

protagonists of the drama Dr Cragg discusses – Israeli Jews and Palestinians made of flesh and blood, leading concrete lives and having complex and varied class-interests – bear no resemblance to the abstract “spiritual” creatures delineated in the

book. And the proposed solution of the problem is, not unlike the hypothetical “Arab mentality”, a solution feasible “on the battlefields of rhetoric”, and nowhere else.

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**CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD** by Tom F Driver. *SCM Press, 1981. pp xi + 183*  
**£5.95.**

In this book Tom F Driver (who is Paul J Tillich Professor at Union Theological Seminary, New York) challenges the traditional Christian beliefs that Christ was a final revelation of God; that God achieved man's salvation once for all through Christ; and that Christ is the centre, model and norm for humanity. Driver is therefore obliged to reject classical christology. His two main reasons for rejecting it are, in my opinion, invalid. First, he maintains that it entails morally reprehensible attitudes such as anti-semitism and anti-feminism. But no such entailment exists. On the contrary a true understanding of the Incarnation and of Christ's virginal conception requires attitudes that are opposite to those that Driver rightly deplores. Secondly, Driver claims that the relativism characteristic of our age renders traditional christology unacceptable. 'Relativism' is a complex idea that Driver does not examine with sufficient care; but if it is taken to signify the view that an absolutely unique and normative revelation of God within history is impossible it must be rejected as an assumption that conflicts totally with the Christian message in its original form. Chiefly I find Driver's own christology inadequate and, moreover, perplexing. This is what he says on p 165; 'We are not concerned with a singular Christ who came "once for all" and whose claims are therefore universal, essentially the same for the church and the world and for all times and places. We are concerned with many Christs. There are many because Christ is the human form of actual encounters between God and the world'. On this view

the sheer identity of Christ considered merely as a human individual disappears.

Nevertheless, this book has value and significance in three respects. First, it reminds us that Christ is not absolute in the sense that he gave rules that solve all moral problems in all circumstances, or in the sense that we can achieve perfection by re-enacting his life (which would be manifestly impossible). Christ is absolute primarily in the sense that the hypostatic union conferred on his humanity a permanent relation with God that is absolutely unique and unsurpassable. Secondly, this book is valuable in reminding us that the claim for Christ as one who is normative for humanity cannot be substantiated unless we take full account of his saving work, not only in the past, but also in the present and the future. These two truths hang together. Thus *imitatio Christi* consists, not merely in following (in so far as this is possible) the example set by the human Jesus in his past life on earth, but also, and even more, in being transformed by him in the present through the Holy Spirit who inspires us with the hope of achieving perfection in the life to come. Yet the book is chiefly significant for showing how far human ingenuity can go in reconstructing christology (and thereby Christianity) in order to meet what are thought to be our moral needs in the light of distinctively modern presuppositions (such as those indicated by the terms 'relativism' and 'pluralism') that we are thought to hold.

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