

soon falls in with the idea; and in fact Benoit closely connects the synoptic accounts so that a general picture emerges. The notes are first rate, just enough to give the necessary authorities and explain important issues, without saying too much to confuse the non-specialist.

At times Benoit does seem to go into too many details. Especially with the trial of Jesus he seems to become entangled in his own arguments and not explain fully enough to general readers such curious things as Jesus' silence before Pilate. He also seems to

find difficulties where non-specialists may not think they exist. He is anxious to explain the exact meanings of 'javelin' and 'hyssop' (p. 197), whereas it might seem that the evangelists were non-specialists themselves and not likely to be too exact in their use of words.

In general the discussions are illuminating and interesting, even racy. Part of this is due to the smoothness of the translation, but Benoit is to be congratulated on the overall success of his attempt to reach the general reader.

ÆLFRED BAKER
JOSEPH TURTON

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS OF NAZARETH, by Willi Marxsen. *S.C.M. Press*, 1970. 191 pp. 40s.

This book stems from a pamphlet published by the author in 1964 which aroused passionate discussion. The author then expanded and popularized his view in some general lectures at the University of Münster in 1967-8, which are contained in this book. It is a fascinating attempt to explain the New Testament accounts of the resurrection in terms of existential commitment. 'Jesus is risen' is a statement of involvement, an assertion that Jesus is still living and important for me, which could (p. 141) be equally well expressed by the sentence 'Still he comes today'. Marxsen feels passionately that if faith is to have any value it must be a venture, a leap in the dark. A faith which demands the evidence of signs and wonders is precisely a barrier to real faith (p. 153). Our faith is a miracle, the result of the preaching of the gospel today, and Peter's faith—the rock on which the Church is founded—can have no other quality than ours. Furthermore, resurrection of the body is only one particular philosophical way of expressing the Christian hope for the future (it is, in fact, not specifically Christian, being shared by Jews and Muslims). At the time of Christ hope for the future was expressed in many other ways, as deliverance of the soul from the bonds of the body, as coming with Christ at the parousia (early Paul), as a transformation which has already occurred (John, then the Gnostics). It can be equally well expressed in the words of the dying Heinrich Rendtorff, 'I shall be safe' (p. 188).

Marxsen accepts freely that much of his interpretation of the evidence is hypothetical; but he insists that the traditional interpretation is no less hypothetical. The resurrection

accounts in the gospels cannot really be harmonised, for the authors are using different parts of the tradition with quite different interests from ours. Were they in Jerusalem or Galilee? To whom were the first appearances? What was the quality of the risen body of Christ? Why is the missionary charge to the apostles given so many times by the different authors and in such different circumstances? Did it in fact occur several times? Marxsen's solution is that in the pre-gospel tradition these stories were independent units, each expressing in its own way that Christ is still living and of vital concern; they were structured into a set pattern only by Matthew and Luke—Mark still has only one story, that of the empty tomb, a story which concerns only one particular aspect (and that not the most important) of what is being asserted by the resurrection. Other stories are 'legends' teaching various truths of Christianity: Matthew 28, 16-20 expresses the understanding that faith involves mission; John 21 (later projected back into Jesus' lifetime in Luke 5, 1-11 and Mark 1, 17) expresses Peter's realization when fishing after the death of Jesus that Jesus still lives and calls him to be a fisher of men; the story of the disciples at Emmaus (much expanded by Luke) originally taught that Jesus is present in each eucharistic meal. Similarly the story of the empty tomb shows merely that Jesus did not remain among the dead and that he sends his followers out to call others to faith. The great mistake was to link into a series pictures which are really different expressions of the same reality; this was forced on Matthew by his method of apologetic against the assertion that Jesus was not risen at all. Even in the

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