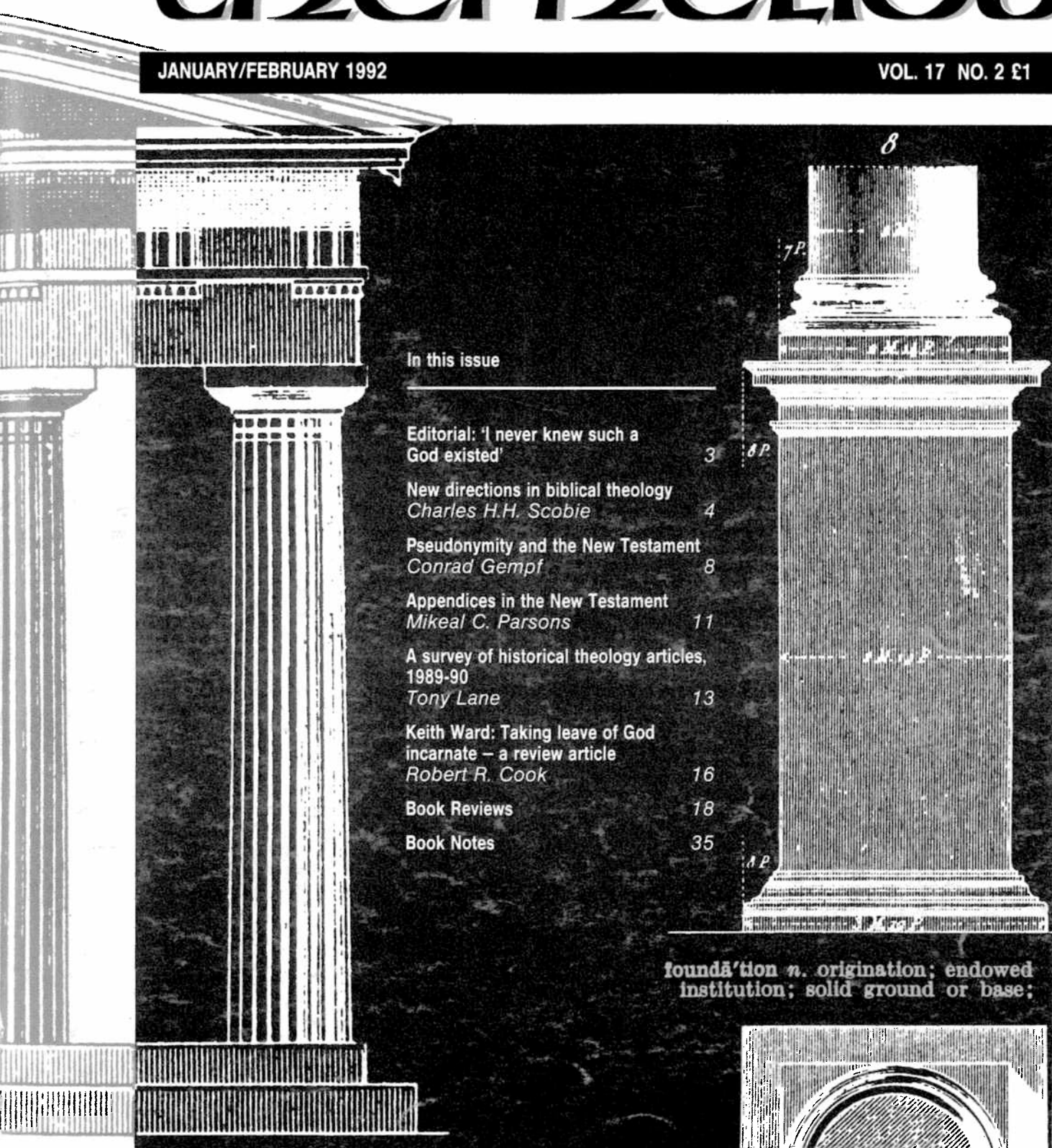


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# themelios

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1992

VOL. 17 NO. 2 £1



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founda'tion n. origination; endowed institution; solid ground or base;

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Vol. 17 No. 2

An international journal for theological and religious studies students, expounding and defending the historic Christian faith. It is published three times a year by the Religious and Theological Studies Fellowship, a constituent part of the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, and the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. It seeks to address itself to questions being faced by theological and religious studies students in their studies and to help readers to think out a clear biblical faith.

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be sent

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PO Box 7895, Madison, WI 53707-7895, USA

## Subscription rates (including postage)

British Isles £4.50

Subscribers in the Republic of Ireland please pay in sterling. (Payments can be made to our National Giro Account Number 5038316, marked for *Themelios*.)

Elsewhere (surface mail, including bank charges) for orders through the appropriate address shown above

1 year £4.50 US \$11.50

2 years £9.00 US \$20.00

3 years £13.50 US \$28.50

(If air mail required, please add for each year's subscription £2.75/\$5.00.)

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16mm microfilm, 35 microfilm and 105 microfiche copies of *Themelios* are available through:  
University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, USA

ISSN 0307-8388

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# Editorial:

## 'I never knew such a God existed'

There was an excited sparkle in his eyes as he came up to me at the end of the session. 'I was so thrilled when you said you were going to be preaching from the Old Testament,' he said, 'because I became a Christian through reading the Old Testament.' That is something you don't hear every day, so I was eager to hear more. He was one of the participants at a regional conference for Christians in secular professions in eastern India where I was giving a series of talks on the subject of biblical guidelines for Christian involvement in the secular world in September 1991. He is now a doctor of science and a university lecturer in chemistry, but his earlier life was an unlikely starting point for such a position.

He grew up in one of the many backward and oppressed groups in India, part of a community that is systematically exploited and treated with contempt, injustice and sometimes violence. The effect on his youth was to fill him with a burning desire to rise above that station in order to be able to turn the tables on those who oppressed him and his community. He threw himself into his education, and went to college committed to revolutionary ideals and Marxism. His goal was to achieve the qualifications needed to gain some kind of power and thus the means to do something in the name of justice and revenge. He was contacted in his early days at college by some Christian students and given a Bible, which he decided to read out of casual interest, though he had no respect at first for Christians at all.

It happened that the first thing he read in the Bible was the story of Naboth, Ahab and Jezebel in 1 Kings 21. He was astonished to find that it was all about greed for land, abuse of power, corruption of the courts, and violence against the poor — things that he himself was all too familiar with. But even more amazing was the fact that God took Naboth's side and not only accused Ahab and Jezebel of their wrongdoing but also took vengeance upon them. Here was a God of real justice. A God who identified the real villains and who took real action against them. 'I never knew such a God existed!' he exclaimed. He read on through the rest of OT history and found his first impression confirmed. This God constantly took the side of the oppressed and took direct action against their enemies. Here was a God he could respect, a God he felt attracted to, even though he didn't know him yet, because such a God would understand his own thirst for justice.

He then went on, he told me, to read the books of the law, and his amazement grew. 'God!' he cried out, even though he didn't know who he was talking to, 'You're so perfect! You think of everything!' He was impressed with the tremendous attention to detail of OT law. It was all so practical, covering every aspect of everyday life in the kind of society which was not unlike the patterns of village and small town India still. Here was a God who understood and cared about the lives, relationships and working conditions of ordinary people, made laws about their safety, protected the poor and vulnerable, restricted the power of slave-owners and creditors and demanded courts free of bribery and corruption. A relevant God indeed! And then there was his holiness. This was a serious God who meant what he said and expected people to act accordingly. He was not capricious or arbitrary like the gods of mythology, but a God of absolute purity, a God to be careful with. All this discovery was staggering to him as he read on and on. He found himself praising this God he didn't know. 'God, you're so just, you're so perfect, you're so holy!' he would exclaim, believing this was the kind of God that answered the need of his own angry struggle.

Then he came upon Isaiah 43:1, and came to an abrupt halt. 'But now, says the Lord. . . . It's a beautiful word in Telugu, apparently. It means, 'yet, in spite of all that'. The end of Isaiah 42 describes Israel's sin and God's just punishment. But suddenly, unexpectedly, God is talking about forgiveness and pardon and love. 'I couldn't take that,' he said. 'I was attracted to the God of

justice and holiness. I ran away from a God of love.' But he couldn't. For as he read on he found such a God more and more — still in the OT! It was about then that the Christian friends came and explained more about the fulness of God's justice and love on the cross, and he came at last to understand and surrender to the God he had found in the OT and his life was transformed through faith in Christ.

It was a testimony to warm the heart of any OT teacher, vivid confirmation of Paul's confidence that the 'holy Scriptures [of the OT] are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. 3:16). But what struck me most forcefully was the fact that the things that had so attracted him to the God he read about in the OT are the very things which western Christians so often find themselves repelled by. Shortly before leaving for those seminars in India I had been taking one in England and had been questioned yet again as to how God could possibly have commanded destruction or have acted in retributive punishment. Such things offend our supposedly civilized sensibilities. Perhaps we cannot understand them because we have never known what it is to cry out to heaven from a situation of systematic cruelty and exploitation. As C.S. Lewis observed, our discomfort with things like the OT curses on evildoers may indicate not so much our greater moral sensitivity, as our appalling moral apathy. The sheer detail of the law in the OT likewise puts many modern Christians off even reading it at all. The idea that it might have something to do with a God who engages with real life at its most practical and that we might have something to learn from such mundane details does not seem worth the effort of digging it out. And the God of unapproachable holiness and purity has got rather hidden in sentimental waves of chummy affection for one and all. Are we ever shocked by God's love? Do we ever, like Jonah, find it just too unbelievable, in the light of what we know of God's justice and judgment? 'I never knew such a God existed.' But he does — not just in the past of ancient Israel, but in today's world. Are we afraid to discover him?

The experience taught me again the living quality of God's Word that it speaks uniquely in each human context. We need, therefore, to be prepared to accept that things we find relatively unimportant may speak very powerfully in another culture, and that things we find puzzling or repulsive may make great sense and even be attractive in other cultures. It calls for humility, though it can cause some hermeneutical vertigo, to relativize our own favourite viewpoints on familiar texts and listen to how those of other cultures respond to them. We live in a world-wide church, and the task of biblical exegesis and interpretation belongs to the whole church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. So we must avoid hitching all our interpretation to a mono-cultural wagon. When did you last read, learn from, disagree with, or be surprised by, a book of theology or biblical scholarship by a non-western author?

Chris Wright

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*After several years David Deboys, formerly Librarian at Tyndale House, Cambridge, has laid down the task of Book Review Editor. We are most grateful for all his labours on this much valued part of Themelios, and take the opportunity also to thank all those who review books for us (and then wait patiently for their reviews to appear! We are trying to reduce the backlog . . .). Welcome to Rick Hess, of Glasgow Bible College, who has taken over from David.*

# New directions in biblical theology

Charles H.H. Scobie

Dr Scobie is Cowan Professor of Religious Studies at Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada. Readers will find further articles on biblical theology by Dr Scobie, including his proposals for a fresh structural approach, in recent issues of the Tyndale Bulletin, as noted in the bibliography to this article.

## Defining 'biblical theology'

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.'

(L. Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, chapter 6)

Students seeking to discover what is meant by 'biblical theology' may be pardoned for concluding that many scholars are as arbitrary as Humpty Dumpty in their use of the term. There appears to be no commonly agreed definition of what constitutes 'biblical theology'. They may well be surprised to find that some appear to hold that biblical theology did not exist before 1787, and equally surprised to discover that others believe that on a strict definition there can be no such thing as a biblical theology today.<sup>1</sup>

What is the problem? Why cannot biblical theology just mean what it says (to come back to Alice)? 'Biblical' comes from the word 'Bible', which comes from the Greek *ta biblia* ('the books'), via the Latin *biblia* ('the book'), and which in this context means the books of the OT and NT recognized as canonical Scripture by the Christian church. Theology deals with *theos*, meaning 'God', and by common consent this includes God's relation to the world and to humankind. The ending *-logy*, from the Greek *logos*, used in this way means the ordered, systematic, rational, scientific study of a subject. Biblical theology thus ought to mean something like the ordered study of what the Bible has to say about God and his relations to the world and humankind.

The Christian church has always accepted the revelation of God in the Scriptures as in some sense normative for its faith and life. To us it seems obvious that the teaching of the Bible has to be appropriated and applied in each new age. The Bible was written over a one-thousand-year period in times in many ways very different from our own. Theology is the discipline which asks what the Bible has to say to us today.

Some people have used the term 'biblical theology' to mean such a system of Christian doctrine based on the Bible, a 'theology that accords with the Bible' (Ebeling).<sup>2</sup> Thus Karl Barth's theology could well be described as 'a biblical theology'. This use of the term is really redundant, however, for all forms of Christian theology claim to be in some way based on, or in accord with, the Bible. The theology which the church has to work out in each new age is better designated as 'dogmatic theology' (Barth called his work *Church Dogmatics*) or 'systematic theology'.

Much more common is the use of 'biblical theology' to mean the theology of the Bible itself, 'the theology contained in the Bible' (Ebeling). What we may not realize, however, and what we may find hard to understand is that the idea of making a clear separation between what the Bible meant in its original historical context and what it means for Christians today is a relatively modern one; it became possible with the rise of modern historical consciousness and was only clearly enunciated towards the end of the eighteenth century. Prior to that, the teaching of the Bible was not clearly distinguished from the teaching of the church; the one was more or less integrated with the other. Yet it is surely nonsense to hold that the church had no biblical theology before the eighteenth century; I have suggested that the early period was characterized by what may be called an *integrated biblical theology*.

With the rise of historical consciousness and the development of historical-critical methods the distinction did come to be drawn between the original theology of the Bible (discovered by these historical methods) and the later dogmatic theology of the church.

Biblical theology came to be regarded as entirely independent from dogmatics and from later church tradition. This may be called the period of *independent biblical theology*. Important as its contributions are, this approach has led to an impasse in which we still find ourselves today.

Recent developments have suggested that biblical theology cannot be regarded as a purely historical and descriptive discipline in isolation from the community which accepts the Bible as Scripture. Rather it stands in an intermediate position between historical study of the Bible on the one hand, and dogmatic theology (and related areas) on the other. This approach may be characterized as an *intermediate biblical theology*.

## A brief history<sup>3</sup>

As the books of the NT were added to those of the OT to form the Scriptures of the Christian church, these books were used by the church in formulating its beliefs and in countering what it considered to be false teachings (e.g. Gnosticism). A writer such as Irenaeus (late second century) certainly employed a form of biblical theology as he sought to understand the relation of unity to diversity within Scripture, the relation of the OT to the NT, and the overall structure of the biblical revelation. But, like the Church Fathers who followed him, he made no distinction between the teaching of Scripture and the 'rule of faith' or teaching of the church.

The most basic problem of biblical theology in any age is that of reconciling the desire for a uniform and consistent set of beliefs with the manifest diversity of the Bible. In the early centuries this problem was often tackled by means of allegory which sought a hidden, spiritual sense behind the literal meaning. This tended to disregard history and find the same theology throughout the whole of Scripture; the danger obviously was that of reading meanings into passages quite contrary to their original significance.

When we come to the Protestant Reformation, the work of its leaders was clearly based on a form of biblical theology. Luther, Calvin and others sought to return to scriptural teaching and to judge later traditions and practices by norms derived from Scripture. They too had to face the problem of unity and diversity; Luther, for example, did this with his dialectic of law and gospel, and his use of 'justification by faith' as an interpretive key (even though it led him to doubt the canonicity of three or four NT books). Yet even with the Reformers there was no clear distinction between the faith of the Bible and the faith of the church.

In the post-Reformation period the way was prepared for an independent biblical theology by three developments. Firstly, the practice developed within Protestant Orthodoxy of compiling collections of proof texts (*dicta probantia*), usually accompanied by exegetical comments, in order to demonstrate the biblical basis of Protestant doctrine. The 'proof text' approach has obvious weaknesses but it did turn attention to the content of the Bible. The earliest known use of the term 'biblical theology' refers to a work of this kind published in 1629. Secondly, the revival movement we know as Pietism, reacting against the barrenness of Protestant orthodoxy (though not against orthodox belief), turned to the Bible for spiritual and devotional nourishment. In the eighteenth century several Pietists published works with 'biblical theology' in the title. Thirdly, a different kind of reaction, that of Rationalism, sought to escape from later church dogmas and discover in the Bible universal and timeless truths in accordance with reason. The five-volume *Biblische Theologie* (1771-86) by G.T. Zachariae is typical of this approach.

In 1787 G.T. Gabler, on his appointment to the University of Altdorf, gave an inaugural address, the Latin title of which may be rendered as 'An Oration on the Proper Distinction Between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Specific Objectives of



Each'. Historians down to the present day have seized on this title as embodying the essence of the new approach which was emerging towards the end of the eighteenth century. Biblical theology is to be thought of as an historical and descriptive discipline, quite independent from dogmatic theology. And this certainly was the route taken by many in the nineteenth century. (Recent study has shown that Gabler distinguished 'true biblical theology', which is historical, from 'pure biblical theology', which is an intermediate stage between historical biblical theology and dogmatics. He was deeply concerned about the meaning of the Bible for his day, though he had a strongly rationalist outlook.)

A succession of 'biblical theologies' was published from around 1790 well on into the nineteenth century. The problem was that application of the new historical-critical methods (themselves influenced by the prevailing Rationalism) brought out the diversity of Scripture (especially of the OT v. the NT) and emphasized the complex process of historical development through which the Bible came into being. Thus biblical theology began to diverge into OT theology and NT theology, the way being led as early as G.L. Bauer who wrote separate works on the theology of the OT (1796) and of the NT (1800-02).

The historical approach revolutionized the understanding of the Bible, including questions of authorship and date, thus inviting a quite new historical reconstruction. Archaeological discoveries provided a mass of material from the Ancient Near East and the Graeco-Roman world which made the religion of the Bible look less unique. By the end of the nineteenth century OT and NT theology had given way to the study of the history of religion (*Religionsgeschichte*). This approach is well characterized in W. Wrede's 1897 monograph, 'Concerning the Task and Method of So-called New Testament Theology'. This is available in English translation<sup>9</sup> and is worth reading if only because its approach is still typical of many academic biblical scholars today. Wrede held that both terms of the expression 'NT theology' are wrong. Since the discipline is purely historical it cannot be limited by the bounds of the canon but must include all relevant literature. Its true subject matter is not theology but early Christian religion which the scholar tries to investigate 'as objectively, correctly and sharply as possible. . . . How the systematic theologian gets on with its results and deals with them — that is his own affair. Like every other real science, New Testament theology has its goal simply in itself, and is totally indifferent to all dogma and systematic theology.'<sup>10</sup> Here indeed is independent biblical theology!

After the First World War the reaction in dogmatic theology led by Karl Barth had its counterpart in a renewed interest especially in OT theology, with W. Eichrodt's *Theology of the Old Testament* being perhaps the most impressive of a series of such works. On the NT side the best-known work was R. Bultmann's brilliant if controversial *Theology of the New Testament*. Important contributions were also made by O. Cullmann in his *Christ and Time and Salvation in History*. These certainly represent a re-emphasis on theology rather than history of religion, and some have spoken of a 'biblical theology movement', especially in the English-speaking world, which peaked in the 1950s. An analysis of the 'movement' and its inherent weaknesses is provided in B. Childs' *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (1970), which is required reading for an understanding of the present-day situation. While this movement produced biblical 'word-books' and spoke much of the unity of the Bible, it is significant that it did not produce a single 'biblical theology'.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a movement back to emphasis on diversity and development within the Bible. A purely historical approach was encouraged by the development of numerous 'Departments of Religious Studies' within universities. Biblical theology was seen as dealing with what the Bible 'meant', not what it 'means', though in fact for many not only was biblical theology abandoned, but even OT and NT theology were ruled out of court. At best one could speak of the Priestly theology or the Deuteronomistic theology in the OT field, and of Pauline or Johannine theology in the NT.

Somewhat misleadingly, this highly fragmented, historical, descriptive approach could still be labelled by some of its practitioners as 'biblical theology', though it could well be argued that it is strictly neither 'biblical' nor 'theology'. Yet on the other hand if the term was understood in a stricter sense as dealing with OT and NT together, and dealing with the ordered study of the biblical understanding of God and his relation to the world and mankind, many biblical scholars would simply say that such a

thing is quite out of the question today. This is the impasse in which biblical scholarship finds itself at the present time.

## New directions

Recent years have seen a questioning of some of the basic assumptions of modern biblical study and this has opened up the possibility of new directions in biblical theology.

Academic study of the Bible has tended to separate it from the life of the church. There appears to be a growing awareness that the study of the Bible cannot be separated from the ongoing community which accepts it as canonical Scripture. In the field of literary studies various forms of 'reader-response criticism' have stressed the role of the reader in the interpretation of texts. According to S.E. Fish,<sup>9</sup> texts have meaning only in the context of an 'interpretive community'; clearly the appropriate interpretive community for the Christian Bible is the Christian church. A growing number of biblical scholars have been speaking of what P.D. Hanson has called 'the responsibility of biblical theology to the community of faith'.<sup>9</sup> W. Wink began his *The Bible in Human Transformation* (1973) with the startling sentence, 'Historical biblical criticism is bankrupt.'<sup>10</sup> Wink does not in fact advocate the abandonment of historical methods; he goes on to explain, 'Biblical criticism is not bankrupt because it has run out of things to say or new ground to explore. It is bankrupt solely because it is incapable of achieving what most of its practitioners considered its purpose to be: so to interpret the Scriptures that the past becomes alive and illumines our present with new possibilities for personal and social transformation.'

This links up with another recent trend, the growing questioning of the role of historical criticism. What is being questioned is not so much the method itself as the use that is made of it. Typically, historical criticism has regarded the biblical text as data from which to reconstruct the history and religion of ancient Israel and the early church. It has looked not so much at the text as through the text to the history which lies behind it. It has tended to regard only the earliest level to which it can penetrate as 'authentic'. For example, many scholars regard the conclusion of the book of Amos, the 'Appendix of Hope' (Am. 9:8c-15), as a later addition which is therefore to be discounted in any study of the theology of Amos. The reference to a future resurrection and judgment in John 5:28-29 is regarded as the work of an 'ecclesiastical redactor' and is irrelevant to the study of Johannine theology with its purely realized eschatology.

Recent reactions against this kind of approach include J.A. Sanders' method of 'canonical criticism', which examines the whole process of transmitting, editing and shaping the biblical material up to and including its final canonical form.<sup>11</sup> The 'tradition-historical' approach associated especially with the OT scholar H. Gese and the NT scholar P. Stuhlmacher seeks to trace the long and often complex process of the transmission of biblical traditions through the OT, the inter-testamental period and on into the NT without a break; this has been hailed as a new form of biblical theology, but it depends on assumptions which are not accepted by all scholars and raises questions, e.g. regarding where the norm is to be found in Scripture.<sup>12</sup> Two ongoing series, *Overtures to Biblical Theology* (Fortress Press) and *Biblical Encounters* (Abingdon Press), publish studies of biblical themes which, while not ignoring diversity, tend to stress continuity, and also relate the themes to contemporary concerns.

The claim of historical criticism to present an objective, neutral descriptive approach to the Bible is increasingly questioned. Modern hermeneutical theory,<sup>13</sup> especially as influenced by H.-G. Gadamer, recognizes that there can be no interpretation of texts without presuppositions. Not that such presuppositions go unquestioned; the interpreter must remain open to the text and participate in a 'fusion of the horizons', i.e. the horizon of the text and the horizon of the interpreter. The underlying presuppositions of much historical criticism have been rationalistic and positivistic, so that some of the most central assertions of the texts themselves — the presence and activity of God in nature and in history — have been set aside. It is in reaction to this that scholars such as P. Stuhlmacher have called for a 'hermeneutics of consent to the biblical texts' which will be marked by 'a willingness to open ourselves anew to the claim of tradition, of the present, and of transcendence'.<sup>14</sup>

Yet another significant trend is a new willingness to focus on the final, canonical form of the biblical text. This is generally

typical of the renewed literary interest in the Bible (which can otherwise be marked by considerable diversity). Literary critics tend to look at the text as it stands, rather than through the text to the history that lies behind it. While some focus on relatively small textual units, the literary critic Northrop Frye looks at the entire Bible as a literary whole. What impresses him is the continuity to be found in the Bible which he characterizes as a sequence or dialectical progression consisting of seven main phases which run from creation to apocalypse. Frye is well aware of the findings of historical criticism, but finds them irrelevant to his purpose which is to study Scripture in the form in which it has exerted a tremendous influence over Western culture. Thus although critical scholars hold that Genesis 1 comes from the latest of the four Pentateuchal sources, 'A genuine higher criticism', Frye remarks, 'would observe that this account of creation stands at the beginning of Genesis, despite its late date, because it belongs at the beginning of Genesis!' Frye holds that while the Bible is 'certainly the end product of a long and complex editorial process, the end product needs to be examined in its own right'.<sup>15</sup>

Most significant of all for charting a new direction for biblical theology has been the advocacy of a 'canonical approach' associated primarily with the work of B.S. Childs. First enunciated in his *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, then worked out in a number of subsequent books and articles, Childs argues that 'the canon of the Christian church is the most appropriate context from which to do biblical theology'.<sup>16</sup> Childs does not reject historical criticism, but seeks to go beyond it by focusing on the form of the text which has been accepted as canonical by the church. To date, the canonical approach has been applied by Childs in a commentary on Exodus, in 'Introductions' to the OT and NT, and most importantly in his *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, but not to a 'biblical theology' which embraces both Testaments together.

These trends have to be carefully and critically evaluated, but they do demonstrate a certain convergence of opinion and point towards a new direction for biblical theology.

## An intermediate biblical theology

There can be no return to the situation of an *integrated biblical theology* which existed before the rise of the modern historical approach. Yet the pursuit of a totally *independent biblical theology* has led to an impasse. What holds promise is an approach which sees biblical theology as a bridge discipline standing between historical (and literary) study of Scripture on the one hand, and the use of Scripture by the church in dogmatic theology and related disciplines on the other.

Historical-critical study of the Bible still has an important role to play. The books of the Bible must be interpreted against their historical background; questions of authorship, date, destination, purpose and so on must be based on a critical assessment of the evidence; and study of individual books and authors must be based on painstaking exegesis which aims to understand the meaning of the text in its original setting. But the limits of historical criticism must be kept in mind. The method can generally yield only possible or probable, not certain, results. No historian is free from presuppositions; those of the biblical critic require careful scrutiny. It is not just the (often hypothetical) original form of a tradition that is 'authentic'; all levels of Scripture must be given due weight through to the final edited form.

Literary study of the Bible can provide an alternate vantage point from which to view the Bible as a whole. Especially where it deals with Scripture in its final canonical form, it can shed light on the shape and structure of the Bible, and on its essential continuity. But care must be taken to ensure that the text is not understood in a way inconsistent with the original historical meaning.

An intermediate biblical theology will assume and accept the findings of the historical and literary approaches, but will seek to go beyond them and move from analysis to synthesis. It will still be basically concerned with 'the horizon of the text', and will attempt to provide an overview and interpretation of the shape and structure of the Bible as a whole. It will seek the unity and continuity of Scripture, but without sacrificing the richness of its diversity. It will focus not on exegetical details but on the broad interrelationships between the major themes of the Bible, and above all on the interrelationship between the Testaments.

It is clear that this cannot be done in a 'neutral' or 'objective' fashion. An intermediate biblical theology is inevitably part of the interpretive process, and its presuppositions will be those of the

interpretive community, including belief that the Bible conveys a divine revelation, that the Word of God in Scripture constitutes the norm of Christian faith and life, and that all the varied material of the OT and NT can in some way be related to the plan and purpose of the one God of the whole Bible. Such a biblical theology lies somewhere between what the Bible 'meant' and what it 'means'.

An intermediate biblical theology provides a bridge to dogmatic theology, the discipline which seeks to apply the Word of God in each new day and age. Dogmatic theology in turn ought to illuminate and direct every aspect of the church's life: it must form a bridge to the church's worship, preaching, teaching, devotion, ethical reflection and Christian action. The biblical material synthesized by biblical theology constitutes the norm which has to be correlated with the situation faced by the church today. While the contemporary Christian community is the true interpreter of Scripture, it is equally true that the community must constantly scrutinize its faith and life in the light of the Word of God in Scripture. Contemporary theological concerns (e.g. ecology, feminism, human rights) do not determine or dictate the conclusions of biblical theology, but they can prompt biblical scholars to reassess the scriptural evidence which may have been obscured or distorted by later non-biblical prejudices and presuppositions.

## Biblical theology is canonical theology

It has been proposed above that 'the canonical approach' provides the most promising way forward. Biblical theology, it may be suggested, is canonical theology in five senses.

Firstly, biblical theology is to be limited to the canonical books of the church's Scripture. However important they may be for the study of the history of religion, the inter-testamental literature and the Apostolic Fathers are not part of the scriptural material which the church recognizes as constituting the norm of its faith and life. This of course does not deny that there may be much of value and of truth in these and other non-biblical works, only that biblical theology is concerned with those books which contain the norm by which value and truth are to be evaluated.

Secondly, biblical theology is to be based on the entire canon, consisting of both OT and NT. Much recent German discussion has focused on the question of 'eine gesamtbiblische Theologie', 'an all-biblical theology'. This means above all seeking to do justice to the OT, not just seeing it as a quarry of proof texts or, in terms of 'law', as a foil for the gospel. 'The church', contends S. Terrien, 'needs to be cleansed of its traditional Marcionism — a theological form of anti-Semitism — which has been revived in modern times by Schleiermacher, Harnack and Bultmann, among others.'<sup>17</sup>

Thirdly, biblical theology is to be based on the Christian form of the canon. In the Hebrew order of Torah — Former Prophets — Latter Prophets — Writings the emphasis falls on Torah as God's supreme revelation. The Christian order (based on the Septuagint for the OT) is Torah — History — Writings — Prophets — Gospels — History — Epistles — Revelation. In this order the gospels are central. The position of the prophets makes the OT open-ended, looking forward to the Christ event, while the books following the gospels look back to it. A more difficult question is the status of the apocryphal/deuterocanonical books excluded from the Hebrew Scriptures but accepted by major Christian traditions. Whatever view is held of their inspiration a case can be made for taking them into account in a biblical theology as a link between the Testaments.

Fourthly, an intermediate biblical theology will be based primarily on the final canonical form of the text. The word 'primarily' is important, for the historical-critical approach remains a preparatory stage of biblical theology and a safeguard against unwarranted interpretations. But what the church has always accepted as canonical is the final form of the text. It did not canonize J, E, D or P. What is significant about the book of Amos is that it was not accepted into the canon without 'The Appendix of Hope'; the result is that in Amos, as in all the prophets, however much the emphasis may vary, there is a dialectic of judgment and mercy. Similarly the significant thing about John's gospel is that it was only accepted by the church in the 'ecclesiastically redacted' form (if that is what it is); the result is that John, like the rest of the NT, however much the emphasis may vary, presents a form of inaugurated eschatology.

