

Theology in a Century of Death

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IN the fifth of a series of six Norton Lectures given at Harvard University in 1973 on the semantics of music called *The Unanswered Question* and recently broadcast on BBC 2, Leonard Bernstein said that 'ours is a century of death, and Mahler is its prophet'. A history of the twentieth century must inevitably read as a catalogue of death and any authentic prophecy about the twentieth century must have the experience of death at its centre. Since 1914 the toll has mounted as cataclysm has been overtaken by self-inflicted cataclysm until the number of those killed during the last sixty years is no longer calculable.¹ The optimism of the nineteenth century could be maintained until the First World War, but any attempt to perpetuate it after that has been a delusion. We can hardly be optimistic any longer about a civilization that is so self-destructive. The twentieth century experience as an experience of death has its true beginning not in 1900 but in 1914. The first fourteen years of this century were really a hangover from the bouyant bourgeois idealism of the last century. The authentic twentieth century experience was possible only after 1914. Since that first holocaust Europe and North America has moved from an initial optimism about its consequences (Lloyd George's 'land fit for heroes') to disillusion, unemployment, depression and further destruction in 1939. Since 1945 we have had the initial optimism of the welfare state, followed by disillusion, unemployment, successive economic crises, followed by who knows what.

Before 1914 there were a few precursors who, we can now see, gave intimations of what was to come. These prophets had already experienced the disintegration of bourgeois culture; Schnitzler, Karl Krauss, Thomas Mann in his early novels, Mahler. Others had even set about reconstructing our perception of reality, the cubist painters between 1907 and 1914, and Schönberg. Mahler came too soon to be able to attempt the reconstruction of musical experience at the beginning of the twentieth century, but, besides experiencing the collapse of bourgeois humanism, he was the one person who foresaw what the future held. In his music he was the prophet, as Bernstein says, of what was to come. Apart from the caricature and purposeful banality of some passages, Mahler's music reaches a series of peaks of intensity in a number of very slow adagio movements in his symphonies, each an apparent premonition of death: the last movement of the third sym-

¹For an estimate see G. Elliot, *Twentieth Century Book of the Dead*, Harmondsworth, 1973, pp. 211-235.

phony, the adagietto of the fifth, the beginning of the *Faust* movement in the eighth, the *Abschied in Das Lied von der Erde*, the last movement of the ninth, and the funeral march from the unfinished tenth symphony. And yet even this omits the most crushing and tragic of all his works. The Somme, Auschwitz and Vietnam have come to represent the barbarity which has been typical of each epoch of the twentieth century and it is possible to see these events anticipated (though it was obviously not Mahler's intention that we should) in the three hammer blows that fell the composer in the last movement of the sixth symphony. Although Mahler is now acknowledged to have been a great symphonist he was certainly not recognised as such in his own day, with the exception of a small group of devotees. It was not until the fiftieth anniversary of his death in 1961 that his music found an extensive receptive audience. Was this because he was misunderstood? Bernstein thinks not. He suspects that Mahler's listeners have always guessed what was being said, but they could not bear it. Mahler's premonition was too uncomfortable. We can accept it now as part of our own experience because we have heard the same sort of things from so many quarters. Death is the twentieth century experience and it is this general human experience which is at the root of the crisis of twentieth century culture.

Mahler's vision was fulfilled soon enough after his death in 1911, when ten million were slaughtered in the cause of imperialism, but it did not stop there as Europe went from one crisis to another. Curiously perhaps, the artist who best typifies this period for me is Sibelius. Sibelius is often thought of as a rather unfashionable composer who wrote a few popular tunes. He is indeed popular enough in his first three symphonies and in much of his incidental music for the theatre, but then there is a change. After his self-imposed exile at Järvenpää Sibelius composed a series of very disturbing works, beginning with the fourth symphony of 1913, which seem to undermine the emotional responses which had become usual with romantic music. Herbert von Karajan has recently said that this fourth symphony is one of the three most exhausting works to conduct because in the course of the symphony everything seems to fall apart. (The other two works which he finds so exhausting are Berg's *Three Pieces* op.6—also written at the outbreak of the First World War—and Strauss's *Elektra*.) In 1926 Sibelius wrote *Tapiola* which is his last work (apart from his incidental music for a performance of Shakespeare's *Tempest*) and this is still today very painful music to hear. He wrote no more music until his death in 1957, and it is clear from listening to the late music of Sibelius that after *Tapiola* he could not carry on, there could only be silence. Hidden in a remote Finnish forest, Sibelius seems to have experienced the crisis of twentieth century culture as acutely as anyone.

