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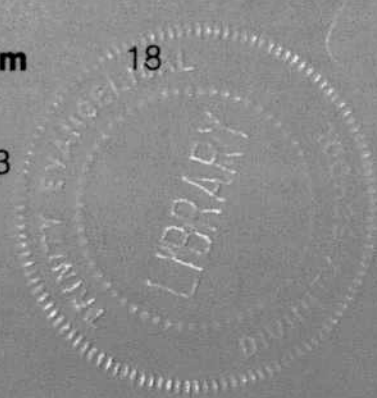
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Editorial: Virgin birth and bodily resurrection

Scholarly conjecture easily becomes scholarly fashion without good reason: theories that have no very secure basis often come to command wide assent. Once this has happened, it does not occur to most people to question the theories, since they are assumed to be securely based, and the person who does question them finds himself or herself swimming against a strong and sometimes hostile tide. Earlier in this century scholars who questioned the two-source theory of synoptic origins experienced this, and it is only recently that it has become respectable (almost) to have doubts about Markan priority and the existence of Q. In this issue of *Themelios* Gordon Wenham continues his article questioning the scholarly consensus on the book of Deuteronomy.

To recognize the deceptive power of scholarly fashion is important both for the inexperienced student, who may otherwise assume that uncertain scholarly opinions are in fact soundly based, and also for the scholar, whose research may be seriously flawed or limited by his or her failure to question the current tenets of scholarly orthodoxy. It is also particularly important that influential church leaders beware of theological fashions. David Jenkins, the new Anglican bishop of Durham (in the north of England), has caused much distress and dismay all over the world by expressing very publicly his opinion that Jesus was not born of a virgin and his doubts as to whether Jesus' body was physically raised from the dead. In doing so he has sided with certain scholarly opinions rather than with traditional and biblical orthodoxy. This must on any reckoning be a very serious thing to do, especially for a bishop of the church. It might conceivably be defensible were the scholarly opinions concerned really well founded; in fact, however, the bishop has aligned himself with some very questionable theological opinions.

So far as the virgin birth is concerned, there *are* difficulties in the Matthean and Lukan accounts of Jesus' birth, in particular difficulties in harmonizing the two accounts. But the fact remains (1) that Matthew and Luke are our earliest sources of information about Jesus' birth; they are apparently independent accounts — witness their differences — but they both agree that Jesus was miraculously born of Mary before she married Joseph. It is unlikely that the evangelists intended their respective accounts of Jesus' birth to be taken as unhistorical 'midrash'. (2) It is very probable that the tradition of Jesus' virginal conception antedates Matthew and Luke. The fact that other New Testament authors do not mention it explicitly proves nothing. (3) The earliest non-Christian version of the events, *i.e.* the Jewish accusation that Jesus was illegitimately born, is a recognition of the irregularity of Jesus' birth. Given this evidence, the traditional Christian view of Jesus' virgin birth has a lot going for it historically (as well as theologically); it is accepted by many

scholars, and is even allowed as a serious possibility by Raymond Brown in his standard, but by no means conservative, work on the subject *The Birth of the Messiah* (Geoffrey Chapman, 1977). It is, to say the least, premature for a bishop of the church to side with those who deny traditional Christian orthodoxy on this point.

So far as the resurrection is concerned, the case is even stronger for the traditional interpretation. There are some problems in harmonizing the resurrection narratives in the different gospels. But these problems are not insuperable, and in any case the differences between the gospels show the independence of their resurrection traditions. These independent traditions all make it quite clear that Jesus' resurrection was a raising and transforming of the physical body of Jesus, not just something spiritual or visionary.

Scholars have claimed that Paul, our earliest witness to the resurrection (writing 1 Corinthians about AD 55) viewed Jesus' resurrection as something visionary. But the claim is an argument from silence: from Paul's failure in 1 Corinthians 15 to mention the empty tomb and from his failure to distinguish his own vision of the risen Christ on the Damascus road from the earlier appearances of the risen Christ to others. And, if anything, the Pauline evidence points the other way. Paul probably implies the empty tomb when he speaks of the burial of Jesus before referring to the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:4); he probably implies that Jesus' physical body was raised when he speaks of the bodies of Christians being redeemed and transformed (*e.g.* Phil. 3:21). As for Paul's inclusion of himself in the list of witnesses to the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, this does not prove that he saw himself as a witness in the same sense as those who preceded him; but, even if he did, it is more likely that he regarded his own experience of the risen Jesus on the Damascus road as something more than a vision than that he regarded the earlier resurrection appearances as visionary.

The traditional Christian claim that the tomb of Jesus was empty on Easter morning goes back very early, and was accepted by the early Jewish opponents of Christianity who explained that the disciples stole the body (Mt. 28:15). That explanation was never plausible. The Christian explanation that Jesus' body rose from death makes much more sense: it accords with our earliest historical evidence, it fits with what we know of Jesus' remarkable life, it explains the character and dynamic growth of the early church. It is ironical that at a time when a Jewish scholar has come out in print arguing for the resurrection of Jesus' physical body — see the review of P. Lapidé's book later in this *Themelios* — an Anglican bishop can publicly question this traditional element of the Christian good news; this time the historical evidence favours the Jew's interpretation rather than the Christian's!

Bishop Jenkins by his public statements has given to certain doubtful scholarly opinions a respectability that those opinions do not deserve. Uninformed people inside and outside the church must inevitably wonder: why should a bishop of the church have discarded the traditional doctrines of the virgin birth and of the bodily resurrection, if he could have avoided it? The fact is that he could and should have avoided the opinions that he advocates: his opinions are not soundly based, and reflect more on uncertain theological fashion and on the secular philosophy that is so powerful in the West at present than on anything else. (On the philosophical background see Paul Helm's article later in this *Themelios*.)

Those of us who live in the West live in an age of doubt, and this doubt rubs off onto theologians and bishops and often, of course, onto theological students. In this situation we need prayerfully to ask God to save us from false teaching; we also need reminding that the good news of Christ revealed in the Bible remains as true and relevant and wonderful as ever. While we must be open to true scholarly insights, we must beware of deceptive theological fashions, and we must guard the gospel committed to our charge.

Some recent literature: R. T. France has written a number of very useful articles on the virgin birth, e.g. 'Scripture, tradition

and history in the infancy narratives of Matthew' in *Gospel Perspectives II* (ed. R. T. France and D. Wenham, Sheffield: JSOT, 1981), pp. 239-266. D. A. Carson's new and important commentary on Matthew (in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, ed. F. E. Gaebelin, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) has useful discussion of the infancy and resurrection narratives. Also on the resurrection see M. Harris, *Easter at Durham* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1985, an excellent analysis of the Bishop of Durham's views in the light of NT teaching); G. Osborne, *The Resurrection Narratives: A Redactional Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984); J. W. Wenham, *Easter Enigma* (Exeter: Paternoster/Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984, a careful harmony of the resurrection narratives, also available now in German). W. Craig has a number of useful articles: 'The bodily resurrection of Jesus' (*Gospel Perspectives I*, 47-74), 'The empty tomb of Jesus' (*Gospel Perspectives II*, 173-200, cf. his similar article in *NTS* 31, 1985, 39-67), 'The guard at the tomb' (*NTS* 30, 1984, 273-281).

Editorial changes

Our sincere thanks go to retiring editors Dr Gordon Wenham, Professor Jan Veenhof and Dr Emilio Nuñez for all that they have done for *Themelios* over a number of years. We welcome as our new Old Testament editor Dr Martin Selman of Spurgeon's College in London.

The hope of a new age: the kingdom of God in the New Testament

I. Howard Marshall

We are very glad to have been allowed to reprint this longer than usual article in Themelios, both because its subject is so important and because the author, who is Professor of New Testament at the University of Aberdeen, is such an authoritative expert in gospel studies. The article was written for a book entitled The Spirit in the New Age, edited by L. Shelton and A. Deasley and published by the Warner Press of Anderson, Indiana, USA. The book is one of a five-volume series of Wesleyan Theological Perspectives, being available only through the Warner Press; further details of the series may be obtained from the Press at PO Box 2499, 1200 East Fifth Street, Anderson, Indiana 46018. We are very grateful to Professor Marshall and to the Warner Press for their kindness in letting us reproduce the article.

Christian hope is manifestly based on the promises and actions of God, and therefore it is not surprising that a discussion of the kingdom of God (henceforward abbreviated in this essay as KG) should figure in this symposium. Although the phrase has been the subject of much biblical research in recent years, and although it is bandied about with great frequency in discussions of Christian social action, it is unfortunately often the case that it is used in a very vague manner and that there is a lack of clear biblical exposition in the churches on the meaning of the term. Our aim in this essay will be to harvest and assess some of the recent scholarly discussion with a view to showing how an understanding of the KG can give fresh vigour to our Christian hope in God.

Introduction

Discussion of the KG was particularly spirited up to about 1965, and by that date a certain consensus appeared to be developing about the meaning and significance of the KG, especially as the phrase appears in the Synoptic Gospels.¹ Some of the main points that emerged can be summed up as follows:

1. The writers of the Gospels regarded the KG as being the central theme of the teaching of Jesus. This can be seen from the frequency with which the phrase appears on the lips of Jesus as compared with other theological concepts,² and also from the way in which the Evangelists themselves identify it as the burden of Jesus' message.³ Consequently scholars tended to regard the KG as being in fact the principal concept in the actual teaching of Jesus.⁴

2. Among scholars who approached the gospel records with a rigorously critical methodology for separating off what they regarded as the authentic teaching of Jesus from later elements wrongly ascribed to him, it was agreed that some of the texts about the KG must belong to any critically established 'irreducible minimum' of the teaching of Jesus.⁵

3. According to the Evangelists Jesus announced both that the KG would come in the near future as the consummation of God's purpose and also that it was already present in some way during his ministry as the fulfilment of God's promises. One is tempted to say that there was an increasing consensus on how this evidence ought to be interpreted, namely that both of these elements were to be taken at their face value as authentic aspects of the teaching of Jesus; the only problem that then remained was to explain how these two elements could be credibly integrated with each other, one important suggestion being that the promise of the KG was fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus and would be consummated in the future.⁶ Nevertheless, there was a continuing powerful body of opinion which accepted that the KG was an entirely future entity in the proclamation of Jesus and that it was regarded as present only in the sense that an event which is known to be impending can have decisive effects on how people see the time just before its arrival.⁷

4. The term KG refers primarily to the sovereign activity of God as ruler or king and only secondarily to the realm over which he rules.⁸ Its content is the saving and judging action of God.

5. Insofar as the KG could be regarded as being present, it was so in and through the proclamation and activity of Jesus, and its presence (or, for upholders of the alternative view, its imminence) was in evidence in his parables and mighty works.⁹

Some twenty years later the mood of scholarship on these points has not undergone any substantial changes. However, there remain a number of questions where further precision is desirable, and some progress in answering them has been made. Some of these questions are:

1. Can we be more precise about the actual ways in which Jesus used the term KG? For example, did he use it simply in ways familiar to his audience, or did he implicitly transform its content, just as he appears to have done with other theological concepts?

2. How is the KG related to other concepts which appear in the teaching of Jesus?

3. How did Jesus see his own role in relation to the KG? This question needs to be asked quite specifically with reference to Jesus' self-understanding of his identity and role and also with reference to his premonition of his own death.

4. What did Jesus envisage as the results of his proclamation of the KG? To what extent did his message have a communal or corporate dimension so far as his own lifetime was concerned?

5. In what ways did Jesus envisage the future dimension of the KG? Had he any place in his thinking for what we know as the church?

6. Granted that the early church stood in some kind of continuity with Jesus and his teaching, what happened to the KG in its proclamation and its theology? This is a question which can be raised in two contexts. First, there is the theology of the church reflected in the NT epistles which is not overtly based on the sayings of Jesus. Second, there is the tradition of the teaching of Jesus which was handed down at first by word of mouth and then incorporated in the written Gospels. What did the early church make of the KG?

These points constitute a formidable agenda, and it will not be possible to treat any of them in an adequate way in a brief essay, still less to deal with all of them. It will, however, be clear that the answers to some of them are very relevant to the topic of Christian hope in that the questions force us to explore different aspects of the nature of the hope held by Jesus. Further, if we can see how the early church appropriated and made use of the teaching of Jesus, this may help us in turn as we seek to understand and apply the teaching of Jesus and his followers for today.

The meaning of 'kingdom of God'

As has been indicated already, there is a growing agreement that the phrase KG should be taken to refer primarily to God's sovereignty rather than to the realm over which he is sovereign. It will then refer to God's sovereignty in contrast to that of Satan (Lk. 11:18) who is the ruler of 'this world' (Jn. 12:31; 14:30). Those who adopt this view tend on the whole to assume that the reference must be to a specific act of divine rule, so that one can ask 'When is *the* kingdom of God coming?' (cf. Lk. 17:20). It is this assumption which causes problems when the teaching of Jesus that the KG is both present and future is examined, and it is understandable that some scholars should want to explain away either the present or the future dimension.

A possible way out of the impasse has been suggested by N. Perrin. His contribution is to show that KG may be a 'symbol' for 'God acting in sovereign power', i.e. God acting with might and imposing his authority so that people obey him. If KG functions in this way as a symbol, then it need not refer simply to a promised future realm or to a single mighty act by God. Rather by the use of the phrase 'Jesus is deliberately evoking the myth of the activity of God on behalf of his people . . . the exorcisms are a manifestation of that activity in the experience of his hearers', Perrin is saying that 'KG is here a symbol, and it is used in this saying because of its evocative power. The saying is a challenge to the hearers to take the ancient myth with renewed seriousness, and to begin to anticipate the manifestation of the reality of which it speaks in the concrete actuality of their experience.' Again, 'the symbol of the kingly activity of God on behalf of his people confronts the hearers of Jesus as a true tensive symbol with its evocation of a whole set of meanings, and . . . the myths, in the message of Jesus [become] true myth with its power to mediate the experience of existential reality.'¹⁰

Perrin is here making use of a distinction between symbols which have a one-to-one relationship to what they signify (as, for example, the mathematical symbol π signifies a precise, unique quantity) and symbols which 'can have a set of meanings that can neither be exhausted nor adequately expressed by any one referent',¹¹ and he is claiming that KG falls into the latter category. When Jesus uses the term KG he

is pointing beyond the phrase to that which it signifies, namely the powerful action of God which can be expressed in a whole range of situations.

In a similar way B. D. Chilton has argued that KG is an expression for 'the saving revelation of God himself' or 'God in strength', and that it refers to 'a personal God revealed'. This means that the KG need not be tied down in time; it can refer 'in the first place to God's self-revelation and derivatively to the joy of men in his presence', and hence it can further be used to refer to 'the reward held ready' in Luke 12:32.¹² Chilton's view is based on an exhaustive discussion of a set of texts in the Gospels which he examines in the light of their Jewish background especially in the diction of the Targums.

The approach of Perrin and Chilton is a very attractive one in that it offers a way out of the present/future dilemma which has shaped discussion of the KG for so long. It suggests that the dilemma is a false one, since a reference to 'God acting in power' is clearly not to be tied down to any one particular manifestation of the power of God.

Nevertheless, closer scrutiny of it leads to some critical comments and some doubts as to its viability. First, it must be noted that Perrin does not seem to be too sure of the ontological status of what is represented by the symbol. He speaks of the 'myth' which is evoked by the symbol. Now it is certainly not the case that the use of the word 'myth' should automatically arouse suspicion in the minds of evangelical Christians, for the category of 'myth' can have a valid and proper use in Christian theology just like any other literary genre which is in itself neutral. Admittedly Perrin may be adopting a position near to that of R. Bultmann, whose influence on his thinking is freely admitted, but it should be observed that in this particular book he is critical of some aspects of Bultmann's position. Rather one may appropriate Perrin's insights by saying that the 'story' of God acting in power is the correct interpretation of, say, the exorcisms performed by Jesus, events which might be understood otherwise but which are in fact pointers to a correct understanding of the activity of Jesus as a manifestation of God's saving power. The position of Perrin is thus somewhat ambiguous. However, this observation does not apply to the work of Chilton who interprets the Gospels in the context of an orthodox understanding of the Christian faith.

Much more to the point is our second critical comment. In both cases the interpreters gain their understanding of the meaning of KG from the examination of a limited group of texts which they believe can be shown to be authentic sayings of Jesus.¹³ One is tempted to say that any saying of Jesus which Perrin accepts as authentic *must* be authentic for he belongs to a particularly sceptical group of scholars. Consequently, our understanding of KG must do justice to the texts which Perrin invokes. However, this leaves us with two problems. On the one hand, Perrin has to admit that for the most part the Jews to whom Jesus spoke saw KG as a symbol with a single reference; we must ask, then, whether Jesus would have been speaking meaningfully to them if he had shifted the force of the term significantly. On the other hand, we have to face the problem of the remaining KG texts in the Gospels. If a wider group of texts than those examined

by Perrin and Chilton proves to be authentic, then we must ask whether they burst open the definition that has been offered and lead us to a different one. Even, however, if the other usages in the Gospels are to be attributed to the followers of Jesus rather than to himself, it may still be the case that this is a pointer to the fact that they understood Jesus differently from Perrin and Chilton, and we shall have to ask whether this makes the view of the modern scholars doubtful. In short, we have to ask whether Perrin and Chilton's view still holds when a wider body of relevant evidence is taken into account.

Consequently, in undertaking such an examination we must begin by asking how Jesus' audience would have understood him. Now Perrin himself has shown that the background of the teaching of Jesus lies in the apocalyptic understanding of the KG as God's action rather than in the Rabbinic concept of the KG as the expression of God's demands upon his people enshrined in the Torah or law.¹⁴ KG was not all that common a term in Judaism but it appears to have been used for that future state of affairs when God's rule would be established and would bring peace and happiness for his people. Sometimes the idea is close to that of the 'age to come' which will succeed this age and which will be ushered in by the resurrection of the dead.¹⁵ The important point is that God brings about this new era by his own mighty action. Although the Jews spoke of 'the age to come', they did not regard it as being 'beyond history' but rather as being the next stage in history, brought into being by God's action in history, bringing the rule of Satan to an end and commencing his own rule. Thus the KG is the full and powerful manifestation of the sovereignty which God already exercises over the world.

Various texts in the Gospels speak of the KG as this future state of affairs to be established by God. The KG as the future state of the righteous is contrasted with Gehenna, the abode of the unrighteous dead (Mk. 9:47). The righteous will enter the kingdom prepared for them while the unrighteous are cast into outer darkness (Mt. 25:34). It will be a time of surprises for Jesus' contemporaries when they see the patriarchs admitted while they themselves are excluded (Mt. 8:11/Lk. 13:29 Q). Jesus talks in the future tense about entry into this realm (Mt. 7:21), and he himself looks forward to sharing in eating and drinking in the new situation after the KG has come (Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:16, 18). In all this Jesus reflects Jewish expectations (Lk. 14:15).

Jesus' audience would have understood and accepted this basic expectation. He was operating with the same framework of ideas as they did, and if he had not done so, his teaching would have been unintelligible to them. One area of surprise would have been in his statements about who would be present in the KG; he shattered the easy assumption that any members of the people of Israel would qualify for entrance simply on the basis of their scrupulous observance of the Pharisaeic legislation.

More significant is the question of time. According to Luke the nature of Jesus' activity must have been such as to lead people to think that the KG would appear 'immediately' (Lk. 19:11) and to cause some Pharisees to ask when the KG was coming (Lk. 17:20).¹⁶ The interpretation of the crucial statements in Matthew 10:7/Luke 10:9 Q and Mark 1:15 is disputed;¹⁷ they can be taken to mean either that the KG has

already arrived or that its coming is imminent; were these sayings perhaps genuinely ambiguous? In Mark 9:1 Jesus refers to people who would not die before they saw that the KG had come; the authenticity of the saying is disputed, as is its interpretation.¹⁸ In Luke 21:31 Jesus refers to a future point at which people will know that the KG is near.¹⁹ In addition there are various texts which suggest that the day of judgment or the coming of the Son of man is imminent.²⁰ The thought of the imminence of the end is firmly embedded in the gospel tradition, but direct references to the imminence of the KG are not very frequent, and it is difficult to say that the distinctive teaching of Jesus lies here.

What is much more strongly attested is Jesus' teaching that the KG was already in some sense present in his ministry. The evidence for this has often been discussed and need not be rehearsed here in detail; the key texts are Matthew 11:12/Luke 16:16 Q; Matthew 12:28/Luke 11:20 Q; and Luke 17:21 together with Matthew 10:7/Luke 10:9 (11) Q and Mark 1:15, which in my opinion belong here rather than with the 'futurist' texts.²¹ These verses indicate that the action of God in bringing in the KG has already begun, so that Jesus can declare quite simply and plainly that the KG has arrived. So strong is this impression that C. H. Dodd could see no room for any teaching about a future coming in the outlook of Jesus; while he undoubtedly did not do justice to the future elements in the teaching of Jesus, the point to be stressed here is that he established the fundamental importance of the texts which testify to the presence of the KG.²² It is these texts which convey the distinctive element in the teaching of Jesus about the KG. To say that the End was near was not unprecedented. To say that the future KG was *already* present was unparalleled.

The crucial question in interpretation is now whether this remarkable strand of teaching stands in genuine continuity with that about the future reign of God. Essentially the options reduce to two. The one is to say that the link lies in the concept of imminence or 'nearness': for Jesus the KG was so close in time that the whole of present life was coloured by its imminence. Whether he spoke of the KG as being virtually present and saw his mighty works as the precursors of its coming, or whether he could say that there was a sense in which the near kingdom was already operative, the point is that his ministry derived its impetus and validity from the belief that the KG was very near, and with it the coming of the Son of man and the end of the present age. This view, which is that of scholars such as E. Grässer who is its most consistent and able advocate, faces unsurmountable difficulties. Those who hold this view have to admit that Jesus was mistaken in regard to the specific form of this hope which he held. The KG did not come in the way he prophesied, and consequently the validity of his whole message, inasmuch as it was based on this hope, is completely taken away. Scholars who interpret the teaching of Jesus in this way agree that this is so, and they then have to show how the early church had to modify the tradition of the teaching of Jesus to take account of the 'delay of the parousia' and so produce an alternative theology in which the hope of the future coming of the KG is given little or no place and is replaced by an emphasis on the present working of God by the Spirit in the church.²³ But this is highly unsatisfactory. Some people may be prepared to allow that Jesus was a mistaken prophet, but, if so, it is not clear that attempts to revamp his teaching can carry much conviction,

and it looks rather as though one mistaken mythology is simply being replaced by another dubious mythology of the Spirit. The basic problem remains as to how the teaching of Jesus can in any way be valid when it rests on a set of mistaken assumptions. Nor were these assumptions peripheral ones; they were concerned with the central theme of his message.

The second type of option is to recognize that the essential or distinctive element in the teaching of Jesus was his proclamation that the KG which his hearers expected to come in the future was already present in his ministry. God's purpose, prophesied in the OT, was being brought to fulfilment in an unexpected manner. The best way to express this is probably in terms of concealment or veiled manifestation.²⁴ What this means is that the popular expectation of the KG was of an open, public and final act of sovereignty by God which would establish his rule in the world and bring its benefits to his people, but Jesus believed and taught that God was already acting in his ministry powerfully but secretly to establish that realm and to initiate a chain of events which would lead up to and include the End of popular expectation. There was thus a real and genuine manifestation of God's power, but it was in a sense veiled and secret.

