

said a little more about some things even if it meant curtailing his treatment of others. Thus I should have welcomed a more extensive (and perhaps more sympathetic) discussion of religious experience within the context of religious epistemology as a whole. However, the merits of the book remain. In his Introduction Davies says that he has tried 'to write about things in a way that should enable the reader to take up some sides for himself' and 'to write on the assumption that the reader has little or no philosophical background'. I believe

**GOD INCARNATE: STORY AND BELIEF**, edited by A E Harvey, *SPCK*, London, 1981. pp 104 £3.95.

This book is a collection of papers given at a seminar of Oxford scholars which met in response to the publication in 1977 of *The Myth of God Incarnate*, and which questioned the centrality or even the appropriateness of belief in the divinity of Christ. Anthony Harvey, the editor of the present book, explains that though most of the contributors recognised the force of the arguments of *The Myth of God Incarnate*, yet they were unable to accept its conclusions. It might indeed no longer be possible to express a belief in the divinity of Christ in "logically coherent propositions" (p 1), but there are other ways of articulating one's faith, above all that of the story.

This, and the very title of the book, might lead one to expect a number of papers devoted to the exploration of the relationship between narrative theology and claims for Christ's divinity, but the relationship between the two is only rarely pursued in this book. The papers are almost without exception, stimulating and provocative and yet the authors most convinced of the sufficiency of narrative theology seem least concerned about the question of Christ's divinity, and vice versa. Harvey's opening essay is devoted to a useful consideration of in what senses the "christian story" may be said to be true, yet none of these seem to help one to understand in what sense the claim that Jesus is God might be true. He gets a little closer to this question when, in another paper,

that he has fulfilled both of these aims. With the minimum of technicality (though without philosophical over-simplification) he fairly offers arguments for and against the various views he presents. Thus he encourages students to pursue their own reflections in the light of further reading. Taken as a whole this book is a valuable addition to the other introductions to the subject (chiefly, in my view, those by H D Lewis and John Hick) to which Davies refers.

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he shows the gospels offer good evidence that Jesus was believed to speak with the authority of God himself. James Barr has some interesting things to say about the relationship between story and myth, but believes that Messiahship rather than Incarnation is central to a proper understanding of Christ. John McQuarrie, in perhaps the most illuminating paper of the book, shows how the gospels, as works of art, disclose the truth about Jesus in a way that a simple historical report could not, but he then goes on to claim that this does not release the theologian from the task of making ontological claims about the nature of man and of Jesus that, presumably, go beyond the scope of narrational theology. Geza Vermes, the Jewish scholar, does not believe that the evidence of the gospels warrants any claim for the divinity of Christ. Peter Hinchliff explores the relationship between belief and experience but also recognises the need for belief to issue in some ontological claim about Jesus.

The nearest we get to tackling the relationship between story and belief in Christ's divinity is in the superb paper by Rachel Trickett on imagination and belief and in the brief but suggestive Christmas sermon by Peter Baelz. And so one could not claim that this book convincingly established an alternative locus for the expression of belief in Christ's divinity. Nevertheless it was worth producing and does suggest theological perspectives which may one day be fruitful.

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