It is curious that while the Scandinavian countries have not been at the centre of recent historical events, they do seem to have captured the mood of the epoch more consistently than anywhere else.

Vienna at the turn of the century is where we first see the disintegration of bourgeois culture: Schnitzler and Klimt foreshadow the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But apart from Schönberg (who later sought refuge from the Nazis in the United States) and Berg, Vienna did not lead anywhere and is even now living on its past—Johann Strauss, postcards of Franz-Josef, and Sachertorte. In Scandinavia, however, we find the moral collapse of the bourgeoisie in Ibsen, the nightmares of Mönch, the self-questioning of Sibelius, the cosmic conflict of Nielsen's symphonies, and the desolation of Ingemar Bergmann.

What more evidence is needed of the collapse of idealism and the resulting desolation? Joyce, Brecht, Canetti, Kafka, Beckett. Grosz, Picasso's Guernica, Bacon. Thomas Mann, Günther Grass, e.e.cummings. Shostakovitch and Solzhenitsyn. Ours is a century of death and any form of artistic expression and any intellectual movement which fails to confront and reflect this will have little to offer our age in the long run. Interestingly enough, while I have suggested that Scandinavia has been remote from historical events but at the centre of the twentieth century experience, this is not true of Britain. Britain was never occupied nor did we have concentration camps and a secret police, but Britain did suffer a great deal in two wars and yet you would never guess it from the intellectual and artistic life of these islands. Britain has been and remains insular. What few exceptions there are (Orwell, perhaps, and Vaughan Williams in his fourth and sixth symphonies) only emphasise the isolation of British culture.

If we are to judge the seriousness of any intellectual or artistic movement we have to place it in its social and historical context and see how it reflects and helps us to bear the twentieth century experience, without pretending that we can escape from it. Art will emerge as great art, and intellectual criticism will last, only in so far as it faces this crisis. This is why Solzhenitsyn for all his faults will stand the test of time whereas Nabokov and Iris Murdoch for all their virtues will not.² If the basic test is to be applied to all cultural phenomena, how well does twentieth century theology stand up? Just how much of modern theology has come to terms with the twentieth century experience and can remain an authentic part of our culture? How much, on the other hand, has merely tried to preserve the relics of bourgeois humanism or has tried to escape from the inexorability of European barbarity and brutality?

At the beginning of the twentieth century theology was a fairly accurate reflection of the general culture of the previous century. The great names up to the outbreak of the 1914-18 war were Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf von Harnack. Ritschl had formed a moral theology which avoided any contact with the conflicts of the political world, and in a negative sense Ritschl helped to bolster an attitude which

²Solzhenitsyn's writings up to *Cancer Ward* prove him to be a great writer by any standards, but his most recent publication *Lenin in Zürich* is so poor that the onus is now on him to show that he can maintain his former achievement in exile.

illustrates completely Genet's definition as formulated in *The Miracle of the Rose* that saintliness 'is recognised by the following : that it leads to Heaven by way of sin'.

How far, then, does this strange, sad, twilight creature fit in with any traditional standards of saintliness that are not those of Genet, but of accepted hagiography? Are we simply dealing with a private canonisation of Genet's according to his own theology, totally irrelevant to, and indeed at odds with the notion of saintliness as understood by the universal church for centuries?

Divine finds spiritual values independently of the majority ethos, since her whole social context is far removed from the *bien pensant* criteria of moral orthodoxy; it is genuinely a counter-culture, since it creates its values entirely with reference to itself, and not to a broader social framework. Her qualities, therefore, are manifested according to the ethic of the micro-society, rather than being adjusted to those of society at large; for her suffering is understood as suffering first of all for and at the hands of a homosexual lover, and is the outcome of a total spiritual and sexual devotion to him; it gives all, and asks and expects nothing in return, having as its *raison d'être* the abnegation of self in order that another, or others, may themselves escape suffering. The same may be said of her gentleness, never a weak characteristic, but rather a positive and caring affection; frivolity, which accompanies these two, and which is so much a part of the whole ethos, prevents them from ever becoming sentimental excesses.

But it is the final act of Divine that singles her out for saintliness, curious as this may seem, since in it lies the ultimate humility in terms of the ethos which is hers; the killing of the child constitutes the ratification of her martyrdom by the refusal of its merits—as she is prepared by her creator to receive the reward, she makes this gesture to demonstrate her own unwillingness to take it. It is the ultimate example of the publican figure, the 'unrighteous' man who is justified by his acknowledgement of spiritual worthlessness.

