

## Reviews

THE CRUCIFIED GOD, by Jürgen Moltmann, tr. by R. A. Wilson and John Bowden. SCM Press, London, 1974. 346 pp. £4.25.

MAN, by Jürgen Moltmann, tr. by John Sturdy. SPCK, London, 1974. xi + 124 pp. £1.50 paper.

Jürgen Moltmann first hit the English theological scene eight years ago with the appearance of his *Theology of Hope* which had been published in Germany in 1965. This proved to be the most striking theological book of the Sixties and heralded a plethora of books on Christian eschatology and its implications for political theory and strategy. Since then no major work of Moltmann's has appeared though various articles and collections of articles have flooded the market. Now at last another major book, *The Crucified God*, has been published, though it is true to say that Moltmann has been preparing for its publication for some time with a series of articles in various journals. Having begun at the end, so to say, with eschatology, Moltmann has now moved back in time to recover the meaning of the death of the risen Christ. From a cultural point of view this is an extraordinary and courageous thing to do, because he does it at a time when others are still absorbing the implications of his discussion of hope and eschatology. It was only a few months ago that I reviewed a book for this journal in which the author remarked that after centuries in which the passion and death of Christ had dominated the theological and devotional arena, now at last Christians were rediscovering the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. But Moltmann is restless enough to have moved on (or moved back) to the problem of the meaning of the death of the man whom God raised from the dead.

Moltmann maintains that the crucifixion has never been popular because such a death is too disturbing to allow one to remain comfortable. It forces us to come to terms with ourselves. The crucified God, made a present reality through faith, 'alienates alienated men, who have come to terms with alienation'. The crucified God fragments Marcuse's one dimensional man. And yet there

has been a constant tendency for the death of Christ to be softened as the Church tried to preserve the political *status quo* of societies in which it had a vested interest: 'The assimilation of Christianity to bourgeois society always means that the cross is forgotten and hope is lost'. It may seem odd that Moltmann should relate the cross with hope. But he is clear that it is the risen Jesus who was killed and the death of Jesus only acquires meaning because God has raised him up. As one would expect, Moltmann has a running dispute with Pannenberg in this book, but what is striking is that in general Moltmann adopts the position taken by Pannenberg in his work on Christology —so far as the resurrection is concerned at least. That is to say, Moltmann rejects all existential reductions of the resurrection and insists (though not with the vigour of Pannenberg) on an historical and bodily resurrection. In fact Pannenberg has even provided the vocabulary that Moltmann uses when talking about the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of all Christians. What differences there are, then, are part of a closely argued debate between the two and do not mark sharp divisions of approach. Moltmann does, however, insist that while Pannenberg looks at the resurrection of Jesus from an historical point of view and moves towards the future and the general resurrection, he views the matter eschatologically from the future towards the past. Apart from this difference of methodology, there are some differences of substance. Moltmann in no sense sees the resurrection of Jesus as a proof or a demonstration of the existence of God; he maintains his use of 'promise' ('The resurrection of Jesus from the dead by God does not speak the "language of facts", but only the language of faith and hope, that is, the "language of promise"'); and he

adopts Hick's platitudinous theory of the eschatological verification of God's existence.

Because the dead Jesus has been raised up, Moltmann thinks that we can indeed ask about the meaning of his death. He says that what differentiates Jesus's death from that of anyone else is that he was abandoned by God. Jesus was rejected by the Jews as a blasphemer, he was rejected by the Romans as a rebel, and he was rejected by God his Father. It is possible that the Jews and Romans had misunderstood him when they rejected him, but one cannot say that of God. When Jesus is raised up, it is the one who has been abandoned who is raised. The death of Jesus puts the righteousness of God into question, and in the resurrection of Jesus it is the righteousness of God which is vindicated. The God who has raised Jesus is a God of righteousness, and it is this issue which is at the centre of apocalyptic literature. From which point, then, should Christology begin? 'The origin of Christology', writes Moltmann, 'the purpose of which is to say who Jesus is in reality, consequently lies not in Jesus's understanding of himself or in his messianic consciousness, nor in the evaluation of him by his disciples, nor solely in his call to decision, which might imply a Christology. It lies in what took place between Jesus and his God, between that "Father" and Jesus, in what was given expression in his preaching and his actions and was literally "put to death" in his abandonment as he died'.

If Jesus is to be identified with God and if the death of Jesus was a death in God, Moltmann wonders how this will affect our concept of God. He insists on the Galilean origin of Christianity, rather than a Roman or Greek origin. Consequently he rejects an omnipotent, impassible God, a God who is distant, in favour of a God who is abandoned and suffers at the moment of his death and who triumphs over death. 'It is indispensable for the liberated believer to dispense with the inhuman God, a God without Jesus,

for the sake of the cross'. To this extent Moltmann is sympathetic to the atheism of Feuerbach and Marx, Rilke and Heidegger. But ultimately he rejects their atheism because they attribute the traditional characteristics of the Greek concept of God to man. Man becomes the one who must free himself from God so that he can become his own creator, and Moltmann sees this anthropotheism as the source of the grotesque inhumanities of the twentieth century. Moltmann thinks that the only serious atheism is the 'metaphysical rebellion' of Camus and Horkheimer.

*The Crucified God* ends with a brief chapter on the implications of the cross for the Church and society, 'Ways towards the Political Liberation of Man'. Unfortunately Moltmann does not suggest much that is new here, but he does say that the Church must not settle for a left-wing or a right-wing option in politics, but must strive for the Christianisation of its political situation in terms of the freedom of Christ.

*Man* is a brief discussion of theological anthropology. It begins with a discussion of cows and is altogether a much less compelling book than *The Crucified God*. *Man* reads like a commissioned work: a book which had to be produced rather than one which needed to be written (though it is by no means as boring as the seemingly interminable introduction to *The Crucified God*). The quotations and references in *Man* are encyclopaedic, for Moltmann always has a tendency to enter into discussion with anyone who is relevant no matter how remotely, but *Man* is no more than an extended anthropological footnote to the matters which really concern Moltmann. And anyone who has managed to read this far should by now be clear that, no matter what difficulties and disagreements may be felt, *The Crucified God* should be on the shelf of anyone who thinks that the theological enterprise is worthwhile.

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ST THOMAS AQUINAS: *Summa Theologiae*. Vol. XXIV: The Gifts of the Spirit (la Ilae lxviii-lxx) by Edward D. O'Connor, C.S.C. *Blackfriars*; London, *Eyre and Spottiswoode*; New York, *McGraw-Hill*, 1974. xx + 166 pp. £3.75.

This volume of the new *Summa* is one of the shortest in the series. It is also one of the most important, for its concern is nothing less than man's

elevation by grace into the life of God. In Fr O'Connor's words, it 'presents the ultimate and most exquisite refinement of its theory of the divinisation