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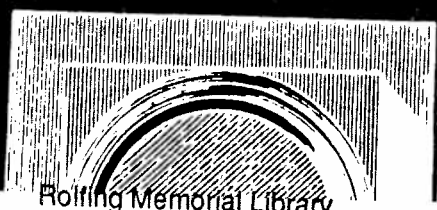
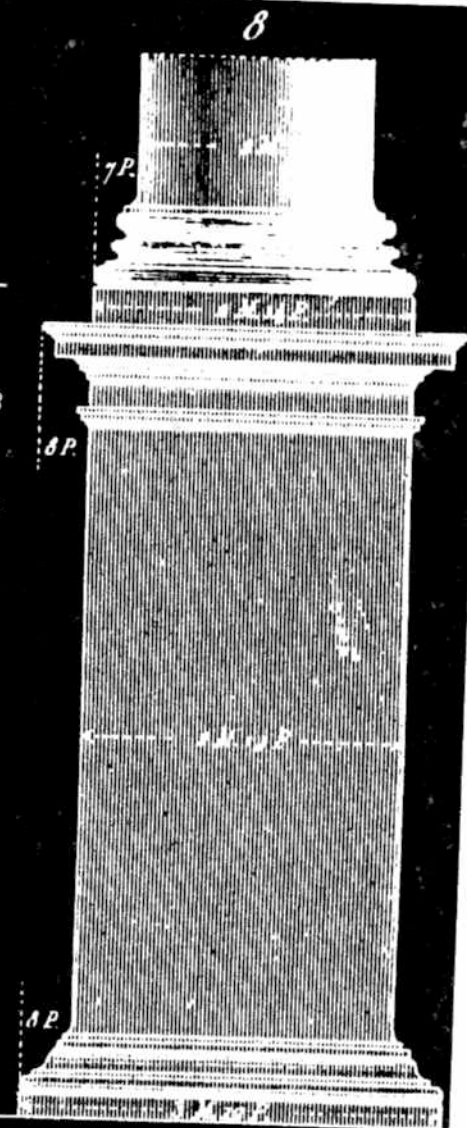
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Vol. 20 No. 3

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Editorial: End of the Millennium

Stephen Williams

Right now, in grand institutions and in humble homesteads, in the churches and outside them, plenty of folk are preparing for the end of the millennium. Not even Methuselah could have celebrated two such occasions; it will not come our way again; so it behoves us all to seize the opportunity and mark the occasion with our celebrations. Governments with precious little to celebrate in terms of their political track record are planning to unite their people with a display of gladness and hope. Individuals with precious little to celebrate in terms of their personal circumstances are planning to renew their lives with a like display. At least, these are the appearances. Of course, there is another side to things. Whatever the public profile, Thoreau's words remain hauntingly apt: 'The mass of people lead lives of quiet desperation.'

As the build-up commences, we may lament people's willingness to be distracted. We know how the grand occasion, the momentous event, the televised tragedy, provide us with a welcome opportunity to be spectators. As participants in life, we find our fortunes to be pretty shabby, so it is a relief to attend, with the best of reasons, to the Great Event. Indeed, we are sometimes participants, and not mere spectators, in these things. However, our participation is still a break from the routine of life or from its long-term prospects and so there is the element of distraction. But many of us, as Christians, will find in the figure 2000 no magic to lure us or mystique to enthrall us, just yet another sign, albeit dramatic, of our human determination to prefer fantasy to reality.

On the other hand, we may often lament people's *unwillingness* to be distracted. In my student days, a bunch of frustrated evangelical theology students nailed, one Thursday evening, a notice to the entrance door of a prestigious University Divinity School. It read: 'Due to unforeseen events, no classes will be held this Friday. Lectures will resume on Monday, after the Parousia.' Rightly or wrongly, it was felt that the love of theological ideas had absurdly wrenched the great Christian realities from the grasp of those dedicated to thinking about them. Unwillingness to be distracted from one's thoughts, including the thought of the Parousia itself, was a demoralizing sign that theological centres and religious centrality can fly apart.

All in all, we are surely justified in preparing ourselves for the possibility that 2000 will mark up a new stage in the problem of recalling the world and the church from its willingness or unwillingness to be falsely or rightly distracted. No more than the possibility: we always hope that the return of the Lord is imminent. But talk of the return of the Lord, long incredible to many people, could become doubly so in the third millennium. And talk of the Lord at all, also incredible to many people, could encounter the same fate. Admittedly, this is a largely Western point of view at the moment of writing. We are familiar enough with the way in which religious belief in its traditional Christian form is, at best, an anachronism, in the eyes of many. Indeed, it has become something of an anachronism to call it an anachronism, for we are equally familiar with the fact that many have declared war on religious belief in its traditional Christian form, regarding it as a living poison, not a bulky corpse, an antagonist more than an anachronism. In 2000, will some not draw a deep breath and say: 'This we have had for two thousand years; let the ages of liberty now begin'? We may be

very hopeful about keeping the language of Christian faith and eschatological hope alive until the year 2000. In fact, we may think that our language has a better chance than it has had for a long time, of edging in to the realm of public discourse, expectation, hope and anticipation. By all means, let us take encouragement from such a possibility and seize any opportunities that our day affords. But let us also in faith, not in faithlessness, anticipate the possibility that our difficulties in persuasion and communication will be enhanced if a new millennium gets under way in continuity with the old.

It is a warning apt for those of us engaged in theological study. For while a large number of people may be open – even increasingly open – to the gospel, intellectual currents of our day continue to flow in a direction away from the credibility of Christianity. As theologians, we can be incredibly cloistered, confusing the world of theological exchange with the world of personal realities. We distortedly think of the Department of Theology as a microcosm of the world. And yet, the world of theological exchange *is* a world of personal realities; it is just that it is not the whole of it. But ideas formulated, transmitted, challenged, scorned, embraced, in lectures, seminars, arguments, essays, journals, can form, malform, deform, reform, transform the persons who trade in them. We may easily get the battle of ideas out of perspective. And we may easily confuse between those ideas which basically matter and those which basically do not. Yet, thoughts matter, as every student of the Bible will know. And if the advent of the third millennium does not demonstrate that to us, the advent of that Day will.

The mood and tone of this editorial are not designed to set the mood and tone of those which, *d.v.*, will follow. But it is as well to set the work of *Themelios* in the context of the coming end of the millennium. For, like it or not, consciousness of the calendar will be the backdrop of much (though certainly not all) of the thinking and planning of those whose situation allows or impels them to think and to plan very much. Be that as it may, our confidence in Christ need not wane and can certainly grow as the ages run their course. We do well to ponder, in conclusion, words written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer over half a century ago:

In Soloviev's story of the Antichrist, in the last days before Christ's return, the heads of the persecuted churches discuss the question of what is for each of them the most precious thing in Christianity; the decisive answer is that the most precious thing in Christianity is Jesus Christ Himself. That is to say, that in the fact of Antichrist only one thing has force and permanence, and that is Christ Himself. Only he who shares in Him has the power to withstand and to overcome. He is the centre and the strength of the Bible, of the Church, and of theology, but also of humanity, of reason, of justice and of culture. Everything must return to Him; it is only under His protection that it can live. There seems to be a general unconscious knowledge, which, in the hour of ultimate peril, leads everything which desires not to fall victim to the Antichrist to take refuge with Christ.¹

Whether or not there is unconscious knowledge, Christ will one day be revealed as the unassailable truth. We work in the light of that for which we wait.

¹D. Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (Macmillan, New York: 1965), p. 56.

Living theologically: toward a theology of Christian practice

R. Paul Stevens

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I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen – not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else.
C.S. Lewis

Living theologically – my title is an oxymoron, like black light, constructive criticism, or servant leadership – two ideas that normally do not belong together. What has theology to do with everyday life?

Theology is usually considered an abstract discipline. It is rational, reducible to propositions, and capable of being categorized (liberal, conservative, evangelical, Reformed, liberation). It is not usually thought of as practical. People in business, law, the professions and the trades often regard the study of theology as a process of becoming progressively irrelevant. The hardest words of critique are offered by insiders. For example, Lesslie Newbigin says:

Christian men and women who are deeply involved in secular affairs view theology as the arcane pursuit of professional clergymen. This withdrawal of theology from the world of secular affairs is made all the more complete by the work of biblical scholars whose endlessly fascinating exercises have made it appear to the lay Christian that no one untrained in their methods can really understand anything the Bible says. We are in a situation analogous to one about which the great Reformers complained. . . .¹

Theology! God-words. God-study. God-thought.

Then there is life! Everyday life. Getting up in the morning life. Paying the bills life. Watching a hockey game life. Trying to find a job life. Trying to say 'I love you' to your spouse life. Raising a family in a postmodern culture life. Computers, credit cards, freeways, gridlock, virtual reality, running a small business, movies, the economy, racial tension, sexual appetite, recession, radar imaging from satellites, fashion, television, ambition, workaholicism, debt, prayer, Bible study, theological discourse – what do these have in common?

It should be obvious that I am pleading for a different definition of theology than what is commonly thought, one closer to the Bible.² Such is supplied by the Puritan William Perkins, who said, 'Theology is the science of living blessedly forever'.³ J.I. Packer, in the same tradition, says that theology is for achieving God's glory (honour and praise) and humankind's good (the godliness that is true humanness) through every life-activity.⁴ If these definitions come close to capturing the biblical approach to theological education then the only theology that is truly Christian is one being applied. I would not want to be a professor of unapplied theology! One reason is that the movement of the Bible is always from the indicative to the imperative, from doctrine to duty, from kerygma to didache, from theology to ethics, from revealed truth to extraordinary living. Francis of Assisi once said that humankind has as much knowledge as it has executed. That means that what you really know – in the fully biblical and Hebraic sense – is what you live. You have passed some examinations and written some academic papers. But these are trivial tests compared with life itself. For example, James Houston recently suggested at a pastors' conference that the curriculum vitae of a pastor is usually written on the face of his wife. There was a stunned silence among the predominantly male audience.

In this paper I will explore the life–theology connection by looking through three lenses, each providing a way of looking at the rich connection designed by God but largely fragmented in contemporary theological education.

1. Orthodoxy

Orthodoxy is made up of two words, one of which meaning 'straight' or 'right' (from which we get the English word orthodontist, the person who makes straight teeth) and the Greek word for 'glory' or 'worship' – *doxa*. Doctrine that lines itself up (*ortho*) with Scripture is designed to be a blessing to everyday life and, at the same time, to bless God (*doxa*) in life itself. It aims, as Packer says, at true godliness that is true humanness.

*Redeeming the routine*⁵

The whole of our life has the glorious prospect of living out the great doctrines of the faith. The doctrine of the Trinity, for example, directs God-imaging creatures to live relationally. Those who proclaim that God is love are invited to be included in the love-life of God and so become lovers themselves (Jn. 17:21). To believe in God the creator is to accept trusteeship of the earth. The incarnation revolutionizes our attitude to things and promotes a radical Christian materialism. The atonement equips us to live mercifully. Ecclesiology evokes the experience of peoplehood, living as the *laos* of God rather than a bouquet of individual believers. Eschatology teaches us to view time as a gift of God rather than a resource to be managed.

All of this involves straight thought. Far from denigrating thought, the Bible invites us to love God with our minds (Mt. 22:37) by thinking comprehensively (taking the whole into consideration, including paradox, ambiguity and the aesthetic), thinking critically (not allowing our minds to be conformed to this age), thinking devotedly (by taking captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ – 2 Cor. 10:5). The fruit of such thinking should be a blessing for everyday life. Thinking Christianly is part of the 'science of living blessedly forever'.

The danger of unapplied theology

But orthodoxy involves more than merely speaking correctly about God. We could do that and still be damned, like the friends of Job – Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar – who spoke with impeccable correctness about God but in the end received God's judgment: 'I am angry with you [Eliphaz] and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has' (Job 42:7). Remarkably, God judged Job as orthodox and his friends (who could have had degrees from both Fuller and Regent) as heretics. Why? It is not only a fascinating question but a vital one.

A careful study of the book of Job reveals that the only authentic theologian in the book was Job himself. The reason is sublimely simple: while the friends talked about God, Job talked to God. P.T. Forsyth says that 'the best theology is compressed prayer'.⁶ While Job's friends delivered their lectures about God, Job talked to God, and in so speaking – with all his holy boldness – he spoke well of God. His theology was orthodox. We will return to this later.

The danger of mere intellectual orthodoxy is that we are tempted to think we can manage God. Our doctrines then become idols – static, fixed and inflexible. According to Psalm 115:8, 'those who make [such idols] will be like them'. They will

become people who are static, inflexible and unsurprising. In contrast, the Lord 'does whatever pleases him' (115:3). And those who worship the Lord become free and spontaneous. God can never be contained by the human mind. If he could then God would be too puny a God to be worshipped. The point of theology is to understand God (to stand *under* God in reverent awe), not to over-stand God by attempting to control him through theological discourse. Much that passes for theological education is the extension of the tree of knowledge of good and evil through history offering the temptation to transcend our creatureliness. True worship is the opposite invitation. Orthodoxy welcomes mystery and confesses with Job, 'these are but the outskirts of his ways' (Job 26:14 KJV). As Robert Capon said: 'The work of theology in our day is not so much interpretation as contemplation . . . God and the world need to be held up for oohs and ahhs before they can be safely analyzed. Theology begins with admiration, not problems.'⁷ So orthodoxy is about worshipful living.

Truthful living for God's glory

Doctrine that does not lead to doxology is demonic (Jas. 2:19). That is why those who set out together on a theological education experience are on a dangerous journey. We must make sure we are heading in the right (orthodox) direction. The goal of biblical theological education is to increase our love for God and to make us more human. For this reason the academy must work in partnership with the church and the marketplace since there is in these real-life ministry and life situations a built-in reality check. More important, there is a built-in love check. We cannot learn to love the church as Christ does (Eph. 5:25) without being in both Christ and the church. The church cannot be loved *in absentia* the way some people get their degrees. The congregation is essential for our God-given goal of forming people who will worship God through preaching, examining a balance sheet, preparing a family meal, praying with a friend, pruning their rose bushes, and equipping the saints.⁸ According to Ephesians the purpose of congregation and life-based education is that the saints will live for the praise of God's glory (1:12, 14) – that is, to live doxologically.

So, looking at the theology and everyday life connection through the lens of orthodoxy, we see that the great doctrines of the faith beg for application. They bless everyday life. They point us simultaneously to the adoration of God and to the possibility of living a genuinely human existence. But we must now look through a second lens – orthopraxy – to discover what is involved in the connection of theology and daily life. Orthopraxy literally means right or straight practice.

2. Orthopraxy

We are in desperate need today of a theology of good works, especially evangelicals. We are saved by grace and not by works – that is the gospel. Further, faith without works is dead – and that is part of the gospel too. But how can people saved by grace work? What is right practice? When is a work Christian?

Humanizing theological living

Is it evangelism, preaching, pastoral care, counselling – all the subjects loosely called 'applied theology' or 'ministry division' courses? I can only point in passing to the fine piece of analysis done on right practice by Craig Dykstra.⁹ Dykstra notes the ubiquitous tension between the so-called academic fields of theology, Bible, history, ethics (disciplines in which practice is thought to have no intrinsic place) – and the applied theology division which is often relegated, in some people's minds, to 'how to' techniques for clergy. It is now widely recognized in theological circles that we must break out of the dichotomy of practical skills and theoretical knowledge. Perhaps we will never resolve the tension. Indeed, we may better speak of useful and fruitful tension as we work on integration. As we do this we can put the question differently along these lines: what is theological about praxis and what is practical about theology?

In contrast to the dichotomizing of theology and practice in the theological academy today, the NT presupposes a community in which every person is a theologian of application, trying to make sense out of his or her life in order to live for the praise of God's glory.¹⁰ On the most basic level orthopraxy is

about practices that are in harmony with God's kingdom in the church and world, that bring value and good into the world. It is not obvious, however, that one cannot do the doctrine fully in a classroom or library, or learn the doctrine in the classroom and do it later. Instead of training for ministry and then going into it, we assume you should not 'go into the ministry' unless you are already 'in it'. The best education is education *in* ministry and not just *for* it. It is transformative not preparatory.¹¹ Behind this is an important principle of spiritual theology: any attempt to know God apart from the activities of life is unreal.¹² My own experience is illustrative. After two years in theological college I was suffering from academic burn-out. My wife and I moved into the slums of Montreal and tried to serve God in an inner-city church while I continued my M. Div. part-time. This rejuvenated my theological education. I engaged every course with questions that came out of daily ministry and our immersion in the poverty of the city. This points to a truth we must explore, that there is more to orthopraxis than application. There is revelation and illumination.

Knowing through doing

There is a growing critique of the traditional linear, cause-effect approach in theological education: first you get the theology and then you apply it. In contrast, we must aim at a circle of learning: theory expressed in practice, which leads to deeper theoretical/theological reflection, which leads to praxis again, and on it goes. We should speak of this as a spiral of learning as we keep re-entering each phase at a deeper level.¹³ Obviously by relegating praxis to the post-academy experience we are short-changing learning. Perhaps this is easier to grasp in Africa or Asia than in the West. The orthodoxy-orthopraxy tension in the West reflects the intrinsic dualism of Western civilization, and the lingering effects of the Enlightenment.

In contrast, the Bible invites us to wholistic living that embraces propositional truth, as well as truth learned through image, imagination and action, all a seamless robe. For example, the apostle Paul hammered out his doctrine of justification by faith in the context of the Gentile mission. He was a missionary theologian. Ray S. Anderson notes, 'Paul's theology and mission were directed more by the Pentecost event which unleashed the Spirit of Christ through apostolic witness rather than through apostolic office. This praxis of Pentecost became for Paul the "school" for theological reflection.'¹⁴ The gospels point to the same unity of knowledge. Many of the commands of Jesus link revelation with obedience: 'If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love' (Jn. 15:10); 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples' (8:31); 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death' (8:51). Sometimes Jesus invited people to 'believe this'; more often Jesus said 'do this and you will live' (Lk. 10:28; see also Mt. 19:21). Especially in the Gospel of Luke Jesus teaches that obedient action is the organ of further revelation. If they do not obey the law and the prophets, he said, 'they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead' (Lk. 16:31). He puts these words on the lips of Abraham in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus and proclaims that even his resurrection from the grave will have no evidential apologetic value if they are not acting on the light they have. We know more through doing what we already know.

Biblical theological education is not inert theology and unreflective action but 'praxis-laden theory' and 'theory-laden praxis'.¹⁵ Immanuel Kant said something similar when he offered the maxim that experience without theory is blind but theory without experience is mere intellectual play.¹⁶ What we can learn by doing is much more than simple technique. Every action has implicit theory just as every theory has implicit action. So theological reflection *in* ministry or a societal occupation is essential to living theologically. But in these things we are not trying to squeeze blood from a rock. Daily life is bursting with theological meaning just as theological truth is laden with blessing for daily life. God can be known and loved through praxis in the realities of everyday life. What a strange marriage psychology would require one to love fully and only then to kiss, rather than to kiss in order to love! What a strange perversion of the Christian life that would forbid one to act until one knows, and not act in order to know! We are formed theologically not only by reading and reasoning but by action and by service.

My own story may be illustrative. I abandoned professional ministry at thirty-eight years of age, took up the trade of carpentry for five years and planted a church. It proved to be a theological education immersion experience. I learned theology through that.¹⁷ I prayed as much as a carpenter as I did as a pastor, possibly more, because I was so frequently beyond my comfort zone. But the experience deepened my theology and spirituality. Indeed, as Eberhard Jüngel said, 'Everything can become the theme of theology on the basis of its relation to God.'¹⁸ In this we have a clue to our basic question – what makes practice Christian?