As a saint, then, Divine is far removed from the saintliness of the majority. Her qualities are not *per se* the attributes of saintliness, since incorporated into the context of compromise, normality, and accepted social values they would lose their significance. Such values as they are understood by the majority moral code may represent a viable approach to spiritual achievement for the many, but Divine is one of the few. Her saintliness is extreme, not everyday; exceptional, not normal. She has the qualities of the saints of legend, and she has these not *despite* the fact that she represents a counter-culture, but rather *because* of it. The saints whose lives have become part of universal mythology, far from conforming to orthodoxy, generally lived totally at variance with it. Their interpretation of counter-culture was different, but was none the less disruptive, shocking and unacceptable to the majority.

I would argue then that Divine's saintliness, if we have difficulty in recognising it, is strange for us not because she represents too modern,

opinion by their proclamation in support of the war policy of Wilhelm II and his counsellors. Among these intellectuals I discovered to my horror almost all of my theological teachers whom I had greatly venerated. In despair over what this indicated about the signs of the time, I suddenly realised that I could no longer follow either their ethics and dogmatics or their understanding of the Bible and of history. For me at least nineteenth century theology no longer held any future.⁵

Those who reacted against Liberal Theology and who felt the urgent need to reconstruct a new theology included Barth, Thurneysen, Brunner, Gogarten and, later, Bultmann. It is of first importance to remember that Dialectical Theology had its origin in the crisis which was at the heart of Europe at that time. It was in the first place a protest against the theology which had culminated in the First World War.

Barth's avowed aim was to make it possible to speak of God again after the reductionism of Liberal Theology, and the monument of this reaction is *The Epistle to the Romans* (not available in English until 1933). Barth had no more time for platitudes about the fatherhood of God. He considered any humanistic, cultural, philosophical approach from man to God to be a misrepresentation and ultimately a blasphemy against God's word which is directed towards man. Salvation is initiated by God in the objective reality of his revelation (Jesus Christ) to man. In the face of this revelation man can only respond and obey. The fissure between Barth and Harnack, moreover, came at precisely that point which had been located by Weiss and Schweitzer, but which had not then been pressed home—eschatology.⁶

Barth's is essentially an authoritarian schema which is no doubt at the bottom of Bonhoeffer's charge that Barth's theology is based on a 'positivism of revelation', a charge which Barth consistently claimed that he could not understand.⁷ Whatever one thinks of Barth's alleged positivism (and I remain convinced of the charge even though Jürgen Moltmann—himself a Barthian of sorts—considers that such a charge is fundamentally mistaken⁸) Barth's theology is central to the twen-

⁵K. Barth, 'Evangelical Theology in the Nineteenth Century', in *The Humanity of God*, London, 1967, p. 12f.

⁶H. M. Rumscheidt, *Revelation and Theology: An Analysis of the Barth-Harnack Correspondence of 1923*, London, 1972, p. 10: 'It is this insistence on God's otherness and in the double emphasis—God on earth and on earth God—that there is to be sought the element that influenced Barth and that was so distasteful to Harnack, namely eschatology'.

See also J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, London, 1967, p. 39: 'After the First World War the founders of "dialectical theology" took the eschatology that had thus been suppressed by idealism and condemned to ineffectiveness, and set it in the centre not only of exegetical but now also of dogmatic study. In the second edition of his *Römerbrief*, Karl Barth in 1921 makes the programmatic announcement: "If Christianity be not altogether and unreservedly eschatology, there remains in it no relationship whatever to Christ" (*The Epistle to the Romans*, London, 1933, p. 314)'.

⁷K. Barth, *Fragments Grave and Gay*, London, 1971, p. 121.

⁸J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, London, 1974, p. 197, n. 21: '“Dialectical theology” had no “authoritarian concept of the Word of God”. Anyone who still asserts that, misunderstands both its understanding of the Word and the concept of authority'.

tieth century experience and is a savage attack on the bourgeois theology of his day. It is no coincidence that one of Barth's main tasks has been to develop a moral theology which remains consistent with a vigorous socialism.

