

the ground of the existence of personal agents: consideration of incompositeness shows that there can be only one God, who transcends the world but is immediate to the action and existence of each creature, and that God is fittingly called holy, great and good.

The main stages of the argument, though elegant, convincing, and excellently signposted, are swift. I found myself anxious for more detail at a number of stages: but it is the sign of a good book that it leaves one hungry for more. Braine's understanding of his key notions is so appealing that one sometimes wants—wrongly—to see him giving more attention to refuting possible objections. This is an illegitimate demand to make on this book, but not an illegitimate plan for the future of metaphysics: and this book seems to set an excellent programme for metaphysical work. One is inspired to hope that others will take up the development and defence of Braine's concepts.

The breadth and depth of Braine's work is such that there is room for a full book in defence of his views on the concepts he uses at each stage, as his argument involves an understanding of central concepts that implies the rejection of views that seem to be an intrinsic part of the contemporary practice of philosophy in English-speaking countries. There could be full books in defence of his account of realism, of the relations between first- and second-order questions, of causality, of agency, of substance, of existence, of contingency, etc. etc. Braine wisely does not try to justify his views fully here: he merely gives what he takes to be the conclusive argument against rival conceptions, and pushes on. This will disappoint some readers, but will surely provide an inspiration for many more. These topics need work in their own right: but how important they are is shown by Braine's use of them. Braine's accounts of these concepts is unfamiliar and will, I fear, be unwelcome to many: indeed, I fear they may be yet more unwelcome precisely because of Braine's use of them.

A review such as this cannot do justice to such a work. May it at least communicate to some the enthusiasm which Braine's book has inspired. It is an essential work for anyone interested in either metaphysics or in natural theology, and contains valuable material for those involved in logic and the philosophy of science.

CHRISTOPHER MARTIN

THE PROPHETIC GOSPEL by A.T.Hanson, *T. and T. Clark*, 1991. pp.393.

In this study of the Fourth Gospel, Professor Hanson develops the theses explored in his earlier book, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, 1980, and draws out implications. He argues that the Fourth Gospel is dominated and conditioned by scripture. In twelve chapters, he examines the scriptural background to sections in each of the chapters of the Johannine text, except chapter 21, which he regards as an editorial appendix. Discussions of the gospel's scriptural quotations and obvious

allusions are included, but Professor Hanson also discerns the influence of scriptural passages on parts of the gospel in which no overt reference to scripture is made. Not all readers will be as convinced as Professor Hanson is that the scriptural passages he cites inspired the form and content of the Johannine narrative (e.g. that Genesis 18–19 inspired John 3.39–59 pp. 125–131), nor will all readers be persuaded by Professor Hanson's interpretation of Johannine passages.

In chapter 14, Professor Hanson reflects on the Johannine use of scripture which he has discerned. He suggests that the author used scripture to show that it had been fulfilled in the career of Jesus Christ and in the experience of the early church, and that this motif took precedence over all others in his presentation. Hence the author introduced episodes and teachings on the sole basis of scripture. The only control over the author's inventive genius was his belief that scripture warranted such invention. Moreover, Professor Hanson argues that the author, like some of his Jewish contemporaries, interpreted scriptural theophanies as evidence of the activity of the Logos of God in the world, and that he was therefore able to present the activity of the Logos in Jesus' life as the culmination of this salvation history. Professor Hanson suggests that John did this occasionally through typological or allegorical interpretations of scripture, but most often by an interpretation which he calls 'inspirational' rather than midrashic. He explains: 'John as he read his Bible was struck by the appropriateness of certain passages to his own understanding of Jesus, and therefore saw in them divinely inspired information about events in Jesus' career for which there was no other evidence, as for example the guards in the garden falling to the ground or Nicodemus bringing enough myrrh and aloes for a king's burial. He was therefore emboldened to include in his Gospel teaching and incidents drawn wholly from scripture. He did not make any explicit allusion to scripture as he wrote because the connexion existed purely in his mind and he was not writing in this context to make any polemical point. . . . He was writing perhaps in this context mainly for himself or for the initiated few' (pp. 246–7). This leads Professor Hanson to the following conclusion: 'The author of the Fourth Gospel must have been regarded by his own circle as a prophet in the sense that he excelled at understanding to what extent the prophecies of scripture have been fulfilled in Jesus' (p. 253). Hence, he calls the Fourth Gospel 'the Prophetic Gospel'.

In chapter 15, Professor Hanson examines the christological implications of his interpretations. He cites passages from the gospel which suggest that Jesus exercised a superhuman omniscience, that Jesus recalled 'his pre-existent life, and that Jesus behaved like the risen Lord. He recognises that 'the incarnate glory of the Word' was manifested in humility, suffering, and obedience, that it was 'veiled', 'though pretty thinly veiled', but asserts that the signs indicate that 'the incarnate glory is still very divine' (p. 266). He admits that 'in the passion narrative Jesus is presented as a human personality rather than a divine

figure; but the divinity flashes out occasionally' (p. 259). Hence he concludes: 'The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel cannot possibly be an historical representation: he is a divine figure, the eternal Word appearing as a man but retaining all the attributes of God except invisibility and omnipresence. . . . John's Jesus looks very like an angel working on earth, notably of course in 18.6 . . . All this points more in a Monophysite than a Dyophysite direction, though both terms are anachronisms' (pp. 269–70). Professor Hanson, more appropriately and less anachronistically, could have called his interpretation Docetic.