If this view is sound, then it means that the basis of the proclamation of Jesus was a valid one, the belief that God was already fulfilling the prophecy of the coming of the KG. Or rather, the validity of Jesus' proclamation depends not on whether he was correct or mistaken about the nearness of the KG in the future, but on whether he was correct or mistaken about the reality of God's action in the present.

Further, the problem of continuity between the present and the future aspects of Jesus' teaching is solved. What Jesus taught was that the KG which the Jews expected in the future was already a reality. God was acting in power and consequently his realm was already in existence. Thus Jesus retained the traditional understanding of the KG as God's future realm initiated by his powerful action, but he transformed it (1) by declaring that the point in time at which it was to appear had already arrived, and (2) by indicating that the way in which it was appearing was different from what was traditionally expected.

By understanding the teaching of Jesus in this way we can give a satisfactory and coherent account of a larger corpus of sayings than Perrin and Chilton and place the teaching of Jesus within the structures of Jewish thinking — structures which he transformed in an intelligible way. Such an understanding, it should be emphasized, is not an arbitrary one imposed on the evidence at the cost of straining some texts to make them fit into the pattern. Rather, starting from texts which in our opinion have strong claims to being authentic, we have been able to achieve a consistent and coherent understanding of the teaching of Jesus into which other texts whose authenticity might otherwise perhaps be suspect can be fitted by the so-called 'criterion of coherence'.

Moreover, we have established a vital point for our understanding of Christian hope which will be developed as we proceed further. Christian hope is often thought of as being somehow based on the future. Such hope is in danger of remaining precisely that and nothing more — hope. For hope to have substance it must be rooted in and related to something else — a conviction about the character of God,

such as, for example, that he keeps his promises or that he has done certain things in the past. The teaching of Jesus about the KG enshrines the conviction that God has already begun to act in the world and will complete what he has begun. Thus the validity of the hope depends upon the validity of the conviction that God is already at work in the world.

What Jesus taught about the kingdom

In the discussion of a concept such as the KG it is important to distinguish between the meaning of the phrase itself and what is said about it. The distinction is not always easy to observe in practice, and in the previous section we have had to transgress it. There we were concerned primarily with the meaning of the phrase in itself, but it was impossible to establish this without paying attention to the way in which it was used and to the contexts in which it appeared. The result of our investigation so far has been to show that KG did not simply function as a symbol for 'God acting in sovereign power' but rather that it referred to that realm which the Jews expected to be set up by the sovereign power of God in fulfilment of prophecy. Starting from this point we can give a coherent account of the use of the term by Jesus, and we saw that he began to use the term in a new way by claiming that the KG had already come and that it was present in an unexpected manner. We must now explore further what Jesus said about the KG. How did he use the term?

The way in which Jesus used the term KG in a new way has been helpfully explored by J. Riches in *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism*.²⁵ He tries to show how Jesus could take over a term like KG and retain its core meaning, while ridding it of some of its conventional associations and substituting others. Essentially his argument is that Jesus referred to the KG in the context of actions by himself which related it to his belief in a forgiving and merciful God who willed that people should love one another. Thus the concept was purged of its nationalist and martial associations and was linked to ideas of mercy and forgiveness extended to people of all kinds. The essential point which is being made here is a sound one which had of course been recognized by earlier scholars. The merit of Riches' presentation is that he is able to link what Jesus was doing in the case of the KG with his transformation of the ideas of purity and of God himself and thus to give a coherent account of the teaching of Jesus.

In this way the KG clearly becomes a symbol of hope for the downtrodden in society. It expresses the attitude of God to such people and declares that his concern is for them. Jesus' teaching is that God is at work to establish a new community. The bliss which is associated with the age to come is already being experienced, and this bliss is not just for the people who think they are entitled to it by virtue of their religious orthodoxy and adherence to the Jewish law.

At the same time, however, Jesus purged the concept of its nationalistic associations. We should be clear about what was actually happening here. It is commonly thought that the Jewish concept of the KG was a nationalistic and military one, and that Jesus replaced this image with a spiritual one. In fact, however, the Jewish concept was both nationalistic and spiritual. The description of the KG in Psalms of Solomon 17 combines both elements:

Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, at the time in which you see, O God, that he may reign over Israel your servant. Gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, and that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample her down to destruction. Wisely, righteously, he shall thrust out sinners from the inheritance. He shall destroy the pride of the sinner as a potter's vessel. With a rod of iron he shall break in pieces all their substance. He shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth. At his rebuke nations shall flee before him, and he shall reprove sinners for the thoughts of their hearts. He shall gather together a holy people, whom he shall lead in righteousness, and he shall judge the tribes of the people that has been sanctified by the Lord his God. He shall not suffer unrighteousness to lodge any more in their midst, nor shall there dwell with them any man that knows wickedness. For he shall know them, that they are all sons of their God.²⁶

Here vengeance on the godless nations and holiness among the people of Israel are closely linked together. Jesus, therefore, has to purge away the nationalist elements in the Jewish concept of the KG and to lay stress on the spiritual elements.

Now this approach is not without its problems as soon as we try to apply it to the situation of the downtrodden. On the one hand, the plight of the downtrodden is often due to the violent and ungodly in the nation itself, and, on the other hand, it may be due to the violent and ungodly people of other nations. In first-century Palestine both types of oppression existed, just as they do today in many parts of the world. In what ways did Jesus envisage the KG as the solution to the needs of the people?

There is no programme of social action in the teaching of Jesus about the KG. He is concerned with the relationships of individuals to God and the behaviour that will result from that. On the one side, he offered to the needy forgiveness, integration into the community of God's people, and physical healing. On the other side, he called those who followed him to a life in which their total attitude must be one of love to God and their neighbour and of commitment to himself as Teacher and Master. His teaching about non-violence did not, in my opinion, forbid the use of restrained *force* (as opposed to *violence*) to preserve law and order, but it certainly forbade the excesses of armed conflict and insurrection. Nevertheless, in his preaching Jesus certainly condemned verbally the hypocrisy and greed of those who oppressed the poor and the outcasts of society, and he attacked the people of Israel as a whole for their failure to live as the people of God.

But how effective are words, even if accompanied by a few beneficial miracles? People might well have concluded that nothing much was happening. And Jesus took care of this point in his teaching. The so-called parables of growth depicted the secret, quiet beginnings of the KG and gave the assurance that what was scarcely visible in its beginnings would grow, like a plant from a seed, until its effects were manifest and great (Mk. 4:26-29, 30-32). Consequently, Jesus could speak about the 'mystery' of the KG (Mk. 4:11; 'mysteries' in Mt. 13:11 and Lk. 8:10). A 'mystery' is a divine secret which God reveals to the people who are able to understand it, such as his prophets in OT times. Jesus told his followers that it was they who were privileged to be the recipients of his revelation concerning the KG. The mystery or secret was that the KG had come in the person, deeds and words of Jesus. For those with the eyes to see, things were happening, but others could easily persuade themselves that

nothing of significance was happening. Within the community formed by Jesus new relationships did exist in which the needy could find a love that expressed itself both in material provision and also in loving acceptance. This was something that was visible — 'See how these Christians love one another' presumably reflects what some pagans actually said, even if the wording stems from a Christian apologist. At the same time there is no doubting that the early Christian groups were on occasion characterized by a lack of love and by material greed (see 1 Corinthians!), so that outsiders might also be tempted to think that there was nothing distinctive about them.

We can now move on to suggest some additional features that arise out of the teaching of Jesus on the KG when it is put in the total context of his teaching.

The kingdom of God and the Father

The first is that with the concept of the KG there is closely associated Jesus' understanding of God. The KG is specifically linked with the thought of God as Father in Luke 12:32; 22:29f. (contrast Mt. 19:28); Mt. 13:43; 25:34. In the references in Luke it is God as the Father who bestows the KG on the disciples and Jesus respectively. The two references in Matthew also occur in material addressed to the disciples. This is congruent with the fact established by T. W. Manson that Jesus did not preach about God as Father to all and sundry but revealed him as such to his disciples.²⁷ Of crucial significance in this connection is the fact that the Lord's Prayer begins with the words, 'Father, may your name be hallowed, may your kingdom come', thus linking closely the name of 'Father' and the KG. Jesus starts from the situation of Jewish piety in which people were accustomed to pray to God, and he directs his disciples into his understanding of God as Father. We observe, first, that the prayer is one for God to act to establish his rule. It was common ground between Jesus and his audience that the coming of the KG is the act of God and not of man, even though God would use man in the fulfilment of his purpose. Jewish literature of the time shows that here Jesus was saying nothing new.²⁸

Second, the God who establishes his rule is the God whom Jesus addresses as 'Father'. The fact that Jesus used an intimate form of address which appears to be unparalleled in contemporary Palestinian Judaism and that he taught his followers to know God in the same intimate manner as he himself enjoyed needs no further elaboration here.²⁹ This has an important consequence for the understanding of the KG. As A. M. Hunter put it, 'The King in the Kingdom is a Father.'³⁰ This fact indicates that the KG is primarily concerned with the creation of a family; the character of the King is the model for the character of the members (Mt. 5:48/Lk. 6:36 Q).

Third, in this context it is God the Father who is at the centre of Jesus' teaching. The petition for the KG to come is preceded by the petition that God will cause his name to be hallowed. This is important because it shows that the coming of the KG and the hallowing of God's name are parallel concepts and indeed that they are very closely associated.³¹ It is by concentrating attention on the Lord's Prayer as the critically-assured minimum of Jesus' teaching that H. Schürmann is able to insist that Jesus' message was primarily about God and puts him at the centre.³² The suggestion here

is that God himself rather than the KG was primary for Jesus. I am rather doubtful whether this is a helpful distinction; it would be more cogent if it could be shown that teaching about God himself characterized the message of Jesus, but this is scarcely the case. Nevertheless, the significant fact emerges that the character of the KG is determined by the character and activity of God the Father.

The kingdom of God and the Spirit

The second important element which must be brought into the picture is the Holy Spirit. The Evangelists were conscious that Jesus carried out his ministry in the power of the Spirit who was bestowed upon him at his baptism. That Jesus himself was aware of the source of his power is to be seen in the extremely significant text Matthew 12:28/Luke 11:20 Q where he comments that it is by the Spirit/finger of God that he does his mighty works and KG has arrived. Whether we take 'Spirit' or 'finger' to be the original word used by Jesus and paraphrased by the use of the alternative word in one of the Gospels,³³ the text testifies to the realization of divine power active in the ministry of Jesus to enable him to carry out his exorcisms. In another saying Jesus attributes his mighty works to the power of the Spirit and warns unbelievers against the danger of blaspheming or speaking against the Spirit (Mt. 12:21b/Mk. 3:29; Mt. 12:32b/Lk. 12:10 Q). Again, there is some doubt about the precise wording used by Jesus, but the basic point is not in any doubt, namely that Jesus recognized that his mighty works were performed in the power of the Spirit.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that for Jesus the coming of the KG and the activity of the Spirit were tightly connected, so much so that we may suggest that it was the working of the Spirit in and through Jesus which constituted the actual coming of the KG.³⁴ It is interesting that this connection is maintained outside the synoptic Gospels, especially when we remember that references to the KG are less common. Birth by the Spirit and entry to the KG are linked together in John 3:3, 5, and Paul links the Spirit with the KG in Romans 14:17 and Galatians 5:21f.; we may compare 1 Corinthians 4:20 where the KG is linked with power.

Three points emerge here. The first is that the KG is brought directly into conflict with the evil rule of Satan whose power is placed over against that of the Spirit. The Evangelists recognize that this motif was a dominant one in the ministry of Jesus when they relate at the outset of the story how Jesus, immediately after he had received the Spirit, was straightway sent into the desert to face Satan. Luke and John note how the events leading up to the passion and death of Jesus were instigated by the action of Satan through Judas (Lk. 22:3; Jn. 13:2, 27). It has sometimes been suggested that for Luke at least the period of Jesus' ministry between the temptation in the desert and the passion was free from temptation by Satan, but this hypothesis will not stand up to examination, especially in the light of Luke 22:28.

The second point is that the KG is associated with power. It is brought into being by the exercise of divine might, the 'finger' of God (cf. Ex. 8:16-19). As Paul says, the KG is not (simply) a matter of talking but of power (1 Cor. 4:20). A divine reality is at work in the world, and an important saying suggests that this power would become all the more evident after the ministry of Jesus (Mk. 9:1).

A third point to be noted is that the Spirit was promised in the OT as a gift for the last days in the same way as the KG (Joel 2:28f.). The KG and the Spirit are thus both signs of the eschatological activity of God now realized in the ministry of Jesus.

The effect of these considerations is to underline the element of power in the KG as God's activity in Jesus which extends beyond mere prophetic inspiration expressed in words.

The kingdom of God and Jesus

The fact that God's power is revealed in the KG in and through Jesus inevitably leads us to consider more closely his relation to the KG. It is the weakness of several treatments of the KG that they do not adequately consider the concept of messiahship. This is regrettable. For the word 'Messiah' retained the sense of 'Anointed' and was used to refer to a person endowed with the *Spirit* for a particular purpose authorized by *God*. We can leave aside the view that the background to the use of the term in the Gospels is anointing to priesthood³⁵ and take it for granted that the reference is to an anointed ruler or *king*. Thus the term Messiah is implicitly associated with the three terms that we have already considered: *God* sets up his rule (the KG) through a *king* anointed by the *Spirit*.

The question whether Jesus thought of himself as the Messiah is one that arouses much controversy. Since the early church believed without question that he was the Messiah, the tendency to read back this title into his earthly ministry was obviously strong and therefore the texts must be examined with care. Yet the surprising fact is that according to the Gospels Jesus rarely used the word 'Messiah' and rarely spoke in a way that suggests that he thought of himself as the Messiah. This fact, which helped to lead to the theory that Jesus did not think of himself as the Messiah and that such references as there are in the Gospels do not represent his teaching, ought rather to be evaluated as indicating the historical verisimilitude of the Evangelists and should encourage us to view the actual texts in the Gospels where the term occurs with greater respect. Alongside these texts must be placed three other pieces of evidence. First, there is the way in which Jesus was addressed as 'Son of David', an appellation which is firmly present in the tradition (Mk. 10:47f.), although Jesus himself taught that it was an inadequate way of thinking of the Messiah (Mk. 12:35-37). 'Son of David' was a synonym for 'Messiah'.³⁶ Second, there is the use of the term 'Son of man' by Jesus. This term was not taken up by the early church to any appreciable extent and is characteristic of the diction ascribed to Jesus. Within the scope of the present essay it is not possible to bring together the evidence for the writer's view that Jesus used this term as a messianic self-designation which draws its meaning from Daniel 7 where a figure like a man is given rule and authority by God.³⁷ Third, there is the fact that Jesus acted as the agent of God's rule and did not merely announce it as a prophet might have done. Various of his actions could be regarded as messianic in the strict sense of the term.³⁸ The cumulative effect of these three considerations is to show that Jesus did act messianically and that he must have been conscious that in doing so he was fulfilling the role of the Messiah. That is to say, the precise form which the KG took in the mind of Jesus

was a messianic form as opposed to the kind of conception of the KG where a Messiah is not specifically present.³⁹

If so, we face the questions as to why Jesus did not publicly use the actual term 'Messiah' of himself. The reason usually advanced is that he wished to avoid the misleading implications of a term which would lead people to expect a warlike leader. It has often been thought that this danger lurked behind the wish of the people to make Jesus king in John 6:15. This cannot be the whole story, however. Even if Jesus was reticent about using the term 'Messiah', he was prepared to use the term KG which, as we saw, contained a blend of political, military and more spiritual associations for his contemporaries. It is, therefore, uncertain whether Jesus was simply trying to avoid political misunderstanding. Two other reasons may be suggested. If we are correct in assuming that Jesus used the term 'Son of man' by preference, then it can be argued, first, that this phrase expressed better the divine origin of the bearer of the title. For the Jews 'Messiah' seems to have connoted a purely human figure on the whole, but 'son of man' in Daniel 7 connoted a heavenly figure 'like a man', and therefore it was better suited to express the true nature of Jesus. There is a case that 'Son of man' was tantamount to 'Son of God', and, if this suggestion can be upheld, it will explain why Jesus preferred this term. But here our second consideration comes in: 'Son of man' was also an idiomatic term in Aramaic which may possibly have meant much the same as 'I' in certain contexts, and there is much to be said for the view that Jesus used a deliberately ambiguous term as part of his 'veiled manifestation' of himself.⁴⁰ Now, if this is a correct suggestion, then we have a phenomenon similar to that which we found in the proclamation of the KG by Jesus. Jesus is concerned with authority and rule which will be revealed openly in the future, but which at present are hidden and partly secret. The fact that we can detect this same pattern in the use of both concepts, KG and Son of man, is surely significant. It would appear to support the authenticity of Jesus' teaching in both areas, since it is highly unlikely that the early church would deliberately create the same motif in both areas.

Our discussion has shown that KG and 'Messiah' are correlative concepts, each belonging to the other and implying the other. Jesus thus appears as the divine agent to whom God has entrusted dominion and power, and it is thus in Jesus that the KG becomes a reality. As T. W. Manson put it, the KG is the messianic ministry; it is in the activity of Jesus that we see the activity of God which brings about his rule.⁴¹

The kingdom of God and Israel

We must next ask what Jesus envisaged as the result of the establishment of the KG. The traditional hope was, as we have seen, for the setting up of a new kingdom in the presence of God at the end of the age in a cosmic setting; it would be composed of people who loved and served God and who lived together in righteousness and peace under the rule of God and his agent the Messiah. The Jews believed that they themselves would compose this people. The KG is thus a corporate entity and consists of people. Hence the mission of Jesus involved the creation of a people who would be the objects of God's rule and who would receive the benefits of his rule. Since Jesus warned the people of Israel that as a nation they were in danger of being rejected by God, he must have envisaged the creation of a new people, incorporating

elements of the old people but also open more widely and constituted by a new allegiance. Along with his proclamation of the KG he also called people to personal allegiance to himself as disciples and taught them that they must obey his words. The conclusion is irresistible that response to the message of the KG was identical with acceptance of Jesus as Master. The new Israel is constituted by its allegiance to the Messiah. The recognition that Jesus was concerned with the creation of a new Israel is not new. Again we owe to A. M. Hunter the lapidary statement that 'The Kingdom of God implies a new Israel',⁴² but it is Ben F. Meyer who has given the most concentrated expression to this thought in recent writing. He asks: 'Why indeed should the reign of God have been the object of a proclamation to Israel as such unless it bore on the destiny of Israel as such?'⁴³ Here two key texts must be mentioned. The first is the enigmatic saying recorded in differing forms by Matthew and Luke (Mt. 19:28/Lk. 22:29f. Q):

Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Common to both forms of the saying is the idea of rule by Jesus which will be shared in the world to come by the twelve disciples as they sit on thrones and judge the tribes of Israel. There must be an element of symbolism in the saying, recorded as it is by Luke in the context of the prophecy of the betrayal by Judas (though Luke later records the appointment of a replacement for Judas). But a literal understanding of the saying is unlikely since it takes no account of the place of the Gentiles (whether in the eyes of Jesus or of the Evangelists). The thought is of privilege for the faithful followers of Jesus who have shared in his earthly ministry to Israel, and the privilege appears to be that of sharing in the judgment on the unbelieving people of Israel rather than of ruling over a reconstituted Israel. Is the saying, then, anything more than a symbolical way of stating that the disciples will share in the KG but unbelieving Israel will be condemned, or, rather, that a division will be carried through among the Jews on the basis of belief and unbelief? It is not likely, then, that this text speaks of a 'new' physical Israel ruled by the twelve, but it certainly prophesies the end of the old Israel.⁴⁴

The other crucial text is Matthew 16:18 where Jesus prophesies that he will build his church on 'this rock' and that it will not be overcome by the powers of death. The authenticity of this saying is much disputed, and we owe to Ben F. Meyer a spirited defence of it.⁴⁵ In the light of the Dead Sea Scrolls the language has been shown to be definitely Palestinian, and there are no conceptual reasons for denying it to Jesus. In effect the sole remaining reason for not accepting it is its absence from the other Gospels, especially from Mark and Q; but it is curious reasoning which would reject a saying simply because it is not attested in the other Gospels or their sources.⁴⁶ If the saying is genuine, it expresses the purpose of Jesus to establish a people whom he describes as 'my people'. Coming immediately after Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah, this must mean 'the people of myself as Messiah'. Here, therefore, we have an express statement of the intention of Jesus to form a people to

whom is given a name used of Israel as the people of God; compare how Stephen could refer to 'the church in the wilderness' (Acts 7:38). Moreover, the statement has a cosmic dimension with its reference to 'the powers of death', and Jesus goes on to speak of the keys of the kingdom of heaven entrusted to Peter which suggests that in some way the people and the KG are closely related. After the disastrous effect of the mediaeval equation of the KG with the church, seen in the increasingly secular and unchristian expression of authority claimed by church leaders and in the refusal to recognize the saving rule of God outside the Catholic Church, there has been a strong reaction against the identification of the KG as the church, and the current understanding of the KG as God's *activity* of ruling rather than as the area or people over whom he rules has strengthened the case. But we have seen that this modern understanding of the phrase KG is one-sided and inadequate. The KG is not just the sovereign activity of God; it is also the set-up created by the activity of God, and that set-up consists of people. Hence the people created by Jesus is a manifestation of the KG: ideally they are the people who accept the rule of God through Jesus and on whom he bestows the blessings of his rule. The church as the people of God is the object of his rule and is therefore his kingdom, or at least an expression of it, imperfect and sinful though it is. We should not be afraid of recognizing this fact, despite the misuse of it in the past. Although the church has the promise of sitting in judgment on the world (1 Cor. 6:2), which may be in effect a reinterpretation of the saying about the Twelve sitting in judgment on the tribes of Israel, this is a purely future role, and there is no justification for exercising it here and now. Indeed, the danger is already guarded against by the sayings of Jesus which insist that leadership is a matter of humble service and which warn the disciples categorically against desiring position and privilege. It is true, of course, that there will be leaders in the church, but they have been given the pattern of humility and service which they must follow by Jesus.⁴⁷

The kingdom and the new age

After our rapid survey of some of the salient features in the teaching of Jesus it is now time for us to try to assess their significance for today.

The first point to be noted is that the early church did two things with the teaching of Jesus. On the one hand, it retained a record of it in the traditions which eventually received definitive form in the Gospels. This indicates that the teaching of Jesus continued to be influential in the church, and, as we noted, the Evangelists appear to have recognized that the main theme of Jesus was the KG. On the other hand, the uses of the term KG outside the Gospels are much less thick on the ground. This suggests that while the early church faithfully preserved the account of what Jesus actually said, it also moved on beyond his teaching and interpreted it for its new situation in the post-resurrection period in the Hellenistic world. Thus, although the mode of expression was varied, the central importance of the message expressed by Jesus in terms of the KG remained constant. Elsewhere I have tried to show how the emphasis shifted from the kingdom to the king himself in his functions as Lord and Saviour and how the experience of the blessings of the kingdom found apt expression as eternal life.⁴⁸ This does not mean that we should completely abandon the term KG and

express the concept in other ways; rather, just as the early church retained the term and used other forms of expression, so too we should retain and explain the biblical terms and also look for new ways of expression that will be meaningful in our contemporary society.

