

equally basic. What then might a historian say?

The first thing that needs saying to Peter De Rosa, is that this is after all a matter that needs argument: bland assumptions are not good enough. When Thomas (and in a superficial and fashion-ridden time I should wish to stand up and be counted some kind of student of Thomas) comes to examine the knowability of the Holy Three, *St. Th. Ia*, 32,1, he states most firmly that the Three-fold One is known to us only through his own self-revelation, and warns us against light-weight arguments: "Secondly, with regard to the usefulness of bringing others to faith. For if anyone introduces non-cogent arguments in order to establish faith he provides occasion for the derision of unbelievers: for they take it that we rely upon such arguments, and believe because of them. Therefore those things that are of faith should not be attempted to be proven except upon authorities, for those who accept authorities. For the others, however, it will suffice to defend the truth that those things that faith proclaims are not impossible." *ib.c.* What then are the *auctoritates*?

The midrashic stories of Jesus' childhood have all too often been glozed over, as recently by R. Laurentin in otherwise very helpful works: *Structure et Théologie de Luc 1-11*, and *Jesus au Temple, Mystère de Paques et Foi de Marie. Luc 2:48-50*. EB 1964 and 1966, in fundamentalist style. This is a pity, since it seems likely that Luke had something by way of genuine report, at whatever hand to work on in his very crafted constructive work. Here I would wish to refer particularly to his story of Jesus in the Temple: between the lines one glimpses a very stubborn, and apparently self-willed child ("Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"), who is very recognizably the Jesus of the later gospels. Luke, above all, has not failed to note the trait of the old

gospel tradition: "Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him for the crowd. And he was told, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.' But he said to them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.'" Luke 8: 19-21.

The one thing we may, and must say of Jesus is that he went again and again to the outer limits of the permissible: and beyond. Clearly Jesus had learnt enormously from the ascetic John the Baptizer, and yet of Jesus it was said: "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates, 'We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn,' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" Matt 11: 16-19. If we may risk any statement about the Jesus of history, (and I would wish to risk many,) we must say, in terms of that last shocking (!) saying but also with an eye to the many parables that breathe an unmistakable air of ripeness ("Ripeness is all"!), that Jesus was above all a man who enjoyed a party—in trust of the coming kingdom.

It has been just this aspect of Jesus that I have most missed in Peter De Rosa's book. I will try to forgive him his really horrid pieces of doggerel versification—Bishop Barry in TLS actually seemed to like them; I suppose they were meant originally for children in classrooms: but let me declare a preference for, e.g. The Songs of Innocence, or say, Honey and Gold; children deserve our best, do they not? Let us finally try to share, with Peter De Rosa, as I am sure we do, a mutual devotion to Jesus Lord and Christ.

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A JEWISH UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Samuel Sandmel. SPCK, London, 1976. 336 + xxxiv pp. £4.75.

In writing this book, Professor Sandmel, a world authority on Jewish history and religion, aims to provide Jewish read-

ers with a straightforward, yet critical, introduction to the New Testament. Such an undertaking by a Jewish scholar was un-

paralleled when the first edition of the book was published in the United States in 1956. A second, augmented edition followed in 1974, which is now made available in paper-back form to English readers. The first edition was warmly received, and such criticisms as were made of it are answered in the New Foreword to the second edition.

The book opens with a paean of praise, which resounds throughout the work, in honour of liberal protestant scholarship: Professor Sandmel characterises this as

free, objective, and rigidly honest. In it, predisposition and prejudgement are reduced to the vanishing point, and reverence for the New Testament has seemed to evoke as full and open-minded a study and investigation as fallible man can undertake. (p xvi).

Although Professor Sandmel concedes that this liberal scholarship is not always quite the perfection which the sentence we have quoted would lead us to believe—it is “not of one piece” (p xvii)—and occasionally refers to the views of “conservatives” and “fundamentalists” as differing from those of the liberals, he normally takes into account only liberal arguments and conclusions. Modern Roman Catholic scholarship, which is neither conservative nor fundamentalist, is all but ignored, as is the large body of Anglican opinion which dissents from the scholarly “consensus” of liberal protestantism.