Finally, a canonical biblical theology will attempt to deal with the full range of the canonical materials. In particular it will resist the temptation to adopt 'a canon within the canon' which gives priority to certain themes, passages or books to the exclusion of others. This is a short cut to finding unity in the Bible which must be avoided. For example, the Pauline epistles are of fundamental importance for biblical theology, but the Epistle of James is part of the canon also and must be given its place in a fully canonical biblical theology.

## A structured biblical theology

What form will such a biblical theology take in practice? There are those who see biblical theology primarily as a dimension of exegesis, or of the study of individual books or authors, or of particular biblical themes. Certainly this can be part of biblical theology provided the passages, books or authors under study are placed in their total biblical context. The tracing of themes through both OT and NT, already referred to, is certainly an important part of biblical theology. But the question must be raised as to whether such fragmented study is sufficient. The study of biblical themes in isolation raises the question of how the various biblical themes are interrelated. Studies which span OT and NT raise the question of the interrelationship of the Testaments. Such questions cannot be answered without some view of the structure of the biblical revelation as a whole.

This raises the question of whether the time has come to attempt again not just 'doing biblical theology' but writing 'a biblical theology'. It will be recalled that volumes of biblical theology were produced in the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century before the enterprise diverged into separate OT and NT theologies. After about a century in which virtually no major 'biblical theology' appeared (one possible exception is M. Burrows' *An Outline of Biblical Theology*, 1946), the question of such an undertaking is again the subject of lively discussion. In addition to the programmatic essays which have appeared in recent years, the American OT scholar S. Terrien has led the way with his work *The Elusive Presence: The Heart of Biblical Theology*, published in 1978, which may be claimed as the first major scholarly attempt to write a truly biblical theology encompassing both OT and NT in over a century. It has been followed by a work similar in scope by the German scholar H. Seebass, *Der Gott der ganzen Bibel* ('The God of the Whole Bible'), published in 1982.

Such an undertaking raises the very basic question of the appropriate structure for a biblical theology. Historically, all OT and NT theologies, and the much smaller number of biblical theologies, have adopted some form of structure which has to a considerable degree affected the way in which the biblical material is presented. Three types of structure may be broadly distinguished.

The first may be classified as a *systematic* structure. All the earliest biblical theologies followed the type of outline employed in the *Collegia Biblica* of Protestant orthodoxy. That is, the material was arranged under the headings normally employed by dogmatic theology. Such an approach continued to be used in the nineteenth century, sometimes in simplified form, but generally following some such sequence as God, Man, Sin, Christ, Salvation, Church, sacraments, and so on. It has persisted into the twentieth century in biblical theology (Burrows), OT theology (Köhler, Baab, Heinisch, Jacob) and NT theology (Grant, Richardson, Schelkle). Nevertheless it has come under severe criticism as imposing doctrinal categories which are foreign to biblical thought, and as excluding certain major biblical themes.

The advent of historical criticism prompted a totally different method of ordering the material: the Bible began to look less and less like a text book of systematic theology and more and more like a history book, so an *historical* outline was adopted which traced the development of biblical faith in a chronological sequence which was increasingly the product of scholarly reconstruction. This scheme is particularly typical of the History of Religions approach and is still widely used in many standard works and text books. It is well suited to the type of historical study which must precede biblical theology, but hardly does justice to the theology of the Bible. Hybrid forms of structure can be found: a good example is D. Guthrie's *New Testament Theology*, which opts for a basic systematic structure (God, Man, Christology, the Mission of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Christian Life, the Church, the Future, Ethics, and Scripture), but within each section and sub-section takes a historical approach, reviewing each segment of the NT in turn.

Dissatisfaction with both these structures led to a third approach which may be characterized as *thematic*. While there were some earlier precedents, the first notable theology of this type was W. Eichrodt's *Theology of the Old Testament*, which took the theme of 'covenant' as its organizing principle, and arranged the main topics of the OT under the three major headings of 'God and Nation', 'God and World' and 'God and Men'. This sparked off a long debate on the appropriate 'centre' of an OT theology, with numerous alternative suggestions being made; to a lesser extent there has been a similar debate in NT studies.<sup>18</sup> Others feel that no one theme can possibly do justice to the richness and diversity of either OT or NT. This is even more so the case if the question is raised regarding one theme which could form the basis of a truly biblical theology. Suggestions here include 'covenant', 'the Kingdom of God' and 'salvation history'; Terrien's *The Elusive Presence* takes as its controlling theme 'the presence of God'.

These and other suggestions invite serious criticism and it is difficult to understand the obsession with finding one single theme or centre on which to base a biblical theology. On the other hand, a multiple theme approach holds much promise. Two examples may be cited. E.A. Martens' *Plot and Purpose in the Old Testament* identifies four key interrelated themes: salvation/deliverance, the covenant community, knowledge/experience of God, and land. These are traced through the OT with a few suggestions as to how the same themes might be followed through the NT. W. Dumbrell's *The End of the Beginning: Rev. 21-22 and the Old Testament* is not a fully-fledged biblical theology, but it does deal with five related themes found in the last two chapters of the Bible: the new Jerusalem, the new temple, the new covenant, the new Israel, and the new creation. The development of these themes is traced through OT, gospels and epistles and back to Revelation, thus showing how 'the entire Bible is moving, growing according to a common purpose and towards a common goal'.<sup>19</sup> A multi-thematic approach ensures, so far as is humanly possible, that the structure arises from the biblical material itself rather than being imposed from the outside. It allows full scope for dealing with topics — for example the theme of Wisdom — which tend to be seriously under-represented, if not excluded, from more traditional schemes. It is consistent with a 'dialectical' approach which recognizes the bi-polar nature of many key biblical themes. For example, the emphasis on 'salvation-history' and on 'the God who acts' has to be balanced by an emphasis on creation theology (which has received a lot of recent attention). Terrien's *The Elusive Presence* illustrates the possibilities of this approach with its dialectic of the divine self-disclosure and self-concealment, of a theology of the 'name' and a theology of 'glory', of the aesthetics of the mystical eye and the demands of the ethical ear, and so on.

For a full-scale biblical theology it would be desirable to identify a limited number of major themes; in fact, when the numerous suggestions which have been made for a 'centre' are examined they tend to fall into about four major groups. Round these appropriate minor themes could be grouped. The various themes must be traced through OT and NT and a satisfactory method found of correlating the OT and NT material. This obviously raises many complex problems and limitations of space preclude their discussion here. Elsewhere I have made tentative suggestions regarding a possible overall structure for a biblical theology.<sup>20</sup>

## The challenge of biblical theology

The kind of enterprise which has been barely hinted at here would obviously constitute a colossal challenge to biblical scholarship, and even many who do not oppose it in theory hold it to be impossible in practice.

Certainly it could only come about through the co-operation of OT and NT scholars, which would break down the unhealthy over-specialization and compartmentalization that characterizes much biblical scholarship today. It would equally call for co-operation between biblical scholars and systematic theologians. If biblical theology is to be thought of as a bridge discipline then it is a bridge which must carry heavy traffic — travelling in both directions. And it must be a truly ecumenical enterprise in which scholars of different denominations and confessional backgrounds co-operate. Liberal Protestants no longer dominate the field. The entry of Roman Catholics into the mainstream of biblical scholarship, and the growing scholarly contribution from conservative evangelicals, hold out exciting possibilities.

Though for long the Cinderella of the theological disciplines, and though still subject to violent attack by many academic biblical scholars, there are signs that biblical theology may be about to come back into its own.

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<sup>1</sup>On the history of biblical theology see Hasel 1975, Hasel 1978, and Reventlow 1986.

<sup>2</sup>Ebeling 1963, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup>On the history of the interpretation of Scripture see Grant and Tracy 1984.

<sup>4</sup>An English translation, along with helpful introduction and comments, will be found in Sandys-Wunsch and Eldredge 1980.

<sup>5</sup>In Morgan 1973, which also has a helpful introduction.

<sup>6</sup>Morgan 1973, p. 69.

<sup>7</sup>This often-quoted distinction originated in Stendahl 1962.

<sup>8</sup>See Fish 1980, pp. 171-172.

<sup>9</sup>See Hanson 1980.

<sup>10</sup>Wink 1973, p. 1. The following quotation is from p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>See Sanders 1984.

<sup>12</sup>See Reventlow 1986, pp. 149-154, and Hasel 1982, pp. 63-67.

<sup>13</sup>For a helpful introduction see Maddox 1985.

<sup>14</sup>Stuhlmacher 1977, pp. 83, 85.

<sup>15</sup>Frye 1981, p. xvii.

<sup>16</sup>Childs 1970, p. 99.

<sup>17</sup>Terrien 1980, p. 75.

<sup>18</sup>See Hasel 1975, ch. IV, and Hasel 1978, ch. III.

<sup>19</sup>Dumbrell 1985. Quotation from Introduction (no page number).

<sup>20</sup>Scobie 1991b.

# Pseudonymity and the New Testament

## Conrad Gempf

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A few years ago I met someone who claimed to be C.S. Lewis. He clearly knew a lot about the man whose identity he was appropriating and on occasion mixed what he said with genuine excerpts from Lewis's books. He was very entertaining to spend an evening with, but he was not the man he pretended to be. There were other people present — should I have denounced him to them? Should I have confronted this man: 'Impostor!'

Perhaps your feelings will change when I tell you that this man was on a stage at the time, surrounded by props. I had gone to see a one-man show based on the life and writings of C.S. Lewis. Despite the fact that the great majority of the audience with whom I

was seated were Christians who would claim to be against falsehood and deceit of any kind, no-one was unhappy with the actor or the playwright for the fraud they conspired to present to us. In this context, the pretence was not only acceptable, but laudable. We all paid good money to be lied to, and emitted loud noises of approval when it was complete.

If we can forget for just a moment our deeply-ingrained acceptance of theatre and fiction as valid genres, we may be able to glimpse just how peculiar the whole business is — how odd someone from outside our culture might find it. I submit that it is in this frame of mind that we are best able to approach the curious business of religious pseudonymity ('pseudo' = false; 'nym' = name): the practice of writing a literary work under the pretence that someone else, usually someone more famous, wrote it.

## Pseudonymity and the documents

Whatever one thinks about the authorship of the books of the NT, there can be no doubt that there are pseudonymous documents to be found *outside* of the canon. No doubt the most widely known example of this is the so-called *Gospel of Thomas*, one of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic documents (although it was known before their discovery). Virtually no-one who has studied this collection of sayings believes that it originated with the disciple whose name it bears, despite the introduction of the book which reads: 'These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Thomas wrote down'.

For a number of the books of the NT, however, you can find scholars on both sides of the question. Clearly it will not be possible to outline all the arguments and points of view in a short article such as this,<sup>1</sup> but it may be helpful to point out a few of the books whose authorship is most 'under fire', and to refer to some of the reasons why this is so. For it is worth noting at the outset that not all NT books are seriously contested. Just as virtually everyone accepts the pseudonymity of the *Gospel of Thomas*, so virtually everyone accepts that the letters of 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Philippians and Philemon, for example, were penned by the apostle Paul. Even the most liberal of NT critics do not dispute the claims of authorship of canonical books without some reasons.

It is also worth noting at this stage that some of the neat lines between scholars are starting to break down. Formerly it was the case that a person's views on pseudonymity in the canon could be ascertained merely by finding out whether the person was an 'evangelical' or not. Indeed, for many, this was precisely the test: if someone believed that the NT contained pseudonymous works, they were, by definition, not an evangelical. We'll come back later to why this should no longer be the case (under the heading 'Pseudonymity and inspiration'). For now, suffice it to say that the party lines cannot be so neatly drawn.<sup>2</sup>

The book of 2 Peter is probably the most frequently doubted. The author of the book makes unmistakable personal references, such as calling himself Symeon Peter (1:1) and referring to the Transfiguration (1:16-18). But for many scholars, these apparently clear signposts of authorship are a little too clear and self-conscious to be accepted without question. Furthermore, there are features of the letter that seem to point to a time later than Peter's lifetime. For example, if the phrase 'Ever since our fathers died' in 3:4 refers to the first generation of Christians, as many believe, then it is odd coming from Peter. Or again, the reference to 'all Paul's letters' in 3:15 suggests a collection of the letters, whereas it is doubted that they would have been collected and distributed all together in the apostle Peter's time. There are other arguments both for and against Petrine authorship, but our purpose here is merely to show that features of the text itself cause people to inquire into the matter — it is not all presuppositions and hypercriticism.

Of the letters bearing Paul's name, it is the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) which have received the roughest ride. The reasons for this include both form and content. First, there are indisputable differences in both vocabulary and sentence structure from other letters claiming to be written by Paul. Second, in terms of content, important Pauline concepts appear to be used in a different way altogether in these epistles. Perhaps the clearest example of this is the key theological theme of 'faith'. In most of Paul's writings, the idea conveyed is a human response of obedience to and identification with God's acts in Christ. In the Pastorals, it seems more to do with a body of beliefs — the content of the commitment rather than the action: '... he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever' (1 Tim. 5:8). Other theological and ethical quirks could be added to this. There are, to be sure, a variety of ways of explaining these, but they are real differences.

Another perceived problem area in the Pauline corpus is the pair of Ephesians and Colossians. Like the Pastorals, these letters bear a marked similarity to each other and stand over against the other letters of the apostle, albeit less clearly so. While the Pastorals are usually accepted or denied *en masse*, many scholars will split Ephesians and Colossians and say that Colossians is authentic while Ephesians is not. Again there are reasons that relate to both form and content, and again these are capable of a variety of interpretations or explanations.

Whether they are *good* reasons or not, it must at least be admitted that there are rational reasons for doubting the authorship of some NT books. And these reasons arise from the text rather than from some perversity of mind on the part of scholars. But how is this phenomenon to be explained? What possible reason could anyone, let alone a Christian, have for writing a document and pretending that someone else is responsible for it?

## Pseudonymity and authors

Sometimes, of course, the false attribution of a book to a famous author has nothing to do with the original author at all. The book of Hebrews is a good case in point. It is anonymous, and early Christian writers expressed various opinions about who wrote it, ranging from Luke to Barnabas, including Origen's famous statement that 'who wrote this epistle God alone knows for certain'. The tradition that it was one of Paul's seemed to stick, and for centuries it was so regarded. But without question, if the author had intended to pass it off as such, the initial greeting 'Paul, an apostle ...', so typical of the Pauline epistles, would not have been omitted.

Another way that works are sometimes falsely attributed to famous people without the author intending it is when the real (less famous) author has the same name as another potential author. Many commentators think that this is the case with the book of Revelation, which claims only to be written 'by John', and nowhere makes any explicit claim (or even hints) at being by one of the disciples. If 'John the Elder on Patmos' felt that he and his circumstances were known to his intended readers, it may not have occurred to him that centuries later people would confuse him and his work with another John.

But 2 Peter and the other epistles I mentioned in the last section, if they are pseudonymous, clearly go beyond this innocence. Our question remains: why would anyone go to all the trouble to write something, only to claim someone else wrote it?

It is not as strange as it sounds at first. Quite the opposite: for some ancients, it was a very sly move. The ancient medical author, Galen, writes about two libraries run by wealthy collectors who sought to outdo the other by purchasing works of famous authors for huge sums. This demand, not surprisingly, encouraged quite a few people to forge brand-new 'ancient' works for a handsome profit.<sup>3</sup> This, however, seems an unlikely motive for the author of a Christian work, not only because of the morality, but also because the church was not a very lucrative market for such forgeries until a much later period in time.

Another cunning motive for writing a book in someone else's name is to legitimize your own views by 'showing' them to have a more respectable pedigree: 'this isn't *my* idea; it comes from the disciples!' This is, at least in part, the kind of motive behind the production of such heretical works as the *Gospel of Thomas*. The motive is not dissimilar to the church's reasons for delineating the canon: 'these aren't just *our* ideas ...'.

Now, for modern people there is a world of difference between summoning support from documents written by authorities and forging such documents oneself. At least there is if what we're reading is a magazine article or a book of non-fiction. We have entirely different expectations of a play, a film or a poem, however. For example, if a television programme shows some film footage of London in the 1930s accompanied by sombre music and the voice of a news presenter doing the narration, the whole audience will treat the words differently than if the music is light-hearted and the voice is that of a famous comedian. It is important to notice that there is nothing intrinsically different about the footage or the medium that demands one not to be taken literally — it is a more or less arbitrary feature of our society and culture, but a feature which nearly everyone in our society is aware of.

Some biblical scholars have argued that it is our arbitrary cultural expectations that mislead us when we consider authorship of some of these ancient books. The cultures which produced them and for which they were produced may have had entirely different expectations than we have. Perhaps when a new epistle bearing an apostle's name was produced after his death, people had only the expectations we might have at a one-man play about C.S. Lewis. We are not likely to condemn the playwright or the actor of plagiarism or misquotation as long as what is said is true and



reasonably in character. Might not the early Christians have had this kind of expectation of spiritual writings? A truly helpful epistle written by someone else in Paul's name might, thus, not have been viewed either by the author or the audience as plagiarism or misquotation or lying. Just as with the actor playing C.S. Lewis, none of the audience would have been 'fooled', nor would the intention of the writer have been to make the people believe that Lewis or Paul were really on the stage. Dishonesty doesn't really enter into it.

This is a very common way of understanding pseudonymity in Christianity and in ancient cultures: that it is used more as an artistic literary device, rather than as a serious and dishonest attempt to gain authority for a work by deceitful means. And to some extent, the evidence that we have bears this out. An incident from the early church that is frequently mentioned is the church father Tertullian's account of an elder of Asia in his time who wrote a book using Paul's name, out of love for Paul and desiring to honour him thus. We shall have occasion to look at the ending of this incident in the next section, but for the time being we can see that the incident illustrates that some Christians did compose pseudonymously, apparently without feeling they were doing something deceitful.

## Pseudonymity and audiences

But the real question for such a point of view is whether or not the intended audiences did in fact take 'authorship' this lightly. For the answer, we must again look to the church fathers. Ideally, we would like an 'epistle review' by an early church leader which says something along the lines of: 'Apollos's delightful "Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans" is full of good insights about the Christian faith'. We would expect a church that was very casual about the authorship question, and interested largely in the spiritual value of a book. What we find, however, is different: we find that the early church was very interested in both, including the question of authorship for its own sake.

The modern discipline of biblical studies prides itself on scientific use of literary analysis, and we tend to think that such 'tools' were the invention of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is a bit of a surprise, then, to find very similar techniques being used by church leaders to analyse Christian literature as early as the first few centuries AD. And what they were using them for was to determine authorship. About the author of Revelation, Dionysius wrote:

... I could not so easily admit that this was the apostle, the son of Zebedee ... and the same person who wrote the Gospel. ... But from the character of both, and the forms of expression, and the whole disposition and execution of the book, I draw the conclusion that the authorship is not his.<sup>4</sup>

Dionysius came to the conclusion that it must have been another man named John who wrote the book. Clearly some in the early church were interested in authorship, and were not exactly gullible.

It is sometimes thought that in order to 'make it into the canon' a book had to meet the formal requirement of being written by one of Jesus' followers. A moment's reflection shows that this is too simplistic. The majority of the NT is attributed to Paul and Luke, two men who were not followers of the Lord during his earthly ministry. Yet it is true that authorship mattered to those who decided, or recognized, the canon. If, however, mere connection to an apostle is not good enough grounds for taking a book seriously, much of the impetus for falsely claiming apostolic authorship is removed.

In the outcome of the incident I mentioned in the previous section, about Tertullian's elder who wrote his book in honour of Paul, despite the lofty motive the elder was not saluted, but rather he was removed from church office. Tertullian also tells us that there were some teachings in the book he didn't like. But these were probably not to be considered heretical — nor were they the crux by which the book was rejected. It is not that Tertullian said, 'These beliefs are wrong, therefore the book must be rejected';

rather it seems more akin to 'this book is a fake, therefore I needn't change my point of view on these matters'.<sup>5</sup>

In short, the only reactions portrayed in the surviving literature are (1) this book really was written by the apostle it claimed to be written by; (2) we don't know who this book was written by, or it was written by a person with the same name as someone more famous; or (3) this book was not written by the person who claimed to have written it and is to be rejected. This does not sound to me like the concerns and reactions of a society that was comfortable with the sort of artistic pseudonymity of which we spoke in the previous section.

## Pseudonymity and inspiration

We have seen, in the cases of some of the books of the NT, that it is possible to find rational reasons for asking whether the real author of the book is who the book claims. We have seen further that it is indisputable that pseudonymity was practised in the first few centuries of the church both by heretics (the *Gospel of Thomas*) and by those who thought of themselves as inside the church (Tertullian's elder). Although inspiration by the Holy Spirit and false claims of authorship do not seem to us to be compatible, we cannot, I think, exclude the possibility that God would work through such literary conventions. Pseudonymity need be only as deceitful as a parable, if the audience knows what's coming.

On the other hand, the evidence shows that the church fathers were far from uninterested in the authorship question, and yet we have no record of their congratulating a pseudonymous author or consciously accepting a single pseudonymous work. We must conclude that if pseudonymous works got into the canon, the church fathers were *fooled* by a transparent literary device that was originally intended *not* to fool anyone.

It will be clear by now that I personally find no compelling reason to believe that any of the books in the NT are written by anyone other than who they claim to be written by. The evidence, overall, inclines me to the other direction. But, and this is important, I do not think that pseudonymity can be ruled out as a serious possibility. The cases against the traditional authorship of 2 Peter and the Pastorals in particular are strong and not easily dismissed.

In the end, though, the books' place in the canon was secured not by their authentic authorship claims but by their being inspired by the Holy Spirit. And we must always remember that his ways need not be our ways. In the light of the practice of ancient cultures, therefore, we must not take the point of view that anyone who thinks there are pseudonymous books in the NT *necessarily* has something wrong with their view of biblical authority.

The books of the Bible were written by specific human beings in specific cultural settings. Being sensitive to these origins, even when features of them appear to conflict with our own cultural expectations, enhances rather than detracts from our understanding of how the Holy Spirit used these people and situations to bring us the book we know as Holy Scripture.

<sup>1</sup>For more complete arguments on both sides of the matter, it is best to look at introductions to the NT and commentaries on the books in question. A good start would be D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Apollos, 1990) and W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (SCM, 1975).

<sup>2</sup>On the one hand, evangelicals like Richard Bauckham come down on the pseudonymity side of the question, while people of otherwise more liberal persuasions, like Luke Johnson, come down in favour of authenticity, more or less. See R.J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Word Biblical Commentary, 1986), and L.T. Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament* (SCM, 1986).

<sup>3</sup>Galen, *In Hipp. de nat. hominis* 1.42, as cited by Bruce Metzger, 'Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha', *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. 91 (1972), pp. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup>Dionysius, *Extant Fragments* 1.4, as cited by T.D. Lea, 'The Early Christian View of Pseudepigraphic Writings', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Vol. 27 (1984), p. 69.

<sup>5</sup>See D. Guthrie, 'Appendix C: Epistolary Pseudepigraphy', in *NT Introduction*, pp. 1011-1028.

# Appendices in the New Testament

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## Introduction

Older biblical scholars of the previous generation took it for granted that many of the writings of the NT were composite documents, that is to say, documents which are composed of the fragments of two or more other writings. In fact, some theories of composition were so elaborate that scholars thought that some NT writings contained parts of as many as nine different letters.

That the compositional history of the NT writings could be so complex runs against what we know about the history of their canonization. Recently, the trend in NT scholarship has been to argue, in many cases, for the compositional integrity of the documents in question. In this article we will consider five of the NT writings which have most often been considered to be composed of several fragments. Of special interest are those writings which scholars claim have had material appended to the end of the document: Mark, Romans, Philippians, 2 Corinthians, and John.

## Mark

The majority of textual critics agree that Mark 16:9-20 is not part of the original Gospel of Mark. Some of the oldest and best manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark are either missing those verses or have clearly marked them in the text to indicate that they are of a very different character from what precedes them.<sup>1</sup> When one reads those verses, it becomes clear that they were mostly compiled from the other canonical gospels, probably by a later scribe of the second or third centuries AD. There are stories of appearances to Mary Magdalene (*cf.* Jn. 20), to two walking 'in the country' (*cf.* Lk. 24), and to the disciples at table (*cf.* Jn. 21 and Lk. 24); a commissioning (*cf.* Mt. 28; Lk. 24), and an ascension story (*cf.* Lk. 24). There are also extra-canonical references to casting out demons, speaking in tongues, handling serpents and drinking poison as demonstrations of faith (Mk. 16:17).

Why were these verses added? The answer may be found when one reads Mark 16:8, 'And the women said nothing to anyone for they were afraid.' Is it possible that the evangelist could have ended the gospel with this rather enigmatic expression? For a long time, scholars thought not. And the popular view was that the ending of Mark was lost; perhaps the last page of the manuscript was torn off and destroyed, or perhaps the evangelist died before finishing the composition. More recently, however, scholars have argued that Mark ended the gospel intentionally at 16:8. The fact that other manuscripts have been discovered which also end with the preposition 'for' (*gar*) adds weight to this conclusion.<sup>2</sup> The rhetorical effect of ending the Gospel of Mark at 16:8 is to leave the gospel open-ended, so that the readers themselves must write the conclusion to the gospel as they finally decide what to do about Jesus.

In the case of the Gospel of Mark, then, we may indeed have a clear instance where material was appended to the end of the gospel because 16:8 was considered to be an unsatisfying ending, particularly in light of the endings of the other canonical gospels.

## Romans

Paul's letter to the Romans was considered by older scholars to betray the marks of a composite letter. The doxology found in most translations at the end of chapter 16 (vv. 25-27) is found in some manuscripts at the end of chapter 14; and in the oldest witness to the Pauline letters, P46, the doxology is found at the end of chapter 15. While none of the manuscripts of Romans lacks chapters 15 or 16, the 'floating' doxology found at the end of chapters 14, 15 and 16 has led to the conclusion that, at some point,

Paul's letter to the Romans circulated in a fourteen-chapter, fifteen-chapter, and sixteen-chapter form. The question, then, is: which of these forms is the most original?

For a long time, scholars thought chapter 16 in particular could not be part of the original letter to the Romans. The argument was reasoned as follows. Paul had never been to Rome at the time of the writing of this epistle. Therefore, it would have been impossible for him to have known the large number of Christians listed in the greeting in chapter 16. Scholars concluded that chapter 16 was once part of another letter by Paul, probably addressed originally to the Ephesians. It was probably added to the end of Romans by later scribes in the process of collecting Paul's letters.<sup>3</sup> One then had to account for the fourteen-chapter ending which, so it was argued, was the product of Marcionites who were motivated by an anti-Jewish bias and excised the favourable references to Judaism found in chapter 15.

Recent work, however, has convinced most scholars that Romans 1-16 belong together as part of the original letter sent by Paul to the Romans.<sup>4</sup> According to this view, a fourteen-chapter and fifteen-chapter form of Romans emerged at the time when Paul's letters were being circulated among churches to whom they were not originally addressed. The fourteen- and fifteen-chapter forms were abbreviated, then, for liturgical purposes. Rarely in the early church would there have been occasion to read from chapters 15 and 16.

The argument that Paul could not have known the large number of Christians listed in chapter 16 is countered by arguing that Paul is employing a particular rhetorical device to establish his contacts in the church. The rhetorical effect has Paul saying, 'You may not know who I am, but I know who you are.' So he drops names to establish contacts in Rome before his arrival there. Christians travelled rather extensively, and it would not have been impossible for Paul to have known, either personally or by reputation, all of those listed in Romans 16. The cumulative effect of these arguments (and others) is the conclusion that Paul wrote chapters 1-16, our canonical Romans, to the church at Rome.

## Philippians

Many have thought that Paul's letter to the Philippians is comprised of two or three letters. Though there is no manuscript evidence to support such a division, as in the cases of 2 Corinthians and Romans, scholars point to the sharp break in 3:1 where Paul uses the expression, 'Finally, brethren'. Many scholars believe that Paul intended to end the letter here and that the closing of this first letter to the Philippians was lost. Those words ('finally, brethren'), coupled with the sharp change of tone in 3:2, have led some to conclude that a second letter has been added to the first. Recent grammatical studies, however, have demonstrated that the 'finally' of 3:1 may be simply a transitional particle used to introduce a fresh point in the argument and that 3:2 stands in continuity with what precedes and follows it in Paul's argument.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the themes of Philippians cut across chapters 2 and 3, arguing against its disunity. Against the selfishness of some in Philippi, perhaps led by Syntyche and Euodia (see 4:2), Paul offers several examples of selfless service. He begins with the Christ-hymn in which Christ is depicted as the selfless servant who puts the needs of others before himself (2:5-11, esp. 2:5). Paul then points to the example of his co-worker, Timothy, as one who 'will have the interest of the congregation at heart and not like those others who put their own selfish thoughts first' (2:22). Later in chapter 2, Paul refers to the example of Epaphroditus (2:29), a member of the Philippian church, as yet another example of those in the service of the gospel who put others and the cause of the gospel before themselves. Finally, in chapter 3, Paul holds himself up as a fourth example of those who adopt a selfless stance in their ministry. The argument of chapter 3 then fits very nicely with the arguments made by Paul in chapters 1 and 2 and contributes to the arguments for the unity of the letter.

Chapter 4, often referred to as the 'thankless thanksgiving', has sometimes also been viewed as yet another fragment appended to the Philippian letter. Again, there is little reason to assign chapter 4 to another letter. Rather, that Paul has waited until now to thank the Philippian congregation for their gift may be a rhetorical device on the part of Paul to allow him to deal with the problems in the Philippian congregation first. It also accounts for his own embarrassment at having received a gift from them. After all, the typical practice of Paul was not to receive any gifts from the congregations that he served (see e.g. 1 Cor. 9:15-18; 2 Cor. 2:14-17). Thus, the manuscript evidence, the grammatical evidence, the rhetorical arguments, and the theological themes of the Philippian letter all contribute to confirm its integrity.

## 2 Corinthians

Without doubt, 2 Corinthians has been the NT writing most frequently identified as a 'composite document'. A few scholars have suggested that as many as nine letters have been stitched together to make our canonical 2 Corinthians. Even less radical reconstructions posit as many as six letters: (a) 1:1-2:13, 7:5-16, 13:1-14; (b) 2:14-6:13, 7:2-4; (c) 6:14-7:1; (d) chapter 8; (e) chapter 9; (f) chapters 10-13.<sup>7</sup> These divisions are based on what scholars have identified as sharp breaks in Paul's thought or argument – passages so disjointed that some think Paul could not have digressed that much in a single letter. Such judgments are, of course, somewhat subjective, as evidenced by the fact that scholars cannot agree when the argument has digressed to the point that a fragmentary letter must be posited!