How was Catholic theology fairing at that time? Not very well. The modest attempts by von Hügel, Tyrrel and Loisy to take theology forward from the magisterial papalism of the first Vatican Council had been condemned as 'modernism'. The mainstream of Catholic theology then sank back into the non-historicity of Neo-Thomism. If ever there was a theology without any roots in contemporary experience this was it. (It is precisely this detachment from history that will prevent the use of structuralism, I am convinced, from making any significant advance in biblical hermeneutics.) And yet the efforts of Garrigou-Lagrange, Gilson and Maritain kept Neo-Thomism afloat for some decades.

After the First World War the slaughter was followed by unemployment, inflation, economic depression and the emergence of fascism and re-armament. Out of this maelstrom came existentialism. The concept of anxiety or dread (*angst*) may reflect the uncertainty of the time (though the idea goes back to Kierkegaard at least) but Heidegger's vision is essentially individualistic and introverted. Rudolf Bultmann, after an initial sympathy with Barth, derived his main inspiration—after the New Testament—from the Martin Heidegger of the 1920s, and it is paradoxical that while Bultmann's demythologising programme seems to be so much in tune with twentieth century sensibilities it is in fact an individualistic escape from the social experience of Europe. Although Bultmann carried on teaching at Marburg throughout the 1939-45 war and even managed to publish his writings though on a much reduced scale, he did in fact suffer a great deal during the war years for being a member of the anti-Nazi German Confessing Church. Bultmann even lost a brother in a concentration camp. But what relation does Bultmann's theology have to fascism and the concentration camps?

At the centre of Bultmann's theology is the quest for self-understanding. The questions which we ask in this enquiry about our own existence presuppose implicitly the question about God. Those questions which search for self-understanding find their most satisfactory answer, Bultmann claims, in the New Testament. Everything in the New Testament which is not overtly related to self-understanding is classified as 'myth'. Myth can either be rejected or reinterpreted, and Bultmann choose to interpret myth in terms of self-understanding in so far as this is possible. What then does Bultmann make of, for example, the resurrection. It is, according to Bultmann, the realisation that the death of Jesus of Nazareth is *pro me*. Bultmann wrote (in 1941!) of the resurrection of Jesus:

Cross and resurrection form a single indivisible cosmic event which brings judgement to the world and opens up for men the possibility of authentic life.

An historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceivable.

In this way the resurrection is not a mythological event adduced in order to prove the saving efficacy of the cross, but an article of faith just as much as the meaning of the cross itself. Indeed faith in the resurrection is really the same thing as faith in the saving efficacy of the cross, faith in the cross as the cross of Christ.⁹

What relation has this to fascism?

It is often alleged that Bultmann has provided from within theology the sternest challenge to the traditional assumptions of theology. He has, for example, proved to have been consistently sceptical about the historical content of the Gospels. For him the only sure and necessary facts for Christianity are that Jesus preached and that he was killed. All else can be and is doubted. Strangely enough, however, in assuming that the answers which will satisfy our quest for self-understanding can only be found in the New Testament, Bultman is basing his theology on a scriptural authoritarianism which is just as unyielding as that of Karl Barth, even if it is internally rather more critical. In a century like ours any existential theology (whether it be 'existentialist' or not) is inevitably a cop out, an escape from reality, no matter what passing contribution it may make to the history of theology. While the theology of Karl Rahner, who also took his inspiration from Heidegger, may have done much to free the Roman Catholic Church from a restricting and long outdated scholasticism, its significance is limited by the scholasticism that it presupposes and cannot now lead Catholic theology any further. Rahner has served his purpose. The same is true of Paul Tillich whose 'cultural theology' reduces Christianity to one more example, and not necessarily the best, of how the numinous can be experienced by the individual. Tillich was in fact closely involved in the events of German history, as a chaplain in the trenches at Verdun and in being forced to escape to the United States in 1933, but his resort to existentialism hardly seems an adequate theological response to fascism. Curiously it was Reinhold Niebuhr who helped Tillich to settle in the United States, who provided a theology much more in tune with the political and moral conflicts of European civilization at that time.

The centre of theological conflict during the 1930s was in neither the United States nor in Britain, but in Germany. It was not taking place in the Catholic Church which succeeded largely in coming to terms with fascism in a series of concordats, but in the Protestant Church in the struggle between the Confessing Church which resisted the Nazis and the German Christians who attempted a synthesis between Christianity and National Socialism. After Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, every university lecturer had to take an oath of allegiance to the Führer. Karl Barth was the only teacher of theology

⁹R. K. Bultmann, 'New Testament and Mythology', *Kerygma and Myth*, London, 1972, Vol. 1, pp. 39, 41.

in a German university who refused to take the oath without any reservations and he was expelled from his position at the University of Bonn in 1935. Like Thomas Mann, whose novels are at the heart of the twentieth century experience, Barth went into exile in Switzerland. Barth continued to be the main theological influence in the Confessing Church's struggle against fascism, despite his conflicts with Gogarten who went over to the German Christians, and with Brunner who stayed firm but angered Barth by his 'cultural' approach through a natural theology.

