

JESUS, by Eduard Schweizer. SCM, 1971. 200 pp. £3.

In substance, this book was written when the author was in Japan with plenty of leisure and little literature. As such it is primarily the product of the reflection of this distinguished Swiss scholar, rather than a minute documentation of new advances. The publisher's blurb expresses the hope that it will perform for the next decade the service which Bornkamm's *Jesus of Nazareth* performed for the last, a hope which may well be fulfilled.

The chapter on the sources sets the tone of the work; it is clear and forceful, a combination of detailed scholarship well mastered, and breadth of approach, recognizing the part which sympathy must play in any account of an event: for a good report on a play it is not enough to tell merely the details of staging, nor simply to enthuse about it; there must be some element of involvement, but not too much. This is true of the gospels, which present the Jesus of history, but only through the vision of the Christ of faith who is their master. It is the second chapter which, from its title onwards, is truly arresting: Jesus, the man who fits no formula. Jesus will accept no current title because none fits him; instead he takes and moulds the title Son of Man. No other concept will cover the fullness of what he is—they are half-truths which help to illustrate but do not exhaust his richness, his unique authority, his unparalleled relationship to the Father. Schweizer holds that there is no single genuine saying which shows that Jesus accepted the titles of Messiah, Son of God or Servant (all his views are stated with authority and forcefulness, unmarred by acidity, which are attractive whether one agrees or not); these are all ways in which the community struggled to express the personality which they had experienced. The presentation of how the kingdom features in Jesus' ministry contains many insights, how he, in fact, accomplishes the prophecies (the early Christians notice

this in their reflection on the phenomenon of Jesus and write it into their accounts), how he can accept the world by bringing the kingdom to it. Again the author strikes to the core of the Christian message in his assessment of Jesus' attitude to the Law; his ambivalent attitude towards it corresponds to his radical, uncompromising, all-or-nothing approach. Schweizer succeeds in conveying more of the attractive yet *insaisissable* quality of Jesus than any author I can remember.

After this most important chapter, Schweizer goes on to develop how the vision of Jesus developed among his followers, their attempts to express this in the context first of Jewish thought and then of Hellenistic. Among important features of the book are the analysis of the differences between Jewish and New Testament apocalyptic (p. 59), and between previous uses and the Christian use of the title Son of Man (p. 67—none of the earlier or contemporary literature had spoken of the Son of Man as coming to earth, only to heaven; this is a characteristic of Christian apocalyptic). His plea (p. 85) that dogmatic formulations can be properly understood only in their original thought-context is amply illustrated by the richness he brings to them. Only slightly disappointing is the treatment of the transition to the view of Christ as cosmic Lord, an important step which it is difficult indeed to track.

It is a recommendation that the book ends, and does not begin, with the gospels, the theology of their writers, and with the non-Pauline writings, for these stand at the end, not at the beginning of a process. The treatment of these is satisfactory and has a number of good points pithily stated; but they are none of them as striking as the pages on the Man who fits no Formula.

HENRY WANSBROUGH

GOD AND MAN, by Anthony Bloom. DLT, 1971. 125 pp. £1.50.

There is more fun for the textual and literary than for the theological critic in this new collection. My conjecture is that first of all the archbishop was constrained to talk about things he didn't really want to talk about; then the talks were badly recorded and unintelligently

transcribed in manuscript (there are entire passages without a vestige of sense, as well as errors that upturn whole sentences—e.g. 'different' for 'indifferent' on p. 44); then typed by someone who could not read the manuscript (e.g. 'clear' for 'dear' on p. 57),