While no universal agreement among scholars exists on this very complex issue of the compositional history of 2 Corinthians, there does seem to be a majority opinion emerging among the more recent commentaries on 2 Corinthians on two points. First, it is more plausible to accept digressions in Paul's thought in 2 Corinthians than to accept modern reconstructions of five or six epistolary fragments woven together into one document. Multiple-letter reconstructions of six to nine letters seem almost physically impossible without the aid of a word processor to 'cut and paste'! They certainly demand more sophistication in ancient book-making than we have hard evidence for. So a number of recent commentaries argue that the compositional history of 2 Corinthians must be much less complicated than many have assumed.

Second, despite the more cautious views on the compositional history of 2 Corinthians, there does seem to be a consensus among recent commentators that 2 Corinthians 10-13 represents a separate letter which was appended to the end of chapters 1-9.<sup>8</sup> Several pieces of evidence point in this direction: (1) There is a sharp change in tone between chapters 1-9 and 10-13. In the first nine chapters, Paul presumes that the conflicts alluded to in previous letters have been resolved, and he commends the Corinthians for their recent behaviour and attitude (see e.g. 7:5-16). The overall tone is irenic and conciliatory. But in chapters 10-13, Paul launches into an invective against 'false apostles' (see e.g. 11:13, 22-23; 12:11-13). The overall tone in these chapters is defensive and polemical; Paul has slipped into his fighting mode! (2) The visit by Titus mentioned in 8:16-23 is evidently not the same as the one mentioned in 12:17-18. In the first, Titus is accompanied by two brethren, while in the second he has only one companion.

The last three chapters seem to presume a change in the situation which Paul is addressing. Some have suggested the Corinthian situation changed during the course of writing the letter and caused Paul to shift his tone in the midst of his composition – the so-called 'sleepless night' theory. It seems unlikely, however, that Paul would have allowed the first two-thirds of the letter, with its laudatory tone, to stand unrevised. And it is historically possible, but not probable, that such a situational change could have occurred during the actual composition of the letter.

More likely is the suggestion that chapters 10-13 were originally part of another letter and were appended to 2 Corinthians 1-9 during the process of the collection and formation of the Pauline corpus at the end of the first century. Even this view, however, does not finally settle the issue. Some scholars argue that chapters 10-13 come from the so-called 'angry letter' to which Paul alludes several times in chapters 1-9 (see 2:3-4; 2:9; 7:8, 12).<sup>9</sup> Others are persuaded that the topics taken up in 10-13 do not sufficiently match the issues which Paul says he addressed in the

'angry letter'. Hence, these scholars argue that the 'angry letter' is indeed lost, and that chapters 10-13 were written after chapters 1-9 at a time when relations between the Corinthian community and Paul had taken another turn for the worse.<sup>10</sup> This reconstruction would make 2 Corinthians 10-13 the fifth piece of correspondence sent by Paul to the Corinthians.<sup>11</sup> It was probably added to the end of 2 Corinthians 1-9, not necessarily because it was written after 1-9, but more likely because of the tendency of the editors of the Pauline collection to arrange the letters from the longest to the shortest (see e.g. Romans, 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, which are arranged in descending order according to length).

This reconstruction is historically plausible: it does not demand a complicated process of editorial activity – chapters 10-13 were simply added to chapters 1-9; it accounts for the sharp break in tone and differences of detail between 1-9 and 10-13; and it recognizes the Pauline tendency to address financial matters at or near the end of his letters (here in 2 Cor. 8-9; cf. 1 Cor. 16; Phil. 4). It is not impossible that such invectives as those found in chapters 10-13 could have been included by Paul at the end of the letter as a rhetorical device, but no-one has yet made that case convincingly.<sup>12</sup> Until such evidence is forthcoming, the most convincing solution appears to be the one proposed above.

## John

Only a very few students of the Fourth Gospel in modern times have argued that chapter 21 belonged to the original composition of John. The decisive evidence for most commentators is that the overall effect of chapter 20 is to give appropriate closure to the gospel story. This judgment is bolstered by the conclusion of chapter 20 which contains a closing beatitude (20:29) and a summary of the author's purpose (20:30-31). To narrate another appearance story after blessing 'those who have not seen and yet believe' (20:29) is an unusual transition to say the least. And it is also somewhat surprising that chapter 21 follows on the heels of these words: 'Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book . . .' (20:30)! That the book at one time concluded with chapter 20 seems clear. Still, chapter 21 does pick up some of the narrative threads of chapters 1-20 and is better labelled an epilogue than an appendix of unrelated matters or a supplement of information acquired later.<sup>13</sup>

But when was chapter 21 written, by whom, and why? The question of 'when' is probably the easiest to answer. The fact that the earliest manuscripts include chapter 21 has been taken by scholars, not as evidence against the view that chapter 21 was added later, but that the addition was made very early in the compositional process. In fact, it is generally agreed that chapter 21 was probably added before the Fourth Gospel was 'published', that is, circulated beyond the audience for whom it was originally intended.

Who wrote the chapter is a much more difficult question. Some argue that it is the product of the fourth evangelist himself who was prompted to append the material because of some change in the life of his community. Others argue that a later redactor of the Johannine community was responsible for the material. Recently, many scholars have simply admitted they do not know.<sup>14</sup> At least we can say that it was the product of an individual closely related to the interpretive community for whom the Fourth Gospel was written. Why the material was composed and appended is, of course, an equally notorious question. For those who do not identify the fourth evangelist with the beloved disciple, the 'most compelling ground could have been the death of the Beloved Disciple after the writing of chapters 1-20, and the consequent dismay that it caused among the Johannine churches. . . .'<sup>15</sup> At any rate, chapter 21 of John does bear the marks of being material appended to a gospel which originally concluded at 20:30-31.

## Conclusion

Of the five NT writings sometimes believed to contain appended material, I have argued, on the basis of grammatical, literary, and theological grounds, that two – Romans and Philippians – are, in fact, literary unities. But how can we speak of the remaining three as the inspired Word of God if they contain fragments of other documents? I close by making several remarks in response to this question.

Mark 16:9-20 came from a period well after the time of the composition of Mark's gospel. In fact, the evidence suggests that the material was written after the process of canonization began,

certainly after the collection of the four-fold gospel. For that reason, many scholars are unwilling to accept Mark 16:9-20 as authoritative Scripture, since presumably it is from the hand of a second- or third-century scribe and not from the period of composition. Even the most conservative scholars consider it unwise to base church doctrine on such spurious passages which are not supported elsewhere in Scripture.<sup>16</sup>

The other two writings, 2 Corinthians and John, are distinct from Mark in this respect. In both instances, the appended material evidently comes from the period of composition. Both are vehicles of the authentic, apostolic theology which took its impulse from the teachings of Jesus, is reflected in the NT writings, and was later formalized in the early church as the 'rule of faith'. In the case of 2 Corinthians, the material comes from the pen of Paul; and, in the case of the Fourth Gospel, chapter 21, if not from the hand of the evangelist, comes from someone within the original interpretive community. No reason exists in either case not to accept the canonical status of the material as sacred Scripture.

Furthermore, recent trends in confessional biblical scholarship suggest that interpreters, while acknowledging the complex compositional histories of such writings as 2 Corinthians and John, attempt to understand these writings in their final, canonical form.<sup>17</sup> The final, canonical shape of Scripture is the form which the believing community has accepted as inspired and authoritative. And unless it can be shown, as is most likely the case with Mark 16, that the material comes from a time period well after the emergence of the NT documents as sacred writings, then one indispensable task of the theologian of the church is to interpret those sacred writings in their canonical form as the Word of God for the community of faith.

<sup>16</sup>Actually there are four endings current in the manuscript tradition. See the discussion by Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1975), pp. 122-128.

<sup>17</sup>See Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), p. 151, for references to works which end in gar.

<sup>18</sup>See T.W. Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans — and Others', *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles*, ed. Matthew Black (Manchester, 1962).

<sup>19</sup>See especially the work of Harry Gamble, *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977). In my opinion, Gamble's arguments are conclusive, and his work shifts the burden of proof upon those who would argue against the compositional unity of Romans.

<sup>20</sup>These arguments for the unity of Philippians and others may be found in David Garland's article, 'The Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Literary Factors', *Novum Testamentum* 27 (1985), pp. 141-173.

<sup>21</sup>See *ibid.* for the arguments cited in the preceding paragraphs. Garland's work has done for the unity of Philippians, in a less exhaustive way, what Gamble's work has done for the unity of Romans.

<sup>22</sup>See David Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), p. 208.

<sup>23</sup>See, e.g., Victor Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AB Vol. 32A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984); Ralph Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC Vol. 40 (Waco: Word, 1984); Charles Talbert, *Reading Corinthians* (New York: Crossroad, 1987).

<sup>24</sup>So Talbert, *Reading Corinthians*, pp. xix-xx.

<sup>25</sup>So Furnish, *II Corinthians*, and Martin, *2 Corinthians*.

<sup>26</sup>In this reconstruction, letter A is lost (see 1 Cor. 5:9); letter B is our 1 Cor.; letter C is the now lost 'angry letter' (see 2 Cor. 2:4; 7:8); letter D is 2 Cor. 1-9; and letter E is 2 Cor. 10-13.

<sup>27</sup>See though the commentary by Frederick W. Danker, *II Corinthians*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1989), in which he suggests the possibility of a unified narrative based on ancient rhetorical conventions.

<sup>28</sup>These arguments are made by Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI*, AB 29A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 1078-1079.

<sup>29</sup>George Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC Vol. 36 (Waco: Word, 1987), pp. 395-396.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>31</sup>See, e.g., the note on Mk. 16:9-20 in W.A. Criswell (ed.), *The Criswell Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1979), p. 1184. On the basis of the textual evidence, the writer concludes: '... the precise ending of Mark remains unknown', and further that '... no doctrine ought to be built on the basis of these verses alone'.

<sup>32</sup>See especially the work of Brevard Childs in this area.

# A survey of historical theology articles 1989-90

Tony Lane

This article surveys nineteen English-language periodicals which are likely to be of interest to theological students. For reasons of space it is not possible to summarize all of the relevant articles in these journals, but the excluded articles are all listed at the end.

## Abbreviations

CTJ	Calvin Theological Journal
CH	Church History
Ch	Churchman
EQ	Evangelical Quarterly
ERT	Evangelical Review of Theology
ExA	Ex Auditu
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
Int	Interpretation
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
MT	Modern Theology
SBET	Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
SCJ	Sixteenth Century Journal
Th	Theology
TB	Tyndale Bulletin
VE	Vox Evangelica
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal

## The early church

V.K. Downing in 'The Doctrine of Regeneration in the Second Century', *ERT* 14 (1990), pp. 99-112, seeks to trace evangelical emphases in the teaching of the earliest Fathers. He acknowledges that regeneration is associated with baptism, but claims that repentance and faith are also presupposed. The theme of baptism in the early church is also taken up by J.P.T. Hunt, in 'Colossians 2:11-12, the Circumcision/Baptism Analogy, and Infant Baptism', *TB* 41 (1990), pp. 227-244. He shows how the earliest discussions of infant baptism (Tertullian and Origen) mention no link with circumcision. The first time that we see such a link being made (Cyprian) it looks as if it is being applied to an already existing practice (infant baptism). Again, Colossians 2:11-12 was not used in connection with infant baptism until the fourth century. Thus the use of the analogy with circumcision appears to be an argument that emerges late in the day to support a well-established practice.

A number of articles discuss aspects of particular early figures. Trevor Hart in 'The Two Soteriological Traditions of Alexandria', *EQ* 61 (1989), pp. 239-259, considers the way in which the early church wrestled with the issue of contextualization. He compares the manner in which Clement and Athanasius each relate to their Platonist culture. Clement, in seeking to make the gospel relevant,

ends up reducing it to Greek thought; Athanasius applies the gospel to his culture in a way that challenges the latter's foundations. P.W.L. Walker in 'Gospel Sites and Holy Places', *TB* 41 (1990), pp. 89-108, presents a fascinating contrast between the attitude of two fourth-century bishops in Palestine. Eusebius of Caesarea is the careful historian with a concern for authenticity which makes him sceptical about extravagant claims, e.g. about the 'true cross'. Cyril of Jerusalem, by contrast, is the director of pilgrims who cares less about authenticity and who cultivates a 'sacramental' view of the 'holy places'.

Interest in the Arian controversy shows no sign of abating. Alwyn Pettersen, 'The Arian Context of Athanasius of Alexandria's *Tomus ad Antiochenos VII*', *JEH* 41 (1990), pp. 183-198, argues against the widespread view that this document (AD 362) opposes the teaching of Apollinarius. The affirmation that Christ's body was not  $\psi\upsilon\chi\omicron\nu$  (without a soul) makes sense in the context of the anti-Arian stance of the document. But it is not precise enough to exclude 'Apollinarianism' and the evidence is that Apollinarius remained on good terms with the authors of the *Tome*. Another aspect of the Arian controversy is considered by Graham Keith. 'Our Knowledge of God: The Relevance of the Debate between Eunomius and the Cappadocians', *TB* 41 (1990), pp. 60-88, sets the debate out carefully and lucidly. Eunomius is infamous for his claim that 'God does not know anything more about his essence than we do' (p. 73)! The conclusion draws some lessons from the debate, showing the unfortunate consequences of some aspects of the Cappadocians' case. The Arian controversy is also discussed by Joseph T. Lienhard, in 'Basil of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra, and "Sabellius"', *CH* 58 (1989), pp. 157-167. Basil sought to unite the church around support of his own formula of one *ousia* and three *hypostases*, and opposition to the teaching of Marcellus. But a lingering support for Marcellus and suspicion towards Basil's own programme were both greater than he realized. Furthermore, he confused the teaching of Marcellus and Sabellius, blending the two together into one.

The Cappadocians feature again in an article by Verna E.F. Harrison, 'Male and Female in Cappadocian Theology', *JTS* 41 (1990), pp. 441-471. She shows how all three of the Cappadocian fathers 'are surely a long way from the misogyny which is sometimes ascribed uncritically to all early Christians' (p. 471). They deny that there is gender in the eternal godhead, seeing it as only a temporary phenomenon within humanity. Richard Kyle in 'Nestorius: The Partial Rehabilitation of a Heretic', *JETS* 32 (1989), pp. 73-83, poses the old question of whether or not Nestorius was a Nestorian. He concludes by acquitting the mature Nestorius, but (in my opinion) only by failing to consider the full force of the case against him. Colin Gunton in 'Augustine, the Trinity and the Theological Crisis of the West', *SJT* 43 (1990), pp. 33-58, points to various weaknesses in Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity and sees them as paving the way for agnosticism and atheism. These weaknesses are especially the idea that God is essentially unknowable and also the relegation of the Trinity to secondary importance compared with the unity of God.

## Middle Ages

D.E. Nineham considers a fascinating, though little known, ninth-century controversy in 'Gottschalk of Orbais: Reactionary or Precursor of the Reformation?', *JEH* 40 (1989), pp. 1-18. Gottschalk held to a strictly Augustinian doctrine of predestination, for which he was tortured and imprisoned, despite the fact that many of the leading theologians of the day took his side. The author skilfully disentangles the theological issues and also shows how these were complicated by factors of personality, race and politics, as well as pastoral concerns.

Anselm of Canterbury is the subject of three articles which relate him to others. M.T. Clanchy, 'Abelard's Mockery of St Anselm', *JEH* 41 (1990), pp. 1-23, is a detailed analysis of Abelard's one, unflattering, reference to Anselm. The author asks why Abelard chose to attack Anselm in this way and, by looking below the surface of what is said, argues that Anselm's work on the incarnation had served as a basis of Abelard's condemnation in 1121. Trevor Hart in 'Anselm of Canterbury and John Macleod Campbell: Where Opposites Meet?', *EQ* 62 (1990), pp. 311-333, compares the two theologians with a view to showing that they are not as different as is often held. His aim is in particular to question the generally received evangelical assessment of Campbell. He succeeds in showing that he is not as far from an evangelical approach as is often supposed. There is, however, one serious weakness. Campbell is repeatedly quoted as believing that a penal

interpretation of the cross involves seeing Christ's sufferings as purely physical (pp. 327-330). But while this charge might apply to some earlier traditions, in the evangelical tradition from the time of the Reformation the atoning work of Christ is seen primarily in terms of the spiritual suffering of separation from the Father. G. Watson in 'A Study of St Anselm's Soteriology and Karl Barth's Theological Method', *SJT* 42 (1989), pp. 493-512, assesses Barth's interpretation of Anselm. He concludes by asking of Barth 'whether his criticisms of St Anselm's presentation do not reveal a tendency in his theological method of raising to understanding the particularity of the humanity of Jesus' life-act through its direct association with the inconceivable act in which God posits himself, that is, to convert the contingency and relativity of creaturely being into an aspect of an all-encompassing idea' (pp. 511f.).

Another great medieval exponent of the cross is Thomas Aquinas, whose contribution is expounded by Aidan Nichols in his 'St Thomas Aquinas on the Passion of Christ: A Reading of *Summa Theologiae* IIIa, q.46', *SJT* 43 (1990), pp. 447-459. He shows how Thomas argues that the cross, while not absolutely necessary, is the most fitting way for God to save us.

## Reformation

David C. Steinmetz in 'The Reformation and the Ten Commandments', *Int* 43 (1989), pp. 256-266, discusses different attitudes to the first commandment and in particular to the issue of images. He shows the differences between the Reformed (Carlstadt, Zwingli, Bullinger and Calvin), Lutheran (Luther) and Roman Catholic (Eck and Trent) traditions. The debate concerned whether or not the Ten Commandments prohibit all images and whether, if they do, this prohibition is binding on Christians. The lines of demarcation are little altered today.

The topic of baptism crops up again in an issue of *SBET* (7:1, 1989). Robert Letham expounds the doctrine of 'Baptism in the Writings of the Reformers' (pp. 21-44). He expounds Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon and Bullinger, pointing to the weaknesses of each. These weaknesses he sees as overcome in Bucer, Calvin and Vermigli. He concludes by pointing out that the Reformers and the Anabaptists differed in the exegesis of the NT because they approached it from different world-views. He helpfully analyses five basic differences which stand between them. The other side is presented by John Colwell in 'Alternative Approaches to Believer's Baptism' (pp. 3-20), which covers Pilgrim Marpeck (the Anabaptist), John Bunyan and Karl Barth. He is critical of Bunyan for treating baptism as a secondary matter and commends the other two for taking it more seriously.

Moving to the other sacrament, Alister McGrath has written on 'The Eucharist: Reassessing Zwingli', *Th* 93 (1990), pp. 13-19. He presents Zwingli's approach as one of 'transsignification' (to use a modern Catholic term), in which the Eucharist presents the narrative of Christ's death and so provides the community of faith with a sense of historical location. He concedes that for many this will be seen as an inadequate doctrine of the Eucharist, but considers it fruitful as a starting point. In a rather different article, D.A. Scales, 'Thomas Cranmer's "True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament"', *Ch* 104 (1990), pp. 102-131, expounds Cranmer's doctrine with a particular emphasis on his opposition to the Roman Catholic doctrine. He shows a wide knowledge of Cranmer's writings, but ignores the secondary literature, such as the work of Peter Brooks.

Peter Matheson in 'The Hammer, the Sickle and the Rainbow', *Th* 93 (1990), pp. 20-26, presents a lively picture of Thomas Müntzer on the 500th anniversary of his birth. He seeks to disentangle the religious, political and socio-economic sides of Müntzer and to rescue him both from his detractors and from the Marxist historians.

As always, there are a number of articles about Calvin. Susan E. Schreiner, 'Exegesis and Double Justice in Calvin's Sermons on Job', *CH* 58 (1989), pp. 322-338, shows how Calvin's exposition relates to his medieval predecessors: Gregory, Maimonides, Aquinas and Lyra. In particular, she shows how Calvin handles texts which seem to point to a higher justice of God before which even the sinless cannot stand — and the way in which he draws back from some possible implications of this. Randall C. Zachman in 'Jesus Christ as the image of God in Calvin's Theology', *CTJ* 25 (1990), pp. 45-62, sees this theme as the centre of Calvin's Christology. He maintains that Calvin, by focusing his Christology on Christ as the image of God, manages to overcome a number of false dichotomies, such as that between the know-



ledge of God as creator and redeemer and that between an incarnational and a spirit Christology.

Richard Muller in 'Fides and Cognitio in Relation to the Problem of Intellect and Will in the Theology of John Calvin', *CTJ* 25 (1990), pp. 207-224, warns against the tendency of some recent scholarship to portray Calvin's view of faith as purely 'intellectualist'. He emphasizes the non-technical and anti-speculative nature of Calvin's thought and also traces the influence upon Calvin at this point of the medieval tradition. He concludes that, for Calvin, faith involves the will as well as the intellect. Attempts to create a sharp contrast between an intellectualism of Calvin and the voluntarism of later Reformed theology are misguided. Richard Muller has written extensively on the relation between the founders of Reformed theology (such as Calvin, Bullinger and Vermigli) and post-Reformation Reformed scholasticism. His thesis is that there is far more continuity between these two phases than it has of late been fashionable to allow. His case is ably and conveniently summarized by Martin I. Klauber, in 'Continuity and Discontinuity in Post-Reformation Reformed Theology: An Evaluation of the Muller Thesis', *JETS* 33 (1990), pp. 467-475.

Jonathan H. Rainbow, 'Double Grace: John Calvin's View of the Relationship of Justification and Sanctification', *ExA* 5 (1989), pp. 99-105, summarizes Calvin's thought in this area. He does so in a very clear manner, though it is an unfortunate slip to say that Calvin's doctrine 'severs' justification and ethical behaviour (p. 101). As the author goes on to state, Calvin distinguishes them but they cannot be separated: you cannot have one without the other. John Kelsay in 'Prayer and Ethics: Reflections on Calvin and Barth', *HTR* 82 (1989), pp. 169-184, compares the way in which these two Reformed theologians justify the practice of prayer. Calvin lays the ground for a Reformed spirituality in a way that Barth does not. The differences between them he sees rooted especially in the fact that Barth is reacting against Kant.

In an important article, Christopher Fitzsimons Allison considers 'The Pastoral and Political Implications of Trent on Justification: a Response to the ARCIC Agreed Statement *Salvation and the Church*', *Ch* 103 (1989), pp. 15-31. He criticizes the statement for ignoring certain key issues. Crucial to these is Trent's denial that sin properly so called cannot coexist with a state of grace, that the Christian is not 'simul iustus et peccator'. This has serious pastoral and political implications.

## Post-Reformation

Richard A. Muller, 'Arminius and the Scholastic Tradition', *CTJ* 24 (1989), pp. 263-277, gives a foretaste of his forthcoming book on Arminius. He shows how mistaken it is to portray Arminius as a Melancthonian humanist fighting against Aristotelian scholasticism. Arminius was deeply influenced by medieval scholasticism (especially Aquinas) and was, like his opponents, an heir of the 'Calvinist Thomism' of the preceding generations.

There are three articles on Puritan spirituality. R. Tudor Jones, 'Union with Christ: The Existential Nerve of Puritan Piety', *TB* 41 (1990), pp. 186-208, discusses an aspect of Puritanism that has been unjustly neglected. Union with Christ is seen as the beginning and foundation of Christian life. Charles L. Cohen, 'Two Biblical Models of Conversion: An Example of Puritan Hermeneutics', *CH* 58 (1989), pp. 182-196, shows how Lydia and David were used by the Puritans to exemplify the process of conversion. He sheds light both on the different Puritan understandings of conversion and on the way in which they handled the Bible. R.M. Hawkes in 'The Logic of Assurance in English Puritan Theology', *WTJ* 52 (1990), pp. 247-261, offers a sympathetic exposition of the Puritans' teaching. He seeks to show how they avoided 'being trapped between the passive tendency of saving faith and the necessity for active obedience in the Christian life' (p. 260).

Michael Root in 'Schleiermacher as Innovator and Inheritor: God, Dependence, and Election', *SJT* 43 (1990), pp. 87-110, reminds us that Schleiermacher was not only a radical innovator, but also in some respects 'a surprisingly dutiful son of the Western theological tradition' (p. 87). He examines Schleiermacher's understanding of the relation between God and the world in particular, and shows how in some respects he is one of the most consistent exponents ever of 'the strict Augustinian-Calvinist doctrine of election'.

Harold H. Rowdon in 'The Brethren Concept of Sainthood', *VE* 20 (1990), pp. 91-102, expounds the distinctive views of J.N. Darby and shows how they have to a limited extent made their mark upon the teaching of the Open Brethren. His helpful conclusions point to the way in which even those who are most zealously opposed to tradition cannot avoid forming a new tradition of their own.

Richard A. Muller, 'Karl Barth and the Path of Theology into the Twentieth Century: Historical Observations', *WTJ* 51 (1989), pp. 25-50, offers a provocative and persuasive reinterpretation of Barth's significance. He sees considerably more continuity than is normal between theology pre- and post-1919/20. Barth's rebellion was 'the revolt of a group of third-generation Ritschlians against some of the premises and concerns of the Ritschlian program' (p. 40). Barth's relation to the last century is also the theme of Daniel B. Clendenin, 'A Conscious Perplexity: Barth's Interpretation of Schleiermacher', *WTJ* 52 (1990), pp. 281-301. He identifies four major problems that Barth has with Schleiermacher and concludes that his criticisms are justified. Barth's relation to the patristic tradition is considered by Hans Boersma, in 'Alexandrian or Antiochian? A Dilemma in Barth's Christology', *WTJ* 52 (1990), pp. 263-280. He argues against Waldrop's contention that Barth's Christology is Alexandrian.

Finally, Richard Bauckham in 'Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* Revisited', *SJT* 42 (1989), pp. 199-214, looks back at 'one of the truly great theological works of the last few decades'. He focuses attention in particular on the resurrection of Jesus, the heart of Moltmann's book, expounding it appreciatively.

## Other articles

- Marvin Anderson, 'John Calvin: Biblical Preacher (1539-1564)', *SJT* 42 (1989), pp. 167-181.
- Dennis Bielfeldt, 'Luther, Metaphor, and Theological Language', *MT* 6 (1990), pp. 121-135.
- Lyle D. Bierma, 'The Role of Covenant Theology in Early Reformed Orthodoxy', *SCJ* 21 (1990), pp. 453-462.
- Mark S. Burrows, 'Jean Gerson after Constance: "Via Media et Regia" as a Revision of the Ockhamist Covenant', *CH* 59 (1990), pp. 467-481.
- H. Chadwick, 'Ego Berengarius', *JTS* 40 (1989), pp. 414-445.
- Elizabeth A. Clark, 'New Perspectives on the Origenist Controversy: Human Embodiment and Ascetic Strategies', *CH* 59 (1990), pp. 145-162.
- Graham Cole, 'Sola Scriptura: Some Historical and Contemporary Perspectives', *Ch* 104 (1990), pp. 20-34.
- Agnes Cunningham, 'From Strangers to Citizens: Eschatology in the Patristic Era', *ExA* 6 (1990), pp. 73-85.
- Trevor Hart, 'Humankind in Christ and Christ in Humankind: Salvation as Participation in our Substitute in the Theology of John Calvin', *SJT* 42 (1989), pp. 67-84.
- Michael J. Hollerich, 'Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First "Court Theologian"', *CH* 59 (1990), pp. 309-325.
- Martin I. Klauber, 'Reason, Revelation, and Cartesianism: Louis Tronchin and Enlightened Orthodoxy in Late Seventeenth-Century Geneva', *CH* 59 (1990), pp. 326-339.
- Peter J. Leithart, 'That Eminent Pagan: Calvin's Use of Cicero in *Institutes* 1.1-5', *WTJ* 52 (1990), pp. 1-12.
- Robert Letham, 'Amandus Polanus: A Neglected Theologian?', *SCJ* 21 (1990), pp. 463-476.
- H.D. McDonald, 'Process Christology', *VE* 20 (1990), pp. 43-55.
- Peter Matheson, 'Thomas Muntzer's Marginal Comments on Tertullian', *JTS* 41 (1990), pp. 76-90.
- Randall E. Otto, 'The Solidarity of Mankind in Jonathan Edwards' Doctrine of Original Sin', *EQ* 62 (1990), pp. 205-221.
- Alan Spence, 'John Owen and Trinitarian Agency', *SJT* 43 (1990), pp. 157-173.
- Stephen Strehle, 'The Extent of the Atonement and the Synod of Dort', *WTJ* 51 (1989), pp. 1-23.
- R.E.H. Uprichard, 'The Eldership in Martin Bucer and John Calvin', *EQ* 61 (1989), pp. 21-37.
- John Wenham, 'Fifty Years of Evangelical Biblical Research: Retrospect and Prospect', *Ch* 103 (1989), pp. 209-218.

# Keith Ward: Taking leave of God incarnate – a review article

Robert R. Cook

A review article of *A Vision to Pursue*, SCM, 1991, 226 pp., £9.95.

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The publication of Keith Ward's latest book coincides with his commencement as Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford. It seems timely, therefore, to examine this book in the light of his work over the past ten years or so in order to discover what sort of theologian holds this prestigious and influential chair. What we find, in fact, is that *A Vision to Pursue* marks a radical departure from his earlier writings.

Throughout the 1980s Ward gained the reputation of being a bold and articulate defender of the faith. In *Holding Fast to God* (1982), for example, he sought to refute point by point the sceptical arguments of Don Cupitt as presented in *Taking Leave of God*. Significantly, Ward's book is praised in the foreword by the evangelical statesman, Sir Norman Anderson. Although he would never call himself an evangelical, Ward was a 'mere Christian' in the Lewisian sense of adhering to the creeds without feeling the need to demythologize them in a liberal direction. In fact he identified himself with the C.S. Lewis Centre, contributing a chapter on miracle to the book *Different Gospels* (1988) sponsored by that group. All through the decade we found Ward popping up on our TV screens or appearing in print, supporting the idea of a loving God who draws us into an eternal relationship with himself, or the historicity of the virgin birth, or the resurrection of Jesus. He was there too in *Thought For the Day*, and many of us were profoundly helped by his radio series *The Turn of the Tide* which demonstrated that experts in several different disciplines were again taking the Christian worldview seriously. The *Church Times*'s appellation of Ward as 'Champion of the Faith' on the publication of his *The living God* (1984) seemed eminently justified. But now comes the sudden shock of *A Vision to Pursue* in which he expresses profound doubts about the trustworthiness of Scripture, apparent agnosticism about the virgin birth and Christ's bodily resurrection, and disbelief regarding the doctrine of incarnation. What can have happened here?

To attempt to answer this question it might be helpful first to note areas where Ward has always distanced himself from positions held by most evangelicals. He has consistently rejected the doctrine of scriptural infallibility, preferring to view the Bible as the product of the interaction between human speculation and divine prompting. Consequently he sees the Bible as presenting a chequered picture of base human teaching (e.g. the idea that God might order genocide) and divine wisdom.