The other figure who emerged at this time in the struggle in Europe was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Like Barth who insisted that God alone was Führer for a Christian, Bonhoeffer scoffed at those who needed a Führer¹⁰. For all Bonhoeffer's personal piety and the latent individualism of his ethics,¹¹ he of necessity developed his ideas on community, discipleship and ethics against the constant problem of surviving in the National Socialist reich. Bonhoeffer at the end of his life was cut off from any wide audience while Bultmann was earnestly trying to liberate the twentieth century Christian mind from archaic thought-forms, but Bonhoeffer was living out and thinking out the conflict with death that has not long been absent from European history in the past sixty years. It can be confidently asserted that Bonhoeffer's letters and papers from prison have had a much wider influence since that time than Bultmann's demythologizing programme. In his fight against fascism Bonhoeffer was eventually murdered in 1945. It should now be clear that between 1914 and 1945 there are two men whose theology stands out as being serious and realistic because they speak from the centre of the twentieth century experience. That does not make it easy to understand or to agree with everything that Barth and Bonhoeffer have said, but their theology has a relevance and seriousness which most other theologies, Protestant and Catholic, lack. Theology, unlike art, does not just reflect life, but makes certain objective claims, so that it is not enough that theology is written from a social and historical experience. But such an experiential basis is a prerequisite for a theology being taken seriously.

How then are we to judge the theology that has appeared since the last war? Since then we have experienced the growth of nuclear armaments and monopoly capitalism, the worldwide activities of the CIA and imperialistic exploitation, starvation and malnutrition, Vietnam and the liberation struggles. How has Christian theology responded to this?

Since the 1939-45 war, theology has been as full of irrelevancies and contradictions as before. Tillich has continued his flirtation with eastern religions. Bultmann's line has been kept going, though in a modified way, more closely allied to the historical Jesus, by a succes-

¹⁰D. Bonhoeffer, 'The Leader (Der Führer) and the Individual in the Younger Generation', *No Rusty Swords*, London, 1970, pp. 186-200.

¹¹Whatever Bonhoeffer may have meant by 'religionless Christianity' he did not imply any lack of personal piety as can be seen from his personal letters, and the root of that puzzling expression must be found in Barth's view that God's righteousness brings about the abolition of religion.

sion of pupils prominent among whom have been Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling. The most significant movement, if ours can indeed be called a century of death, might seem to have been the Death of God theology. Certainly Thomas Altizer, William Hamilton *et al.* reflected the alienation experienced by the liberal bourgeois Christian in America of the 1960s. In a period when the human race has been flirting with self-annihilation, God has been conspicuous by his absence, by his apparent death. But in a period of destruction and desolation Christian theology is abrogating its task if it simply goes along with the prevailing culture and morality. Barth and Bonhoeffer are the key theologians of the period between the wars because they immersed themselves in the crises of that time without trying to escape. They stood out against fascism however by proclaiming the righteousness of God. Advocates of the Death of God, by contrast, have tried to inflate the human ego by claiming that we have to manage without God. God is not righteous, they say; God is not here; God is not.

The Christian response to the twentieth century and its ongoing crisis must be one of criticism, not acquiescence. Christian theology must challenge the dominant culture of our time. It must not try to prop up a fading liberal capitalism and its humanistic values, it must not adulate Stalinism, it must not choose existentialistic escape. It must be critical and look for something new. Theology can never be an ideology of death. Ultimately it must look for a newness that only God can create.

During the last decade or more a new area has been mapped out in contemporary theology, again in German Protestantism. The two key concepts in current theology are 'hope' and 'resurrection'. These are old themes that have been rediscovered after centuries of neglect and it is no coincidence that they have been rediscovered in the second half of the twentieth century. It has needed a century like ours, a century of death, to provide the historical and cultural context in which these ideas could re-emerge. Only a German Christian who feels the responsibility of Auschwitz could write a theology of hope. If one absorbs the horror that Auschwitz represents the response must be either despair or hope in a resurrection brought about by God. Many Jews, however, from their experience of Nazism, seemed to have discovered a secular resurrection in Zionism.