Inside Christian practice

What makes an activity Christian is not the husk but the heart. Preaching, caring for the flock and equipping the saints can be profoundly secular. Listening to a child, designing a software package, and examining a balance sheet can be profoundly Christian. What makes a work Christian is faith, hope and love. This is a crucial point. Orthopraxy is not merely accomplished by the skilful performance of ministerial duties like leading Bible studies, praying for the sick and doing acts of justice. This misunderstanding has seduced many non-clergy laity to aspire to ministerial duties in order to be 'doing ministry'. They become paraclergy instead of regarding their ordinary service in the world as full-time ministry. It is not the religious character of the work that makes service Christian but the interiority of it. William Tyndale said, 'There is no work better than another to please God; to pour water, to wash dishes, to be a souter [cobbler], or an apostle, all are one, as touching the deed, to please God.'¹⁹ I can preach a sermon to impress people; I can fix our shower door at home for the glory of God. I have probably done both. The difference is faith.

Luther deals with this brilliantly in his *Treatise on Good Works*. He uses the analogy of husband and wife as an example of the Christian practices that spring from gospel confidence. Where the husband is confident of his acceptance he does not have to do big things to win his wife's favour. In the same way the person who lives by the gospel 'simply serves God with no thought of reward, content that his service pleases God. On the other hand, he who is not at one with God, or is in a state of doubt, worries and starts looking for ways and means to do enough and to influence God with his many good works'.²⁰ Faith defines orthopraxy. Faith by definition cannot be calculating, or even self-evaluative, just as the eye cannot look at itself, designed as it is for looking at another. When the eye is single or sound the whole of one's bodily life is filled with the light of Christ (Lk. 11:34-36). Life centred on God transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary so we discover what Alfons Auer described as 'the sense of *transparency in worldly matters*'.²¹

The unselfconsciousness of such faith is the matter raised by the disturbing parable of the sheep and the goats (Mt. 25:31-46). The unrighteous protest that if they had seen Jesus in the poor, hungry or stranger, even if they had known Jesus was disguised in the poor, they would gladly have done a service directly to the Lord. So the unrighteous are surprised that their failure to love their neighbour was a failure to love Jesus. They would have gladly done Christian practices for Jesus but not for others! Apparently that is not enough. In contrast the righteous found to their exquisite surprise that what they did not regard as a ministry to Jesus (but just loving their neighbour) turned out to be a Christian practice approved by the Lord. They too protest, 'Lord, when did we see you, hungry, naked and thirsty, and feed you?' Jesus says, 'Whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers, you did for me' (25:40). We onlookers are caught up in the parable and are surprised also by the implication that compassionate actions (surely intrinsically Christian practices) are Christian precisely because they did not have a spiritual reward in view! They are Christian, Luther would say, because they arise from gospel confidence, from the generosity of a heart set free by acceptance in Christ. It is this element of surprise for which we are least prepared when we ponder the parable. Perhaps the purpose of theological education is to set us up to be as surprised as the righteous on the day of judgment to discover we acted in love without knowing it was for and to Jesus.

True Christian action – orthopraxy – is gratuitous, free from contrivance, free from a calculating spirit, free from contract – I do this for God and he does that for me. Orthopractic living is essentially spontaneous. With Jesus in our hearts we love

because there is someone in need, not to gain approval by God or to receive the benefits of Christian action. This is the issue behind the question that dominates the book of Job. Satan said, 'Does Job serve God for nothing?' (Job 1:9). In the end our own service to God can be tested by the same probing question. One of the great lessons of the book of Job is this: Job proves that faith is not for the this-life benefits of having faith. Not for healing (indeed he never even prays for healing); not for the restoration of his fortunes (this comes after he meets God again). Faith is for the glory of God. Christian practice, whether developing a compensation package for a business or empowering the poor, is for God's glory. The South American liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez comments on this insightfully (and remarkably in view of his theological orientation):

The truth that [Job] has grasped and that has lifted him to the level of contemplation is that justice alone does not have the final say about how we are to speak of God. Only when we have come to realize that God's love is freely bestowed do we enter fully and definitively into the presence of the God of faith . . . God's love, like all true love, operates in a world not of cause and effect but of freedom and gratuitiveness.²²

Orthopraxy is action in harmony with God's purposes in which we can discover God and his truth. Orthopraxy is not necessarily clerical, though it includes the work of the pastor. Whether washing dishes or preaching, being a cobbler or an apostle, 'all is one, as touching the deed, to please God'. Orthopraxis is not measured by excellence, by efficiency, or by its religious character, but by faith, hope and love. We must cultivate the heart and not merely the husk of such action. But that points to a third lens through which to investigate the theology-life connection: orthopathy.

Orthopathy literally means right passion. The word was coined by Dr Richard Mouw. There is also a hint in the writings of the Jewish author Abraham Heschel who said the prophets embodied the divine pathos, that is, what God cares for.

3. Orthopathy

The cultivation of the heart – a more wholistic way of knowing – is the very thing our postmodern culture is inviting.²³ But the biblical response to the postmodern challenge is not to abandon reason but to allow God to evangelize our hearts as well as our heads, to care for what God cares for. As Micah said, 'He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God' (Mi. 6:8). How can theological education cultivate these? Such orthopathic education would require healing the fragmentation of theological knowledge and recovering the view promoted in the Middle Ages that theology is a *habitus*,²⁴ a disposition of the soul. As a practical knowledge of God unifying head and heart, theology has the character of wisdom. But where do we get wisdom?

Educating the heart

It is often conceded that the academy cannot be a solo educator, but there is little evidence that the academy needs the home, the congregation and the marketplace, though all four are linked by God in a daily life system for learning. The first school, of course, is the home. The congregation and the academy are poor substitutes when it comes to the education of the heart. I refer to my own orthopathic education in a story I develop in *Disciplines of the Hungry Heart*.

Though my parents never intended it, their spiritual nurturing included exposing me to the ministry of the poor to the rich. They built our lovely family home on a three-acre plot next door to a one-room shack without water, electricity, indoor plumbing or a furnace. Albert Jupp lived with his aged and ill mother in that smelly, dank shack. As he was occupied with the care of his mother, Albert was unable to hold down a steady job. Somehow he eked out an existence beside the Stevens, his rich next-door neighbours. Today the rich hardly see the poor except on television or from an air-conditioned tour bus.

Each night Albert would get a pail of water at our outside tap, which was always kept running, even in the dead of winter when our neighbours had their taps safely protected from freezing. My mother was one of the most generous souls on

earth, and her sensitive conscience would not allow her to set a fine meal before our family without thinking of Albert and his mother. So night after night I was asked to make a pilgrimage up the hill to the shack with two portions from our table for our poor neighbours. I confess that as a teenager I usually resented doing this. But what I think was bothering me was how that nightly visit to the Jupps made me think about my own existence as a rich young man. Daily I was confronted existentially with the truth that the rich cannot know God well without relating to the poor. My neighbour made an evangelical invitation to my heart.

In a remarkable series of seven sermons on the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the fourth-century Church Father John Chrysostom addressed the illusions of wealth. In these prophetic sermons, Chrysostom argues that the rich are not owners of their wealth but stewards for the poor.²⁵ Appealing to the prophets of the OT (Mal. 3:8-10), Chrysostom warns about the spiritual dangers of the rich. 'The most pitiable person of all', he says, 'is the one who lives in luxury and shares his goods with nobody.'²⁶ In contrast, 'by nourishing Christ in poverty here and laying up great profit hereafter we will be able to attain the good things which are to come'.²⁷ In this last quotation Chrysostom hints that ministering to the poor simultaneously heals the hearts of the rich and nourishes Jesus. What should be observed is the truth that God has provided for the education of our hearts in love and compassion through our everyday family experiences and through our neighbour. Both are a means of grace.

Neighbour as educator

As we have already seen, the neighbour becomes a means of grace precisely when the neighbour is taken seriously as neighbour and not as a means of grace! We cannot simply deal with the poor, the stranger and the outsider in principle, or engage in theoretical or strategic considerations of how to care for our global neighbours. It is in the context of actual neighbour-relationships that we are invited to live the life of faith. It is precisely in the unplanned and uncontrollable circumstances of our lives that we can find God and be found by him. Bonhoeffer spoke to this with great depth in a conversation he reports he had with a young French pastor.

I discovered later, and I'm still discovering right up to this moment, that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith. . . . By this worldliness I mean living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failures, experiences and perplexities. In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God.²⁸

We find God (and get our hearts educated) in the centre of life rather than the circumference. This was the case for Job.

Passion for God

Job is a stunning example of orthopathy. His school was his life. He, like David, was a man after God's own heart. As he went through test after test, sometimes with obvious weariness, Job began to want God more than he wanted health. Indeed – and this is seldom noted – Job never asked for healing. What he wanted was the friendship of God (Job 29:4). So most of Job's speeches are directed to God, inquiring of God, challenging God, exploring God, demanding of God, confronting God with holy persistence (Jas. 5:11). At times I think his orthodox friends with degrees from Regent and Fuller may have hid under the table expecting God to liquidate him for his impertinence. But in the end the God-talkers were condemned and Job was justified, being blessed with a first-hand experience of God (42:5). Was this because Job spoke well of God (the primary theological task) *by speaking to him boldly, with passionate faith* (the primary theological method)?

Job used his experience of the absence of God in order to know God better. P.T. Forsyth once said, 'Prayer is to the religious life what original research is for science – by it we get direct contact with reality.'²⁹ Job was not a half-hearted researcher. He took God on, like Abraham pleading, Jacob refusing to let God go until he had blessed him, like the Syro-Phoenician woman begging for crumbs under the table, like Paul asking three times for the thorn to be removed, like – dare we say it? – Jesus in the garden exploring his own heart options with the Father until he could freely do the Father's will through

submission rather than compliance. Job withstanding God, wrestling with God, extracting revelation from God and in the end knowing God – is this orthopathy? Is this proof positive that the kingdom of God is not for the mildly interested but the desperate? God-knowers (orthodox, orthopractic theologians) will 'take' the kingdom by violent, passionate (orthopathic) faith (Mt. 11:12). Luther described the qualifications of a theologian this way: 'living, or rather dying and being damned make a theologian, not understanding, reading or speculating'.³⁰ By undergoing the torment of the cross, death and hell, true theology and the knowledge of God come about. Job, the OT theologian, would say 'Amen'. Caring for what concerns God, caring for God's concerns in daily life, and caring for God above all – this is orthopathy.

In conclusion

Orthodoxy. Orthopraxy. Orthopathy. All three point to the marriage of theology and everyday life: theology and life linked in praise (orthodoxy), practice (orthopraxy) and passion (orthopathy). What God therefore has joined together let no theological institution put asunder.

Might not the most pernicious heresy in the church today be the disharmony between those who claim to be theologically approved but live as practical atheists? Is the greatest challenge not graduating from Regent or Fuller, but in the end, at the conclusion of our life-long theological education, having the Lord say, 'I know you'? Would not the most fearful failure be to have God say, 'I never knew you' (Mt. 7:23; 25:12)?

One of the Desert Fathers was approached by an eager young student who said, 'Abba, give me a word from God.' The wise mentor asked if the student would agree not to come back until he had fully lived the word.

'Yes,' the eager young student said.

'Then this is the word of God: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind."' The young man disappeared, it seemed forever.

Twenty-five years later the student had the temerity to come back. 'I have lived the word you gave. Do you have another word?'

'Yes,' said the Desert Father. 'But once again you must not come back until you have lived it.'

'I agree.'

'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

The student never came back.

²⁵Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 142–143.

²⁶The working definition of theological education developed within the Coalition for the Ministry in Daily Life is as follows: 'Theological education for all the people of God is the life-long, life-based (rooted in life and not abstracted), and life-oriented (directed toward the totality of life) process of forming and transforming persons, communities, organizations and institutions into Christian maturity for the purpose of serving God and God's purposes in the world' ('Consultation on Ministry in Daily Life: Task Group Report', 14 November, 1992).

²⁷*The Golden Chain* (1592), in Ian Breward (ed.), *The Work of William Perkins* (Appleford: Courtney Press, 1970), p. 177.

²⁸From a lecture at Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., September 1992.

²⁹This is the title of the excellent book by my friend Robert Banks (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1993).

³⁰P.T. Forsyth, *The Soul of Prayer* (London: The Independent Press, 1916/1954), p. 11.

³¹Robert Farrar Capon, *An Offering of Uncles: The Priesthood of Adam and the Shape of the World* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), p. 163.

³²A strand of witness through the OT and NT points to education in the thick of life and in the context of daily ministry: the family as the primary educational unit; the reinforcement of public festivals; structured patterns of instruction through creeds and stories; the schools of the prophets; congregational instruction in the synagogue; the disciple community around Jesus engaged in action as well as withdrawal for reflection; Paul's travelling seminary with his missionary co-workers (Timothy, Gaius, Tychicus and Trophimus); the Hall of Tyrannus as education in the marketplace (Acts 19:9-10); and the local household churches, undoubtedly the primary place for the education of the whole people of God.

³³Craig Dykstra, 'Reconceiving Practice', in Barbara Wheeler and

Edward Farley (eds), *Shifting Boundaries* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), pp. 35–36. Dykstra defines a Christian practice (as distinct from activities) as inherently cooperative (not a solo action), inherently good (generates value), and inherently revelatory (bears epistemological weight). Unfortunately he then lists as Christian practices those activities which could appear obviously to be done in the name of Jesus: interpreting Scripture, worship and prayer, confession and reconciliation, service, witness, social criticism, and the mutual bearing of suffering (pp. 45, 48).

¹⁰While the Bible offers several models of and contexts for theological education, there are some consistent themes: (1) it is community-oriented rather than individualistic; (2) cooperative rather than competitive; (3) life-centred rather than school-based; (4) transformational rather than exclusively informational; (5) life-long rather than seasonal, packaged and concentrated; (6) available to all the people of God rather than to a clerical elite; and (7) concerned with equipping the people of God both for service in the church (the *ecclesia*) and for societal service to God (the *diaspora*).

¹¹Extensive research and theological reflection on the congregation as the centre for spiritual and theological formation has recently taken place. Representative of this are the following: Craig Dykstra, 'Reconceiving Practice', in Barbara Wheeler and Edward Farley (eds), *Shifting Boundaries* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox, 1991); Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Joseph C. Hough and Barbara Wheeler (eds), *Beyond Clericalism: The Congregation as a Focus for Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

¹²I attribute this thought to a formative paper delivered by Dr F.W. Waters in 1962, 'Knowing God Through Thinking and Service', a presentation that started my own journey of integration.

¹³See Max Stackhouse's discussion of *theoria, praxis* and *poesis* in Max Stackhouse, *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988). His approach does not negate the importance of straight thinking: indeed, he critiques liberation theology for its faulty *theoria* on pp. 84–105.

¹⁴Ray S. Anderson, *The Praxis of Pentecost: Revisioning the Church's Life and Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), p. 196.

¹⁵Philip S. Keane and Melanie A. May, 'What Is the Character of Teaching, Learning, and the Scholarly Task in the Good Theological School?', *Theological Education* XXX No. 2 (Spring 1994), p. 40.

¹⁶Quoted in Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *General System Theory* (New York: George Braziller, 1968), p. 101.

¹⁷The reflection that was inspired by this practice is documented in *Liberating the Laity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985).

¹⁸Eberhard Jüngel, *The Freedom of a Christian: Luther's Significance for Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1988), p. 22.

¹⁹William Tyndale, 'A Parable of the Wicked Mammon' (1527), in *Treatises and Portions of Holy Scripture* (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1848), pp. 98, 104.

²⁰Martin Luther, 'Treatise on Good Works', W.A. Lambert (trans.), James Atkinson (ed.), *Luther's Works* Vol. 44 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 26–27.

²¹Auer, *op. cit.*, p. 230 (italics mine).

²²Gustavo Gutierrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987/88), p. 87.

²³See Stanley J. Grenz, 'Star Trek and the Next Generation: Postmodernism and the Future of Evangelical Theology Today', *Cruce* XXX No. 1 (March 1994), pp. 24–32.

²⁴Farley, 'Interpreting Situations', p. 18.

²⁵St John Chrysostom, *On Wealth and Poverty*, trans. Catherine P. Roth (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), p. 50.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 55, emphasis mine.

²⁸Dietrich Bonhoeffer in a letter from Tegel Prison 1944, quoted in Melanie Morrison, 'As One Who Stands Convicted', *Sojourners*, May 1979, p. 15.

²⁹P.T. Forsyth, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

³⁰D.M. Luthers Werke: *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar, 1993–), 5: 163: 28–29, quoted in Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 152.

The fallacy of contextualism

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In the last several decades both philosophy and theology have increasingly taken a 'contextual turn'. The contextual turn begins with the observation that all of human enquiry occurs within contexts. By itself this observation is perfectly innocuous. It is patently obvious that each of us thinks and moves within certain social, linguistic and epistemic contexts. We are not disembodied spirits living in a Platonic heaven, but flesh and blood people living at certain concrete times and places.

The observation that all human enquiry occurs within contexts (and is thereby constrained by contexts) is uncontroversial. Nevertheless, controversy does arise when we move beyond this simple observation, and embrace the dogma that all human enquiry is inescapably imprisoned within and thereby incorrigibly skewed by contexts. It is one thing to admit that enquiry occurs within contexts and is thereby constrained by contexts. It is quite another to assert that contexts so bias enquiry that our beliefs about the world are invariably warped.

Thus we see the contextual turn taking two forms, one moderate, the other hard-core. Of these I am entirely in sympathy with the moderate turn. Indeed, I regard human enquiry as functioning essentially within contexts, and thus regard the recent elevation of the epistemic status of contexts as salutary for the field of epistemology. In particular, moderate contextualism, as we may call it, uncovers the pretensions of

positivism, which in line with the Enlightenment vision of reason, claims the ability to settle all our questions at the bar of Reason writ large. Against this inflated view of human reason, moderate contextualism affirms that all instances of human enquiry occur within contexts and must therefore acknowledge the role of contexts in shaping how we view the world. Reason functions within context and cannot be divorced from context. According to moderate contextualism, reason is to context as soul is to body. Objectivity is not lost by acknowledging the role that background information, or equivalently contexts, play in shaping how we acquire new information and thereby learn about the world. Moderate contextualism, while acknowledging the obvious, does not open the door to unbridled scepticism or relativism.

Moderate contextualism as the view that all human enquiry occurs within and is constrained by contexts is unproblematic. Even what Christians regard as humankind's chief truth, that God in Christ assumed human form to redeem the world, cannot be divorced from the time, place, history and culture within which Jesus moved. Jesus was not a Platonic ideal being, but a Jew. If we fail to understand Jesus' Jewish roots, we fail to understand the gospel. The problem with the contextual turn, however, occurs when this moderate contextualism is transformed into hard-core contextualism by being universalized and absolutized in the same way that reason was itself absolutized in the Enlightenment. It is the absolutization of contextualism that constitutes hard-core contextualism and results in what I call the 'fallacy of contextualism'. It is against this absolutized form of contextualism that I am arguing in this essay.

With hard-core contextualism far more is at stake than the unproblematic claim that enquiry occurs within and is constrained by contexts. By adding that inquiry is always imprisoned within and thereby incorrigibly skewed by contexts, hard-core contextualism entails that we are irremediably barred from obtaining accurate, univocal knowledge of the world. Thus according to hard-core contextualism, our knowledge is always biased, skewed, and theory-laden. Alternatively, our knowledge of the world is always a fictive construction to which we must ever add the disclaimer 'but of course we don't really know what's going on'.

Now there is a problem with adding to all our assertions the disclaimer 'but of course we don't really know what's going on'. For if we don't really know what's going on, then we don't really know *that* we don't really know what's going on. G.K. Chesterton put it this way: 'We don't know enough about the unknown to know that it's unknowable.' Here then in a nutshell is the fallacy of contextualism. It is the fallacy that results from asserting with too much confidence that there is nothing about which we can legitimately have confidence. It is the fallacy of knowing too much about the very thing that's supposed to be an object of ignorance. It is the fallacy of trying to have your cake and eat it too.