Inspiration is the guidance of God in raising the minds of those involved in this process to deeper insights and more creative adaptations, so that a whole work is completed which will be able to form a sort of mould or matrix for

shaping the developing life of the tradition which will be built upon it (1984; p. 92).

Nevertheless, in spite of his theoretical reservations, Ward has tended in practice to approach Scripture with trust, attempting to defend what he finds there. For example, he marshals Professors Morna Hooker and Graham Stanton in support of his positive but mediating position on the historicity of the gospels: 'we neither have to take as the literal truth every word ascribed to Jesus, nor reject all of them as legendary, but . . . we can get a clear, if impressionist picture of Jesus' (*The Turn of the Tide* 1986; p. 101).

Concerning the Trinity he has always been a modalist, rejecting the view that God has three centres of consciousness which he mockingly described as 'an everlasting committee meeting – a man, a boy and a mysterious bird, locked for ever in mutual flattery' (1986; p. 127).

Further, the notion of substitutionary atonement, which he blames on Anselm, has always been morally repugnant to him: 'we have the idea of sin requiring retributive punishment, of a bloody death being able to pay the required price, and of the innocent being able to suffer in place of the guilty – a fundamental perversion of justice if ever there was one' (1984; p. 115).

There have also been developments in his thinking throughout the decade. For example he has moved from a position of hell as 'annihilation or total exclusion from the community' (*Rational Theology and the Creativity of God* (1982), p. 202), to what seems to be a tentative espousal of universalism implicit in *Divine Action* (1990). More significantly for this article, he has shifted in his Christology but not this time in a liberal direction. While his earlier works had a worryingly adoptionist ring (1984; ch. 9) which was in line with his modalistic trinitarianism, by 1990 he was ready to defend a robust incarnational Christology, for although Jesus 'shares our nature . . . he is not, and could never be, a distinct and separated soul' (1990; p. 219). In other words, he contended that the subject or soul of Christ is divine and not human; the one who has a human nature is none other than God himself. At this time, a high Christology also pervaded Ward's approach to the question of salvation in other religions. While he believed there must be a genuine offer of salvation for all humanity, he insisted that the offer comes through Jesus who is 'God's definitive self-disclosure' (1990; p. 196), which is in line with what he had expressed previously: 'After death, all will come to know by whom they have been saved; and they will only be saved as and when they come to know [Jesus] as Lord and Saviour' (*Holding Fast* 1982; p. 165).

But now only one year after *Divine Action* we read that Jesus cannot be 'a fleshly envelope of the divine mind' (1991; p. 216) for he is merely 'a human being in and through whom God acts' (p. viii). And as for the doctrine of his ascension and glorification, 'That the fifteen-

billion-light-year-large . . . cosmos should be thought to be fulfilled in one human youth, sitting on a throne and surrounded by a chorus of doleful white-robed patriarchs, is just too childish to contemplate seriously' (p. 84). This watered-down Christology enables Ward to be completely egalitarian towards other faiths, for 'Once one begins to speak of incarnation as God acting in and through Jesus, it is not long before one might see God acting in and through *Torah*, *Sharia*, and *Guru Nanak* as well' (pp. 123-124). Within a year Ward has moved from a trusting approach to scriptural revelation to a radically sceptical one (e.g. the gospels 'are best seen as the first written expressions of a form of understanding and response to God which originated in the historically irrecoverable life of Jesus', p. 34), from a truly incarnational Christology to a militantly adoptionist one, and from an inclusivist view of other religions to a radically pluralist one. Again we ask: how can this be? What can have happened here?

Ward does not leave us guessing. Although he is convinced that the concept of incarnation can be defended conceptually, as indeed he attempted to do in *Divine Action*, he now sees no reason to suppose that it ever happened in history since not only is the historical Jesus irrecoverable through the layers of tradition, but also the gospel records portray a fallible man who made mistakes, and error is incompatible with deity. The alleged mistake that Ward capitalizes on is Jesus' prediction found in Matthew 24:34 that 'this generation will not pass away till all these things [eschatological events leading up to the Second Coming] take place' (1991; p. 17). Later in the book he adds the mistake Jesus makes in attributing some illnesses to demon possession (p. 118). Over the page he reapplies his argument to the Bible itself: we cannot accept the teachings of a book which insists on such unacceptable notions as complete divine foreknowledge (p. 120). (This point is an interesting reversal of his earlier position which still rejected absolute foreknowledge (on philosophical grounds) but was at pains to demonstrate scriptural support for his position: 1982; p. 131.)

Once the incarnation has been dispensed with, the main stumbling block for inter-faith dialogue has been eradicated and Ward is very sensitive of the damage that has resulted from animosity between religions. He has also become more and more impressed by the profound similarity between aspects of teaching within the various faiths as was explored in his *Images of Eternity* (1987) which compared the concepts of God in five different religious traditions. Perhaps his 1989 lecture tour in India deepened this conviction. Although there are aspects of Christianity which still appeal to him, such as its stress on God's righteousness and divine involvement in history, Ward seems to be experiencing the magnetism of Eastern thought. For example, his description of the troubled world as 'bound by desire and despair' (p. 33) seems more informed by the

Buddhist notion of *dukkha* than by Christian theology, and his description of religion as 'a complex of stories, beliefs, practices and ideals which encourage a turning-away from selfishness by relating individuals to a supreme objective value which is their ultimate goal' (p. 188) significantly omits any reference to forgiveness or grace or personal relationship. In contrast, the warmth of devotion once expressed towards the person of Jesus (e.g. *The Battle for the Soul* 1985; p. 22) is signally lacking in his latest work where Christianity is reduced to the conviction that 'God uses a saintly and inspired man to make him an image, an expression of divine love, and to make the mythologized narrative of his life a vehicle of that love to the world' (p. 93). Such doctrinal formulations might just keep some troubled intellectuals within Christendom but it certainly would not make any converts!

Before turning to specific comments, the basic thesis of *A Vision to Pursue* will be described briefly. Ward argues that we are on the brink of the Third Stage of religious thought and practice. The First Stage of localized tribal religions gave way to the Second Stage of the great scriptural traditions whose texts claimed final and universal truth. This view is now untenable, he claims, in the light of critical method and scientific discovery, but out of the crisis will emerge the Third Stage of convergent spirituality whereby each tradition can reach beyond its boundaries to fruitful dialogue and mutual discovery of emergent truth. In true post-modernist spirit, Ward speaks of the Scripture giving us 'not a final clear revelation of truth, but a mysterious signpost towards an unfolding understanding which is still in progress' (p. 153).

Although the book throws up many contentious issues worthy of discussion, this review article will confine itself to raising some points about Ward's latest Christological position.

1. He gives no reason why his perspective on the basic historicity of the gospels changed from trust to serious doubt between 1990 and 1991. Certainly there were no breakthroughs in New Testament scholarship during that year which should result in radical reappraisal! It is surely still perfectly sensible to maintain that although we may not have the actual words of Jesus, we nevertheless can hear the authentic voice; although we lack an objective photographic picture of him, we can legitimately believe that we possess an insightful and recognizable artistic portrait. And if Ward is so agnostic about the life and teaching of Christ, how is he so sure, for instance, that Jesus believed in demon possession?
2. On Ward's assumptions about the fallibility of Scripture, surely it would be legitimate to argue that Jesus made no mistake but the evangelists misunderstood and

misrepresented his eschatological teaching? Indeed Ward seems to take this line when he writes, 'they fitted Jesus into their messianic expectations of immanent apocalypse. They then read this expectation back into the record of Jesus' life' (p. 43). Why then does he still insist that Jesus was mistaken?

3. It is still tenable to hold one of the many alternative explanations of Jesus' words in Matthew 24:34, perhaps the most promising of which is the contention that the verse refers to the events leading up to the fall of Jerusalem while verse 36 relates to the Second Coming itself (see the paper, 'This Generation will not Pass . . .' by D. Wenham in *Christ the Lord*, ed. H. Rowdon, IVP 1982; pp. 127-150).
4. How can Ward be so sure that Jesus was wrong about demons? In an earlier work he seemed to have no problem in believing in creatures inhabiting other universes known perhaps as angels and archangels (*Rational Theology* 1982; p. 167) and in the present book he is convinced that consciousness is not confined to our physical central nervous systems (1991; p. 143). What is incoherent, then, in postulating fallen spirit beings? Of course to do so would be to complicate his thesis that the world's religions are all feeling towards God because the idea of spiritual deception would have to be introduced.
5. Is it true that Jesus could not be divine if he made a mistake? It is clear that incarnation entailed some modification, for example God is spirit yet became embodied, and God is omnipresent yet became localized in space. Surely theoretically it could also have meant limitation and fallibility of knowledge. Identity can survive all kinds of changes in knowledge and ability, as the biography of each one of us demonstrates as we develop from the limitations of childhood to the abilities and understanding of maturity and then on perhaps to senility, yet we remain the same person. The Hindu religion, which Ward is sympathetic to, is not embarrassed by the idea of God fragmenting into diverse selves all of whom are divine yet display ignorance and are prone to mistakes. I am not convinced that a mistaken individual would be *ipso facto* barred from incarnational claims, but he would of course be disqualified as a totally trustworthy teacher which is a totally distinct, but very important, issue.
6. Ward has a major problem with the worship of Jesus which is repeatedly reported in Scripture (e.g. Mt. 14:33; Lk. 24:52; Jn. 9:38) and has remained fundamental to Christian piety throughout the history of the church. The best he can do is to offer Jesus as an ikon of God whom we worship *through* the man Jesus (p. 106). But scriptural testimony is

unanimous that it was *he* that was worshipped and not another through him.

7. Ward is weak on the necessity of the cross and its function. On the one hand he follows the scriptural emphasis on its importance and yet on the other he stresses that as omniscient, God suffers everywhere with everyone so that there is nothing qualitatively different about vicariously experiencing the suffering of Jesus on the cross. Yet it is not good enough so to dismiss the clear biblical teaching on the cruciality of Christ's sacrifice. And if substitutionary atonement presents an ethical problem, so surely does the calling of a human to the fate of agonizing death in order that he may become a type of God's universal suffering in creation. Ward counters that Jesus' call was to lead a saintly life and martyrdom simply followed as it does for many godly Christians, but the gospels seem to present a man who was uniquely born in order to die; his death was an integral part of his mission.

*A Vision to Pursue* contains many valuable insights although the best have been expressed already in other books by Ward (e.g. the relationship between science and religion). But it is evident that it also contains disturbing new elements. Ward has defected from orthodoxy in some fundamental ways. In *Holding Fast to God*, he confessed that if the gospel records of Jesus' life are significantly flawed,

then the whole tradition which has shaped our spiritual state is mistaken in important ways. If our lives are transformed, it will not be by the power of Jesus. We will not be able to rely on his promises for salvation, but will have to look elsewhere. We will, in fact, have turned into something else, members of some new religion of our own, perhaps. We will not be Christians (p. 77).

As the new divinity professor in one of our premier universities, Keith Ward surely finds himself now in this lonely position. Whether he goes on calling himself a Christian is up to him but for those of us who have benefited so much from his first-rate philosophical and apologetic work in defence of the faith, it is a tragic moment. It seems, Professor Ward, that we must sadly take our leave.

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- Rational Theology and the Creativity of God*, Blackwell, 1982.  
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# BOOK



# REVIEWS

**Daniel (WBC 30)**  
**J.E. Goldingay**  
Dallas: Word, 1989, liii + 351pp.,  
\$24.99.

J.E. Goldingay's commentary on the book rightfully takes its place with the best of scholarly treatments of Daniel. Here is a commentary that reflects thorough scholarship, careful handling of the data of the text, independence of judgment, and impressive awareness of the mass of secondary literature (in a variety of languages) which exists for Daniel research.

Following the general format of the Word Biblical Commentary series (WBC), the main body of Goldingay's commentary is organized around the following divisions for each section dealt with (usually a chapter of Daniel, though chapters 10-12 are dealt with as a single unit): (1) bibliography; (2) translation; (3) notes; (4) form/structure/setting; (5) comment; and (6) explanation. For the most part, this arrangement works fairly well. However, the distinction between 'comment' and 'explanation' is not always clear, and there is often a certain amount of overlap between the two. Whether a distinction here is really advantageous for the reader is debatable. For the purposes of this review I will organize my comments around these same divisions, although I will treat the final two together under the rubric 'interpretation'.

1. *Bibliography.* The collection of bibliographical data which Goldingay presents in this commentary is simply invaluable for anyone doing research on the book of Daniel. Here the extent of his preparation is impressive, and it is no exaggeration to say that the bibliographies alone for a serious student are worth the price of the book. In addition to introductory bibliographies dealing with the interpretation of Daniel (4+ pages), commentaries and other works on Daniel (c. 4 pages), and works cited by shortened references in the main part of the commentary (8+ pages), there are separate bibliographies for each of the sections in the commentary. The bibliography on Daniel 7 alone, for example, has more than 200 items. Granted, much of it deals with the 'Son of Man' literature in a context broader than Daniel studies *per se*, but as a study guide it is exceedingly helpful.

2. *Translation.* Goldingay presents in the commentary his own translation of the Hebrew or Aramaic (2:4b-7:28) text of Daniel. For the

most part the translations strike me as being accurate, fresh, and very readable. Particularly bold is his translation of 3:17: 'If our God, whom we honour, exists...' (contra RSV, 'If it be so...'). However, the theological implications of this translation are nicely dealt with on p. 71 (but for a somewhat different approach, see P.W. Coxon, 'Daniel iii 17: A Linguistic and Theological Problem', *VT* 26 (1976), pp. 400-409).

3. *Notes.* A collection of notes follows the translation of each section of Daniel. It is here that one looks for relevant philological and textual data supporting decisions made in the translation. Goldingay's control of the materials here is outstanding. There are insightful grammatical discussions, careful sifting of textual variants, summaries of lexical research, etc. I particularly appreciated his thorough familiarity with the evidence of the ancient versions of the book of Daniel, including not only the Greek and the Latin, but also the Syriac. Such interest (to say nothing of competence!) is increasingly rare among biblical commentators nowadays.

4. *Form/structure/setting.* Here one finds an evaluation of Danielic material in light of contemporary OT scholarship. The discussion of structure and setting generally provides helpful insight into these matters for each section of the commentary. From a form-critical point of view, Goldingay understands Daniel 1-6 as embodying elements of midrash, court-tale, legend, and aretology. This leads him to conclude that some of the material may be less than factual (see, e.g., pp. 6-8, 68, 75, 124, 126, 127). This for Goldingay is a matter of genre, and requires neither negative criticism against nor defence of the book of Daniel. He says, 'To imply that they [the stories] are at fault if they contain unhistorical features is to judge them on alien criteria; to defend them by seeking to establish that at such points they are factual after all is to collude with such a false starting point' (p. 321). But this may too easily dismiss the latent theological problems which the presence of inaccuracies in writings claiming divine origin poses for some interpreters.

So far as the visions of chapters 7-12 are concerned, Goldingay argues that we are dealing here with pseudonymous literature which is 'quasi-prophecy' (see e.g. pp. 267, 289, 304, 312, 315, 316-317, 321, 322, 332), or 'quasi-prediction' (see e.g. pp. 282, 283, 285, 293), or sometimes 'situational midrash' (see e.g. pp. 284-285). In an extended and creative paraphrase of the biblical text, Goldingay even has the scriptural writer himself admonish us to the effect that 'it would be inappropriate to be literalistic in interpreting my visions, as if my message was other than a quasi-prophecy' (p. 315, italics his). This perspective, of course, assumes a second- (rather than sixth- or fifth-) century date for the book. While a late date for the book is a consensus view of modern OT scholarship, it should be noted that a case can be made for an earlier date (see e.g. R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 1110-1127, or J.G. Baldwin, *Daniel*, pp. 35-46).

5. *Interpretation.* In assuming a second-century date for the book, Goldingay understands the original audience to be mainly the suffering Jewish community of the Maccabean period. Under the guise of prophecy, the author of the book seeks to provide encouragement for those enduring the outrages of persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. His purpose is not to predict the future; in fact, 'the End of which he spoke did not come' (p. 334), at least not in the sense he spoke of it.

Only selected specifics of Goldingay's conclusions may be mentioned here in an attempt to represent briefly some of the more

interesting or important of his conclusions. (1) According to the author, dates and numerical figures in the book of Daniel are not necessarily precise (see e.g. pp. 14-15, 45, 164, 179, 213, 239, 295). Goldingay believes that it is mistaken to think that biblical inspiration requires absolute accuracy in such matters (cf. p. xxxix). Those who subscribe to biblical inerrancy will no doubt take issue with ideas such as these. (2) Daniel's seventy sevens are 'not chronology but chronography' (p. 257; cf. pp. 258, 266). According to Goldingay, we therefore should not expect an exact chronological outworking of the 'weeks'. This conclusion goes counter to the common conservative view that this prophecy prefigures the coming of Jesus the Messiah. (3) The author of the book of Daniel engages at times in intentional ambiguity. We may err therefore in trying to know too precisely what he meant. Concerning the identity of the second and third kingdoms of Daniel 7, for example, Goldingay says that 'Daniel is not really interested in the second and third kingdoms, and perhaps had no opinion regarding their identity' (p. 176; cf. p. 178). This view, at least to the degree that he avers, is rather unlikely. (4) The identity of the fourth empire of chapters 2 and 7 of Daniel is, for Goldingay, Greece, not Rome, though he concedes that 'it is possible to make out a plausible case for identifying Rome as the fourth animal' (p. 187). The identification of Rome as the fourth empire is in fact the view advocated by most conservative evangelicals. (5) Although Daniel's fourth animal is nondescript in the text, Goldingay makes a case for understanding it to be the elephant (see e.g. pp. 163, 186). This specificity is rather odd, given the principle of ambiguity maintained elsewhere in the commentary. (6) 11:36-39 refers to Antiochus, not Antichrist (nor Antiochus V nor Pompey and his associates) (p. 305). Those who date the book early and see genuine prediction involved usually take this section to have future significance (= Antichrist), concluding that there is a temporal gap (most probably) between verses 35 and 36. Goldingay rejects such a view. He does, however, see some sort of shift at verse 40, which he thinks 'marks the transition from quasi-prediction based on historical facts to actual prediction based on Scripture and on the pattern of earlier events; this continues into 12:1-3' (p. 305). (7) In dealing with the 'much disputed' resurrection passage in 12:2, the author says 'we must avoid treating it as a piece of theological "teaching": it is a vision or a flight of the imagination, not a "fully developed" belief in resurrection... his imaginative portrayal should not necessarily be taken as an attempt at literal prediction' (pp. 306-307). However, this does not seem to me to do justice to the intent of these verses. (8) When Goldingay presents the author of Daniel as reflecting on his own visions (p. 219 *et al.*), his paraphrase is interesting, but various anachronisms appear, such as references to Jesus and NT Scripture (see e.g. pp. 222, 314, 318).

The production of the book is generally good, although for some reason the first quarter of the commentary has not received the same proof-reading care as the remainder of the book. In the first 75 pages there are numerous typos, affecting both English and Greek words (see especially p. 5).

Minor complaints aside, this is a helpful commentary from which I have learned much. As part of the WBC, its theological stance is broadly evangelical. It is not, however, representative of conservative evangelical scholarship in adopting a second-century date for the book, seeing it as a pseudonymous composition, and taking its prophetic content

to be only quasi-prediction. With regard to the major interpretive issues for the book of Daniel, this commentary is more representative of a broader consensus of OT scholarship.

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### Introducing the Old Testament (Oxford Bible Series)

**R.J. Coggins**

Oxford: OUP, 1990, 165 pp.,  
hb £25.00, pb £8.95.

It was a pleasure to read this book. Instead of a traditional 'Introduction', which systematically works through every book of the OT and discusses questions of date, authorship, composition, etc., this is a fresh and readable account of how modern scholars have sought to understand and interpret the OT.

After briefly noting the issues raised by the name 'Old Testament' (a specifically Christian term for Jewish material), Coggins discusses textual criticism, historical criticism, the contribution of archaeology, approaches from the perspectives of sociology, anthropology, liberation theology, feminism, literary criticism and, finally, Israelite religion and OT theology. Coggins is excellent at helping us see why scholars approach the text in the way they do, and is himself always fair-minded in his treatment of different options. He is acutely aware of the limitations of what we really know, and generally avoids the all-too-common habit of presenting hypotheses as though they were facts or making unexamined and questionable value judgments. His discussion of the OT text is always fresh, as in, for example, his suggestions about the relationship of the ending of Amos to the book of Obadiah that follows in the Hebrew 'Book of the Twelve' (i.e. Minor Prophets).

I have only two small regrets. First, that Coggins has not said more about the phenomenon of resurgent Jewish biblical scholarship, and the issues this poses for Christian OT scholarship. For example, much of the most perceptive recent literary criticism (e.g. Alter, Sternberg) is from Jewish scholars, and surely relates to the long Jewish tradition of close and imaginative readings of biblical stories. I suspect that Jewish scholars will increasingly create an agenda subtly but deeply different from that of traditional Christian scholarship. Secondly, Coggins is perhaps thinnest in his treatment of OT theology, even though he recognizes that religious concerns still motivate most study of the OT. If one takes such religious concerns with full seriousness, the issues to do with OT theology should surely be at the heart of an introduction to the OT, even in an academic context. Still, one book cannot do everything, and what Coggins has given us is better than most.

**R.W.L. Moberly, Durham.**

### The Gospels and Jesus (The Oxford Bible Series)

**Graham N. Stanton**

Oxford: OUP, 1989, 296 pp., £8.95.

The Oxford Bible Series is aimed at a general readership at an introductory level, but no

punches are pulled in terms of the conclusions reached. In *The Gospels and Jesus* Stanton appears to commit himself fully to classical historical-critical methodology and to let the chips fall where they may. That said, the chips often fall into a pattern that an evangelical will find more or less congenial.

The book loosely fits into a 'search for the historical Jesus' mentality. The goal is not only to introduce the gospel and themes in modern gospel study, but also to say what the author believes a historian can say about Jesus, the subject of the gospels. Thus, the volume is divided in two: part one considers the nature of the evidence and part two considers the content of this evidence.

After an introductory chapter about the nature of the venture, there follows a chapter about the genre of the gospel, and the possible purposes of the gospels' authors. After this, each of the canonical gospels is given a chapter of its own. Here Stanton relies mainly on redaction-critical methods to highlight the particular emphases of the individual gospels. Secondly, these chapters are used to introduce, or explain more fully, critical theories and methods alluded to in the first two chapters. A deliberately subordinate and tertiary purpose is to discuss the authorship, provenance and dates of the documents. The first half of the book closes with a chapter asking the question 'Why Four Gospels?', introducing the reader to such evidence as fragmentary, gnostic and medieval 'gospels'.

The second half of the book takes the discussion on to consider the Jesus behind the records. This half is introduced with two chapters assessing the evidence and bringing the reader to Stanton's 'working hypothesis' about individual traditions in the gospels. This hypothesis is worth quoting in full:

Once we have taken account of four factors, we may accept that the traditions of the actions and teachings of Jesus preserved in the synoptic gospels are authentic. These are the four important provisos: (i) the evangelists have introduced modifications to the traditions; (ii) they are largely responsible for their present contexts; (iii) some traditions can be shown to stem from the post-Easter period rather than the life-time of Jesus; (iv) since certainty always eludes us, we have to concede that some traditions are more probably authentic than others. (p. 163)

If such a stance seems too pessimistic for most evangelicals, it should be appreciated that neither will this hypothesis receive warm acceptance in the other camp. For in such a climate it appears too optimistic: 'a tradition is authentic unless . . .', as opposed to the more usual working hypothesis of the critic: a tradition can only be authentic if it meets the criteria.

The second half of the book continues by examining several important themes in the gospels: there are chapters titled John the Baptist, Prophet and Teacher, The Kingdom of God, Parables and Miracles, Messiah/Son of God/Son of Man, Conflict, and The Last Days. The book is rounded off by a summary/conclusion chapter 'Who was Jesus of Nazareth?' Here Stanton succinctly presents both his aim and his conclusions. A representative sample:

Believer and non-believer will have to agree to part company on the answer to the question 'Who is Jesus of Nazareth for us today?' In study of the story of Jesus, however, believer and non-believer can join hands. . . . The key to the story is its ending. . . . [Jesus] went to Jerusalem in order to confront the religio-political establishment with his claim that the kingdom of God was at hand. . . . Jesus believed that he had been sent by God as a prophet to declare authoritatively the will of God for his people: acceptance or rejection of him and of his message was equivalent to acceptance or rejection of God. (pp. 271-274)

We must note, however, that believer and non-believer cannot join hands on the issue of what the real ending, 'the key to the story', was. Stanton writes in an earlier chapter, ' . . . resurrection faith rests on the experiences of the disciples, on the reality of which the historian can say little' (p. 270).

Stanton's volume is a success. He is consistent with his method, the book treats its readers as intelligent adults but without getting too technical, and it covers a considerable amount of ground in a readable, even interesting, way. It is a book that I would recommend as a neutral text in a university course on the gospels. As I've indicated above, however, neither conservatives nor liberals will find it completely satisfying.

### The Prayers of David (Psalms 51-72)

**Michael Goulder**

Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990,  
266 pp., £35.00.

Goulder, the Reader in Biblical Studies at the University of Birmingham, has produced a second volume in his series of studies of the text of the Psalter. The present deals with the *Epilote* of David, this being found as a rubric after Psalm 72 (v. 20). Goulder accepts the interpretation which sees this title as referring only to Psalms 51-72. Although Psalm 72 carries a superscription with respect to Solomon, he sees this as delineating the end of David's reign as king, and so germane to the life of David. Goulder is known for his bold approach to scriptural issues, and this book proves to be no exception. He himself states that it will probably prove 'scandalous' (p. 9).

So what is his thesis? Namely this, that the 'Prayers of David' were indeed written for David, in his own lifetime, and that they cover, serially, the last years of his life, from the death of Uriah (Ps. 51) to the coronation of Solomon (Ps. 72). He insists that this thesis is not a return to the pre-modern days of Psalms study, but rather the result of careful, unbiased examination of the text. What is more, he makes a point of stressing that the various notes supplied as part of the text of the Psalter (technical, topographical, musical) are 'integral and indispensable' to a proper understanding of the text.

Goulder maintains that within the so-called succession narrative there is a particular 'document' which he calls the 'Passion of David', being an account of his trials in the last years of his life. This story became the 'myth' which was recited by later kings at Israel's autumnal festival, specifically at the time of penitence for the sins of the past year (p. 47). The psalms in question he relates to liturgical procession around the named sites of the narrative. Goulder's presentation certainly glitens, but is it gold?

**W. Riggans, Ware, England.**

### Luke 1-9:20

**John Nolland**

Dallas, Texas: Word, 1989, 454 pp.,  
\$24.99.

The motivation for this work is found not in what information is lacking in its comprehen-



sive predecessors (Schürmann, Marshall, and Fitzmyer), but in a desire to address a different audience: 'the fledgling student, the working minister, and colleagues in the guild of professional scholars and teachers as well'. For this crowd, Dr Nolland has produced a very usable commentary, and for this work we owe him a debt of gratitude.

On the positive side, several points favour this book.

First, this commentary demonstrates a good mix of research in old and new literature. The names Cadbury, Foakes-Jackson, Lake, Schlatter, Godet, and Loisy appear frequently in this work. At the same time, the author is well acquainted with recent works, some of which made it to press just too late to be included in the discussion. Similarly, Dr Nolland is well acquainted with German and French authors, and has kept abreast of theological developments in those two literary spheres. At the same time, he has confined his discussions primarily to English.

Second, one of the finer contributions of this commentary is the original translations that are given. They are, generally speaking, both technically accurate and at the same time demonstrate a smooth flow of language. The notes and comments that follow are based on the translations and illuminate them.

Third, elsewhere Dr Nolland has laboured to develop and defend the thesis that the typical first-century reader of Luke/Acts was a God-fearer, who was not Jewish by birth. This type of person, whose cultural background was usually Hellenistic, was attracted to Judaism, to the God of Israel, and to the worship of the synagogue. God-fearers of this variety had taken on the religious and ethical values of their Jewish mentors, but had not yet taken the final step of circumcision. Nolland is quite possibly correct in asserting that Luke himself fitted this description, but even if the writer of the third gospel was more heavily affected by Jewish influences than contemporary interpreters have allowed, how many other first-century people fell into this category? A very small minority is the typical answer to be expected from the academic community. If, however, Nolland's assumption is true, Luke would not have addressed his gospel to such a minority, and yet have enjoyed such wide (universal) acceptance as a major gospel, unless this minority was a majority. After all, if Luke writes for a wider audience than Theophilus alone, then we would expect him to deal not only with issues such as entry into the faith, but also with the comprehensive needs of his fellow believers. Dr Nolland may be on to something here.

Fourth, the author has a knack for introducing controversial issues objectively without taking sides. The synoptic problem is an example of this. In the introduction, mention is made of the hypothetical Q document and the original use of it by Matthew or Luke. The author then invites his readers to 'make their own assessments of judgments of this kind which appear from time to time in this commentary'. Oddly enough, he also introduces the Griesbach hypothesis, not by mentioning Griesbach by name, but rather W.R. Farmer. He then offers two brief reasons why this hypothesis has not persuaded his thinking. First, the way in which Mark must have edited Matthew in order for Griesbach to be true is strange indeed. Second, the assumption of Markan priority has produced scholarly work that has cumulated an increasingly credible analysis of the Matthean and, especially, of the Lukan text'. On the one hand, his rather indirect support for Markan priority and possibly a Q document might appear to be a soft-pedal that

lacks the courage to take a bold stand. On the other hand, however, this tact can also be seen as the wisdom of a scholar who has come to a decision on an issue and puts forward that decision as a working hypothesis rather than rehearse a plethora of details that have, over the course of decades, produced no universally acceptable solution. This work is a commentary on Luke, not a treatise on the synoptic problem. Some assumptions must be made at the outset, or else the work will never be completed.

Fifth, Dr Nolland takes a sober view of introductory issues. Although he confesses that the case for Lukan authorship is not clear-cut, he affirms it on the grounds that no decisive arguments can be made against it. He also takes the view that Luke was a companion of Paul and not his disciple, which accounts for their differences in theology. The 'We' sections of Acts are 'best explained as indicating the personal presence of the author'. And Luke wrote the gospel before Acts, but had the writing of Acts, and the Gentile mission, in mind when he wrote the gospel, as is implied at Luke 2:32.

