altered, so the Report of the Royal Commission set up to investigate capital punishment tells us, 'there is no clear evidence in any of the figures we have examined, that the abolition of capital punishment has led to an increase in the homicide rate or that its reintroduction has led to a fall' (paragraph 65). Of course there may be cases where a man has been deterred from committing murder by his fear of execution, but it is also true that the vast majority of murders are done in a moment of mental instability when the murderer does not stop to weigh up the consequences. The recent case of Victor Terry, who committed a murder only an hour after two friends of his, Forsyth and Harris, had been hanged, provides a good example.

The retention of the death penalty also endangers society inasmuch as the penalty is utterly irrevocable. There are at least three cases in this century when innocent people have been convicted of murder by a British court and hanged. The cases of Edith Thompson, Walter Rowland and Timothy Evans, were, as far as it is possible to be sure, serious miscarriages of justice. The wrong was not confined to the individuals and did not consist solely in the removal of life from innocent persons; its was an injury to the society of which these people were a part and a source of suffering for any who loved or depended upon the victims. We may perhaps add that the only instance in British records of a convicted murderer being released only to be convicted of a second murder, was that of Rowland whom we mentioned above, and who was almost certainly the victim of a miscarriage of justice, being guiltless in the second instance. No one would suggest that all murderers should be released; rather we are maintaining that reformed criminals may be released only if they are spared the death penalty.

This brings us to the question of the reform of the criminal. However much we may despise the terms 'maladjustment' or 'mental sickness' it cannot be denied that great progress has been made in the reform of all sorts of criminals including murderers. Here Christians have the greatest responsibility. The gospels are full of examples of men and women who were without question mentally sick, and whom the Lord healed. Christians believe that they have the message that can cure mankind's peculiar disease of which murder is but a single symptom. If Christians were as concerned for the spiritual health of their fellow men as their Lord was, they would hesitate before insisting that a murderer (who clearly is in the greatest need of salvation) should be

consigned to a lost eternity. The work of Christian ministry among criminals has time and again proved fruitful. Who are we to curtail the healing power of the Great Physician?

If Christians are at all conscious of the judgment from which they have been saved by God's mercy they will think twice before exacting from their erring fellowmen the just reward for their sins, when God Himself refrains from giving mankind his deserts. With the knowledge that we 'have no excuse, whoever' we 'are who judge' (Rom. ii. 1) and with the Lord's words ringing in our ears: 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone' (John viii. 7) our hearts can only bleed for the murderer rather than cry for his blood. Professor Clark's complaint may be summed up in his last sentence. 'The abolition of capital punishment is an instance of the ethical irresponsibility of the modern secular community where a misplaced sympathy for the criminal has widely replaced a lost sense of justice'. This, ultimately, is what I cannot agree with. Christian charity and forgiveness are hardly compatible with a call for retribution from a sinful human as opposed to a righteous and holy God. The test that proves the existence of that forgiving love within our hearts is to ask of ourselves whether we recognise the faults that we so much dislike in the murderer, as merely a magnification of our own failure and sin. As a recent book ¹ on the subject asked: Can we admit 'with the shuddering recognition of kinship: here but for the grace of God drop I'?

¹ A. Koestler and C. H. Rolph, *Hanged by the Neck*.

Men As Trees Walking

R. E. D. CLARK

DR LEON MORRIS writes: I find this paper full of interest, and I am impressed by the possibility of taking into account the experiences of those whose sight has been given by surgical operation, and others with experiences like those of Dr Clark. This, I feel, is well worth pursuing. It may indeed help towards a fresh understanding of events, occurring in some of the miracles.

In the application of Mark viii. 22-26, this apparently involves two miracles—the one whereby sight was restored, though the man was not able to interpret correctly what he 'saw', the other whereby the necessary interpretation was given (i.e. the process which took Dr Clark some time, occurred immediately). Did this happen with other miracles, or not?

A difficulty in the way of Dr Clark's thesis is that if this is what Mark viii means, it is hard to know how the man could have recognised anything immediately, men, trees, or anything else. Would they not have needed to be explained to him?

For reasons such as this (and other adduced by Mr Wilmer) I am not sure that a full explanation has yet been given. But I am impressed by the fact that the blind do apparently classify men with trees. I had not been aware of this. And the point that 'not a single ancient writer, as far as we know, had an inkling of understanding about the psychological world of men born blind' is important. Taken together it does seem to me that Dr Clark is on to something which has not previously been pointed out about this miracle. I hope he will give further thought to this and publish in due course.

MR HADDON WILMER writes: Would the man have recognised *anything* on first receiving his sight? Would he have had a visual concept of 'walking'? This here must mean not so much taking steps, the scissor action of the legs, since this is a detail which would have been lost in the general vagueness of his new vision; but rather the fact of their moving back and forth and across. Would the newly sighted have such an appreciation of what 'walking movement' was visually? Surely von Senden's work suggests not? The point of the man's remark as it stands would seem to rest upon the fact that he knew men

and trees *were* different, but they did not *appear* so to him. Von Senden's evidence suggests that there was no reason why he should suppose men and trees were different in shape or powers of movement.

