

The concluding chapter (pp. 213-226) traces the themes of Christian patience and hope. It also traces the developing doctrine of positive nonviolence in Tertullian, Origen, and Lactantius.

Hornus is to be commended for his penetrating analysis of both the historical and theological issues involved. His study is of greatest importance in assessing correctly the attitudes toward war, violence, and the state during the first four centuries of the church.

Andrews University

GERHARD F. HASEL

Rice, Richard. *The Openness of God: The Relationship of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will*. Nashville, Tenn.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980. 95 pp. Paperback, \$4.95.

This vigorous and tightly written little book, the first by a young theologian whose Chicago dissertation was a study of process theologian Charles Hartshorne, attempts to distance itself in some respects from process theology but owes much to it. It is a brave attack upon what the author calls "the traditional understanding of God's relation to the world," according to which God is sovereign and omnipotent, in complete control of events, having perfect foreknowledge, sitting enthroned outside of time as Lord over time, with past, present, and future all as one to him.

Rice insists that to hold this traditional understanding is to make human free will an illusion or to be guilty of intellectual laziness, entangled in all sorts of contradictions. Against it, Rice brings what he calls "the open view of God," according to which God experiences time and events serially, in principle just as we do. He is not changeless, but rather he is ever learning, ever experiencing new things. He does not know the future decisions which men will freely make as individuals, nor does he know the consequences that will flow from those decisions, because those decisions have not yet been made and are therefore not there to know. But God is clever: he knows all the options and can anticipate any eventuality. Though God plays the game fairly and the "cards are not stacked," the final outcome is assured because he is so good at the game. No matter what may go wrong, he has a contingency plan.

By taking this position, Rice thinks to solve some age-old conundrums and resolve such ancient antinomies and dilemmas as that posed by David Hume: "Is He willing to prevent evil, but not able? then He is impotent. Is He both able and willing? whence then is evil?" Rice believes his view makes more rational the idea of free will, replacing the notion of predestination with the concept of perfect anticipation and skillful planning. God becomes more sympathetic and egalitarian, and creatures become

more important. Thus, God is not able to prevent evil, but he knows how to mitigate it. Perhaps Hume would have said that such a position attributes to God mitigated impotence.

This reviewer fails to see how Rice's "open view" really resolves any of the dilemmas it addresses, except by ignoring one of the horns. Furthermore, whether or not his God "stacks the cards," Rice does. He compares the foreseeing of future decisions to the making of a square circle, but that is a specious analogy; a better analogy is making a circle into a square, which God can do. Is it any more wonderful to assert that God has perfect diachronic knowledge than to say he has perfect synchronic knowledge?

Furthermore, Rice fails to acknowledge the elusiveness of the whole idea of freedom, inadequately defining it as involving "the absence of external compulsion." Since one of his major motives is to protect the idea of freedom, we must require him to develop this notion with the same degree of theological and philosophical rigor which he has attempted to apply to divine sovereignty. Nor has he fully solved the problem of evil, for even though his God does not have absolute foreknowledge, God is supposed to have the cleverness and resourcefulness not to let evil get out of hand! But a fireman who has the skill to put out a fire, but fails to do so, is not much less culpable than a fireman who fails to prevent a fire. Rice concedes that God can limit the options available. So freedom is not total, after all. To use an unseemly metaphor, God lets the devil win a few hands (why?) but holds the trump card all the time. To change the metaphor, the whole problem is turned into a "cat-and-mouse" game. On the other hand, Rice feels that God can only respond to human decisions and events, not control them, which makes him a slave, not the master, of all that happens. Rice has, in short, removed determinism far from man, only to threaten God with it instead.

Rice is concerned to deal with biblical objections to his view. For example, he has a sort of futurological model of prophecy. God can predict because of the inevitable consequences of present realities, because of his own intentions to act, and because of a combination of these two factors. But does not the mention of inevitability reintroduce the specter of determinism?

Rice claims that his view provides "support of creaturely significance," and we may agree that it makes the sizes of God and man a little more nearly equal. But not everyone will regard human responsibility and potency as a "basis for hope and optimism" (p. 80)! Rice's theology has the merit of giving integrity to prayer, but when it comes to intercessory prayer even he cannot avoid mystery and paradox, things which he usually finds quite distasteful. Perhaps when he meditates on matters longer he may find the mystery and paradox again extending over areas where he

had thought to expel them. Rice mistakes one side of the truth for the whole, but at least he lays out that one side with clarity.

The cover design by Dean Tucker is gorgeous.

Andrews University

ROBERT M. JOHNSTON