Perhaps the most fundamental fact that we discovered in Jesus' teaching about the KG was the way in which he looked forward to the future full manifestation of God's rule but at the same time proclaimed and brought into being that same rule during his ministry. For Jesus the future had already commenced in the present time. The OT had prophesied the hope of God's future action as king, and it expressed its hope on the basis of the mighty acts of God which had already been experienced especially at the exodus. The early church was conscious of living in the era of fulfilment. Its hope for the future was based on what it already knew of the present working of God. This is an observation of the utmost importance. Christianity is not built upon a hope of what God may do in the future; on the contrary, the hope is built on the experience of what he has already done and is doing in the present time. And this hope is that God will bring to completion what he has already begun. He will continue to work in character with his past and present work.

Consequently, when we talk about the KG we are talking about something which is actually happening here and now, inaugurated by the ministry of Jesus, and now 'come in power' since his death and resurrection (Mk. 9:1).⁴⁹ The KG is now 'incarnated' in Jesus himself. Through his death and resurrection he has been shown to be both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:38). The hope of a new age is thus a hope that has been coming true ever since Jesus first began to proclaim: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand' (Mk. 1:15). The hope is no longer hope but present reality. To be sure, it is incomplete; we live 'between the times', but our assurance, based on our present experience, is that in the future we shall know in fuller measure the experience of divine power.

The terminology makes this clear. Jesus used one and the same term, 'the kingdom of God', for the present and the future of God's rule. The Holy Spirit is described by Paul as the 'first instalment' of what God intends to give his people (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14). The power that makes for newness is already making things new. In Johannine terminology eternal life is a present experience stretching into the future.

All this demonstrates that the message of the KG is that the age to come has already dawned. God is now at work in the world. This point needs some emphasis, for too often people talk as though the activity of the KG ceased with the termination of the earthly ministry of Jesus, or as though it is something purely heavenly or spiritual. Those who have spoken of the KG as present in the world today have often thought of it either in a purely humanistic manner as the realization of a moral state of society through human effort or in terms of the establishment of some kind of ecclesiastical organization. But the language of the KG stresses that it is God who is presently exercising his powerful lordship in the world in which we live.

There might seem to be one decisive difference between the coming of the KG in the ministry of Jesus and its presence now. We saw that the manifestation in his ministry was veiled

in certain respects, although Jesus could accuse his contemporaries of blindness when they failed to perceive the significance of the signs of the times. But now the situation appears to be different in that God has raised Jesus from the dead and thus declared him to be the judge and saviour of mankind. Does this not mean that the presence of the KG should now be manifest and open to everybody? On the whole the NT suggests that the situation in fact is no different. The god of this world has blinded the eyes of those who do not believe. Christians walk by faith and not by sight. The fact of the resurrection — and the interpretation to be placed upon it — are not matters that can be proved in a way that will be universally compelling. Hence the presence and progress of the KG is still a matter for faith. The signs pointing to it are, however, stronger than they were before; the person who does not believe has to reject a stronger body of evidence.

The relation of the presence of the KG to its future requires some consideration. The NT teaching about the future KG is cast in apocalyptic terms; it presents the picture of a cataclysmic end to the present world-order followed by a new order characterized by incorruptibility and permanence. Does this mean that there is no continuity between present and future? The tendency in much evangelical teaching has been to emphasize the disjunction between the two ages with the world getting worse and worse until eventually God steps in and makes a totally fresh start by taking his people away from the corrupt earth and raising the dead in Christ to share with them in the new world. Certainly the biblical picture is of a world in which evil gets worse and worse and the godly remnant suffers much persecution. Moreover, the world in which we live presents an equivocal face with the achievements of science and technology on the one hand and the potential for nuclear destruction and other evils on the other. Are there any grounds for hope in the message of the KG?

It is the merit of Ian Murray to have drawn attention to *The Puritan Hope*⁵⁰ that before the end of the age there would be widespread revival and the conversion of unbelievers, a hope based exegetically on Romans 11 and other passages. The significance of this hope has perhaps been missed because it has been entangled with questions about the millennium and its timing. Advocates of the Puritan view have linked it to post-millennialism, the doctrine that the millennium will precede the parousia and prepare the way for it. But post-millennialism is a doubtfully-based option, and it would be better to recognize that the hope of revival in the last days is something to be distinguished from the millennium.

Can this hope be taken as something realistic? Does Jesus' preaching of the KG give us any basis for hope for the future? Certainly there is a pattern that must be observed. Scholars have often found it difficult to accommodate the expectation of the cross by Jesus in his proclamation of the KG: how can Jesus have announced the presence of God's rule and yet faced apparent defeat and the need to give his life as a ransom for many? The solution to the problem lies in the resurrection and his triumphant vindication by God. But this means that there was a pattern in the ministry of Jesus in which there was a genuine experience of opposition by the powers of evil which led to his crucifixion; the death of Jesus was real, but it was only apparent defeat for it was itself part of God's plan and it was followed by a display of divine power and victory. This pattern was repeated in the early church in its experience

of strength in the midst of weakness. May we not then say that on a cosmic scale the KG comes in weakness and grows in weakness but that there will be a triumphant vindication at the parousia of the Lord? The pattern of crucifixion and resurrection enacted in the experience of Jesus will be followed in the case of the church as it dies now in order to be resurrected with its Lord at the parousia. Thus the church can proclaim the KG now in the sure hope of its final triumph. And yet at the same time it must be affirmed that the triumph is not merely future. The biblical teaching is not that God's strength is experienced after weakness but rather that it is known in weakness. The cross itself was the place of glorification of Jesus according to the Fourth Gospel (Jn. 13:31f.). The church rejoices in and during its sufferings, and, although death may be at work in its messengers who proclaim the good news, there is life for those who respond to the gospel here and now (2 Cor. 4:12). Thus the picture is one of veiled triumph now and open triumph to come.

If the church possesses this sure hope, what can we say about the activity of the KG here and now and the church's relationship to it? Here we may start with the well-known words of Vincent Taylor:

One important feature His teaching does share with Apocalyptic: from first to last the *Basileia* is supernatural; man does not strive for it or bring it into being. Our modern idea of labouring for the coming of the Kingdom is a noble conception, fully baptized into Christ and expressive of His Spirit; but it is not His teaching regarding the *Basileia*.⁵¹

Taylor is of course right in what he says about the teaching of Jesus: the coming of the KG is the act of God; he acts to establish his rule over the community to whom he gives the blessings of his rule. Rightly, therefore, does Taylor go on to emphasize that we are to pray for its coming, and this surely remains a primary obligation. Yet this is surely not the whole story. For we have seen that God acted in Jesus to establish his rule and that the concepts of the Messiah/Son of man and the KG are indivisibly joined together. But the Messiah or Son of man is the leader of a group which is not only subject to God as king but also acts in unison to spread the KG. The idea that the KG expands of its own accord independently of the action of God's agents is thoroughly false. Jesus called the Twelve and the Seventy to share in his work, and he told them to preach that the KG had drawn near and to perform the signs of its presence. The KG extends as it is proclaimed and as the signs of its presence are performed. If Jesus came to bring the KG, we must also conclude that his followers were commissioned by him to carry out the same task. It must be questioned, therefore, whether Taylor is right in saying that 'labouring for the coming of the Kingdom' is not the teaching of Jesus himself. On the contrary, this is precisely what he called his followers to do. To proclaim the kingship of God is to spread the KG, for it opens up to people the possibility of responding to the message by acknowledging God as their king.

One can understand the position Taylor adopted. It was no doubt a reaction against the nineteenth-century liberals and the social gossellers who thought of a KG which was little more than a glorified human community bound together through action inspired by love. Such a concept is dangerously secular and leaves God out of consideration, to say nothing of Christ. Equally it is possible and necessary to

react against the autocratic claims of a church which claims that it incarnates the KG and is in danger of implying that submission to a supreme pontiff is the same thing as accepting the kingship of God. It is good to be able to report that contemporary Roman Catholic scholarship now repudiates any such ideas.⁵² However, we can learn from these dangers that the KG is not simply an ethical community among mankind or an ecclesiastical institution. But at the same time it must be insisted that the KG is concerned with moral issues; as Taylor again says, the moral renewal of humanity follows from the presence of the KG.⁵³ Nor must we forget that the KG is concerned with the formation of a Christian community and is not simply a collection of isolated Christian individuals.

The church consists of people who acknowledge God as king and who are committed to proclaiming his kingship and witnessing to his reality in their own lives as individuals and as a community. Put in other words, this means that a primary task of the church is evangelism carried out in the power of the Spirit. But such proclamation is not simply aimed at the conversion of individuals. The church must also spell out the nature of obedience to God both spiritually and morally, just as Jesus did. The proclamation of the KG will include the declaration of God's condemnation of what is evil and hypocritical in the lives of people both as individuals and as members of communal bodies in business and government. To say this obviously raises questions about the extent to which protest in the name of God should be carried out in action as well as in words, but there is no room here to take up the point. We must be guided by the example of Jesus who forbade his followers to use violence, but who did things, like associating with tax collectors and sinners, which outraged his opponents and made them even plot to kill him.

Thus we conclude that the church is called to participate in the realization of the KG here and now. To do so will arouse opposition; like its Lord it will experience weakness and crucifixion. But it will bear these things in firm hope because of the victory already achieved by God in Christ and because of his faithful promise to complete what he has begun. The promise of the KG signifies that 'in the Lord your labour is not in vain' (1 Cor. 15:58).

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¹ W. G. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfilment* (London, 1957); G. E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom* (London, 1966); N. Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (1963); R. Schnackenburg, *God's Rule and Kingdom* (London, 1963). For summaries of the discussion see O. E. Evans in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, 1962), II; B. Klappert in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Exeter, 1976), II, pp. 372-390; G. Klein, 'The Biblical Understanding of "The Kingdom of God"', *Interpretation* 26 (1972), pp. 387-418; I. H. Marshall in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, 1975), III, pp. 801-809. For more recent studies see H. Merklein, *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesheerrschaft* (Stuttgart, 1983), and G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Coming of God* (Exeter, 1983).

² The following comparison may be instructive:

	Mt.	Mk.	Lk.
Kingdom of God	50	15	39
Believe, faith	24	20	26
Father (used of God)	44	4	17
Love	12	8	16
Parable	17	13	18
Son of man	26	14	24
Spirit, Holy	12	6	17

³ See Mt. 4:23; 9:35; cf. 13:19; 24:14; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 4:43; 8:1; 9:2, 11, 60.

⁴ A significant nonconformist on this point is E. Bammel, 'Erwägungen zur Eschatologie Jesu', in F. L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Evangelica III* (Texte und Untersuchungen III, Berlin, 1964), pp. 3-32.

⁵ N. Perrin's book *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London, 1967) is more ruthless than the author's earlier work listed above and may be regarded as fixing the low watermark for English-speaking scholars; yet even he insists that there are strong arguments for the authenticity of Mt. 12:28/Lk. 11:20 Q; Lk. 17:20f.; Mt. 11:12/Lk. 16:16 Q and for other, parabolic sayings. The continental low watermark is fixed by H. Schürmann, *Gottes Reich — Jesu Geschick* (Freiburg, 1983), p. 135, who feels reasonably secure in holding only to Lk. 11:2-4; 6:20; 11:20; 12:31 and 13:18f. (with parallels as appropriate).

⁶ See especially the works of G. E. Ladd and R. Schnackenburg cited above; L. Goppelt, *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1981), I, pp. 51-67.

⁷ J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology I* (London, 1971), p. 102: '[Jesus'] meaning is that the eschatological hour of God, the victory of God, the consummation of the world, is near. Indeed it is very near.' Similarly, H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (London, 1969), pp. 106-115; R. H. Hiers, *The Kingdom of God in the Synoptic Tradition* (Gainesville, 1970).

⁸ The need to think again about this point was shown by S. Aalen, "'Reign" and "House" in the Kingdom of God in the Gospels', *New Testament Studies* 8 (1961-2), pp. 215-240.

⁹ The basic study of the 'present' sayings is W. G. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfilment*. He argues that 'Jesus saw the Kingdom of God to be present before the parousia, which he thought to be imminent, only in his own person and his works; he knew no other realization of the eschatological consummation' (*op. cit.*, p. 140).

¹⁰ N. Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia, 1976), pp. 43, 45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹² B. D. Chilton, *God in Strength* (Freistadt, 1979), pp. 285f.; 'Regnum Dei Deus Est', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 31 (1978), pp. 261-270.

¹³ Thus H. Merklein, *op. cit.*, p. 38, argues that sayings in which KG is a spatial term all come from a stratum in the gospel tradition which is later than Jesus and that he used the term only in a dynamic sense.

¹⁴ N. Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 56f.

¹⁵ See Ps. Sol. 17; Ass. Moses 10:1-10; Sib. Orac. 3:46-56, 652-4, 767-89; Qaddish; Tg. Gn. 49:10f. Other references in the apocalyptic literature are to the present sovereignty of God over Israel and the nations (Ps. Sol. 5:21; Jub. 12:19; 1 En. 84:2f.; T Reub. 6; T Jud. 21; IQM 6:6; Shemoneh Esreh 14).

¹⁶ Even if Luke himself created the situation in Lk. 17:20, the question attributed to the Pharisees is entirely credible. See I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter, 1978), pp. 653f.

¹⁷ See I. H. Marshall, *op. cit.*, pp. 422f.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 377-379.

¹⁹ Only Luke has supplied 'the kingdom of God' as the subject of the verb 'is near' (cf. Mk. 13:29); Mark may have thought that the reference was to the coming of the Son of man, but there is no essential difference.

²⁰ Mk. 13:32; Mt. 24:42, 50/Lk. 12:46 Q; Mt. 25:13; Mt. 10:23; 24:44; Lk. 18:8; 21:36. Some of these formulations may belong to the Evangelists.

²¹ See I. H. Marshall, *op. cit.*, pp. 628-630, 475f., 655f. and 422f.

²² C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London, 1961).

²³ E. Grässer, *Das Problem der Parusieverzögerung in den synoptischen Evangelien und in der Apostelgeschichte* (Berlin, 1977).

²⁴ See especially C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to St Mark* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 63-68; H. Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia, 1962).

²⁵ J. Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism* (London, 1980), pp. 87-111.

²⁶ Ps. Sol. 17:23-30.

²⁷ T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 89-115.

²⁸ See Psalms of Solomon (cited in n. 26); Ass. Moses 10:1; Sib. Orac. 3:47f., 767f.; Qaddish Prayer ('May he set up his kingdom'). Jesus need not be referring exclusively to the future, imminent kingdom; his words can refer to God's action now.

²⁹ J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology I*, pp. 61-68.

³⁰ A. M. Hunter, *Introducing New Testament Theology* (London, 1957), p. 31.

³¹ For a profound discussion of the similarities and differences between the two petitions see E. Lohmeyer, *The Lord's Prayer* (1965), pp. 100-110.

³² H. Schürmann, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Düsseldorf, 1968), pp. 13-35; *Das Gebet des Herrn* (Leipzig, 1981), n. 222.

³³ See I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, pp. 475f.

³⁴ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London, 1975), Pt. 1.

³⁵ The view of G. Friedrich, 'Beobachtungen zur messianischen Hoherpriesterwartung in den Synoptikern', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 53 (1956), pp. 265-311, has been refuted by F. Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel* (Göttingen, 1964), pp. 231-241.

³⁶ See C. Burger, *Jesus als Davidsohn* (Göttingen, 1970); he does not regard the tradition as historical. On Mk. 12:35-37 see I. H. Marshall, *op. cit.*, pp. 743-749.

³⁷ I. H. Marshall, *The Origins of New Testament Christology* (London, 1976), ch. 4.

³⁸ J. D. G. Dunn, 'The Messianic Secret in Mark', *Tyndale Bulletin* 21 (1970), pp. 92-117.

³⁹ Jewish messianic expectations in the time of Jesus are extremely difficult to unravel. In some of the literature future expectations are expressed without mention of a messianic figure (e.g. Ass. Moses 10).

⁴⁰ See S. Kim, *'The "Son of Man"' as the Son of God* (Tübingen, 1983), pp. 35f.

⁴¹ T. W. Manson, 'Realized Eschatology and the Messianic Secret', in D. E. Nineham (ed.), *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 209-222; *The Servant-Messiah* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 63.

⁴² A. M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁴³ B. F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London, 1979), p. 133.

⁴⁴ So A. Plummer, *The Gospel according to Saint Luke* (Edinburgh, 1901), pp. 502f.; J. Dupont, 'Le logion des douze trônes (Mt. 19, 28; Lc. 22, 28-30)', *Biblica* 45 (1964), pp. 355-392. Here I alter the opinion expressed in *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 818.

⁴⁵ B. F. Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-197; J. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-170.

⁴⁶ If we did this, we would have to reject large areas of teaching found only in any one Gospel – which would be patently absurd.

⁴⁷ The practical problem lies in how to combine force and love (1 Cor. 4:21).

⁴⁸ I. H. Marshall, 'Preaching the Kingdom of God', *Expository Times* 89 (1977-8), pp. 13-16.

⁴⁹ On this saying see the discussion of the various interpretations in I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, pp. 377-379.

⁵⁰ I. Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (Edinburgh, 1971).

⁵¹ V. Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London, 1937), p. 10.

⁵² R. Schnackenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

⁵³ V. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

The date of Deuteronomy: linch-pin of Old Testament criticism

Part 2

Gordon Wenham

In the first part of this article the author, who is lecturer at the College of St Paul and St Mary in Cheltenham, explained the arguments for the critical consensus which dates Deuteronomy in the late seventh century BC. Then under the heading 'Reopening the question' he began critically to re-examine those arguments, looking first at the question of language, then at ancient legal texts paralleling Deuteronomy. He continues below.

The central sanctuary

The chief argument for supposing that Deuteronomy was written in the seventh century is its repeated insistence that worship should be limited to 'the place which the LORD will choose'. This is generally taken as a code word for Jerusalem, so we should regard Deuteronomy either as the programme for or a justification of Josiah's centralization measures. This reading of Deuteronomy is, it is held, confirmed by 2 Kings 22 which mentions that a law book was discovered in the course of the reform.

Now there are several objections to this equation of Deuteronomy with the Josianic reform programme. The first oddity is that the book never specifies where 'the place' is. It is generally explained as reflecting the writer's unwillingness to put obvious anachronisms into the mouth of Moses. But if pseudonymous writing was as acceptable as liberals usually

allege, why such coyness? If Moses was the greatest of the prophets, as Deuteronomy certainly claims (18:15-22; 34:10-12), why should he not have predicted that Jerusalem would be the chosen city? It would certainly have added credibility to Josiah's reformation. If an unnamed prophet of Bethel could be credited with predicting three centuries beforehand that King Josiah would carry out his reforms (1 Ki. 13:2), why should not the much better known Moses have been allowed to name Jerusalem?

Secondly, the usual critical contention that Deuteronomy limits all worship to Jerusalem is demonstrably false. Nowhere does the book specify what place is meant by 'the place which the LORD your God will choose'. It is just a guess that Jerusalem is intended. But Deuteronomy does specify by name one place where an altar is to be built and sacrifices offered. Read Deuteronomy 27:4-8. There you will see that sacrifices must be offered on Mount Ebal, a hill near Shechem, approximately forty miles north of Jerusalem. At least Shechem was an important shrine in the days of Joshua (Jos. 8:30-35; 24) and also in the tenth century in the days of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12). Then it faded out as a significant centre until it became the capital of the Samaritans in post-exilic times.²⁴

It must be admitted that it is totally incongruous for a book

which is supposed to be vitally concerned with limiting all worship to Jerusalem to state that Moses ordered sacrifice to be offered at Mount Ebal, at what Josiah would have called a high place. In the light of chapter 27 it seems impossible to regard the present book of Deuteronomy as either the programme for or as a tract justifying centralization of worship. Chapter 27 would surely have been omitted if that were the book's purpose. For this reason it seems very difficult to believe that Deuteronomy was written in the seventh century BC in Jerusalem.²⁵

Rather surprisingly, few critical scholars pay much attention to the problems posed by chapter 27 for the usual dating of Deuteronomy. There seems to be a blind spot here with many: they have been so conditioned to believe that Deuteronomy wants to limit all worship to Jerusalem that they overlook what chapter 27 is saying. Those who do notice the problem often suggest it contains later interpolation.²⁶ But this is hardly satisfactory. For reasons already stated above, formally and stylistically chapter 27 is an integral part of the book. Furthermore, even if it is construed as an interpolation, it is necessary to suggest when it was inserted into our book. If it was not in the original Deuteronomy written to promote or justify Josiah's centralization, why insert it soon afterwards? The editors of Kings, often alleged to be the final editors of Deuteronomy, were also fiercely opposed to the high places such as Ebal, so why should they have wanted to make this comment? Therefore even if one is disposed to see this chapter as an interpolation, for which there is little evidence, there are still difficult questions which a seventh-century date for Deuteronomy's composition seems unable to answer.

Finally it should be noticed that though the book of Kings associates the discovery of the law book with Josiah's reforms, it does not actually say all the reforms including the centralization of worship were prompted by the discovered law book. As is widely recognized, at least two quite distinct sources have been combined in 2 Kings 22-23: first, a full and circumstantial account of the discovery of the law book in 22:3-23:3, 21-23, and second, a list summarizing Josiah's measures in 23:4-20.

The implications of the composite nature of 2 Kings 22-23 were brilliantly worked out by N. Lohfink²⁷ some twenty years ago. He argued that, if the law-book source (22:3-23:3) is distinct from the centralization source (23:4-20), it is doubtful whether the discovery of the law book had anything to do with the centralization programme. In other words it is dubious whether 2 Kings 22-23 lends any support to the notion that Deuteronomy was a seventh-century work written to support the centralization of worship in Jerusalem. It may be noted that Lohfink's conclusions were partially anticipated by D. W. B. Robinson in his excellent monograph *Josiah's Reform and the book of the Law*.²⁸ Robinson relied on 2 Chronicles 34, which places Josiah's centralization measures in his twelfth year, six years before the discovery of the law book in his eighteenth year (2 Ch. 34:3-18). There is certainly nothing in 2 Kings to refute this chronology. Indeed the fact that the temple was being repaired when the law book was found surely implies that certain reforms preceded the law book's discovery.

How then should we take Deuteronomy's references to the central sanctuary, if they are not to be read as a cryptic

allusion to Jerusalem? Here McConville's important new work *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy*²⁹ needs to be consulted. He argues that Deuteronomy must not be read as a religio-political tract attempting to adapt old legislation to the social conditions of the late monarchy period. In fact he shows that the cultic legislation of Deuteronomy does not fit the seventh-century situation at all convincingly. It stands much closer to the conditions in the Judges period. What we have in Deuteronomy are not changes in regulations necessitated by social changes in the late monarchy period, but a theological reinterpretation of older pentateuchal law (including P) in the light of God's great new act of generosity, the gift of the promised land.