It is possible, of course, that his remark, as we have it, is a summary of a discussion about what he saw. He could have said, when asked what he saw, that 'I see trees', and have been corrected by 'No; they are men; trees don't look like that'. To this he might have retorted, 'Well then, they are like trees walking.' But this is to use imaginative interpolation to save not so much the story itself as an interpretation of the story. It is difficult for an amateur to see if such conjectures receive any support from the grammar and structure of the man's remark, and any real judgment will depend on further conjectures about the original saying in Aramaic (?) This might afford a further clue.

Of course, it is possible that the man had seen before, in which case his remark makes easy sense: he knew what to expect but it took a *little* time for him to regain the power of focusing his eyes. In any case, one remarkable feature is the speed with which the man picked out tree-like objects, and interpreted the *sight* of them in terms of his previous *tactile* understanding of shapes. It is clear from von Senden's evidence and Dr Clark's experience that this takes time, but not so in the story of the Gospel. We may compare the speed of conversion experiences reported in Wm. Sargant's *Battle For the Mind*, with the speed of breakdowns in war—one hour against thirty to forty days. This is itself suggests another factor besides mental strain. The Miraculous working of God.

It ought to be mentioned that the verb *apoka thestēmi* usually carries the meaning of restoration to a thing's original condition, so that the meaning given in the article for the case in question, and in other cases of the intransitive use (*cure*) perhaps needs extra support.

BOOK REVIEWS

C. W. HUME, *The Status of Animals in the Christian Religion*, 2nd edn. 1957, 8s. 6d. *Man and Beast*, 1962, 15s. (UFAW: Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, 7A Lamb's Conduit Passage, London, W.C.1).

Many years ago Major Hume, who possesses high scientific qualifications, dedicated his life to the cause of animal welfare. From around 1926 onwards he has steered his way carefully between a callous indifference to the sufferings of animals on the one hand and an over-sentimentality coupled with utopian and unrealisable ideals on the other. From the beginning his attitude has been sensible, scientific and deeply Christian. It is one of his cardinal principles that he never imputes unworthy motives to others however much he disagrees with them.

At first the Society which Hume founded (now UFAW) had only two members and for many years more its finances were precarious. Today it has the co-operation of most (perhaps all?) of those in this country whose work involves experiments on animals. It has published a valuable reference book on how to rear and keep laboratory animals together with many other smaller works and pamphlets. One most valuable project has been the elimination of animal wastage in laboratories. In the past biologists, because of their ignorance of statistics, used often to subject many more animals to painful experimentation than was strictly necessary to obtain the required results.

Again, UFAW patiently fought the gin-trap for thirty years until it was abolished in England and Wales in 1958. It is still in use elsewhere and Hume tells us how he once sat in church 'behind a row of women devoutly wearing furs that may have caused a hundred days of extreme suffering in the aggregate. This was on Good Friday.'

Man and Beast is a collection of articles and papers written by Major Hume over the years since his work began and now collected in a single volume. It is packed with information. He tells the stories of his battles and his difficulties. He gives a reasoned case for kindness to animals and telling arguments against widespread attitudes. There is a useful discussion on the nature of animal consciousness. With the help, in particular, of Dr W. H. Thorpe of Cambridge, the author has been at great pains to see that his scientific facts are right and his approach up to date. He shows how difficult it can sometimes be for the layman to discover whether an animal is suffering or not and how important it is for facts to be disseminated.

The chapter 'In Praise of Anthropomorphism' is particularly outstanding in this connexion. It discusses the problem how far we ought to suppose that animals have experiences and feelings like our own. A scholarly chapter on the attitude of the Roman Church is also most enlightening.

An important point brought to the fore is that the rising interest in science may often serve to encourage cruelty. In U.S.A. children are allowed to send up mice in home-made rockets. They are encouraged to develop an impersonal and objective (i.e. non-sympathetic) attitude to animals and, generally, to do experiments at home which are later popularised at the annual Science Fair. It

is only too clear that the battles which UFAW has fought in this country will have to be fought again elsewhere.

The earlier book, *The Status of Animals in the Christian Religion*, is masterly, beautiful, sensible and scholarly. The Bible, Hume argues, teaches not sentimentality but neighbourliness to animals. But pagan influences, in the Middle Ages, largely deprived Christians of their concern for the lower creation. The loss is serious and reflects on human character. Experimental work confirms the fact that aggressiveness and callousness towards animals are correlated.

The glib pagan formula 'Animals have no souls', if true, should make us all the more anxious to ensure that the only life an animal has is as happy as possible. If we deem animals as far beneath us in endowment, it is all the more reason why we should seek their good. In the Incarnation God sought *our* good, though we are His inferiors, and the Gospels teach that we should be kind and neighbourly to our inferiors also. Kindness (charity) is the greatest of the Christian virtues. It embraces mercy, pity, gentleness and compassion, says St Paul. To be cruel, then, be it to a fellow human or to an animal, is obviously sinful. The Christian can easily forget this and live in sin—using cruel poisons on rodents or encouraging a cruel fur trade. But Jesus said, 'Go ye and learn what this meaneth: I will have mercy and not sacrifice.'

R. E. D. CLARK

The Psychology of Christian Conversion. By ROBERT O. FERM. Pickering and Inglis, 1962. 15s.

