

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View*, P.K. Jewett, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1975, 200 pp., \$2.95).

Paul Jewett, Professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, has sparked a minor uproar by writing this volume. It is a work about which one cannot easily remain thoughtfully neutral. Because there is so much in it that is informative and insightful, it is unfortunate that its central thesis must be rejected.

Jewett argues that three views concerning the relationship between man and woman have prevailed in the church: androgyny as the ideal, which he rightly rejects; a hierarchical relationship, which he opposes throughout the volume; and a full partnership. Taking a leaf out of Karl Barth's *Dogmatics*, Jewett bases his viewpoint on Gen.1:27: God created man in his own image, male and female he created them. What does it mean to be in the image of God? If the second clause is parallel to the first, then to be in the image of God means to be male and female. Male and female enjoy fellowship together, as God the Triune enjoys fellowship in himself.

Now the Old Testament legislation, Jewett argues, does not build on the concept of partnership entailed by this view of man's beginnings. Most of the laws concerning man/woman relationships are heavily slanted in the man's favour. This is because they are not the ultimate expression of God's will, but the true expression of God's will only at that time, and given to ameliorate the far severer distress of women in the contemporary world. Judaism, however, regressed and became separately harsh in its treatment of women: male chauvinism reigned supreme.

Jesus, however, treated women as persons, precisely as he treated men as persons. Jewett runs through the familiar facts: women were among his close friends, they were last at the cross and first at the tomb, and so forth. Although Jesus doesn't

polemize against Pharisaic attitudes toward women (as he does, for example, against their view of the Sabbath or of foods), he does, by his example, uphold the equality of the sexes, and therefore the importance of Gen.1:27.

What shall we say of the second creation narrative in Gen.2, in which the creation of the male precedes the creation of the female; or the account of the fall, in Gen.3? Jewett says that it is of no significance who was created first: to push that argument absolutely would mean that animals and trees are more important than human beings, since they were created before human beings. And even if Eve sinned first, Scripture says that it was Adam's sin (not Eve's) which wrought such damage to the race. If someone argues that the serpent approached Eve because she was intrinsically weaker, ontologically inferior, we might reply that Adam could be accused of being weaker, since he fell by the temptation of a woman, whereas it took the devil himself to trip up Eve.

But the issue will be finally decided on the basis of the Pauline passages. Jewett makes a great deal of Gal.3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (NIV). Moreover, he points out how atypical Paul was in his references to women as fellow-workers. In I Cor. it is clear that women "pray and prophesy" (I Cor.11:5). Hence, in more difficult passages like I Cor.14:33-35 and I Tim.2:11-15, Paul must be charged with inconsistency. Especially in the latter, Paul appeals to the second creation narrative, and uses typically rabbinic arguments to interpret it. In this, Jewett urges, Paul does not live up to his own true insights of the gospel. Paul contradicts his own affirmation that in Christ there is neither male nor female (Gal.3:28). The apostle, regrettably, breaks the analogy of the faith.

The study is garnished with several *addenda* and extra notes, which survey the sad story of misogyny, come out in favour of ordaining women, explain *analogia fidei*, and so forth.

Among the positive features of this book is the admirably lucid style, and the obviously (but no intrusively) broad understanding of the primary and secondary sources. Moreover, many of Jewett's

sub-arguments are cogent and convincing. The church has certainly gone astray whenever it has appealed to psychological, sociological and historical arguments to justify male chauvinism; and the record of the church is none too attractive in this regard. Because he expounds with vigour the passages which emphasize the importance, dignity, and status of women, he helps us see, for example that the admonition to the effect that women keep silence in the church can scarcely be taken absolutely, since they "pray and prophesy" in (at least) the Pauline churches. And he helps us see the essential absurdity, the conspicuous unscripturalness, of forbidding ordination of women on the ground that their form is so exciting to men as to annul their message by distracting their male hearers. Perhaps most helpful of all is the observation that the male/female relationship must not be reduced to the husband/wife relationship: whatever the biblical portrait of the husband/wife relationship may be, it does not follow that all women must be submissive to all men, nor that the Bible forbids any woman from being a bank manager, university professor, or holder of other positions of authority and influence.

Nevertheless, Jewett's book must be criticized on several points; and these points, far from being insignificant lapses, are of major importance.

My criticisms are in four areas. In the first place, there are several discrete places where I am unconvinced by Jewett's exegesis of a particular text. For example, on the very difficult verse, Gen.3:16, I have read nothing better than the recent article by Susan T. Foh, *Westminster Theological Journal*, 37 (1975), 376-383.

My second criticism centres on Jewett's appeal to *analogia fidei* ("the analogy of the faith"). In the practice of Protestant theologians, to appeal to the analogy of the faith has been to appeal to basic Christian theology, to accepted biblical truth, in order to arrive at meaningful and essentially biblical conclusions on some point not explicitly covered by the biblical data. It was an extrapolation of biblical teaching to a somewhat hazy area, or a way of clarifying relatively obscure biblical passages. Unfortunately, Jewett appeals to the analogy of the faith in order to exclude some of the biblical data. His controlling principle is no

longer the Word of God, which governs the *analogia fidei* in such a way that we may arrive at further tentative conclusions; rather, his controlling principle is the *analogia fidei* which Jewett himself constructs by selectively accepting the biblical witness, and which he then applies to the biblical witness to justify his selectivity. The Scriptures are not longer the "given".

