

## Reviews

THE RISEN CHRIST AND THE EUCHARISTIC WORLD, by G. Martelet, S.J.  
*Collins* 1976 242 pp. £4.95

The Resurrection and the Eucharist: two fundamental facets of faith, and both in recent years have been subjects of sometimes unnerving argument and debate. Gustave Martelet tries here to connect Resurrection and Eucharist through a proper understanding of both, and by connecting, illuminating and deepening the understanding of each. Thus we cannot properly understand the Eucharist as Mystery, (i.e. Christ dynamically present in the Eucharist as Love, arousing the appropriate human response), without a proper understanding of the Presence to the world of the glorified, risen body of Jesus. How does Martelet make out in this laudable and necessary initiative? If the quantity and the intellectually O.K. quality of the footnotery is any criterion, certainly he cannot be accused of not being painstakingly thorough, (only 200 pages of text and 40 pages to expound the 311 footnotes), but somehow the whole thing doesn't hang together.

Individual sections contain some splendid stuff, particularly his meditation on the symbolism of bread and wine in the Eucharist as eloquent of the humanising of nature, both in the way they stand for the annexation of the world's resources by man's genius for human good and brotherhood, but also the way that genius has been sinfully harnessed to satisfy human rapacity with its consequence of exploitation, oppression and inhumanity. His section of the Eucharist as Real Presence is good too, and perhaps helps to explain why the rich fruits hoped for from Liturgical Renewal have been so dismayingly slow to appear, and the tenacious Tridentist nostalgia for the arcane splendour of the solemn Latin High Mass lingers on. Theology forms spirituality: and Martelet traces here how the theology of the Eucharist as the Body of Christ was abandoned in favour of that of Substance. Inevitably, 'the Mystery to be understood gave way to the miracle to be believed'; the 'how' (encouraged and explained by

metaphysics—Transubstantiation) ousted the 'why' and 'for whom'. Eucharistic spirituality became a matter of the prodigy—the miracle of God at the consecration changing the substance of bread and wine into that of the body and blood of Christ—as a spectacle to be believed and to inspire awe, rather than the Mysterious Presence of the Event of God's Love for us in Jesus, to be understood, marvelled at and responded to.

Fr. Martelet's discussion of the Resurrection is marred by his swashbuckling and frequently unfair attack on modern exegetes. He sees the problem with the latter to be a barrier of initial impossibility. That is to say they reject a priori the possibility of the truth of what the Gospel Resurrection accounts are struggling to bring to speech:—that Jesus rose from the dead; that the tomb which once contained his body is consequently empty; and that he showed himself as risen to his disciples. The Gospel narratives have then to be 'explained' otherwise:—as an expression of the emerging faith of the disciples in Jesus and so on. A tricky problem: well aired in the pages of *New Blackfriars* in recent months. And although sometimes unfair, Martelet is surely right to raise the problem of what might be called the hermeneutics of the hermeneutical problem. What comes first; the method or the problem lying behind and giving rise to the method? What comes first; the emergence of a hermeneutical method which radically questions and undermines the principle that there are events in human history which are eloquent of God and his power; or, the ability to see all history explicable only, yet comprehensively, in purely human terms, from which emerges a hermeneutical method which explains 'divine' events (the Resurrection and miracles) accordingly? 'Divine' events in the eye of the observer and in themselves are, and can only be purely human. In which case 'seeing' God in particular historical occurrences is arbitrary. Indeed such a God

would seem superfluous and of no interest for us; rather like those melancholy holy images of the catechism who can neither see, nor hear, nor help us. My problem with Fr. Martelet is not that he raises the issue but his rather insensitive dismissal of the ones he thinks are guilty.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons why for me this book, although containing

many good things, doesn't cohere. Another reason however, and for me much more off-putting, is the free use he makes throughout the book of Teilhard's optimistic, evolutionary humanism; much of which I don't understand, and what I can understand doesn't make sense.

ALBAN WESTON, O.P.

**FAITH AND REALITY**, by Wolfhart Pannenberg, translated by John Maxwell, Search Press, London 1977. ix + 138 pp. £4.95

Pannenberg has published a host of articles over the last twenty years. His first was on analogy in Karl Barth's theology and dates from 1953, but the stream of his publications in the theological journals began in earnest in 1958. Although Pannenberg has not yet produced a systematic account of his thought, it is possible to construct his theological thought-world by piecing together the ideas of these many articles. It is a thought-world at once novel and traditional, it looks forward to the end of history and backward to the beginnings of Jewish traditions, it is thoroughly Protestant in outlook and Catholic in scope. The collection of articles under review contains ten pieces written for non-academic audiences. They were written at various times in his career but some are from 1960 and are among his earliest articles. What is striking is that the main ideas of Pannenberg had already been thought out over fifteen years ago and those later years have largely been a matter of drawing out and extrapolating those ideas.

This collection, then, contains many of Pannenberg's central ideas: the significance of the life and resurrection of Jesus, the relationship of history and revelation in biblical traditions, the role of the Spirit in a theological analysis of the natural sciences, the sense of mystery at the centre of all creative processes, all of which are placed in an eschatological perspective. In one sense, then, this book would form an excellent introduction to Pannenberg's theology. But two caveats must be issued. First, his ideas cannot be presented systematically in a collection of ten articles, and the 'system' is important because Pannenberg's is an integrated theology in which the parts fit together to form a whole. Second, Pannenberg does

not seem to be always at his best when writing semi-popular pieces. He tends to allude to depths of thought and details of argumentation which cannot in fact be fully set out in a brief article. So we have here a glimpse of the breadth and originality of Pannenberg's theology, but his stature and importance will become clear only with further reading.

A final word on Pannenberg's politics which concern in part the last two articles of this book. When Pannenberg looks ahead to the Kingdom of God created by God at the end of human history, he accompanies this vision with a warning that *any* social structure will be at best no more than an imperfect refiguration of what God has in store for us. This statement—which would surely be accepted by all readers of *New Blackfriars*—is of revolutionary import. But the revolutionary implication of Pannenberg's vision is never made evident, as it is with Jurgen Moltmann for example. What Pannenberg says about politics is limited by the political history of Germany in the 1960's when these articles were written. In fact his remarks were quite daring in their time and one lecture earned Pannenberg a number of threatening letters. Pannenberg does not, however, go in for political analysis which, if it were not well done, might cast doubt on his theological competence. Call it discretion or cowardice, but he settles for laying a theological foundation for any such analysis. From such a foundation the reader must go on to draw his own political conclusions but apart from a number of general statements Pannenberg will not do it for one.

GEOFFREY TURNER