This is a valuable and thoroughly sensible book. Billy Graham, the evangelist, believes that it will be widely used as a textbook in colleges which have an evangelical emphasis.

The author starts with a useful summary of previous books on conversion. He then discusses the subject again in the light of what has been said in the past and of the fresh material (answers to a questionnaire circulated to those who were believed to have experienced Christian conversion) he has obtained.

His conclusion is that although Christian conversion may not differ *psychologically* from other forms of conversion, such as those which occur in connexion with non-Christian religions, it does in fact differ profoundly.

Firstly, Christian conversion is not *merely* psychological, for it involves a definite intellectual content—the realisation that Christ has suffered for us and thereby made forgiveness possible. This marks it off from conversion which, in William James' words, may be only 'vague enthusiasm . . . a feeling that great and wondrous things are in the air'.

Secondly, it is normally (90 per cent of cases studied) connected with sin and the convert is given power to live a changed life. Indeed, Underwood, after stating that all moral maladies could be cured by conversion, could only illustrate the point with reference to specifically Christian examples. In the saintly Hindu there may be storm and stress, followed by conversion, but no evidence of sin or of moral regeneration.

Dr Ferm successfully shows that the supposed connexion of conversion with adolescence—which often led former writers to the conclusion that conversion

is an adolescent phenomenon—is quite baseless. Indeed, investigators have sometimes reached this astonishing conclusion by confining their material to university students! In communities where fresh evangelical work has started, the average age in several instances is between 40 and 50, but after a church has been established for a generation or two and the young have become instructed in Christian matters, the average age naturally falls towards the 'teens. It is interesting that the converts of some great evangelists such as Wesley, Bishop Asbury, and Finney have been confined chiefly to adults.

The attempts of psychologists to bring Christian conversion within the psychological net sometimes occasion a smile. The words '. . . God-consciousness vague and marginal before their conversion . . .' have been seriously used in an attempted definition of conversion—thereby excluding St Paul and John Wesley! On a more serious note, there is much talk about conflict as if it did not involve ethical responsibility. Intellectuals are lulled to sleep with psychiatric jargon which serves to diminish the sense of sin. In fact evasion of sin is the prevailing sin of our age (p. 200).

The book is well referenced and is a mine of useful information. Unfortunately it is written in a style which jars on English ears, but seems to be accepted in the U.S.A. ('It was B's purpose to gain information which would make it possible to. . .' instead of 'B wished to. . .'). Apart from this the book may be confidently recommended.

R. E. D. CLARK

In Search of Myself. By D. R. DAVIES. Bles. 16s.

The late David Richard Davies enriched our *Journal* with two valuable papers ('Christianity and Marxism', 1944; 'Theology and some Recent Sociology', 1947) and many members will have read his books or listened to his broadcasts. Mr Davies wrote the bulk of his moving autobiography, now published by Messrs Bles, many years ago but kept it up to date till near the time of his death in 1958. Written in a racy and enthralling style, it tells the story of how a young, brave and wayward lad in a desperately poor mining family (his father's back had been broken in a mining accident and no compensation was given) made his escape from ugly surroundings.

As the years passed by Davies threw himself heart and soul into one movement after another. At one point he had a church, preached the social gospel and collected many working men around him by his advocacy of the general strike. Such a ministry could have no permanence and resignation was inevitable. He drifted to London where, unemployed, he could no longer support his wife. He lived alone and for a year sold his precious books, one by one, to obtain enough food to eat. Later he became an enthusiastic Marxist. He was off to Spain at the time of the Civil War. Marxism, like all his previous enthusiasms, failed him. He had had enough. He decided to end his life. He entered the sea at a lonely spot. There in the water Christ met him and from that moment he never went back. He put his unrivalled experiences and inside knowledge at the disposal of the Christian Church and over pots of hot coffee he studied, wrote books and articles and prepared talks far into the night.

In his later years he settled down as a minister in the Church of England, having abandoned his nonconformist upbringing.

R. E. D. CLARK

Christ and Freud: A Study of Religious Experience and Observance. By ARTHUR GUIRDHAM. George Allen and Unwin Ltd. London, 1959. 21s.

The aim of this book is to study the psychiatric foundations of religion and also, conversely, 'to estimate to what extent religious factors are important in relation to psychiatric conditions and more especially to neurosis.' Dr Guirdham's stated objective is one of the most practical to those concerned with the applications of psychiatry, as well as to the pastoral worker. However it demands an informed and unbiased account of psychiatric theory, as well as a fair statement of Christian doctrine and practice.

Dr Guirdham's theme is clearly argued with some caustic wit. He holds that the Christian religion, as traditionally practised, is ridden with guilt, deliberately fostered by the clergy. Not only is this contrary to Christ's intention, but it has the practical defect of engendering a high incidence of neurosis, compared with the adherents of the Oriental religions. He proposes, therefore, that the shibboleths of clerical Christianity should be discarded in favour of 'the one fundamental religion' which derives much from the religions of the Far East whose 'techniques render the total submission to the Absolute a much more immediate proposition'.