Because God is doing so much for Israel, particularly giving them the land of Canaan, they are expected to respond more generously than in the past. They must take care of the widow, the poor and the Levite. They must go beyond the letter of the old law; giving interest-free loans that are written off after six years, or offering bulls instead of lambs at passover, and extra pieces of other sacrifices. For God's goodness to Israel is shown not simply in giving the land, but in dwelling in it himself at the place which he will choose. The place is to be the new Sinai, the new heaven on earth, because it is where the LORD will put his name and his habitation. Thus according to McConville, Deuteronomy is not so much interested in the location of the place, but in the fact that it will be chosen by God for his dwelling. The geographical location is unimportant: the theological significance of the place is all-important.

Religious ideology

It is often supposed that the ideology of Deuteronomy supports the case for a seventh-century date. The warnings of judgment and the threats of exile match the situation Judah faced with the Assyrian and Babylonian attacks on Jerusalem. The relevance of Deuteronomy to this situation is undoubted, witness the use Jeremiah and Ezekiel make of deuteronomic ideas, but whether this proves Deuteronomy was specially written for this period is another matter. As Peter Craigie argued in his commentary,³⁰ the themes that are most prominent in Deuteronomy, the promises to the patriarchs, the covenant, the kingship of God, holy war and the conquest of the land are exactly those found in what is often regarded as the earliest poem in the Old Testament, the Song of the Sea in Exodus 15. This poem is unquestionably early, as its grammatical forms show, and was presumably composed soon after the crossing of the Red Sea which it celebrates. The coincidences between Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy are striking, but owing to our limited knowledge of the development of religious ideas in Israel, we cannot appeal to the parallels as proof that Deuteronomy must be early. However at least they show that there is no theological incongruity in positing an early date for Deuteronomy.

Marriage laws

Similarly the civil law of Deuteronomy fits the second millennium as well if not better than the first millennium. The demand for multiple witnesses for conviction is a recognized principle of old Babylonian laws. The double inheritance of the first-born and the practice of Levirate marriage are attested in Middle Assyrian Law. Though the

extra-biblical parallels cited come from the second millennium, it seems likely that similar legal principles continued to operate later.³¹

However the large group of laws on sex and marriage in Deuteronomy 22 do seem closer to second-millennium legal requirements than to what we know of Jewish practice in the late fifth century BC.³² This is strange if Deuteronomy were only written a century or two earlier. Deuteronomic definitions of and punishments for adultery find close parallels in old Babylonian and Hittite laws (1750/1500 BC). The arrangements about bride money also fit early practice well. But in the Jewish colony of Elephantine divorce rather than death was the penalty for adultery, and the bridal payments were lower. It must be admitted that this evidence does not constitute conclusive proof of the second-millennium origin of the deuteronomic laws. We are not exactly comparing like with like when comparing official collections of law like Hammurapi's or Deuteronomy with private legal documents like those found at Elephantine. Nevertheless it does suggest that the legal parts of Deuteronomy could also have originated early: they do not require a seventh-century date, indeed they are difficult to square with it. But this is an area which requires much more work before definite conclusions can be drawn.

The use of Deuteronomy in Jerusalem

It has already been argued that it is wrong to see Deuteronomy as a programme to centralize worship in Jerusalem, but that is not to say it had no place in Jerusalem religion. Though Deuteronomy did not prompt Josiah's reforms according to a critical reading of 2 Kings 22-23, it does appear that the law book found in the temple was a version of Deuteronomy, or at least included Deuteronomy. Lohfink³³ has however shown that the law book narrative (2 Kings 22:3-23:3) only makes sense if the book discovered was an old and authentic one, whose authority was immediately recognized by the religious and political leaders of the day. He argues that the book discovered in the temple was a covenant document used from time to time in official rites in Jerusalem, perhaps at royal coronations. Certainly it was regarded as binding on the king and his subjects. In a long and complicated argument he suggests that the document, which he regards as some briefer form of Deuteronomy, was brought to Jerusalem with the ark in the time of David. Lohfink's arguments are suggestive rather than conclusive, but again they point to an earlier origin of the book than is usually assumed.

Conclusions

This examination of the main arguments for the dating of Deuteronomy has been far too brief to deal with them adequately. Nevertheless there are very good reasons for concurring with Rendtorff that the dating of this pentateuchal source 'rests on hypothetical assumptions which only have any standing through the consensus of scholars'. Time and again we have observed how exegetical and other data have been interpreted on the assumption that Deuteronomy was written in the seventh century, and then often as not these interpretations are claimed to support this dating. The style of Deuteronomy, its approach to war, its attitude to the central sanctuary, its relationship to the treaty texts, have all been

evaluated in the light of a prior assumption about its seventh-century date.

It has been our argument that this assumed date not only conflicts with Deuteronomy's own statements about its origin, but that it creates other critical problems in its train. The style of Deuteronomy and its parallels with the legal texts are certainly compatible with an earlier date. However Deuteronomy's directive that sacrifice should be offered on Mount Ebal makes it most unlikely that it should be regarded as a tract whose main purpose is to encourage or justify centralization of worship in Jerusalem. Nevertheless if the consensus of scholarship on Deuteronomy is to be changed, much detailed work must be done, as it involves reassessing and often rewriting the whole critical tradition about the Old Testament. This is an immense undertaking. McConville's book shows some of the many issues that are involved. May it be the forerunner of a series of fresh studies of the history of Old Testament literature and of religion and Deuteronomy in particular. For it is not just our understanding of history that is affected by our view of Deuteronomy's date, but our view of the inspiration of Scripture, since a late date clearly implies its pseudonymity.

However conservatives should not merely be concerned to defend the truth of Scripture. Though that is often a very taxing and difficult intellectual task, it is not the chief purpose of Scripture to teach us about Moses' life history or whatever. Rather it is to train us in righteousness, in the obedience and love of God and his laws. 'To love God with all our heart, soul and mind,' as Deuteronomy puts it. As a result of biblical scholars' preoccupation with critical issues for nearly two centuries the church has lost out in two directions. First, the theories of authorship often adopted have led to a low view of biblical inspiration and the authority of Scripture. 'If it is not really by Moses, or by Paul, we need not believe it or obey it,' is the unspoken corollary of many critical theories. And second, Bible-believing Christians have spent so much time worrying about when this was written or how it was written, that they have forgotten to listen to the voice of God speaking to them through Scripture. This ought to be our first priority: to discover what God is saying to us through Deuteronomy, not whether Moses or some great unknown wrote it.

²⁴On Shechem see G. E. Wright, *Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City* (London: Duckworth, 1965). Most recently what is apparently a large and roughly built altar dating from about the twelfth century BC has been found on Mount Ebal itself. This could go back to Joshua (cf. Jos. 8:30-35). See also G. Garner, *Buried History* (1984).

²⁵I have developed this argument more fully in 'Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary', *Tyndale Bulletin* 22 (1971), pp. 103-118.

²⁶Cf. H. D. Preuss, *Deuteronomium*, pp. 149-154.

²⁷N. Lohfink, 'Die Bundesurkunde des Königs Josias — Eine Frage an die Deuteronomiumforschung', *Biblica* 44 (1963), pp. 261-288, 461-498.

²⁸D. W. B. Robinson, *Josiah's Reform and the Book of the Law* (London: Tyndale, 1951).

²⁹J. G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985).

³⁰P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 59-66. Craigie's is the more incisive of the two recent conservative commentaries on Deuteronomy, but J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (London: IVP, 1974) also contains much of value not to be found in Craigie.

³¹For a convenient list of parallels between biblical and other collections of law see S. Greengus, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Supplementary Volume) (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), pp. 533-534.

³²For a discussion of the Elephantine texts, see B. Porten, *Archives of Elephantine* (Berkeley: 1968). Porten has also republished and

translated a representative selection of these texts in *Jews of Elephantine and Aramaeans of Syene: Aramaic Texts with Translation* (Jerusalem: 1974).

³³N. Lohfink, *Biblica* 44 (1963), pp. 261-288, 461-498.

A taproot of radicalism

Paul Helm

The theological limelight in Britain has in the last year or two been occupied by radical theologians such as David Jenkins and Don Cupitt. In this article Paul Helm, lecturer in philosophy at Liverpool University, explores the philosophical roots of this radicalism.

Biblical theologians are sometimes puzzled by the radical attacks made by assumedly Christian theologians upon the evidential value of the words and work of Jesus presented in the New Testament. While they can readily appreciate the views of those who argue, on textual and historical grounds, that this or that particular miracle story is inauthentic, even though they may not share those views, they find it almost incredible that scholars should refuse to take the New Testament documents seriously, at face value. For it seems as if such scholars are flying in the face of a lot of evidence. If the New Testament contained an account of only one miracle, or of one event which ought reasonably to be interpreted as a miracle, one could understand a certain scepticism. But who could responsibly reject all the data?

Facts and interpretations

Various theories have been offered to explain this state of affairs by people who deplore it. For some it is a conspiracy to subvert the faith. For others it is the result of baseless speculation. For others still it is the latest slither down the slippery slope, a slide which began a century or more ago, while for others it is a case of theologians trying to snatch the headlines. For any of these claims to be persuasive it would be necessary to produce some facts which only they account for. But are there such facts? Is there any evidence, for instance, that in the last hundred years first one tenet of the faith and then another has been denied because the first has been denied, with cumulative effect?

Even if there were such confirmatory evidence it would still rather miss the point, just as it misses the point to say that such radicalism is 'out of date'. For the question is not whether radical theologians have *motives* for their radicalism, but whether they have *reasons* for it, reasons that will stand up to scrutiny and that will constrain objective enquirers to join them. Whether the radical is reluctant or eager, whether he works with ill-will or good-will — these are irrelevant considerations for someone who wants to know whether or not he ought to be a radical.

So the attitude which rejects radicalism because it allegedly flies in the face of the evidence of the New Testament, though widespread, is naïve.

It is understandable that a Christian theological student, immersed in the details of his study of the New Testament, should not be able to see much beyond these details. But he is wrong not to do so, and particularly wrong if what he is ultimately trying to do is to integrate the fruits of his study into responsible Christian confession and witness.

In terms of a familiar distinction, between *data* and *theory*, or between *facts* and *interpretation*, the narratives of the Gospels may be thought of as the *data* or *facts*. (Of course these facts, because they are in the form of words and clauses and sentences, are the result of lexical and grammatical interpretation, but this can be taken for granted in what follows.) The theological student's bewilderment at the wholesale dismissal of the miraculous in the New Testament by theologians and others may arise from a failure to see that this rejection is not simply a denial of the factual character of certain events on the grounds, say, that there are discrepant accounts of them, but a denial of certain facts *because of certain theories about such facts which are already held*.

Suppose that Mrs Smith is accused of witchcraft or sorcery. Some may wonder whether or not the evidence to support this accusation is good. What exactly did she do? Who saw her? What effect did her actions have? But another might say: Mrs Smith could not have been a witch because there are no witches. He might agree that she acted like one, and thought she was one, and that her actions had serious effects. But how could she have been a witch, since there are none? (Compare the defence by the town-clerk of Ephesus of Diana-worship in Acts 19:35-36.) The objection here is not on the grounds that the facts are inadequate to support the conclusion, but to the very idea of such a conclusion.

To say that facts are interpreted in the light of theories is not at all to suggest that those who hold the theories have no reasons for holding them, that it is a matter of blind dogmatism, a leap of faith. Unfortunately the impression is sometimes given that these matters are always a matter of blind faith by a careless use of the word 'presupposition'. 'It's all a matter of their presuppositions', as though 'presuppositions' are mysterious, secret, unchallengeable things.

To simplify somewhat, it can be said that there are three main theories of the miraculous in the New Testament. The first theory holds that such events, divine acts in history, unprecedented acts of the Creator upon and within his creation, are possible and that the only question for the

responsible New Testament scholar to answer is whether they in fact occurred. The second theory holds that such events could have occurred but that the evidence that they did not is always greater than the evidence that they did. The third theory is that such events could not have occurred.

It is the third theory which is important here. Clearly if a person holds such a theory then, faced with the New Testament narratives, he *must* interpret them non-miraculously. But why should anyone hold such a theory?

Kantian theology

There is one dominant pattern of argument in Western culture for the conclusion that miracles cannot happen. The argument has the following form:

1. Miracles are, by definition, acts of God.
2. To suppose that God acts is to suppose something which no human mind could know.
3. Therefore no person can know that an event is a miraculous act of God.

The reason for this conclusion is not that there is not enough evidence to conclude that a miracle has occurred. If it were a matter of not having enough evidence then perhaps more could be gained, or at least there could be dispute over whether the evidence which there is is sufficient. Rather, the reasoning has to do with the limits of the human mind, limits which, it is claimed, cannot in the very nature of the case be overcome.

What are those alleged limits? Chiefly, that any individual thing about which people claim to know anything must be a possible object of our experience, and anything which is a possible object of experience lies within the boundaries of space and time. Hence we can never properly think of, form concepts of, God, since to do so would take us beyond the necessary boundaries of our experience. To put the point slightly differently, the only kind of God conceivable by us is one falling within space and time, a purely anthropomorphic God. But God is by definition not in space or time. He is therefore 'beyond all the knowledge which we can attain within the world'.

This is Immanuel Kant's argument. The whole basis of Kant's philosophy is a criticism of metaphysics, of the idea that through reason, or revelation, it is possible to gain some knowledge of the nature of things. Metaphysical enquiry, according to Kant, generates antinomies, sets of conflicting arguments which all seem equally valid. Thus, for instance, our intellectual enquiries require us to think that the universe has a beginning in time and is a bounded space and at the same time that the universe is infinite in time and space. Such antinomies are generated because the human mind is so structured as to be capable of experiencing things only in terms of their appearances, never as things-in-themselves. We are required by our experience to *postulate* things-in-themselves, but they are never *known* in experience. The idea that we might know things-in-themselves is an illusion of thought through which we mistake the regulative requirements of our thinking for objects of knowledge.

Kant applies this to human thought about God. God is unknowable and yet his existence is required, particularly (according to Kant) by the nature of morality. The moral law

(which is not, for Kant, the law of God but a law which rational, autonomous agents 'legislate' (*i.e.* will) for themselves) requires the idea of God as the rewarder of virtue and the punisher of vice. Only on such a supposition is morality made intelligible, for only God could ensure the connection between virtue and happiness. Thus, though human beings cannot know God, they are required by the nature of morality to postulate his existence.

Kant's book *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1792-3) is in essence the application of this critical philosophy to Christianity considered as a historical religion. According to Christianity God makes himself known and makes known what he requires of men and what he has done for men through Scripture. Kant turns this claim upside down. For him morality is in no sense derived from religion or theology, rather morality (understood in purely secular terms) requires theology, and the theological texts of Christianity, especially the New Testament, are to be interpreted, or rather re-interpreted, in the light of Kant's critical philosophy and rational morality. As John Kemp has put it, Kant

has no use for such Christian concepts as grace, salvation, and the service of God except in so far as they are given a moral interpretation: the service of God consists in leading a morally good life, not in rites and observances, and grace and salvation are earned by moral goodness and nothing else — Kant will have no truck with the doctrine of justification by faith.¹

It is not that Kant thinks the New Testament does not teach the doctrine of justification by faith. Rather, since that doctrine is based upon unacceptable epistemological and moral assumptions, it cannot be the truth.

The influence of Kant's view upon subsequent theology, particularly continental Protestant theology, can hardly be exaggerated. It had two major consequences. One was to make impossible or irrelevant the programme of natural theology, that of proving the existence of God from reason or nature. The other was to make impossible the idea that any source whatever — Bible or miracle — could provide us with revelation, with the knowledge of God.

So much for the negative and destructive side of Kant's proposal. But Kant was not an atheist. What did he propose? Although God cannot be known, and hence nothing can be a revelation of him, yet God's existence can and must be *postulated*, for God's existence is a requirement of morality. Without the idea of a *summum bonum*, the idea of God as the rewarder of virtue and the punisher of vice, there could be no morality.

These two ideas, that there can be no knowledge of God but that the idea of God is *regulative*, have set the agenda for subsequent Protestant theology. Religion is not the bounden allegiance to God arising from his self-disclosure, as in orthodox Christian theology, rather it is (for example) the feeling of absolute dependence (Schleiermacher), or it is a life of service embodying the ethics of the kingdom of God to be realized here on earth (Ritschl), or it is the following of Christ whose character is understood exclusively in this-worldly moral terms (Bonhoeffer).²

But what has Kant's philosophy to do with the study of the New Testament, and particularly the interpretation of the miracles? It is of central importance, for however these

accounts are to be interpreted they *cannot* be interpreted as they stand, as recording the acts of God. Some other way *must* be found to interpret them, or they must be abandoned altogether.

Furthermore, according to Kant there is something improper or unbecoming about a religion which depends upon miracles. This point can be vividly illustrated from the work of Kant himself. In *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* Kant offers a reconstruction of Christianity in line both with his negative attitude to the knowledge of God which has been sketched above, and with the supreme importance he attaches to the morality of duty in accordance with what he calls the moral law. Some samples of his exegesis of the New Testament might be of interest.

First, Kant's general attitude to Scripture. The interpreter must bring to its interpretation a supreme moral criterion.

The final purpose even of reading these holy scriptures, or of investigating their content, is to make men better; the historical element, which contributes nothing to this end, is something which is in itself quite indifferent, and we can do with it what we like.³

Kant distinguishes between an empirical faith (Christianity in his case) and moral faith (faith understood in accordance with his own ideas of autonomous reason).

If such an empirical faith, which chance, it would seem, has tossed into our hands, is to be united with the basis of a moral faith (be the first an end or merely a means), an exposition of the revelation which has come into our possession is required, that is, a thorough-going interpretation of it in a sense agreeing with the universal practical rules of a religion of pure reason. For the theoretical part of ecclesiastical faith cannot interest us morally if it does not conduce to the performance of all human duties as divine commands (that which constitutes the essence of all religion). Frequently this interpretation may, in the light of the text (of the revelation), appear forced — it may often really be forced; and yet if the text can possibly support it, it must be preferred to a literal interpretation which either contains nothing at all (helpful) to morality or else actually works counter to moral incentives.⁴

What Kant is in effect proposing here is a hermeneutic of Scripture which is in accordance with his view of what religion is whether or not that hermeneutic does violence to the actual meaning of Scripture. 'Reason has freed itself, in matters which by their nature ought to be moral and soul-improving, from the weight of a faith forever dependent upon the arbitrary will of the expositors.'⁵ So Kant affirms as a basic principle of his exegesis that the attempt must be made 'to discover in Scripture that sense which harmonizes with the *most holy* teachings of reason'.⁶

There is therefore no norm of ecclesiastical faith other than Scripture, and no expositor thereof other than pure *religion of reason* and *Scriptural scholarship* (which deals with the historical aspect of that religion). Of these, the first alone is *authentic* and valid for the whole world; the second is merely *doctrinal*, having as its end the transformation of ecclesiastical faith for a given people at a given time into a definite and enduring system.⁷

It is not surprising to find Kant reconstructing traditional Christian doctrine to suit the ends of pure moral religion. Writing about the virgin birth he says

Yet of what use is all this theory pro or con when it suffices for practical purposes to place before us as a pattern this idea taken as a symbol of mankind raising itself above temptation to evil (and withstanding it victoriously)?⁸

Since Kant wrote this the application of his basic approach to the critical study of the New Testament has taken one of two different forms which may be called the *blanket* and the *filter* applications. The first treats the New Testament as a seamless whole which, since it contains reports of miraculous occurrences and purports to be a revelation of God, is to be reinterpreted wholesale, the whole corpus of the documents being regarded as (for instance) the product of the faith of the early church having a historical basis which is now totally indiscernible. Alternatively, attempts have been made (notably in successive 'quests' for the historical Jesus) to filter out of the New Testament writings (particularly the Gospels) those elements which are regarded as mythological or legendary accretions in order to regain what must (it is thought) have been the true, original, unadorned facts of the matter: the career of Jesus the moral teacher, the victim of Pharisaic hypocrisy and of Roman callousness and indifference.

The details of these various programmes do not matter here. What is important is to see that this Kantian philosophical outlook enables the one who holds to it to treat the New Testament, perfectly consistently, in what would otherwise seem to be a dogmatically arbitrary manner. While such an attitude to the New Testament is not dogmatic it is certainly *a priori* in that the Kantian interpreter brings to the text of the New Testament definite views both about the limits of human knowledge and about the nature of religion as being the embodiment or expression of certain moral and social ideas.

Kantianism and the radicals

The recognition that such a general outlook is widespread in Protestantism, not only on the continent but also in the British Isles, serves to render the views of theologians such as Don Cupitt and the Bishop of Durham more intelligible. When the Bishop spoke, on a notorious occasion, of 'conjuring tricks with bones' in connection with the idea of Jesus' physical body being raised, he was not being facetious nor attempting merely to capture the headlines. He was being consistently Kantian, consistent at least to the extent of saying, with Kant, that the true meaning, or value, or import of the resurrection has essentially nothing to do with a physical body come alive again (because that is contingent, historical and uncertain, and in any case a miracle) but that its true meaning or value is moral or ideal.

While it would be too much to say that the Kantian framework is the only or dominant *motif* in Bishop Jenkins' ideas, nevertheless there are key expressions which are characteristic of a Kantian theologian. For instance in the much-publicized *Credo* programme on British television (29 April 1984) the emphasis falls on

telling miraculous stories because you've already had a wonderful belief and I think the virgin birth is like that. . . . The virgin birth, I'm pretty clear, is a story told after the event in order to express and symbolize a faith that this Jesus was a unique event from God. . . . What seems to me to have happened is that there was a series of experiences which gradually convinced a growing number of apostles that Jesus had certainly been dead, certainly buried and he wasn't finished but he was raised up, that is to say, the very life and power and purpose and personality which was in him was actually continuing and was continuing both in the sphere of God and in the sphere of history so that he was a risen and living presence and possibility.

This reading of the text is one that only Kant's critical philosophy makes possible, yet the centre of gravity for Bishop Jenkins (perhaps not altogether consistently) lies in his unconcern with the miracle stories as historical events (though not with a historical figure called Jesus) rather than in a purely moral faith bereft of any essential historical connections with Jesus. His is a filter, rather than a blanket, approach to the New Testament.

The Kantian influence is more marked in the case of the radical theological views expressed by Don Cupitt.

Theology may be subjectively impossible in that our cognitive powers are limited by the bounds of sense and God must be outside their scope, as Kant taught.⁹

In a later book, *Taking Leave of God*,¹⁰ Cupitt appears to have moved from a position which stresses negative theology (the idea that it is only possible to say what God is not, not what he is) to one which regards most if not all questions about the objective reality of God as wholly unimportant if not quite misplaced, misplaced because they treat the issue of whether or not God exists as one which can arise outside the context of human spirituality. Nevertheless, the influence of Kant is manifest in the way in which a strong version of the idea of personal moral autonomy governs all else in theology, in Cupitt's view of spirituality, with its emphasis on disinterestedness and its non-theological, purely formal character, and in the way in which Cupitt attempts to 'decode' the divine attributes as aspirations of human spirituality. As part of this project Cupitt emphasizes the bounds of human experience¹¹ and hence the idea that God forms a part of transcendent reality about which we can say nothing,¹² for God is 'altogether unspecifiable'¹³ and the idea of God is a projection of the human consciousness¹⁴ though not, strangely, as a postulate in strict Kantian fashion.¹⁵ Cupitt's proposals here come within a whisker of theological reductionism, though he would probably reject the charge as being yet another attempt to make concern about God 'objective', thus taking that concern out of the context of human religion.