The fallacy of contextualism is a fallacy of self-referential incoherence. Hard-core contextualism makes a universal claim, and therefore can be applied to itself. Nevertheless, when applied to itself, hard-core contextualism strips itself of any claims to universality. Is all of our thinking irremediably biased by context? Then what about the very claim that all our thinking is irremediably biased by context? And in what context is this claim being made? As hard-core contextualists are we not all too biased in making such claims about contexts, and if so, might we not simply be committing a conceptual error, having made the claim simply because we are part of a secular culture (= context) that has bought into unbridled scepticism and relativism?

When cast in this light, the fallacy inherent in hard-core contextualism becomes immediately apparent. Still it is amazing the different forms this fallacy takes and the vast number of reputed thinkers who continue to take it seriously. The next thing I want to do therefore is present a few concrete examples of this fallacy in action. Having presented these examples, I then want to draw several conclusions both about the proper place of moderate contextualism in theology and philosophy, and the proper way to safeguard theology and philosophy from the fallacy inherent in hard-core contextualism.

* * *

Consider the following blurb on the back cover of Ronald Thiemann's recent book *Constructing a Public Theology* (the blurb is by William Placher and serves as an endorsement for the book):

In a pluralistic society . . . no set of theological or philosophical first principles provides a starting point on which everyone can agree. . . . Thoughtful Christians in particular want to make their voices heard in public debate without opening themselves up to charges of trying to impose their agenda on everyone else.¹

Prima facie, this statement appears innocuous – nay, even tolerant and generous. In our pluralistic society we have grown accustomed to the notion that everything is up for grabs. Indeed, for any claim made, someone else seems ever ready to advance a counterclaim. Cicero's dictum has, as it were, come home to us with a vengeance, to wit, 'there is nothing so absurd but that some philosopher has said it'. And in our day, everyone is a philosopher.

Now while it is perfectly true that our society no longer adheres to any common first principles on which a consensus exists, it does not follow that society should adjure the search for a common set of first principles or consider it somehow progressive that first principles are now regarded as *passé*. Let me stress that a society's search for or adherence to first principles does not entail a return to classical foundationalism in epistemology, to positivism in science, or to the glorification of reason à la the Enlightenment. Presumably our society itself constitutes a context within which common purposes and goals can be worked out. For this reason it seems artificial to proscribe, prior to any discussion or analysis, the search for such principles by the society. Without such a discussion and

analysis, we simply don't know whether a society's search for first principles is doomed to fail.

In this light let us reconsider Placher's claim that 'in a pluralistic society . . . no set of theological or philosophical first principles provides a starting point on which everyone can agree'. Placher is making more than a simple statement of fact. Indeed, he is not just claiming that the members of our pluralistic society do not agree on any theological or philosophical first principles. The latter claim is certainly true, but holds little philosophical interest since our society contains many criminals and mentally deranged individuals to whom philosophers and theologians will not, at least in their academic writing, give the time of day.

At issue is not the obvious fact that the members of our society don't agree on anything. Rather, it is the claim that we are in principle barred from reaching agreement. In this way our *inability to agree* is itself elevated to a first principle. If you will, this becomes a first principle: *societies are properly speaking pluralistic and therefore cannot have first principles*. Such a first principle is of course self-referentially incoherent. If a society accepts that 'no set of theological or philosophical first principles provides a starting point on which everyone can agree', then that society does indeed have such a first principle. If an individual claims that any search for first principles is doomed to failure, then this individual has already found such a first principle (the claim itself becomes a first principle).

Self-referential incoherence is typically greeted with amusement once it is exposed. Nevertheless, we need to recognize that whenever an argument founders on self-referential incoherence, there is a serious problem with that argument. Indeed, whole schools of philosophy have crumbled under the weight of self-referential incoherence. Among these I would point out the failure of Frege's logicism for mathematics as a result of the Russell paradox, the failure of Hilbert's programme for showing that every mathematical claim is decidable as a result of Gödel's theorems, and the failure of logical positivism as a result of the self-refuting nature of its verificationist theory of meaning.

If Placher is asserting that the search for theological or philosophical first principles is a doomed enterprise, then Placher is guilty of self-referential incoherence. His claim therefore has no logically compelling force, and any conclusions he draws from this claim become unsupportable and suspect. Thus when Placher concludes, 'Thoughtful Christians in particular want to make their voices heard in public debate without opening themselves up to charges of trying to impose their agenda on everyone else', this conclusion must be evaluated on its own merits, and not as a consequence of a self-referentially incoherent first principle that by *fiat* bars first principles *tout court*. On its own merits, however, Placher's conclusion carries little weight. The references to 'thoughtful Christians' and 'impose their agenda' are rhetorical moves designed to distinguish the good guys from the bad guys, *i.e.*, those who embrace Placher's pluralism and those who, like myself, eschew it. Thus if we are to take Placher seriously, the evangelization of the Roman empire by the early Christians (to whom the epithet 'thoughtful Christians' certainly cannot be denied) would have involved the 'imposition of an agenda'.

Perhaps I'm being a bit obsessive, working to death a mere blurb of endorsement on the back of a book cover. Nevertheless, as a blurb of endorsement it indicates to what extent the theological community is prepared to accept the fallacy of contextualism, and with it the relativism and radical scepticism entailed by hard-core contextualism. After all, it is the content of a book, not the blurb endorsing it, that is supposed to issue in controversy.

But then again, Placher is not saying anything that Thiemann does not espouse and develop in the body of his book. For instance, on the question of pluralism, Thiemann comments:

Political and cultural diversity is a gift to be nurtured and celebrated. The freedom upon which such diversity is based is particularly precious and must be preserved and extended to those who have been excluded from full participation in a free society.²

In elevating pluralism to a first principle, Thiemann is guilty of the worst sort of special pleading. Thiemann's pluralism has no room for intolerant chaps like myself who think Christianity

makes exclusive truth claims that are binding on the world at large. And yet, Thiemann's pluralism is to be accorded sacrosanct status as a guiding principle of society. Woe to anyone who opposes it. Call it pluralism, but I call it imperialism.

* * *

Next, let us consider a contextual fallacy that occurs all too frequently in contemporary literary theory. Once again Ronald Thiemann lays out the fallacy, though this time without giving his assent to it. Thus he describes the following views that have become commonplace in literary circles:

- (1) Literary texts are indeterminable and thus inevitably yield multiple, irreducibly diverse interpretations.
- (2) There can be no criteria for preferring one reading to another and [thus we are] cast into the darkest of hermeneutical nights in which all readings are indistinguishably gray.³

I find it helpful to set claims like this apart in the way I have done here. Indeed, if one reads claims like this within the flow of a paragraph, their self-referential incoherence is likely to be lost. But set apart as they are here, their self-referential incoherence becomes strikingly evident.

Although (2) is supposed to make a more radical claim than (1), both quickly run into difficulties when we turn the hermeneutic questions they raise back on themselves. Is the hermeneuticist who asserts either (1) or (2) ready to admit that what he or she is asserting is itself indeterminate? Do (1) and (2) admit no semantic boundaries? In all likelihood a hermeneuticist who asserts claims like (1) and (2) wants to be taken seriously and wants the semantic range of (1) and (2) narrowly constrained. Thus for a philosophical subversive like myself to come along and interpret these claims differently from their plain sense would be deemed unacceptable. But what if I choose to interpret claims (1) and (2) as saying respectively the following:

- (1') Literary texts are determinable and thus yield a single, univocal interpretation corresponding to the original intention of the author.
- (2') There are sharp criteria for preferring one reading to another and thus we can always avoid the darkest of hermeneutical nights. All readings are either black or white.

Let me emphasize that I'm not endorsing (1') or (2'). My point is simply that if one starts out by taking (1) and (2) seriously, then (1') and (2') become *legitimate readings* of (1) and (2) respectively, with the result that it becomes impossible to take (1) and (2) seriously. In this way deconstruction becomes a tool not just for deconstructing texts but also for deconstructing itself.

And this is why deconstruction is at base an intellectual subterfuge. The key theoretical problem facing the literary theorist is to characterize the relation that obtains between the reader of a text and the text itself. In the classical conception meanings inhere in texts and the reader's job is to dig out the meaning from the text, the meaning of the text typically being identified with the intention of the author. Deconstructionists, on the other hand, start by assuming that any meaning associated with texts is so under-determined as to issue in 'endless labyrinths of possible meanings'.⁴ Deconstruction therefore 'invites readers to approach texts creatively and to appreciate their ability to generate an unlimited plurality of meaningful effects'.⁵

The key word in the last sentence is 'creatively'. Because the meaning of the text is so unconstrained, the reader must create the meaning rather than discover it. And yet the writings of deconstructionists do themselves constitute texts which can be read deconstructively. But of course Derrida and his disciples do not want the texts they write deconstructed in the way they are advocating that other texts be deconstructed (*i.e.*, something like what I was doing above when I reinterpreted sentence (1) as sentence (1')). Rather they want their texts taken seriously and read non-destructively. Only after their own work is taken seriously and read using a classical hermeneutic do they enjoin the reader to read everything else deconstructively. This is not so much a logical fallacy as sheer hypocrisy.⁶

* * *

The fallacy of contextualism is frequently tied to a faulty view of language. This faulty view of language comes up repeatedly in feminist theology, where it is used as a tool for systematically transforming traditional God-talk. Let us therefore turn to a particularly apt expression of this faulty view of language as enunciated by the feminist theologian Elizabeth Johnson:

There has been no timeless speech about God in the Jewish or Christian tradition. Rather, words about God are cultural creatures, entwined with the mores and adventures of the faith community that uses them. As cultures shift, so too does the specificity of God-talk.⁷

Certainly languages are evolving, living entities – one has only to compare the King James version of the Bible with more recent translations into English to see how much our language has changed in the last 400 years. Words change their meanings over time. Grammar changes over time. Even logic and rhetoric change over time. What's more, language itself is thoroughly conventional. What a word means depends on convention and can be changed by convention. For instance, there is nothing intrinsic about the word 'automobile' that demands the word denote a car. If we go with its Latin etymology, we might just as well have applied 'automobile' to human beings, who are after all 'self-propelling' also. There is nothing sacred about the form a word assumes. For instance, 'gift' in English means a present, in German it means poison, and in French it means nothing at all. And of course, words only make sense within the context of broader units of discourse like whole narratives.

No one who reflects on the matter thinks language is in any way fixed or ossified. But then again this is not Elizabeth Johnson's point. Her aim is to develop a feminist theology in which she can be justified referring to God in the feminine, *i.e.*, as 'she'. The very title of her book leaves no doubt on this point: *She Who Is*. But how does Johnson justify such a change in our language about God? It certainly isn't enough to say that language evolves, that words are conventional, and that the meaning of language depends on context. Rather, Johnson needs the much stronger notion that language is incapable of conveying enduring senses which are expressible over time and translatable from the past into the present.

Where then is the fallacy of contextualism in all this? In denying that there is 'timeless speech about God in the Jewish or Christian tradition', Johnson certainly does not mean that her own pronouncements about the nature of language and the impossibility of timeless speech about God are not to be taken in a timeless sense. The problem is that if language is incapable of expressing 'timeless senses', then any claim about language which claims language cannot express timeless senses becomes uninterpretable and meaningless. Language is evolving. The publication date of Johnson's book is 1992. It is now 1994. At least two years have elapsed since Johnson wrote the above passage which denies such a thing as timeless speech. How then can I know what Johnson meant two years ago if language cannot convey timeless senses?

But that was only two years ago, you say. Then please explain to me what distinguishes the two years since the publication of Johnson's *She Who Is* from the 2,000 years since the publication of the gospel. Why should we not attach the same disclaimer to Johnson's writings which she seems to attach to the Scriptures, namely, that her writings have no timeless sense? Is it because Johnson and we are part of the same culture? But she is a feminist theologian and I am an evangelical mathematician. What then does it mean to say we are part of the same culture? Indeed, theologically I view myself as much closer to Paul and the NT than I do to Johnson and her form of feminist theology. I submit therefore that Johnson's denial that language can convey timeless senses is incoherent. If language cannot express timeless senses, then speech occurring two seconds ago or two millennia ago is equally inaccessible to our cognitive faculties.

* * *

Having now described the fallacy of contextualism in some detail and given a few concrete examples showing how this fallacy operates in practice, I want in this final portion of the essay to turn to a somewhat different question, namely, What is it that keeps this fallacy alive? As a strictly logical matter, the fallacy of contextualism represents an egregious blunder which once noted can be duly dismissed. Nevertheless, the persistence with which this fallacy rears its head, and the multiplicity of guises which it assumes, should lead us to ponder why it is that this fallacy keeps being reincarnated.

Once Aristotle formulated his logic, there was no longer any question about whether a given syllogism was valid or invalid. Moreover, anyone who proposed an invalid syllogism was henceforth laughed to scorn and considered an uneducated

boor. Not so the purveyors of the contextual fallacy. They remain some of the brightest lights on the literary, philosophical and theological landscape. How is it that they manage to keep their reputations intact despite committing what on closer examination is an inexcusable error?

To be sure, the error is often concealed, being cloaked in a morass of terminology and notation. Yet at other times the contextual fallacy is not so much concealed as proclaimed and celebrated. This is likely to occur in those theologies that revel in contradiction and think faith cannot be faith unless it embraces the absurd, as though logical clarity and precision were somehow inimical to faith.

A thoroughgoing pragmatism often underlies the fallacy of contextualism. If all that is interesting is happening in my own little context, and if no one outside my context is entitled to rebuke or correct me, then the fallacy of contextualism serves to affirm my way of life and give me the autonomy to do as I please. Autonomy and self-determination are watchwords of our age. They are the principal goals of self-realization. They are psychological desiderata to which the American Psychiatric and Psychological Associations give their seal of approval. Pragmatism as it were tells us, 'Yes, it is a logical fallacy, but it feels so good. It lets me do what I want. It is liberating. How can something that feels so right be so logically wrong?' And so we are encouraged not to take the fallacy too seriously. It does useful work. It encourages pluralism and diversity. It keeps us in step with the times.

It seems, however, that there is a deeper issue at stake here, deeper than the rationalizations offered by pragmatists on behalf of the fallacy, and deeper also than the logical critique offered against the fallacy earlier in this essay. The deeper issue concerns both the nature of contexts and the nature of human rationality. Hard-core contextualism and the fallacy of contextualism that it engenders view contexts as essentially bent in on themselves. According to hard-core contextualism, contexts are autonomous little worlds alienated from other contexts and incapable of interacting coherently with them. Hard-core contextualism, as it were, takes the alienation humans experience on account of sin and corruption, and elevates it to a philosophical principle. For Augustine the sin and corruption of the self consisted in the self being bent in on itself. Hard-core contextualism elevates, glorifies and transfigures this corruption, taking the contexts in which humans live, move and have their being, and turning them in on themselves.

This is bad. As Christians we live, move and have our being in God. We are therefore not to have our vision focused on our own little contexts, but rather to open our contexts to God and the world. In short, we are to be in communion with other contexts. The Christian view of contexts and human rationality is therefore quite different from the view advanced by hard-core contextualism. On the Christian view, contexts are not bent in on themselves, but are fundamentally open, embracing the world and seeking to learn from it. Yes, we operate within contexts; but we are able also to reflect on our contexts and broaden the scope of our contexts so as to embrace and enter other contexts. Reinhold Niebuhr referred to this ability of ours as 'self-transcendence'.⁸

There is no context which God does not simultaneously inhabit and transcend. At the root of the fallacy of contextualism is the notion that we can have our own little world into which no one else can intrude, not even God. Pride undergirds this thirst for autonomy, this desire to be masters of our own little worlds. Curiously, though this thirst for autonomy is almost always advertised as setting us free, it invariably accomplishes the opposite. For the autonomy that bends contexts in on themselves is an autonomy of isolation and solitary

confinement. This sort of autonomy is wholly incompatible with the freedom offered to humanity by God in Christ. Instead of imprisoning us in our contexts, God has created us so that we can interact with and learn from other contexts.

Christianity has never been a religion of the self. The first commandment is a commandment to worship God and God alone. Corrupted as it is by sin, the self, when it turns in on itself, discovers nothing of enduring hope or value. To see this, one has only to consider the logical outworkings of religions which do make the self rather than God the centre of their attentions. In both Hinduism and Buddhism 'the chief end of man' (to use a phrase from the Westminster catechism) is not 'to glorify God and enjoy him forever', but to have the self absorbed into Brahman or annihilated in the void so that it can escape the weary cycle of reincarnation. In either case the goal is to do away with personal identity.

To this the Westminster catechism responds that 'the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever'. But how is this goal to be accomplished? The eighth chapter of Mark's Gospel begins to answer this question: 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it' (Mk. 8:34-35). Our first step then is not to turn in on ourselves, but to turn outward and to God.

But once we have turned outward and to God, where do we go? To this Gregory of Nyssa responds that we go on to perfection – yet a form of perfection that is dynamic and progressive rather than static. For Gregory of Nyssa perfection is identified with ever-increasing growth in the knowledge of God. Indeed, as finite beings perfection is never something we attain once and for all. Rather, perfection is a matter of continuing growth in the knowledge of God. Now this view of Christian perfection is incompatible with any view of contexts which treats them as isolated, mutually inaccessible compartments.

In conclusion, let me offer a few predictions about what we can expect from the fallacy of contextualism in the future. First, I predict that this fallacy will not go away, despite brilliant refutations of it like the one you have just read. The practical benefits of this fallacy are simply too great for people to let mere trifles like *logic* and *truth* get in the way and prevent them from enjoying its benefits. Second, we can expect ever more sophisticated versions of this fallacy, which are so richly ornamented in terminology, notation, and all manner of scholarly appurtenances that the job of exposing the fallacy of contextualism will require increasing care and diligence. Third and last, I predict that hard-core contextualism will be employed with increasing vigour as a weapon against traditional Christian thinking. The attack will come chiefly in the name of pluralism, diversity and tolerance, and will challenge Christianity at every point where Christianity stands in opposition to the secularization of culture and society. To put the matter in a by now familiar idiom, the goal will be to transform the Christian context into the secular context. In this respect Romans 12:1-2 provides a decisive corrective.

¹Ronald F. Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), back cover.

²*Ibid.*, p. 47.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

⁴Mark A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), p. 17.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶For a general treatment of deconstruction, see Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London: Methuen, 1982).

⁷Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), p. 6.

⁸See Book I, Chapter 1 of Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1949).

Studies in the book of Joshua

Richard S. Hess

Introduction

Studies in the book of Joshua have received new impetus from three directions. One is the increasing archaeological evidence that the surveys of the land of Israel have yielded. This is not only true for the period prior to the monarchy but also provides new evidence for the entire period of OT Israel. Scholars such as Fritz and Na'aman have begun to apply these results to the historical interpretation of texts of Joshua, particularly the tribal allocations of the second half of the book (cf. Hess 1993). The matter will not be addressed here except as it has an impact on literary forms and ideological issues. A second area of renewed interest has come from those literary studies that seek to make sense out of the final form of the text. As a result, the exciting stories of chapters 1–12 have received new attention as scholars such as Hawk and Mitchell discern literary strategies. Koopmans has applied the same process to the final chapter of the book, where Joshua renews God's covenant with Israel. Ottosson and Svensson have attempted to look at the literary process at work in the allotments of Joshua 13–21. Comparative literary approaches constitute a separate category of literary methods. Weinfeld extends the comparisons to Greek and Ancient Near Eastern literatures. Schäfer-Lichtenberger studies the character of Joshua as a successor to Moses, drawing on comparisons of characterization in Deuteronomy and in Kings. In linguistics, discourse grammar has emphasized the final form of other OT texts. Winther-Nielsen applies this method to Joshua. A third area where one might expect new directions is the text-critical evidence provided by the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some recently published Qumran texts reflect the Masoretic text while others support a Hebrew precursor to the Septuagint as original (Greenspoon and Tov). This brief survey will focus upon the second area of development, the literary studies, with consideration of some of the comparative Ancient Near Eastern literature as well.