If by religion and Christianity Dr Guirdham means grotesquely authoritarian clericalism and neurotic religiosity then his arguments may have some force. However to suppose that there is no more than this to Christianity shows ignorance of everything except superficialities. His representation of psychiatric matters seems equally tendentious. A single instance is enough. The argument hangs on the comparative incidence of neurosis between East and West. Such figures as do exist are of the most doubtful validity, and the differences may be due to a great number of possible causes. To assume that clericalism and religion account for these differences is, to say the least, unjustified. With such central defects this book cannot be recommended, despite some shrewd observation and comment.

I. LODGE-PATCH

Religion in the Developing Personality: Proceedings of the Second Academy Symposium, 1958. Academy of Religion and Mental Health, with the aid of the Josiah Macy, Jr Foundation. New York University Press. 1960. \$3.

Religion, Culture, and Mental Health: Proceedings of the Third Academy Symposium, 1959, Academy of Religion and Mental Health, with the aid of the Josiah Macy, Jr Foundation. New York University Press. 1961. \$3.50.

THESE volumes are the proceedings of two of the annual conferences held since 1957 by the Academy of Religion and Mental Health. The symposia

bring together contributors of a wide variety: neurologists, psychiatrists of differing allegiances and clergy—Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish. Each topic is introduced by a speaker: a condensed version of his informal paper, and the (often lively) discussion is given.

The earlier symposium recognises that much of overt religion can be related to developmental factors in the personality. Many people acquire religion in adolescence: others when their life's work is complete and death seems to threaten. The outward characteristics of religion seem to be typical of particular age groups.

In childhood the earliest adumbration of religion is affected by the concurrent emergence of the child's sense of identity, and the development of his trust in his parents. The adolescent is concerned with the many problems of his relationship to society, and may utilise his religion to serve his personal needs for security. Allport speaks of this as 'extrinsic' religion and emphasises the need for an 'instrument, for use in adolescence and later years, that will enable us to distinguish two entirely different types of religious sentiment. The one has to do with . . . personal psychological needs The second type . . . is . . . an intrinsic value, larger than self, wholly beyond self. . . this kind of religion can steer one's existence without enslaving him.' 'It is granted of course, that a given individual may harbour a mixture of both types. When this instrument is devised we shall be in a position . . . to discover the relation between religion and mental health.'

This research emphasis recurs in the themes of other speakers who speculated whether man could be shown to have an innate need for religion which could provide peace and strength.

In the second volume the sociological approach is more fully explored, and, like the former, has contributors of the highest distinction. In the papers and discussion on 'A Sociological Approach' emphasis is laid on the observations suggesting that the personality derives important components from the individual's early social experiences: it is also suggested that organised religion takes no cognisance of this fact—the cure of souls is a secondary consideration. In 'An Anthropological Approach' Margaret Mead sketches from the viewpoint of the social anthropologist the purposes served by religion in a variety of cultures, and supports the universality and necessity of this aspect of man's activity.

In the 'Religious Approach' there is some interesting speculation as to what kind of personality is typical of a given religion, and what contribution religion may make to mental health. However this preoccupation is characteristically refuted by Harold Wolff 'Is health the end of man? Is comfort the goal of his existence?'

The form of the second volume makes a review difficult; the digressions are frequent, the many stimulating ideas are rarely followed through and the main theme is often lost. There is throughout a refreshing air of unconstrained questioning of the origins of religious behaviour, and its significance for mental health. The last twenty pages contain a list of the many research projects put forward throughout the symposia, indicating the stimulus that the Academy can give to work of this kind.

The weakness of this whole work, however, lies in the wide background of the discussants. Where so varied a group of discussants are gathered, 'religion'

will have a correspondingly vague connotation. Thus, there is no appeal to the Scriptures for light on any of the problems raised. Scientific work (and there are ample references given) provides the only external agreed source. There is therefore no 'instrument' to be found to distinguish Allport's 'intrinsic' religion—which becomes merely religion freed from the grossest superficialities.

At this rather low level of religious agreement, however, these books provide considerable interest and stimulus.

I. LODGE-PATCH

Reason and Emotion. By JOHN MACMURRAY. 2nd edition, 1962. Faber & Faber. Paper 8s. 6d. cloth 18s.

Although the lectures of which this book consists were delivered more than thirty years ago, they are still worth reading and pondering. The author's main contention is that the contrast we usually draw between 'reason' and 'emotion' is a false one leading to the conclusion that our emotional life is irrational. The correct contrast is between 'intellect' and 'emotion', reason expressing itself through both. 'Emotional rationality' is 'the capacity to apprehend objective values' and to behave in terms of the object, 'emotion' providing the motive for activity. What we need, therefore, is to cultivate a direct sensitiveness to the reality of the world around us.

The idea of 'emotional rationality' is applied to the spheres of Science, Art and Religion. These are seen as expressions of the personal and their relations to each other are carefully worked out, the clue being found in the grammatical distinction of three persons. The reviewer found the lectures on Science and Art the most rewarding.

The treatment of Religion and Morality was less satisfying. Religion is defined as 'the drive to achieve rationality in our relations with our fellows'. God is 'the infinite ground of all finite phenomena in the personal field', so that God is known through the personal relationship—if it is truly personal. It follows that morality is the demand for rational behaviour: acting in terms of things and people as they really are. In this 'new' or 'higher' morality, laws (divine or human) are an obstruction—they prevent the development of a free personal life—and the one guiding principle of 'love' is to treat one another always as persons.

