

text as it stands. Her efforts to avoid using the word 'man' in almost any context, above all in the phrase 'God and man' when used of Christ as man and in reference to the Eucharist, involves her in much awkwardness and ambiguity of phrasing and some rather odd theology. For Catherine a man was a man and a woman a woman. To each God had said: 'I make you free, subject only to myself' (Tommaso 69), and to each Catherine longed to give something of the utter freedom in re-

gard to all men (and, of course, women!) that was hers precisely because she was herself 'servant and slave of the servants of Jesus Christ'.

The book is quite fat and difficult to keep open, but it is beautifully set with only a handful of minor misprints; the prettied-up (and unidentified) version of Andrea Vanni's 'true image' of St Catherine on the cover is quite dreadful.

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FAITH IN HISTORY AND SOCIETY: Towards a practical fundamental theology by Johann Baptist Metz. *Burns & Oates*, London, 1980. pp 237 £6.50.

JENSEITS BÜRGERLICHER RELIGION: Reden Über die Zukunft des Christentums by Johann Baptist Metz. *Kaiser – Grünewald*, 1980. pp 148 DM 13, 50.

Paul Ricoeur's Sarum Lectures in Oxford last year concluded with unstinted praise for Metz's recent work. On the other hand, in the Hulsean Lectures which Charles Davis gave in Cambridge in 1978 a much more restrained and even somewhat sour assessment emerges. *Faith in History and Society*, to my mind, consolidates the author's claim to have established a radically new approach in Catholic theology. Whether that judgment will be confirmed by many English readers is another matter: the translation (by David Smith) is so fuzzy and wayward that few will persevere to the end.

We cannot do without a rational Christian apologetics (chapter 1). The response to the rise of the bourgeoisie after 1789 (the word "Bürger" appears on every other page but is systematically translated "middle-class citizen" or "citizen" *tout court*), with their emphasis on the individual and on freedom, was the ultramontane and neo-scholastic ghetto, with its consecration of the absolutist theory of sovereignty in 1870 and its fear of "subjectivism" (chapter 2). The defeat of that form of Catholicism at Vatican II has left us with a very "liberal" and "privatised" bourgeois religion (chapter 3). The available theologies, from Karl Rahner's transcendental anthropology to Moltmann's speculative gnosticism and Pannenberg's

universal history, are irretrievably *idealist*. The only way beyond this is to insist on the primacy of *praxis* – which, for Christians, means the primacy of following Jesus as disciples: "The Christian idea of God is intrinsically practical – God cannot be thought of at all unless the thought irritates and encroaches on the immediate interests of the one having the thought" (chapter 4). Far from being something extra, or an incubus that burdens mankind, biblical religion is precisely what historically constitutes free persons (p 61). The function of the Church is to act as the public *memoria passionis Jesu Christi* (chapter 5). To keep alive memories of the suffering of the derelicts and the oppressed is to constitute a threat to the established order (chapter 6). The history of freedom is a history of suffering (chapter 7). The Church is a movement, a "being called out", an exodus, etc. (chapter 8). We now have to choose between methods in theology, and ways of being Catholic: the way of transcendental idealism of one sort or another, or the way of telling stories that affect our practice (chapter 9). Bourgeois teleology of evolution must be challenged by biblical eschatology of catastrophe (chapter 10).

In the final chapters Metz works out the three basic categories of the kind of theological work which he envisages. The

first category is memory, remembering, anamnesis, *memoria passionis Jesu Christi* (chapter 11). But the memories are *shared*, so the second basic category is narrative, story-telling (chapter 12): "Christianity as a community of those who believe in Jesus Christ has, from the very beginning, not been primarily a community interpreting and arguing, but a community remembering and narrating with a practical intent – a narrative and evocative memory of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus" (p 212). Seizing a phrase from Wilhelm Schapp, Metz insists that our minds are "in Geschichten verstrickt", our minds are knitted of stories. The third and final category is solidarity: recalling by telling their story the memory of the defeated and the dead we demonstrate our solidarity with all who have been called to become free persons in the sight of the God of the living and the dead (chapter 13).

Having criticized Rahner for his idealism Metz nevertheless produces his theological work as a model of how to bring system and story together in theology. He makes the very illuminating suggestion that the best way to read Rahner's theological work is to take it as the autobiography of a soul (pp 219-228). Once it is established that theology is primarily telling a story that, by keeping certain disturbing memories alive, creates and extends fraternal solidarity, there would be plenty of room for interdisciplinary and social-critical theological questioning – theology as kibitzing, to borrow Richard Rorty's term for the philosophy of the future (Yiddish: to comment while watching a game, to joke, fool around, wisecrack, to tease, needle, to carry on a running commentary while another is working). Metz insists

NEW ESSAYS ON HUMAN UNDERSTANDING by G. W. Leibniz. Translated and edited by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennet. Cambridge University Press, 1981. £28.00 h/c. £10.00 p/b.

This is a much needed and excellent addition to the English translations of Leibniz. It is based on the Robert-Schapers edition of the *Nouveaux Essais* published in 1962 by the Akademie-Verlag of Berlin. It also relies on the edition of Locke's *Essay* edited by Peter Nidditch and published by the Oxford University Press in 1975. The translators offer a readable text

that the *memoria passionis* needs to be told, and re-told, as a story, not out of condescension to the "simple faithful" who could not understand the message without illustrations (as St Thomas virtually holds: *Summa Theologiae* Ia, 1, 9) but simply because there is no other way of sharing the memory and thus of recreating the believing community.

Obviously this is one more book about theological method, and there is in any case a perceptible trend towards "narrative theology". The rest of the work remains to be started, but Metz has surely opened the way.

The little collection of lectures and addresses is chiefly remarkable for the text of the one at the 1978 *Katholikentag* which enraged Cardinal Hoeffner and led him to denounce it as recommending a "minimalistic" version of Christian faith. The text shows that Metz simply preached a sermon on how the German Catholic Church which is so generous with money in gifts to the Third World should face up to the fact that the money comes in the first place from collusion in exploitation of that same Third World. But when the University of Munich appointed Metz to the principal chair of theology last year Cardinal Ratzinger, invoking the concordat, prevented him from getting the job (he stayed professor in Münster). No reasons were ever made public, but Metz originated the "political theology" which gave rise to "liberation theology" in Latin America, and that was presumably enough for the intolerant and reactionary cardinals of the German Catholic Church.

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which certainly displaces the excruciating version of A. C. Langley published in 1896. They also provide useful notes and an Introduction which is void of serious philosophical commentary but which supplies the reader with all the basic information about the origins of the *Nouveaux Essais*. Highly recommended.

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