In his latest book, *Only Human*,¹⁶ the framework of negative theology is abandoned, for 'all dogmatic theological beliefs as such, belong to a world that is gone, and now can no more be put to effective use in our own world than can the myths of some exotic tribe'. But the Kantian idea that the world is bounded by our experience 'and outside it there is nothing at all, not even nothingness' remains, even though the postulated God of Kant is no more. The result is an attempt to provide a humanistic spirituality.

Insofar as Cupitt's earlier negative attitude to the knowledge of God has roots in Anglican theology it can be traced to H. L. Mansel¹⁷ (1820-1871). Besides being influenced by continental neo-Kantianism, Mansel himself is in the line of earlier Anglicans such as Archbishop King (1650-1729) and Bishop Peter Browne (d. 1735) whose views were rejected by Bishop Berkeley in his *Alciphron* (1732). While men of this school spoke of human ignorance of God's faculties as they are 'in themselves', their emphasis on the language of theology being regulative rather than cognitive was grounded more in the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God rather than, as with Kant, based on the necessary limitations of the human mind in gaining knowledge of anything. The words of Scripture were treated by them as

wholly metaphorical, not as truths but as symbols. But what the language of theology was meant to regulate were the conventional ideas of 'practical religion' of eighteenth-century Anglicanism.

Some conclusions

So far it has been argued that much of the current attitude to the miraculous in the New Testament, that which is at the heart of the Christian gospel, can be illuminatingly explained not as carelessness or unconcern over the evidence of the New Testament, but as a conclusion drawn from a set of Kantian premisses about the limits of human knowledge and thus the priority of the moral over the metaphysical in doctrinal constructions or reconstructions of the Christian faith. From this analysis it is possible to draw some conclusions for those who strive to maintain the orthodox Christian view of the gospel in the current theological scene.

It was noted earlier that attitudes to the miraculous in the New Testament are a matter of 'presupposition'. From the point of view of argument presuppositions are premisses from which certain conclusions — in this case conclusions about the reports of the miraculous in the New Testament — are drawn. But such premisses are not self-evidently true. The fact that they function as premisses does not give them a status which renders them immune to criticism.¹⁸ Not being self-evident, such premisses may either be rejected, or be regarded as conclusions of other arguments with other premisses. There is no process of 'pure logic' by means of which the Kantian conclusions which lie at the root of characteristically modern attitudes to the New Testament are inevitably arrived at. The premisses of such conclusions are themselves conclusions which require premisses. Perhaps the pattern of reasoning from premisses to conclusion does not continue indefinitely but every step in the reasoning can be argued over.

Another conclusion to be drawn from the previous discussion is that basic issues in the interpretation of the New Testament are *theological* issues (or perhaps, better, metaphysical issues). It is possible to engage in a 'surface' interpretation of the New Testament, the philological and grammatical construing of the text. But if the results of such interpretation are to gain purchase as truth then necessary as such work is, it is not sufficient. It has to be possible to move outside the circle of such interpretations and counter-interpretations and to use the results to make truth-claims about God binding upon the intellect and the conscience. So for someone to say, 'I'm not interested in all this theology. Let's get back to the text of the New Testament' displays considerable naïvety.

What makes such an attitude naïve is that it supposes that the present situation is one in which the New Testament is barnacled over with theology and that the interpreter must somehow remove or avoid the barnacles and get at the ringing metal of the text. There have been situations in the history of the church when, by and large, this was the correct procedure. It was the correct procedure at the time of the Reformation when, as the Reformers correctly argued, the text of Scripture was hidden by encrustations of tradition. Hence the need for the plain unvarnished exposition of the text of Scripture. And behind this procedure at the time of the Reformation stands Christ's procedure with the Pharisees.

But this is not the position at present, not at least in those circles heavily influenced by the work of academic theologians in the universities. Here the status of the text itself is an issue, or rather it is an issue which has been very largely settled by a consensus in favour of the Kantian position. It is therefore necessary that anyone who wishes to be properly equipped for the business of using the New Testament theologically, who wishes to answer the question 'What truth does the New Testament teach today?', should be equipped not only with the necessary skills in grammatical, philological and literary analysis, but also be aware of the metaphysical setting in which he is endeavouring to research and write.

A third consequence which arises concerns the question of the direction of the education of theological students, particularly those who wish to devote themselves to an understanding of and the propagation of the historical Christian faith today. One's impression is that students of the text of Scripture are by and large people who have had a training in modern languages or classics, very rarely in philosophy. And those who do have a taste for theological construction tend very often to gravitate towards historical theology or the history of doctrine, the Reformation perhaps, or Puritanism. As a consequence, very few who have a training in philosophy or in a course which has required some philosophy then move into Christian theology, the theology of today, either New Testament theology or systematic theology, and stay there. These are of course only impressions, but are they so inaccurate?

A possible response to radicalism

So far an attempt has been made to offer a way of understanding contemporary 'radical' theology, analysing it in terms of the assumptions of Kantianism which have been so prevalent in Protestantism, particularly on the continent, but from time to time, and certainly recently, in the British Isles. Understanding the background of such radicalism is of course important, and such understanding may go a long way to remove the mystique which seems presently to surround writers like Don Cupitt.

But how, it might reasonably be asked, can such an approach be answered? A number of steps must be taken. As regards the Kantian framework of the theology, the weaknesses of Kant's theory of knowledge need to be explored, both in general, and more particularly as they affect the whole question of the knowability of God. Christian theology has always recognized elements of metaphor and analogy in our talk of God, but has claimed with equal emphasis that it is possible to speak of God with literal sense.¹⁹ If that is so then there can be no *a priori* objection to the idea of God working miracles nor to his acts being known. Thus the *a priori* objection to the miraculous may be neutralized by counter-arguments.

Is it possible to be more positive than this and to provide a philosophical underpinning of the Christian faith that is superior to the Kantian framework? It is a mistake to attempt to offer a philosophical defence of one's faith. This way lies rationalism, the constraining of faith into a 'reasonable' *a priori* framework. The alternative is to deploy a positive argument for both the historical meaning and truth of Scripture at two levels. It is classically understood that

Scripture has held authority over two thousand years of Christians; this understanding has brought peace with God, new hope and moral vision, comfort in bereavement and in approaching dissolution. It has borne the weight of the collective experience of the church. Of course, this could be massive collective deception, but is there any reason to think so?

The second level is more individual and personal. The 'bottom line' as regards our attitude to the New Testament, whether as 'professional' theologians or ordinary unprofessional believers, is whether that New Testament, understood as conveying the historic message of deliverance from sin through the work of the Divine Saviour, bears the weight of our experience. Not whether it 'speaks to us' in some vague way, but whether its detailed message enables us to make sense of our lives.²⁰

A note on books on the philosophy of Kant

Perhaps the best way of gaining an entry into Kant's philosophy is through two short introductory works with fearsome titles, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783) and *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). (The best and most accessible translation of the *Groundwork*, by H. J. Paton, is called *The Moral Law*.) Only then ought one to graduate to the two *Critiques*, the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* is required reading for intending theologians. Of numerous books on Kant's philosophy those by John Kemp, *The Philosophy of Kant* (Oxford, 1968) and Roger Scruton, *Kant* (Oxford, 1982) are recommended as introductory treatments. *Kant's Analytic* (1966) and *Kant's Synthetic* (1974), both by Jonathan Bennett, are standard modern critical treatments of Kant's philosophy from an empiricist standpoint. *Kant's Moral Religion* by Allen Wood (1970) is a useful exposition of Kant's philosophy of religion.

¹ *The Philosophy of Kant* (1968), p. 95.

² The Kantian framework of Bonhoeffer's Christology is stressed by Stewart Sutherland in *God, Jesus and Belief* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 114-120.

³ *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. T. M. Green and H. H. Hudson (New York, 1960), p. 102.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75 (footnote).

⁹ *Christ and the Hiddenness of God* (London, 1971), p. 29.

¹⁰ London, 1980.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁶ London, 1985.

¹⁷ D. Cupitt, 'Mansel's Theory of Regulative Truth' (*Journal of Theological Studies*, April 1967). See also Part One of *Christ and The Hiddenness of God*, 'The Limits of Thought about God'.

¹⁸ As an example of such a criticism, Dr Joe Houston has argued (in an as yet unpublished essay) that if the Gospels are regarded as being made-up stories to justify the disciples' experiences and originally understood as such they could not have had, nor have, a legitimizing function any more than there can be a commonly accepted practice of telling lies. One can only appeal to the past to legitimize the present if one appeals not to a fictitious past but to the past as one believes it to have been.

¹⁹ One piece of evidence that this is possible is the rich and varied treatment of the attributes of God in current analytic philosophy of religion (e.g. Richard Swinburne's *The Coherence of Theism*) — work which Cupitt regards as being irrelevant because 'unhistorical'.

²⁰ I have tried to argue for this at greater length than is possible here in 'Faith, Evidence and the Scriptures' in *Scripture and Truth* (eds. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge).

Book reviews

G. W. Coats, *Genesis, with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984). 322 pp., \$21.95.

George Coats is probably the most distinguished living American pentateuchal critic. Certainly he is very much in the mainstream of critical thinking, so his book gives a good insight into the way the scholarly wind is blowing. This book is part of a series entitled 'The forms of Old Testament literature'. This series aims to present a form-critical analysis of every book of the Old Testament.

This volume examines the structure, genre, setting and intention of every part of Genesis: indeed Coats gives a minute verse-by-verse description of every story. Thus the tower of Babel story is defined as a 'tale' and its nine verses are broken into fifteen sub-divisions: v. 1 exposition, vv. 2-4 proposals, v. 3 construction of bricks, v. 3a speech, v. 3b act, v. 4 construction of city and tower, etc. Though its present setting is part of J, its earlier setting is uncertain. Its intention, like chapter 10 (P), is to explain the dispersal of the nations. Basically then this book is an exercise in labelling the contents of Genesis according to agreed form-critical descriptions. Each section of analysis is followed by a good bibliography of recent writing on the passage.

This is undoubtedly a valuable exercise: it is reassuring that someone of Coats' stamp finds no myths in Genesis. His attempt to define terms precisely and carefully is also a great gain: for example, he defines the individual stories in Genesis as tales, reports, legends, and the final collections of tales and reports as sagas. Thus he talks of the primeval saga, the Abraham saga and so on. These labels do not say anything directly about the historicity or otherwise of the material.

Coats claims his book is essentially exegetical. Certainly his discussion does contribute to understanding the flow of thought in Genesis, but it really contains the preliminaries to a proper commentary. The preacher or historian will not find what he needs here unfortunately. Nor will the modern literary critic gain much. Indeed I think the subtitle 'with an Introduction to Narrative Literature' is positively misleading. It led me to expect something along the lines of Alter's or Gunn's books, i.e. an exploration of the techniques used by biblical storytellers, but all it contains is a series of definitions of what Coats means by 'saga', 'tale', 'novella' and so on.

Coats' approach to source criticism is interesting. Like other recent writers he rejects the existence of an E source: Genesis consists of two main sources, J and P. He is dubious about attempts to press further back behind the history of the material that makes up J and P. Unlike many form critics he is much more insistent on the unity of the material that makes up J or P. In both the primeval saga and the Abraham saga many of the stories belong together and it is impossible to recover an earlier version of these stories in which they were independent.

There is thus in this book a noticeable attempt to escape from the dissection that has characterized much pentateuchal study. Unfortunately Coats still looks on J and P as so distinct that he never brings them together in effective exegesis. We still await the day when mainstream scholarship accepts the substantial unity of the whole of Genesis. Meanwhile those looking for a sober up-to-date treatment of its critical problems will find this a very useful volume.

Gordon Wenham, The College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham.

E. J. Hamlin, *Joshua: Inheriting the Land* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1983). 207 pp., n.p.

This volume is another in the ITC series, which is 'addressed to Ministers and Christian educators... moves beyond the usual critical and historical approach to the Bible and offers a theological inter-

pretation of the Hebrew text'. The aim is admirable. In this book it is achieved with mixed success.

Joshua, of course, is not an easy book to comment on. It is one of those Old Testament books which stress the exclusiveness of Israel, thus in contrast to, e.g., Isaiah which shows more clearly that God has plans for other nations. And this exclusiveness indeed becomes for many a particularly difficult moral problem because of the command of God in the book to destroy the nations which inhabit Canaan. In addition, its authorship, transmission and purpose are problematic, and it raises difficult historical questions.

Hamlin's approach to the historicity of Joshua is significant in relation to all these matters. He attaches some importance to his identification with the view popularized by N. K. Gottwald in *The Tribes of Yahweh* that Israel's origins in Canaan are to be sought not in a conquest (as per Exodus-Joshua) but as the result of a social revolution. This means that the underlying issue in Joshua is not, or at least not obviously, chosen people versus non-chosen peoples, but rather the attempt of a revolutionary grouping (Joshua's 'mixed multitude') to replace the Canaanite system of tyrannical petty kingdoms with a society based on principles of justice (pp. xxii ff.). His approach to Joshua, therefore, involves the view that much that is recorded there is not in all respects historically accurate, but rather represents centuries of theologizing about ancient traditions, applying them to ever new generations. (In terms of composition he follows Noth's theory of the deuteronomist.)

This view of historicity carries over to the exegesis, naturally, in many respects. The most pervasive effect is the difficulty which arises in pinning down any text to a particular situation in Israel's history. Narratives are rarely taken to derive in their entirety from the period of Joshua and to be comprehensible against that background. Often a threefold development is discerned (the ancient traditions, a ninth-century Narrator and a seventh-century Teacher), e.g. on 9:1-27, pp. 77ff. Yet the impression is often gained that the meaning of a text can only be obtained by seeing it in relation to many situations. A related feature of the exegesis is that the explanation of texts is often sought by analogy with any number of other biblical texts. Indeed it sometimes seems that Hamlin thinks there are 'meanings' which are independent of texts and alongside which texts may be laid by way of illustration (cf. p. 50). This is methodologically highly suspect, and a threat to genuine exegesis. If the 'meanings' come first then the interpretation of Scripture is open to abuse.

The dangers of the procedure described could be illustrated in many ways. A striking example is the interpretation of the covenant with the Gibeonites as one of three 'models' for Israel's relationships with Canaanites living in the land, and for Hamlin the preferable one is co-existence, the others being Jericho-extermination and Aicultural exclusivism with economic co-operation (pp. 74f.). This is consistent with seeing Joshua as a theological treatise (and no-one is saying it is not theological), but hardly with its being historical narrative. In particular, it regards what the text presents as a specific exception based on a trick and an error, in the Gibeon story, as typical and even legislative.

Another effect of Hamlin's approach to history is that what many readers perceive as moral problems are somehow spirited away. An example is the *herem* or command to destroy the inhabitants of Jericho (ch. 6). Hamlin takes this as nothing more than the teaching of a theological point (i.e. the need to keep separate from Canaanite practices) unrelated to any particular destruction of Canaanites, on the grounds that such would have been irrelevant in the Teacher's day (pp. 52ff.). He has thus dexterously applied his historical eclecticism to try to avoid what seems to be the plain sense of the text — and of course, has *not* avoided it, since the text still says it!

It has perhaps been unfair to dwell on shortcomings only. There are many perceptive comments on individual points. My concern has been with what seems to be a basically unsatisfactory methodology. The danger of theological predilections obtruding upon good exegesis is one which faces us all constantly, but which regrettably is well illustrated here.

Gordon McConville, Trinity College, Bristol.

H. G. M Williamson, **The New Century Bible Commentary: I & II Chronicles** (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1982), 428 pp., £8.95.

The books of Chronicles have been to a large extent disregarded in recent years. Indeed the title 'Leftovers', by which they are known in the Septuagint, suggests that from the start they have suffered from a reputation of being a poor relation of the books of Kings.

Williamson's commentary amounts to a rigorous comparison between the two, in the interests of which he deliberately ignores what might otherwise deserve comment. The result is to show quite clearly that the books of Samuel and Kings, substantially in their present form, lay in front of the Chronicler, although he did have access to other sources, not without historical value.

The commentary reveals in a most interesting and lucid way how the Chronicler systematically altered his 'Vorlage' with a view to highlighting his own theological emphases. These are (i) the people of God, seen as a unity even after the division of the kingdom; (ii) the monarchy, with David and Solomon representing an ideal partly recovered under such good kings as Jehoshaphat, Uzziah and Hezekiah; (iii) the temple and its worship — the Chronicler shows great interest in the Levites; and (iv) retribution and repentance.

These themes were regarded by the Chronicler as particularly relevant for his own day, which Williamson sees as most probably in the fourth century, though the books are notoriously difficult to date, especially if, as is urged, the notion of a work embracing Ezra and Nehemiah is abandoned as unconvincing.

There is therefore some comparison to be made between the way in which parts of the prophets are to be seen as expositions for a later age and the way in which the Chronicler is interpreting earlier historical work. Two points need to be emphasized. The first is that the Chronicler does not mind altering the plain historical sense of his Vorlage in matters of detail. This arguably drives a coach and horses through a certain sort of historical literalism which has sometimes been applied to Scripture. Any attempt to harmonize the books of Kings and Chronicles looks hopeless in the light of Williamson's careful analysis, at least if harmonization is understood in the sense of ironing out historical discrepancy of any kind. The second is that it would be quite unfair to conclude that the Chronicler 'played fast and loose' with history. Though he felt free to alter his Vorlage, there were severe limits placed on the extent to which this could be done.

Williamson's book will go a long way towards spurring evangelical scholars to formulate an understanding of biblical historical writing which is both true to the evidence and yet avoids going down the road of Bultmannian scepticism. The question to be answered is in what sense the books of Chronicles are true, if they are not even meant to be true in historical detail. Often arguments about inerrancy are conducted with a degree of philosophical superiority to the hard facts of the biblical text. What Williamson has done is to provide an important agenda for those wrestling with this question, and to rule out some of its more superficial solutions.

The book deals with earlier work in a magisterially fair-minded way. It is a model of clarity and the tally of only seven misprints (as counted by this reviewer) is an immense improvement on earlier volumes in this series of commentaries.

John Job, Rugby.

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr, **Toward Old Testament Ethics** (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 345 pp., \$14.95.

Walter Kaiser's contribution to the field of biblical ethics will be helpful for those who want a broad overview of the field. Like an hors d'oeuvre the book will give the reader a taste of many and varied subjects, but the reader will probably not get enough of any one item to satisfy a hungry appetite for depth.

Dr Kaiser is well read on biblical ethics and theology, and perhaps

one of the best features of his book is the extensive footnotes on each page. He is not afraid to credit other writers for their insights and thus introduce many avenues for further study. Yet at times the book seems to be more a compendium rather than a fresh approach to Old Testament ethics. He is especially indebted to W. S. Bruce's book *The Ethics of the Old Testament*, first published in 1895.

The unifying theme of the book is the life of holiness based on God's own holiness. Curiously, at the beginning of the chapter entitled 'The Law of Holiness: Leviticus 18 - 20', found in Section II, the author makes this understatement: 'Old Testament ethics cannot be properly grasped apart from some understanding of the holiness of God' (p. 112). Yet at the beginning of Section III he writes, 'In the Old Testament, holiness lays claim to the entirety of a person's life. It is impossible to exclude anything from the potential sphere of God's own holiness' (p. 139). This is one example of a few infelicities of organization and style which we find regrettable in a work of such scholarship. Dr Kaiser uses the theme of personal and corporate holiness to discuss such topics as worship, work, family life, capital punishment and abortion. Do not look for detail or lengthy arguments, but be prepared to use his ideas for further study. Perhaps the most controversial section is his discussion of 'just and holy wars'. Some of his boldest statements are made concerning the relationship and responsibility of strong nations to their weaker friends and neighbours.

The author's concern is always to be faithful to Scripture as the infallible Word of God. His exegesis is reliable, which makes this a good book for the Christian who does not have a vast library of Old Testament commentaries. The reader will also find the section on moral difficulties in the Bible to be faithful to Scripture, even if it gives but cursory answers in some cases.

The concluding section on the relationship of Old Testament ethics and New Testament applications is quite short. This is surprising since this topic cries out for a full discussion in a book on Christian ethics.

Toward Old Testament Ethics makes a good companion volume to *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*. The former volume gives the biblical foundation and many of the building materials to construct an ethical system, while the latter volume gives the needed finishing touches for subjects that Dr Kaiser's book does not fully address.

Tordon Woolard, Brussels, Belgium.

R. E. Friedman (ed.), **The Poet and the Historian: essays in literary and historical biblical criticism** Harvard Semitic Studies (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983), 163 pp., \$13.60.

The six separate specimens of literary-critical scholarship have no common focus beyond being addressed to advanced students of the Old Testament. Friedman contributes 'The Prophet and the Historian: the acquisition of Historical Information from Literary Sources' - Zech 7 & 8 on the fasts is prophecy not law. F. M. Cross recapitulates much he has said on 'The Epic Traditions of Early Israel' in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*. Baruch Halpern informs us that 'the early formulations of the covenant spawned later partisan reinterpretations, each of which appealed to earlier texts for proof', 'these traditions grew by feeding on themselves'. He describes the misunderstanding of the Song of the Sea and of Deborah by the prose versions, and goes on to the work of P as 'the cautious verbiage of institutional bureaucracy', a 'literalist, or guide to fundamentalists'. He sides with metaphor against such inner-biblical literalism, and his essay 'Doctrine by Misadventure: between the Israelite Source and the Biblical Historian' certainly has some purple passages ('David's Lear-like status . . . the tragedy of the old man unable to hold his own either politically or in bed').

David appears in the next two as well - Moshe Weinfeld 'Zion and Jerusalem as Religious and Political Capital. Ideology and Utopia', and A. M. Cooper 'The Life and Times of King David

according to the Book of Psalms'. Cooper, as do other contributors, has some scathing things to say about the plethora of mutually contradictory scholarly hypotheses and critical 'results'. Indeed, a maxim emerging from this volume for *Themelios* readers who do not share these authors' presuppositions about Scripture could well be 'set a thief to catch a thief'. 'The application of historical-critical and form-critical methods only multiplies hypotheses and uncertainty, and hardly moves us closer to a valid understanding of the history of Israel, or of the history of Israelite literature' - so A. M. Cooper. His solution, after a glance at B. S. Childs' canonical approach, is along the lines of the so-called New Criticism: 'the meaning of the psalm is nothing more or less than the way we, as readers, appropriate the text and *make* it meaningful . . . a world of imagination which exists nowhere beyond the language of the poem and our own minds', p. 131. finally, the Greek empire strikes back in A. Momigliano's 'Origins of Universal History' - Daniel's pseudonymist cribbed the four empire scheme from Herodotus, Ctesias and company: six full pages of bibliography document the apocalyptic struggle towards this conclusion.