Yet in chapter 16, he tries to insist that the gospel also presents Jesus as man who was born, died and was buried. He asserts that 'John began from an historical figure, and does not mean to abandon it, however far he modifies it' (p. 276). The 'modification', however, includes Jesus' recollection of 'being present at events which took place centuries before he was born' (p. 279). So 'John has compromised Jesus' full humanity' (p. 282). At the end of the chapter, Professor Hanson suggests that the Johannine portrait of Jesus is analogous to an icon: 'An icon does not attempt literal representation of the subject of the portrait. The aim is rather to convey the true spiritual significance of the subject. In order to attain this end some deliberate distortion of nature is adopted. That is what John is doing with his portrait of Jesus. But in that case it is not just the historical Jesus whom his icon represents: it is much more like the Jesus of faith, the risen Lord, known down the ages by the experience of the faithful' (p. 291). The Fourth Gospel's icon, however, represents, according to Professor Hanson, a Monophysite Christ (p. 292).

Chapter 17 draws out the implications of Professor Hanson's view that 'there is not much history' in the Fourth Gospel. He concludes that 'John is aware of an earlier historical tradition about Jesus which differs in certain important respects from his. He feels constrained by it at certain points even when it seems to conflict with his own. He has his own historical tradition, which appears to be inferior to that of the Synoptists, though not without some value. But he allows himself a very wide licence indeed in altering, enriching, transposing, and adding to his own tradition from his own resources, which were largely drawn from scripture as he understood it' (p. 318). Chapter 18 sums up Professor Hanson's argument in terms of the purpose of the Fourth Gospel: 'John believed himself justified in going beyond the early tradition of Jesus because the scripture entitled him to do so. He was not only waging a polemic against contemporary Jewish criticism of what Christians claimed for Jesus. He was also deploying the full resources of scripture in order to set out at length the full significance of Jesus for the church. . . . (The Gospel) was intended to be a full account of the christology which the church must accept if, in John's view, it was to be faithful to scripture' (p. 342). Moreover, 'the Paraclete played a part in reassuring John and his community that his "radical" christology was justified' (p. 346).

The final chapter addresses the question of how the church should

understand and use the Fourth Gospel today. After a brief consideration of Origen's and Augustine's interpretations, Professor Hanson expounds a series of rules for the contemporary church's handling of the Fourth Gospel. First, the church should 'not treat it as a reliable historical record' (p. 364). Second, the church must recognise that the Johannine Christ is Monophysite, by which Professor Hanson means that 'he is a mixture of human and divine in which the divine element predominates' (p. 365). But Professor Hanson thinks that the church can accept the Johannine portrait as long as it sees it as a portrait of the risen Christ rather than of the historical Jesus (p. 367). In spite of highlighting the gospel's Monophysite Christology, and on pp. 370–71 regretting that 'John, it is true, has largely omitted one vital element in the doctrine of Jesus as the image of God, the element of kenosis, of humiliation, of suffering', which interprets the gospel as a denial of the Chalcedonian Definition, Professor Hanson suggests on p. 268 that 'the Chalcedonian formula, which was designed to fit the Johannine Jesus, is no longer our necessary starting point for our doctrine of the incarnation'.

Clearly, the study raises important questions about the nature of the Fourth Gospel and how it is to be understood. Professor Hanson's interpretations develop a long tradition according to which *doxa* means Divine glory and 'Son of God' refers to Jesus' divinity. The study assumes and builds upon these interpretations of the expressions without arguing for them, and these interpretations lead inevitably to the recognition that Johannine christology is Monophysite or Docetist.

MEG DAVIES

ROBERT RUNCIE by Adrian Hastings. *Mowbray* 1991. Pp. xv + 221. £15.95.

In the 1950s a summer school student at Westcott House, Cambridge, was cheered up by the vice-principal, Bob Runcie: 'He thought all priests should have a secular side to them, and that a false or intense piety was an obstacle to real religion. . . He had intelligence, wit and style.' This summing up came from Gary Bennett who had, as Hastings shrewdly notes, 'a sharp clear, irritable mind.'

Thirty years later Bennett's irritation spilled over into *Crockford's* Preface. Hastings leaves us in no doubt that he finds Bennett's judgement sounder in 1957 than in 1987. The idea of Runcie conspiring to appoint liberal bishops did not hurt because it was so demonstrably false.

What really stung was the attack on Runcie's moral character—'nailing his colours to the fence'—and the suggestion that he was no more than an intelligent pragmatic wobbler who invariably followed the line of least resistance. By some divine irony Bennett's last Holy Communion was at the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury. For Runcie, Bennett's public challenge was insignificant, though the private