Whilst the orthodox Christian will be classified with the author's treatment of religion and morality, he cannot fail to find this book interesting and stimulating. It provides a very fair and thoughtful statement of the views of an influential modern school of thought.

J. W. BAIGENT

Religion and the Scientific Outlook. By T. R. MILES. George Allen & Unwin, 1959. Pp. 224. 21s.

In this clear and readable book the author attempts to answer the questions—'Has science disproved the existence of God?' 'Is there a conflict between science

and religion'? and 'Is it reasonable for a person living in the twentieth century to accept some form of Christian orthodoxy?' We are shown how present-day philosophical techniques can help to answer these questions.

By 'present-day techniques' is meant a modified form of logical positivism. There is a clear statement of logical positivism and the verification principle, and then the author shows why it needed modification and development. The most important chapter in the book is the one that tries to show that the concept of 'absolute existence' ('what really exists') is meaningless, all the subsequent arguments being based on this assumption that 'factually significant' means the same as 'empirical'.¹

There is a useful discussion of moral assertions which concludes that they have a perfectly legitimate status, and that their truth or falsity is a matter in the last resort for personal conviction rather than rational argument.

The second part of the book examines materialism, behaviourism, determinism, physical research and psycho-analysis, and shows, using the touchstone of the 'absolute-existence' mistake, that none can be regarded as a threat to religious belief. The third part of the book discusses various sorts of religious language, including statements about God, miracles, revelation, prayer and Christian doctrine, and assesses how far such language can still legitimately command attention and respect.

The author claims to be Christian, but in the light of his philosophical views he is unable to subscribe to a *literal* interpretation of orthodox Christian beliefs. Instead, he prefers a quasi-agnostic approach—the formula of 'silence qualified by parables', i.e. the only legitimate religious assertions must be parabolic. Instead of 'Do you believe in the existence of God?', we should substitute 'Do you accept the theistic parable?' the assertion 'God answers prayer' must be abandoned also. Literal petitionary prayers must be replaced by the language of commitment and dedication.

This book challenges our conception of God and makes us re-examine our religious language. It would usefully be read in conjunction with the Bishop of Woolwich's 'Honest to God.'

J. W. BAIGENT

Philosophy and Religion. The Logic of Religious Belief. By JOHN WILSON. O.U.P., 1961. Pp. 119. 12s. 6d.

Can religious belief be rational? Once again we are asked to consider the problem of the validity of religious assertions. Are we to follow the modern philosophers who reject metaphysical and religious language as having no 'cash value' in terms of verifiable facts? Or shall we say that religious beliefs are self-validating, immune from the criticisms of philosophy?

Mr Wilson, who is not a professional philosopher, claims to be writing for 'other amateurs'. In this small, well-written book he shows that philosophy,

¹For an answer to this position see T. McPherson, 'Ayer on Religion', in *Faith and Thought*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (Summer 1962).

rightly used, can help religious belief to be reasonable. Using the methodology of linguistic analysis, he distinguishes four groups of religious assertions. Assertions of empirical fact, analytic assertions (concerned with the meaning and use of religious terms), assertions of value (moral judgments), and what look like assertions of empirical fact, but whose subject-matter appears to be some supernatural entity or state of affairs. It is this last category which needs special investigation. It is important to remember, however, that many assertions are mixtures including terms appropriate to more than one category. Wilson then examines a number of philosophical theories about the logic of religious assertions which are popular today. He rejects all theories that religious statements are explanatory, self-justifying, or derived from authority. These treat religious assertions as genuinely factual, but are unable to show how they can pass the verification test.

The main section of the book is concerned with this question of verification. Wilson finds that it is easier to criticise than the construct, but he makes some important observations. Meaning depends upon people's intention and use. Falsifiability must be accepted as the criterion of validity. Religion can only be true if verified in terms of experience. But 'experience' does not have to be sensory. Religious experience can be called 'cognitive', and the difficulties in testing its validity are practical rather than logical.

Wilson sees that Philosophy can take us only so far in demonstrating the possibility of a rational basis for religious belief. Religion is primarily a commitment, a practical belief, a practical decision. But faith need not part company with reason. Those of us who are trying to communicate the Faith to the modern thinking world can learn a great deal from this book; it challenges us to radically re-think our religious ideas and the way we express them.

J. W. BAIGENT

Man and Science. By W. HEITLER. English Translation. Oliver and Boyd. 1963. 21s.

Professor Heitler of Zürich was (jointly with F. London) the first to apply atomic orbital theory to the formation of molecules; his name is known to every chemist. In this short book of 100 pages, beautifully written and packed with wisdom, he applies the philosophic thinking of a lifetime to what he believes to be the great problems of our day—the proliferation of quantitative and the equally significant stagnation of qualitative science.