A further abuse of analogy occurs when Jewett compares the man/woman relationship to the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Jewett is right, of course, to point out that, just as the Father and Son are equally God, so men and women are equally human, equally Man in the generic sense. But what can he say of the fact that the Son obeys the Father, and the Father commands the Son (especially in John and Hebrews), and never the other way around? In a footnote on p.133, Jewett says this cannot be part of the analogy, because it pertains only to Christ's self-humiliation in the economy of redemption. I am unconvinced that the pre-existent Son ever enjoyed the role of commanding his eternal Father; but even if that were so, the hierarchical pattern "God-Christ-man-woman" in I Cor.11, and alluded to elsewhere, has as its second element *Christ*, not *pre-existent Word*, or the like: the allusion is to the redeeming Messiah within the economy of redemption.

These criticisms lead on to the third area in which I must quarrel with Jewett, *viz.* his methods. First, he uses arguments from silence to suit his own purpose. He acknowledges, for example, that Jesus nowhere propositionally opposes Pharisaic attitudes to women, and suggests that his conduct is testimony enough; yet when he discusses the ordination of women, Jewett says that Jesus' conduct, his choice of twelve *male* apostles, has no theological relevance and is nothing more than a concession to the times.

Second, Jewett divides up the three models of male/female relationships, but is not careful enough to distinguish among the sub-groups. For example, although he does not explicitly say so, he gives the impression that all who adopt the "hierarchy" view necessarily insist on the ontological inferiority of the woman. Indeed, he insists that any kind of subordination entails inferiority. This enables him to avoid discussing the opinion of a large num-

ber of evangelicals who do not believe there is an entailment from subordination to inferiority. They speak in terms of roles, and emphasize with a vigour not less than Jewett's that men and women are equally human. They detest the shameful heritage of male chauvinism. In the marriage relationship they are quick to point out that the responsibility of the man to love his wife as Christ loved the church imposes on him an obligation and a standard nothing less than awesome, and all too frequently ignored by theologians. And yet they believe the Scripture teaches that certain *roles* are assigned to each partner. Whether wittingly or not, Jewett never really answers the most difficult objections to his interpretation, but only appears to.

Third, Jewett has an irritating habit of using texts of Scripture in ways not demonstrably relevant to their context. For example, on p.103 he says that the resurrected Lord's command to certain women to tell his brethren of his resurrection (Mt.28:9f.) "is a fact too long overlooked in adjudicating the place of women in the Christian ministry". The fact is, the text itself draws no such conclusion. Jewett's point is in principle a *possible* deduction; but methodologically it is potentially valuable only if it confirms what is propositionally stated elsewhere when the topic is expressly raised, or as a possible hint if the Scriptures say nothing propositional on the matter. But it is methodologically irresponsible to pit a possible deduction from one text against a clear opposing proposition from another text in order to support a theological structure, no matter how popular that structure may be. In the same view, Jewett makes Gal.3:28 the *magna carta* of Christian liberty. Of course, he recognizes that Paul is speaking primarily of man's relationship *coram Deo*, with respect to God, for the epistle to the Galatians is concerned with defending justification by grace through faith apart from works. But he argues that Paul's statement abolishes all hierarchical distinctions as well; and that, I submit, is simply not in view. It may or may not be a legitimate conclusion; but it is not the argument on Paul's mind. Similarly, although the switch from "or" to "and" (i.e., slave *or* free, but male *and* female) *may* be an allusion to the second creation narrative, it is a fairly major step from this possibility to the bold conclusion that Paul is rejecting the second creation narrative, or popular perversions of it, in favour of the first one.

And that brings me to my final area of criticism: Jewett no longer submits to the authority of Scripture, his protestations notwithstanding. See, for example, his comments on pp.51, 59, 65, 113f. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in his treatment of I Tim.2:11-15. In this passage, Paul relates the exclusion of woman from certain roles to the second creation narrative (man was created first) and to the fall (Eve sinned first). Jewett says that Paul here lapses lamentably into rabbinic exegesis inconsistent with his own theology. Admittedly, the question of how the New Testament uses the old is very complex; but there is no difficulty attached to what Paul *means*, at least as far down as verse 14 (and Jewett himself treat verse 15 fairly). Jewett, on the basis of Gal.3:28, argues that just as Paul formally abolished master/slave relationships, even if it took centuries for the church to abolish slavery, so also he abolished hierarchical relationships based on the male/female distinction. There is, I protest, a big difference. Paul in I Tim.2:11-15 appeals both to the Fall and to creation to support the latter; but he never does any such thing for the former. When Jewett goes on to protest that he is simply treating the Old Testament the way Jesus did, getting to the root of things, I reply that Jewett is not the Revealer of God. He ought not adopt the revelatory stance that Jesus did (because of who he is), or Paul did (because of what God gave him). And he ought not reject the given revelation.

This area of Christian theology is very complex. Jewett is certainly correct in saying that the church has been far too restrictive, and Christian theologians far too condescending, toward women. But over-reaction is not the answer. The Scriptures themselves require various restrictions in church life, for example: I think it can be affirmed that the church-recognized teaching authority over men is forbidden to the woman. And I am sure that the Scriptures teach something of male headship in the home, even if that is unpalatable to some and easily perverted into oppression by others.

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