Nolland's logic for dating the gospel depends on the importance of the Jewish setting for Luke/Acts. Since Nolland places a heavy emphasis on the significance of the Jewish setting for Luke/Acts, an early date follows. He asserts that Luke must be later than Mark, yet earlier than the gathering of Paul's works into a single corpus and dissemination in the church. He sees no large passage of time between the dates of composition of Luke and Acts. The end of Acts he dates by chronology at about AD 62, therefore Luke can be no earlier than AD 62. Loyalty to the temple and Luke's degree of focus on that structure counts for a date not much later than its destruction. Therefore, he opts for a date in the late 60s to late 70s, but it is '... not possible to be rigid ...'.

On the negative side of this assessment, several points can be mentioned.

To begin with, the format for this series is unacceptable for a work of this magnitude. Commentaries in the series are broken down into the following sections: Notes, which are concerned with textual witness; Bibliography and Form/Structure/Setting, which deal with modern scholarship; and Comment and Explanation, which are concerned with the exposition of the passage's meaning and relevance to the ongoing biblical revelation.

The series tries to strike a middle ground between pastoral literature and academic material. In an attempt to please everybody, one often runs the risk of pleasing nobody. This format might work with the smaller books of the NT like Philippians, where issues can be addressed adequately in 450 pages (900 for the two volumes). With Luke, however, one must consider the relationship to the other synoptic gospels. Also, Luke has more in common with John than the other synoptics, so John must also be considered at the appropriate moments. Further, Luke was written in conjunction with Acts, therefore Luke/Acts requires additional thinking for continuity of thought. Additionally, ever since 1966, when van Unnik had the good fortune of coining the phrase 'Luke/Acts: A Storm Center in Contemporary Scholarship' (and incidentally did not do much with the third gospel after that), much ink has been spilled over Luke's gospel, not to mention the last century. How can one address a full spectrum of issues within such a limited format? The blame for this inadequacy, however, should not be handed to Dr Nolland. The responsibility belongs to the series' editors.

John Nolland is certainly acquainted with the major issues in Lukan study. That is obvious from reading his bibliographies. But,

as was mentioned above, he seldom takes sides, which can be seen as a mark of wisdom when dealing with unresolvable controversies such as the synoptic problem. Perhaps this is necessary when one wishes to remain objective. It would, however, be comforting to see more in-depth interaction with the current arguments. For example, during the discussion of the Nazareth pericope at Luke 4:16-30, the author has ample opportunity to discuss liberation theology, structural analysis, lectionary hypotheses, and Luke's supposed anti-Semitism, and the significance of these issues. He chooses rather either to remain silent on these issues or to mention them only superficially.

So also, in dealing with the history-versus-biography genre issue, Dr Nolland gives the impression at some points that he is persuaded by one side, and at other points by the other. He does affirm that Luke is not a biographer only, but a theologian in his own right. This statement, however, does not settle the issue. The evangelists have been seen as theologians ever since the advent of redaction criticism.

The most glaring departure from scholarly consensus is Nolland's decision to subdivide Luke's gospel at 9:20. This decision, in my opinion, is a mistake. His reason for doing so is to highlight Peter's confession. All of 9:21-50 is then seen as transitional material, which is a very large transition indeed. It is difficult to believe that Luke had this division in mind when he organized his material. Although Peter's confession is an important moment for the synoptic writers, for Luke, Jesus' resolve to travel to Jerusalem at 9:51 has been anticipated since the mention of this 'exodus' during the transfiguration at 9:31, and will be held as an unresolved tension throughout the central section, until Jesus actually enters the temple at 9:45-48. Luke clues his readers that 9:51 is a monumental moment by the use of septuagintal language, which reminds the reader of holy history from the OT. The construction he employs is ἐρέετο (ἔει), with ἐν τῷ plus the infinitive followed by καὶ (αὐτός) and a verb in the indicative. This construction is used over 500 times in the LXX. For Luke, 9:51 must be seen as a pivotal point in history.

This small number of negative criticisms should not hold sway over the many positive features of this work. Dr John Nolland has demonstrated an admirable amount of industry in producing this volume and deserves our commendation for a job well done in producing a usable commentary on the third gospel. This commentary is destined to find a well-deserved place on the shelves of evangelical students, pastors, and teachers. We look forward enthusiastically to volume 2.

Mike Nola, Holden, Mass.

**Watchwords. Mark 13 in  
Markan Eschatology**  
(JSNT Supplement 26)  
Timothy J. Geddert  
Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989,  
315 pp., £25.00.

This is a well-written and attractively argued study of Mark's gospel which began life as a PhD thesis at Aberdeen University. Mark 13 has attracted the attention of many scholars in the past, but Geddert breaks new ground by the way he seeks to read the chapter in the whole context of Mark's gospel; his thesis is a good example of responsible redaction criticism.

His method is to see how various of the themes that are important in Mark 13 are used elsewhere in Mark's gospel, and to reflect on what this usage suggests for the interpretation of Mark 13. He begins by looking at 'signs' in Mark, arguing that the evangelist is quite negative towards signs; Mark 13 should not be seen as providing signs to the disciples. Geddert argues that Jesus does offer objective proofs of his authority in 2:1-3:6, but this gives way after 3:6 to secrecy on Jesus' part, a secrecy that goes on even after the resurrection and that the disciple (and the reader of Mark's gospel) is invited to penetrate. Geddert goes on to look at Mark's use of the verbs *blepein*, a word used by the evangelist to refer to the discernment that Jesus looks for, and *gregorein*, a word used to describe the faithful 'watching' of Jesus in his passion and the faithful watching of his followers in the last days (Geddert sees the links between Mark 13 and the Markan passion story as highly significant, the passion being the pattern for Christian discipleship). The author moves on to look at Mark's view of the temple: Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple because of the corruption of the temple authorities, who have robbed God, and its replacement with himself (Jesus) and his church. In his chapter on suffering in Mark, Geddert's major thesis is that Mark presents a 'passion paradigm' according to which the suffering faithful pass on the baton of faith to the next runners: John the Baptist to Jesus, Jesus to the disciples, the disciples to their successors (so Mk. 13). Geddert has a particularly interesting interpretation of 16:7: going to Galilee is not simply a geographical journey, but it is for the disciples picking up the baton from Jesus and starting the journey that Jesus travelled from Galilee to his Jerusalem passion. Geddert goes on to explain that 'Mark ... wrote much of his Gospel on two levels at once, narrating a sequence of historical events and at the same time and with the same words, instructing readers in discernment and discipleship'. In his view Mark 13 can in a real sense be seen as the ending of Mark's gospel, because, if the gospel is first read as a description of Jesus' life, we are then directed back (16:7) to read it again as a description of our life as disciples, this being directly described in chapter 13. In his last two chapters Geddert looks at Mark 13 itself, arguing that the destruction of the temple is to be seen as part of the secret working-out of God's kingdom-purpose in Jesus, and then turning to the most controversial question of all – the question of what Mark 13 teaches about the time of the end – and contending that Mark is deliberately ambiguous: Mark does not know if the end will be soon or not, and so he does not make it clear whether 'all these things' in 13:30 include the end or not. Here as elsewhere Geddert makes a virtue of scholarly disagreement, and maintains that Mark meant to be obscure, following Jesus' own secretive teaching method. Conservative scholars have often argued that Mark 13:30 is not a mistaken prophecy of a near end, but their arguments have sometimes seemed special pleading; Geddert argues his view in a persuasive and scholarly way.

The book is full of good observations – e.g. the observation that suffering for Mark is not a depressing thing, but a path to glory – and useful arguments – e.g. his refutation of the interpretation of 16:7 as a reference to the parousia. Geddert's major theses are attractive, e.g. his suggestion that Mark is doing two things at once: telling us about Jesus and about discipleship. I wondered on quite a number of occasions whether he (like most redaction critics) is over-subtle in his interpretations (e.g. is the widow of 12:41-44 partly a symbol of Jerusalem and its religious leaders, to be con-

trasted with the woman of 14:3-9? Is the faithful doorkeeper of 13:34 meant to remind us of Jesus at his passion? Is 16:8 meant to show that disciples can fail? etc.). I am sure that Mark was a theologian, but was he as consciously ingenious a literary artist as Geddert thinks? It is possible that some of the features of the story that are supposedly significant reflections of Mark's own particular theology may simply be the way the evangelist received the story from his sources or informants (e.g. Geddert's explanation of 13:33-37 is helpful, but it is perhaps rather subtle to see a pointer to Jesus in the doorkeeper, and it may be that a slightly more source-critical and slightly less redaction-critical explanation is in order here; also the point of the passage is surely to be awake for the unknown moment of the Lord's return). I also wondered if Geddert's welcome stress on the meaning of the text in the context of Mark's gospel led him to neglect the importance of the historical background to a passage like Mark 13:14: that verse needs to be read in the light of the devastating events of 167 BC – the setting-up of the 'desolating sacrilege' by Antiochus IV and the Maccabean rebellion – which were so important for the Jews of first-century Palestine living under a pagan emperor.

In brief, not a beginners' book, but a particularly stimulating and helpful work that deserves careful weighing by all serious students of Mark's gospel.

David Wenham, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

**Peter and the Beloved Disciple:  
Figures for a Community in  
Crisis (JSNTSS 32)**  
Kevin Quast  
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic  
Press, 1989, 221 pp., £25.00/  
\$43.50.

Adopting the consensus view that the fourth gospel was written against a background of mounting crisis owing to conflict between church and synagogue toward the end of the first century, and that the beloved disciple, though a real person, primarily functions in a symbolic fashion, Quast sets out to uncover the symbolic significance of both Peter and the beloved disciple in the Gospel of John. In chapter 2, Quast examines Peter's place in John 1-12. Peter shows up only twice, where he appears as one among the disciples of Jesus, yet sufficiently prominent that he can serve as their spokesman. His own faith is judged to be exemplary, in the sense that it exemplifies what the evangelist understands to be required in anyone who is to become a true disciple of Jesus. The chapter ends by warning that it would be premature to conclude that, even if this portrait of the evangelist's understanding of Peter is correct, it necessarily follows that it is also the community's view of Peter. It is just as likely, Quast thinks, that the evangelist is correcting a community impression.

That sets the stage for the ensuing chapters. Chapter 3 examines the interaction between Peter and the beloved disciple at the Lord's supper. Quast concludes that the presentation does not dispute 'the leadership/spokesman role that Peter assumes in the greater Christian tradition' (p. 70), since the beloved disciple follows Peter's lead and acts under his direction. If the beloved disciple represents the Johannine community, and Peter represents the 'Apostolic community' (which rather begs some questions!), there may be an

appeal to bring the two communities together on the basis of a proper relationship.

In chapter 4, Quast concludes that the narratives of Peter's denials (1) are not dependent on the synoptic accounts, and (2) do not pit Peter and the beloved disciple against each other. Rather, each has his own symbolic function. Peter (and the disciples he represents) lacks faithfulness and understanding. The contrast is not between Peter and the beloved disciple, but between Peter and Jesus. 'A dramatic contrast is created wherein Jesus denies nothing and Peter denies everything' (p. 98). Like all the other disciples, Peter is unable to follow Jesus to the end. The beloved disciple is shown to be intimately related to Jesus, and, with Mary, 'reveals to the gospel readers that [Jesus'] crucifixion marks not the end, but the beginning of new relationships in the church' (p. 99).

Chapter 5 is devoted to a study of Peter and John at the empty tomb. That the beloved disciple arrives first should not be taken to signal precedence in importance or authority. Indeed, that he arrives first should not, Quast says, be thought surprising: 'After all, he is being described to the community that identifies itself with him' (p. 123). He simply exemplifies true discipleship: it is necessary to come to a point of belief. For his part, Peter shows that belief is 'precipitated by an historical witness to the evidences of the resurrection' (p. 123). But why, someone might ask, must Peter function in this way at all? Would it not have sufficed to make John the witness? Quast says that, apart from the fact that this narrative 'is obviously built upon traditional sources that focus on Peter ... the need was arising for the Johannine community to hold fast to the anchor of their faith, and the traditions surrounding Peter embodied that anchor. One could expect that as the Johannine community matured, the Beloved Disciple's identity as a witness paled while his exemplary discipleship continued as his legacy. For his legacy to continue unabated and uncorrupted, the Johannine community had to embrace the more secure Apostolic traditions' (pp. 123-124).

In chapter 6, dealing with John 21, Quast argues that the need for the Johannine Christians to join themselves to the 'Apostolic stream' becomes increasingly obvious. However much John 21 focuses on Peter, it was to be read by the Johannine community. The evangelist was preparing the community for the death of the beloved disciple, and part of this preparation reminds them of Peter and his role – and therefore the role of the broader apostolic church. Not least does the example of Peter show that conditions for high office in the church include love for Jesus, and willingness to die for him. Peter and John are not to be contrasted: they represent complementary roles.

The seventh (and final) chapter summarizes and integrates these findings, but does not advance them.

Many of the exegetical observations in the book about Peter and the beloved disciple are sensible enough. It is the attempt to turn Peter and the beloved disciple into symbols for two disparate communities (only the first one 'apostolic'), and then to discern the dynamics of the Johannine community by clever 'mirror-reading', that prompts a fair bit of suspicion that the thesis is uncontrolled and unprovable. Quite apart from the fact that I am unconvinced that the portrait of the Johannine community painted by Brown, Martyn, Meier and others (and which Quast presupposes) is correct, it seems to me that the narrowness of this study is almost guaranteed to ensure distortion.

Granted that the fourth gospel is primarily about Jesus, is it not necessary to say more about how Peter and the beloved disciple function *within the demonstrably primary concerns of the fourth gospel*, as a control on what symbolic values may be projected onto them? Is the evangelist concerned to write a book about Peter and the beloved disciple? To put the matter another way, is it easy to imagine any first-century reader seeing so much symbolic value in the two figures as they appear in the fourth gospel? Well, perhaps, but I doubt it; and if they did, it would only be because the situation in the Johannine community (assuming this was written for the community!) was exactly as Quast has created it. But the *only* evidence for the kind of alienation from the beloved disciple that would cherish the exemplary discipleship of the beloved disciple but not (unless it were buttressed by the 'Apostolic stream') his authority, lies in the mirror-reading that depends on the symbolism and exegetical judgments of Quast in the first place. Meanwhile, if the putative Johannine community has to be *persuaded* of Peter's (and therefore the apostolic church's) place in the scheme of things, why should its authority be thought more secure or tempting than that associated with the beloved disciple?

For the kind of study it is, the work is well done, the writing lucid. But the case it makes, I think, is not proven, not plausible, and barely possible.

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### Paul's Letter to the Romans

John Ziesler

London/Philadelphia: SCM/TPI,  
1989, xv + 382 pp., £9.50.

Do we need yet another commentary on Romans? The short answer is yes. Ever since Luther, most commentators have seen Paul arguing against a Judaism that depended upon the law to earn sufficient merit to become acceptable to God. According to this view, Paul opposed a self-righteous notion of justification by works by emphasizing something radically different — justification by faith (in Christ). The resulting picture of Paul's theology has created significant tensions between justification and sanctification, and made it difficult to square his views with those expressed in James 2 about the importance of 'works'. There have been plenty of other issues in Romans for commentators to differ about, but this basic understanding of Paul has largely gone unchallenged.

In 1977, however, E.P. Sanders' blockbuster study *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* shook this foundation to the core. Sanders offered convincing evidence that many Jews did not see obedience to the law as the way to *gain* justification before God but the way to *remain* within the covenant, and that many Jewish writings roughly contemporary with Paul presupposed God's grace and the notion of justification by faith. On Sanders' reading of the evidence, Paul's problem with his kinsmen was therefore not an individualistic legalism (in the sense of trying to *earn* God's acceptance), but their failure to acknowledge Christ as Lord. Furthermore, when Paul wrote negatively about the law he was opposing Jewish-Christian insistence that Gentiles had to become Jews (observe the law) before they could become Christians — the idea that in order to be a true child of Abraham, one had to adopt the ways of Abraham's physical offspring.

Other scholars such as James Dunn have also argued that 'works' in Paul do not refer primarily to good deeds done out of love (as in James), but specifically works required by the Torah, such as circumcision, keeping the dietary laws, observing the Sabbath, etc., i.e. *the distinctive marks of Judaism*. The difference, if subtle, is real. Thus the boasting Paul rejected (e.g. in Rom. 3:27) may now be seen as a boasting not so much in *personal accomplishments*, but in the Jewish heritage and *status* (over against the Gentiles). Paul was not concerned with salvation of the self-righteous *individual* in Romans, but with the relation of Jews and Gentiles in God's plan for humanity.

J.D.G. Dunn has recently given us a full exegesis of the letter from this new perspective on Paul (in the Word Bible Commentary series), but his massive two-volume work can be a daunting thicket for newcomers to find their way through. By contrast, John Ziesler's contribution to the TPI series offers a more user-friendly (and affordable) way into a post-Sanders reading of Romans. The merits of Ziesler's work are its clarity in explaining the new perspective, in pointing out where that can make a difference, and the way Ziesler excels in bringing the reader to the heart of an issue with minimum verbiage. His commentary may not revolutionize our understanding, and it certainly will not confirm all our biases, but it will introduce thinking students to the insights of modern scholars.

Ziesler's clear discussion of why Romans was written provides a good example of the value of the book. Scholars have produced a mountain of literature over the issue of whether the letter is Paul's systematic theology — his 'last will and testament' — the theological defence he planned to offer in Jerusalem, or material specifically intended to address real issues for the Christians in Rome. In fourteen pages Ziesler summarizes the arguments, rightly concluding that Romans reflects both Paul's and his readers' situations.

Those looking for a dogmatic or polemical commentary that boldly declares the only 'sound' interpretation will be disappointed; Ziesler often sets out two or three options and expresses his preferences very tentatively. He writes from a critical standpoint, asking uncomfortable questions and forthrightly pointing out apparent flaws in Paul's logic glossed over by more evangelical commentaries. Unfortunately, the brevity of the work can sometimes imply that there are no answers to the problems raised, and in his treatment of the law Ziesler hesitates to characterize Paul's thought as coherent. Ziesler offers us some more interpretative options, but he does not make it any easier to decide what Paul originally meant.

The following may give something of the flavour of the author's perspective: the 'righteousness of God' in 1:17 and 10:3 refers not to a status given by God, but to his saving action out of loyalty to his promises, as well as referring to a power into which believers are drawn and which demonstrates itself in their lives. In 1:18–3:20 Paul is not trying to prove the sinfulness of each and every person, but only that Jews are just as much sinners as Gentiles. When writing about the judgment according to works in chapter two, Paul is describing the human condition apart from Christ and is going along with Jewish assumptions simply for the sake of argument. In 3:20 'Paul is not... attacking a merit-centred view of the way to enter into relationship with God, let alone a self-righteous kind of piety' (p. 105). Ziesler finds no notion of imputed righteousness in either 3:21 or 4:3 (nor in Gal. 3:6), but rather a focus on God's saving activity in accepting the

undeserving. *Hilasterion* in 3:25 is expiation rather than propitiation, and there is little (if any) causal connection between Adam's sin and those of mankind in 5:12. Romans 7:14–25 refers to pre-Christian experience, 7:25b perhaps being a gloss that crept into the text at an early stage. The 'just requirement of the law' in 8:4 is the commandment not to covet. A conjectural emendation resolves the Christological crux in 9:5; the original probably read 'whose is the God blessed for ever'. Following R. Badenas, Ziesler thinks Christ is the *telos* of the law (10:4) inasmuch as he is the one to whom it points and in whom it finds its completion. 'All Israel' in 11:25 speaks of physical Jews alive at the end-time who will repent and believe in Christ.

On occasions (notably at 9:31 and 10:5), Ziesler seems unsure of his footing and of how far he should push the idea that Paul was not addressing a Jewish theology of justification by meritorious works. He acknowledges that clearly Paul *would* oppose any notion of earning salvation, and he effectively presents the apostle's theology of grace. Still, the 'new perspective' on Paul needs a fuller exposition, and debate over Paul's target will continue, as evidenced by Stephen Westerholm's fine *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith. Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

In short, Ziesler's work is useful, but it should not be one's only commentary on Romans. There is no mention, for example, of the current debate over the nature of the homosexuality Paul rejects in Romans 1. The introductory discussion on Paul and the law is good, although one could wish for a similar section summarizing Paul's use of 'righteousness' from one who has already written extensively on the subject. Those wanting to dig deeper into issues raised here will want to turn to Dunn's mine of information. Ziesler's frequent footnotes to Cranfield's ICC volumes for further discussion confirm the latter's continuing significance: Cranfield remains the best source for a survey of interpretative options, although he quickly dismisses Sanders' work in one footnote! Others may be tempted to do the same, but Sanders has made his point that the common Christian caricature of Judaism needs to be revised.

Michael B. Thompson, St John's College, Nottingham.

### Ephesians (Word Biblical Commentary 42)

Andrew T. Lincoln

Dallas: Word, 1990, 494 pp.,  
\$24.99.

An appreciation for the apostolic foundation (*themelios*) of the church, and in particular the Pauline tradition, best characterizes the outlook of the author of Ephesians according to Andrew Lincoln. In the first major exegetical commentary on Ephesians since Markus Barth's massive two-volume work (1974), Lincoln has provided a fresh analysis of the letter that stresses a 'second-generation', post-apostolic perspective.

Lincoln parts ways with the evangelical tradition of scholarship on the letter which has commonly regarded it as stemming from the hand of Paul himself — indeed, many have described Ephesians as the jewel of Paul's letters. He finds the combined weight of the differences of language, style, points of theology, and the apparent later perspective of the letter as irreconcilable with Pauline authorship.

Furthermore, he contends that the pseudonymy of Ephesians is betrayed by its heavy borrowing from Colossians as its primary literary source.

For Lincoln, it is the temporal setting of the letter that is decisive for its interpretation. He sees the letter as written by a Jewish-Christian follower of Paul who is using the accepted device of pseudonymy to pass on Pauline tradition to the churches of Hierapolis and Laodicea after the death of the great apostle. Lincoln agrees in large measure with the conclusion of David Meade (*Pseudonymy and Canon* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986)) that these Asia Minor churches lacked a sense of cohesion and communal identity because of the loss of Paul as a unifying source of authority. According to Lincoln, the author of Ephesians endeavours to let Paul speak again: 'Instead of simply saying that he is passing on Pauline traditions, he makes it more personal, direct, and forceful by adopting the device of Paul himself appealing to the churches' (p. lxxxviii). This becomes the basis for explaining the many autobiographical statements by 'Paul' in the letter, particularly in Chapter 3. The first-person statements have the effect of the apostle speaking again to the churches and serve to strengthen the bonds between them and the Pauline tradition. The author is not part of a 'Pauline school', but works independently in providing a fresh interpretation of the Pauline gospel.

For the most part, Lincoln sees the Pauline tradition reflected in Ephesians as faithfully preserved in its application to a new setting. For instance, in contrast to many other scholars holding to pseudonymy who detect an eschatology in Ephesians at odds with Paul, Lincoln rightly stresses the futurist eschatology present in Ephesians and explains that the realized eschatology of Ephesians 2 is essentially consistent with Paul. At other points, however, Lincoln finds theological formulations that he feels could not have been made by Paul during his lifetime. Perhaps most significant here is his explanation of Ephesians 4:1-16. He contends that the pseudonymous author is addressing the issue of how the Pauline churches can remain unified and apostolic without the apostle. The answer is to be found in the stress on the significance of the bearers of the Pauline gospel — originally the foundational apostles and prophets, but now the evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

Another distinctive trait of the commentary is Lincoln's effort to highlight the formal rhetorical dimensions of the writing. Lincoln describes Ephesians as a combination of the epideictic and deliberative rhetorical genres, the former of which sets out to increase the intensity of the adherents to certain values while the latter seeks to persuade the audience to take certain actions. Nevertheless, Lincoln characterizes Ephesians as the written equivalent of a sermon or homily in the form of a letter. His comments here make a fresh contribution to the study of Ephesians.

In addition to the use of Colossians, Lincoln sees the author making use of other traditional materials, viz. the Pauline letters, hymnic and liturgical pieces, credal statements, and a household code (mediated by Colossians). In Ephesians 2:14-16 he detects a hymn that, in its original form, spoke of Christ as the one who provides cosmic peace and reconciliation. He explains that the writer of Ephesians has adapted this hymn to express how Christ has brought the Gentiles near and has overcome the barrier that has separated them from Israel. Lincoln contends that this perspective on the church's relationship to Israel is different to what Paul expressed in Romans 9-11 where Paul argued that Gentile

Christians had been added to a Jewish base and there is a future hope for ethnic Israel. In Ephesians, Lincoln explains, the question of Israel's privileged position and future has been transcended. Gentiles are joining a new community, 'a third race', which is neither Jewish nor Gentile. Lincoln argues that this is a return to the perspective of Galatians with its polemical stress on the discontinuity between the church and Israel (Gal. 3:28; 4:25-27; 6:15-16).

Lincoln's verse-by-verse exegetical analysis of the letter is extremely rich with insights. He shows an incredible mastery of all the relevant secondary literature, interacting with it throughout the commentary. I found that Lincoln provides many important corrections to much of the recent scholarship on Ephesians (e.g. to A. Lindemann on the realized eschatology of the letter and to C.J. Bjerkelund on the function of the *parakalō* section in 4:1ff.).

Many evangelical readers will have difficulty, however, with his reflection on the setting and composition of the letter. To my mind, his appeal to pseudonymy as an ancient literary device that would have been recognized and accepted by the early Christians is still unproven (although some evangelical scholars think otherwise). Lincoln's explanation of the 'Pauline' autobiographical statements in Ephesians 3 is strained.

Similarly, Lincoln's explanation of the letter in terms of post-Pauline temporal setting does not explain some of the difficult passages as well as an earlier setting. For example, his explanation of the purpose of 2:11-22 as teaching Gentile Christians about their roots after the time when Jew-Gentile unity had been achieved is less convincing than postulating an actual situation of disunity among Jews and Gentiles in the churches of western Asia Minor in the middle of the first century. His explanation also suffers from the dubious supposition that the vast majority of church members were Gentile (they were more likely a mixture of Jews and Gentiles given the vast Jewish population of Asia Minor). Granted, Ephesians is more general, less polemical, and ostensibly less situational than the other Paulines. However, Lincoln's contention that the subject of Ephesians is 'Christian existence as a whole' (p. x) is much too vague.

Finally, I remain unconvinced of Lincoln's view that Ephesians represents a reinterpretation of the Pauline gospel using Colossians as its primary base. He denies that Ephesians could have been written shortly after Colossians by arguing that there is a 'changed perspective' at many points, viz. when the author of Ephesians borrows phrases from Colossians his redaction introduces notable changes of perspective. These examples do not prove compelling. In my opinion, it is still conceivable that these points could be explained as an application of the same gospel with similar terminology to the exigencies of a slightly different situation and purpose.

Clinton E. Arnold, Talbot School of Theology.

**Jesus, Paul and the Law:  
Studies in Mark and Galatians**  
James D.G. Dunn  
London: SPCK, 1990, 277 pp.,  
£15.00.

This book is largely a reprint of nine essays written by Dunn during the '80s. Eight of them

are here published exactly as they first appeared, but in each case Dunn has appended a note to expand a point, interact with subsequent discussion, respond to criticism or the like. The eight essays are: (1) 'Mark 2:1-3:6: A Bridge between Jesus and Paul on the Question of the Law'; (2) 'Jesus and Ritual Purity. A study of the tradition history of Mark 7:15'; (3) 'Pharisees, Sinners, and Jesus'; (4) 'A Light to the Gentiles': the Significance of the Damascus Road Christophany for Paul'; (5) 'The Relationship between Paul and Jerusalem according to Galatians 1 and 2'; (6) 'The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-18)'; (7) 'The New Perspective on Paul'; (8) 'Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:10-14)'. The ninth essay, 'The Theology of Galatians', is a revised version of a paper that earlier appeared in *SBL 1988 Seminar Papers*.

Three of the essays first appeared in *Festschriften*, the rest in journals. Dunn has been one of a handful of important participants in the debate largely sparked off by the work of E.P. Sanders, and to have his relevant contributions together is a great boon. There is much suggestive material in these pages — whether or not one agrees, for instance, that the incident at Antioch was quite as important a turning-point in Paul's mind as Dunn suggests, or whether the first-century debate with Judaizers was primarily over the 'nationalistic badges' (circumcision, food laws, Sabbath keeping): can, say, Romans 3:20 in its context be accommodated within such a scheme?

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**Hermeneutic and Composition  
in 1 Peter**  
(WUNT 2nd series, 30)  
William L. Schutter  
Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989,  
191 pp., DM 79.

Just when the scholarly investigation of 1 Peter was thought to be reaching a consensus to do with the letter's audience and structure, this Cambridge dissertation arrives to shatter the illusion. Thanks to the patient and innovative studies of Goppelt, who may be credited with pointing researchers in the direction of the formative social setting of 1 Peter, and Elliott, whose *Home for the Homeless* set out to prove the importance of the topos of the *oikos*-motif, recent studies have concentrated on audience criticism as the key to understanding this deceptively simple document.

Now Schutter approaches the letter from a strictly literary and comparative viewpoint. His aim is to investigate the use of the OT materials which have long been recognized as pivotal to the author's hortatory sections. But no-one up to this juncture — not even Selwyn in his magisterial commentary — has explored the use of the OT in 1 Peter in such depth and with such detail.

Conceding that the standard introductory issues such as the epistle's dating, authenticity and background have reached a stalemate (his term, p. 7), he proposes to break out of the impasse by capitalizing on the gains yielded by a literary and hermeneutical analysis. The chapter headed 'The Setting of 1 Peter' provides the starting point, as it is provisionally accepted that 1 Peter is a pseudepigraphic encyclical written at Rome during the time of Domitian and intended for mostly Gentile lower-class readership scattered throughout Anatolia. At the close of the inquiry not much proof is offered to dispute any of these conclusions —



except one, namely that if the audience was indeed Gentile, it must have had a social group of Christians who were intimately familiar with the use of Scripture in the synagogue and able to track the author's arguments of the most subtle kind, based on the hermeneutical device of homiletic midrash.

The letter is divided into three parts, with a body-opening (1:13-2:10), a middle section (2:11-4:11) and a close (4:12-5:11). But this division is both like and unlike the Pauline model. Among the compositional techniques used, little importance is attached to the presence of hymns, creeds or baptismal reminders. Instead, more emphasis is placed on link terms, hook words, cross references and assonances. All of this evidence is designed to show that 1 Peter is a unitary tapestry, of an exquisite and coherent pattern. The unity of the letter shines out clearly.

The heart of Schutter's book is a treatment of the biblical sources underlying 1 Peter. The letter teems with OT references, nearly 46 quotations and pointers, not counting iterative allusions that would increase the total to a proportion of nearly one for every two verses of text. Moreover, the entire range of canonical Scripture is laid under tribute, with a distribution that centred on Isaiah, Psalms and Proverbs.