Continental studies on Joshua continue to appear. On the basis of linguistic and historical arguments, some of these accept a date before the monarchy for the composition of most or all of the book (Koorevaar and Holland). However, what will probably become the most influential recent contribution, that of Volkmar Fritz, does not accept this premise. His commentary appears in the same series as that of M. Noth's 1938 study and represents the most recent study on the whole book. Fritz tends to follow the traditional historical-critical approach. He emphasizes the role of a series of Deuteronomistic and priestly redactors in the composition of the book. Thus each section of the commentary is divided by redactions. This renders the work difficult to use for those who do not accept Fritz's premise. In addition, the work is hampered by an absence of interaction with the 1990 study by Younger that examined Joshua 9–12 in the light of Ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts. Younger identified numerous statements in the biblical texts that Noth and others had ascribed to later editors. Yet he found similar statements in comparable conquest accounts. This study called into question the methodology used to identify Deuteronomistic and other redactions in the book of Joshua. Unless other criteria can be employed to identify editors, their identification remains speculative.

Literary strategies

Several English-language books have proceeded in a different direction. Hawk's work follows the literary studies of Polzin and Gunn. Hawk emphasizes the discontinuities found in Joshua. This is especially true with what he recognizes as two conflicting threads that run through the book: emphatic assertions of complete obedience juxtaposed with statements of

Israel's failure to obey and to achieve all that God had instructed. Thus the first chapter of Joshua asserts Joshua's total dedication to God. However, this must be contrasted with the reluctance on the part of the Transjordanian tribes to accept Joshua's authority except as he obeys God (1:17–18). The story of Rahab is an example of disobedience on the part of Joshua who sends the spies, and on the part of the spies who make a covenant with Rahab. 11:16–23 begins and ends with statements about Joshua's conquest of the entire land, but places between them statements about the cities that were not conquered. Chapters 13–22 begin with an orderliness to Judah's allotment but gradually disintegrate as the other tribes are described. Chapter 22 (the altar of the Transjordanian tribes) is a model of ambiguity and the concluding chapters strive to close the book with references to items found in the opening chapters, but also describe unresolved matters. Hawk explains these contrasting plots on the basis of different strategies ('desires') that he ascribes to Joshua, God, the author, and the reader.

While there surely are conflicting elements in the book of Joshua, it is not clear that Hawk has accurately identified them. Part of this has to do with an absence of consideration of key concepts, such as the 'ban', elsewhere in the biblical and extra-biblical texts, and the lack of an awareness of Ancient Near Eastern writing styles for the sort of literature found here. For example, Lilley (see also Mitchell below) has demonstrated that the 'ban' did not require the slaughter of all animals in every case, nor did it always involve the burning of a city. Rahab's commitment to the spies and to Israel's God is nowhere described as a violation of God's will. Nor is there explicit evidence in the biblical text that the spies (or Joshua) were wrong for making and accepting this agreement (see Winther-Nielsen below). Younger has shown how 'hyperbole' is characteristic of the conquest accounts in comparative literature. This is true at least in the sense that phrases like 'all the land' were not intended to be taken with a mathematical literacy. Mention of areas not conquered appears alongside the claim of taking all the land. Younger's study is broader in scope than either Van Seters' attempt to compare Joshua 1–12 with Neo-Assyrian accounts or Hoffmeier's comparison with Egyptian New Kingdom narratives. Younger compares conquest stories from a variety of Ancient Near Eastern peoples and periods. Both the Ancient Near Eastern treaty form and the covenant form of books such as Deuteronomy allow for the absence of elements of closure at the end of the document. This includes the appearance of curses in the final chapters, something that Hawk finds problematic. Hawk's volume is important for its serious treatment of the whole book of Joshua. Much analysis, particularly in the second half of the book, is of value.

Mitchell, on the other hand, attempts to incorporate form and tradition-historical studies into a literary analysis of the text. He examines the question, 'Why is the express divine will that all the enemy are to be slaughtered contradicted by the examples of Rahab, the Gibeonites and others who are not slaughtered?'. The first half of the book considers forms and phrases related to the command to destroy all the inhabitants of the land and Israel's failure to accomplish this. A major section of the study examines the 'ban' or *herem* and concludes that there is a flexibility in the usage of the term throughout the Deuteronomistic history. For Mitchell a variety of usages of concepts like *herem*, whether for a test of obedience or for cultic contamination, should be included in our interpretation of the texts. In the first part of his book Mitchell moves through Joshua 8–21, without much consideration of the broader (other than Assyria) Near Eastern context and with almost no mention of the historical geographical context suggested by Kallai, Na'aman and Boling. While this may be understandable in a

literary study, Mitchell's incorporation of historical comparative material elsewhere makes these omissions surprising. His literary conclusion, that the key theme of chapters 12–21 is the end of war, seems dubious in the light of chapter 22 and of Judges. While that emphasis does exist (11:23; 14:15), the helpful comparisons of Joshua 1 with chapters 21 and 22 in terms of fulfilment say more about the literary closure of the book, as Hawk asserts (*cf.* his work's title, *Every Promise Fulfilled*), than they do about the expected cessation of warfare.

The second half of Mitchell's book considers expressions related to the enemy nations and their continued occupation of the land. His conclusions stress the change from a unified group of nations opposed to Israel at the beginning of Joshua to a collection of isolated pockets of resistance by the time of the allotments (chs. 13–21). With Gottwald, Mitchell observes the emphasis upon the rulers of the nations that Israel conquered, as listed in Joshua 12. Survivors, such as Rahab and the Gibeonites, do not include the Canaanite rulers. Yet, Mitchell cannot avoid an ambiguity in the text, in which Israel is to drive out the inhabitants of the land but at the same time groups like Rahab and the Gibeonites survive with orthodox Yahwistic confessions. Mitchell does not in the end resolve these ambiguities, although he does include a final paragraph that attempts to relate them to historical realities of post-exilic Judaism. At times he moves from the literary device of juxtaposition of different perspectives to the charge of outright contradiction. For example, he maintains that Geshur and Maacah sometimes fall within the conquered territories of Transjordan (13:11) and sometimes they lie outside those lands (Dt. 3:14; Jos. 12:5). However, a closer examination of the two latter passages reveals that these texts do not claim to describe all of Israel's conquered land in Transjordan. Mitchell seeks contradictions in the text in order to demonstrate an ideological bias. But this is not necessary, as theological 'bias' against 'Canaanites' or other groups can exist without the need for historical or literary contradictions (Hess 1993; 1994a). These comments aside, Mitchell has provided a useful service by summarizing much of the best in Continental scholarship and applying it to the study of key phrases in the text of Joshua.

Winther-Nielsen explores the first half of Joshua from a rhetorical linguistic perspective. His work applies the discourse grammar approach of Robert Longacre to Joshua. The first hundred pages introduce this approach using the text of Joshua as a source for examples. A special study of the encounter with Rahab (Jos. 2) demonstrates how the dialogues elaborate central concerns of the narrative. The central role of the conquest theme is emphasized by the syntax of the chapter, as is the decision of Rahab as an act of faith. The account of crossing the Jordan (chs. 3–4) is structured around the actions of the priests as they enter and emerge from the waters. The actions of these chapters have long been a source of debate due to their apparent repetition and contradiction. Winther-Nielsen proposes a unified and sequential structure to the whole. The conquest of Jericho focuses on the destruction of the site, an activity in which God serves as the major actor while Joshua and Israelites obey. Winther-Nielsen applies his technique to the whole of Joshua, observing how God's speech of 1:2–5 sets forth the key themes of the book. As with past studies of other Hebrew texts, this application of functional discourse grammar demonstrates a textual and thematic unity to the book of Joshua.

Ottosson's work emphasizes the importance of ancient cultic material as original to the book of Joshua, rather than as something inserted by a later redactor. Surely texts such as chapters 1, 6 and 22 do form part of the narrative and cannot be interpreted as later insertions. Ottosson's work on chapters 14–22 has been further developed by Svensson. Svensson also stresses the importance of the appearance of Eleazer, the priest, along with Joshua in the accounts of the distribution of the land. Further, Ottosson's understanding of Joshua as a priestly figure is developed by Svensson. Both find in these chapters an idealized land designed for a new David (prefigured by Joshua) who will restore the kingdom and expand it to include all the territory of the united monarchy.

Svensson provides a useful collection of data relating to the versional readings of the hundreds of place names in these chapters. He collects this material with discussion of how the historical and prophetic books treat each of the regions described. This is the chief contribution of his work. In this way the work is a historical geography, arranged not according to

chronology (as Aharoni) but by region as delimited in Joshua 13–22. He does not propose new identifications for the sites but relies largely upon the earlier work of Ottosson and especially Kallai, with regular references to Engnell and to the appropriate entries in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Svensson does not interact with the proposals of historical geographers such as Aharoni and Rainey. Na'aman's earlier work receives attention but his 1991 study, which criticizes Kallai's attempt to date the town lists of Judah to Hezekiah's period, is not mentioned.

Ottosson and Svensson both seek to find a motivation for the book of Joshua, one that stresses the positive value of rulership in general and of David's reign in particular. Kallai's dating of the boundaries of chapters 13–19, as well as his overall perspective on the unitary composition and purpose of these texts, agrees with this concern. This explains why Svensson follows Kallai. Svensson describes his purpose as 'a literary-structural close reading of Joshua 14–21'. It is not clear that he achieves this, at least not in the terms of modern literary readings. No attempt is made to discern the role of the narrative segments in these chapters, nor is consideration given to the rationale for the order and organization of the text as it now appears. The only overall literary analysis occurs when Svensson identifies two inclusions in chapters 13 and 22–23: the phrase 'Joshua was old and advanced in years' and the discussion of the two-and-a-half Transjordanian tribes. Readers seeking literary analysis must look elsewhere.

In fact, Ottosson does observe a literary significance to the allotments. He suggests that the more towns named, the more positive the evaluation of the tribe. Thus Judah (ch. 15), with the most towns named, is most highly regarded by the author. Hawk also finds a positive evaluation for Judah. For him this is because Judah has a complete set of boundaries and a clearly distinguished town list. Other tribes, without boundaries or where boundaries and town lists are mixed (*e.g.* Ephraim and Manasseh) are targets of a negative evaluation by the author.

The form of the boundary descriptions and town lists reflects both the ideal of the early settlement and their usage as a legal and administrative document in later periods. The early origin that the text assigns to these documents is supported by their topographical similarity with Late Bronze Age city states of Palestine, by the need for some sort of boundaries given the sociological dynamics present in the settlement of the land, and by the archaeological evidence of settlement in the hill country of Palestine from 1200 BC (Hess 1994b). The similarity of the boundary descriptions to those found in treaties and their context between the covenants of Joshua 8 and 24 suggest that the literary structure of these documents was as much determined by the legal and administrative realities of Israel and Judah as it was by some other overall literary structuring of the author. This is not to say that the documents served no literary purpose (as with the insertions of the narratives about Caleb, Achsah, the daughters of Zelophehad and Joseph), but that purpose should be integrated within a covenantal context and theology.

Comparative literary approaches

Weinfeld moves the literary studies almost entirely into the realm of the comparative. He does not identify forms or discuss the usage of theologically significant words and phrases without recourse to comparative materials from the Ancient Near Eastern and classical worlds. Drawing together materials he has already published elsewhere and adding new insights, Weinfeld's work includes comparisons with a variety of materials in the Hebrew Bible. Of special interest for Joshua are his studies on Greek and Hebrew settlement traditions. Although other chapters detail Weinfeld's view on the history of the Joshua traditions and their origins, as well as the different accounts of this event as preserved in the Bible, it is in the area of comparative settlement traditions (pp. 22–51) that Weinfeld makes important contributions. Comparisons with the Greek traditions of settlement reveal a number of important similarities with the biblical accounts. For example, both include inquiries at the shrine, priestly guidance, divine obligations, the founder's tomb, naming and dividing the land, divine promises, setting up stones and building an altar. Both also follow a sequence: (1) oracular confirmation; (2) erection of monuments and altars, along with sacrifices; (3) the use of divine lot to allocate the land; (4) divinely given laws for the settlers; and (5)

according a prominent position to a leader-founder who cooperates with a priest. The leader-founder (e.g. Joshua) is a leader of settlers, a builder of a city, and a legislator.

A literary study of royal successors and succession narratives in the house of David is presented by Schäfer-Lichtenberger, who examines and compares Joshua and Solomon. Both follow charismatic leaders (Moses and David) and both stand at the beginning of a line of successors, Joshua before the judges and Solomon before the kings of the divided monarchy. Schäfer-Lichtenberger argues that both were literary creations that served as patterns for the political and social leadership in the crisis and reorganization of Judah that followed the death of Josiah. Joshua was the ideal while Solomon served as the 'anti-ideal'. The book of Deuteronomy served as the source material from which the Deuteronomists constructed their characterizations, especially the laws regulating the righteous king and the true prophet (17:14-20; 18:9-22). For Joshua Schäfer-Lichtenberger studies all relevant texts in the Pentateuch and Joshua, with an eye toward detailed source and redaction critical analysis.

In tracing Joshua's development in the Pentateuch, Schäfer-Lichtenberger observes the difference in the authority of Moses and Joshua. Despite the fact that Joshua is Moses' successor, he retains a measure of independence as exemplified by his name Hoshea. This appears as Joshua's original name in Numbers 32:16 before Moses changed his name to Joshua. Hoshea reappears in Deuteronomy 32:44 when Joshua is about to succeed Moses. It, along with other features, represents Joshua as a distinctive individual as well as a successor. A more important difference between Joshua and Moses is that described in Deuteronomy 34:9-12, where Joshua's succession is described in the same context as the emphasis upon the unique prophetic role of Moses. Moses received his authority directly from God; Joshua received his through Moses, though it also came from a divine decision.

Schäfer-Lichtenberger discusses the first chapter of Joshua in some detail, emphasizing the references to and quotations from the words of Moses. After examining some of the later references in the book of Joshua, it is affirmed that here as well Joshua is not a new Moses nor a dynastic successor to his predecessor. Instead, he has an authority that stands under the rule of the Mosaic law. This is compared to Solomon whose authority derives from his role as a dynastic successor. In the view of the Deuteronomistic historian this role is not the ideal of Joshua and is not the one to follow. Instead, Joshua, who is presented as a model of one who observes the Mosaic law, becomes the ideal. Schäfer-Lichtenberger's presentation is an important contribution to the study of succession in the Bible. It would have been valuable to devote greater attention to the book of Joshua and to consider how this role is exemplified in detail in the numerous words and deeds of Moses' successor.

McConville also addresses theological concerns in his discussion of the date of Joshua. He relies upon the works of Younger, of Polzin who plays upon the parallels of a land not fully conquered by a people not completely obedient, and of Koorevaar, whose structural analysis of the allocations of Joshua 13-21 focuses upon 18:1-10, where the ark of the covenant is established at Shiloh. The location of the sanctuary at Shiloh argues for the early period of Israel's history as a date of the origins of the accounts in Joshua. In his study of holy war, McConville focuses on the role of Israel's God as a successful combatant against Baal and other deities. Although this may be true for other books in the Bible, it does not help much with Joshua, where deities other than the God of Israel receive little mention. However, McConville does provide a useful literary context for central themes of Joshua as developed from Deuteronomy in anticipation of the subsequent Deuteronomistic History.

Future studies of Joshua should: (1) take into account the implications of recent literary approaches, including studies of syntax, discourse and characterization; (2) carry forward the theological content of the book of Joshua in terms closer to its ancient literary forms of conquest account, land grant and covenant; (3) recognize that these forms are cast in a new light that demonstrates Joshua as the divinely appointed successor to Moses, and the conquest and occupation as Israel's opportunity to respond in obedience to God's covenant.

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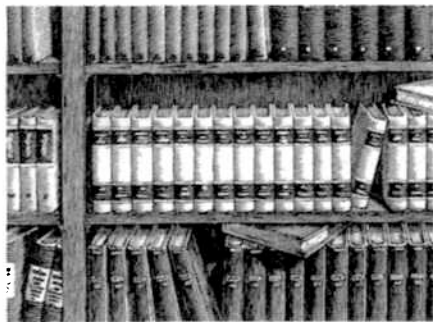
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BOOK



REVIEWS

**The Message of Deuteronomy:
Not By Bread Alone (Bible
Speaks Today)**
Raymond Brown
Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993,
331 pp., £9.99.

Whenever I preach or lead a Bible study, I am as grateful for this series of commentaries as for any other. The strengths of this series have been its combination of careful scholarship with model exposition, faithfully relating God's word to contemporary life. This new addition to the series continues in that tradition.

The riches of Deuteronomy are too little known in modern Christianity. It is a book of immense value and excitement. Raymond Brown captures that in this commentary. A brief introduction adequately orientates the reader to the book and its main issues and points of scholarly debate. Brown accepts 'the reliability of the biblical claim concerning its Mosaic origin' (p. 18). Throughout, critical issues are kept to a bare minimum.

The pattern of the book follows that of the series. Deuteronomy is treated in paragraphs rather than verse by verse. This strength generally helps the reader to grasp the flow of the book better. Having said that, I wonder whether more could have been made of the function of Deuteronomy 1-3. These chapters are what is often called the historical prologue to Deuteronomy. Brown's comments on these chapters are throughout helpful and relevant. His comments about the morality and relevance of the instructions for war and destruction of other nations are particularly thoughtful (pp. 49-53). Yet it seems to me that the major thrust of these chapters sets the theological agenda for the rest of Deuteronomy, in particular commending the faithfulness of God to a faithless Israel. This sense of the overall direction of the book is not so clear here.

Brown's discussion on the centralization of worship in Deuteronomy 12 (pp. 143-149) focuses on the real purpose of this law, namely its prohibition against syncretism and Baal worship. He does not raise any of the contested issues about the location of the central place and whether a sole sanctuary was in mind. One of the strengths of this book is its application for Christians. Where the NT reinforces the laws of Deuteronomy is made clear; so too where, in the

light of the NT, things are changed. Brown models good hermeneutical methods which the reader will benefit from noticing. He recognizes the need to identify the theological principles underlying the explicit practice. These principles are then applied through the NT to modern practices. So from chapter 12, the central sanctuary for Christians is seen to be Jesus and the throne of God. For Christians, worship is personal and not geographical. The prohibition against Baal worship is also relevant in a modern pluralist society. The food laws of Deuteronomy 14 are interpreted through Mark 7 and Acts 10 where all foods are declared clean. Yet the principles of the food laws, namely health, avoidance of other religious practices and the difference of Israel from other peoples, are retained and reapplied. On the law dealing with a woman who intervenes in a fight between her husband and an attacker and who grasps the attacker's private parts (25:11-12), Brown shows a vital key of biblical ethics, that the end never justifies the means (p. 246).

A hallmark of this commentary is the demonstration of the relevance of Deuteronomy for today. Deuteronomy is wide-ranging in its concerns and issues. At every step, Brown is careful to show the contemporary value of the book for forming Christian thinking and action. He combines a sound theological appreciation, an active social concern and a pastoral heart with his own experience as a teacher and pastor. This commentary continues and enhances the high standard of the series.

Paul A. Barker, Cheltenham and Gloucester College, Cheltenham

**The LORD's Song: The Basis,
Function and Significance of
Choral Music in Chronicles
(JSOTS 156)**
J.W. Kleinig
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,
1993, 236 pp., £25/\$40.

What part should music play in Christian worship? This is one of those problems that has led to perennial controversy among Christians. Several of the reasons for such disagreement are fairly obvious, such as strong emotional and cultural expectations, but there is no doubt that the Bible itself adds to the difficulties. For example, it is rather ironic, if not a little embarrassing, that despite the time and energy that this issue occupies in church life, the NT says practically nothing about it. A further complicating factor is that the main biblical material on music and worship occurs in the much neglected books of Chronicles and in some of the obscurer parts of the Psalms. It is little wonder, therefore, that attempts to introduce a biblical dimension into the whole issue are frequently superficial, even by those who respect biblical authority.