Heitler starts by discussing the work of Kepler. Believing that the construction of the solar system was perfect, Kepler devoted his life to the search for its mathematical Pythagorean harmonies, which, at the age of 50, he at last discovered, to his great delight. Pythagoras was right—the planets were tuned to the music of the spheres. Kepler's thinking was teleological. But it was not far removed from that of modern scientific man whose guiding principle, also, is that nature is capable of being represented in a mathematically simple way. Ask him why this should be. He has no answer, unless he says with Kepler that God

willed it so, or that nature is so made that it dove-tails into the web of man's thinking. Teleology is not easily cast out.

Newton made use of Kepler's famous laws—incidental discoveries for Kepler, by which he set little store—to show that planets follow elliptical orbits. But he could not explain the harmonic relations which Kepler had discovered, nor can these be derived from causal mechanics. For this reason scientists ignore them, just as they ignore the reason for their own way of thinking. So we see that the discovery of deterministic laws in no way undermines teleology. Kepler's harmonies and their modern equivalent may be a basic part of the design of nature.

Science, as we have it, assumes that only the quantitative is significant. It looks for a substratum upon which measurement is possible—electromagnetic waves for light; an elastic medium for sound; chemical molecules for tastes and smells. Goethe took the opposite view to Newton in his theory of light, and assumed that whiteness was an external or primary quality. His position is impossible to refute. Similarly it is impossible to refute the view that mind and purpose are primaries. Today's science gives strong support to Plato's idea that spiritual prototypes ('ideas') have actual existence and can be realised practically in the material world. This view seems almost inescapable when we reflect that some branches of mathematics were developed before physics had need of them. Only later did scientists discover that the events of nature required the work of the earlier mathematics for their description. The mathematics, therefore, was present in nature from the beginning—it cannot have been the creation of man's mind. Its prototype, or ideal Platonic 'idea', was present in the universe before man came on the scene.

Biology supports the same view. The coming together by chance of the parts which make a co-ordinated animal form is too fantastically improbable for such an event to be taken seriously. Contrary to the common view, it makes no statistical odds whether the parts come together by chance in one sudden improbable event, or whether the process takes place step by step: natural selection, whether operative or not, cannot avoid the force of the argument that a non-material purposive factor has been at work. We must draw a similar conclusion also from several other branches of biology; from the sense of free-will within ourselves; from a consideration of the past history of the universe; from the complete and utter failure to find, even 'in principle', an intelligible connexion between mental processes and the physical world—and from other lines of thought. Again, plan or Platonic 'idea' (call it what we please) must have existed before its material manifestations. In this connexion the frequent comparison between the computer and the human brain misses the point: the fundamental decision as to what it is important for a computer to compute is taken by man, not by the computer itself. Computers save drudgery: they do not save ultimate decision. They do not tell us what lines of enquiry to pursue; they do not have 'hunches'.

Professor Heitler believes that science, by continuing along its present lines, can only bring destruction. It is wrong to defend science (in its present form) on the ground that it is a search for truth. Certainly the search for truth is moral; but partial truth claiming to be the whole truth may well be immoral. Determinism, which so easily becomes a habit of mind for those trained in modern

science, is soul-destroying and dehumanising. It can be reconciled neither with humanism nor religion. It explains man away, making electrons more important than the soul.

We must return, says Heitler, to the philosophy which places man in a central position. Idle speculation about life on other worlds can do no good. Even the establishment (if that is possible) of extra-terrestrial communication would involve lapses of many years (perhaps hundred or thousands of years) before replies could come back to us. For practical purposes terrestrial life is unique and must be the core of our thinking.

R. E. D. CLARK

Isaac Newton Historian. By FRANK E. MANUEL. Cambridge University Press. pp. 328. 60s. 1963.

A few days before his death in March 1727, Sir Isaac Newton was visited by Dr Zachary Pearce, Bishop of Rochester. 'I found him writing over his Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms', the Bishop reported, 'without the help of spectacles, at the greatest distance in the room from the windows, and with a parcel of books on the table, casting a shade upon the paper. Seeing this, on my entering the room, I said, "Sir, you seem to be writing in a place where you cannot well see." His answer was, "Little light serves me".' His eyes could no longer bear the sun on which he had gazed for so many years as he sought to probe its mystery. In the brief time that was left to him he was anxious to complete a historical study which clearly he regarded as of equal importance with his scientific researches.

Professor Manuel's survey originated in a project to publish a fragment of twenty-six folios from Newton's own hand, housed in King's College Library, Cambridge. Entitled 'The Original of Monarchies', it appears as Appendix B in the volume under review. But since it was so closely related to the Chronology posthumously published in 1728, Professor Manuel was led to examine this together with other manuscript and printed sources. The result is a study of outstanding interest and competency in the highest tradition of the press which offers it.

It has been fashionable in the past to dismiss Newton's historical work as at best the jottings of an amateur and at worst the obsessions of a mind temporarily unbalanced. Professor Manuel finds no convincing evidence to support the latter interpretation and resolutely defends the professionalism of Newton in the field of historical enquiry. But it is characteristic of the mathematician and physicist that he should concentrate on chronology. 'His history was sparse; specific as a businessman's ledger, it allowed for no adornments, no excess. It has the precisianism of the Puritan and his moral absolutism' (p. 10).