To summarize the outcome of this investigation is not easy, but certain conclusions stand out. In some specific areas it is shown how Psalm 34 is not so formative as is generally believed; rather, a case for treating Ezekiel 8-11 as a decisive OT testimony leads to the affirmation that the author's chief interest is in the Temple-Community motif, drawn from OT-midrashic materials and (by inference) with little concern to relate the church's identity to the social world around it (*pace* Goppelt, Elliott, Balch, Wire, etc.). This last contribution will need to be pondered by any who insist that 1 Peter is primarily a social tract, not a liturgical document or an extended Scripture exposition.

One other point. The consensus that 1 Peter is also a document reflecting Hellenistic Christianity will need to be reviewed. For the thrust of this book is to establish the author's Jewish identity and education — and again, by inference, the milieu of his readers in the world of Diaspora-synagogal Judaism.

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**Judaism in the First Century**  
(Issues in Religious Studies)  
*Hyam Maccoby*  
London: Sheldon Press, 1989,  
vii + 136 pp., £4.95.

This book is the third in a new series aimed at beginning students in colleges and universities, 'A'-level pupils, and 'anyone approaching a study of these issues for the first time' (General Preface). As such, the work contains fairly basic (and largely uncontroversial) descriptive accounts of many of the religious institutions and practices of Second-Temple Judaism. There are useful chapters on the different religious groups, biblical interpretation, legal issues, education, the cult, etc. Several omissions are, however, striking. The section on 'synagogue and temple' fails to comment on the significance of the fall of the temple and on the limited evidence for first-century synagogues in Palestine; the author's description of liturgical and other activities in the first-century

synagogue is rather optimistic in its use of later sources. Other shortcomings in the argument include the generally uncritical assessment of Pharisaism, including the latter's unquestioned identification with the Rabbinic movement initiated by Yohanan ben Zakkai. There is not much on the 'social world' of early Judaism. The author does, however, offer an attractive (and somewhat flattering) chapter on Pharisaic welfare and charity, including a brief section on inequalities relating to slaves and bastards (*mamzerim*).

Unlike some other introductions to the subject, this book mercifully does not stun the beginning student with an unreadable first chapter on the labyrinthine political history of Second-Temple Judaism; instead, necessary historical background information is supplied as and when needed. The material on theology ('world view') and ethics is by and large quite helpful, but would merit some expansion, e.g. on social criticism, prayer, and the persistent struggle over theodicy. For an otherwise wide-ranging book about first-century Judaism, early (Jewish) Christianity gets surprisingly short shrift, except on the frequent occasions where the author sees fit to correct perceived misrepresentations of contemporary Judaism in the NT.

**Markus Bockmuehl**, University of Cambridge.

**The Bible without Illusions**  
*R.P.C. and A.T. Hanson*  
London: SCM/Philadelphia: Trinity  
Press International, 1989, 150 pp.,  
£6.95.

I found this book both stimulating and frustrating, for reasons which will become clear. The last joint project of the Hanson brothers before Richard Hanson died in 1988, it aims in a popular way to show how the Bible is to be used in the light of modern knowledge. If there is a central conviction on which the argument is based, it may be found in the judgment that the Scriptures are 'evidence rather than oracle' (p. 109). The Bible is not a magic book, different in kind from all other books, delivering messages of guaranteed authenticity direct from the mouth of God. It is a collection of literature bearing witness to a people's developing awareness of the living God, which becomes sharply focused in the person of Jesus.

The authors begin by arguing that biblical criticism is an indispensable tool of honest study. Chapters 2-4 describe the manuscript tradition on which our Bible is based, and survey the interpretation of Scripture in the NT itself and in the early church. Chapters 5 and 6 argue for historical criticism and against fundamentalism. Chapter 7 discusses the nature of prophecy and the contents of the prophetic books. Chapter 8 gives a very brief outline of the content of all the other biblical books. Chapters 9-12 handle other issues which have to be faced as we apply the biblical message to our own times, e.g. Is the Bible's world too culturally distant from ours? How do we derive doctrine from the Bible, if different parts of it speak with different voices?

There is useful material throughout, especially when the authors offer positive exposition of issues such as the nature of prophecy, the derivation of doctrine from Scripture, or the illumination which critical study has brought to our understanding of particular parts of the Bible.

But the book suffers from two defects. The first is the tendency to make unsupported assertions. The pages are littered with phrases such as, 'If one studies honestly one will conclude...' (p. 59). We are presented with unexplained conclusions about the historicity of Moses (p. 91), the authenticity of the Johannine Jesus (p. 94), or pseudonymous letter-writing as a recognized convention in NT times (p. 95). I recognize the difficulty of dealing with such issues in a book designed to be popular and not too long. But I do not see how such cursory treatment can be constructive for people who are not already familiar with the arguments.

Secondly, the authors are inclined to make their points in a polarized way, sometimes setting up aunt sallies to bolster their argument. When they criticize some conservative scholars for pretending to use critical methods but always coming to predetermined conservative conclusions (p. 41), why do they not comment that there are 'liberal' scholars guilty of a parallel crime? When rejecting conservative ideas about inspiration and inerrancy, why do they not choose to engage in constructive discussion with standard works by scholars such as J.I. Packer, I.H. Marshall, W.J. Abraham? When making the essential point that texts must be studied in their context, they illustrate it with a series of examples showing how not to do it, rather than showing positively how attention to the context will shed light on the text's meaning.

Despite such questions about the book, readers of this journal will recognize the authors as men for whom the Bible matters. If it provokes discussion and reassessment of personal convictions, it will serve a useful purpose.

**Stephen H. Travis**, St John's College, Nottingham.

**A Christian Theological Language**

*Gerald L. Bray*  
Oxford: Latimer House, 1989,  
38 pp., £1.75.

**Let God be God**

*Graham Leonard,  
Iain MacKenzie and Peter Toon*  
London: Darton, Longman & Todd,  
1989, x + 85 pp., £3.95.

**What Language shall I Borrow?**  
**God-talk in worship: a male response to feminist theology**

*Brian Wren*  
London: SCM, 1989, xi + 264 pp.,  
£9.95.

Here are three books tied loosely together by the words 'religious language'. Each is a good, provoking read, and though one is altogether more substantial than the others in size, they all deserve serious attention, and would stand well together on a reading list.

Gerald Bray is never dull, and this Latimer booklet — despite a lengthy excursus into 'the five key terms' in the vocabulary of classical theology (*ousia*, *hyparxis*, *physis*, *hypostasis* and *prosopon*) — a fascinating study in itself — makes rewarding reading. In addition there are three very helpful sections on current debating-



points. First, the adequacy of human language (is it an appropriate vehicle for talking about God?). Secondly, God's 'gender'. Dr Bray sheds light on some of the confusions between sexuality and language-gender which pepper theological discussion today. I knew already that in French *la personne* is a person, male or female, and takes an appropriately female pronoun even if in fact a man. Examples from Italian, Russian and modern Greek were less familiar. Thirdly, Dr Bray addresses the question of cross-cultural communication, and while suggesting that our culture may be less differentiated than is often thought, offers some guidelines on how we should best indigenize Christian thought-forms in cultures that really are alien.

The Bishop of London *et al.* offer a stout defence of revealed religion against those who wish to tamper with its biblical expression. 'Nowadays', they write, 'it is suggested that in using the Scriptures we must adapt them to suit our culture and our ideas. Likewise it is maintained that we can modify the great images such as Fatherhood, or Sonship, through which God has chosen to reveal himself and which he bids us use in our address to him' (p. vii). By contrast, biblical Christianity is revealed and its integrity must be maintained. Their main target here is those whose concern for inclusive language has led them to distort the faith. They address the specific question, 'Is Christ as human being androgynous?'. They are very unhappy with the move to strip out the old inclusive 'man' terminology from our language of praise, reiterating the important point that this terminology has been made to look increasingly exclusive by feminists themselves when it was not originally intended so to be (though they acknowledge the chauvinistic abuse to which it has been put). The Anglican context of their discussion leads them to spend three pages on 'New canticles for use with the ASB', which will concern some of us more than others.

Brian Wren is best known as a hymn-writer ('freelance hymn-writer, practical theologian and worship consultant' says the jacket, as well as URC minister). He offers a stimulating critique of what he calls MAWKI ('Masculinity As We Know It') — the macho maleness which has so influenced our culture and, through its profoundly chauvinistic character, helped give birth to 'feminism'. We may set out on this journey with an enthusiasm which ebbs as Mr Wren seeks to take us further — much further — than this reviewer, for one, would wish to go. But his vision of a sanctified manliness, rid of its MAWKiness and conformed to the image of Jesus' own manhood, is powerful and needs to be taken on board by those who remain unconvinced that the radical restructuring of our language and theology is necessary. It is summed up so well in Brian Wren's own hymn 'Can a man be kind and caring?', which opens the discussion with its haunting refrain: 'Jesus did, and so I can: I will be a Jesus man.' There is so much to be learned from the questions which 'feminism' has thrown up. A sympathetic reading of Brian Wren's fine book is to be recommended for those who want to try — not least because it is plainly a book written by a poet, and such books are invariably pleasures to read, however disagreeable their conclusions may be.

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### Life's Ultimate Questions: A Contemporary Philosophy of Religion

John P. Newport  
Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing,  
1989, 644 pp., np.

How can we explain the biblical account of the origin of life in the context of a scientific age? To what extent are miracles, providence and prayer relevant in an age of science? Is there life beyond death? Can we know that there is one true religion? What is the biblical approach to other world religions? Does human existence and history have any meaning? How important are the arts and culture, and what contributions can Christians make to them? On what basis should Christians make moral decisions? Professor Newport's approach to each of these and related questions is systematic and forthright, such that *Life's Ultimate Questions* functions nicely as a kind of guidebook, sketching paths through the sometimes mystifying maze of issues which philosophers of religion and Christian apologists typically address.

In each chapter Newport formulates an issue in terms of several basic questions, presents the major arguments competing as answers to these questions, and concludes with his own arguments and answers which are based on what he calls the biblical worldview, a view generally consonant with evangelical positions. Newport's biblical worldview, in fact, is the thread which holds together the diversity of philosophical questions which make up the fabric of this book.

To take one example, in chapter 7, 'The Question of Evil and Personal Suffering', Professor Newport first discusses the ways in which the question of evil and personal suffering emerge and the urgency with which they confront us. Second, he discusses what he calls 'non-evangelical approaches' to this problem, including such views as 'evil is illusion' (Hinduism, Christian Science), 'evil is basic to human existence' (Buddhism), 'matter is evil' (Plotinus), 'coequal power' (Manicheism), 'finite-god' approach (Kushner, Brightman), and others. Third, Newport delineates the 'revealed principles' of his biblical approach, and finally suggests ways of formulating a biblical, evangelical answer, based on those revealed principles. This format, which is typical of all chapters, renders Newport's discussions readily accessible to the alert student and layperson. However, it would be misleading to leave the impression that Newport's biblical worldview is a fully developed philosophical theory of the universe from an evangelical, Christian perspective. Instead, what he provides throughout each chapter are the basic biblical principles upon which such a theory should be erected.

One great value of this book is that Newport includes the views of evangelical philosophers of religion and apologists which are systematically ignored by most books on philosophy of religion. In his chapter on faith and reason, for example, Newport not only includes the classic writers on the subject (Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Kant and others), but also the views of American evangelical apologists like Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield, Gordon Clark, Cornelius Van Til, and Carl Henry.

Newport originally developed this material, he tells us, as a 'series of Sunday evening talks' (p. xiii) to a church congregation, and later as material for college classes. Con-

sequently, the treatment of the subject matter is not specialized and assumes no prior knowledge of the material. The book is organized so that the subject matter and arguments are relatively easy to follow, although not all arguments are easy to understand. Accordingly, it is appropriate for and accessible to motivated laypersons, and appropriate for some Sunday School classes, study groups, and those interested in these sorts of philosophical and apologetical questions.

On the other hand, this book, in my estimation, is not really appropriate for college-level inquiry and study. Partly this is due to the vast volume of material Newport undertakes to cover, which gives the book the quality of a survey or guidebook rather than of a critical analysis. In fact, the variety of topics is so wide that there is never space enough to offer more than a superficial overview of the philosophical problems and their solutions. And partly it is due to the fact that it is not quite as 'contemporary' a philosophy of religion as it might be. In fact, Professor Newport seems to be more familiar with recent developments in theology than he is with recent developments in philosophy of religion. He typically appeals to the views of theologians like George Linbeck and Stanley Hauerwas and neglects the work of contemporary philosophers of religion like William Alston, Richard Swinburne, and Richard Purtill. Contemporary philosophy of religion has experienced a kind of renaissance in the last ten to fifteen years; neglect of this most recent work makes *Life's Ultimate Questions* somewhat less than the contemporary philosophy of religion its sub-title claims for it.

Nevertheless this book introduces the reader to many of the classical problems in philosophy of religion and to a wide variety of solutions. The interested reader may well be enticed to pursue elsewhere any one or all of these problems at greater length and in greater depth.

**James Gilman**, Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Virginia.

### The Logic of Evangelism

William J. Abraham

Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Eerdmans/London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989, x + 245 pp., £7.99/\$12.95.

James Denney once commented that if theologians were our evangelists and evangelists our theologians, we would have the ideal church. Although William Abraham is not an evangelist in the field, he is a professor of evangelism who teaches at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. In addition to evangelism he also lectures in philosophy, which ensures a commitment to scholarly debate, a welcome feature of the title under review.

In his opening chapter Abraham laments the dearth of books which provide a firm theological foundation for the practice of evangelism. Whilst the cupboard shelves are not quite as bare as the author would have us believe — he fails to note James I. Packer's *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, Robert Kolb's *Speaking the Gospel Today*, and the two volumes edited by David Wells — it is true that there has been no comprehensive text on the topic of evangelism which endeavours to provide a theological framework to direct and critique the practice of evangelism in all its

aspects. Such a framework Abraham endeavours to supply by utilizing the overarching motif of the kingdom of God. 'We can best improve our thinking on evangelism by conceiving it as that set of intentional activities which is governed by the goal of initiating people into the kingdom of God for the first time' (p. 95).

This is a serious theological text which, in this reviewer's opinion, represents the most thoroughgoing treatment of evangelism from a theoretical perspective available to date. His purpose is twofold: first, to address the theological academy which has for too long relegated evangelism, church planting and mission to the sidelines by creating a false dichotomy of pure and applied theology; and second, to provide a penetrating critique of the many contemporary approaches to evangelism which lack both theological integrity and strategic effectiveness.

The task of evangelism stems from the message and dynamic of the gospel. Before engaging in evangelism, it is of crucial importance that the evangelist has an accurate understanding of the nature of the message s/he seeks to communicate. Good News is only possible because of a God who has chosen to reveal himself. 'Whatever evangelism may be, it is at least intimately related to the gospel of the reign of God that was inaugurated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Any vision of evangelism that ignores the kingdom of God, or relates it to a position of secondary importance, or fails to wrestle thoroughly with its content is destined at the outset to fail' (p. 17). Such is the author's basic thesis which helpfully broadens the topic from the ultra-individualistic approaches which are so prevalent in evangelistic literature, and which heightens awareness of the divine dynamic at work without which there would be no present manifestation of the kingdom nor the possibility for its enhancement. Now, as with NT believers, evangelism has to be 'rooted in a corporate experience of the rule of God that provided not only the psychological strength and support that was clearly needed in a hostile environment but that also signified the active presence of God in their midst' (p. 38).

In his consideration of the place of proclamation, Abraham argues against a narrowing of the message to conform to the sharp distinction between preaching and teaching argued by C.H. Dodd; a restricting of the evangelistic task to those especially gifted and recognized as evangelists by the church; or a blinkered focusing of attention on the threshold decision, to the exclusion of the wider, ongoing implications of discipleship. Rather, the author regards the whole congregation as an evangelizing community embarking on the Great Commission focus of going into all the world to make disciples. Evangelistic strategies which are based outside of the structures of the local church — for example, television, city-wide crusades and lone-ranger approaches — all suffer severe limitations. Methods which have become commonplace in the twentieth century would appear strange to the eyes of NT believers for whom it was unthinkable to have evangelism without community and community without evangelism (p. 57).

Abraham agrees with the Church Growth school of thought to the extent that evangelism is seen as a vital activity which must be integral to the life of the local congregation; that the goal is not the registering of decisions but the growing of disciples, who are being nurtured in the community of faith; and that insights derived from the social sciences can legitimately be applied to the communication task.

On the other hand, he expresses concern regarding Church Growth's fiercely pragmatic spirit, and he scolds its advocates for neglecting to do their theological homework. He applauds Charles van Engen for his significant work in relating Church Growth to ecclesiology, but awaits a more thorough theological exposition of Church Growth in relation to missiology and the eschatological motif of the kingdom. John Wimber is commended for his efforts in this direction, but Abraham does not regard Wimber as a true representative of the Church Growth school; rather, 'his work represents a profound challenge to the fundamental orientation of McGavran and his disciples' (p. 90).

Abraham's focus on the kingdom paradigm in relation to the practice of evangelism leads him to place a strong emphasis on initiation into a local body of believers as the locus of the rule of the King. Drawing on his Methodist heritage, the author holds forth the strategy of Wesley in eighteenth-century England, in which awakened sinners were brought into the class meetings in order to learn the implications of following Jesus Christ. Translating this concept to the contemporary setting, initiation must include the following elements: coming to experience in one's inner life that kind of assurance which only the Holy Spirit can give; the reception and development of particular gifts and capacities; learning to give of oneself in the work of the kingdom; appropriation of certain basic spiritual disciplines that are absolutely essential for the exercise and sustenance of responsible obedience to the joys of the kingdom (p. 103).

Baptism needs to be seen as a radical break from the social context, signifying a new identity both in terms of personal regeneration and kingdom incorporation. Seen in this light, baptism can neither be set aside nor treated lightly. The reality of conversion and the imagery of new birth have to be liberated from subjectivism to be seen in this broader context. However, this reviewer would take issue with the statement that 'the imagery of new birth is very marginal in the New Testament' (p. 120), in the light of the exploration of this concept provided by Peter Toon in *Born Again — a Biblical and Theological Study of Regeneration*, and he would like further clarification of the relationship between 'being' and 'doing' in relation to conversion (p. 125); if 'being' does not precede 'doing', as José Miguez Bonino argues, are they to be seen as two sides of the same coin?

The last two chapters deal with the challenge presented by secularism and religious pluralism in the task of evangelization. In response to the former, Abraham rejects any attempt to accommodate the gospel to the secular mindset by downplaying the unique salvation events which find their climax in Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. The great themes of the gospel are neither redundant nor optional (p. 197). On the other hand, 'the mature evangelist needs to be deeply informed by the convictions and sensibilities of those he or she is seeking to address in the name of the gospel' (p. 203). In regard to the pressure from pluralism to relativize the gospel, Abraham insists on the finality of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, arguing that the ministry of the Cosmic Christ is wider than his embodiment in Jesus of Nazareth. From this standpoint he believes that 'it is reasonable to infer that people outside the biblical tradition may also be saved and acquitted' (p. 220).

By regarding other religions as preparations for the gospel he overlooks the fact that other religions often give very different answers to different sets of questions, and that, as Karl Barth has argued, there is the presence of the

demonic, which makes all human religion an obstacle to hearing the authentic voice of Christ. One must seriously question the notion that other religions lead to the Christ revealed in the NT. While we may agree with other evangelical scholars (e.g. John Stott and Norman Anderson) that salvation may be available to those who have never had a valid opportunity of hearing the gospel and have thrown themselves on the mercy of God, we must ask whether the non-Christian religion in which they were nurtured has led them to this position? This is not to deny the possibility of dialogue, nor the recognition of genuine spiritual insight and moral rectitude in other religions.

Eddie Gibbs.

**Theology in the City:  
A Theological Response to  
'Faith in the City'**  
Anthony Harvey (ed.)  
London: SPCK, 1989,  
ix + 132 pp., £6.95.

Most of the contributions to this book try in different ways to answer the chorus of complaints (to which this reviewer was party) about the inadequacy of *Faith in the City's* theology. In his Introduction Anthony Harvey argues that much of this criticism was beside the point, for in clamouring so loudly for 'traditional' theology it quite failed to notice the 'alternative' theology that the report was offering. Instead of the academic, systematic kind, which claims a monopoly of truth, regards logical inconsistency between doctrines as a form of sin, and takes as its basic criteria the data of revelation and the established system of doctrine, *Faith in the City* proposes a lay theology, whose concerns are practical rather than theoretical, whose criteria are local, and which is therefore happy to countenance a plurality of theologies answering to a diversity of local situations.

Andrew Kirk argues along similar lines in Chapter One, though in a more cogent fashion which depends less heavily on a caricature of 'traditional' theology. His objections to the received theological model in the West are basically two: it has failed to respect the experience and theological insight of ordinary people, especially of the poor who are in a privileged position to hear the Word of God; and it has abstracted itself from its political context, ignoring the injustices which structure it.

Haddon Willmer follows with an imaginative contribution to the urban species of local theology, in which he criticizes the currently predominant ideal of political society, the shopping centre (the principle of the market), in terms of two classic alternatives: Jerusalem (the principle of a political environment which enables humanity) and Athens (the principle of active, participative citizenship).

In Chapter Three Andrew Hake offers some theological reflections on one of the pivotal moral concepts in *Faith in the City*: 'community'. He affirms the church's need to maintain its identity by responding to the demands of holiness and right belief, while stressing the church's role as an instrument of God's work of bringing about universal salvation. Elaborating this universalist theme, he goes on to make two important and controversial points. First, that although Christians look for the fulfilment of humanity in terms of being made into the likeness of Jesus Christ, such transformation need not occur through the church; and second, that since God's

universal sovereignty sanctifies what is common, the church should communicate in common language which is only *implicitly* theological.

In one of the more substantial essays in this collection, Raymond Plant starts to make good what he sees as a major weakness in the church's response to the present Government and its policies — a weakness evident in *Faith in the City*: its failure to answer the New Right's critique of the welfare state. His own reply comes in three stages: moral, empirical, and theological. In the first, he argues, *inter alia*, that even though the unequal outcomes of the market are not intended by any particular agent, they should still be considered unjust; that freedom should not be understood entirely in terms of the absence of external coercion by other agents; and that there should be statutory rights to basic goods. In the second, he provides statistical evidence that the 'trickle-down' effect of the Government's market-based strategy has been to increase inequalities. And in the third, he presents theological grounds in support of social equality and for a conception of freedom in terms of the possession of basic economic resources.

In the fifth chapter Barney Pityana outlines another species of 'local' theology, one grounded in the experience of British black people. Here themes given voice by Harvey and Hake reappear: the starting point for theology is not Scripture or tradition but 'people in their life-situations'; and the people of faith should be indistinguishable from the wider community, except in the 'deeper spiritual understanding' of witness and service that undergirds their participation in that community.

Finally, Dan Cohn-Sherbok seeks to counter Lord Jakobovits' criticism of *Faith in the City* by offering an alternative account of Jewish social ethics. Instead of an ethic of liberation by self-help, he appeals to the exodus and prophetic and rabbinic traditions in support of one which emphasizes the duty of solidarity with the poor.

*Theology in the City* does go some way toward solidifying the theological grounds of *Faith in the City*, but it still leaves some crucial questions wide open. I shall mention four. First, granted that theology should take on local flesh, does this really mean that local theologies should be immune from criticism in the light of Scripture and tradition, and from the claims of theoretical consistency? In other words, does it entail an undisciplined pluralism? Second, granted that theology should be responsible to the moral demands present in its situation, must that responsibility always be direct, and is that situation and its demands adequately read in exclusively political terms? Third, granted that the Spirit operates redemptively outside the church, how then are we to understand the church's role in God's redeeming work? And fourth, granted that the church must avoid jargon if it wants to communicate what it has to say, how is it to say something *different*, something that might *change* the world, if it can only use common language commonly?

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### The Quest for Wholeness

Martin Israel

London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989, 133 pp., £6.95.

In this book, Dr Israel has bared his soul with regard to his entry into the healing ministry.

Those who regard Scripture as the sole authority in faith and conduct will be disturbed by what they see.

The author entered his work through contact with three healers with different emphases, to whom the book is dedicated. The first was Constance Peters, who founded the Science of Life Fellowship (p. 125). Dr Israel's hay fever was greatly reduced after a service in a Brighton church, where she performed the laying-on of hands by courtesy of the priest (p. 6). Her ministry is described as having had a traditional biblical basis (p. 9).

Mary Macaulay was a person of great love who spoke from the soul rather than the brain at her Iona Education Centre (pp. 8, 126). Although her lectures contained much unconventional speculation concerning the origin and destiny of the human soul, her teaching was 'basically common sense illuminated by the voices of well-known figures in the spiritual and psychodynamic fields' (pp. 7-9).

Ronald Beesley was a powerful psychic healer, who ran his own College of Psychotherapeutics (p. 130). He loved Christ (p. 131), drew on theosophical and Hindu insights, and was a medium of intense potency (pp. 10-11).

Dr Israel subsequently set up his own centre in London. In his work, love is the key emphasis. Where the Bible stresses love, its insights are welcomed, but where it does not in the author's eyes, such as at the Red Sea and in other parts of the OT, it is to be bypassed (pp. 21, 44). Dr Israel maintains that other means besides Scripture will help us grow closer to the 'One Who Is, . . . whom we know in the depths of our being', such as Hindu and Buddhist meditation (pp. 59, 63, 70). The author is not deterred by the difference in the ways Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Eastern religions express God. Hinduism and Christianity may look different, but 'the deeper truth of spiritual life, the perennial philosophy as Leibniz called it, is one and the same' (p. 110).

Techniques of healing are considered neutral. Any and every psychic experience appears to be allowable. Christ is described as having had psychic powers in which the Holy Spirit was at work (p. 35). Indeed, although astral travelling as practised by Hindu healers may get out of control, even it is not evil in itself according to the author; rather it requires constant supervision (p. 72). Mediumship is described as 'a mixed blessing, to be used with impunity only when the person is totally committed to God in a higher religious faith, preferably the Christian one' (p. 121).

Throughout the book there are references to Scripture. This makes it appear as if the author is committed to a scriptural outlook, but this is not so. The reality seems to be that his theology rests on mysticism and emotion, and is prepared to draw on any area of philosophy and teaching that coincides with his deeply-held convictions. His use of Scripture is selective; for example, passages such as Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 18, which outlaw mediums, are not referred to.

In my view, this is a dangerously muddled book which will cause spiritual confusion in those who absorb its teaching. Far from finding wholeness, those who travel this kind of path are more likely to end up with broken lives. Some may think it significant that all three of Dr Israel's teachers came to a sad end, and that their work tended to collapse after them (pp. 125-129). In my opinion, by referring to the activities described in the book as coming from the Holy Spirit, this book disregards the Bible's warning addressed to those who tamper with God's Word, whether by adding to it or subtracting from it (Rev. 22:18-19).

David Pennant, Woking.

### Alive and Kicking — Towards a Practical Theology of Illness and Healing

Stephen Pattison

London: SCM, 1989, 192 pp.,  
£8.50.

### In His Hands — Towards a Theology of Healing

David Dale

London: Daybreak, 1989, 161 pp.,  
£5.95.

One of the most pressing needs of churches increasingly fascinated and preoccupied by ministries of healing as a central and public pastoral concern is to develop theological perspectives on suffering and wholeness. These need to bring the contemporary world of suffering and the quest for healing into creative encounter with the Scriptures and Christian tradition. This encounter needs to be characterized by intellectual, ethical and spiritual integrity. Only so may central issues such as theodicy, societal and personal dimensions of disease, gospel and community contexts of healing, and the spirituality of those involved in healing be properly addressed.

These issues are tackled in very different ways by Stephen Pattison and David Dale. Pattison, for some years Lecturer in Practical Theology at Birmingham University and now Secretary of Central Birmingham Community Health Council, has made it his central concern to encourage theology, Christian discipleship and ordinary human living to come together in creative engagement. His recent move from theology in the university to theology in the health authority is part of this engagement and forms the background of his book. David Dale is a United Reformed Church minister and Chairman of the Church's Council for Health and Healing. His approach has been formed through long ministerial experience in which healing and the search for a theology of healing have been central concerns. They come from different theological backgrounds, and both are concerned to broaden Christian engagement with healing rather than to privatize it into their own traditions.

The books also have different purposes. *In His Hands* is intended to be a 'working theology for ministers and interested lay people'. It is unashamedly practical rather than academic, though its deceptively simple style is clearly based on a world of experience and a good deal of careful research. *Alive and Kicking* started out as a major research project intended to last five years. Pattison had hoped to produce a 'thorough and systematic review of perspectives on illness drawn from many sources, and of religious responses actual and possible'. In the event the book had to be written in just three months, so he has produced a survey of key issues as starting points for others to take the research further.

The books are also very different in style. Pattison writes very clearly, giving breathtakingly panoramic reviews of his subject areas, pointing up pertinent topics for further research, and providing extensive notes. His style is passionate, racy, academically sharp, very readable. I found myself constantly wanting to be in dialogue with it. By contrast, Dale's style is much more measured, patient — at times almost pedestrian. In some places it reads more like a book on spirituality than on theology (though none the worse for that). He builds his case carefully, with lots of examples

and some penetrating insights gained through years of ministry.

Both books range widely. *Alive and Kicking* begins by setting an agenda for a practical theology of illness and healing and sets out basic perspectives of understanding illness. The latter include medical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, metaphorical and historical perspectives. The key concern is to point to the inherent presuppositions, meanings and powers of each viewpoint. We are then treated to a sympathetic and critical survey of theological and sociological presuppositions of the current revival of Christian interest and practice. Pattison's concern for a thoroughly engaged Christianity is further pressed in chapters on Politics, Conflict, Healing and Illness; Mental Illness; and The Judgement of AIDS. The discussion is clearly and economically developed, with constant reference to the notes. Almost every chapter provides opportunities for further research by both undergraduate and post-graduate students wishing to explore the theology of illness and healing. The notes themselves are such a gold-mine of information that the book would be worth buying for them alone.

*In His Hands* also attempts wide coverage, though the approach is much more church-based and needs to be evaluated in that context. The scope of the range is not always matched by consistency of quality. The opening chapters on Healing Ministry in the Church Today and Healing in the Biblical Tradition set out the main areas but add nothing new. The third — Healing as Integration — is much more perceptive, as are chapters 4, 6 and 7 on Healing Miracles, Suffering and a God of Love, and Healing in the Local Church. Different para-Christian stances towards healing such as Christian Science, spiritualism and faith healing are located alongside exorcism and signs and wonders ministry in a way that leaves one feeling that coherence may have sacrificed too much to coverage. The chapter on Healing Prayer is similarly broad but somewhat sketchy. David Dale clearly has great strengths in the spirituality and practice of healing in the local church.