As might be expected, St Paul’s ideas are the first to be discussed, and these are used as the yardstick by which the rest of the New Testament is judged. Sandmel urges that Paul’s Judaism is of the Hellenistic type, akin to Philo’s, a Judaism which sought salvation from the material world which is evil and where life is bad (pp 50-51; 70-71). Unlike the Rabbis, St Paul holds that man “is by nature bad” (p 38) and requires salvation which God provides in Jesus, who is God’s Logos. For Philo, God’s Logos is His mind, that part of Him which man may apprehend, and Paul asserted that it had taken flesh in Jesus. So the Apostle used the Jewish title Christ in a new sense as the designation for this ultimate Logos. . . . transmuted into the Greek concept of the divine mind. (p 51)

By faith in the atoning death of this Christ a man’s nature is changed from evil; he

becomes identified with Christ, an identification which is enacted in Baptism and the Eucharist (pp 59-60). This latter Sacrament was, it seems, invented by St Paul (pp 86, 132), whose independence of the Palestinian Church and its traditions Sandmel strongly emphasises (pp 88-89). The section on Paul ends with a brief introduction to each of the Epistles, in which we are asked to take note of Paul’s view of the impending End, the fluidity of doctrine in the Church, and the lack of a definitive ecclesiastical organisation.

In a short survey of this kind it is impossible to deal fully with Professor Sandmel’s remarks. A few general observations, however, must be offered. Many of the points which Sandmel raises are those which arise from a specifically protestant approach to St Paul. Thus a certain sort of protestantism, indeed, has insisted that man and the world are by nature evil, although the Pauline Epistles themselves nowhere declare such a thing so baldly. The early Gnostics, it is true, readily understood St Paul to mean that matter was evil, but mainstream Christian Tradition had always resolutely opposed such an idea because Jesus had come *in the flesh*, human flesh and not, as Sandmel erroneously supposes, in “exceptional” flesh (p 53). St Paul states that mankind is *inclined to evil*, a notion which is in part shared by, and may derive from, the Palestinian Jewish teachers, who believed that God had created man with two inclinations, the one good and the other bad. St Paul almost certainly had greater affinity with Palestinian Judaism than Sandmel will allow—witness the works of W D Davies— but his curious unwillingness to use the Dead Sea Scrolls to cast light on St Paul’s antecedents may account in large measure for his Hellenistic portrait of the man.

We would also question whether Philo’s Logos, the exact significance of which is not entirely clear and whose place in the complete scheme of Philo’s theology is easily exaggerated, may be used to explain Paul’s complex Christology in the somewhat *simplistic* way which Sandmel suggests. As to the Eucharist, the time-worn theory that St Paul gave it its present Scriptural significance has been refuted time and again. For how could some Greek-speaking Apostle, whose claims to

authority, as Sandmel stresses, were continually challenged within the Church, have imposed the drinking of blood, albeit sacramentally, upon a religious movement which included large numbers of Jews? And from where did Paul derive his view that Jesus' death was sacrificial, if not from the Lord's own action on the eve of his arrest? A model for Jesus' institution of a sacrificial rite in perpetuity lay ready to hand in Palestinian traditions of the "Binding of Isaac", the only, beloved son of Abraham, whose perfect, voluntary offering in self-sacrifice was believed at the time to have validated all future sacrifices of the people of God.

Much more could be added, but the preceding remarks will suffice to show how deeply Sandmel has been influenced by his secondary sources. His discussion of the Gospels shows the same trait. The Synoptics were all written after AD 70; St Luke is said to have been composed as late as AD 150 (p 191), although no evidence for this dating is given. Here again there is much that is predictable: a proportion of the Gospel tradition, how much we are not told, is said to have been created by the early Church; the various solutions to the Synoptic problem are set out; the Church's re-working of Jesus' sayings is noted. But Professor Sandmel wisely relegates to the earlier part of his book (pp 8-10) the anguished pre-occupation of liberal protestants with how much of the supernatural element in the Gospels is acceptable to "modern man", a pre-occupation which is sadly capable of rendering their scholarship the very opposite of the "free, objective, and rigidly honest" which Sandmel supposes. Professor Sandmel believes that the Gospels were written after AD 70 because

by 70 AD the Church had grown so much that inner diversity to the point of nihilism threatened it unless some standardisation was to ensue; the time had come for a more stable, even more rigid, teaching about Jesus (p 112).

Even were we to grant that this statement was correct, the same argument might be used to date the Gospels before AD 70, since one of St Paul's great concerns was precisely for the unity of Christians in the One Body over against party divisions and factions. Sandmel, however, believes that the Synoptic Gospels represent a post-

Pauline development and reflect views either for (St Luke) or against (St Matthew) the general drift of Paul's doctrine of faith; such a belief, however, raises the question (which is not answered) how much influence St Paul actually exerted in the Church, as well as the question of the date of the oral traditions which lie behind the present written Gospels.

