

the theological framework that informs these five versions is clearly evident, it can also be said that each of the five may legitimately claim to have a basis in Jesus himself. The reason that there are five versions is that the NT authors see Jesus' activity as Divine Man as representing his mission to be related in varying degrees to his essence as the Christ.

James M. Robinson reviews the history of the exegesis of the parables of the kingdom since Juelicher from a methodological point of view. He shows how the New Hermeneutic approaches the parables allowing the parabolic form to function meaningfully, rather than following the previous exegetical methodologies that considered form as irrelevant to content. A parable is not a coded presentation of an abstract truth, nor an abstract understanding of existence. The New Hermeneutic gives a material role to language since it itself actualizes God's reign. On this basis the parables are conceived as "a language event potentially admitting the hearer of God's grace." The locus of God's reign is the language of Jesus, which presents the possibilities from which reality is actualized. In the parables reality comes into language. In this way form and content are interwoven.

The two essays in this collection which merit special attention are the first and the last, the former for the originality of its conception, and the latter for Robinson at his expository best, even if this reviewer could not decide what it means to say that a parable names its true being.

Saint Mary's College
Notre Dame, Indiana

HEROLD WEISS

Young, Norman J. *History and Existential Theology: The Role of History in the Thought of Rudolf Bultmann*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969. 174 pp. \$ 5.95.

While admitting that the post-Bultmannian era has already begun, Norman Young, Professor of Systematic Theology, Queens College, University of Melbourne, seeks valiantly through this book to bring Bultmann back into the mainstream of theological thought. Most readers will conclude that his efforts have been in vain, since new issues have arisen and the locus of attention has shifted to focus on man in all his social dimensions. The book is somewhat quixotic and belated in making its appearance. It is about ten years too late. The dates of the material cited in the footnotes attest to this.

Nevertheless, for a student of the new generation who needs to make acquaintance with the history of theology, this book will serve as an excellent introduction to Bultmann's theology. The author writes with clarity and exposes the significant strands of Bultmann's thought. He treats his subject in three parts: I, Bultmann's View of History; II, History and Theological Method; III, History and Doctrine.

Under I, he deals with Bultmann's distinction between nature and history and *historisch* and *geschichtlich*. Then he deals with Bultmann's concept of *Geschichtlichkeit* and eschatological existence. Under II, he discusses Bultmann's method in dealing with hermeneutics and demythologization, relating these to the understanding of history explained in I. In III, he explains Bultmann's concept of revelation, of the eschatological event of Christ, and of man's existence.

Throughout the discussion Young, while critical, seeks to work within Bultmann's system. He seems to think that his work is a corrective rather than a repudiation of Bultmann. Therefore, he defends Bultmann against what he considers unjust criticism, but, on the other hand, criticizes him for not allowing his method to go far enough. He agrees with Bultmann's hermeneutical method *in principle* but not with what *in fact* occurs in the application of this method. He illustrates this with Bultmann's use of John and Paul as norm and the neglect of other parts of the NT, or with his acceptance of certain ideas of John and Paul to the rejection of other ideas in these same writers. He admits that there is no distorted exegesis but the result is only partial exegesis. He would, therefore, seek a more adequate approach which would encompass the entire NT. He finds this approach basically in Bultmann's principles. "If the most basic of his hermeneutical principles is applied, viz., that the interpreter should bring to the text the question that concerned the author, this would mean admitting that the question of human existence appropriate in most cases is not appropriate in others, and that the history which interests some of the writers is not the historicity of man but, for instance, the history of the nation. It would also open the way to finding another series of questions that would elucidate these passages. Such an approach is not, I think, fundamentally out of harmony with Bultmann's project; it recognizes the diversity of New Testament witness and allows the Word to address man through this diversity" (p. 153).

Young's second major criticism is directed toward Bultmann's view of revelation. While defending Bultmann against Ogden's charge of inconsistency in maintaining the unique act of God in Christ, he is not satisfied with the separation of the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith, the lack of content in the revelation of God, and the tendency to locate God's act in preaching and not to acknowledge that the event began with Jesus himself. Nevertheless, he feels that it is still possible to remain within the Bultmannian system without the weakness cited above. To show that this is possible he refers to the work of the new questers who, with the same view of history as Bultmann, seek to bridge the gap between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history and in doing this provide some content, however minimal, to the revelation of God. His own "constructive alternative" follows the lead of Gogarten who insists "that the act of God originates not in the kerygma about Jesus, nor in the 'nature' of Jesus as a past-historical personality, but in the proclamation of Jesus himself"

(p. 126). In this way, the historical Jesus becomes of primary significance, for it is in him that God proclaims his word. Thus while "Jesus becomes the eschatological event in the church's proclamation," "this is true only because first he became the eschatological event by his own obedient hearing, proclaiming, and living of the word given to him by God" (p. 126).

These criticisms of Bultmann are not new, but the author's claim of providing these alternatives within Bultmann's system is. It is possible for him to do so with his first alternative of "complete exegesis" only because he resorts to "the most basic of his hermeneutical principles, viz., that the interpreter should bring to the text the question that concerned the author" (p. 153). For Young this would mean that there would be legitimate concerns other than the question of human existence, but for Bultmann, approaching the Bible with Heidegger's analysis of man, other concerns would be irrelevant and peripheral and would distort the Scripture's main concern and thrust. To Young's attempt to work with Bultmann's system, the latter would surely say, "Nein!"

To the second alternative Bultmann would also say, "Nein!" but his voice would be muffled somewhat by the fact that his students have attempted to work in the same direction. There is, therefore, some justification for Young's claim that this alternative is workable within Bultmann's system. However, in this and in the work of the new questers there seems to be an inexplicable reticence to show that Jesus understood himself to be the Messiah, for fear that this would remove the scandal or objectify faith. Even if historical criticism should prove the claim, it hardly seems that this would remove the scandal or objectify faith. Bultmann especially thinks this would be faith with works, a kind of legalism. It has been *proved* by historical criticism that many throughout history have claimed divine status, but this does not in itself compel faith. Whether it can in fact be proved that Jesus understood himself to be the Messiah is for historical criticism to determine, but there should be no reticence in declaring that he understood himself as such for fear that faith would be compelled and objectified. Nevertheless, the question needs to be asked, "Is it possible to follow Young's alternative here, not because Bultmann's method disallows it, but only because Bultmann himself does so? Is the fault with Bultmann's method or with Bultmann?" Young thinks it is the latter.

One question kept arising throughout the reading of the book, "Why does Young feel he needs to wear Bultmann's armor?" To approach his two major positions, he could have started out just as well with another method. It would have been much simpler.