

JESUS, by Eduard Schweizer. *SCM*, 1971. 200 pp. £3.

In substance, this book was written when the author was in Japan with plenty of leisure and little literature. As such it is primarily the product of the reflection of this distinguished Swiss scholar, rather than a minute documentation of new advances. The publisher's blurb expresses the hope that it will perform for the next decade the service which Bornkamm's *Jesus of Nazareth* performed for the last, a hope which may well be fulfilled.

The chapter on the sources sets the tone of the work; it is clear and forceful, a combination of detailed scholarship well mastered, and breadth of approach, recognizing the part which sympathy must play in any account of an event: for a good report on a play it is not enough to tell merely the details of staging, nor simply to enthuse about it; there must be some element of involvement, but not too much. This is true of the gospels, which present the Jesus of history, but only through the vision of the Christ of faith who is their master. It is the second chapter which, from its title onwards, is truly arresting: Jesus, the man who fits no formula. Jesus will accept no current title because none fits him; instead he takes and moulds the title Son of Man. No other concept will cover the fullness of what he is—they are half-truths which help to illustrate but do not exhaust his richness, his unique authority, his unparalleled relationship to the Father. Schweizer holds that there is no single genuine saying which shows that Jesus accepted the titles of Messiah, Son of God or Servant (all his views are stated with authority and forcefulness, unmarred by acidity, which are attractive whether one agrees or not); these are all ways in which the community struggled to express the personality which they had experienced. The presentation of how the kingdom features in Jesus' ministry contains many insights, how he, in fact, accomplishes the prophecies (the early Christians notice

this in their reflection on the phenomenon of Jesus and write it into their accounts), how he can accept the world by bringing the kingdom to it. Again the author strikes to the core of the Christian message in his assessment of Jesus' attitude to the Law; his ambivalent attitude towards it corresponds to his radical, uncompromising, all-or-nothing approach. Schweizer succeeds in conveying more of the attractive yet *insaisissable* quality of Jesus than any author I can remember.

After this most important chapter, Schweizer goes on to develop how the vision of Jesus developed among his followers, their attempts to express this in the context first of Jewish thought and then of Hellenistic. Among important features of the book are the analysis of the differences between Jewish and New Testament apocalyptic (p. 59), and between previous uses and the Christian use of the title Son of Man (p. 67—none of the earlier or contemporary literature had spoken of the Son of Man as coming to earth, only to heaven; this is a characteristic of Christian apocalyptic). His plea (p. 85) that dogmatic formulations can be properly understood only in their original thought-context is amply illustrated by the richness he brings to them. Only slightly disappointing is the treatment of the transition to the view of Christ as cosmic Lord, an important step which it is difficult indeed to track.

It is a recommendation that the book ends, and does not begin, with the gospels, the theology of their writers, and with the non-Pauline writings, for these stand at the end, not at the beginning of a process. The treatment of these is satisfactory and has a number of good points pithily stated; but they are none of them as striking as the pages on the Man who fits no Formula.

HENRY WANSBROUGH

GOD AND MAN, by Anthony Bloom. *DLT*, 1971. 125 pp. £1.50.

There is more fun for the textual and literary than for the theological critic in this new collection. My conjecture is that first of all the archbishop was constrained to talk about things he didn't really want to talk about; then the talks were badly recorded and unintelligently

transcribed in manuscript (there are entire passages without a vestige of sense, as well as errors that upturn whole sentences—e.g. 'different' for 'indifferent' on p. 44); then typed by someone who could not read the manuscript (e.g. 'clear' for 'dear' on p. 57),

and finally submitted to a printer who added a few contributions of his own (e.g. 'lasts' for 'last' on p. 84).

The first chapter is the transcript of a television discussion between Anthony Bloom and Marghanita Laski, in which, essentially, they are talking about totally different things throughout. As so often, polite and slightly forlorn (even jealous?) pious atheism meets the wild and devastating world of the gospel and does not even notice. And the archbishop, in turn, has (as he admits) insufficient philosophy to be able to respond with any particular cogency or relevance.

This lack of philosophy, in fact, spoils a good deal of the book. Three of the remaining four chapters are talks originally delivered at Birmingham University, on 'Doubt', 'Man and God' and 'John the Baptist'. The last of these is very good indeed, and the authentic voice we expect to hear from Anthony Bloom comes over. 'The will of God is madness . . . you cannot adhere to the will of God for good reasons.' The austere, exotic figure of the Baptist, who is nothing but a 'voice crying in the wilderness', who must decrease so that Christ may increase, emerges with a strange power and urgency.

But in the other chapters there is little that rings true, except for odd flashes, where the archbishop, as it were, plays truant and talks from the heart and right off the subject. There is some powerful teaching on intercession as a stepping into the breach, into the total serenity of God which is *in* and not apart from the

storms of the world. Involvement in one without the other is not prayer, whether it be involvement in God without the storms, or the storms without the serenity of God. There is an incisive remark about a faith that pretends to be in heaven without its ever having been on earth.

Then there is a long chapter on 'Holiness and Prayer', reproducing a talk given at Louvain, which repeats a lot that is already familiar (on the prayer of stability, for instance), or that occurs elsewhere in this present book, with only one or two new thoughts—though these are important. 'One of the reasons why holiness is unsteady and why the holiness of the Fathers and heroes of the Spirit in the early days often seems so remote is that we have lost the sense of combat.' You have only to look at the new breviary to see how true that is. And I think Anthony Bloom has put his finger on one of the crucial issues of our time. We don't believe, really, in the power of evil, and we have lost our grip on the weapons of good that are given to us. We have forgotten (extraordinarily) that there is a war on, or at least, we have forgotten what kind of a war it is and who the enemy is (Ephesians 6, 12). And in this way we have lost the incentive to faith and holiness.

All told, I don't think there is enough in this book to sustain its 125 pages. Admirers of Anthony Bloom, amongst whom I am happy to count myself, will find it, on the whole, disappointing.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.

TRUTH, by Alan R. White. *The Macmillan Press Ltd*, London, 1971. 150 pp. £1.95.

It seems that truth is mysterious, or quite unproblematic. Academic discussion has tended to focus on the field between these extremes, and it is to this field that Professor White introduces us. His book will occupy a felt gap on academic shelves; it is workmanlike, well-organized, and has an excellent bibliography (which would, however, have profited from revision since the first publication of the book in the United States in 1970). The book is divided into two parts: the first discusses 'characteristics of the notion of truth', contributing to discussions of truth-value gaps and of necessary truth, *inter alia*. The second part discusses six theories of truth. This part is the more satisfactory, and the more useful, although the account of Tarski (whose theory is said to add 'a discordant note to our search') is

poor: semantic paradoxes are not, any more than set-theoretic paradoxes, due to 'abuse of language'. However, wider horizons, such as the significance of Tarski's theory, seem to escape Professor White. Even the problem of his book nowhere receives clear formulation, surely a serious deficiency in an introductory work. It is, therefore, not surprising to read that what we are really looking for is the 'meaning' of truth. But what does the author mean by 'meaning'? It is quite on the cards that truth does not have the kind of meaning for which he seems to be looking. This possibility is nowhere seriously discussed, and the author seems too busy deploying his lists of arguments to spare the time to help us understand. Moreover, I must protest against his use of trivial and ill-considered grammatical