Served this literary-critical menu, what can one say? Scholarly consensus is obviously as far away as ever, and professors dead or retiring are ever savaged by the doctoral shark pack. Evangelicals would do well to applaud softly, if not carry a big stick, when Cross plays Mac the Knife to Wellhausen and Gunkel. His positive affirmations about transmission of Middle Bronze traditions are attached to a pre-JE epic law which we don't have, sung by bards quite romantically enough for Gunkel. The hard evidence for virtuoso performances bardic or liturgical in tribal-league times at Gilgal or anywhere else is still missing. Moreover, Cross like other contributors credits much canonical Scripture to ideological propagandists just as much at loggerheads as J and P were for Wellhausen.

For me the plum is Moshe Weinfeld and his use of incontrovertibly dated Near Eastern Texts providing a delineated cultural horizon and revealing uniquely Israelite features in the foreground. There is at least a documented cultural continuity expressed in literature in Mesopotamia from Sumerian to Babylonian times, and attested historical contact between this zone and Israel's ancestors, kings and exiles, giving some credibility to the comparative method. Although Weinfeld speaks in terms of 'the typology of court ideology', which can demean when applied in a reductionist manner to biblical material, his literary-critical decisions against the late emergence of dynastic messianism are positive. The ANE texts should be required reading, and those interested in Old Testament eschatology focused on David and Zion should not miss this one.

Deryck Sheriffs, London Bible College.

J. Goldingay, **God's Prophet, God's Servant: A Study in Jeremiah and Isaiah 40 - 55** (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984), 160 pp., £4.95.

Some books are a delight. This is one of them.

In the first place it is eminently readable. The author foregoes footnotes and writes in an easy, non-technical style. Such a style can be deceptive in its simplicity, for the content reflects a thorough mastery of modern scholarly debate.

Secondly, it is a work of true theology. The author shows how numerous key issues to do with God and man, sin and salvation, discipleship and suffering receive profound treatment in Jeremiah and Isaiah 40 - 55. He is always sensitive to the meaning that the material would have had in its original context, yet he constantly shows not only how these Old Testament prophets stand as true precursors of Jesus but also how they apply to Christians today.

I found the treatment of Isaiah 40 - 55 particularly helpful, as Goldingay relates the 'servant songs' to their context and shows the development of a consistent train of thought through the chapters in a

way that I have not found elsewhere. On the question of the identity of the servant he makes a complex scholarly debate amenable to a simple and satisfying solution.

One small regret is that Goldingay has not given more space to some of the critical issues that tend to loom large in a student's first acquaintance with scholarly approaches to the Old Testament. He deals with the basic critical problems in a remarkably deft way in the introduction - but it is perhaps a little too deft for some, especially when current study of Jeremiah is distancing itself from interpreting the material in terms of Jeremiah's own personal relationship with God. I have no doubt that Goldingay's approach is fundamentally correct, and his interpretation will still be of value long after current fashions have passed; but a little more help with critical problems in the meantime would be appreciated. Since, however, one book cannot do everything, this is perhaps less of a criticism of this book than it is a request for another. More, please!

R. W. L. Moberly, University of Durham.

G. Emmerson, **Hosea. An Israelite Prophet in Judaeon Perspective** (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 224 pp., n.p.

This book is a study of the redactional activities of the Judahite editors of the text of Hosea after its transmission to the kingdom of Judah subsequent to the fall of Samaria in 721 bc. More particularly, it examines expressions of future hope in Hosea, references to the southern kingdom, and polemic against northern cult practice - all three being areas in which theological opinions incompatible with those held by Hosea have often been sought, and found. In the case of the first passages the conclusion is that there is very little secondary (this term is not used in a pejorative sense by the author) material in such texts, which are integral to their present contexts, and that they are also marked by a distinctive theology of repentance which is authentically Hoseanic. Such secondary material as does appear in these contexts is recognized by thematic and grammatical detachment from its surrounding text, and characterized by a different theology of repentance, *i.e.* one which requires repentance as a pre-condition of salvation, in contrast to Hosea's own view, which was that repentance is made possible by God's saving acts and follows them.

Examination of references to Judah and the Davidic dynasty yielded the conclusion that Hosea himself offered criticism of Judah's hostile stance towards Israel, that there is nonetheless in Hosea a sense of nostalgia for, and confidence in, the Davidic royal house, and that only the criticisms of Judah's cult and religious life in general reflect the theology of the Judahite editors of the text of Hosea. In the third area covered, that of northern cult practices, it is reported that Hosea had no quarrel with the existence of sanctuaries such as those of Gilgal and Bethel, which were hallowed by ancient tradition, but where attacks are made upon their legitimacy one may again recognize Judahite influence at work.

In all this Hosea is revealed as sharing theological standpoints with Deuteronomy, in which a positive attitude is revealed to the notion of a united nation, a pragmatic acceptance of monarchy as a stabilizing influence supplying continuity is discernible, and where the covenant values of Sinai are, as in Hosea, even by his Judahite editors, cherished and offered as a way to avoid the impending disaster of destruction and exile.

This book is a Newcastle-upon-Tyne PhD thesis, argued with clarity, simplicity, accuracy, erudition, sensitivity to the texts discussed and great respect for God's activity in preserving and re-shaping the text 'in the conviction' (p. 136) 'that what was addressed to a previous generation' (*i.e.* Hosea's hearers) 'as a word from God still has relevance for a later time and a new situation' (in the hands of its Judahite editors). As an attempt to record Scripture 'as originally given' and to distinguish it from God's later activity, it must be rated very highly indeed.

P. J. M. Southwell, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (London: SPCK, 1984), 287 pp., £9.50.

In his introduction Blenkinsopp writes: 'the only way to avoid the worst excesses arising from presuppositions of a theological or philosophical character is to keep on returning to the historical phenomenon of prophecy in Israel, which implies the attempt to make sense of its development throughout a long history, parts of which are very poorly documented. It would be easier . . . to eschew the attempt' but one must 'regain perspective on the phenomenon of prophecy as a whole' (p. 13). His aim is to provide a critical history, not a thematic study of prophecy, and throughout he is particularly aware of the phenomenon of 'inter-prophetic exegesis' and the critiques of earlier prophecy which are so much a feature of exilic and post-exilic prophetic texts.

Blenkinsopp begins with a chapter on the prophets in the canon, as one might expect from the author of *Prophecy and Canon*. This includes a good survey of modern critical scholarship within the area of Old Testament prophecy. The subject is then reviewed historically from early Near-Eastern prophecy onwards (not much attention to Balaam in this section) and proceeds down to the eschatological re-interpretation of prophecy in Zechariah 9-14, and the radical critique of it in Jonah. It is in these later chapters that the student is best served, for Blenkinsopp has gone to great pains to provide as much information as possible about those periods of Hebrew and Jewish history from which we have least contemporary literature. His section on 'Third Isaiah' is a masterpiece of detailed and sensitive study, even though we are inevitably in the realms of speculation at this point.

Each chapter is followed by extensive notes, which point the reader to further recent discussion of points raised in the text, and these are usually enormously helpful. The sections are all preceded by useful bibliographies, though regrettably these do not take much notice of recent conservative scholarship in England. Good use is made of valuable monographs, such as that of Hans Walter Wolff on Micah, and indeed a feature of Blenkinsopp's study is the way he has assembled the insights and discoveries of others and reported them in his own work. This is not to say he does not have some valuable insights of his own - 'Third Isaiah' has already been mentioned - and his summary of the ministry of Ezekiel on pp. 206-207 is superb. But the chief value of this book will be to the student who needs to turn to a reference work in order to discover what is being said in modern critical scholarship about the prophets and their historical background. One may add that Blenkinsopp has a great eye for detail, and good sympathetic imagination, and the book is strewn with brief 'throw-away' remarks which are exceptionally shrewd and thought-provoking.

P. J. M. Southwell, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

Robert A. Anderson, *Daniel: Signs and Wonders*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1984), xvii + 158 pp., £4.25.

The title of this new series of commentaries is bound to arouse interest, with its distinctive emphasis on a theological rather than a critical approach, and its intention to transcend the parochialism of western civilization by including authors from Eastern Europe and from such countries as Israel, Indonesia and India. The series, intended for ministers and Christian educators, has as its goal 'the Old Testament alive in the church', and is to be written 'by front rank scholars who treasure the life of faith'. Their brief includes reference to such Jewish traditions as will help illuminate the text of the Old Testament, but all the contributors are persons who affirm the witness of the New

Testament to Christ, and who 'share a developing consensus that any serious explanation of the Old Testament's relationship to the New will uphold the integrity of the Old Testament'.

The author of the *Daniel* volume is Professor of Old Testament, Ormand College, University of Melbourne. In a short introduction (less than five pages) he dates the book in its present form to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, touches on its place in apocalyptic and wisdom literature, and in the development of the canon. He sees its aim to instruct, inspire and confirm the faith of ordinary people, who were forced to live in the midst of hostility. Questions of historical accuracy are in general considered as irrelevant to this commentary, though they are touched upon as they arise in the text. There is 'essential historicity', but 'to heighten the drama and underline the message he [the author] had to move beyond the restrictions of historically accurate detail'. For instance Belshazzar (son of Nabonidus) is called son of Nebuchadnezzar, who is made to displace the relatively insignificant Nabonidus.

In the apocalyptic chapters (2, 7-12) the focal point of all the prophecies is the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, though reference is made to other possibilities; e.g. on ch. 2 there is reference to the Jewish interpretation that Rome was the fourth kingdom (21, 22), and a quotation from R. H. Goldwurm's commentary on Daniel (1979), p. 59, that the fourth beast is the Christian church. It is good to be shocked into considering such a point of view. The last three pages touch on the influence of these chapters on the thinking of Jesus (Mark 13) and on the Book of Revelation, as well as on the music and art of our own day.

This is a reverent commentary that takes seriously both the stories and the apocalyptic chapters, yet despite some unusual references and thought-provoking passages it is not as distinctive as one might have been led to expect by the claims of the series. Its theology seems to this reviewer to be 'thin' because the book of Daniel is seen only in relation to the second century BC. Its relevance therefore is limited to periods that reproduce the same sort of circumstances. If there is no overview of future world kingdoms (future in the sixth/fifth centuries BC), coming to focus in Christ, there is no ground here for proclaiming God's overruling of history, and so a whole dimension of the book's significance is missing.

Joyce Baldwin, Bristol.

Schuyler Brown, *The Origins of Christianity. A Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (The Oxford Bible Series; Oxford and New York: OUP, 1984). x + 169 pp., £3.95.

The new Oxford Bible Series (General Editors P. R. Ackroyd and G. N. Stanton) aims to give a broad thematic view of the biblical literature, and is to include general introductions to each Testament as well as a volume on the interpretation of both.

Dr Brown, Associated Professor in the University of St Michael's College, Toronto, has contributed this introductory volume to the New Testament part. It is difficult to assess briefly a book so densely packed with latent learning, which steers a refined course between the extremes of fundamentalism and Bultmannian hyper-scepticism (pp. 15-17). It has many virtues. It is a smoothly written exposition of many positions widely held among contemporary scholars. One can only admire its easy command of the secondary literature. The book traces its way conscientiously over each lineament of current debate, with comment which nuances the author's position at each point within the stream. Yet I find the result disappointing. It is probably very heavy going for the general reader, while lacking specific documentation to assist the student. (It would be a good exercise to identify throughout the books and articles whose influence has shaped the refinements of presentation.)

In this short review I shall focus on basic questions of method

rather than attempting detailed discussion. The heavy, if tacit, dependence on synthesizing opinions constantly provokes the reader to ask 'Are these things so?' An important example will illustrate. Brown rejects the idea that the 'we-passages' in Acts denote eye-witness authorship on the two grounds that 'we' cannot consistently include both Paul and the author, and that the first person plural is to be explained as a stylistic device used in Greek accounts of sea-voyages (pp. 27-28). On the former we observe simply that this imposes an artificial rigidity on the application of the pronoun, which in Greek as in English shifts with context between inclusive and exclusive senses, and advocates of traditional authorship have no need to suppose otherwise here. The second objection reflects V. K. Robbins, 'The We-Passages in Acts and Ancient Sea Voyages', *Biblical Research* 20 (1975), pp. 5-18 (cf. C. H. Talbert (ed.), *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978, pp. 215-242), who argues for this literary practice from Greek and Latin examples. The first obvious narratives I happened to check (Caesar, *Gallic War* 4.23-4, 28; 5:8; Lucian, *Ship* 7-9) were all in the third person, and Lucian actually puts his voyage narrative in third person indirect speech in a first person context. (In Caesar's Latin the Roman forces are constantly termed *nostrī* [our men], but this of course is used with a third person verb, occurs in contexts of all kinds, and has no bearing on our question.) Of course such narratives are often first person accounts, because they recall personal experience, and plural because they recall communal experience. The same tendency is as true of colloquial English as of literary Greek (or Latin), but it is no proof of the existence of a literary style appropriate to what was *not* personal experience. Robbins' examples are not representative, nor accurately analysed.

That kind of example worries me, for in a popular survey of this kind the general reader is in the hands of his author, and in no position to unravel what lies beneath his statements. I am not reassured when Brown advocates 'reading between the lines' as the means of knowing the social history of first-century Christianity (pp. 12-13), where the historian must surely attempt to wrestle with the primary collateral documents, however sparse. And his over-simplified account of ancient historiography (pp. 13-14) and his dismissive reference to 'a historical consciousness which did not yet exist' (p. 31) should not be allowed to pass without a close reading of Polybius 12.25a-k (2nd cent. BC; accessible in Loeb translation).

Questions of the status of Luke-Acts in particular are of course crucial for determining whether we have to deal with documents which are basically sound in their ostensible account of Jesus and of Paul or whether they have to be radically reinterpreted to meet a readjusted synthesis. This is not to challenge the validity of the observations underlying tradition-criticism and redaction-criticism, but to suggest that some of the large and confident conclusions drawn from them are tenuously based. It is very proper to recognise the factor of diversity in primitive Christianity, but the idea that theological similarity indicates contemporaneity and theological disparity a difference of date (p. 26) presupposes a linear idea of development often determined by rule-of-thumb lexical or formulaic criteria. Thus the word 'church' is taken to refer first to a local community, and to be universalized only at a deuterio-Pauline stage (pp. 120-1), a pattern which entails some reinterpretation of references contained in the generally accepted Pauline epistles. (The argument from theological similarity to date is I think a weakness of J. A. T. Robinson's case for very early datings). And anonymity, we are told, was a distinctive feature of the second generation (pp. 133, 136) - but then, so was pseudonymity, as a cover for anonymity (p. 141). Criteria like this are highly suspect. The same conclusion may be drawn whether a text bears a name or not.

Brown explains Jesus' continuing attractiveness as largely due to a self-understanding as 'a man for others' (p. 68). The historian as such is not competent to pass judgement on divine intervention (p. 73), but Jesus' performance of miracles was uncontested and must be rated an historical datum (p. 60). The gospel accounts of the sayings of Jesus (p. 48) and of the empty tomb (pp. 75-77) are to be treated with respect. There is a

thoughtful assessment of form-criticism (pp. 36-40). Acts must be accepted as a source for Paul (p. 102), though chronological nearness is ruled out by differences in theology, as in the understanding of apostleship (p. 28). There is a lengthy tradition-critical study of the word *ophthe* ('he appeared', 1 Cor. 15:5-8, pp. 81-92), concluding that its original function was to legitimate the preacher rather than to validate the resurrection, and equating the appearance to the 500 with Pentecost (pp. 90-92). I find these last, and the subsequent accounts of the history and tenets of Johannine and Matthean communities, among the most speculative and least convincing parts of the book. The 'early Catholicism' attributed to Luke-Acts and the Pastorals is taken in conclusion to have been the 'winning' strand, the form of early Christianity which influenced subsequent religious history (pp. 152-153).

This densely packed book is useful for the initiate as a concise repository of assumptions and opinions, flavoured with a few additional hypotheses, but for a reasoned New Testament introduction or a convincing account of Christian origins I should prefer to look elsewhere.

Colin J. Hemer, Tyndale House, Cambridge.

W. Barnes Tatum, In Quest of Jesus, a Guidebook (London: SCM, 1983), 186 pp., £5.95.

'Like us, the Gospel writers tended to make Jesus over in their own likenesses' (p. 22). The same observation applies to Tatum in this primer. His format - simple language, a mixture of thematic and historical description of basic issues in the study of the Gospels, lucid and helpful diagrams, brief accounts of selected works of scholarship and occasional summaries of his arguments - is ideal for the novice. Although written for the general reader, not for the professional scholar, the book will help someone embarking on serious study of the gospels who wants to survey the subject before an under-graduate course in theology begins or who wants to see the wood of an essay topic before examining the trees in detailed literature.

Tatum covers a large area in a small space. Short sketches are given of ancient attestations to gospel origins, of source-, form- and redaction-criticism and of the synoptic (treated more or less as one) and Johannine portraits of Jesus. He describes historical searches for Jesus from Tatian and Calvin down to Bornkamm's *Jesus of Nazareth*, giving summaries of writers like Shirley Jackson Case and S. G. F. Brandon. His final section selects topics - Resurrection and Virgin Birth, Christology, Kingdom Preaching, Ethics, Parables, Miracles and Passion Narratives. To cover so many topics in so short a space is remarkable. But this achievement limits the value of the book. For serious students it introduces topics and writers which must be researched elsewhere, in more detailed works, if they are to evaluate them responsibly. The format is useful for starters; the main course must be derived elsewhere.

His content is extremely disappointing. First published in 1982, the text takes little account of scholarship since 1975. No account is given of recent work (e.g. Drury) on appreciating the gospels as literature, on social forces at work in Jesus' ministry (e.g. Theissen) and the Jewish behaviour of gospel writers (e.g. Gundry). Further, his critical stance is out of date. In his 'contemporary view of Gospel origins' he claims that all traditions about Jesus had to be translated from an Aramaic original into Greek, he commits the reader to Markan priority as something 'evident', and, although he distinguishes the four gospels by their portraits of Jesus, he does not consider the distinct literary genres of the four. Jesus is a common theme - but is not the theme treated differently by each writer?

Gervais Angel, Trinity College, Bristol.

B. D. Chilton (ed.), *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress/London: SPCK, 1984). xi + 162 pp., n.p.

This is the fifth volume of the series *Issues in Religion and Theology*, and like its predecessors it offers a collection of significant pieces on its subject. These range from a 1934 contribution by Rudolph Otto to two recent views first published in 1979. There is also a 26-page introduction by the editor, charting the progress of the debate, and a four-page bibliography (with, alas, a sizeable percentage of the titles in German). Modern authors and New Testament references are indexed.

It would be possible to carp at the selection offered — no Schweitzer (nor any of his predecessors), no Dodd, no Jeremias — but what is here offered is a good sample of high points of the discussion. Otto's essay is the only one of the eight over twenty years old, and the rest reflect aspects of the wide variety of approaches which have been brought to the attempted elucidation of the phrase in contemporary study. M. Lattke (1975) discusses the Jewish background both to the phrase 'kingdom of God' and to the idea of God's kingship. T. F. Glasson (1977) roundly condemns all followers of Schweitzer's eschatological interpretation of the kingdom, and pronounces his influence baneful. N. Perrin (1976) uses the categories 'sign' and 'symbol' as developed by the linguistic philosopher P. Ricoeur. Here Chilton has skilfully extracted much of the meat of Perrin's book, presenting short extracts stitched together with brief summaries of the intervening argument. There is also an extract from the end of Chilton's own contribution to the debate, *God in Strength* (1979).

This is certainly a valuable way for a student to immerse himself in the literature rather than relying on one scholar's view in a standard *Theology*. If I have a complaint, it is that the form of the introduction does not make it particularly easy to put the individual essays into their historical context as one reads them; nor are we offered any critique of the views presented here. A brief introduction to each essay would have been a real help. It would also have been very valuable to have some reflection on the extent to which the contributors actually differ in substance. Are they not, to some extent, saying the same things in different words? That may perhaps be left as a valuable exercise for the reader.

D. R. de Lacey, Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

Pinchas Lapide, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, ET Wilhelm C. Linss (London: SPCK, 1984). 160 pp., £4.95.

Pinchas Lapide is an orthodox Jewish theologian who has worked hard in the cause of Jewish-Christian relations and in recent years has become the favourite Jewish conversation-partner for German Christian theologians. A few years ago he took the unprecedented step of accepting (without becoming a Christian) that the resurrection of Jesus was a real historical event, and in this book explains why. If I have understood him correctly, there are three reasons: (1) The historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, while not unambiguous enough to convince the determined sceptic, is very good. In particular, Lapide is impressed by the transformation of the disciples from a frightened and despairing group on Good Friday to a confident missionary society: only a real historical event can explain this. (2) The disciples' experience of Jesus' resurrection must be understood as a genuinely 'Jewish faith experience'. Its preconditions (especially the Jewish expectation of resurrection) are Jewish beliefs which Lapide as an orthodox Jew shares. (3) Following Maimonides and some modern Jewish theologians such as Franz Rosenzweig, Lapide sees Christianity as part of God's providential purpose to spread the knowledge of the God of Israel throughout the world. But, he reasons, in that case the resurrection of Jesus, without which there would have been no Christianity, must have been a real act of God in

history. It does not make Jesus Israel's Messiah (and so Lapide has not become a Christian), but it gives Jesus a prominent place in God's preparation of the world for the coming messianic age.

Whether or not other Jewish theologians find Lapide's argument acceptable, he seems to me to have moved Jewish-Christian dialogue in a significant direction. Modern Jewish assessment of Jesus and Christianity would seem to have two major features. There has been, in the first place, an attempt to retrieve Jesus as a Jewish teacher with Jewish (as opposed to Christian) significance, and, secondly, there has been a positive assessment of Christianity as serving, in God's providence, to bring Gentiles to faith in the God of Israel. But between the historical Jesus and Gentile Christianity lies, historically, the faith of the first *Jewish* Christians in the risen Jesus as Messiah. Lapide has rightly seen the need for serious Jewish assessment of this original Jewish Christian faith in Jesus, without which there would have been no Gentile Christianity. What he attempts to do is to assess it positively as the historical root of Gentile Christianity. But there is a problem here with regard to Jesus' significance for Jews, which Lapide seems to have missed but which may make other Jewish theologians reluctant to follow him. Acceptance of Jesus' resurrection establishes, as Lapide's book repeatedly shows, a fundamental continuity between Jesus himself and the earliest Christian message about Jesus, *i.e.* between Jesus the thoroughly Jewish figure with a mission to his own people alone and the first Jewish Christians who called their own people to faith in the risen Jesus. It becomes difficult to see where a line can be drawn between the retrieval of Jesus himself for Judaism and a Jewish assessment of Jewish Christianity as having only Gentile significance. I do not mean this as a polemical point, but to indicate that Jewish theological assessment of Jesus and Christianity must involve itself rather deeply in the question of the historical continuity between Jesus and the rise of Christianity. As far as further dialogue is concerned, Lapide's book points in the direction of the need for both Jews and Christians to look rather carefully at the reasons for and the meaning of the original Jewish Christian belief in Jesus' messiahship: this is not so obvious a matter as Christians have tended to think.