Professor Manuel sees Newton as a religious traditionalist, despite his well-concealed excursions into Socinianism. He will have none of Johnson's version that 'Sir Isaac Newton set out an infidel, and came to be a very firm believer'. Even a sceptic like Voltaire could not deny that Newton 'was firmly persuaded of the existence of a God; by which he understood not only an infinite, omni-

potent, and creating being, but moreover a master who has made a relation between himself and his creatures'.

Newton shared the orthodox attitude to Scripture in accepting its unimpeachable veracity. Although the days of rationalistic criticism were not yet, there were those nevertheless who were beginning to question the invariable accuracy of the Biblical record. Newton allowed himself to speculate on matters of date and authorship, yet 'his purpose was not to denigrate the worth of Biblical history but rather to demonstrate its marked superiority over any other historical records from antiquity' (p. 60). If, as Professor Manuel prefers to think, Newton does not rely as much on their inspiration as on their evident reliability, his testimony gains rather than loses in impressiveness.

Chronology was a particularly live issue at the outset of the eighteenth century. 'The authenticity of the Biblical account was at stake and thus by implication the truth of religion itself' (p. 38). Newton did not hesitate to claim that the chronology of Scripture must determine the entire historical scheme. His conviction was substantiated by the application of scientific methods of calculation, based mainly on the principles of astronomy.

In congruity with this approach to history, we are not surprised to find that Newton displayed considerable interest in Biblical prophecy, and interpreted it in a plainly literal fashion. The prophetic books were regarded as history written in advance, as it were, and would prove to be so when the events they foreshadowed actually occurred. Newton showed himself to be 'a militant Protestant' not only in his hermeneutical method, but also in his antipathy to 'the fraudulent Catholic religion', as he described it.

As a pioneer in demonstrating that science properly understood will vindicate the truth of Scripture, Newton could hardly have suspected the way in which archaeology was to supply further and abundant corroboration. He spoke disparagingly of those who were preoccupied with what he called 'stone dolls' and added: 'I can't imagine the utility of such studies'. Whilst we rejoice in the reassuring evidence from the archaeological field, we would welcome a serious return to Newton's concern for chronology and prophecy.

A. SKEVINGTON WOOD

Israel and the Nations: The History of Israel from the Exodus to the Fall of the Second Temple. By F. F. BRUCE. The Paternoster Press. 16s.

Some of our most valuable textbooks for less advanced students and the general reader have been the fruit of more popular lecture courses. Limitation of time has enforced brevity and the presentation has had to be non-technical. Professor Bruce's most recent book is the outcome of two such courses and is likely to prove a most popular work among R.I. teachers, candidates for lower theological examinations and the more intelligent non-specialist Christian public for a good many years to come. He has confined himself to essentials and has manfully resisted the temptation some have fallen into in recent years of adding the unessential in footnotes.

The first hundred pages cover the Old Testament from the Exodus to the story of Ezra and Nehemiah. The treatment is deliberately briefer than in the

second part of the book, and that is how it should be, for the story is better known and guides are easier to obtain than is the case with the Inter-Testamental period.

Such a brief treatment absolves the author from a discussion of the more difficult and complex problems of the Exodus and the Conquest. In fact it is doubtful whether he could have handled them at all without either unbearable dogmatism or a dislocation of the scale of his work.

Obviously views are expressed with which not every one will agree, but there are few points I should consider important enough to question. The equation of Sela with Petra (p. 31) is misleading. It is doubtful whether horses were used for riding in contrast to their use in chariots in the Fertile Crescent as early as the time of David (p. 32). It is a pity that at least the possibility of a second expedition of Sennacherib against Hezekiah is not mentioned. The view of Jehoiakim's warlike activity derived from N. H. Baynes (p. 87) was never probable, and now seems impossible in the light of the most recent information we have of Nebuchadrezzar's movements at the time. It is interesting to note that the coming of Nehemiah to Jerusalem is placed without hesitation before that of Ezra, though there is no dogmatic fixing of the chronology involved.

Pages 112-225 commence with a description of the strange Jewish colony at Elephantine in Upper Egypt and their irregular temple and then takes the story of the Jews down to the destruction of the second temple. There is sufficient detail here to make it unnecessary for the normal reader to turn to any other source of information; on the other hand there is virtually nothing that could be declared superfluous. It is surprising that no mention is made of the very widely held view today that in fact John Hyrcanus was the first of the Hasmoneans to take the title of king and not Aristobulus I. The one great lack in this second part is that no picture is given of religious development. It is far harder for the ordinary reader to obtain the information on the religious transformation of Jewry in this period than it is to find good books on the religion of the Old Testament. In addition, however, even under the Hasmoneans the Jews were primarily a religious community. The development from Ezra to Hillel and Shammai at the beginning of the first century A.D. is not as simple as many imagine.

Quite correctly the incidents of the New Testament are not mentioned except purely incidentally. In some ways it may be unsatisfactory that such an artificial division should be made and the Inter-Testamental period continued down to A.D. 70. In practice, however, it is not merely possible but desirable. The birth of the Church had so little political influence on the last desperate years of Judea that to include its story would be to distort the proportions of the people's history.

