

between atomism, with its emphasis on the discrete structure of things, and holism, which is concerned with the totality of complex systems. Thus the overall pattern is more important than the individual constituents that mark it out, whether these be electrons, atoms, or molecules—'it is almost as though the pattern determined the properties of its constituents, rather than the other way round'. From a more dynamic viewpoint, form in nature must always control process. Mr Whyte makes the illuminating suggestion that such process reflects a search of pattern for completeness—'incomplete patterns possess their own inherent *élan*'—and hence that it may be important to investigate the mathematics of incomplete patterns other than the usual linear ones. His thought covers the whole range of being from the inanimate to man, and as might be expected, form grows in importance as we approach living organisms, whose activity is said to consist in 'the spreading of a structural pattern as it pulsates'—a particularly suggestive remark, if we remember how often long-term linear processes are superimposed on short-term cyclic ones.

Mr Whyte's theme is clearly an important one, though it is perhaps not so unusual as he supposes; is he not once again asking for the union of Dionysus and Apollo? A scientist badly needs such over-all formative ideas, but they have to be presented to him in an exact scientific way if he is to be persuaded of this need. This unfortunately Mr Whyte completely fails to do. His work is merely a long fantasia of his chosen theme; the thought is not only disconnected (there is a distressing lack of form), it is often far too vague. The claim to predict the shape of science fifty years hence is never met; all that is done (all that could be done) is to analyse present trends and suggest emphases, and the further claim weakens the real insight often shown in this. And there are worse faults. To take a single example, Mr Whyte wishes to talk about the moon's surface as still presenting a state of affairs reasonably close to the beginning of our universe, and has to preface it with the remark that this is 'so extraordinary a fact as to merit a moment of surrender to its poetry and mystery'. Two pages of rhapsody follow. And these 'moments of surrender' are distressingly frequent. It is a great pity that so interesting a book should have been made very nearly unreadable in this way.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

L'ATTENTE DU MESSIE. Recherches Bibliques de l'Université de Louvain. (Desclée de Brouwer).

JESUS AND THE FUTURE. By G. R. Beasley. (Macmillan; 15s.)

These two scholarly and well documented books, the one from a Catholic, the other from a Nonconformist source, attempt to deal

anew with that question ('What think ye of Christ?') which the human mind can never leave alone. Now, as in the past, it is by the answer to this question that every one of us stands or falls. (According to the first of these books this question is much more to the fore than it has been: 'La personne de Jésus reste le point central des préoccupations contemporaines'.) But I cannot say that it is true of this country as the writer of those words thinks to be true of his own, that 'au sein du protestantisme un retour à la foi en la divinité de Jésus constitue une des plus marquantes variations d'aujourd'hui'. Would that it were true!

*L'Attente du Messie* is a study of the problem of Messianism, made up of a series of papers by various authors Belgian, and Dutch scholars, among them names of such repute in continental Catholic circles as Canon Cerfaux and J. Coppens. They deal with such well-worn themes as the origins of Messianic expectation, the Emmanuel prophecy, the Suffering Servant of Jahweh, Christology in St Paul, etc. But they do not merely serve up a re-hash of old ideas. There is a formidable array of references to the modern studies of the subject, traditional and liberal. As we naturally expect from the University of Louvain, due regard is paid to the high merits of Père Lagrange, whose learned studies of this subject (*Messianisme chez les Juifs* and *Etudes sur les religions sémitiques*) have exercised such a profound influence on Catholic scholars. Outside traditional Catholic views there are in this matter the usual confusion and diversity of view. It is hardly necessary to observe that there are those who hold that the very idea of Messianism has been borrowed from the religion of nature and from pagan sources. But this need not stop us from endorsing the opinion of this book that, thanks to recent archaeological discovery and research, we are now in a position to evaluate more precisely the content of such biblical titles as 'King', 'Servant of Jahweh', 'Son of Man', etc. The milieu in which these names were originated and developed is now seen in a much clearer light; and anything that throws light on the question of Messianism is welcome. For, as one of the contributors to this book so justly observes, 'point capital du message juif et chrétien, le messianisme est un thème difficile'.

The mention of difficulty brings us to the subject of the other work, *Jesus and the Future*, in which Dr Beasley presents us with a very scholarly and laborious examination of the volumes of destructive criticism that have been written concerning the great eschatological discourse of our Lord (Mark 13 and parallels in Matthew and Luke) ever since the publication of David Strauss's *Life of Christ* in 1835-6. Every biblical scholar will be prepared to agree with the man who called it 'the biggest problem in the Gospel'. Opponents of Christianity,

like Strauss and Renan, have made great capital of it. Non-Catholic biblical scholars have given up belief in traditional Christianity because of it, unable to accept the divinity of one who, as it seemed to them, foretold things which have never come to pass. But, as this book indicates, there is a much more fundamental problem to be faced here before one begins to worry about the extremely thorny question of the right interpretation of prophetic sayings. In this discourse Jesus called himself, and therefore either knew himself to be or wished others to believe him to be, the one who was to judge the world in the future. If he spoke the truth, then he is evidently not mere man but God made man. In the other alternative, there is no need to be concerned whether his predictions were or were not fulfilled. For a man who wrongly claims divinity is either insane or wicked. But no honest and unprejudiced critic has ever found in Jesus Christ the least vestige of support for either of these accusations. The Gospel evidence alone is sufficient to show that even if he were no more than man, he was the sanest of men; and as Chesterton says, the saner a man is the more he knows that he is not God. And to the modern critics, as to the ancient critics of our Lord, there still comes the same challenge: 'Which of you shall convince me of sin? I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me?' Dr Beasley, after reviewing and passing critical judgment on everything of repute written on the subject, mainly by non-Catholic scholars, during the past century, offers his solution which, if not wholly acceptable to Catholics, is at least along traditional lines.

REGINALD GINNS, O.P.

NEITHER WILL I CONDEMN THEE. By Franziskus M. Stratmann, O.P.  
Translated by Hilda M. Graef. (Blackfriars Publications; 8s. 6d.)

This account of the aims and methods of the Order of Bethany by a German Dominican who was courageously sheltered by the Sisters during the Nazi persecution, will be welcomed by the many admirers of their work for unfortunate women. The magnificent ideal which inspired their founder is perhaps not sufficiently known. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Père Lataste of the Order of Preachers encountered women in the course of his prison missions who had experienced a 'profound inner change' yet could not hope to find an honourable place in society, or apparently in any existing religious order. His solution was to found a congregation where penitents would live in such close communion with 'blameless nuns' that 'outsiders could not distinguish which of the Sisters had been guilty and which had not'. It was an audacious challenge to the Catholic opinion of the day, for both prisoners and prostitutes were more marked out