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Theology and the Drama of History

How can theology think and talk about history? Building on the work of the major twentieth-century theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar as well as entering into sharp critical debate with him, this book sets out to examine the value and the potential of a 'theodramatic' conception of history.

By engaging in dialogue not only with theologians and philosophers like von Balthasar, Hegel and Barth, but with poets and dramatists such as the Greek tragedians, Shakespeare and Gerard Manley Hopkins, the book makes its theological principles open and indebted to literary forms, and seeks to show how such a theology might be applied to a world intrinsically and thoroughly historical. By contrast with theologies that stand back from the contingencies of history and so fight shy of the uncertainties and openness of Christian existence, this book's theology is committed to taking seriously the God who works in time.

BEN QUASH is Dean and Fellow of Peterhouse and lectures at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge. He is also Convenor of the Cambridge Interfaith Programme.

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This book is dedicated to my father, John,
my sisters, Samantha and Meg,
my brother, Toby,
and most of all

to my mother,
Marilyn.

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Feast of St Augustine of Hippo 2004

Abbreviations

<i>Adrienne</i>	<i>Erster Blick auf Adrienne von Speyr</i> (Einsiedeln, 1967)
<i>Affekt</i>	<i>Der antirömische Affekt</i> (Freiburg, 1974)
<i>Barth</i>	<i>Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie</i> (Einsiedeln, 1976)
ET	English translation
<i>ExT</i>	<i>Explorations in Theology</i> I–IV (San Francisco, 1989–95)
GL	<i>The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics</i> 1–7 (1982–89)
<i>Ganze</i>	<i>Das Ganze im Fragment</i> (Einsiedeln, 1963)
<i>Geschichte</i>	<i>Theologie der Geschichte</i> (Einsiedeln, 1959)
H	<i>Herrlichkeit: Eine theologische Ästhetik</i> I–III/2.2 (Einsiedeln, 1961–9)
‘In Retrospect’	‘In Retrospect’ in John Riches (ed.), <i>The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar</i> (Edinburgh, 1986)
<i>Maria</i>	<i>Maria für Heute</i> (Freiburg, 1968)
‘Mysterium’	‘Mysterium Paschale’ in J. Feiner and M. Löhrer (eds.), <i>Mysterium Salutis</i> III/2 (Einsiedeln/Cologne, 1970)
NK	<i>Neue Klarstellungen</i> (Einsiedeln, 1979)
<i>Reader</i>	<i>The Von Balthasar Reader</i> , Medard Kehl and Werner Löser (eds.), Robert J. Daly and Fred Lawrence (trans.), (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982)
<i>Skizzen</i>	<i>Skizzen zur Theologie</i> I–IV (Einsiedeln, 1960–74)
TD	<i>Theodramatik</i> I–IV (Einsiedeln, 1973–83)
ThD	<i>Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory</i> 1–5 (San Francisco, 1988–98)
TL	<i>Theologik</i> I–III (Einsiedeln, 1983–7)