Never before has Western humanism placed so much value on the life of the individual as at the present time, as can be seen in attitudes to capital punishment, euthanasia, organ transplants and so on, while at the same time permitting the destruction of races (Vietnam, Biafra, Ethiopia). There is something frenetic and self-deceiving about our preoccupation with the well-being of the individual while we ignore the fate of millions. Western humanism seems to be covering up for the barbarity of twentieth century man. The crisis at the heart of twentieth century culture has detected this, but, apart principally from Barth and Bonhoeffer, European theology has only just caught up with this in Moltmann and Pannenberg. European theology has caught up

by crying out against the prevailing culture. It was not by chance that Jürgen Moltmann was in a prisoner of war camp when he first worked out his programme for the theology of hope that was to come to fruition in the 1960s.¹² Moltmann and Pannenberg may or may not be the most talented theologians of our epoch, but at the present time they are the two who should be taken most seriously.

Moltmann's view of the crucifixion has its roots in the events of his time as is clear when he says that Auschwitz is bearable only because it has been anticipated in God himself :

God himself hung on the gallows. . . . If that is taken seriously it must also be said that, like the cross of Christ, even Auschwitz is in God himself. Even Auschwitz is taken up into the grief of the Father, the surrender of the Son and the power of the Spirit. . . . As Paul says in 1 Cor 15, only with the resurrection of the dead, the murdered and the gassed, only with the healing of those in despair who bear lifelong wounds, only with the abolition of all rule and authority, only with the annihilation of death will the Son hand over the kingdom to the Father. Then God will turn his sorrow into eternal joy. This will be the sign of the completion of the trinitarian history of God and the end of world history, the overcoming of the history of man's sorrow and the fulfilment of his history of hope. God in Auschwitz and Auschwitz in the crucified God—that is the basis of a real hope which both embraces and overcomes the world, and the ground for a love which is stronger than death and can sustain death.¹³

Barth's reaction against the moribund Liberal Theology of the nineteenth century focussed on his detestation of Schleiermacher and his rejection of Hegel. It is paradoxical that both Moltmann and, particularly, Pannenberg should have gone back to Hegel, not to reproduce Liberal Theology but to pass beyond it.¹⁴ Pannenberg's theology betrays few signs of his having grappled with the experience of post-war Germany. It is, on the surface, the most rational and cerebral theology imaginable. Yet why should the apparently irrational and unpopular idea of 'resurrection' have emerged at the centre of theology at the present time? Precisely because God's resurrection liberates man from the present, the immediate present of twentieth century Europe, not as an escape from the present but as a transformation of it. Hegel's vision of a universal-history, modified by Pannenberg's openness to the future, the perpetual newness of God's future, with the as yet unrealised future activity of God, permits an alternative to the self-destruction of European man. Pannenberg's presentation of the future general resurrection and its anticipation in Jesus of Nazareth may appear traditional, antiquated and remote, but it is the only answer that the

¹²J. Moltmann, 'Dostoevsky and the Hope of Prisoners', *The Experiment Hope*, London, 1975, p. 85.

¹³J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, London, 1974, p. 278.

¹⁴A. D. Galloway, 'The New Hegelians', *Religious Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 4, December 1972, pp. 367-371.

Christian has to the crisis of twentieth century Europe and its culture, because it is God's answer. The crucified God is a risen God and man who is in the process of crucifying himself can also be raised up by God. The crucifixion is God's identification with the fate of man; the resurrection is a rejection of the despair inherent in that fate.

Moltmann and Pannenberg each have their theological acolytes and denigrators, which does not prove anything one way or the other. My purpose has been to open a perspective, to locate them in the development of the twentieth century and to identify their theology as a response to the general crisis of twentieth century culture. Within this overall picture it becomes clear that the theology of Moltmann and Pannenberg could only have appeared in the latter half of the twentieth century, no matter how traditional their ideas may seem. Theirs is the only serious and appropriate response possible to the recurrent emergence of chaos and barbarism, to the instability of contemporary society. It would be fitting if it were possible to predict where theology will lead over the next twenty years. It would be convenient if there were some budding theological genius on the horizon whom one could safely predict would be the leading light in the period that will take us to the end of the century. But if there is such a figure on the horizon I have not yet come across him. It is, however, extremely unlikely that such a figure will come from the theological faculty of a British university. New fashions will continue to come and go in theology, but one thing is sure. The only serious theology which can develop in the last quarter of this century must be in broad continuity with that of Moltmann and Pannenberg.