Part Four of the book deals briefly with the rest of the New Testament. Here Sandmel assents to more radical views: Acts is almost completely unhistorical, reflecting Church conditions of the early second century (p 264). But he does not explain why Acts should differ in important respects from the Epistles of St Ignatius, also of the early second century. The Pastoral Epistles are non-Pauline, composed as anti-Marcionite propaganda: the perfectly respectable case for Pauline authorship is completely overlooked. St John's Gospel cannot be used to gather historical details about the life of Jesus; but not a word is said of C.H. Dodd's important contributions in the study of this Gospel. These and other writings bear witness to "Early Catholicism", a loaded expression which Sandmel uncritically accepts from the hands of his secondary sources rather than questioning whether such a hypothetical phase of church history has any solid basis in historical fact.

What, then, are we to say of this book? On one level it may be viewed as just one more liberal protestant Introduction: as such, it is a disappointing book, and does not do justice to its author. On the other hand, Professor Sandmel's scholarship shines through brilliantly when he writes as a Jew, and for this reason alone the book deserves a wide Christian readership. For here we have a Jewish scholar who writes about Jesus and the early Church in a spirit of sincerity and of genuine desire to understand: Christians can read his chapter on St John's Gospel, for example, only with profit. When the specifically liberal protestant element of the book is disregarded, what is left is a thoroughly Jewish impression of Jesus and His Church, drawn with a degree of awareness which is as informative as it is commendable. Christians of the twentieth century have the weighty responsibility of seeking to understand Judaism in its own terms, as far as they are able; for this reason Chris-

tians need to know how Jews think of Jesus, and the reviewer can imagine no better means of obtaining insights into this

fascinating subject than Professor Sandmel's book.

ROBERT HAYWARD

FURTHER BUDDHIST STUDIES, by Edward Conze. *Cassirer* 1975. *xiv + 238*. No price given.

Together with *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, this volume of opuscula makes available in convenient form all the major short writings of Edward Conze, an event of undoubted importance and interest to serious students of Buddhism. This second collection, however, assembles such varied materials that it is likely to appeal much less to the less specialised reader. It offers us 90 pages of reviews and review articles, most of them very technical. Then there are three articles from Conze's pre-Buddhist philosophical period, which will, I fear, not provoke as much excitement (or fury) now as in the 30's when they first appeared. The essay on the socio-economic origins of nominalism is perhaps the most interesting, especially the reminder that Occam's principle of parsimony—a "bourgeois" principle—is quite arbitrary. The attempt to show that the principle of contradiction is "not an absolute law but relative to the practical attitude you choose to assume" is not entirely convincing—it rests far too heavily on a highly dubious reading of Heraclitus and on Schopenhauer's disciple Bahnsen, who are invoked to show that "pessimism tends to destroy the principle of contradiction". Rather a lot of questions are begged! And surely all systems that employ paradox, whatever their purpose, actually rely on the principle of contradiction (witness Plato's *Parmenides*, for instance). Even if the point must be conceded (and it can be, surely, with less difficulty now) that logic is only one possible way of organising one's world, it does seem that, for what it is worth, logic is at least an absolute law of the human mind, however difficult it may be to relate it to other modes of behaviour and perception, and however diverse may be the different ways of identifying what is or is not contradictory. And that will surely include magical views of life too. Even though

they may operate with very different kinds of connexion from those employed by scientists, they still require some regular principles of compatibility and incompatibility.

Of the remaining essays, those on the Dharma and on the Buddhist understanding of the virtue of friendship (*metta*) contrasted with a romantic or social view of charity, are very interesting and useful; that on Buddhism and Gnosis is seriously vitiated by its dependence on German secondary sources dealing in that classic academic construct 'Gnosis'. It is perhaps not being too cynical to suggest that one of the major reasons why one can so easily find parallels between Buddhism and Gnosis is that Gnosis was constructed, at least in part, with precisely such a comparison in mind. It is very far from clear that 'Gnosis' as a concept is of any use whatsoever in helping us to pick our way through the jungle of spiritual and religious texts thrown up in the early christian centuries. Of much more importance is the detailed work on particular texts and particular systems, and it would be extremely interesting to trace parallels then between elements in christian texts and elements in Buddhism, and to disentangle possible lines of influence in each direction.

In addition there are three more short essays, and an Introduction in which Conze "lets his hair down" and talks about himself. The result is a book which is often useful, sometimes profoundly wise, occasionally a little peevish, and always readable. The author has given himself generously to us.

As usual, unfortunately, the printers have reduced many of the occasional Greek words to nonsense; and there is a sprinkling of other tiresome misprints.

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