

MOLTMANN, MESSIANIC THEOLOGY IN THE MAKING by Richard Bauckham, *Marshall Pickering*, 1987. Pp. x + 175. £9.95.

The purpose of this presentation of Moltmann's theology is to give us an overview of his theological development from the publication of *Theology of Hope* in 1964 to the beginning of his efforts at producing a dogmatics in 1980. The author devotes most of his attention to a thorough analysis of Moltmann's three major volumes in this period: *Theology of Hope*, *The Crucified God*, and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. In the foreword to this book, Moltmann admits that there was a certain one-sidedness in these volumes but notes that he tried to grasp the whole of theology in one focal point. Beginning with the future of God, he later shifted perspective to the cross, and in his treatment of the church, focussed on the Spirit. In spite of a certain diversity, there is nonetheless a unity to which Moltmann often drew attention with the catch-phrase 'the resurrection of the crucified Christ and the cross of the risen Jesus.' One can see as well an emerging trinitarian perspective. This came to full bloom in 1980 with the publication of *Trinity and the Kingdom of God*.

Among the strengths of this study is the fact that the author has a thorough familiarity with the breadth of Moltmann's writings and with the secondary literature which has contributed to a broad discussion of Moltmann's theology. I would judge the book to be an accurate presentation of Moltmann's thought, which also draws attention to some of the problem areas of his theology. In addition, this study gives a fine introduction to the contemporary non-Christian authors with whom Moltmann has sought to dialogue, beginning with Bloch in the period of *Theology of Hope* and proceeding to Camus and the Frankfurt school in the period of *The Crucified God*. Moltmann himself remarks that this book helped him to see how strongly influenced he has been by Camus. Bauckham shows that the optimistic Marxism of Bloch must reckon with the failure of the modern age's rebellion against injustice symbolized in the invasion of Prague in 1968. The rebel in the name of justice ends by becoming a tyrant. Protest atheism thus reveals itself as doomed to failure. In dialogue with Camus, Horkheimer and Adorno, Moltmann is led to the suffering God of the cross as the only adequate response to an abandoned humanity.

As already mentioned, in addition to a clear and well-balanced presentation, the author makes us aware of a number of critical problems in Moltmann's theology. Besides the onesidedness of the books and the over-optimism of *Theology of Hope*, conceptual unclarity emerge with *The Crucified God*. What does Moltmann mean, for example, when he says that God is revealed in his opposite? Bauckham comments, 'It was probably a mistake for Moltmann to try to put the cross under some *general* dialectical principle of knowledge.' (p.69) Secondly, has Moltmann's theology of the cross really solved the problem of suffering? True, God does not cause suffering, but neither does he intervene to prevent it. As Bauckham observes, we are left with a heavy residuum of the protest atheist's case—until the eschaton. Thirdly, there are serious problems in Moltmann's understanding of the relation of the immanent and economic Trinity. In

order to guarantee a Trinity open to history and to humanity, Moltmann tends to eternalize the sufferings of the cross and equate them with the life of the Trinity itself. Finally, in Moltmann's ecclesiology, he rather high-handedly identifies authority structures with domination. And in his desire to ensure a dialogue between church and world, he underrates the mission of the church by claiming that it is not the church's task to summon men and women to herself. But as Bauckham explains, 'If the church is the anticipation of the kingdom of God within history, it would seem natural to suppose that the way the church serves the coming kingdom is by calling and gathering people into its own fellowship.' (p.137)

In spite of these short-comings, Bauckham identifies the major achievement of Moltmann's theological project as creating hermeneutical structures whose strength lies in their biblical basis, their Christological centre and their eschatological openness. These open-ended structures facilitate dialogue between Christian faith and the contemporary world and thus help ensure an equilibrium in the tension between identity and relevance.

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PELAGIUS: A RELUCTANT HERETIC by B.R. Rees. *The Boydell Press, Suffolk, 1988. Pp. xv + 176. £29.50.*

This study seeks to rescue Pelagius from the opprobrium which has frequently fallen upon him. It does so by reexamining the contemporary evidence and the secondary literature, but with a curious air of the author's doing so as an observer too modest to feel competent to attempt to assert an alternative view, although he clearly feels that there ought to be one. The style, though readable, tends to the modern cliché ('at the end of the day'; 'precious little'; 'hails from') rather too often. The fundamental flaw of the book is that, although Professor Rees recognises that Pelagius thought himself orthodox, and wanted to be recognised as such (p.xi), he does not address the real paradox that all heresy is, in a sense, both 'reluctant' and obstinate. It is also a pity that the mass of illuminating post-Pelagian references and comments are not made more of in their own right. One suspects that Professor Rees really wanted to write a book about the survival of 'Pelagian' positions and their continuing appeal in many different ages and contexts. That would have been a valuable exercise, and perhaps he may do it next. If Professor Rees feels insecure as a theologian (p.ix), he is able to deploy his scholarship as a classicist to many uses in this book, and it is here that he is able to give us fresh angles of view. As an accessible survey of the Pelagian controversy for the modern reader who comes to it anew, this will prove on the whole a reliable guide.

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