The value of the work is enhanced by a good index and all the genealogical and chronological tables any reader could reasonably ask. I hope, however, that in the next edition some guidance will be given in the ample Bibliography. For the reader who will profit most from Professor Bruce's story there is nothing to suggest where he can best turn to amplify it, if he so wishes. That many will wish it, I do not doubt, for it is a truly fascinating world to which we are introduced.

Science and Religion: An Interpretation of Two Communities. By HAROLD K. SCHILLING. Allen and Unwin, 1963. 25s.

Dr Schilling, of the State University, Pa., U.S.A., attacks the task of comparing religious with scientific beliefs, and the ways in which each are formed in the mind. The book is methodically arranged and its object is to bring out—which it does most convincingly—the closeness of the relationships which are found at every level. Following A. N. Whitehead, the author sees science and religion as the two strongest influences (apart from mere impulses of the various senses) which influence men, and believes that the welfare of mankind will be determined by the relationship which is conceived to exist between them.

Unfortunately, the endeavour to be thorough results in much triteness and prolixity. In the first half of the book, particularly, the discussion (at least to the reviewer) seems very dull indeed. In the later part, however, Dr Schilling warms to his task. He argues that every concept of science has an experiential, an intuited and a theoretical meaning and seeks to show that the same is true of theological concepts. In each case he discusses how such theories are verified and validated and shows that essentially the same methods are used. The differences, where they are to be found, are not basic.

Though the general line of argument is clear and convincing, the detail is often hazy and ill-defined. The author seems to be aware of this fact. We read: 'I must repudiate any impression that the intuitive and postulational aspects of presuppositions and assumptions can be distinguished or differentiated sharply, or that in the experience of individual or community they operate independently, and are necessarily separated temporally . . .' (p. 212). The rather philosophical style, of which the preceding sentence is typical, will not appeal to all readers. It may, indeed, be disliked most of all by those for whom the message of the book would be most useful. This seems a pity. One feels that the point of the book could have been made much more attractively and at a third of the length. Still, there is, I think, no other book that covers quite the same ground, and for those who can enjoy the style, or have mental discipline enough to master it, there will be rich reward.

R. E. D. CLARK

Mithras, the Secret God. By M. J. VERMASEREN. Chatto and Windus, 1963. 22s. 6d.

The discovery in 1954 of evidence of a Mithraeum at a building site near the Mansion House in London created a good deal of interest in the ancient cult of Mithras. This was not the only, or the most important, discovery in the field of studies in Mithraism. For instance, excavations in Rome in 1934-37 and again in 1953-58 have shown that on the Aventine Hill was a villa, part of which was used from the end of the second century A.D. as a Mithraic temple, and part from some point during the fourth century for Christian worship.

Utilising evidence from these and other archaeological discoveries to supplement the meagre literary sources, a Dutch scholar, M. J. Vermaseren, has

written an account of the cult which has been translated into English under the title *Mithras, the Secret God*. The story of Mithraism from its antecedents in India and Iran to its virtual demise in the late fourth century A.D. is here told with remarkable thoroughness and conviction, and yet with refreshing clarity. Necessarily, a great deal hinges on the interpretation of inscriptions, reliefs and sculpture, and difference of opinion on minor points is still possible. The main outline of Mithraism, however, is set out in the volume under review with a wealth of elaboration and illustration. The work of translation has been done with skill, and the result is a well-arranged, readable and informative study of the subject.

Of particular interest to readers of this journal is the relationship, if any, between Mithraism and Christianity. As our author reminds us, Mithras was sometimes regarded by early Christian writers as a kind of Anti-Christ, and it has been alleged that Mithraism would have conquered the world, had Christianity not done so.

Resemblances between the two religions do exist. It is well-known that a ceremonial meal figures in both, but there are other similar features. 25 December was the particular festival of Mithras when his birth was celebrated. After performing his miraculous deeds which centred round the slaying of the bull and which included smiting the rock to obtain water in a manner reminiscent of that of Moses in Exod. xvii. 5, 6, Mithras banqueted in company with Sol, the sun god, from the flesh of the bull and finally was carried into heaven in a chariot.

These similarities are more than a little superficial. Indeed, the differences between Mithraism and Christianity sometimes come into focus at the very points of similarity. The legend of Mithras was clearly as unhistorical as the story of Christ is historical. The birth of Mithras was out of the rock, the slaying of the bull and the banquet have closer links with ancient fertility rites than with the work of Christ, and the striking of the rock and the ascent into heaven bear only superficial resemblance to Biblical narratives. The uniqueness of the incarnation, life and passion of Christ remains. Again, Mithraic worshippers may have partaken of a sacred meal in commemoration of the exploits of Mithras, but similar forms may possess greatly differing content. It has been stated that Mithraic communicants believed that they were consuming the divine body and blood of Mithras, but Vermaseren has found no evidence to substantiate this view, though he cites the words of Zarathustra in a medieval text.

Mithraism is portrayed in this fascinating volume as an Eastern religion which swept through the western world largely because of the measure to which it provided an answer to the desire for personal salvation in the context of a world religion. It was adaptable, but insufficiently adaptable to fulfil the hopes of a Julian. Above all, though it provided *an* answer, it did not provide *the* answer.

HAROLD H. ROWDON