When seen in this context, Kleinig's contribution is an all-too-rare, in-depth investigation of the nature and theology of musical worship in the Bible. It was apparently inspired by a comment by J.S. Bach, and takes the books of Chronicles as its object of study. A wide range of issues are covered, from routine matters such as vocabulary and function of music to its wider significance in worship.

It was David rather than Moses who introduced musical worship to Israel. A foundational charter for the practice is provided by passages such as 2 Chronicles 5:11-14 and 29:25. These explain how music became part of Israel's

worship through prophetic authority and divine presence, and also legitimate its ongoing use in temple worship. Kleinig also examines the various components of musical ritual, including its times, places, personnel and instruments, before moving to the most interesting part of the book, namely the ritual and theological significance of 'the LORD's song'.

In Kleinig's view, music belonged essentially to temple ritual. It was particularly closely associated with the daily burnt offerings, in contrast to the atonement sacrifices which lacked any musical accompaniment. The singing was actually synchronized with the burnt offering, in order to proclaim God's gracious presence among his people. Music was therefore for the praise of God, especially in presenting God to the congregation by proclaiming his name and announcing his acceptance of his people. Above all, it was the ritual function of musical worship which determined its meaning, and according to Kleinig, it could have no independent significance apart from its ritual context.

This volume contains a careful analysis of a range of important topics, but it cannot really be regarded as a comprehensive treatment of the subject, since the author rarely strays beyond his set agenda. It is true that a brief nod is made in the direction of recent anthropological work on sacrificial ritual, but it is disappointing that little is done to relate the findings to musical worship elsewhere in the OT. On literary issues, no concession is given to arguments which might undermine the unity of the work, even in important sections on musical worship such as 1 Chronicles 15-16 and 23-27. Similarly, issues of an historical nature are generally not touched upon, even in the case of the much disputed question of how the groups of Levitical musicians developed.

Nevertheless, several features in Kleinig's work are to be welcomed. It is certainly the most detailed treatment of the topic, filling a vacuum in Japhet's magnum opus on the ideology of Chronicles. It takes a positive attitude to the unity of Chronicles, and the valuable theological focus enables the reader to move beyond questions concerning the origin of the Chronicler's views. Questions will be raised, however, about some of the positions adopted. Did musical worship invariably lead to some kind of theophany, for instance, or was the temple primarily thought of as God's royal court? One also gains the impression that the author's whole approach to music in worship is rather restricted. Phrases such as 'choral music' or 'liturgical song', for example, evoke a picture of a distinctive kind of modern liturgical worship, with all the attendant trappings! Similarly, the rather formal view of worship implied by Kleinig cannot necessarily be deduced from the Chronicler's descriptions of the Israelites singing and making music in God's presence. The frequent references to wholehearted and spontaneous joy suggest that the Chronicler saw temple worship more as a means of encouraging every Israelite to adopt a similar attitude towards God rather than as a form to be followed on set occasions in a particular place.

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Jeremiah Lamentations: The New American Commentary
Vol. 16
F.B. Huey
 Nashville, TN: Broadman Press,
 1993, 512 pp., hb.

F.B. Huey, in giving us a commentary on Jeremiah and Lamentations, has undertaken to outline each of these books chapter by chapter, section by section, and given us exegetical commentary verse by verse. Both include explanations of dates, authorship, structure and theology of the books. Jeremiah is not an easy book to work with. The chronology and structure are somewhat convoluted. It does not flow easily from front to back. The author has taken pains in the introduction and throughout the entire commentary to unravel some of the confusion. The whole of the book of Jeremiah is held as the context for each section through the introduction to each section of the outline. Huey makes a constant attempt to keep the sections (as confusing as they are chronologically) tied to the events of history that set them in a context. Lamentations is treated in the same way.

The author takes every opportunity to make links with history and biblical references using past and current scholarship (often in footnotes) to draw all angles to light. Appeal is made to history, Ancient Near Eastern studies and anthropology for evidence to put the pieces together. The author includes possible explanations of fauna and flora, geography and customs related to each passage. Also a history of how texts were/are translated helps to keep the reader apprised of the various ways of treating passages that may be difficult. Frequent cross references to similar passages, including reflections of NT connections, are included both in the major body of the commentary and in the footnotes. Careful explanation is made of idioms (and puns) in the original language that lose their flavour in translation to the English. Explanations of the Hebrew, its forms and definitions make it a very useful tool, even for novice Hebraists. There are occasions where Huey has interpreted the passage in light of events that occur after the text is to be written. He is, however, not shy at these points to engage discussion with scholarship that does not hold to the inerrancy of Scripture as the basis and guiding principle of exegesis.

The format of the book is aided by a nice breakdown between the commentary and the footnotes. The footnotes are comprehensive at each point without assuming previous information. They include notes on articles written on key themes raised in Jeremiah; differing views of scholars; different translations of words from the original Hebrew; differences between the Septuagint, Syriac, and Masoretic texts; full bibliographic references to articles or books that are cited, so that further study can be done; and other issues of controversy or interest. The author has no fear of repeating information for the sake of the integrity of the commentary within each section. This is a commentary that is written in a style that can be read from cover to cover, or it can be read for just the bits that are needing research.

The stated purpose of the book, and *The New American Commentary* as a series, is a focus 'on the intrinsic theological and exegetical concerns of each biblical book', while engaging 'the range of issues raised in contemporary biblical scholarship', as well as assuming 'the inerrancy of the Scripture'. The Preface states, 'The perspective of the NAC is unapologetically confessional and rooted in the evangelical

tradition'. This is a commentary that 'concentrates on the theological exegesis, while providing practical, applicable exposition'. We can thank *The New American Commentary* and Dr Huey for a job well done.

Rebecca Doyle, University of Sheffield

An Examination of Kingship and Messianic Expectation in Isaiah 1-35

Paul D. Wegner
 Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press,
 1992, 397 pp., hb.

Though nowhere stated, this book looks and reads like a doctoral dissertation! It will be reviewed, however, with the presumed majority of readers of this journal in mind, *viz.* theological students.

Written under the guidance of R.E. Clements, Wegner uses up almost 400 pages (some 70 of which for bibliography and name index) to make one basic point with regard to four passages in Isaiah: How did Isaiah 7:10-17; 8:23-9:6; 11:1-11 and 32:1-8 'provide the foundation and background for the *later* concept of Messiah' (p. 2, emphasis mine). By *later* he means later than Isaiah himself but, unlike others (*e.g.* Mowinkel and Becker), he insists on the fact that for him the *roots* of messianic expectation were already present in Isaiah's time (roughly at the end of the eighth and beginning of the seventh centuries BC). So there was an early concept with its basic elements and a later, much more complicated development of it. This second major point is what Wegner intends to demonstrate.

How does he go about his task? He finds the 'suitable exegetical method' in *relecture* (p. 303). He seems to be enamoured with this French term which, in the eyes of this reviewer at least, stands for nothing more than vintage 'Redaction Criticism' (in capitals, p. 304). What this reviewer failed to see is how the concept as such has supposedly not been examined so far in Isaianic studies. To him the term and the concept are well-worn in biblical studies, at least in French works. One should bear in mind, of course, that 'relecture' or re-reading is not to be taken literally, in terms of mere *reading* a text over again. No, it actually means *adding* to what one reads, mostly for the purpose of updating (or of 'actualization', to use additional rather French-sounding terminology). Now anybody familiar with biblical criticism knows that the basic tenet of redaction criticism is that biblical texts by and large are composite, *i.e.* they were, at the beginning, *not* the way they are now but *grew* by accretions through time. This, in essence, is what a champion of 'relecture' like Verneylen means. He happens to be the author of two thick volumes on Isaiah (1977/8). One wonders, then, why Wegner states that the concept as such has not been examined so far, unless, perhaps, he refers to Isaianic studies in the English language.

Here, in short, are his conclusions, all four texts having a similar pattern to them:

(a) God will use Assyria to punish Israel for her unbelief and to purge the wicked ones from the nation (Is. 7:17-19; 8:19-23b; 10:5f.; 31:4);

(b) a remnant of righteous ones will be saved and delivered from the Assyrians (8:8, 12-14a; 8:23-9:2; 10:21f.; 31:1-6);

(c) God will raise up a righteous deliverer to lead Israel in victory over Assyria ([possibly 7:14-16]; 9:1-6; 10:15-19, 33f.; 11:1-5; 31:5, 8f.; 32:1);

(d) this deliverer will establish a kingdom characterized by peace and justice (9:5f.; 11:1-9; 32:1-8).

Wegner does not claim to know who arranged these passages in that way. 'But it appears that if it was not Isaiah then much authentic Isaianic material was used within the pattern.' However, 'it appears that the so-called messianic passages have been shaped in such a way so as to portray a specific picture of messianic expectation' (p. 305f.). This reviewer for one, however, looked in vain for that specific picture. All Wegner claims is that it was developed later and 'appears to be more complicated' than others acknowledge. Strangely enough, then it is in the conclusion that a lengthy excursus follows on the various traditions that could have led to the rise of the concept of an 'Ideal Deliverer/Ruler'. Wegner discusses 'Royal Ideology' (2 Sa. 7), the 'remnant', Zion's inviolability, and Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (2 Ki. 18-20), but never states whether it was one or several of these that would lead to that specific picture.

Daniel Schibler, Basel, Switzerland

The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses

William L. Holladay
 Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress,
 1993, xi + 395 pp., hb., price not known.

There are many books on the psalms as they appear within the OT, also books dealing with modern theological issues arising from the study of them, and at least one (Prothero, *The Psalms in Human Life*) which deals with the history of their use and impact. Professor Holladay deals with all this within the compass of one volume.

His book is written for the non-specialist and takes little for granted, but it would certainly be of value to the theological student, even though he or she will need to augment it from other sources on some aspects of the subject. It is always good to have something wide-ranging to enable you to see the grand sweep of a great subject prior to more detailed study of particular aspects.

Part I is entitled 'The Psalms Take Shape - a Reconstruction'. Even though evangelical students will not be persuaded by all that is said here, there is much of positive value. The writer makes helpful comments on the OT cultural background. Remarking on the frequent appearances of enemies in the psalms, for instance, he shows in how many ways, in that time and place, a man might have experienced the enmity of others.

The author is an expert on the book of Jeremiah and he makes interesting comments on the relationship between the Psalter and this prophetic book, especially in relation to the question of the possible dependence of one on the other. However, there is not much on the poetry of the psalms.

There are a few references to James Sanders and just two to Brevard Childs, but it is evident that Dr Holladay has been influenced by their general approach. He has a strong sense of the Psalter as a canonical book and not simply as a miscellaneous collection of religious poems. What he has to say about its structure and the significance of the order of the psalms in it is thought-provoking.

Part II is at once instructive and disappointing. It is called, 'The Psalter through History'. Many readers will find a great deal of its material quite unfamiliar and therefore valuable. The treatment of Luther, of the Roman Catholic use of the psalms and of the psalms in the modern missionary movement is excellent, but the information given on the Scottish Psalter and on the use of the psalms in the Book of Common Prayer is extremely slender. Most disappointing of all is the one chapter on the NT use of the psalms. Most of us would willingly have sacrificed part of the three-and-a-half pages of information on the life and work of C.A. Briggs if, by this means, the 21 pages on the NT could have been extended.

Part III is entitled 'Current Theological Issues' and is full of stimulus to new thought about the psalms and how they can be used in Christian worship and Christian living. You may not agree with his approach on every matter, but will find he encourages you to think through a number of important issues. He suggests, for example, 'how the psalms of lament might extend and stretch and toughen our experience of worship' (p. 293). The chapter on 'Censored Texts', in which he deals with passages normally omitted in public reading, again gains illumination from his studies in Jeremiah. He addresses the question of the use of the psalms in worship and devotion by women – whether satisfactorily, I must leave the reader to decide.

There is a concluding chapter on approaching the psalms from the standpoint of our Lord, based on the undoubted fact that they furnished his own worship manual. He says, 'His praying of the Psalms can stretch our praying of them. He can adore and praise God fully, while by comparison we can adore and praise God only faintly and fitfully. He can lament the sin of the world, which he took upon himself . . . , in ways we cannot begin to imagine' (p. 348).

Altogether a good read – and how beautifully produced it is! If you work through it in detail and lend it to several of your fellow-students, it will probably survive the ordeal and still look good on your shelf!

Geoffrey Grogan, Glasgow Bible College

Studies in Old Testament Theology

Robert L. Hubbard, Jr.,
Robert K. Johnston, and
Robert P. Meye (eds)

Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1992.
333 pp., \$17.95.

It is a happy combination of topics, contributors and editors that come together in this valuable book honouring Dr David Hubbard, a major, even towering, figure in theological education. The book, another welcome impetus to the discipline of biblical theology, is more focused than most *Festschriften*. Three themes are systematically traced in turn through the three parts of OT canon. Images in the portrayal of God, images for the people of God, and the contemporary value of the respective canonical division are identified for the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Writings. The third theme, that of connecting the OT with life in the present, receives additional input in two final chapters, 'Israel and the Church in the World' (Richard J. Mouw) and 'Environmental Ethics and the Covenant of Hosea 2' (William A. Dyrness). All three themes – God, people of God, and appropriation of

Scripture – are highly pertinent to the church today.

The 14 contributors, all seasoned scholars, include teaching colleagues of the honoree, such as Daniel P. Fuller, Frederic W. Bush, John D.W. Watts, Leslie Allen, Richard Mouw and William Dyrness, but also scholars from other points on the theological spectrum, such as Elizabeth Achtemeier (mainline Protestant) and Roland Murphy (Roman Catholic). Two are from the United Kingdom: John Goldingay ('Images of the People of God in the Writings') and David J.A. Clines.

The editors, one each from the disciplines of OT, NT and systematic theology, have secured well-deserved and, as befits the honoree, well-articulated tributes (Max Depree, Vernon Grounds, Leon Pacala and Timothy Weber). Robert Hubbard's essay, 'Doing Old Testament Theology Today', is a short, incisive and well-balanced assessment of the discipline, one from which both beginners and veterans can benefit. The indexes are multiple: subject (22 pages!), text, authors, foreign words. A selected bibliography of David Hubbard's writings extends to seven pages. Chapter endnotes will help the specialist. The reading level is that of upper college.

While the book coheres well around the selected themes, it is not tightly knit as to method. David Clines in his essay on the portrait of God adopts the literary method, and in a teasing way – certainly non-traditional, even mischievous, and for some problematical – reads 'against the grain', so highlighting a dialectic resulting in ambivalences and ambiguities: God is present (but apparently absent), God fulfils promises (but often does not), God speaks (but his speaking is ambiguous, concealing). By contrast Leslie Allen, in describing the people of God as depicted in the prophets according to the historical method, stresses (almost too one-sidedly) the well-known covenant dimension. Roland Murphy seems not so much to highlight images of God in the Writings as to detail the genres found in Wisdom, except for the closing observation that Wisdom literature preserves something about the mystery of God.

Similarly, as one might expect in a collection of this nature, viewpoints vary, even collide. Daniel Fuller writes with conviction about the unity of the OT; Clines opines that there is not a graspable unity in the Pentateuch (and that despite his earlier proposal that 'promise' is the Pentateuch's unifying theme). Achtemeier encourages appropriation of Scripture via analogy; Kaiser plays it down. While the book by its design is to focus on images, and so is in step with the current attention given to a right-brained approach to understanding, some contributors have difficulty freeing themselves from a definition-and-analysis approach.

Of considerable value in the book are the essays which outline the contemporary value of the three-part OT canon. By arranging for this set of essays, the editors are declaring that biblical theology is not merely descriptive but is in some sense normative. Whether Walter Kaiser's fascination with the 'ladder of abstraction' is really the best principle by which to make the Pentateuchal laws relevant to today is debatable. Robert Johnston's article on learning from Wisdom moves considerably beyond the commonplace, and is especially well done. Carl Armerding writes on the relevance of the prophets. Given the three essays of this genre, along with the sensible suggestions by E. Achtemeier on preaching the OT, this book has a strong appeal for the pastor as well as the academic. It will help the student to get a handle on how to think about God, God's people, and Scripture's bearing on current questions.

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Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law (JSOTS 140)

Walter J. Houston

Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993, 314 pp.,
£40.00/\$70.00.

It has been remarked that a historian seeks to discover with infinite pains what any serving girl of the time could tell. Our ignorance of the food habits of the ancients illustrates this dictum admirably, and it is to Houston's credit that he tackles positively and persuasively a subject that has generated a degree of discussion that dwarfs the information we have at our disposal.

The primary source of our knowledge relating to Israel is Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Houston sets out the evidence for their internal complexity and suggests that the Deuteronomy tradition is based on an early form of the Leviticus tradition. But source criticism by itself cannot take us far, and so there follows a useful survey of the various types of explanation of the dietary laws, none of which has proved satisfactory by itself. Instead, Houston suggests that the laws require us to take into account all relevant factors, environmental, cultural and geographical. He goes on to survey the sparse information we have about the attitude to food and the practice of sacrifice in the ancient world. The valuable aspect of this treatment is the way in which Houston seeks to relate the fragmentary texts to the more material fragments uncovered by archaeozoologists (a rare species interested in the analysis and interpretation of animal remains found in excavated tombs and rubbish tips). The result is a cautious yet persuasive portrait of diet through the centuries.

And what about that infamous denizen of the animal kingdom, the pig? While we find the animals we would expect throughout the region (primarily sheep, goats, cattle), there is a marked decline in the number of pigs in Israelite settlements. Houston builds a persuasive solution to the complex role that the pig played. For one, the Israelites, with a background of pastoral nomadism, would not have kept pigs. But why was this aspect of Canaanite culture singled out for emphasis? The evidence suggests that the Canaanites were happy to eat pork, but only used pigs for sacrifice in abnormal situations, such as offerings to underworld deities. Drawing on anthropological insights, Houston proposes a basic threefold classification of animals: domestic animals that are clean and may be sacrificed, unclean wild animals that are associated with violence and destruction and are not sacrificed, and animals such as dogs and pigs that are neither fully domestic nor wild. It is the ambiguity of the last class that enables them to be powerful symbols. The final step of the argument is to relate the absolute prohibition of eating, not just sacrificing, the pig to the distinctive Israelite understanding of God. The development of a classification system that declared pigs to be supremely unclean cut off the possibility that they could be used to contact the realm of the dead. Israelite monotheism is safeguarded by the distinctive profile of the Israelite purity laws.

With the general lines of interpretation clear, Houston returns to the texts and relates differences to the setting and theology of the priestly and Deuteronomistic traditions. These differences arise not so much from divergent datings as from different responses to challenges to the integrity of Yahwistic monotheism. A valuable final chapter discusses the implications of the study for the NT and for a Christian understanding of the purity laws. The abandonment of the concept of ritual purity was necessary for the fulfilment of the universal mission of the church,

although a strong moral understanding of purity remained. But Houston rightly stresses how much was lost in the process, and the church can learn a great deal from an approach to life that takes the ritual and symbol character of daily life seriously.

This is an impressive volume, ranging confidently over a wide range of the disciplines that now inform biblical studies – history, archaeology, source criticism, anthropology and theology. The problems of methodology and interpretation of limited data are recognized, but they do not sidetrack the course of the argument. And unlike many products of the academy, Houston's Christian commitment emerges. Starting from an apparently marginal law we find ourselves confronted with some of the most significant theological and practical issues that face the church as it seeks to fulfil its mission. While much of the recent interest in the OT has been in the narrative, this volume shows the fruitfulness of looking at the legal portions.

Although this is a sophisticated and demanding book, it is recommended not just to OT specialists, but to anyone who wishes to explore in detail how the people of God can respond to a pagan culture. And who knows, the next trip to the supermarket might be a good place to start!

