327-335; Acts of Peter 1:10; 3:17f (*c.* AD 160); Muratorian Canon (*c.* AD 170). Clement's references both to Paul's preaching 'in the West' (5:6) and to his reaching 'the extreme limits of the West' (5:7) refer most likely to the area of Gades. Cf. E. E. Ellis, '"Das Ende der Erde" (Apg 1, 8)' in *Der Treue Gottes Trauen, FS G. Schneider*, tr. R. Riesner, ed. W. Radl (Freiburg [1991], 277-287 = Eng. text *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 [1991], 123-132.

[15] Harnack (note 13, II, i, 239f.) regarded the Pastorals as Pauline letters (AD 59–64) that were supplemented. But, as K. Aland has argued, with no textual evidence for such later interpolations, this hypothesis is improbable. Harnack thought Paul's mission to Spain (239) to be probable (A. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, 2 vols. (New York [1908]), II, 94n. Cf. K. Aland, 'Neutestamentliche Textkritik und Exegese' in *Wissenschaft und Kirche, FS E. Lohse*, ed. K. Aland and S. Meurer (Bielefeld [1989]), 140ff.

[16] W. Rordorf, 'Nochmals: Paulusakten und Pastoralbriefe' in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament, FS E. E. Ellis*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne with O. Betz (Grand Rapids [1987]), 319-327, 323ff. The route to Rome is different from that in the Lukan Acts.

[17] So, J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London [1963]), 34-36; J. Jeremias, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus* (*NTD* 9, Göttingen [^{2}1981]), 2f. Robinson (note 14, 81-84) and B. Reicke, 'Chronologie der Pastoralbriefe (*TLZ* 101 [1976]), 82-94, date the Pastorals *c.* AD 57-58. But can a dating in the midst of a number of other Pauline epistles account for the changed historical circumstances and the different kinds of themes and traditions reflected in the Pastorals?

[18] Cf. W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos* (Göttingen [^{5}1965]), *passim*. But see M. Hengel, *The Son of God*, (London [1966]), 2 = German text 10f.

[19] E. E. Ellis, *Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society* (Exeter [1989]), 102-111; *idem* (note 8), 238-248.

[20] Cf. C. J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen [1989]); M. Hengel, *Acts and the History of Early Christianity* (London [1979]), esp. 35-68. Otherwise: G. Lüdemann, *Das frühe Christentum nach den Traditionen der Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen [1987]).

God Revealed in Creation

Review Article

BY THE REVD DR W. D. HUDSON
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Systematic Theology, Volume 1 (T. & T. Clark [1992] £27.95, pp. xv + 473, ISBN 0-567-09697-5) by Wolfhart Pannenberg is an English translation of the first of the three volumes which make up what has been hailed as 'a monumental achievement destined to provide a new touchstone of theological scholarship for decades to come'. Its author is Professor of Systematic Theology in the Protestant Theological Faculty at the University of Munster and Director of the Institute for Fundamental Theology and Ecumenics. He is, of course, rightly described on the cover of this volume as one of the foremost systematic theologians in the world today. The three-volumed study brings together the fruits of a lifetime's scholarship in his discipline.

Hesitant as one may be to voice quite such extravagant eulogies of his work as do some of the theologians quoted on the cover, there is no denying that this book is remarkable for its massive scholarship; and admirable for the cogency of many of its arguments and the unfailing clarity with which conclusions are drawn from them. It cannot but arouse the greatest interest in anyone who works in the discipline to which it is an undeniably distinguished contribution.

It begins with a discussion of the nature of theology. God is said to be 'the exclusive and all-embracing theme' of systematic theology. The latter must never be allowed to deteriorate into mere talk about human beings – i.e. into the anthropology, sociology, or psychology of religion. However, there is a sense in which systematic theology has everything to do with mankind as well as with God. 'In the systematic presentation of Christian teaching the world, humanity, and history are claimed as an expression of the deity of God and as testimony to it . . . Christian teaching is viewed and structured in terms of a history which aims at the salvation of humanity and the renewal of creation . . . In this . . . God is central.'