The harshness of these comments may be mitigated by reconsideration of the purpose of *In His Hands* — as a working theology for ministers and interested lay people. Granted the limitations inherent in its rather in-house approach to the topic, it could be a valuable study resource for local Christians considering moving into healing ministries. *Alive and Kicking* could also be used in such a way with its refreshing insights into doing theology in the world, though for a different clientele. *In His Hands* is perhaps an invitation to prayer and action while *Alive and Kicking* is an invitation to research, prayer and action. The former says a great deal that is valuable; the latter leaves much unsaid and suggests ways of finding out how to say it. *In His Hands* will be useful to local church people, *Alive and Kicking* is required reading for students and ministers who want to take a practical theology of illness and healing further.

Gordon Oliver, St John's College, Nottingham.

**Body, Soul, & Life Everlasting**  
John Cooper  
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989,  
262 pp., \$16.95.

John Cooper has written an excellent book on the important topic of what a person is and

what happens to her after death. He says that he has attempted to organize and present his material 'in a way which is both popularly accessible and academically sound' (p. 6). He has certainly succeeded at doing this. The book does not require a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek and will be useful to any reader interested in the subject.

Cooper argues for what he calls 'holistic dualism'. This is the view that a person is a soul which is distinct from its physical body. Though distinct from its physical body, a soul is functionally unified with its body in this life and exists and functions disembodied between death and the future resurrection. Cooper emphasizes that dualism has been the position advocated by the Christian church from earliest times. Moreover, he points out that to give up dualism is both to abandon a plank in the platform of orthodoxy and to undermine the belief of virtually all ordinary Christians.

The non-dualist view to which many contemporary scholars have given allegiance is 'monism', the view that a person is a psychophysical unit which has both mental and bodily aspects, but no distinct and separable soul. Cooper discusses various considerations which have led these scholars to reject dualism and endorse monism, the most important of which are arguments from contemporary philosophy, the advance of science, and Christian theology and biblical scholarship themselves. He believes that none of these provides a good reason to reject dualism, and explains why in varying degrees of detail. Most of his effort is directed at answering objections to dualism from theology and biblical scholarship, and it is here that I believe Cooper engages his reader the most.

Cooper points out that primitive peoples were dualist in their beliefs and that the ordinary person or person-on-the-street is dualistic in her thinking (pp. 74, 178, 197). Thus, the standard criticism against dualism by monists, which is that any dualism present in the Scriptures is Hellenistic or Platonic in origin, is just false (e.g. pp. 94-95). While Plato was a dualist, he did not invent dualism but rather philosophized about a view universally held by the ordinary person. The Hebrew mind, being the mind of an ordinary human being, has, therefore, a dualist's conception of human nature (p. 197). It has this conception, but we must not conclude from this that the writers of Scripture developed a philosophical anthropology that is dualist in character. The writers of Scripture did not develop an anthropology (pp. 106, 178-179, 197). Their purpose in writing was, at least in the case of the NT authors, to proclaim the gospel, and they did so in terms of the prephilosophical world-view of their audience, the ordinary human being (pp. 112, 121). The writers of Scripture, not having a philosophical agenda, used ordinary language. Therefore little, if any, weight can be placed on how a biblical writer uses this or that word. Even dualists can speak of a person as if she is, in the whole or in part, identical with her body. But this does not provide evidence for the truth of monism (pp. 113-114). The authors of Scripture wrote in ordinary language because they did not need to make strict and philosophical distinctions to accomplish their objective.

According to Cooper, the dualist outlook of the ordinary person is clearly present when the writers of Scripture conceptualize the afterlife (chapters Two and Three). For example, the OT authors believed in a region called Sheol where the deceased go at death. The existence of Sheol in biblical thought demonstrates not only that the OT writers believed that a person

is distinct from her physical body but also that they believed that she can be separated from it and continue to exist. While existence in Sheol might not be as 'full' as life on earth (e.g. souls in Sheol are often presented as being lethargic and inactive), it is a form of genuine existence nonetheless.

The intertestamental and NT periods continue the dualistic outlook towards the afterlife and develop more clearly the idea of a future resurrection at which the righteous and unrighteous will be separated and receive their just rewards (chapters Four to Seven). The person is viewed as continuing to exist in the time between death and resurrection (the intermediate state). Even those scholars who argue for an immediate resurrection of the person at her death must, to remain consistent, endorse dualism, for the person who loses her first body at death must be the numerically same entity which acquires her new body at her resurrection (pp. 181-183).

I have only outlined the major points of Cooper's work. There is much detailed argument provided to support the points I have summarized. In addition, there is a very nice discussion of what the soul which survives in the intermediate state might be like (pp. 219-222). Cooper points out that the non-philosophical mind conceives of it as an ethereal, spatial body while the philosophical mind regards it as an unextended, non-spatial mind. How these notions are to be reconciled is a question Cooper believes requires additional work to answer.

I am in sympathy with Cooper's general points. In closing, I would like to record two areas in which one might disagree with Cooper. I say 'might disagree' because I am not clear about what Cooper's positions are on these issues and, therefore, for all I know, there might be no point of disagreement.

First, it is plausible to maintain that one believes in dualism because of what one knows before one ever reads Scripture. One does not believe in dualism because it is the view implied or presupposed by Scripture (pp. 113, 197). Cooper might take the opposite view. For example, he favourably discusses Christians who are committed to holistic dualism because they believe it is the anthropology entailed by Scripture (p. 252). Also, he mentions how traditional Christian Platonists all along tracked the right view (dualism) in the OT, even if they did so for the wrong reason, namely, philosophical prejudice rather than OT erudition (p. 76). Contrary to the view suggested by these remarks, it is reasonable to maintain that one is initially committed to dualism and then finds Scripture plausible because it expresses one's pre-scriptural dualist view.

Second, given both that the ordinary human mind is dualistic in its view of the self and that the biblical writers are writing as and to ordinary human beings, the burden of proof is on the person who would argue that Scripture is not dualistic in its outlook. At one point, Cooper talks about the burden of proof remaining on the dualist (which suggests it was there from the outset) and the dualist having to work hard to vindicate his claim to truth (p. 110; yet cf. p. 123). But if Cooper is right about dualism being commonsense in nature and Scripture according with commonsense, it would seem that it is the opponent of dualism, i.e. the monist, who has to do the hard work.

Stewart C. Goetz, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA.



## Women in Ministry:

### Four Views

Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse (eds.)

Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989, \$9.95.

'Those who follow Jesus Christ must seek to understand his will in relation to women's rights. Beyond the need to come to terms with the times, however, is the requirement that Christians deal justly with others regardless of race, social class or gender.' With those words Robert G. Clouse concludes his introduction to *Women in Ministry: Four Views*. The four-way debate that follows lays out virtually all the issues Christians need to consider in coming to understand the will of Jesus Christ concerning women in ministry.

This book works remarkably well. The four debaters represent distinct positions on a continuum running from a traditional view ('Let your women keep silence') to an egalitarian view ('There is neither male nor female in Christ'). While arguments for each of the four views weave in and out of the essays and responses in what sometimes appears to be a haphazard way, the end result is a comprehensive overview of the relevant issues.

Following Robert Clouse's introductory look at historical views of women in ministry, Robert D. Culver leads off with 'A Traditional View: Let Your Women Keep Silence'. The inviolability of tradition controls Culver's approach: 'tradition... is something precious, instituted by authority which has been delivered over for safekeeping, not to be changed or tampered with' (p. 26). This leads him to stick (laudably) to sometimes anachronistic interpretations of his chosen texts, i.e. lobbying for long hair for women as well as their wearing hats at worship services.

The second major essay, by Susan T. Foh, presents 'A Male Leadership View: The Head of the Woman is the Man'. Setting up a hermeneutical di-polarity as her starting point, Foh attacks those who give consideration to the cultural, historical and geographical context of biblical material as 'relativizing the biblical commands to women'. Not surprisingly, both Liefeld and Mickelsen attack her 'oversimplified and unfair assumptions'.

Foh concludes that women are barred only from the office of elder with its 'authority over human souls'. Her arguments at times have a legalistic flavour. For example, a female missionary may teach a sermon to a male national who in turn will preach it to the congregation, but she cannot directly address that congregation authoritatively (pp. 98-100).

In the third essay Walter Liefeld presents 'A Plural Ministry View: Your Sons and Your Daughters Shall Prophesy'. Liefeld, a master at raising the thought-provoking question, examines two basic questions: how gender affects ministry, and how the nature of ministry affects women's roles. These lead to other questions — about inherent differences between men and women that could render one capable of ministry and the other not, about the order of creation, how the fall affects women's suitability for ministry, how redemption in Christ affects the consequences of the fall, what we make of actual instances of ministering women in the NT records and, ultimately, what ordination means in terms of spiritual gifts, preaching, teaching, authority and servanthood. He concludes that because the main biblical characteristic of ministry is service rather than

authority, none of the relevant biblical texts hinders women from the normal ministries.

The fourth and final essay is 'An Egalitarian View: There is Neither Male Nor Female in Christ', by Alvera Mickelsen. She poses as the basic question, 'Are restricted roles for men and women in church, family and society God-ordained, or are they the result of sin and/or cultural influences?' (p. 173). Assuming that such restrictions are the result of sin and/or cultural influences, Mickelsen locates her hermeneutical approach in Genesis 1-3, in Jesus' purpose and ministry to men and women, and the Romans 16 women. From these she concludes that restrictions placed on the full exercise of women's spiritual gifts are not textually supportable.

As the ink dries on the last rebuttal to these four essays, Bonnidell Clouse concludes with a summary of 'the four scaffolds' constructed by the essayists, and then takes a helpful look at what is happening in churches today.

No evangelical spokesperson can be heard or taken seriously without engaging the traditional arguments supporting gender role hierarchy. At the same time, it is not enough to restate these arguments without engaging with equal seriousness the exegetical and hermeneutical work carried on in recent years, the results of which go a long way to support egalitarian role relationships in the church. It turns out in this debate that Liefeld and Mickelsen have been able to work with traditional arguments more convincingly than Culver and Foh engage egalitarian arguments.

Culver loses credibility with a patronizing tone and his refusal to engage seriously are points raised by other essayists. He assumes too much and dismisses without critical reflection any idea that challenges his assumptions.

Foh has carved out a niche in the discussion that leaves her vulnerable to assault from both sides. In attempting to distinguish her position from Culver's absolute hierarchism and from Liefeld's and Mickelsen's more egalitarian emphases, she ends up sounding like a hair-splitter. But she takes the questions seriously and grapples with them within her hermeneutical framework.

Liefeld continues to raise the tantalizing questions that force an examination of the assumptions behind the traditional view. With Liefeld, however, it is sometimes clearer where he does NOT stand than where he does stand. What precisely does a 'plural ministry' model look like?

Mickelsen marshals the major arguments for an egalitarian position without falling into the ditch of a defensive posture. Instead, she finds a way to respond to the standard arguments supporting hierarchy while also moving the debate through a clear statement of biblical texts supporting her thesis.

Is the book worth reading? Yes. In it hardly a stone in the current debate is left unturned. Proponents of four distinct views have equal opportunity to make their case. Anyone interested in questions touching women in ministry will welcome this lively, balanced debate.

Alice Mathews.

## The Normal Christian Birth

J. David Pawson

London etc.: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989, viii + 326 pp., £5.95.

This is an important book with profound implications. David Pawson, a well-known

British preacher, is concerned about 'how to give new believers a proper start in life', as the cover puts it. He follows a number of recent scholarly works in seeking to 'integrate sacramental or Pentecostal insights with the traditional evangelical outlook' on Christian initiation (p. 4) and comes up with his own distinctive blend.

Pawson's basic thesis is simple. 'In a nutshell, I believe that the "normal Christian birth" consists of true repentance and genuine faith, expressed and effected in water-baptism, with a conscious reception of the person of the Spirit with power' (p. 5). 'Christian initiation is a complex of four elements — repenting towards God, believing in the Lord Jesus, being baptised in water and receiving the Holy Spirit' (p. 11). These are quite distinct from one another and are all essential to entering the kingdom of God. They may occur very close together or over a period of time, but what matters is that they all happen, not that they happen together. These four elements are found in the conversion accounts in Acts, though all four are not mentioned on every occasion. They are also found in Hebrews 6:1-2. The author takes great care to give weight to all four elements, but his essential evangelical (not to say biblical) stance is clear when he affirms that 'faith is the most fundamental of the four elements and actually underlies the other three' (p. 13). He does not, however, use this as an excuse to relativize the others, as do so many evangelicals.

The order of the events is normally as stated above, but not necessarily so, as is seen from Acts 10:44-48 and as happens today with the confusion of teaching on this subject. The timing of the process is clearly of secondary importance to the author and he does not seem to be unduly concerned that it might take years. On the other hand, he does seem to recognize that they form an essential theological unity.

On baptism Pawson boldly contends for the biblical teaching that it is instrumental and not merely symbolic, in opposition to the Zwinglianism of so much evangelical teaching. He observes that the latter position arises from a 'Greek' inability to relate the physical to the spiritual. A sacrament he defines as 'a physical event with a spiritual effect' (p. 46), although this is not to be understood in a magical way.

Receiving the Spirit will normally follow baptism and in Acts usually happens through the laying-on of hands. This 'Spirit-baptism' is not a 'second blessing' after regeneration, as in Pentecostal teaching, but is part of the initial process of becoming a Christian. And yet the author repeatedly argues that it is possible to believe without receiving the Spirit. Thus there can be genuine believers who have not yet received the Spirit. Clearly he himself believes that there are many such for he argues from Acts especially, that one cannot receive the Spirit without this being an observable and indeed audible event. He rules out the possibility of the believer having received the Spirit without being aware of it at the time.

Conversion and regeneration are terms which cover the whole initiation process, emphasizing our activity and God's respectively. Regeneration is in the NT associated with baptism especially.

The layout of the book is very helpful. In the first part the above ideas are set out in a systematic fashion. In the second part, about half of the book, twenty-four passages, from Matthew 28:19f. to Revelation 3:20, are expounded in the light of the thesis. In the final chapter the pastoral implications are explored. Most valuable here is chapter 31 where the traditional evangelical 'prayer of commitment' is subjected to judicious and devastating criticism.



This is an important and valuable book which deserves to be read widely and studied carefully. There is much in it with which the reviewer is in full agreement. The fourfold nature of initiation is a salutary call back from evangelical reductionism to the fullness of NT teaching. Pawson's 'four spiritual doors', as he calls them, are far more biblical than their well-known counterpart. Conversion is a process which need not always be instantaneous. Baptism is a part of this process and is more than a symbol. The reception of the Spirit is also a part of the process and should not be 'left to chance'.

While being in broad agreement with the author's thesis, I am not happy about all the details. In particular, I am not persuaded that the initial reception of the Spirit must always be observable and audible. Unless I have missed something, his evidence is simply the recorded instances where this happened (mainly in Acts) plus an appeal to Mark 16:17f. This is clearly a vital issue of major pastoral import, since Pawson's position means that the majority of evangelical Christians have not yet been fully initiated.

The exegesis of individual passages is inevitably controversial in places and will not persuade every reader. I found the exegesis of Romans 8:9 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 particularly unconvincing. With the former passage there is some muddled thinking. The author denies that if 'anyone not having the Spirit is not a Christian', it follows that 'anyone who is a Christian must have the Spirit'. This denial of basic logic is achieved by placing between the two statements another statement that indeed does not follow from the first, thus masking the fact that the second statement quoted above most certainly does follow from the first. Pawson's argument is that Romans 8:9 should read, 'If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he does not belong to the Spirit'. This unusual interpretation I did not find convincing. Again, he argues that 1 Corinthians 12:13 means that Spirit baptism brings us not *into* the body but *right into* or *further into* the body. These two examples are not, however, typical and his exegesis is generally sober and competent.

One more serious fault must be mentioned, especially as the reviewer is a student of Calvin. It is stated that Calvin at one time questioned infant baptism and he is quoted to the effect that faith should always precede baptism (p. 315). In fact the quotation continues: 'On this pretence, the Anabaptists have stormed greatly against infant baptism. But the reply is not difficult. . . . As the author elsewhere affirms of others, a text without a context makes a pretext. To be fair, at this point Pawson is drawing on another, less reputable, author, but that is still no excuse for not checking such a controversial quotation from Calvin. Again he states that there are only four pages on the Holy Spirit in Calvin's *Institutes* (p. 318), a remarkable statement about one who has been called 'the theologian of the Holy Spirit' and who brings the Holy Spirit into doctrine after doctrine in a way that was unusual before the modern period.

In conclusion, an important and stimulating book which is warmly commended for serious consideration.

**Tony Lane**, London Bible College.

**1 and 2 Samuel**  
(Tyndale Old Testament  
Commentary)  
Joyce Baldwin  
Leicester: IVP, 1988, 299 pp., £7.95.

The impossible is always expected of a commentator on the Books of Samuel. If the perils of the defective received Hebrew text in its relationship to the daughter versions, and especially nowadays to the Hebrew Qumran material, are circumnavigated successfully there then await the enthralling complexities of a multi-faceted story told to legitimate the Davidic succession. It is a story moreover where many women appear, not to be sure, as central characters but as foils to the main protagonists. Perhaps it is too much to expect Baldwin to pick up this aspect. She comes close to it in regard to the Bathsheba incident, but eschews it, exonerating the male-dominated perspective of the text by describing interest in Bathsheba's perspective as an 'invitation to side-track' (p. 244). The persistent tendency to moralise is well exemplified in her extended discussion of this affair. It may be, however, that the volume with its gentle approach to all the complexities of the Books of Samuel (cf. her non-threatening discussion of the major textual dislocation at 1 Samuel 10:26-27 on pp. 95-6) is just the sort of introduction to these issues that many conservative students will find most helpful.

**D.G. Deboys.**

**1 Peter (Word Biblical  
Commentary)**  
J. Ramsey Michaels  
Waco, Texas: Word, 1988,  
ixxv + 1111 pp., \$24.99.

Word Books has published another of its excellent commentaries, following the same format of those we have appreciated before. And Ramsey Michaels has exhibited the fruit of a decade's study on 1 Peter. We will be grateful to him for many years for his fine work. He has taken the best of previous commentaries, enriched that with the most recent scholarship, and provided by his own expertise an advance upon both.

1 Peter is a very important book in our changing world. It addresses the problems of Christianity as a minority religion, of the relationship of Christians to society, and of the church as the primary social group for Christians. In a remarkable way Jesus Christ is presented as the model for believers undergoing social ostracism and persecution.

For the New Testament scholar the exhaustive bibliography for each paragraph, the complete text critical notes, and the clear, efficient presentation of the commentary will be a rich reward for careful reading.

Michaels has a pleasant writing style. His translation of the Greek text is fresh with a natural flow in English, yet it remains a careful representation of the original message. His ability to represent another scholar succinctly and utilize or respond to that information precisely gives the reader an efficient reading experience in the interpretation of the text.

While he is aware of modern trends in New Testament scholarship, he is not taken in

by any extremity. He knows sociological exegesis yet takes a moderate stance on the issues of 'aliens and sojourners'. He is aware of American disputations regarding sex roles, but does not allow that to blur the text either in favour of aggressive feminism or staunch patriarchalism. Rather he interprets the actual message of the text in the sociological setting of the early church. He is then careful to generalize only that material which on good hermeneutical principles has general application for the church universal.

He interprets 'weaker vessel' as 'somebody weaker' — as the opposite of the 'physical superiority and social advantage' of the husband in the characteristic opinion of the day. Not that Michaels (or Peter) makes this the issue, but that this social prejudice creates the need for Christian husbands to honour to their wives, and treat them as their equals. I appreciate the appropriately moderate word 'defer' in place of a misunderstood 'submit'.

I would add an observation that Michaels has not mentioned in his analysis of the *Haustafel* of 2:13-3:12. Peter differs from Paul who makes a rather straight-forward presentation of these 'rules of the home'. Paul certainly did modify the content of these Hellenistic materials to correspond to Christian perspectives, such as the inverted definition of headship in Ephesians 5. Yet he addressed the social pairs directly. But Peter's concern is not so much with the standard relationships between each social pair, but focuses particularly upon the exceptional feature of each relationship which might cause the Christian to beg out. That is, for slaves it's the perverse master, for wives it's the unbelieving husband, for husbands it's the inferior status of the wife, and among Christians it's the tendency toward vengeful interpersonal relationships. Peter emphasizes that even in these inopportune situations the Christian is bound to the social order, and must defer whether for actual benefit (wives) or divine gratitude (slaves).

The most debated passage in 1 Peter regards the 'spirits in prison' in 3:18-22. Michaels interprets this passage in the context of 3:13-4:6, which he captions as 'The Promise of Vindication'. The important message of the paragraph (as continuation of 2:22-25) is that Christ is the example of suffering followed by vindication. Thus the journey of Christ is neither a harrowing of hell, nor evangelistic preaching to the dead, nor a Christophany in the time of Noah. Rather the spirits are the offspring of the 'giants' of Genesis 6:4 (LXX), who now harass humankind, even as the evil and unclean spirits of the Gospel record. The journey of Christ was to their remote refuge (*phylake*), where he announced to these spirits that their hideaway was no longer inviolate. This triumph of Christ gives exemplary courage to those Christians who endure the persecution which is impelled by such evil spirits. Michaels bases his interpretation upon the immediate and larger context of 1 Peter, a very careful scrutiny of the actual words and message in the passage, the underlying gospel traditions, and the ideological context of the first century. It is exegetically sound and theologically consistent with the New Testament message.

Introductory matters are handled cautiously. Michaels asserts that the authorship of this letter cannot be settled with 'absolute certainty'. As a semi-official communication it could well have been actually written by a professional — though not Silvanus, who more likely was the bearer of the letter. Michaels describes several features in the letter which suggest a life situation more like that after the

destruction of Jerusalem than during the Neronian persecution — the reference to 'Babylon' and to a single community of Christians in Rome, the compliant attitude toward the Roman emperor, and the similarities with the situation described in the letter from Pliny the younger c. AD 110.

Yet Michaels concludes that the burden of proof lies with those who assert non-Petrine authorship. This is based upon the indefinite information about the time of Peter's death, on Peter's interpretation of the Christian message which falls well within the parameter of the Gospels and Paul without being dependent upon them, and the restraint in the personal references to Peter. '[T]he traditional view that the living Peter was personally responsible for the letter as it stands has not been, and probably in the nature of the case cannot be, decisively shaken' (p. lxxvi f). This may seem a bit cautious, but the introduction gives due attention to the critical issues and avoids improper romanticism.

The rest of the introduction is equally thorough, and rich reading. Michaels makes a careful analysis of the structure of the letter and works on the assumption of the unity ('integrity') of the letter. The section on 'Sources and Literary Affinities' is complete and judicious. The material on 'Audience: Gentile Christians' and 'Genre: An Apocalyptic Diaspora Letter to Israel' provides a complete treatment of all the evidence — internal, New Testament and external. 'Theological Contributions' focuses only on the Trinity — with justification included. But I wish that some of the more profoundly implicit categories had been elaborated by such a thorough and careful exegete. These categories include ecclesiology, eschatology, church and society, soteriology, and Scripture. And then I realize the great effort and space this would require, and why Word has published a separate volume by Michaels (*Word Biblical Themes: 1 Peter*), which we must read.

This is a great commentary, one which every evangelical interested in 1 Peter must use. The wealth of material, judicious insight and careful identification with Peter's intended message also makes it a treasure store for a broad range of scholars.

Norman R. Ericson, Wheaton College.

### The First Epistle of Peter

(NICNT)

Peter H. Davids

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990,  
xxii + 266 pp., \$24.95.

I had long looked forward to this book. Peter Davids' commentary on James had enthralled me. I continue to use it every spring term as the primary text for a class on the exegesis of that epistle. I needed something comparable for 1 Peter — in between the massive detail of Michaels (Word) and the brevity of Grudem (Tyndale). I hoped, too, that it might more consistently adopt exegetical positions with which I could agree, though playing Michaels and Grudem off against each other had proved effective in class. (I found myself supporting each about 50 percent of the time and one or the other almost all of the time.)

With these lofty expectations, my first reaction as I began to read Davids on 1 Peter was one of disappointment. There was little interaction with the more distinctive contribu-

tions of Michaels and Grudem, especially the latter, though these may have appeared too recently for Davids to include more than he did. Introductory issues were handled much as in Guthrie and typical conservative handbooks — the epistle came from Peter in the sixties prior to his death in response to widespread local persecution of believers and not any official empire-wide pogrom. I find all of this plausible but would have liked more defense and interaction with alternatives. The treatment of structure occupied only one page, despite advertising blurbs labelling this a strength, and nothing appeared here to match Davids' creativity with James. The only distinctive treatment of a theological topic came in an extended excursus: 'Suffering in 1 Peter and the New Testament' (which also treated the Old Testament), but I found Davids driving an implausible wedge between suffering due to persecution and that due to illness and sounding a bit more positive on the necessity of God physically healing faithful believers than seems defensible.

Some of this disappointment continued in my reading of the commentary body. All the essentials were present — discussion of main points, narrative flow, key words, and particular exegetical conundra — but sections often proved brief and uninspiring. Lexical analysis still relied heavily on TDNT. Grammatical observations, for example about tense, seemed sometimes to read into an actual morphological form that which modern linguistics has shown justifiable only when supported by the context. Good biblical cross-references abounded but not nearly as many extra-canonical parallels emerged as with James. Helpful hints for modern applications punctuated the narrative, but surprisingly, Davids spoke not a word about the thorniest question of all — do the commands to submit in the *Hauptstafel* of 2:13-3:7 remain normative for believers today?

I began to reflect on my disappointment, and as I did, much of it began to dissipate. Surely it was not fair to expect a first-edition volume of the New International Commentary series (designed for those who read English only) to match the scope of a work (like *James*) in the New International Greek Testament Commentary series, nor even to follow the daunting precedent for the revision of the NICNT established by Gordon Fee's *1 Corinthians* (as Davids himself notes). The further I read, the more I admired Davids' footnotes, in which detailed references and interaction with secondary literature, much of it in French and German, do appear. I appreciated his extensive, 34 page bibliography, though randomly noted several errant publication dates (eg, Ladd, Maier, Riesner) among the handful of entries I knew by heart. Above all, I became increasingly impressed that, with only a very few exceptions, his conclusions on difficult texts matched my own, even if they were not defended at great length.

Thus, Davids takes *tina hē poion kairon* in 1:11 as 'what or what type of time' (rather than 'who or what time'), chosen in advance in 1:20 as combining prediction and predestination, and *logikos* in 2:2 as 'spiritual' (milk) but also alluding to the 'word' of 1:23,25. The stone of 2:6-8 is a 'cornerstone', not a 'capstone'. The rationale for submission in the *Hauptstafel* is not simply evangelistic or culturally dictated, but 'for the Lord's sake', though 'this also limits submission, for submission can never be to anything he does not will' (p. 99). Davids recognizes the radical difference in attitude toward slaves and women in Peter's version of the *Hauptstafel*. He notes that the commands regarding women's appearance would have challenged the upper class and would have called the church to a simplicity of dress which

has characterized many subsequent Christian revivals and which is seriously needed in the Western church today. The 'weaker vessel' (3:7) perhaps refers most uniquely to women's general 'vulnerability'. The incredibly difficult 3:18-22 should be interpreted, largely with W.J. Dalton, as Christ's post-resurrection proclamation of victory to the fallen angels. 3:21 specifically precludes baptismal regeneration, and the *eperotema* is better translated 'pledge' than 'request'. Believers' suffering in 4:1, which causes them to 'cease from sin' refers to the breaking of sin's decisive power through perseverance in persecution for the faith, based on Christ's model and redemption. 4:6 does not offer unbelievers a second chance at salvation after death but refers to their hearing the Gospel while they were still alive. Judgment beginning with God's household (4:17) alludes to the Lord suddenly coming to his temple (Mal. 3:1-6). The 'elders' of 5:1-6 are officeholders of church leadership; the 'youngers' are not. And Silas must be given a significant role in the composition of the epistle (5:12).

So, I ended up thinking much more positively about this commentary. I could use it as the primary text for my course in 1 Peter, even though I would supplement it more heavily than I do Davids on James. I am grateful that the NICNT is at last nearing completion. May God speed the writers of *Matthew*, the *Pastoral Epistles*, and *2 Peter and Jude*, as well as the revisers of other older volumes to bring this series once again to the very forefront of evangelical scholarship. Peter Davids has certainly contributed his part faithfully.

Craig Blomberg, Denver, Colorado.

### Why? On Suffering, Guilt, and God

A. van de Beek

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990,  
349 pp., \$21.95.

Van de Beek, professor of systematic theology at University of Leiden, writes for the household of faith a book that does justice to both poles of intellectual rigor and pastoral application.

After outlining the problem of evil in the usual manner as a struggle to reconcile the omnipotence (pp. 5-14) and goodness (pp. 14-18) of God, van de Beek organizes the rest of his book around these two themes: God's omnipotence (pp. 25-120) and goodness (pp. 121-252), followed by an analysis or evaluation of these two vantage points (pp. 253-349).

I find several aspects of *Why?* to be especially helpful. First, any theodicy requires a criterion, and van de Beek writes explicitly from *within* and for the context of faith (p. 2). His book is not an apologetic for theism that tries to convince the unbeliever (which is not to say we do not need such books), and as a consequence there are no references at all to the philosophic sceptics such as Hume, John Stuart Mill, Mackie, McCloskey, *et al.* He has no pretensions about 'solving' the problem of evil (p. 5), but instead, to recall Anselm, believes in order to understand rather than understands in order to believe. The priority of faith recurs throughout the entire book as a major theme: God is totally free (cf. Psalm 115:3) and sometimes his ways seem not only hidden but downright questionable (p. 41). We often must trust God despite empirical evidence that seems to contradict his image (p. 86). Mysterious, incompre-

hensible, and even apparently arbitrary, human logic must bow in a 'radically reverent posture of faith' (pp. 118-119). Indeed, *everything* we say about God and the world is based on faith (his emphasis, p. 339).

Having started from a posture of faith, it comes as no surprise that van de Beek takes as the 'critical' and 'decisive' norm the text of Scripture (pp. 3, 86). Here is a second strength: van de Beek's entire book is what we might call a biblical theology of the problem of evil. While there are a smattering of references to Barth, Moltmann, Berkhof, Heppel and generally Dutch thinkers, his theological method of thinking is primarily biblical and not historical or philosophical. There are very few footnotes at all in the entire book, but easily many hundreds of Scripture texts from both testaments expounded at length, with references put in parentheses.

But van de Beek is no fideist in the sense of blind 'faith in faith', and surely the reader must take special delight in a Reformed Dutchman who invokes Wesley's quadrilateral (although he does not refer to it as such). While Scripture is decisive and final, van de Beek outlines three other criteria that must be incorporated into theological thinking: human experiences in the contemporary world, tradition or the history of dogma and ideas, and 'the intrinsic consistency of the line of reasoning' (pp. 3-4). One example of this third strength is van de Beek's constant references to pastoral experiences and situations (pp. 44, 54, 62, 81, 88, 89, 120, *et al.*).