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Land Tenure and the Biblical Jubilee: Uncovering Hebrew Ethics through the Sociology of Knowledge (JSOTS 155)

Jeffrey A. Fager

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, 135 pp., hb.

This volume seeks to interpret the Israelite legislation concerning the year of jubilee by applying methods associated with the 'sociology of knowledge'. According to Fager, Israel's jubilee legislation represented a deliberate attempt to stabilize society during a period of crisis, which he identifies as the Babylonian exile. The destruction of the temple, the termination of the Davidic dynasty, the loss of the land, the apparent annulment of the Sinai covenant, the end of sacrifice and the decimation of the priesthood called into question the orderliness of the socio-religious universe. While many responded by capitulating to Babylonian theology and despairing resignation, among the intelligentsia, particularly the priests, some began to look forward to a restoration of order. Appealing to the traditions of Sinai (rather than Zion), the priests sought to reconstruct the Yahwistic community and the Israelite worldview on more secure foundations. However, these noble religious motives were mixed with a selfish concern to establish themselves as the basic legitimizing institution (after the demise of the monarchy). Within the priesthood, Ezekiel and his 'school' shared with the majority a vision of a theocratic state, but their view, based on fresh revelation from God, was more radical and utopian (cf. Ezk. 47:13-48:29).

In chapters 6-8, Fager appeals to K. Mannheim's three levels of meaning to elucidate Leviticus 25, the basic document on the Israelite institution of jubilee. He discovers that *objectively*, the jubilee came into existence when increasing numbers of small farms were being absorbed into the holdings of wealthy creditors. However, since the periodic redistribution of land (every 50 years) would have been difficult

to administer and probably disastrous economically, he doubts whether the jubilee was intended to be obeyed literally.

At the *expressive level*, by including the jubilee legislation in their legal code the priests attempted to strengthen the efforts of the returning exiles to reclaim the land they had been forced to abandon. They did so by adapting an ancient orthodox tradition to their own context. Under their influence the legislation took on more cultic and theological overtones, but they did not spiritualize it into an abstraction. Insisting on a relatively equal distribution of the land among the people, they sought to lead them toward a proper relationship with the land.

At the *documentary level*, Leviticus 25 reflects an even deeper meaning for the land tenure legislation. By linking specific individuals with specific tracts of land, their economic viability was ensured and family solidarity strengthened. In their adaptation of the tradition, the priests affirmed Yahweh's sovereignty over all the world and repudiated any compartmentalization of life into sacred and secular spheres. Since proper land distribution is seen as integral to an orderly world, unequal distribution of land is therefore not simply a matter of injustice; it is a symptom of social chaos. Unlike Ezekiel's utopian vision, the priestly jubilee acknowledges the realities of the world, but believes the present defects can be corrected here and now. Leviticus 25:23 is foundational to the priestly perspective: Yahweh is the true owner of the land, a notion whose broader implications Fager helpfully points out.

The author has performed a great service in clarifying the nature and significance of Israel's jubilee legislation. His presentation is clear and well organized, and his style lucid. However, the study raises some nagging questions. First, Fager's reconstruction of the history of the priestly tradition depends upon a speculative dissection of Leviticus 25 into literary strata (see the Appendix). Not only is the methodology suspect (cf. M. Greenberg in *Ezekiel and His Book*, ed. J. Lust (1986), pp. 123-135); lexical considerations suggest that several segments identified as late are probably early (cf. archaic (*myt*, v. 17; *š'r*, v. 49). Second, on a related score, Fager's understanding of the relationship between the Priestly Code and Ezekiel is questionable. His claim that there is 'some' evidence for the chronological priority of Ezekiel to P (p. 65) raises doubts about the strength of the evidence. But he never answers the doubts. Instead he carries on as if Ezekielian priority is incontrovertible (but see the contrary linguistic evidence amassed by Hurvitz and Rooker). Third, while Fager's attempt to explain the jubilee legislation sociologically is extremely helpful, his interpretation of laws as 'responses to existing situations and not hypothetical ones' (p. 102) is unnecessarily categorical. Given the Ancient Near Eastern cultural context, the jubilee legislation could have arisen as an antidote to anticipated classism prior to Israel's consolidation as a settled agricultural economy. Fourth, despite Fager's own cautions to the contrary, his emphasis on priestly self-interest will be perceived by some as unnecessarily cynical. Such cynicism is fashionable in the present scholarly climate, but it is often based more on readerly assumptions about authorial intent than on objective internal evidence. The priestly document purports to present a revelation from Yahweh, whose intention is not to establish a priestly hierarchy, but a holy people, reflective of the holiness of the divine Suzerain.

Although questions like these may be raised, they should not detract from the importance of Fager's study in drawing out the significance of the Israelite jubilee legislation. Scholars with a different methodology could arrive at many of the author's conclusions, but by forcing

us to look at the text from new angles he has highlighted nuances of meaning that might otherwise have been missed. For this service we shall all be grateful.

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Luke 9:21-18:34 (Word Biblical Commentary 35b)
John Nolland
Dallas: Word, 1993.

The second volume of Nolland's work continues the strengths of his first volume. Reflecting the Word commentary format, Nolland begins each pericope with analyses of sources, authenticity, historicity and form questions before moving to a verse-by-verse discussion. Often the discussion of historical-critical matters is as long as the verse-by-verse discussions (e.g. Lk. 9:28-36). In fact, more attention seems to be given to these questions than in the first volume. Nolland often defends the integrity of the 'core' of Jesus' teaching, while being more circumspect about the exact wording of the sayings of Jesus (e.g. the passion predictions). In passages like the transfiguration, he is careful not to close out the historical possibility of such events taking place. Each unit closes with an explanation section that attempts to synthesize the results in terms of the book's movement and its major themes. Two excurses discuss the Son of Man and the Jerusalem journey section.

Nolland, Vice Principal and Lecturer in NT Studies at Trinity College in Bristol, England, has always done very thorough work in detailing the periodical discussion surrounding the Lucan text. His discussions are detailed and insightful. In fact, the scope of his interaction makes this commentary a necessity for those who want to interact with recent, technical exegetical discussion about the gospel. For this purpose, the commentary is a gold-mine. In general Nolland concentrates on more recent resources in his actual comments, so the discussion is very current.

When it comes to Luke's gospel itself, it is clear that the break-up of the gospel into three volumes and the organization of its units, though given some thought and attention, is less well developed. The outline proceeds only down to the second level, so that there is no distinct separating out of the major 'Jerusalem journey' section in the presentation. Rather it is briefly treated in an excursus. The gospel's larger block units are mostly ignored, as are the journey subsections, other than being listed on p. 531 and very briefly commented on otherwise (e.g. p. 722). The argument for terminating the journey at 18:34 with the passion prediction seems to read Luke too much in light of Mark, since in Luke 19:41, Luke still portrays Jesus as approaching the city, a point that means journey language was not abandoned after 18:34. This Luke 19 pericope seems a better ending point for the journey on internal literary grounds. One helpful observation in this discussion of unit division is the observation that many themes of 9:51-18:34 are set up in 9:21-50. Still one can question whether the major thrust of Luke's story (as opposed to the analysis of its details) can really be told, if such major units are left largely undiscussed.

On the other side of synthetic concerns, there is no internal outline within pericope units either, so that the flow of argument and logic within a unit has to be pieced together. Examples are the way he separates the discussion of Luke

10:25-28 from 10:29-37, when the parable is clearly a development of the previous remarks and is really part of the same unit of discussion, and the breaking up of Luke 14:1-12 into three units. It is these issues of synthesis where the volume is less helpful, though the explanation sections seem less redundant as well as more synthetic and helpful than in the first volume. Still, pastors will probably be frustrated with the volume since one will have to negotiate much technical, historical debate to find points of emphasis that prove of value to message preparation.

Among the more interesting positions Nolland takes on some key issues, one can note the following: he rejects a parallel with Deuteronomy on the Jerusalem journey section, while accepting in principle the structural work of Blomberg; he opts for the presence of kingdom-inbreaking language in Luke 10:9; he shows clearly how Jesus develops OT ethical themes (e.g. 10:25-28); he sees the Lord's Prayer as part of a single tradition, with Matthew's form generally being the more original, and 11:8 as the 'shamelessness' of the householder receiving the request to aid. Other insights involve the themes of arrival and Jesus' authority in 11:14-23, a single tradition behind Luke 11:37-54 and Matthew 23, a pre-Lucan tradition linking the three parables of Luke 15, the steward of Luke 16:1-8 reducing levels of payment dealing with the rental of land, assumes Luke 16:19-31 is a parable, and the kingdom of God as 'right there' meaning that it has arrived without notice in 17:21.

One observation is that Nolland seems rarely to consider the possibility of certain pericopes reflecting the presence of multiple versions in the stream of tradition. On this point, he follows the current critical consensus, but one wonders whether the tradition histories of some pericopes are more complicated than many argue for (e.g. Lk. 11:37-54; Mt. 23). Other discussions are so broken down into verse-by-verse detail that it is hard to assemble a final position with clarity (e.g. Lk. 17:22-37). But such observations simply reflect the difficulty of bringing together all the many facets of study in this longest of gospels.

In sum, this commentary is a worthy member of a series of strong, technical commentaries on Luke, joining Marshall and Fitzmyer near the top of the class in English language resources. Nevertheless, those looking to engage the gospel at a more synthetic and thematic level will probably want to look elsewhere.

Darrell L. Bock, Dallas Theological Seminary

Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story

W.M. Swartley

Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994, xv + 367 pp.

This book proposes that the composition and narrative form of each synoptic gospel was influenced by major OT theological traditions. Swartley claims that the content and structure of both the Galilee and Jerusalem sections of the synoptics were shaped respectively by predominant motifs found in the Sinai (northern) and Zion (southern) faith traditions. While the Galilean and journey narratives were shaped by and in turn develop Israel's northern traditions of exodus-liberation and way-conquest, the passion and passion narratives, located in

Jerusalem, reflect and develop Israel's southern traditions of temple and kingship. Swartley's method is primarily oriented to what is known as compositional analysis which examines both structural and narrative features. To a lesser degree, Swartley also utilizes tradition history. He argues that there is an intrinsic relationship between narrative analysis which explicates the meaning of the structure and tradition history which often determines the religious meaning of a text behind the structure.

The study is divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter Swartley briefly surveys prior attempts at understanding the role of the OT in the NT and proposes his own method of enquiry. Chapter 2 introduces the four major OT faith traditions which are supposedly at the heart of the synoptics' story of Jesus. Chapters 3-6 demonstrate the extent and nature of the influence of these traditions on the narrative form and content of the synoptics. More specifically, Chapter 3 tries to show that the exodus and Sinai traditions of deliverance and wilderness influenced the Galilean sections (Mk. 1:14-8:27; Mt. 4:17-16:12; Lk. 4:16-9:50). Chapter 4 seeks to demonstrate that 'conquest traditions' (such as the theme of 'divine warrior') played a major role in forming the journey sections (Mk. 8:27-10:52; Mt. 16:13-20:34; Lk. 9:51-19:44). Chapter 5 tries to show that temple traditions were influential in the composition of the pre-passion sections (Mk. 11:1-13:37; Mt. 21:1-25:46; Lk. 19:45-21:38). And Chapter 6 argues that kingship traditions played a significant role in the formation of the passion sections (Mk. 14:1-16:8; Mt. 26:1-28:20; Lk. 22:1-24:53). In the final (seventh) chapter, Swartley not only synthesizes and summarizes the results, but he gives brief analyses to the synoptics' hermeneutic, symbolic use of Galilee and Jerusalem, and purpose of the narrative pattern. The book concludes with two appendices. The first relates the results to the fourth gospel and to certain non-canonical gospels. The second attempts to further verify the results of the study by showing that distinctive features in the synoptics generally corroborate Swartley's proposals.

Swartley's overall proposal is intriguing and his broad method of combining narrative analysis with tradition history is sound. I find the relationship between the OT kingship theme and the synoptics' passion accounts most persuasive. There are, however, two methodological concerns that I have with the work. First, although Swartley does an admirable job on the level of intratextuality, he has not adequately addressed the features and criteria associated with intertextuality. Throughout the work, especially Chapters 3-6, I was left wondering how Swartley justifies thematic and textual parallels in the absence of dictional and exegetical coherences. Although 'echoes' are frequently presented in support of the theses, the validity of this evidence is not demonstrated. Secondly, Swartley's proposal could have been significantly strengthened by incorporating early Jewish exegetical traditions of those OT texts which were supposedly echoed by the synoptics. This neglect suggests that the synoptic writers were only influenced by OT texts and not their contemporary interpretations.

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The First Epistle to the Corinthians (Epworth Commentaries)

Nigel Watson

London: Epworth Press, 1992,

189 pp., pb., £7.95.

In his introduction Nigel Watson sets out his broad understanding of 1 Corinthians as a sustained attempt on Paul's part to correct a series of Corinthian misconceptions of the gospel. These various distortions can be attributed, he believes, partly to the assimilation of the gospel to Hellenism, and partly to a natural human tendency to play down its more challenging aspects. It is chiefly in this latter respect that the letter is thought to have a message for successive generations. Such a schematization of the letter's contents is valuable and probably necessary in a commentary of this nature, not least because it encourages the student to look for the significance of the whole. The drawback with it is that one is left with the impression that the letter is addressed in the abstract to a set of conceptual and doctrinal issues rather than concretely to a church. To my mind the commentary would have had greater relevance to the modern reader if at this point not just the beliefs of the Corinthians had been delineated but also something of the cultural and personal circumstances in which they arose. Also, virtually no consideration is given to literary-critical or stylistic issues in the introduction.

The commentary itself is rather conventional in its verse-by-verse approach, but clear and well laid out. Most of the chapters are afforded brief introductions and certain topics are developed through extended notes. Watson's professed exegetical method - to establish first his own interpretation of the passage and only then to turn to the commentaries - is effective. He is not afraid to make reference to the wider scholarly context - this appears to be one of the main differences between the Epworth series and the Tyndale commentaries - but not to the extent of obscuring the consistency of the individual perspective. Gordon Fee's recent New International Commentary on 1 Corinthians appears to have been particularly congenial to Watson's exegetical judgment. Inevitably, however, this approach also works as a limiting factor, filtering out some important critical concerns. Noticeably absent from the commentary, for example, is any overt assessment of the history-of-religions context for our understanding of either Paul's or the Corinthians' ideas; and, again, apart from a few comments on chapter 13, it is difficult to gain any sense of the letter as a literary object.

Whether these omissions count as deficiencies depends, of course, on what one expects this sort of commentary to offer. The intention behind this book has clearly been to guide the general student through Paul's letter, to clarify what appears in the text, not to initiate him or her into the mysteries of the wider academic debate. In this respect Watson must be judged to have produced a very readable and useful commentary, in effect a digest of current evangelical opinion. It is doubtful, however, whether it meets the broader objective, expounded in the general introduction by the series editor, Ivor H. Jones, and echoed on the back cover, of suggesting 'ways in which Scripture can help towards the living of a Christian life today... in ecumenical, multiracial, and multifaith situations'. The occasional quotation from writers such as Iris Murdoch and G.K. Chesterton gives the commentary little more than a superficial air of literary *savoir faire*, and it has to be said that any special relevance it has to the bewildering pluralistic context in which churches in the West now

find themselves remains largely implicit. It would have been interesting to have found a rather more informed and persuasive presentation of the relevance of Paul's letter to a church still torn apart by rivalry and distrust and beset on all sides by sexual immorality and a resurgence of pagan spirituality.

A.C. Perriman, Amsterdam

The Law in Galatians

(JSNTS 81)

In-Gyu Hong

Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993,
235 pp., hb.

In light of the massive amount of literature which has been produced in recent years on the subject of Paul and the law, one might wonder why still yet another monograph has been written in this area. In the introduction to this volume, which originated as a doctoral dissertation presented to the theology faculty at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, In-Gyu Hong addresses this question. After surveying some of the most influential approaches to this topic which are presently on offer, e.g. the positions advocated by H. Hübner, E.P. Sanders, H. Räisänen, J.D.G. Dunn and S. Westerholm, Hong contends that none of them is satisfactory. Moreover, he maintains that in order to understand Paul and the law aright one must consider carefully Paul's remarks on the subject in each individual letter. Hong selects Galatians, the epistle which he believes contains Paul's earliest thoughts on the law, because he is convinced that 'no one has thus far made a serious attempt to penetrate deeply Paul's understanding of the law as expressed in this letter' (p. 15). (I wonder how the above-mentioned scholars, along with countless others who have attempted to decipher the function of the law in this epistle, would respond to this loosely worded opinion!) Although this statement is certainly a gross exaggeration, it does illuminate the author's rationale in pursuing such a project.

The monograph is divided into two parts. The first section is given over to preliminary considerations. Chapter 1, a discourse and rhetorical analysis of the structure of Galatians, constitutes the lion's share of the first part, or for that matter of the entire book. Hong devotes some 55 pages (roughly a quarter of the volume) to this tedious analysis. He painstakingly evaluates the letter's structure on both a micro and macro level. His inquiry leads him to conclude that Galatians is a deliberative letter which may be broadly outlined as follows: prescript (1:1-5); proposition (1:6-10); narration (1:11-2:21); argument (3:1-4:31); exhortation (5:1-6:10); and postscript (6:11-18). In our opinion, Hong's discourse analysis of the epistle is the most significant and original contribution of this volume, even though he does do a poor job of integrating the results of his analysis into the rest of his thesis. In the second chapter Hong argues that Paul's argument in Galatians is grounded in 'his understanding of the cross of Christ as the event of the eschatological redemption' (p. 95). According to the author, such an understanding was initially gained by Paul on the Damascus road. We learn in Chapter 3 that Hong perceives Paul's Galatian opponents to be 'Jewish Christians connected with the right-wing party in the Jerusalem Church' who were encouraging the Galatian Christians to 'receive circumcision and obey the law as the Jews do' (p. 120).

The second part of the book seeks to discern Paul's view of the law in Galatians. After a

cursorious consideration in Chapter 4 of the meaning of νόμος ('law') in Galatians, Hong sets forth in the three chapters that follow what he believes to be the three functions of the law in Galatians. He suggests that Paul understands the law to operate on three different levels: (1) as an obligation of the Sinai covenant (ch. 5); (2) as an enslaving power (ch. 6); and (3) as an expression of love (ch. 7). Hong contends that in Paul's perspective the first two functions of the law were made obsolete as a result of Christ's redemptive work. But the love command which fulfils the whole law remains operative in the life of the believer. By way of conclusion the author summarizes the results of his study and offers three implications of his work for the present debate on Paul and the law. Hong maintains that in Galatians Paul does not misrepresent the law in Judaism, that his view of the law is not wholly negative, and that his treatment of the law is not inconsistent. The author leaves the broader application of these observations to the reader.

Although Hong displays a high standard of scholarship throughout much of this volume and has admirably waded through a flood of secondary literature on the subject, he seems to have overestimated the uniqueness of his views on Paul and the law. The majority of his conclusions are conventional and are similar to, if not a mere rehearsal of, others' views on the subject. There is nothing inherently wrong with such a study, but given the introduction to the study one expected the moon! On the whole Hong argues his position well; however, his arguments against others' opinions are often quite thin and not as conclusive as he appears to think (see his inadequate rebuttal of Räisänen's view of the law in Paul on pp. 195-197). That there has been so much written on Paul and the law is due largely to the fact that it is such a complex issue, as the author rightly acknowledges. Because it is such a knotty problem, Paul and the law will continue to be a 'hot-button' in NT studies. This book is instructive and a welcomed contribution to the discussion, and among its other strengths, it serves as a helpful summary of the current state of the debate.

Todd D. Still, University of Glasgow

The Function of Suffering in Philippians (JSNTS 78)

L. Gregory Bloomquist

Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993, 235 pp.,
hb.