The fact that this book has been written is significant. But I have to say that I found it in detail an unsatisfying book: it is a very brief and lightweight treatment, which fails to press the important theological issues and which seemed to me inconsistent in places. Carl Braaten's introduction is useful particularly in filling in some of the background to Lapide's thinking from his earlier works.

Richard Bauckham, University of Manchester.

Paul W. Walaskay, *And so we came to Rome: the political perspective of St Luke* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 49; Cambridge: CUP, 1983), 121 pp., £15.

The question of Luke's political perspective has been debated with increasing vigour in recent years. Now, in this short study, Professor Walaskay aims to turn the whole debate upside down. Where generations of exegetes have claimed that Luke is concerned to commend the church to the Roman state, he is convinced that Luke's work can better be understood as aiming to commend the empire to the church.

After helpfully surveying previous work on Luke as political apologist, Walaskay (ch. 2) turns to the text aiming to demonstrate three things: firstly, that Luke includes a good deal of material that could be politically dangerous if read by a Roman official; secondly, that even in passages which have been read as anti-Roman, Luke is in fact glossing over the more negative aspects of Roman rule found in his sources; and thirdly, that in a string of passages in the Gospel Luke presents a wholly positive view of Roman authority best understood as conscious *apologia pro imperio*.

In chapters 3 and 4 this perspective is applied specifically to the treatment received by Jesus and Paul respectively at the hands of Roman justice. Luke is concerned to shift all blame for Jesus' death from Roman to Jewish shoulders. Throughout, Roman judicial institutions are presented as tolerant and just. Jesus is crucified according to God's will notwithstanding the excellence of Roman law; Paul is enabled to accomplish the divine plan for the furtherance of the gospel through the process of Roman justice.

A final chapter sums up and attempts to place Luke's work in historical perspective. Luke's optimistic outlook on the empire reflects the 'tranquillity and tolerance' of Flavian rule AD 70-90. Luke is responding to a complex series of problems: apocalyptically oriented anti-Roman sentiment; anxiety over a delayed parousia; confusion over Christian loyalties following the fall of Jerusalem; potential conflict over the notion of authority. He aims to reassure Christians that the state as much as the church has a divine calling and divine authority.

Professor Walaskay's claims for his own work are disarmingly modest: 'I hope', he says, 'that at the very least this work has raised the possibility that Luke had . . . a positive view of the empire . . . which he imparted to his reading public.' What we have here is a self-confessedly exploratory essay airing publicly a fascinating hypothesis. Read in that way, the book offers new lines on a host of passages and a salutary warning against unquestioned assumptions.

I have two particular problems. Firstly, I'm left constantly wondering at the subtlety of Luke's supposed readers. After all, by the author's own admission a great many thoughtful readers have missed this *apologia pro imperio*. At point after point we are asked to see political concerns where it seems far more natural to see theology. Does Luke stress Jewish involvement in the death of Jesus because he is defending Rome or because he is exploring the theme of Israel's rejection of Messiah? Again, would readers *really* have thought of Luke 2:4 as a reminder to pay their taxes? Secondly, I wonder whether Walaskay's comment on Cassidy's work could not be redirected against himself: 'Cassidy's presentation of 1st century Christian history is not sufficiently careful . . . and placement of Luke in the broader Hellenistic (or even New Testament) literary context is lacking' (p. 86 n. 124). I am not convinced that his picture of the Flavian empire is accurate. Nor am I persuaded that his approach to Luke-Acts as political apologetics can be sustained in a Hellenistic (or New Testament) context.

This is a book to be read by anyone interested in Luke's political perspective. Perhaps though, its greatest value will prove to be negative. If the writer fails to establish his case, he does drive one more nail into the coffin of the dogma that Luke is writing *apologia pro ecclesia*.

S. V. Rees, Stockport.

the best place to start as it is 'where Paul himself started' (p. 27). The study of various Christological titles and roles leads into a discussion of corporate language about Christ ('in Christ', 'the body of Christ', etc.); the right way to understand this language is in terms of Christ's 'sphere of power' (pp. 60-61). When it comes to salvation, Paul's soteriology is taken to be based on his acceptance of Christ as 'solution': it was only this that enabled Paul to 'see with new eyes what the problem was' (p. 24). Indeed, it is better to talk of Paul's 'call' than his 'conversion'; he did not become a Christian because he was dissatisfied with the Law, for he 'encountered Christ before he saw anything wrong in contemporary Judaism' (p. 103). The question of why Paul attacked justification by works of the Law is raised in the light of E. P. Sanders' insistence that Palestinian Judaism was not self-righteously legalistic. A number of possible explanations are considered though none are judged to be convincing. Justification means 'the act of restoring people to their proper relationship with God' (p. 85) and can be distinguished from righteousness, which is 'how one lives within that restored relationship' (p. 96; cf. Ziesler's monograph on *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, 1972). However, Paul's ethics are not based on justification but on 'being under the authority and power of Christ and the Spirit' (p. 111). At various points throughout these discussions key passages are dealt with in more detail. Finally, a separate chapter deals with the influence of Paul in the New Testament and beyond. Here the disputed letters (Eph., Col., 2 Thes. and the Pastorals) are treated in turn and their distinctive theological perspectives are outlined; in most cases the authorship question receives an open verdict although evidence is marshalled against the Pastorals.

No two students of Paul see exactly eye to eye about how to approach Pauline theology and under what headings to organize its themes. Thus, inevitably, one could take exception to Ziesler's treatment at a number of points. To my mind it is a pity that the discussion of the Law is not brought into closer relation with Paul's ministry to Gentiles and his understanding of Christ and Israel. Similarly the discussion of Paul's eschatology is spread over a number of other topics and thus never seen in its proper role determining all the rest of Paul's theology and ethics. Moreover, there are obvious drawbacks in discussing any such theological themes in abstraction from their concrete setting in Paul's varied struggles with his churches.

But these are all minor cavils in comparison with the value of this book as a clear and concise introduction to Pauline theology. I have already made extensive use of it as a textbook for first-year students in an introductory course on Paul and found it most helpful. Certainly it needs to be supplemented if one is to enter into the issues in any depth (it is a shame that the Bibliography is not rather fuller); but as a lucid guide into a fascinating terrain it is to be highly recommended.

John Barclay, University of Glasgow.

J. Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity* (Oxford Bible Series; Oxford: OUP, 1983), 157 pp., £3.50.

At a time when increasingly specialized monographs pour off the academic presses, it is good news to be able to welcome an up-to-date (and cheap!) book which does an admirable job surveying a wide field and serving up a range of scholarship in an easily digestible form. Ziesler's book is written for the Oxford Bible Series, a series of ten volumes designed to give to a 'general readership' a broad view of the topics and problems in biblical studies. This ensures that the style is never over-technical and the specialized vocabulary is carefully explained. Its place in the series also determines the character of this book as a survey of the main themes of Pauline theology: questions of introduction and dating are left largely on one side and the bulk of the book is devoted to discussing and clarifying the most important features of Paul's thought.

Ziesler packs so much into 144 pages of text that it is impossible to do more here than give a few samples of his conclusions. After introductory chapters concerning sources and Paul's inheritance, Ziesler launches into Paul's theology via his Christology; although we may not be able to find any one 'centre' of Paul's thought, Christology is

Rodney A. Whitacre, *Johannine Polemic: The Role of Tradition and Theology* (SBLDS 67; Chico: Scholars Press, 1982). 278 pp., \$13.00 (\$8.75 for members).

This book is a photo-reproduction of a PhD dissertation successfully defended at Cambridge University. Whitacre follows the modern consensus in many critical areas: the author (or authors) is (are) unknown; it is unclear whether the same person(s) wrote the fourth gospel and the Johannine epistles; *apostynagogos* in John 9 is an unambiguous anachronism that gives a crucial clue to the nature of the gospel's *Sitz im Leben*, viz. conflict between Christians and their Jewish opponents; and so forth.

Whitacre's contribution is the delineation of that conflict. He argues that the author's (Whitacre rather tiresomely always writes 'author(s)', never 'author') opponents claimed to share many of the author's beliefs and traditions, but developed them into quite different thought structures about the nature and revelation of God. In both the gospel and the epistles, Whitacre argues, the author responds by appealing to the traditions he holds in common with his opponents, but also by showing the

differences. These discontinuities concern the place and purpose of Jesus: in the fourth gospel, the author insists Jesus is Messiah, God's Son and the supreme revelation of God, and especially of God's gracious love; while in 1 John the christological issue turns more sharply on Jesus' death. More important, the crucial criterion for assessing his opponents' positions and finding them deficient is his 'central theological vision of the love of God'; and the cardinal principle by which the author seeks to establish that his opponents are wrong is the appeal to the *continuity* of traditions as he understands them. The issues are so important to the author that he does not hesitate to class his opponents with those who are of the devil.

Whitacre's treatment of 1 John is more convincing than his handling of the fourth gospel. His wholesale adoption of many commonly held positions provides him with a platform on which to erect his own theory of conflict in the Johannine community; but one marvels at his willingness to adopt such positions without seriously wrestling with the problems they raise or checking the foundations again. Whitacre is to be commended for bringing to our attention John's stress on the *continuity* of tradition; but the more that point is accepted, the more difficult it must be to read off the life of John's community from the surface of the text.

D. A. Carson, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

Richard J. Bauckham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco: Word, 1983), 357 pp., £14.95.

There is no other major commentary on 2 Peter and Jude to match this one: it is expert, thorough, balanced and lucidly written. Dr Bauckham, who is lecturer in Christian thought at Manchester University, brings to his task a formidable grasp of Jewish apocalyptic and other literature and also of early Christian literature, and he uses this expertise to illuminate these two books of the New Testament that seem mysterious and difficult to many Christian readers. He shows how the books have frequently been misjudged by commentators, who have seen them as excessively polemical and/or as reflecting a degenerate and relatively late form of Christianity ('early catholicism', to use the jargon).

He explains the text of the epistles sympathetically and nearly always persuasively. On 2 Peter 1:20, for example, he argues with typical thoroughness and clarity that the reference is probably to the original inspiration of the Old Testament prophets rather than to present interpretation. Very occasionally I felt uncertain about his argument: for example, on 2 Peter 1:16-18 must the Transfiguration, which Bauckham discusses very helpfully, be seen 'as an apocalyptic revelation in which God installs Jesus as his eschatological vice-regent' rather than as a theophany? On 2 Peter 3:8 is Bauckham right to deny any idea of Christian mission here? I wonder if the author has not in mind the saying of Mark 13:10, as he has other possible echoes of Jesus' eschatological discourse in this passage (e.g. the 'thief')?

So far as his critical opinions go, Bauckham maintains that Jude was written by our Lord's brother between AD 50 and 60. It was written against certain itinerant charismatics who saw the grace of God as an excuse for immorality and who spoke disparagingly of the angels who gave the Old Testament law. The letter is an appeal to Christians to fight for the faith, and consists of a carefully constructed *midrash* on Old Testament and other Jewish apocalyptic texts, demonstrating the falsehood and danger of the false teaching (vv. 5-19) followed by the appeal (vv. 20-23).

2 Peter is essentially a 'testament' written probably between AD 80 and 90 in epistolary form. It was written against false teachers, influenced by Greek pagan thought, who were sceptical about the Second Coming and loose in their morals. Bauckham opts for the view that the close similarities between 2 Peter and Jude are best explained by the hypothesis that the author of 2 Peter used the carefully constructed letter of Jude. He agrees with the majority of critical commentators that 2 Peter is a pseudonymous work, written by a leading Roman Christian after Peter's death as a defence of

apostolic (including Petrine) doctrine. Pseudonymous 'testaments' were, we are told, a well-known and respectable literary genre, and there was no intention to deceive; indeed the literary device is particularly transparent in 2 Peter in the way that the author switches from the prophetic future tense — 'Peter' predicts that false prophets *will* come — to the present tense — the false prophets *are* already come (e.g. cf. 3:1-4 and 3:5-10). Various considerations confirm that the letter was written after Peter's time, including its very distinctive Hellenistic style, its close affinities with 1 Clement, 2 Clement and Hermas, and the probable interpretation of 2 Peter 3:4.

The cumulative case for the non-Petrine authorship of 2 Peter is persuasively argued by Bauckham, but it will not persuade everyone. It is not, for example, certain that the oscillation between present and future tenses indicates pseudonymity: might not someone such as Peter have been provoked to write an epistle about coming heresy precisely because heresy was already rearing its head? Whether Bauckham's sincere attempt to portray pseudonymity as a respectable and transparent epistolary genre quite comes off is also disputable: he admits that the Gentile Christian church forgot the nature of the genre before long, and one cannot but be a little uneasy at the apparent suggestion that the readers' faith in eschatological prophecy should have been confirmed by the fulfilment of the pseudonymous predictions of 2 Peter (p. 295)!

Conservative readers may be put off Bauckham's commentary because of his conclusions on the authorship issue. But this would be a pity, since it contains so much exegesis that is positively helpful and informative. I would recommend any serious student or expositor of the New Testament to buy and to study this commentary.

David Wenham, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

Colin G. Kruse, *New Testament Foundations for Ministry* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1983). 236 pp., £12.95.

This is the further volume in the well-established series of Marshalls Theological Library, now appearing in paperback. The book is by a New Testament specialist teaching at Ridley College, Melbourne, and is based upon a degree thesis; and though it has been simplified for publication, it retains a somewhat technical flavour. It is a study of New Testament teaching on ministry, as found in the synoptic gospels and the 'chief' Pauline epistles, and argues that the themes of apostleship, servanthood and 'the role of the Spirit' figure both in Jesus's conception of his own ministry and in his conception of the ministry of his followers; and further, that the same three ideas, along with additional ideas, figure in Paul's teaching about his own ministry and that of the Christian community. He believes that his conclusions have lessons for Christian thinking about ministry today.

Any responsible discussion of things said in the New Testament is bound to benefit its readers, but whether this book is really more than a discussion of isolated passages may be questioned. The organisation of the material leaves a great deal to be desired. The word 'ministry' itself, which should bind the material together, is never defined, and though the author occasionally alludes to the institutional ministry, he usually takes the word in a much more vague and general sense, whether in his lessons for today or in his discussions of Jesus, Paul and the early Christian communities. One of his three leading notes of ministry, 'the role of the Spirit', is again extremely vague, and is used in a variety of ways. Also, in the discussion of Pauline teaching, it is not made clear whether the three leading notes are held to apply to the ministry of all Christians, or whether apostleship is wholly confined to Paul and a few others; and if the latter, how this affects the comparison of Paul's teaching with Christ's.

Further questions are raised by the author's exclusion of the fourth gospel when discussing the teaching of Jesus, and of the pastoral epistles and Acts when discussing the teaching of Paul.

If he had dealt with these books separately, and then considered how far they agree with, and how far they add to, the picture given by the other sources, no one would complain; but to exclude them is really to make the tacit assumption that they either add nothing to our knowledge of Jesus or Paul, or nothing that can be relied upon. Whether the author really thinks this, one wonders; but if he does not, he ought to realise that to exclude these books actually invalidates his comparison of the teaching of Jesus and Paul.

These exclusions are symptomatic of the general approach of the book, which (at least for practical purposes) is cautiously liberal. This comes out again in chapter two, which deals with the question of the authenticity of the sayings of Jesus in the gospels. The author discusses the commonly used criteria of dissimilarity, coherence and frequency of occurrence, and says that, used negatively, these criteria could exclude genuine sayings. Nevertheless, having criticised the criteria, he apparently decides to employ them, and states that he will try to draw conclusions consistent with the degree of certainty which, in the view of the writer, the evidence for authenticity allows' (p. 12).

Too many evangelical scholars are today thinking and writing in this fashion. They presumably suppose that otherwise non-evangelicals will not take notice of what they write. But if one can only secure this notice by conforming, in practice, to non-evangelical presuppositions, what is achieved? Such a policy simply undercuts one's own position.

Roger Beckwith, Latimer House, Oxford.

Allen Verhey, **The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament** (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984). 246 pp., £12.40.
Richard N. Longenecker, **New Testament Social Ethics for Today** (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984). 108 pp., n.p.

The 1970s was a bleak decade for books on New Testament ethics. The field was dominated by J. L. Houlden's *Ethics and the New Testament* and Jack Sanders' *Ethics in the New Testament*, both of which exaggerated the differences between the New Testament authors and portrayed their writings as having little or no authoritative status for Christians today. In contrast, the 1980s have already produced several studies of note, most of them emanating from North America, adopting a more positive approach to New Testament ethics and seeing it as in some sense normative for Christian behaviour. The books reviewed here are the two most recent. Both are worthy additions to this expanding library, though each falls short of the accolade 'outstanding'.

Verhey's book is the more comprehensive in scope. The first three chapters are an extremely thorough survey of the ethical material found in all the New Testament books. Sometimes this descends to a rather tedious recital of texts and description of different scholars' viewpoints. But Verhey's judgments appear generally sound. He spotlights the different emphases of, e.g., the synoptic writers (Mark's Jesus is seen as proclaiming a heroic morality, Matthew's a surpassing righteousness, Luke's an ethic of care and respect), but he also brings similar material together from different sources to demonstrate common strands.

In his final chapter, Verhey considers the question of the authority of New Testament ethics for us today. He presents a 'modest proposal' which in his view steers between the opposite errors of fundamentalism and liberalism, viz. fundamentalism's tendency to discern in Scripture only timeless truths perennially binding upon Christians in all cultures, and liberalism's tendency so to stress the cultural relativity of what is written in Scripture that it releases itself from any challenge contained therein. Verhey argues that the New Testament is authoritative on the level of motivation, showing why Christians should behave in a certain way and in establishing certain ethical principles like love and freedom, but to inquire of Scripture at the 'moral-rule' level is inappropriate. This is because the rules found in the New Testament were intended to answer specific questions of

conduct in the particular communities they were addressing, not for all times and places.

I agree with Verhey up to a point. Women's veils do not have the significance for us that they had in first-century Corinth, so it is meaningless to insist on their being worn now. But it is arguable that other rules have survived the passage of time and place with meaning and value substantially intact. The principles of sanctity of marriage and faithfulness in love are still well served by a simple rule prohibiting adultery. The fact is that there are rules and rules, i.e. rules of short-term, limited validity and rules of long-term, more universal (though not necessarily absolute) validity. The New Testament contains both, and one of the ethicist's tasks is surely to distinguish between them. This Verhey fails to do.

Longenecker begins his book on a fairly programmatic scale, by outlining a variety of ways of using the New Testament in ethics and defining the hermeneutical approach he favours as discernment and application of those prescriptive principles which stem from the heart of the gospel (usually embodied in the example and teaching of Jesus). But he then limits himself to a consideration of what he regards as the most forthright statement on social ethics in the New Testament, Galatians 3:28. This is said to involve a cultural mandate ('neither Jew nor Greek'), a social mandate ('neither slave nor free') and a sexual mandate ('neither male nor female'). Of course, many Christians have been content simply to regard this as preaching spiritual equality, and Longenecker documents the extent to which they have been ready to tolerate enormous inequalities and exercise oppression in all three areas. I agree with Longenecker that the verse does have societal implications as well, though I feel he assumes this rather than argues it systematically.

Longenecker's most interesting, if ultimately rather frustrating, chapter is on the subject of relations between the sexes. He notes the tension in Paul's letters between material affirming the place of women in church leadership (e.g. Phoebe, Priscilla, and the women who pray and prophesy in 1 Cor. 11) and that which reduces them to a silent, subordinate role (1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-15). He makes the helpful suggestion that themes of order, subordination and submission tend to follow when the concept of *creation* is uppermost in Paul's mind, and those of freedom, mutuality and equality when *redemption* takes prominence. My question is whether the understanding of the creation story found in, e.g., 1 Timothy 2 is the only one open to us today, i.e. does the priority of man in creation necessarily indicate pre-eminence, and does the story of the fall necessarily warrant singling out women as prone to deception? An alternative view of creation, traces of which are found in the Bible, could reduce the tension with the themes of redemption, producing a more consistently (though by no means completely) egalitarian understanding of sexual roles and functions. Disappointingly, Longenecker cuts short his discussion just when it is getting interesting, and fights shy of spelling out any conclusions about the rightness or wrongness of women's ordination.

Richard Higginson, Cranmer Hall, Durham.

David W. Gill, **The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul** (Metuchen, N.J./London: The American Theological Library Association and Scarecrow Press, 1984). 213 pp., n.p.

Jacques Ellul, for thirty-six years Professor in the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences at Bordeaux University, holds a very high place among twentieth-century lay theologians. The prolific and provocative nature of his writings has attracted attention outside his own context of French Protestantism for some time but hitherto evaded the sustained and systematic analysis to which David Gill, an American Anabaptist, here subjects it.

Ellul acknowledges a debt to Barth, and this is readily visible in his description of morality *per se* as 'a product of sin or disobedience', his rejection of any ethics based on a doctrine of creation, his universalism and the radically Christocentric character of his ethics. Ellul's influence by Kierkegaard is evident in his individualism which is not balanced by any adequate concept of the corporate possibilities of

church life. Ellul's *distinctive* contribution to modern Christian thought lies in his perceptive, powerful challenge to some of the major forces which shape our lives in the modern world. He has led a major assault on *technique*, a word which means the spirit of technology but something more, 'the totality of methods, rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency . . . in every field of human activity'. This has triumphed at the expense of moral judgment, true democracy, spontaneity, spiritual awareness, gratuitous areas of life, passion and human personality. Cities and city life are subjected to an equally searching critique. Ellul argues (half convincingly) that the city in the Bible is the spiritual symbol of humans acting in independence and rebellion against God. The growth of the nation-state with its perpetration of a whole series of political illusions is another characteristically modern 'power of darkness' in Ellul's view.

Gill is sympathetic and supports Ellul in many areas of his thought but is certainly not uncritical of him. He is probably right to fault Ellul for over-generalized statements and failure to suggest many positive alternatives to the ills which he diagnoses. His evaluations of Ellul's achievement, however, are apt to assume a rather banal seven-out-of-ten flavour. Thus when commenting on Ellul's bringing Christ into the centre of his ethical thought he says rather inanely: 'For making this beginning Ellul is to be credited. For not following through more completely, and for distorting some passages slightly, he must be faulted' (pp. 173-174). In the final pages, however, Gill appears to take some of these criticisms back by arguing that Ellul is better viewed as a prophet than an ethicist. But this begs so many questions that Gill would have been well advised to introduce the prophetic theme earlier and argue it at length.

Richard Higginson, Cranmer Hall, Durham.

David Ewart, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1983). 324 pp., \$11.95.

There are several books which survey the New Testament doctrine of the Spirit of God. This book by a mature Mennonite evangelical scholar is a worthy addition to this field. Compared to Dunn's *Jesus and the Spirit* it is much shorter and less oriented to critical problems. Compared to Montague's *The Holy Spirit, The Growth of a Biblical Tradition* it is less oriented to redactional differences in the witnesses and more of a unitive interpretation of the text as a whole. It is more like Green's *I believe in the Holy Spirit* in its total stance, and agrees with it on almost everything.