Fourth, I like the overall doctrine of God found in *Why?*, and perhaps the best way to explain this is to recall a scene from C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. There the children asked if Aslan the lion was safe. The answer: God is not safe, but he is unfailingly good. Van de Beek is careful to protect the freedom of God, and he does not hesitate to say that his purposes in history seem less like a straight and observable line and more like a zigzag. Still, despite the detours, the believer rests in the beautiful words of the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day, question and answer, regarding the providence of God, that 'all things, in fact, come to us by chance but from [God's] fatherly hand'.

Fifth, while van de Beek does not hesitate to explore the difficult questions of theodicy, nor does he offer simplistic or superficial answers, yet he still manages to affirm some very basic and very biblical lessons that we all need to hear: that God can allow evil in our lives as a spiritual pedagogy (Heb. 12); that God uses evil for our good (the story of Joseph); that suffering can be a form of punishment (Deut. 27-28), but we must refrain from positing a direct relationship between punishment and suffering (or blessing and welfare, for that matter); that much evil in the world is due to human choices; and that God's final word about evil was spoken in Jesus Christ. As P.T. Forsyth once wrote: 'No reason of man can justify God in a world like this. He must justify himself, and he did so in the cross of his Son'.

My exceptions with van de Beek are minor. The book contains no indices at all. At times the text seemed long and tedious. A few readers might wish he had been more definitive on issues like the personal nature of Satan (pp. 190-198), his categorical rejection of natural theology (pp. 227-228), God as predictably unpredictable to the point of being arbitrary (pp. 282, 301, 307, 312), and universalism (pp. 59-62, 107f, 287). Still, those interested in a theodicy addressed from faith to faith will find intellectual and practical edification here aplenty.

**Daniel B. Clendenin**, Farmington Hills, Michigan.

## How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil

D.A. Carson

Grand Rapids: Baker Book House; Leicester: IVP, 1990, 275 pp., £7.95.

D.A. Carson, Professor of NT at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has written a non-technical book about suffering for a general audience which, unlike the normal fare, is *not* intended to be read primarily by people who are actually in the midst of misfortune, malady, or misery (pp. 10, 247). Rather, Carson's book is 'written by a Christian to help other Christians think about suffering and evil' *before* suffering strikes home, in the conviction 'that when such things occur we (will not be) devastated because we have cherished false expectations' (pp. 9, 62; cf. pp. 20, 116, 247). Hence, Carson's work is intended to be 'preventative medicine' against those 'false expectations' harboured by ill-informed or immature Christians 'as to what God is like, what God does, what place suffering has in this world' (p. 10, cf. p. 247).

Positively, the antidote which Carson administers is a 'biblical framework' (p. 39) that is realistic concerning the suffering Christians will undoubtedly encounter as a result of being sinful people who not only live in a fallen world which stands under the judgement of God, but who also, in some cases, must suffer unjustly and innocently as God's people (cf. esp. pp. 20, 110, 116, 138, 159, 168, 194, 200). Second, Carson endeavours to be faithful to the biblical witness concerning the divine purposes of suffering and the character of the sovereign God who reigns over his creation in treating the relationship between sin and suffering (chapter 3); the questions of social evil, poverty, war, and natural disasters (chapter 4); the suffering of God's own people as his people (chapter 5); divine curses, holy wars, and hell (chapter 6); illness and death (chapter 7); the value of knowing biblical eschatology (chapter 8); the meaning of the book of Job (chapter 9); the implications of knowing that God himself suffered (chapter 10), and an appendix on AIDS.

Throughout his work Carson also strives to be faithful to the biblical testimony and tension concerning the relationship between God's transcendence and his personal, interactive nature; and between God's sovereignty and human responsibility. His discussion of the various kinds of suffering in chapters 3-10 is therefore framed on one side by a broader discussion in chapters 1-2 of the problem of evil and the 'false steps' which people have taken in an attempt to respond to it, including not only secular arrogance, ignorant Christian triumphalism, and atheism, but also the 'sub-biblical' Christian views of a self-limited God based on a view of 'free will' which makes God contingent upon human choices and argues that a knowledge of evil is necessary to the knowledge of good. On the other side, Carson offers biblical support for the fundamental perspective of 'compatibilism' which underlies and is supported by all of his discussions (chapter 11; cf. e.g. pp. 71, 146, 158f., 164, 173f. etc.). 'Compatibilism' is the view that the Bible clearly and simultaneously teaches both God's sovereignty, even over evil ('when the Bible speaks of God's permission of evil, there is still no escape from his sovereignty' p. 224), and human responsibility. These two truths may not be able to be reconciled with our finite understanding, but as such they make up the 'mystery of providence', which 'defies our

attempt to tame it by reason... we do not know enough to be able to unpack it and domesticate it' (p. 226). Nevertheless, these two truths are 'compatible', rather than presenting an irreconcilable contradiction or forcing one to admit to sheer nonsense at the very heart of the biblical message (pp. 201, 212f.).

Hence, when all is said, the problem of suffering and evil brings us face to face with the mystery of God's own character and nature (pp. 218, 239). But Carson also follows the biblical conviction that in coming to know God better 'we will learn to trust him; and in trusting him we will find rest' (p. 239). Carson is clear that the *ultimate* help in times of suffering is not a consistent and biblically appropriate set of beliefs, as crucial as these are to the life of faith, but the comfort that comes directly from experiencing the love of God itself through his Spirit (pp. 20f. cf. 127f., 243-245). Carson therefore appropriately concludes his work with a series of basic, but sound and helpful pastoral reflections on gaining the comfort of God oneself and on being a channel of it to others (chapters 12-13). True to his convictions concerning the centrality and necessity of biblical doctrine for the life of faith, these 'practical' suggestions are the way in which the mystery of God's sovereignty and providence work themselves out in the life of the believer, so that the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility in the life of prayer, evangelism, or mutual exhortation and comfort is never allowed to resolve itself by eliminating or relativizing either pole (pp. 201, 230, 232, 235ff.).

Those who, like myself, share Carson's high view of God's sovereignty, even over evil and suffering, and his conviction that God uses suffering as an act of judgment, as well as of mercy and redemption, will welcome Carson's presentation with enthusiasm. It is sound theologically, well written for the church and student, and filled with the kind of constant pointers to and from the biblical text that make it impossible to ignore his positions, even if one disagrees with him. And given his audience, which he for the most part keeps carefully in view, one cannot fault him for stopping short at times from answering definitively or pursuing more deeply some of the questions raised. Rather, Carson's book provides an invitation to pursue the Scriptures for oneself in answer to these crucial theological questions and fundamental issues of life. In doing so, for example, one will want to ask in more detail than Carson does *just how* the manifestation of God's power and presence, and hence our happiness (!), are brought about through suffering, so that suffering itself becomes the primary vehicle through which God is glorified, thereby meeting the deepest needs of his people. One will also want to pursue in more detail the ways in which God's miraculous deliverance functions to encourage the faith of God's people when no such miraculous deliverance is forthcoming, and other such questions. But the very fact that the book stimulates such reflection is part of its value.

Carson's emphasis on God's exalted, sovereign power, unwavering justice, and loving mercy in and through suffering, and his application of the twin truths of God's sovereignty and human responsibility to the various issues and basic questions of life are refreshing. Moreover, Carson's judgments consistently reflect the kind of God-centred theological focus that is sorely needed, but increasingly hard to find in contemporary biblical and theological works written for the Church. They will certainly encourage the faithful to persevere, so that the author's goals have been met in a way that is genuinely

helpful. I therefore recommend the book strongly for both students and lay people alike.

Scott J. Hafemann, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

**The Way of Jesus Christ.  
Christology in Messianic  
Dimensions**

Jürgen Moltmann

London: SCM, 1990, xx + 388 pp.,  
£17.50.

This is the third of Moltmann's 'systematic contributions to theology'. The earlier volumes are *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (1980 — ET 1981) and *God in Creation* (1985). Two more volumes are projected: on eschatology and on the foundations and methods of Christian theology.

The back cover cautiously suggests that 'here perhaps is the most gripping of Professor Moltmann's studies since *The Crucified God*'. This verdict would seem to be amply justified. Anyone who supposes that a theologian can no longer produce fresh and original theology in his mid-sixties will find sufficient counter-evidence here.

The preface helpfully sets out four major concerns of the book. First, this is a christology for the 'post-modern' world. The early church fathers produced a christology which was metaphysical and cosmological. Salvation is from the finitude and transience of human existence. Modern theology, by contrast, developed a christology which was historical rather than metaphysical and anthropological rather than cosmological. The emphasis of Moltmann's christology is *ecological*. His aim is to move to 'a post-modern christology, which places human history ecologically in the framework of nature' (p. xvi). There is a strong emphasis upon Christ's bodily nature and also upon the relation between humanity and the creation.

Secondly, this is 'a christology against the horizon of eschatology' (p. xv). This *eschatological* emphasis is one that will come as no surprise to those who are familiar with Moltmann's theology. It involves no longer viewing Christ 'statically, as one person in two natures or as a historical personality'. Instead, Moltmann seeks 'to grasp him dynamically, in the forward movement of God's history with the world' (p. xiii). This is a picture of Christ on the way, tracing his ministry from his birth through to his parousia.

Thirdly, 'christopraxis' or discipleship plays a larger role here than in most books on christology. This *ethical* concern is one of the reasons for the choice of title (p. xiv). Finally, as in some of his earlier works, Moltmann engages in *dialogue* (or encounter, if one wants a fourth 'e') with Judaism (pp. xvi-xvii).

The scope of the book can best be seen by a brief review of the chapters. The *Messianic Perspective* explores the origins and nature of the concept of messiahship, in both Judaism and Christianity. It concludes with a section specifically devoted to Jewish-Christian dialogue. Here Moltmann considers the Jewish charge that the messiah cannot have come because the world is not yet redeemed. This charge has some validity against the theocratic triumphalism of Christendom, which identifies the church with the kingdom of God. But it does not apply against a more biblical and eschatological approach to christology, which

gives more weight to the fact that salvation is still to come. Jesus came as the Suffering Servant, not yet the Christ of the parousia.

'Trends and Transmutations in Christology' (chapter 2) traces the development of christology from the early church to the modern world to the 'post-modern' world. (It has to be said that the brief sketches of patristic and modern christologies are inevitably oversimplified.) Moltmann identifies three contradictions or crises of modern civilisation: poverty, especially in the Third World; the threat of nuclear inferno; the ecological soteriological relevance. In addition to contemporary relevance, christology must also have a Christian identity. This comes from faith in Christ and the biblical witness to him. It is worked out in the remaining chapters of the book which trace the five stages of 'the way of Jesus Christ', from his birth to his parousia.

The next three chapters of the book are the most substantial. 'The Messianic Mission of Christ' (chapter 3) covers Jesus' life. Moltmann adopts a 'Spirit christology' approach, viewing Jesus in terms of his relation to the Father and the Holy Spirit. This is not to be seen as opposed to the idea of incarnation or to the doctrine of two natures. The notion that there is an antithesis between an adoptionist and a pre-existence christology is a nineteenth-century invention' (p. 74). While I would agree with Moltmann that there is no necessary antithesis, Cyril of Alexandria would be one among many early figures who might contest the claim for the originality of the nineteenth century in this matter. There are other major themes introduced in this chapter some of which will be considered below. 'The Apocalyptic Sufferings of Christ' (chapter 4) takes up and develops many of the themes of *The Crucified God*. A new and interesting theme is that of martyrology, seen as 'the fellowship of Christ's sufferings'. 'The Eschatological Resurrection of Christ' (chapter 5) develops the discussion of the resurrection in *Theology of Hope*, adding the new dimension of its relation not just to humanity but to nature.

The sixth chapter was originally to have been devoted to 'the presence of Christ', but this had been covered at some length in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, to which Moltmann refers the reader (p. xv). Instead the chapter is entitled 'The Cosmic Christ'. Some of the themes of *God in Creation* are picked up and there is an interesting discussion of Christ's relation to evolution, in response to Teilhard de Chardin. It is inadequate to view Jesus as *Christus Evolutor*, Christ-the Evolver. This overlooks the ambiguity of evolution and the numberless victims along the way who pay the price for progress, 'A *Christus evolutor* without *Christus redemptor* is nothing other than a cruel, unfeeling *Christus selector*, a historical world-judge without compassion for the weak, and a breeder of life uninterested in the victims' (p. 296). We need to think of Christ as the *Redeemer* of evolution.

Finally, 'The Parousia of Christ' (chapter 7), in which we have a foretaste of some of the themes of his next major work, on eschatology. Moltmann begins with a 'little apologia for the expectation of the parousia' as the fulfilment of the history of salvation. He also interprets the final judgment in terms of his universalism, arguing the latter at greater length than hitherto, though not necessarily with any greater success at showing it to be biblical.

This is an immensely stimulating book and there is much in it which is helpful. If the following comments inevitably focus more on points of disagreement this should not be taken to imply a negative judgement on the book as a whole.

As has been noted already, Moltmann seeks to expand a new approach to christology for the post-modern world. This transition to a new approach does not imply a rejection of the insights of the past. 'Every christology is part of a grateful and critical dialogue with the christologies of predecessors and other contemporaries, setting its own tiny accents in this great dialogue about the messianic secret of Jesus Christ' (p. 38). So where does that leave Moltmann in relation to the two-natures approach of Chalcedon? The answer here, as in his earlier works, is that this is not clear. Spirit christology is not 'levelled at the doctrine of the two natures' (p. 74). Again, 'two-nature christology' developed out of 'dual New Testament definitions' such as crucified-raised, humiliated-exalted, and 'was in substance well able to retain the sense of these original definitions' (pp. 48f.). But on the other hand, Moltmann expounds at length five impasses of two-nature christology (pp. 51-55), an explicit echo of Pannenberg's 'The Impasse of the Doctrine of the Two Natures' (*Jesus God and Man* chapter 8). What is Moltmann trying to say here? In particular, how should we understand the human Jesus' identity with the second person of the Trinity and by what means does that identity come about? The patristic doctrine of the two natures answers these questions. Should we assume that despite his criticisms of that doctrine here and elsewhere, Moltmann's answer to these questions is some form of two-natures doctrine? Or should we understand that he wishes to look elsewhere for the answer? Either way, one would have hoped for a clear answer to this question in a major work devoted to christology.

One of the least satisfactory sections is that on 'Christ's Birth in the Spirit' (chapter 3:2). The virgin birth is lumped together with Roman Catholic mariology and accordingly dismissed. The reader may be surprised to learn that the New Testament does not acknowledge Mary as 'mother of the Christ' (p. 78). As for the claim that it is 'factually inappropriate to call the virgin birth historical, let alone "biological" and that 'the narrators' aim is not to report a gynaecological miracle' (p. 82), it would be interesting to see how Moltmann would exegete Matthew 1:18-25 from this perspective. I have discussed these issues more fully in D.F. Wright (ed.), *Chosen by God* (London, 1989), pp. 93-119.

The Sermon on the Mount is central to Moltmann's interpretation of christopraxis, in keeping with his radical approach to social and political issues. The Sermon is the 'messianic Torah', which interprets and fulfils Israel's Torah. It is for all people, not just for an élite or for a sect withdrawn from society. Its demands should not be seen as unreasonable. But can it be fulfilled? Anyone who denies that it can be fulfilled, not just in the heart, not just in personal life, but in public action, mocks God, says that Jesus is wrong and stifles the truth of the community of Christ (chapter 3:7:3). Strong words, not least because they condemn the majority of interpreters of the Sermon. Moltmann's approach has the merit of interpreting the Sermon in a simple straightforward fashion, without seeking to explain it away. But I remain unconvinced. I would like to see how Moltmann would interpret Matthew 5:38f. in terms of 'public action' when it comes to running a police force or handling international relations. As elsewhere, Moltmann's application of his theology is stimulating and challenging, but might be said to lack political realism.

This leads to the question of Moltmann's political stance. Here, as in his other works, he brings particular political convictions to his subject. This can be illustrated from his discus-

sion of poverty. Who are the poor and why are they poor? The poor of the Third World are poor as a result of oppression by the First World. The poor are also to be found in the unemployed and disadvantaged of the First World (pp. 64–66). There is no mention of the Second (communist) World, which was still intact when this book first appeared (in German). Are we to assume that there are no poor in countries such as Albania and Russia? The clear implication of this passage, as others in Moltmann, is that it is the liberal capitalism of the West which has created poverty, both in the Third World and at home. This is at best dangerously one-sided. It is true that some aspects of the West's treatment of the Third World (such as the debt crisis) have increased poverty. But there is another, more positive, side to the relationship and it is by no means obvious that the Third World is poorer than it would be if it had had no contact with the West. Again, there are many other factors which contribute towards the problem of poverty, such as climate, population explosion, war, economic and political mismanagement, corruption, lack of work ethic, etc. To blame all this upon the West is to attribute to it an unwarranted omnipotence. Treating the West as the cause of Third-World poverty is counter-productive because it encourages simple solutions and distracts attention from many of the problems.

As in his earlier works, Moltmann insists on the reality of the resurrection. At first sight one might get the impression that this is being spiritualised. While the cross is a historical fact, the resurrection is an apocalyptic happening (p. 214). Jesus' appearances to his disciples are called 'exceptional visionary experiences' (p. 216). Moltmann accepts that the tomb was empty, but 'the proclamation that Jesus had been raised from the dead is not an interpretation of the empty tomb' (p. 222). This does not, however, mean that Moltmann is trying to spiritualise the resurrection. 'Christ's resurrection is bodily resurrection, or it is not a resurrection at all' (p. 256f.). Indeed, if there is no material "resurrection of the body" there is no personal "resurrection of the dead" either' (p. 260). As in his earlier works, Moltmann rejects the Greek dualism between soul and body. 'Eternal life can only be bodily life; if it is not that it is not life at all' (p. 259). The reluctance to call the resurrection a historical event does not mean that Moltmann wishes to reduce it to the Easter faith of the disciples (as did Bultmann) or even that he is willing to dehistoricise it in the manner of Barth. Rather he wishes to stress that the resurrection was not Jesus' return to this earthly life. It is an eschatological event in that it is the beginning of the general resurrection of the dead.

Moltmann's ecological emphasis leads him to introduce a new idea into his interpretation of the cross and resurrection. The cross does not relate to human beings alone. Christ died in solidarity with us, 'but he also died in solidarity with all living things, which have to die although they want to live' (p. 253). Christ 'died "the death of all the living" so as to reconcile everything in heaven and on earth, which means the angels and the beasts too, and to bring peace to the whole creation' (p. 255). It follows that 'every created being enjoys infinite value in God's sight, and has its own right to live; this is not true of human beings alone' (p. 256). There are, however, serious problems with this claim. Is the life of a mosquito of infinite value in God's sight? If so, do I have the right to swat it before it can bite me? If every insect is of infinite value, should I not follow those Hindus who sweep the path before them so as not to step on one? While the desire to give

value to the whole of creation is to be commended, this approach to it would seem to raise at least as many questions as it resolves.

The translation is generally clear, though there is one peculiarity. The Holy Spirit is almost without exception referred to as 'it'. (The German word is 'er' [masculine], though the German word for Spirit is itself masculine: *der Geist*.) In *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* Moltmann argues that the Spirit is a divine person in his own right, not just an energy of the Father and the Son (pp. 125f.). In that book, the same translator intermingles 'he' and 'it' for the Spirit, while in this work the latter predominates.

In conclusion, this is a major and stimulating contribution to contemporary theological debate, from which there is much to be learned.

Tony Lane, London Bible College.

**Creation Out of Nothing**  
Don Cupitt  
London: SCM, 1990, x + 213 pp.,  
£10.90.

In his latest book, Cupitt leads us into the vaporous and ever-shifting world of 'deconstructionism', that brand of 'postmodernism' usually associated with the writings of Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard and others. Cupitt's unremitting assault on realism over the last decade or so has led him to join hands with those who hold that language is the sole domicile of meaning. It is not simply that language plays a creative role in shaping what it is to be human – an insight of immense importance – but rather that language creates reality. There is no 'beyond' language (p. 152). Language is 'outsideless'. Our own thinking is merely the language in which it is conducted. As we would expect, even God is sucked into the stream of language. 'Like us,' Cupitt boldly asserts in the preface, 'God is made only of words' (p. x). The traditional concept of God, we are told, died around 1730 and was replaced by Man, who himself died around 1968. Today, we must tackle the resulting nihilism as religiously as we can. The 'conquest' of nihilism is possible through language. Cupitt believes that the creation of the world is happening all the time through language, in and through us. Language surges up within us and pours out of us to form and reform the world of experience. The religious life thus becomes a continuing, flowing process in which we float along with language, reimagining and recreating ourselves and our world all the time. This is how the ancient doctrine of the 'creation of all things out of nothing by God's Word' must be recast today.

Regular readers of Cupitt's apparently ceaseless output will find here all his familiar trademarks: a superb writing style, a moving honesty about his own experience, extreme subtlety combined with crass banality, a keenness to sweep away what he sees as theological cobwebs, wild generalisations and drastic oversimplifications which severely distort the history of thought, and a multitude of suggestive connections and fertile insights. Perhaps most striking in this book is his tendency to avoid any detailed debate with particular writers who might take a different approach. Opposing views are expressed so generally and crudely that one wonders how anyone could possibly hold them. No specific mention is made of a galaxy of scholars who have dealt with the issues he tackles with much

greater precision and have reached markedly different and considerably more positive conclusions: e.g. Gadamer, Habermas, MacIntyre, Soskice, Devitt, Bowker, Quinton.

Like much from the post-structuralist stable, the book is riven with contradictions which in the last resort bring Cupitt close to complete incoherence. (For Cupitt, of course, this would not necessarily be a criticism.) Let me briefly highlight four of these contradictions.

First, he repeatedly attacks the notion that thinkers – philosophers, theologians, theorists – should be allowed to lead the way in our culture. Yet his own view – which he appears to want us to embrace – has been advanced only by a tiny group of intellectuals, who have been bred within a highly elite and academic Western European philosophical tradition. The position he espouses is so counter-intuitive that it would be hard to see how anyone other than a tiny coterie of intellectuals (and Western post-Enlightenment intellectuals at that) would attempt to live by it. For Cupitt to describe his point of view as 'obvious' – even (in one place) 'blindingly obvious' – is simply absurd. There may indeed be forces present in our culture, which, if taken to their very limits lead in the direction which Cupitt expounds, but it is hard to see how ordinary people could possibly conduct their lives as if language was the all-embracing reality.

Second, he seems keen to distance himself from individualism – the social is prior to the individual, he insists – yet at the same time he renders the status of other people highly problematic. If there is no 'beyond' the language we use, why even postulate the existence of other language users? (What seems to have happened is that the individual has been so destabilised ('decentred', to use the postmodernist jargon) that an attempt is being made to look for some kind of centre of meaning elsewhere, in social reality. Logically, however, Cupitt's basic assumptions spell the collapse of any such attempt.)

Third, Cupitt, for whom human freedom has always been crucial, would like to believe that we can 'bend' language a little (p. 201): 'we seek to put a little spin on it, so as to reshape the world a little and make it express the meanings and values we'd like to see in it' (p. 153). But who or what is this 'we' that can shape language? The very notion of 'bending language' presupposes some kind of agency which performs the 'bending'. How can this be allowed, since Cupitt has already flattened out 'person', 'soul', 'mind', etc. into linguistic categories? 'We' are, after all, 'nothing but words'.

Fourth, a deeper inconsistency underlies nearly every page in this book, one which is not uncommon among others who have an ingrained distaste for the notion of absolute truth. Cupitt has written this volume presumably because he wishes us to share his point of view. It is not just that 203 pages of prose seems excessive if he only wants to entertain us. The tone is invariably insistent, passionate, urging, persuading. On the second page he tells us that 'A new mutation of Christianity is urgently awaited. . . . We must try to produce it' (My italics.) But, we might ask: why, on his own assumptions, should he be in the least concerned to convince us of anything at all if, as he puts it, 'there is no how it is' (p. 172), no Truth-with-a-capital-T? Why not leave us as we are, with our language? His use of words like 'better', 'more beautiful', 'liberating' to describe his own version of religion; his claim that the 'old realistically-defined problem of evil' is 'intellectual and moral self-deception'



followed by the extraordinary claim that 'people know that now' (p. 69); his vehement opposition to realism in any form — all this only heightens the contradiction. For how can any of these phrases make any sense except against the background of a conviction about how things actually are (or are not)? Even the claim that we can never know anything as it is in itself is a claim about reality as it is in itself, namely that it is unknowable. Cupitt is not unaware of this problem — it seems to cost him some anguish

(pp. 89ff.) — but his anxiety should have led him to abandon his spurious claim to be 'pluralist' (pp. 114f.) and 'metaphysically agnostic' (p. 156) when it is so glaringly clear that he is nothing of the sort.

It would of course be perverse in the extreme to pretend that Cupitt's proposals are consonant with mainstream Christianity. However, for those who can stomach it, much can be learned from working through a book like this.

For Cupitt thrusts before us a vision of that extreme fragmentation which is the end result of trying to locate the unity of creation in human thought and agency. Cupitt represents the underlying assumptions of post-Enlightenment Western culture pushed to their extreme, and we would be foolish not to face up to the profound challenges which his nightmarish vision poses, not least to theologians.

Jeremy Begbie, Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

## BOOK NOTES

### Analytical Key to the Old Testament, vol. 4: Isaiah—Malachi

John Joseph Owens

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989,

xi + 941 pp., \$34.95.

Students and teachers of the biblical languages often disagree sharply as to the merit and proper use of analytical lexica. But for those who find them valuable, this volume of a new series will probably prove to be the most 'user-friendly' tool so far created for the OT. Organized in verse-by-verse sequence, each word of the Hebrew and Aramaic appears on a separate line followed by its parsing or grammatical identification, the page number in Brown-Driver-Briggs on which that word's explanation begins, and a sample English translation often but not always paralleling the RSV.

### The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home

Jack O. Balswick and

Judith K. Balswick

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989,

325 pp., \$24.95.

Colleagues on the faculty of Fuller Seminary in California, this husband and wife team have co-authored a wide-ranging and scholarly yet readable digest of current literature on theological and social perspectives on family life. Charts and diagrams, and even well-chosen cartoons, amply illustrate and add interest to the text. The Balswicks treat mate selection, early years of marriage, parenting, sexuality, communication, power and empowering, stress, and divorce and remarriage. Secular studies are appreciatively cited but given sensitive Christian critique. The Balswicks' advice usually proves incisive and quite helpful, though occasionally they fail to note somewhat more conservative evangelical approaches, e.g. regarding divorce and homosexuality, and in at least one instance severe misrepresentation occurs when mate headship is equated with authoritarianism (p. 80).

### Turning To God: Biblical Conversion in the Modern World

David F. Wells

Exeter: Paternoster; Grand Rapids:

Baker, 1989, 160 pp., \$9.95 pb.

The Andrew Mutch Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Gordon-Conwell

Seminary near Boston explains that 'this book is a report and an interpretation of a consultation' jointly involving the World Evangelical Fellowship and the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. It defends two central theses against contemporary naturalism and pluralism: Christian conversion is supernatural and it is unique. Wells surveys the relevant biblical data, selected views from key stages of church history, and applications to would-be converts to Christianity from various other modern religions and ideologies. Periodically, he also interacts with key sociological and missiological debates.

### Old Testament Commentary Survey

Tremper Longman III

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991,

160 pp., \$10.95 pbk.

With the rapid proliferation of new commentary series, surveys of this nature, when done well, prove invaluable. Longman's is done very well. An introductory chapter surveys OT reference tools in a variety of categories; the bulk of the volume is a book-by-book analysis of the best commentaries of various purposes, levels and theological traditions. Longman recommends good evangelical work where it is available; where it is not, he does not hesitate to point students to the best of more critical scholarship. The book concludes with three helpful appendices: 'An OT Library on a Budget', 'The Ideal OT Reference Library', and 'Five-Star Commentaries' — Longman's 'Top 14'. Among them appear G. Wenham, B. Childs, R. Hubbard, H. Williamson, D. Clines, and J. Goldingay.

### The Variety of American Evangelicalism

Donald W. Dayton and

Robert K. Johnston (eds)

Knoxville, TN: University of

Tennessee Press, 1991,

viii + 285 pp., \$39.95.

Despite being horribly overpriced, this volume is one of the most important studies of American evangelicalism in recent years. Contributors from different theological traditions survey their own movements and assess to what extent the term 'evangelical' is an appropriate description of what they represent. Fundamentalists, Pentecostals, Adventists, Wesleyans, Restorationists, Blacks, Baptists,

Lutherans, Mennonites, and the Reformed all get a turn. The two editors themselves contribute articles, disagreeing over whether there are substantial enough similarities to make the term 'evangelical' meaningful as a cross-denominational label. Tim Weber helpfully suggests four subdivisions of evangelicals — classical, pietistic, fundamentalist and progressive. The same questions ought to be asked of the different branches of Christianity worldwide.

### Learning about Theology from the Third World

William A. Dyrness

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990,

222 pp., \$12.95 pbk.

Here is one of the best descriptions, written by a Westerner, of the major developments in Third World theology. Dyrness surveys, in turn, African attempts to relate to traditional culture, Latin American liberation theology, and Asian interaction with the transcendent in Eastern religions. While clearly conservative, Dyrness does a better job than many in listening to other voices and assessing them sympathetically before turning to any necessary criticisms. The volume affords an excellent and readable introduction to a remarkable array of foreign works, not all equally accessible in the English-speaking world.

### The Mission of the Church in the World: A Biblical Theology

Roger E. Hedlund

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991,

300 pp., \$16.95 pbk.

The compartmentalization of knowledge makes cross-disciplinary studies so difficult these days. Longtime missionary in India and church growth specialist, Hedlund makes a yeoman effort at mastering biblical studies in order to write a biblical theology of missions. He probably comes as close to pulling it off as any recent missiologist. At times he depends on outdated sources and betrays no awareness of recent biblical criticism, but in general this is the most comprehensive survey now available of the implications for evangelism and missions of each of the major sections of the biblical corpus.

Craig Blomberg, Denver Seminary.

## BOOK REVIEWS

- J.E. Goldingay *Daniel* (WBC 30) (Richard A. Taylor)
- R.J. Coggins *Introducing the Old Testament* (Oxford Bible Series) (R.W.L. Moberly)
- Graham N. Stanton *The Gospels and Jesus* (Oxford Bible Series)
- Michael Goulder *The Prayers of David* (Psalms 51-72) (W. Riggans)
- John Nolland *Luke 1-9:20* (Mike Nola)
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built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus  
himself as the chief cornerstone  
(Ephesians 2:20)

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