In the ever-burgeoning field of Pauline studies it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a niche in the secondary literature. However, L. Gregory Bloomquist detected such a gap and has filled it in admirably. As the author points out in the introduction, it is remarkable that his is the only specialized study available on the subject of suffering in Philippians, a theme which permeates the entire epistle (p. 13). Oddly enough, the book was printed without a preface. However, by contacting the publisher, the reviewer was able to discover that *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* is a revised dissertation which was originally submitted to the Toronto School of Theology in 1989 for the PhD degree.

The monograph is divided into three parts. The first part, which contains three chapters, considers the history of interpretation of suffering in Philippians. In Chapter 1 the author discusses various martyrological approaches to suffering passages in Philippians. Chapter 2 reviews how modern interpreters who stand in

the Christ-mysticism tradition interpret Pauline texts which speak of suffering. Albert Schweitzer and his so-called followers are also considered in this chapter. Finding himself dissatisfied with the martyrological, the Christ-mysticism, and the Schweitzerian approaches, in Chapter 3 the author surveys what he refers to as 'alternative approaches' (p. 50). After summarizing other history-of-religion views and considering various theological approaches, the author concludes that Daniel Patte's work on structural semiotics is best able to explain the structure of Paul's thought. Convinced that the study of NT texts is moving away from historical-critical and theological approaches (p. 65), Bloomquist asserts that 'structural semiotics provides us with another alternative to approaches dominated by twentieth-century Western metaphysics of ontology' (p. 69). One only wishes that the author would have defined the 'buzz words' that he employed from the field of structural semiotics and that he would have explained the theory more extensively. In doing so, he would have strengthened his position.

In Part Two of the work, the author moves from the structures of Paul's thought to the structures of Paul's letters. Chapter 4, entitled 'Letter Writing and Rhetoric in Antiquity', is a helpful review of how ancient letters were composed and how rhetorical appeals were framed. Bloomquist is rightly convinced that Paul's epistles are best viewed as occasional letters intended to persuade (pp. 93-94). Having set forth the pertinent epistolary and rhetorical principles in Chapter 4, the author seeks to discover the epistolary structure of Philippians in Chapter 5 and the rhetorical functions of the letter in Chapter 6. At the outset of Chapter 5 Bloomquist considers various arguments for and against the integrity of Philippians. After a careful discussion, he correctly concludes that Philippians is of one piece. A summary of his epistolary analysis is found on p. 117. In Chapter 6 the author argues that Philippians is primarily an example of deliberative or persuasive rhetoric. Based on his rhetorical analysis, Bloomquist outlines Philippians as follows: epistolary prescript (1:1-2); *exordium* (1:3-11); *narratio* (1:12-14); *partitio* (1:15-18a); *argumentatio* (1:18b-4:7); *peroratio* (4:8-20); and epistolary postscript (4:21-23). We found the author's understanding of ancient rhetorical devices to be especially illuminating when applied to Paul's outbursts against his opponents. (Bloomquist believes Paul's opponents in Philippi were 'some kind of Jewish Christian pneumatics', p. 131; see also pp. 198-201.)

In the final section, the author applies his epistolographical and rhetorical findings to the discussion of the function of suffering in Philippians. He attempts to detect the function of suffering in the epistle by a careful exegesis of the pertinent texts. In Chapter 7 he treats the theme of suffering in 1:1-18a. Chapter 8 contains the author's comments on how suffering surfaces in 1:18b-2:18. Then in Chapters 9 and 10, Bloomquist deals with the theme in 2:19-4:7 and 4:8-20 respectively. This reviewer found particularly insightful the discussion of the term δούλος ('servants') in 1:1 (pp. 140-145), the comparison of the persecution of Pauline Christians in Philippi and Thessalonica (pp. 157-160), and the presentation of 2:6-11 against an Isaian suffering servant backdrop (pp. 160-168). Although there are a few exegetical foibles in Part Three, the author's apparent reversal of the traditional sequence of the Thessalonian letters is certainly suspect (p. 150).

It is not until the conclusion (pp. 191-197) that the author actually spells out what he perceives to be the functions of suffering in Philippians. He suggests that in epistolary and rhetorical terms the functions of suffering are as follows: (1) suffering serves as a *captatio benevo-*

lenticae; (2) suffering provides an occasion for the communication between Paul and the Philippians; (3) suffering highlights Christ and his servants as types who are worthy of emulation; and (4) suffering points to vindication and gives Paul an occasion to express his 'eschatological confession of faith in God's grace manifested to his servants' (p. 196). Given the multiple functions of suffering in Philippians, one wonders why the book's title does not indicate such. Regardless of this apparent oversight, there are certainly many positive functions that Bloomquist's work will serve in Pauline studies. It is a needed book in the field, and it is well-written and well-argued throughout.

Todd D. Still, University of Glasgow

A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers

D.A. Carson

Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992,
230 pp., £9.99.

This book is something of a chimera, a beast of divers parts. It is substantially a series of expository studies of the prayers found in Paul's letters. But interspersed are chapters dealing with prayer as a practical spiritual theme; and running through the whole work is the *leitmotiv* of D.A. Carson's indictment of the church in the West, which, for all its apparent success in matters of organization and self-promotion, has failed in its chief calling, the knowledge of God, and needs more than anything else to embrace a 'spiritual reformation'.

The expository studies focus on six passages in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Philippians and Ephesians, in which Paul articulates his prayers for the believers whom he addresses. On the basis of these Carson delineates what he believes to be the essential elements of Paul's practice of prayer: a 'spiritual framework' of thanksgiving and hope, a guiding vision of God's purposes, a passionate concern for others, a willingness to go beyond self-seeking to a knowledge of God, a pursuit of excellence in the Lord, and a recognition of God's sovereignty. A final study examines a passage from Romans 15 which culminates not in Paul's prayer for the Romans but in his request that they should pray for his ministry.

Four of the 12 chapters follow a different format. Chapter 1 lists a number of 'Lessons from the School of Prayer', solid practical advice culled from the teaching and example of 'senior saints' - worthy stuff but a rather prosaic opening to a call to spiritual reformation. A similar excursus later examines a number of popular excuses for not praying. In a chapter on 'Praying for Others' Carson has gathered together numerous passages that further illustrate the remarkable degree to which Paul in his prayers expressed a concern for the well-being of the churches - though one might observe, rather cynically, that we should hardly expect him to record at length how he prayed for himself in letters intended to address the needs of others. Finally, there is a well-constructed and apposite study of the relation between prayer and the sovereignty of God, seeking to answer the question, What is the point of praying if God has already ordained all things?.

Despite the title, the idea of spiritual refor-

mation emerges almost incidentally in this book and might easily be missed in a superficial reading. The force of Carson's concern appears chiefly in his trenchant and perceptive, though not particularly coherent, diagnosis of the church's spiritual sickness. He brings to light, here and there, through anecdote and diatribe, a range of moral and spiritual failures: ministers and teachers whose goal is professional self-fulfilment rather than prayerful self-giving; 'morose and whining Christians' too preoccupied with their own needs to 'give thanks in all circumstances'; the shallowness and banality of what passes for spirituality in many churches; our persistent refusal to 'inquire of the Lord' before taking action. Yet in all this Carson loses sight neither of his own shortcomings nor of the special pressures and temptations faced by church leaders; and it is one virtue at least of the hybrid nature of this book that the call to a deeper knowledge of God is firmly rooted both in Scripture and in practice.

What most distinguishes this attempt to redress the church's priorities is that it approaches the matter from an uncommon direction. The belief that it is the Word of God that should reform our praying is no mere dogmatic formality, nor is Scripture invoked simply for purposes of illustration: the various principles, judgments and assurances that Carson sets out emerge consistently from a thorough and confident exposition of the model prayers of Paul's letters. And there is more to recommend this book. It is pervaded by a sense of personal urgency, of impatience, even frustration, which in places inspires a heightened and compelling rhetoric. It does not pursue any narrowly denominational aims: it is a message that believers from all traditions should hear. Especial attention - both critical and sympathetic - is given to the needs and responsibilities of those in ministry. Questions for review and reflection are appended to each chapter.

One is only left wondering whether the book really lives up to its title. On the one hand, the reader may find himself by the end somewhat disoriented, having been tugged back and forth between polemic, exposition and practical advice. On the other, the theme of 'spiritual reformation' is too thinly and spasmodically treated to develop the sort of visionary momentum that it deserves. There is much to be learnt about prayer here, but I fear the bugle call may be too indistinct - and who will get ready for battle?

A.C. Perriman, Amsterdam

Non-canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation

Craig A. Evans

Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992,
xv + 281 pp., hb.

This book targets as its primary audience 'students who aspire to become New Testament interpreters', with the hopes of offering 'comprehensible and manageable' introductions to the vast array of ancient literature relevant to NT study (p. ix). Twelve chapters explore OT and NT apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, versions of the OT, Philo and Josephus, targums and rabbinic literature, early Christian fathers, Gnostic and other writings, with one chapter giving examples of how NT exegesis can be helped by having an understanding of this literature. Six appendices are included, as well as

three ancient and modern indexes. To present all this literature in a user-friendly manner which exposes its significance for NT study is a tall order and, while any single author will demonstrate weaknesses in such an undertaking, Evans succeeds where many might not have done.

Evans's introduction to the book suggests that his primary interest is the way in which the NT authors handle and are influenced by OT Scripture and its developments. This has been an interest of his throughout the years, and it is an important issue which is currently having a resurgence in NT study. Nonetheless, I wonder how different this book might have been if it had been written by someone with more pronounced sociological interests. It may not be unfair to say that Evans focuses primarily upon matters cerebral; there is little about worship patterns or social realities, unless they can be shown to have influenced the ideas of a text. Accordingly, one might be left with the impression that NT study is first about ideas, and that these often passionate and engaging texts can be reduced to storehouses of concepts to be plundered in aid of NT study. There is little feel for the piety of the texts in what is often detached and descriptive analysis.

Since he has needed to be brief, Evans's treatment, while often helpful, can be frustrating. So, for instance, one Qumran scroll is said to contain two hymns, while another is said to be a benediction, with nothing more said of either (p. 63); equal space (one paragraph) is given to the extremely important text *I Enoch* as to *Pseudo-Hecataeus*, a work that I have never seen discussed; on occasion, the reader is told that a particular issue might be important for NT study, but this is often simply signalled, not discussed in any depth (e.g. the astrological interest in *Treatise of Shem* may shed some light on Mt. 2.1-12', p. 24); at times concepts are discussed as if there was a single common belief shared by all, verging on ahistorical abstraction (e.g. 'Messiah' in OT apocrypha on p. 18); when surveying rabbinic literature, Evans may give an overly-optimistic impression of its direct relevance for NT study, without much of the expected cautions about dating the material; mention of texts such as *5 Ezra* and *6 Ezra* do not appear in the chapter on NT pseudepigrapha and apocrypha, although recent work has highlighted the potential of the former (especially) for the study of early Christianity.

In such a project, any reviewer will find minor points to his dissatisfaction, but the merit of the book needs to be judged on its overall value. In this regard, Evans's work provides a helpful resource, signalling the potential of this material for aiding NT research. Evans's expertise is evident especially in his work on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Josephus, and rabbinic literature (a good example of Evans at his best appears on pp. 123-125). Unfortunately, I found the summaries of OT pseudepigrapha to be less helpful than they might have been, and one might do better to take the time to read the various introductions in J.H. Charlesworth's *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Nonetheless, Evans's work should generally be judged a success in meeting its aims. It is the kind of book that does not require careful attention to an intricate argument; one can read it sporadically, on the bus or train, after a long day, and always with benefit. While reinforcing the need for students of the NT to be students of the literature of the Greco-Roman world, Evans's work succeeds in making that prospect enticing and the literature intriguing. The only thing left after reading this book is to do the hard work of studying carefully the literature itself and entering respectfully into the life-world of those who produced it in expression of their life before God.

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**Raising Up a Faithful Priest:
Community and Priesthood in
Biblical Theology**

Richard D. Nelson

Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/
John Knox, 1993, xiii + 192 pp.,
\$19.99.

This is a welcome and timely volume, and in my opinion the best summary to date of what the Bible says not just about priesthood, but about Israel's worship in general. It is reminiscent of De Vaux's masterpiece, *Ancient Israel*, being written clearly and with only a handful of footnotes, so that we are not distracted from a sustained engagement with the biblical texts. The sophistication of the comments reveals a deep and wide knowledge of the scholarly literature, and good use is made of anthropological and sociological insights. An inevitable drawback of the approach he has adopted is that at a number of points Nelson makes critical judgments without discussion. He adopts the usual critical datings and reconstruction of the history of the priesthood, although in general he is cautious and judicious. Along the way we are given a clear and comprehensive discussion not just of priesthood, but also of concepts of cleanness and uncleanness, holy space, sacrifice, and aspects of Israel's eschatological hope. On every page there are insights and perspectives that illuminate the text and the world of ancient Israel.

To write biblical theology nowadays is to make some difficult choices about how to proceed. I think that Nelson has made most of the right choices. In contrast to the critical forces that encourage fragmentation, he insists that the Bible comprises a chorus of voices, not a chaos. His approach is synthetic and constructive, while recognizing historical development and uncertainty about many issues. The tension between the critically reconstructed history of the priesthood and the canonical presentation emerges from time to time, with the latter usually getting the final say. A very positive feature of Nelson's writing is that he is not afraid to interact with modern culture and contemporary ideologies. His exposition of Israel's 'culture map' draws upon structuralist and anthropological insights, and he introduces a range of vivid modern metaphors that enliven the writing and enhance the communication. I was particularly struck by his development of the 'holy-unclean fusion reaction' metaphor. Nelson is more concerned to explain than to dictate, but from time to time he chides Western scholarship for its prejudices. I would have liked him to be even bolder in his dialogue, and a little more aware of the limitations of the metaphors he uses. But perhaps his moderate approach may win the more over to reflect seriously how much Israel's experience of worshipping God can teach us.

Christians, especially Protestants, have often ignored the accounts of Israel's worship, but Nelson explores the relation between the NT and the OT approaches to priesthood and sacrifice in a positive and helpful way. While acknowledging that the NT does not take over directly priestly paradigms for its orders of ministry and eucharistic theology, there are other aspects which remain relevant. Above all, priests are called in a special (but not an exclusive) way to be mediators and guardians of community, vertically with God and horizontally among members of the community. This task is focused on worship, though not restricted to it. Nelson suggests that we need to recover a theology of holy space, as well as of time and history. There is also a growing need to articulate and resolve ritually powers of guilt, uncleanness and sin that

destroy the integrity of individuals and communities. Here also the priests have much to teach us. I warmly commend this volume, not merely to those seeking an introduction to the religion of Israel, but also to those alert to the vital significance of worship in the church today.

Philip Jenson, Trinity College, Bristol

**Pentecostal Spirituality:
A Passion for the Kingdom
(Journal of Pentecostal
Theology Supplement Series 1)**

Steven J. Land

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,
1993, 239 pp., pb.

This is a very interesting, challenging and refreshing interpretation and revision of Pentecostal spirituality. In agreement with W. Hollenweger, Land argues that the first ten years of the Pentecostal movement form the heart and not the infancy of its spirituality and therefore his study of Pentecostal spirituality is limited to the first ten years of the 20th century. Throughout the study, Land emphasizes the crucial importance of understanding the Wesleyan, Holiness and revivalist-restorationist roots of the Pentecostal movement, and he shows how Wesleyan and African-American spiritualities had the most influence upon the originators of Pentecostalism.

Chapter 1 outlines the purpose, method and thesis of the study and focuses on the relationship between spirituality and theology. The starting point for Pentecostals is the Holy Spirit, who is 'God with us', and the heart of this spirituality is prayer. Consequently, prayer must also be central to the theological task; prayer and belief must go together. The task of theology as spirituality is to integrate the beliefs, affections and actions (orthodoxy, orthopathy, orthopraxy). In this spirituality, the kingdom of God is already present but not yet consummated, creating the already-not yet tension. The context for this spirituality is eschatological, waiting for the second coming of Christ.

Chapter 2 describes Pentecostal beliefs and practices, showing their apocalyptic character. The eschatological vision is the inbreaking of the Spirit in the last days, seeing everything in the light of the imminent return of Christ. In this eschatological context, Pentecostal spirituality emphasizes our participation in the biblical narratives, experiencing life as part of the story of salvation-history, the ongoing work of God in history. Consequently, worship, praise, testimony and witness become times to testify to this participation in the redemption story which continues after the Bible. Early Pentecostalism emphasized the three-fold blessings or crisis experiences of justification, sanctification and Spirit-baptism.

Chapter 3 demonstrates how their beliefs and practices are integrated with Pentecostal affections. Christian affections are not passing feelings but are objective, relational dispositions. The heart of Pentecostal spirituality is its affections and the ruling affection is a love and passion for the kingdom of God. The three main Pentecostal affections are gratitude, compassion and courage which correlate to the divine attributes of righteousness, love-holiness and power and the characteristics of the divine kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy. Thus the affectional disposition of a Pentecostal is continual thankfulness, love and confidence. These affections are shaped and expressed in prayer, the

primary theological activity of Pentecostals; it is a participation in the life of God and a longing and passion for the kingdom of God.

Chapter 4 concludes with a brief history of the development of Pentecostalism after the first ten years, describing some of the problems and internal and external criticisms of the movement. In response, Land suggests the need for a trinitarian revision of Pentecostal spirituality within an eschatological context. This vision is correlated with five loci, namely God, history, salvation, church and mission. Pentecostals need to retain the fivefold gospel (which emphasizes Jesus as Saviour, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer, Healer, Coming King) and the three-dimensional understanding of salvation, affirming the necessity of crisis experiences. A passion for the kingdom of God must continue to be the unifying centre of the movement.

This is an excellent, thought-provoking, well-written presentation of Pentecostal spirituality which is controversial and challenging for both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals. Throughout Land gives helpful examples, summaries and diagrams, making it easy to follow the argument. I appreciate his challenge to Pentecostals to become more inclusive with regard to race, gender and class and to be involved in ecumenical dialogue. I highly recommend this book to everyone interested in Pentecostal spirituality and especially to those concerned with its future shape and development. If Land's vision is embraced it can be an important factor in shaping the Pentecostal movement in the future.

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

Jürgen Moltmann

Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress,
1993, xviii + 388 pp., pb.

In this, the third work of his systematic theology, Moltmann brings into focus his entire theological enterprise, presenting in detail the Christology central to his whole thought. As the title indicates, the Christology of the Christian life is a journey, and the way that Jesus took, and the way of Jesus that we take now and in the future, must be central to any theology.

This, however, is not what many have come to understand by Christology. On the one hand, Moltmann criticizes the patristic discussions of two-nature Christology for over-emphasizing the cosmological (and hence vertical) aspect of Jesus Christ. On the other, modern Christologies which are anthropological are seen as overly horizontal in their outlook. Rather, Moltmann proposes a 'Christology in the eschatological history of God', attempting to avoid the over-used categories of Christology 'from below' and 'from above'. The overriding framework for this Christology is an attempt to link the historical reality of the Messiah with the eschatological issues of the world today. Three issues are of crucial importance to Moltmann: economic, political and social injustice; the threat of nuclear destruction; and the threat of the ecological crisis. This last issue has particular importance as Moltmann attempts to describe how the Son is related as cosmic Christ to the whole of nature, leaving behind the modern anthropocentric world view.

This work on Christology is different from others in a number of ways, and here we may isolate four. There is no discussion of traditional patristic Christology, and although Moltmann has explained *why* this is left behind, he only begins to answer *how* we are justified in doing this. Moltmann's spirit Christology is refreshing and stimulating, yet it unfortunately leaves a number of issues unanswered concerning the Godhead. A welcome difference in this work is that the life and work of Jesus actually *matters*, yet without denigrating the importance of the cross and resurrection. All too many Christologies leave the impression that Jesus had no earthly ministry to speak of. Thirdly, due to Moltmann's concerns of contextual relevance, this could well be a Christology of liberation. Praxis becomes the mark of the way of Jesus Christ, and it is once again a delight to see theology concerned with the world in which Jesus lived, died, and still lives today. The last point to notice is one which has become expected of Moltmann – that is, his Christology is rooted in eschatology. Yet the parousia of Christ is not a far-off naive hope, but the grounding and foundation of the Christology that we begin to live out today.

