

New Testament we find other methods of expressing it where there is no suggestion of a risen body: in Philippians 2 the key concept is exaltation rather than resurrection; in the letter to the Hebrews it is that Jesus has entered heaven.

From the foregoing account it is clear that there are two aspects of Marxsen's thesis, concerning respectively the resurrection and faith. The reinterpretation of the accounts of the resurrection, the emphasis on their relevance and message for today, is intensely interesting, a model of the impetus to find the significance for the world today of writings composed two thousand years ago. And for

the comfort of the uneasy it must be said that he nowhere denies the empty tomb nor the bodily resurrection; he merely puts other ways of expressing the same truths on the same level. But it is the tone of voice which is suspect: his basic attitude to the factuality of the events is dictated by the liberal Protestant emphasis on the miraculous 'now' of faith born from the preaching. It is certainly the case that the accounts of the resurrection appearances cannot be harmonized, but the revaluation of their theology need not mean the sacrifice of all their factual content.

HENRY WANSBROUGH, O.S.B.

**PROBLEMS OF SUFFERING IN THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD**, by J. W. Bowker. C.U.P., 1970.

Despite the proliferation, in recent years, of essays and studies in Christian theodicy, a study of the analyses of suffering developed by other religious or quasi-religious traditions has been long overdue, and Mr Bowker's characteristically lucid and erudite work will be very welcome to all students of religious thought and of the relation between 'creed and culture'. The way in which a religious tradition responds to the fact of suffering largely dictates its attitude to society in general, and, as we are reminded frequently in this book, it is ultimately inseparable from that tradition's 'doctrine of Man'. A constructive approach to 'the human condition' demands, it seems, a profound awareness of tension or conflict; yet, for the majority of religious traditions, the ultimate unity of the subject-in-his-experiencing must be safeguarded, the possibility of *varied* ethical and 'metaphysical' experience in the *individual* has to be affirmed. 'Duality without Dualism' is what the religious world-view aims at: the strictly Dualist metaphysic risks 'undervaluing or seriously diminishing the possibilities of experience' (p. 290). The Marxist poses the problem for himself in a rather different way, which Mr Bowker examines at length, with sympathy and perception: the economic analysis of suffering or 'alienation' is a 'potentially depersonalized' understanding of the basic human tension; and the precise status to be accorded to the welfare of the individual as opposed to that of the collective has remained problematic. The author points to Kolakowski and the contributors to the symposium *Socialist Humanism* as guides to the

present condition of the debate in some Marxist circles. Mr Bowker's extended discussion of Chinese Marxism is perhaps one of the most useful sections of his book: the pragmatic nature of Mao's thought is emphasized, and we are reminded that Marxism 'does not depend on having a Hegel in the family' (p. 185)—the actual awareness of suffering as conflict is not dependent upon dialectical theory.

Chinese Marxism, Mr Bowker suggests, can be understood as a 'bridge tradition' standing between East and West, combining the 'Western' view of suffering as 'instrumental' and therefore worthwhile, with the 'Eastern' tendency towards total detachment as regards pain and death. This latter attitude we are very ready to dismiss as tantamount to indifference (see Chesterton, *et hoc genus omne*), but Mr Bowker insists that we do justice to the fact that both Hinduism and Buddhism have shown themselves well aware of the dangerously narrow margin between detachment and lack of compassion. The fulfilling of *dharma*, 'the pattern of life', in Hinduism may be 'a way of engaging the griefs and sufferings of life' (p. 218); but it is possible for *dharma* to require the conscious *infliction* of suffering on others: it is with this problem that the *Bhagavadgita* is largely concerned, and it is this that led many Hindus to regard Gandhi's *ahimsa* as a betrayal of their tradition. Yet, in Hinduism, 'suffering is only a problem for those who cannot see it in the perspective of *Brahman*' (p. 218)—a rigidly monistic answer, perhaps, but reached only by a highly complex argumentation. Buddhism

resolved the tension with the development of the *Bodhisattva* ideal, the compassionate sharing by the teacher of the enlightenment he has gained: ultimately, it is this ideal, which underlies the self-burning of Vietnamese monks in 1963, as the author demonstrates with extracts from the profoundly moving *Vietnam: The Lotus in the Sea of Fire*, by Thich Nhat Hanh.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam are taken to represent the 'Western' traditions (with Marxism), and the concept of 'creative suffering' which, in some form, has been developed by all (even if not wholeheartedly accepted by all) seems to lie very near this final development of the Buddhist ideal. As the author himself remarks (p. 98), it is a great pity that lack of space has excluded a discussion of the Russian tradition (and in particular the thought of Berdyaev) which has stressed this notion of creativity in suffering. There are some points also where Simone Weil cries out for quotation and perhaps one might have expected rather more discussion of Jewish 'post-Auschwitz' theology; but such omissions are inevitable in a work on this scale.

This book succeeds in being not merely a 'reference work'; it is a serious contribution, in its own right, to the understanding of the religious traditions discussed, and raises several fresh points and questions of importance.

R. D. WILLIAMS

## Problems of Suffering in the Religions of the World

JOHN BOWKER

The place accorded to suffering in the main world religions provides an important key to an understanding of the religions themselves.

Mr Bowker compares the ways in which the problem is treated by nine religions. 'A sound and thoughtful study of this vital problem'. *The Expository Times*

70s. net

## The Cambridge History of the Bible

Volume 1: From the Beginnings to Jerome

Edited by P. R. ACKROYD and C. F. EVANS

This volume completes the Cambridge History of the Bible. It shows how the Bible as we know it came into being in the original tongues, how its various component books came to be organized into a canon and how it was interpreted in the Jewish and early Christian traditions up to the fifth century.

90s. net

*Other volumes in the series:*

Volume 2: The West, from the Fathers to the Reformation

Edited by G. W. LAMPE (1969)

Volume 3: The West, from the Reformation to the Present Day

Edited by S. L. GREENSLADE (1963)

70s. net

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS