

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.

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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.

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