The second chapter deals with the concept of God. There are some brief references to British analytical philosophy but these quickly give place to a discussion of natural theology. Much is made – though not in my view very illuminatingly – of the difference between 'the natural theology of the philosophers' and 'the religious experience of God by means of a sense of the working and being of God in creation'. The idea that God reveals himself in creation would appear to be central to Pannenberg's theology.

A long and learned discussion of how religion is related to theology follows in the next chapter. Its aim would appear to be that of bringing into clearer focus the question of how the primacy of God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ can be shown to be both intelligible and veridical in an age such as our own. In the fourth chapter this conception of God as revealed in Christ is brought into relationship with the notion of revelation through creation and human history. 'Without the biblical theology of history which is embraced by the concept of revelation the idea of the Word of God remains a

mythical category and an instrument of unproven claims to authority ... Jesus Christ, then, is the Word of God as the quintessence of the divine plan for creation and history ...'

And so to the doctrine of the Trinity. A masterly review of the emergence of this doctrine is offered and then Pannenberg addresses what appear to him to be the most important intellectual questions to which it gives rise. We find ourselves in the midst of a discussion designed to show that the forms of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit have no genesis from anything other than themselves. God is the same in his eternal essence as he reveals himself to be historically.

The final chapter begins with the ominous sentence: 'Any intelligent attempt to talk about God ... must begin and end with confession of the inconceivable majesty of God which transcends all our concepts.' Again there are pages upon pages of erudition about how philosophers and theologians have attempted to talk about the inconceivable. But on almost the last page we are told that while 'there appears to be no way of showing how we can combine the unity of the infinite and the finite in a single thought without expunging the difference between them', there is one idea which 'leaps over the frontiers of logic' and is found 'only in a very different field, that of the dynamic of the Spirit', namely 'the thought of the divine love'.

Two things would worry me if I were Pannenberg. One, that in systematic theology, as in any other intellectually respectable discipline, it must be true that we cannot conceive of the inconceivable. Love – especially divine love – can no doubt work wonders. But it cannot eliminate self-contradiction. True, in theology, as in science, what at first appears to be self-contradictory may in due course turn out not to be. That may be a good reason for not jumping to conclusions. But not for supposing that, just because we are talking about God, we can dash around 'leaping over the frontiers of logic' and always landing on our feet.

The other thing that would worry me is what may well be happening in what is now called quantum cosmology. If there really is a fifty-fifty chance, as Stephen Hawking and others would have it, that within a decade they will have a Theory of Everything which demonstrates that the physical universe did not need to have a creator, what happens to a theism that is entrenched in the doctrine of divine creation? I happen to think that theism could, suitably revised, survive any such development and have written elsewhere as to how and why. But that this development would rock Pannenberg's theology to its foundations seems to be beyond question.

From Desk to Pulpit

The Junior Church

Only Part of the Story

BY THE REVD VERNON MARSH, BA,
PORTSMOUTH

For a Sunday in Advent

It's very close now and I expect you're all getting very excited. Shall I tell you what I'm looking forward to the most? It's the Spring flowers and the chocolate eggs that I like!

Yes, it's very near ... only *nineteen* weeks to Easter! (*Insert the correct number of weeks for the Sunday on which the talk is given*)

Easter is the time when we think about part of the story of Jesus. There are lots of different parts to Jesus's story, and I've brought along a box full of things to help me remember some of them. But I'll need you to help me remember what the different things are supposed to remind me about.

(*The next part of the talk allows the children to repond to each item before the speaker reveals or confirms why it has been brought*)

A ball ... because Jesus was a child and must have played and had fun.

A saw ... because of his father's work.

A towel ... because of his baptism – he must have got wet!

A bell ... because of the people he healed from skin diseases.

A bag of hay labelled 'for the inn at Jericho' ... because Jesus told stories, including the Good Samaritan (the hay is for his donkey).

A loaf of bread ... because of the Last Supper.

A cross ... because of Good Friday.

An egg box ... because of Easter.

Finally, a doll wrapped in a blanket ... because of Christmas.

Of course, I know that what you're looking forward to is Christmas and not Easter ... yet!

But it's very important to remember that Christmas is only part of the story, and that the baby whose birth we are so glad about grew up, became a man, lived, loved, healed, told stories, suffered, died, and was raised to new life.