

analyses are never simplistic, yet the reader is never overburdened with unnecessarily involved explanations. And the study is filled with insights, as when e.g., Hick dispels the popular opinion that belief in afterlife represents the product of wishful thinking.

On the negative side, there are numerous points at which Hick's observations and conclusions invite criticism. For instance, his effort to show that the affirmation of divine love is incompatible with any view other than universal salvation, neglects the possibility that God genuinely wills something, such as universal reconciliation, but does not succeed. However, the principal defect of the project as a whole lies in the level at which Hick is characteristically content to let the argument rest, namely, that of "possibility," as in a "possible pareschatology," or a "possible eschatology." Admittedly, any portrayal of life after death must of necessity remain highly speculative. And admittedly too, any attempt to synthesize elements in the major religious traditions of East and West is bound to strike some as merely contrived. Nevertheless, Hick's repeated appeals to what is "not logically impossible" does not suffice to establish his conclusions, and in the final analysis he offers little to support the truth of his claims. So, in spite of the impressive scope of topics treated and the helpful insights accumulated along the way, his constructive proposal fails to do more than show that its author is entitled to his opinion.

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Kasper, Walter. *Jesus the Christ*. London: Burnes and Oates; New York: Paulist, 1977. 289 pp. Paperback, \$5.95.

This volume was originally published in German in 1974. An English translation appeared in hardback in 1976 and this present volume is the paperback edition. The author is a Catholic theologian teaching at Tübingen and is indebted to the Catholic Tübingen School represented by Karl Adam and Joseph R. Geiselmann. These theologians not only emphasize the biblical but also the ecclesiastical tradition, although the latter as something living in confrontation with the current issues of the time. Influenced by these men, Kasper calls for "an unrelentingly profound and systematic reflection on the principal themes of tradition and of novel contemporary approaches; a study and investigation of these themes; and an attempt at a new, systematic treatment which responsibly confronts modern thought with the riches of tradition and the results of the ongoing debate" (p. 10). What he calls for he admirably succeeds in doing.

• Most books on Jesus have been written by NT scholars and emphasize historical aspects and methods while Kasper, a theologian, comes to his subject from a philosophical and theological orientation. He is thoroughly familiar with the literature on the subject though he generally neglects literature in English. While usually arriving at relatively conservative positions, by his careful logic and reasoning he makes these positions respectable. He has a way of setting forth the issues so that one is confronted with the ultimate questions and can see that the more liberal positions do not suit the real essence of Christianity.

The first part of the book he entitles "Jesus Christ Today." Under this heading he has three chapters dealing with "The Problematics of Contemporary Christianity," "The Historical Quest for Jesus Christ," and "The Religious Quest for Jesus Christ." In these first chapters, the author shows the need for an appropriate Christology for this age, discusses the basic approaches of Christology, the limits of the old and new quest of the historical Jesus, and the weaknesses of secular thought which pervades modern thinking with its emphasis on subjectivity and freedom. The author argues

that ultimately man can find real freedom only through God, who is true Freedom, and in Jesus Christ and His salvation. He emphasizes throughout this first section the necessity of taking more than the historical Jesus as the content of faith—that one must also include the Resurrection and the imparting of the Spirit.

The next and main section of the book deals with the "History and Destiny of Jesus Christ." This section is divided into two parts, one covering the earthly Jesus and the other the resurrected and exalted Lord. Especially good are the chapters dealing with the message of Jesus, the miracles, and the resurrection. The central message of Jesus is the Kingdom of God or God's Lordship, and this consists of the sovereignty of his love. The salvation of this Kingdom is "the coming to power in and through human beings of the self-communicating love of God" (p. 86). The problem of miracles has to do with the whole of reality and its meaning, and thus natural science cannot settle the question. It goes beyond the mere observable to the metaphysical. Jesus' miracles are signs of the coming Kingdom. It means the end of Satan's power and the restoration to normality. Thus bodies are healed, demons are exorcised, and the dead are raised. The resurrection is not first of all faith in the empty tomb, but faith in the risen Lord. "Easter is not a fact to be cited as evidence for believers; Easter is itself an object of faith." Kasper is definitely opposed to Rudolf Bultmann and others who say that "faith in the Resurrection is nothing other than faith in the cross as an act of salvation," and thus deny the resurrection as a separate event. Easter is what happens to the believers, but not to Jesus Christ. For Kasper, "Faith did not establish the reality of the Resurrection, but the reality of the Resurrected Christ obtruding in spirit upon the disciples' established faith. For this reason it is essential to distinguish between the emergence of the Easter faith and the basis of that faith, the Resurrection of Jesus Himself" (pp. 140).

Kasper's last section deals with "The Mystery of Jesus Christ" and has chapters on Jesus Christ as Son of God, Son of Man, and Mediator. Here the author seeks to take up the results of NT scholarship in order to develop a modern understanding of Christology. In this section the orientation is much more theological and philosophical and the presentation is not as clear as in the previous sections. One keeps asking, "What does he really mean?" But perhaps there are no simple ways to explain such themes as preexistence, incarnation, trinity, etc.

The book is full of insightful statements. Though it contains heavy reading at times, the reader will be rewarded for his labor. The author has done well in synthesizing biblical, philosophical, and traditional material into an understanding of Jesus Christ that is respectable in the light of modern thinking.

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SAKAE KUBO

Kubo, Sakae. *God Meets Man: A Theology of the Sabbath and Second Advent*. Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1978. Paperback, 160 pp. \$7.95.

Sakae Kubo, Dean of the School of Theology of Walla Walla College and for many years Professor of NT at Andrews University, is already well known for scholarly articles in NT textual studies; for his outstanding tool for students in NT Greek, *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (some five or six eds. and printings since 1967); for co-authorship with Walter F. Specht of the helpful analysis of modern Bible versions entitled *So Many Versions?* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1975); and for several more popular theological studies. The book presently being reviewed