One could characterise Ewart's book as richly scriptural and well-abreast of the scholarly literature on the subject of the Spirit. It is divided into three main parts. The first discusses the promise of the Spirit in the Old Testament and then in the gospel traditions. Nothing is left out – the Johannine material is treated as the authentic teaching of Jesus without any misgivings on the author's part. The second section treats the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost and the effect of his coming upon the early church. Though Ewart is not open to the pentecostal interpretation of Acts when it comes to a baptism of power at a later point in a Christian's life, nevertheless he is forthright when speaking of the power and gifts of the Spirit displayed in the early period and shows no desire to suppress this fact. The third section takes up the witness of the epistles. Again there is no picking and choosing between authentic and inauthentic letters.

Ewart's treatment of the material is patient and careful and warmly practical. It reveals scholarly attention to issues, an unhurried willingness to let the scripture speak, and a long experience in teaching and walking with the Lord. The book would be a most excellent guide for use in a study group or in preparing a series of sermons on the doctrine of the Spirit.

I have no complaints to register against this book. It is a scholarly and edifying treatment of what its title announces. It was written with the people of God in mind, and will instruct anyone who is willing to read it.

Clark H. Pincock, McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario.

D. M. Loades (ed.), *The End of Strife. Death, Reconciliation & Expression of Christian Spirituality* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), 233 pp., £5.95.

This is a collection of thirteen papers chosen from over seventy which were delivered at the colloquium of the Commission Internationale d'Historie Ecclesiastique Comparée held at the University of Durham in September 1981. Besides highlighting the work of CIHEC, the book is intended to draw attention to current scholarship in the field of ecclesiastical history. The papers are international in scope and also in authorship with two papers in French and one in German. Though this may cause some irritation to readers not conversant with those languages, the inclusion of these papers serves as a reminder of the global character of the church and of the value of taking a broad view of the past and of the present.

The same sense of breadth and variety is conveyed within the papers themselves, which range from the patristic period to the twentieth century. The difficulty of making such a book fully representative of all the work which went on at the colloquium, while retaining some sense of coherence, was met by choosing three broad themes and including under each a section of papers on different subjects from different periods of history. The themes chosen: death, reconciliation and Christian spirituality, are perennial themes of the Christian faith, and indeed of man's existence. Thus while illustrating how these issues have been treated in the past, the papers raise a number of questions which address themselves directly to the contemporary situation. Under the theme of reconciliation, for example, Professor G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes examines Protestant irenicism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The irenicists sought to allay or reconcile differences between the confessional churches in a peaceful way. The irenicists, who should be understood within the context of the established churches, were not religious tolerationists, however; Professor Meyjes examines different aspects of irenicism by looking at those who influenced this way of thinking: Erasmus, Bucer, Melancthon and Cassander. The study brings out the question of the relative importance of church order and dogma, which for the confessionalists were inseparable. It was this which divided them irreconcilably from the Christian humanists. The final part of the paper examines the idea of irenicism in the 'Republic of Letters', an international fraternity of men of learning in the humanist tradition. The paper notes how all different established churches claimed to represent the true catholic church, and offers important insights as to the way they perceived the problem of confessional discord.

It would be impossible to summarize each of the thirteen papers here. They range from how St Augustine viewed the state of the departed, through the use of wills as evidence of the growing acceptance of Protestantism, to a final paper, well illustrated, relating art and spirituality in twentieth century Nonconformity as seen through the architectural designs of F. W. Lawrence.

The colloquium was primarily an academic one, dealing with various aspects of church history through different kinds of evidence. The treatment of the material reveals both the academic excellence of church historians currently at work, and something of the different ways we can understand the development of the Christian church. By bringing together these multivarious aspects of church history some appreciation of the richness of the Christian's inheritance is made possible.

E. Culling, St John's College, Durham.

W. Dyrness, *Christian Apologetics in a World Community* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1983), 196 pp., \$5.95.

The author's aims in writing this book are (a) to respond to the philosophical presuppositions of world views opposed to the Christian one, and (b) to help the reader develop an apologetic position. He does not aim to answer specific questions, but he assesses various

positions to encourage the reader to make up his or her own mind. He succeeds admirably in reaching his goals. The book is written in a popular style, aiming to help especially those who do not have a formal philosophical education. It will therefore prove a useful tool for those readers who want to begin to get to grips with world views opposed to the Christian faith. Though expressly written for a North American readership, it will be relevant to Western European readers also.

The book is divided into two sections. The first aims to provide an introduction to apologetics, including a defence of its usefulness. There then follows a historical survey of the use of apologetics in the history of the church. Dr Dyrness sets out the issues clearly and simply.

The second section is perhaps more substantial in content. The author, the current President of New College, Berkeley, seeks to provide a framework for meeting specific challenges to Christianity, including those of Eastern religious philosophies (chapters five and six), the empirical and social sciences (chapters seven and eight), the problem of evil (chapter nine) and Marxism (chapter ten) — and all that in less than 200 pages! This section is a helpful, concise and clear introduction to these minefields which nevertheless have to be traversed by the serious, thinking Christian. Given the author's background in Asia, the section on syncretism is especially helpful.

There are nevertheless some weaknesses in the work. Some sections are understandably but frustratingly short. More space especially could have been given to the biblical basis for apologetics (only two pages), which some would want to challenge. Again, a more critical approach to some issues would have been appreciated, e.g. Aquinas (pp. 33-35), who has done immeasurable harm to the church, escapes too lightly in the author's critique of his thought. Moreover, a number of readers may be unhappy with his analysis of the question of what happens to those who have never heard the gospel (especially p. 109): '... We should leave open the possibility that judgment will be relative to knowledge and to obedience (Rom. 2:12-15), and that some may find grace by throwing themselves on God's mercy insofar as they know it. We cannot exclude the possibility that God's mercy is mediated through the fallen creation . . .'. But surely Romans 3 and 10:13-17 demonstrate that faith comes *only* through hearing, and establish the need for preachers to be sent with the Word. If we allow any other means of the message of salvation coming to the individual, inevitably important conclusions about the nature of mission will follow. However, these reservations refer only to small sections of an otherwise carefully written, graciously argued and recommended book.

Lindsay Brown, Paris.

Norman L. Geisler, *Is Man the Measure?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983). 201 pp., \$7.95.

Professor Geisler has given us a useful primer on contemporary humanism. There are two sections. The first is an exposition of eight different versions of humanism: evolutionary, behavioural, existential, pragmatic, Marxist, egocentric, cultural, and Christian. Such names as Huxley, Sartre, Corliss Lamont, and C. S. Lewis are included. In the second section these forms of humanism are evaluated in terms of their positive contributions and their shortcomings.

The expositions are brief, relatively comprehensive, and well footnoted, at least to the major works of the authors cited. The treatments are fair. The tool most used in his analysis is ruthless logic. For example, on behavioural humanism, B. F. Skinner is quoted as pointing out that 'man himself may be controlled by his environment, but it is an environment which is almost wholly of man's own making' (p. 33). Thus man is what man has made of man. Geisler evaluates this claim (that man is completely determined) and finds it self-defeating (p. 36). According to Skinner, both determinists and non-determinists are behaviourally determined to believe what they believe. Yet Skinner is writing to try to convince non-determinists that they

are wrong, and that as reasonable men they ought to accept his arguments. Yet Skinner denies this very kind of freedom! Further, (p. 36), he points out a serious inconsistency in Skinner's position. Skinner claims that man is completely determined and not free, yet he (Skinner) exhorts man to change his environment. Obviously this falls between two stools. If man is completely determined by his own environment he cannot determine that environment. This kind of logical evaluation is used on every view cited, including Christian humanism.

Perhaps the weakness of this kind of treatment is that it fails to sense the emotional tug that makes each position attractive. It would have been helpful for Geisler to include a 'Sitz im Leben' for the development of these modern humanisms, because, as he presents them, it would seem that only less than logical, less than brilliant, minds could hold them, which is obviously not true.

The absence of empathy is most clear in some of his discussions of C. S. Lewis, where Geisler proceeds with this kind of logic. Lewis denies many Old Testament miracles (p. 105), yet accepts the deity of Christ. But, according to Geisler, it is Christ who verified the historicity and authenticity of some of the Old Testament events Lewis rejects, such as the literal truth of Jonah, the creation of Adam and Eve, and Noah's flood. He chides Lewis for using a humanistic base in his reading of the Old Testament using the category of myth. He sees this as a logical inconsistency in Lewis. Yet Lewis could have argued, as others have, that Jesus' reference to Jonah was merely to refer to the story as existing as literature and not necessarily a reference to that story as literal truth. Perhaps in a longer treatment Geisler would have dealt with this possible reply.

Many readers will be familiar with Geisler as a participant in recent creation versus evolution trials in the United States. One sees the impact of that experience in the running attack on evolutionist thought in most of the book. For instance, on page 107, he notes that Lewis also held an evolutionary view of the universe, as an illustration of how Lewis came under the negative influence of secular thought. Obviously, that is an arguable assertion and illustrates a bias with which each point of view is discussed.

There is a helpful section on the various versions of the Humanist Manifesto and other 'secular humanist' documents with evaluations, again using a very strict logic. It is pleasing to see honest facing up to the many good contributions of secular humanism to our common culture (p. 129). 'In brief, this world is not only freer because of Humanism, it is more beautiful, more advanced scientifically, and more variegated culturally.'

Most impressive is his attack on secular humanism at its very core, that is, its supposed scientific content. Geisler does this by a brief treatment of the essential elements of scientific practice. On the basis of these quite broadly accepted characteristics of science he then evaluates the naturalistic view, an amazingly good treatment in a very brief span — almost as good as that chapter in Lewis' volume *Miracles*. However, it is done in the context of an evolutionist versus creationist debate. I don't think that is particularly helpful.

His final judgment is: 'In either event, secular Humanism is not sufficiently rational' (p. 175). This is a damning judgment. I believe he supports this judgment quite adequately, even though his treatments are brief.

Terry Morrison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA.

Francis M. Dubose, ***God who sends. A fresh quest for biblical mission*** (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1983), 173 pp., n.p.

In the preface to this book the author presents his work to the reader as 'a comprehensive and systematic study of the biblical concept of the sending aimed at a better understanding of biblical mission'. The reason for the author's fresh quest for biblical mission, the sub-title of his book, is that 'we do not have a commonly accepted definition of mission' (p. 15) and that despite the excellent theological studies

available regarding the meaning of mission, there is still a 'lack of a conceptually clear theological understanding of mission from a biblical perspective' (p. 16).

As the starting-point for his fresh quest for biblical mission, the author takes the word 'sending', a term which, according to him, carries a rather 'universal consensus' (p. 24) that mission means sending. From the hypothesis that in the sense of 'the sending' there is a biblical idea of mission, the author then goes on an extensive pilgrimage of investigation in pursuit of the sending concept, covering the vast expanse of the whole Bible. He starts by making a careful examination of all the linguistic variables involved in the word 'sending'. He goes on to examine all the sending passages in the entire Bible in order to determine their likely theological content. This is followed by a search to ascertain the nature of the theology in the sending passages, etc. Finally Dubose tries to interpret the biblical evidence in terms of its implication for the total spectrum of Christian faith and practice, making the most practical application possible of the insights of this study for mission in our modern world.

In the first place one has to mention that this book is not only a study of the biblical foundations of mission but also a biblical theology of mission, offering an analysis of the biblical data on 'sending' and, using this as background, providing guidelines for missionary practice. The method of analysis follows the deductive method in the use of Scripture. In a chapter on a hermeneutic for a biblical understanding, Dubose refers to some authors who assume 'the universal' as the missionary motif of Scripture and who, beginning *a priori* with the universalist concept of God and the modern world missionary enterprise, go back to Scripture to discover the biblical justification for the universal activity of the Christian world mission. These authors follow the inductive method in the use of Scripture, which Dubose rejects as a 'fallacy' because the starting-point in this method is the practice, namely 'a Western-orientated institutional mission methodology' for which biblical justification is being sought by forcing Scripture to 'speak' the language of the practice. Dubose argues that one has to consult the Bible first with the express purpose of discovering 'that first meaning, that original idea . . . which is the mission genius of the biblical message' (p. 23). I agree with Dubose in his rejection of the inductive method of the use of Scripture, but I cannot share his certainty that 'that first meaning, that original idea' about mission can be found in the Bible. Even beginning with a universal consensus on mission as sending does not protect the Bible reader and interpreter from subjectivity and therefore from 'interpreting' the Bible literature. Is the understanding of mission as 'sending' not already an interpreted understanding of mission (like the universality of mission)? Is it really possible not to be captive to a word – even the word 'sending' – even if a consensus on the meaning of such a word exists? Does consensus guarantee an objective investigation of such a word in the Word? Presuming that universal consensus can guarantee such objectivity can easily lead to the absolutizing of one's investigation if one thinks it possible to investigate the sending concept over the vast expanse of the 'whole' Bible, to examine 'all' of the linguistic variables of a word, and 'all' the sending passages in the 'whole' Bible (p. 27) and thus to discover the 'first' meaning, the 'original' idea, the 'proto-missio' (p. 23). If such an investigation were possible, this investigation by Dubose would have been the last and definitive investigation on biblical sending. I doubt whether he is able to make such a claim. His research, for instance, has already whetted my appetite for an investigation into the understanding of mission as God's action (*actio Dei* and not *missio Dei*) in the Bible.

Despite my questioning of the author's method of investigation in his quest for biblical mission, the book as a whole satisfied me greatly and I can strongly recommend it for careful study by students and teachers of mission.

In conclusion: this study of biblical mission through a comprehensive and systematic study of the biblical concept of sending by a Protestant missiologist was published in the same year as a study by two Catholic biblical scholars on the biblical foundations of mission, namely Donald Senior and Carrol Stuhlmüller: *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983, xii + 371 pp., \$25.00 hb, \$14.95 pb). For an illuminating review of this excellent book by David J. Bosch, see *Missionalia*, Vol. 12, No. 2, August 1984.

Nico J. Smith, Pretoria, South Africa.

Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984/London: Marshalls, 1985), 1,204 pp., \$24.95.

Handsomely laid out and bound, the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* contains 1,200 entries in 1,200 pages of text prepared by 200 scholars from North America, Britain and the Commonwealth. The articles, which deal with a wide range of theological concepts, movements and documents as well as philosophers and theologians, were purposely written in popular language with emphasis on clear communication. According to the editor, 'Our goal was this: that the scholar find it correct; the layman, understandable' (p. v). If this statement suggests that the *Dictionary* might be lacking in substance, the reader need not worry. The articles are in fact remarkably comprehensive, substantive and informative, even to the theological specialist.

Whereas the reviewer discovered an article on 'Halloween' (!), he searched in vain for entries on anhypostasia, doctrinal development, indigenous theology, Marxism/communism, patristics and Socinianism (a short paragraph was found under 'Unitarianism'). On the other hand, the reader may well be surprised at the wide range of topics treated which are not normally found in similar dictionaries of theology, e.g. 'Ageing, Christian View of', 'Alcohol, Drinking of', 'Asian Theology', 'Gospel, Social Implications of', 'Marital Separation', etc. Likewise one discovers a wide range of churchmen and theologians treated, such as P. Althaus, W. Ames, D. Sayers, K. Schwenckfeld and J. H. Thornwell. Among the outstanding longer articles one might mention 'Atonement, Theories of' by L. Morris; 'Christianity and Culture' by W. Dyrness; 'God, Attributes of' by G. Lewis (note the fresh approach); and 'Theodicy' by J. Feinberg.

The reviewer was struck by the consistent quality and style of the articles in the *Dictionary*. For this praise is due to the editor and the publisher. Moreover, the scholarship reflected in the articles is uniformly impressive. A helpful bibliography of literature in the English language and cross entries to connect up with related material in the volume are given at the end of each article. An index of names, as in the *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, would have assisted the reader to consult all discussion in the volume related to a given personality.

In sum, the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* must be viewed as the definitive theological dictionary from an evangelical standpoint. It sets the standard for subsequent works to aim at. Here is a reference tool that ought without question to be on the shelf of every university student, seminarian and Christian worker.

Bruce Demarest, Denver Seminary, Colorado.

J. G. McConville, **Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther** (The Daily Study Bible (Old Testament) series, ed. John C. L. Gibson; Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew's Press/Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 197 pp., £3.50.

D. J. Clines, **Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther** (The New Century Bible Commentary (Old Testament) series, ed. Ronald E. Clements; London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 342 pp., n.p.

Both of these commentaries focus on three Old Testament books: Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. Ezra-Nehemiah was originally a single work; Esther is included here primarily because it belongs with Ezra-Nehemiah in the Persian period.

The Daily Study Bible is intended to be a continuation of the New Testament series made famous by William Barclay, and there is much evidence within the pages suggesting that those who are fond of the New Testament commentary will likewise be pleased with the

Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther commentary. The primary focus of The Daily Study Bible series is not academic. The purpose here is similar to Barclay's: to enable Christians 'to know Jesus Christ more clearly, to love him more dearly, and to follow him more nearly' (p. v).

J. G. McConville's book demonstrates his commitment to this aim. In discussing the laying of the foundation of the temple, the author reminds us of other occasions like David's bringing the ark to Jerusalem. For McConville these events serve as reminders that worship in Jerusalem was no sordid affair and that there is no place for 'dry formality in Christian worship today' (p. 22).

Frequently, and in accordance with the author's objective, the pericope being considered is related to a New Testament passage. In discussing Nehemiah's prayer in chapter 9, McConville admits that the people of Israel are exhorted to grow in their faithfulness and to become the children of Abraham. McConville, as he frequently does, quickly reminds his readers that this passage should be balanced with a New Testament teaching: in Galatians 3:6-14 Paul warns against any wrong interpretation of what this might mean. There are numerous other examples that the author, if not writing exclusively for a Christian audience, is focusing on Christian issues.

McConville's suggestion is that these three Old Testament books are not only time-oriented, but also transcendent. Additionally, he cautions against the hermeneutical error of immediately projecting the social setting of ancient and inspired writings onto the fabric of modern culture. This is nowhere more apparent than in the command of mass divorce as described in Ezra 10:1-44. The reader is soon met by McConville's stinging rhetorical question: 'Is the Book of Ezra . . . utterly without sensitivity to human distress?' (p. 70). In his three-layered answer McConville asserts that the *action* of Ezra is unique because his *situation* is without analogy, and at least in this instance, modern application of this imperious measure is hardly within the realm of marriage at all.

When one turns to the commentary by Clines, it is apparent that one has come upon a book different in scope. This recent addition to The New Century Bible Commentary continues the tradition of scholarly commentaries already established by the previous volumes in the Old and New Testament series.

Students and teachers should respond favourably to Clines' commentary because he has not only scrupulously provided an illuminating sketch of contemporary scholarship but has also fairly represented those opposing his particular viewpoints. For example, after discussing Ezra's coming to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (458 BC) and Nehemiah's arriving in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (445 BC), Clines discusses the problems of this portrait. He offers a strong argument, consisting of thirteen sections, for the priority of Nehemiah before stating five reasons, fewer but more convincing, for his belief that Ezra's activity preceded that of Nehemiah.

Clines' book is a worthwhile investment. His presentation of an enormous amount of scholarly material is lucid and interesting. One finds numerous bits of significant information in this commentary. For example, Clines believes that it is significant that Esther is the one Old Testament book not found in the Qumran community, and he reminds us that Qumran was not representative of mainstream Judaism.

Later in the commentary he returns to the question of the date of the Ezra-Nehemiah activity and admits that it may be that we simply do not know the answer to this question, and after reiterating his view on the priority of the Ezra activity, admits judiciously that the problem is best left unsolved (p. 181).

Teachers and students should find room on their bookshelves for both of these books. McConville demonstrates how the three Old Testament books can become a relevant force in our daily living; in its own way Clines' sensitive scholarship reinforces the same witness.

Kenneth M. Craig, Jr., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

W. H. Bellinger, Jr., Psalms and Prophecy (JSOTS 27; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 146 pp., £18.50 hb, £7.50 pb.

This useful study is a work more for the specialist scholar than for the general student of the Old Testament. For it reviews and advances a discussion which, in the form in which it is presented, is essentially a scholar's problem: What is the relationship between psalms and prophecy in the Old Testament? Given that some of the characteristic forms of divine speech found in the prophets are also to be found in the psalms, especially God speaking words of assurance in response to a cry for help, what does this show about the relationship of the prophet to the context in which psalms were used, that is the institutional temple worship, the cult, of Israel? Although scholars have sometimes argued for a marked division between prophets and the cult (shades of liberal Protestantism versus Roman Catholicism), it has been more common recently to argue for the existence of a cult prophet, a prophetic figure who exercised his ministry of speaking on God's behalf within the context of temple worship; and it is this that accounts for similarities in form and content between psalmody and prophecy.

After reviewing modern debate on this issue, Bellinger offers some helpful comments on problems of method, with special reference to the problems of knowing what inferences may legitimately be drawn from the generalized and figurative language of the psalms. He then offers a detailed study of selected lament psalms, both individual and corporate, focusing upon the recurrent phenomenon of a marked change of tone from lament to joyful certainty that God has heard and answered the lament. He considers the various proposed explanations for this, and shows that the hypothesis of a cult prophet is open to question. After reviewing such prophetic elements in the psalms, Bellinger briefly considers some psalm-like elements in the prophets, especially Habakkuk and Joel, and again argues that this does not constitute evidence for cult prophets.

Bellinger's conclusions are not very remarkable, but his careful analysis will be helpful for all who are interested in this area of Old Testament study.

R. W. L. Moberly, University of Durham.

BOOK REVIEWS

- G W Coats **Genesis, with an Introduction to Narrative Literature** (Gordon Wenham)
 E J Hamlin **Joshua: Inheriting the Land** (Gordon McConville)
 H G M Williamson **The New Century Bible Commentary/I & II Chronicles** (John Job)
 Walter C Kaiser, Jr **Toward Old Testament Ethics** (Tordon Woolard)
 R E Friedman (ed) **The Poet and the Historian** (Deryck Sheriffs)
 J Goldingay **God's Prophet, God's Servant** (R W L Moberly)
 G Emmerson **Hosea, An Israelite Prophet in Judaeen Perspective** (P J M Southwell)
 J Blenkinsopp **A History of Prophecy in Israel** (P J M Southwell)
 Robert A Anderson **Daniel: Signs and Wonders** (Joyce Baldwin)
 Schuyler Brown **The Origins of Christianity** (Colin J Hemer)
 W Barnes Tatum **In Quest of Jesus, a Guidebook** (Gervais Angel)
 B D Chilton (ed) **The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus** (D R de Lacey)
 Pinchas Lapide **The Resurrection of Jesus** (Richard Bauckham)
 Paul W Walaskay **And so we came to Rome** (S V Rees)
 J Ziesler **Pauline Christianity** (John Barclay)
 Rodney A Whitacre **Johannine Polemic** (D A Carson)
 Richard J Bauckham **Word Biblical Commentary: Jude, 2 Peter** (David Wenham)
 Colin G Kruse **New Testament Foundations for Ministry** (Roger Beckwith)
 Allen Verhey **The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament** (Richard Higginson)
 Richard J Longenecker **New Testament Social Ethics for Today** (Richard Higginson)
 David W Gill **The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul** (Richard Higginson)
 David Ewart **The Holy Spirit in the New Testament** (Clark H Pinnock)
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ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ
 προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.