In spite of the great value of this work, many will find it hard going and daunting. To the uninitiated, Moltmann can appear to be needlessly lengthy and repetitive. As a result of this, there is a danger of taking on board Moltmann's proposals without thinking through their implications. For example, his discussion of time and eternity presents itself as both fascinating and yet incoherent!

There are many other points that could be singled out for debate. Yet perhaps the greatest deficiency in a work such as this is the lack of discussion of religious pluralism. Why, in a world of increasing plurality, should Jesus Christ claim to be 'the way'? And what relationship does this Christ have to the other religions of the world? Perhaps it is because Moltmann has avoided the more traditional cosmological issues that these modern and contextual questions remain unanswered (yet we remain hopeful that they will be considered in his projected volume on eschatology and the last judgment).

Tony Gray, Wolfson College, Oxford

**The Providence of God
(Contours of Christian
Theology)**

Paul Helm

Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993,
246 pp., £14.99.

Rather than offering a comprehensive assessment of recent work on providence (no reference is made, for example, to M.J. Langford's *Providence* or K. Ward's *Divine Action*), Paul Helm endeavours to argue in favour of a specific model of God's action in the world, namely what he calls 'the no risk view' whereby all events are understood as decreed by God. This view, he maintains, is biblical, it is taught by the most significant Church Fathers and it presents the majestic picture of God as someone who cannot be frustrated (p. 52).

Helm departs from certain fellow no-risk advocates like J.I. Packer by rejecting the illogical thesis that both human libertarian freedom and absolute divine sovereignty co-exist (p. 65); rather, according to Helm, God's will determines

human choices. Helm is thus a compatibilist who sees human volition as part of the nexus of secondary causation behind which God's primary causation operates (p. 86). To make sense of the notion of guidance he invokes the traditional distinction between God's secret will (his providential decree) and his revealed will (what he commands) (p. 131). Our duty is to strive to obey his revealed will. Regarding prayer, God both determines the prayer and its answer (ch. 6). Nevertheless our relationship to God may be said to be personal since neither constraint (e.g. parent/child relationship) nor predictability (e.g. in a close, stable relationship) are inimical to personal relations (p. 150).

It has been said that the no-risk view makes God directly responsible for evil so that he must finally be perceived as immoral and humans as anoral. Helm counters that we are responsible insofar as we are both aware of our acts and consent to them (p. 186). He refuses to follow B. Davies in maintaining that God is morally *ex lex* (p. 166). For Helm, God is good without equivocation. Depending on the circumstances, suffering must therefore be understood either in terms of discipline, or of judgment, or of the provision of the means of achieving a greater good, for example the production of sympathy, compassion and patience (p. 202). The fall must be viewed in terms of *felix culpa* since the result is the glorifying of God through a greater manifestation of his character (p. 214). The life and death of Jesus reveal that God is not a callous potentate, for he rules through love and 'weakness' (p. 224). Helm concludes by stressing that the no-risk view of providence should provide solace to Christians by 'recognizing that the evil that they and others experience has been *sent*' (p. 231).

Amongst contemporary scholarship Helm provides, for me, the most persuasive and philosophically sophisticated defence of the position most of us would associate with Calvinist doctrine, and this in an admirably clear and accessible style. I was almost convinced. But profound problems for the no-risk view remain. I will forbear from discussing the exegetical ones (for example, the biblical motif of divine frustration and disappointment, e.g. Is. 50:2; Hos. 11:8f.; cf. Lk. 7:30) and will concentrate on some outstanding philosophical problems. The first concerns the reality of hell. A perfectly good God could only produce a deterministic universe involving suffering for the greater good if all humans, and perhaps all conscious creatures, attain eternal life. The only morally acceptable Calvinism is the Barthian kind. Helm hints that God's love is partial (p. 205), but how does this square with his stress on the unequivocal goodness and, presumably, perfect love of God? Given hell, the only possible Calvinist defence seems to be the horror story offered by the Puritan divine, William Perkins, who suggested that God elected the saved so that his Mercy might be extolled and predestined the damned so as to magnify his Justice.

The two divine wills model also continues to trouble. If God's revealed will is really what he wants to be the case then he cannot be sovereignly in control since it does not obtain in the world. If, on the other hand, God's secret will is normative, then he must really want people to sin. Indeed, according to the no-risk view, in some sense all that happens must be good since it is an expression of God's perfect providential will. Catastrophes and wars, therefore, can only be *apparently* tragic. Admittedly, we should still oppose them out of duty to God's revealed will, but surely any sense of human pity would be misplaced? A view which seems to point to this conclusion cannot be right.

Finally, a word about the compatibilist notion of freedom. If one is responsible for all the choices that are an expression of one's will then

the compulsive kleptomaniac and the subject acting out a post-hypnotic suggestion should be held responsible, for, after all, neither experienced a struggle of wills and they both happily owned their decisions. No, surely I deliberate in order to decide what to do, not to discover what it is that I am destined to do. On the no-risk model, perhaps we cannot blame God on the Day of Judgment, but surely he cannot blame us either. We might be determined to hold one another responsible but God cannot do so unless he too is determined so to do (Helm does not divulge whether he, like Jonathan Edwards, thinks that the very notion of libertarian freedom is incoherent).

Nevertheless, Paul Helm provides a bold and valiant attempt to restate classic Calvinism with his masterly use of the tools of analytic philosophy. His book is a distinguished addition to the 'Contours of Christian Theology' series and I can warmly recommend it.

Rob Cook, Redcliffe College

**Philosophers Who Believe:
The Spiritual Journeys of
11 Leading Thinkers**
Kelly James Clark (ed.)
Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity
Press, 1993.

In the last 15 years or so, something remarkable – many would say providential – has transpired in the academy. Increasing numbers of Christians are entering the discipline of professional philosophy, are doing philosophy well, and are being recognized as such by their peers. This resurgence of Christians in philosophy is reflected in the spiritual testimonies of the philosophers represented in this book. Now that a God-denying logical positivism or scientism has been itself banished as self-refuting (the statement 'only through science can we know reality' is itself not a statement of or derivable by science), and naturalism has loosened its philosophical stranglehold, the Christian voice in philosophy is again being articulated, heard, and heeded.

The editor of this collection, Kelly James Clark, provides a helpful introduction that reflects both on the rise of Christians in philosophy after decades of banishment, dismissal and neglect, and on the nature of 'the literature of confession', a style of writing unfamiliar to almost all the authors and one in which some of them participate only hesitantly. The character and quality of these philosophical testimonies vary greatly. Most of the essays are largely autobiographical with some discussion of philosophical issues along the way. Other essays, particularly Richard Swinburne's, are more philosophical with little autobiography. The authors also differ considerably on the nature of the Christian faith.

Several authors are Roman Catholic or fairly liberal Protestants and so have a different understanding of biblical authority and saving grace than do the evangelical contributors. (One author denies both the historical fall and the literal ascension of Christ.) Frederick Suppe's long essay, which chronicles his struggle with homosexuality and the Roman Catholic Church, will likely disturb many evangelicals (as it did me) because of the excessive attention paid to unsavoury parts of Suppe's private life, the crudity of some of its language, and his sadly unbiblical understanding of grace as something to be won through enduring effort.

Mortimer Adler's essay is a fascinating account of his wide-ranging and long-lasting philosophical endeavours as a 'pagan Thomist', as well as an account of his recent crisis conversion in a hospital bed. However, we may wonder when he says that 'many persons of Christian faith . . . appear to be disappointed when told that they are not going to rejoin their departed loved ones in a bodily reunion after death in the world to come'. Adler seems to overly spiritualize the afterlife, in contradiction to Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15 and elsewhere. We shouldn't expect a recently converted philosopher to be a master theologian, but we must question this statement, nevertheless.

The authors also vary on their understanding of the relationship between Christian conviction and philosophy. Some authors, particularly Nicholas Reschler, provide little instruction on how to philosophize as a Christian. Yet this is something Alvin Plantinga has been exemplifying and encouraging Christians to do for decades, as his fine essay points out. Richard Swinburne's essay summarizes his grand project of modernizing natural theology through an essential inductive or probabilistic method. Plantinga and Wolterstorff, as 'reformed epistemologists', take another approach in emphasizing Christian faith as a starting point for philosophizing. The reader is left to sort out these differing perspectives.

Evangelical readers will generally delight in and be inspired by the spiritual-philosophical narratives given by Alvin Plantinga (a major character in the renaissance of Christian philosophy), Nicholas Wolterstorff and Stephen Davis. As a Christian teaching philosophy at a seminary, I found these essays to be both encouraging and challenging because they present the discipline of philosophy as a divine calling, a labour acceptable to God and worthy of sustained attention. These Christian philosophers have served as models of Christian commitment and philosophical achievement. May their numbers increase!

Despite its unevenness, this book makes worthwhile reading not only by Christians in philosophy but by those interested in the related disciplines of theological enquiry. These thinkers address – in differing ways and with differing theological commitments – many of the same matters as does theology, such as the existence and nature of God, the relationship between Christianity and science, and the rationality of religious belief. The writers do not assume of their readers a great knowledge of philosophy, nor do they write in a technical style. My hope, though, is that someone will produce a similar book with a consistently evangelical tenor.

Douglas Groothuis, Denver Seminary, Denver, Colorado

Fudge's work is to be thoroughly welcomed. A revised version of his 1982 American book, *The Fire That Consumes*, it clearly sets out what it claims to achieve – that is, to provide the case for conditional immortality. Thus Fudge systematically presents the biblical and extra-biblical evidence for the belief that after the last judgment, rather than suffering eternal conscious torment, the wicked will be destroyed. Such a view is also known as annihilationism, although Fudge wishes to distance himself from this title due to its historical associations. In actual fact, Fudge is influenced little by his anthropology. Whether immortality is inherent to human nature or not (a topic which he briefly covers), his final authority rests with an exegesis of Scripture.

In the OT literature, Fudge believes that most references to the end of the wicked are dominated by the theme of destruction. Hence, although Sheol is the destiny for all humanity, the stories of the flood and the destruction of Sodom provide Fudge's governing paradigms. Material from the Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha is more explicit, yet also considerably varied, presenting either destruction or eternal torment, or both, as the fate of the wicked. Thus Fudge concludes that at the time of Jesus no one view dominated.

It is in his examination of the NT evidence that Fudge's most detailed analysis comes into play. Exclusion, the destructive fires of hell, images of loss and destruction all go together to build the cumulative case. Fudge anticipates the arguments from his opponents, and in many cases deals competently with them. Less convincing are his defence of the lack of parallelism in Matthew 25:41-46, and the rising smoke in Revelation 14:11. In fact, one of the main criticisms of Fudge's work would be his hermeneutical approach, at times appearing to be an instance of special pleading. It may be the case that the biblical witness is more complex and multi-faceted than Fudge will allow. Having said this, one of the advantages of this work may well play a part in demonstrating this very fact. Traditionalists have influenced the doctrine and interpretation of the church on this matter for so long, that many of the different aspects of the biblical witness to the doctrine of hell have either been missed or embellished.

The final part of Fudge's work examines some of the more theological, philosophical and pastoral arguments used in the debate, such as the morality of conditionalism and the impact it may have on faith. It is a pity that such discussion could not have been extended, for the comments are more generalizations than arguments.

Having said all this, *The Fire That Consumes* is a vital and important book. Tackling a contentious issue, it intelligently and forcibly presents conditionalism as a Christian option for the church today. Even if the arguments are not conclusive, Fudge presents a work that will not let conditionalism disappear, and which calls for traditionalists to seriously re-examine their pre-suppositions and their exegesis.

Tony Gray, Wolfson College, Oxford

**The Fire That Consumes:
The Biblical Case For
Conditional Immortality**
Edward William Fudge
Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994, xii
+ 226 pp., pb.

In 1974 John Wenham expressed the need for fresh study and 'serious consideration of the case' for the doctrine of conditional immortality (*The Goodness of God*, Leicester: IVP). In the light of the recent debate which comments by John Stott sparked off (*Essentials*, with David Edwards, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988), and some of the uncharitable remarks and actions that have occurred as a result of this,

The Work of Christ
Robert Letham
Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993,
284 pp., £12.95.

In 1993 IVP's new *Contours of Christian Theology* series was launched with this volume, together with a companion volume on the doctrine of God by Gerald Bray, the series editor. The 'work of

Christ' is interpreted broadly and the book covers a wide range of topics, as may be seen from a quick glance at the subject index. After four chapters laying the foundations, the bulk of the book is arranged under the three traditional headings of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King.

The book manages at the same time to be both biblically and exegetically based and also to discuss a wide range of theological issues. The latter are discussed in the context of both historical debate and modern discussion. The price to be paid for such comprehensiveness is that some issues are dismissed rather briefly and not necessarily to the satisfaction of all readers. But the value of the comprehensive cover is real and the briefer discussions serve at least to pose important questions, to whet appetites and to point to further reading.

As would be expected from those who know either the author or the publisher, the stance taken is unequivocally evangelical. The author also writes from a clearly Reformed perspective. He devotes an appendix to 'the intent of the atonement', defending what he calls 'definite atonement'. He explains why he prefers these terms to the 'extent' of the atonement or 'limited atonement', both of which he finds misleading. The basic issue is identified, then discussed both theologically and exegetically.

But it would be wrong to assume that this is simply a regurgitation of past positions. The author is not afraid to criticize the Reformed tradition. Karl Barth's criticism of Reformed theology for separating election and Christ is accepted for the seventeenth century and later, but not for the Reformers themselves (pp. 54-56). The systematic theologies of Hodge and Berkhof are also criticized on the same grounds (pp. 86f.). The discussion is by no means confined to old themes. Modern issues are also confronted – including liberation theology (pp. 62-66), which receives some degree of approval as well as criticism.

Like Calvin before him, the author insists that Christ's work for us takes place not just on the cross, but at every stage of his life from his incarnation through to his resurrection (pp. 116-118). The focus is (again, as with Calvin) especially on the cross. This is interpreted as a propitiatory act of penal substitution, drawing on the studies of Leon Morris and others.

One theme that surfaces repeatedly is the rejection of modern individualism, which is traced back to late medieval nominalism and seen in both pietism and evangelicalism. This is contrasted with the corporate nature of biblical theology. An interesting outworking of this point comes in the discussion of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers (pp. 121-123).

'The series is intended to be of value to theological students at all levels, whether at Bible College, a seminary or a secular university. It should also appeal to ministers and to educated lay-people', according to the Series Preface (p. 9). This volume succeeds in that aim. The wide coverage means that most readers fitting into those categories will be on familiar territory some of the time and will find their horizons being stretched at other times.

Those who are concerned to know more about the work of Christ will do well to turn to this book, both for what it contains in itself and in order to follow up some of the many leads.

Tony Lane, London Bible College

**The Fabric of Theology:
A Prolegomenon to Evangelical
Theology**
Richard Lints
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993,
364 pp., \$19.99.

Richard Lints is concerned about the fragmentation of people's understanding of God, the world and themselves as a result of modernity. He therefore offers an alternative, 'a picture of theology as a whole fabric rather than a patchwork quilt', a 'vision that can facilitate the reinterpretation of life, of how we think, act, and live' (p. 7). He argues rightly that theology is not simply a list of dogmas to be believed, it is a 'framework for thinking about the world and a vision for living in it' (p. 81). Its goal is to bring all of life under the judgment of biblical revelation and thus to bring the cleansing power of God's redemption into all of life.

Lints sets the stage with an interesting description of the evangelical scene in America. He traces the formative influences and emphasizes the current fragmentation, reflected in the orientation to transdenominational proliferation of independent institutions. A measure of unity is observed, provided by commitment to a small core of doctrines that were defined in the battle against modernism.

In a chapter entitled 'The trajectory of theology', Lints gives an illuminating treatment of the manner in which tradition, culture and reason function in various efforts to do theology and makes helpful suggestions about how these three 'filters' ought to be used properly. He does a case study of the theological methodology of four groups or individuals who worked within the framework of Reformed theology: (1) the magisterial reformers Luther and Calvin, (2) the Reformed scholastics of the 16th and early 17th centuries, (3) Jonathan Edwards and (4) Geerhardus Vos. He then clearly delineates the state of postmodern theologies, identifying family resemblances (pluralism, the prophetic role and epistemic pragmatism) and the historical and cultural factors that have influenced this development. This is a fine depiction of the ways in which postmodernism is a continuation of the basic critical consciousness of Enlightenment modernism and of the ways in which it differs. It offers a peculiar challenge for evangelicals. On the one hand, evangelicalism itself has been influenced deeply by modernism and needs to hear the postmodern critique of modernism. On the other hand, divinely revealed truth is much less diverse than postmodernism assumes and the Bible continues to be our authoritative source for finding it, contrary to the objections of both modernist and postmodernist theologies.

Lints's own proposal is based on the conviction that the theological project is embedded in the Scriptures themselves, understood in a redemptive-historical way to be a witness to God's redemptive work and an effective agent of that redemption. A theological framework should situate us in redemptive history and thus 'provide the grounds for us to remain prophetic within our unique cultural setting' (p. 262). We must study Scripture with constant reference to three contexts, the textual, the epochal and the canonical. In the conversation between the theologian and the text, it is important that the questions of Scripture be listened to, rather than simply mined for answers to the questions that arise in the interpreter's particular context. Scripture is to interpret the modern era rather than vice versa. Lints suggests ways in which this should be done within the church, within popular culture and within the academy.

The proposal of Lints is a fine reaffirmation

of a theological method that recognizes the unique authority of Scripture but that is sensitive to the contemporary context. It urges us to restate biblical truth in coherent form for the present generation, but insists that the structure and not just the content of a theological framework is defined by the redemptive-historical form of Scripture itself. It is aware of the extent to which evangelicals have capitulated to modernity but refuses to accept the postmodernist antidote. Anyone who wishes to understand the contemporary theological methodological scene and to advance the church's work of developing a comprehensive vision of all of life from God's perspective will profit from this book. It will be beneficial to both the professional and the serious lay theologian.

Terrance Tiessen, Providence Theological Seminary, Otterburne, Manitoba, Canada

**Science and the Soul. New
Cosmology, the Self and God**
Angela Tilby
London: SPCK, 1992, 275 pp.,
£12.99.

As modern science penetrates ever deeper into the fundamentals of all physical existence, it cannot avoid questions of God and the soul. When such questions as 'What is the origin of the universe?', 'What is the reason for the laws of nature being what they are?', are asked, one has reached the boundaries of all scientific enquiry. These questions naturally prompt the further question as to whether or not there is Someone beyond who is the creator of the universe. With the advent of the new cosmology, relativity theory, quantum physics, chaos theory, challenging as they do the old materialistic, deterministic and reductionist assumptions of an earlier science, these fundamental questions become even more relevant to our existence, enabling us to address questions as to purpose, meaning and freedom in the universe.

From very different perspectives (materialist, pantheist, Christian) there have been many books expounding these themes. Angela Tilby's book *Science and the Soul* was written while she was engaged in making a TV series on the same topic. Written from a relatively liberal theological perspective, she nevertheless clearly believes in the transcendence of God. For her he seems to be a God who not only creates and preserves his universe but continues his process of creation whilst responding to the way in which his universe evolves.

The book is well written, containing one of the best explanations of the new science for the layman that I have read. For this reason alone I definitely recommend this book for all who want to know what the new science is about. She also gives very illuminating insights into the lives and attitudes of such scientists as Newton, Einstein, and a number of others who are still alive. She confirms what this reviewer has also experienced, that scientists, being human, are just as likely to be governed by irrational fears of the reality of God and the soul as any group of people. Like other people they are a very mixed bunch.

The book is at its weakest when she gets into theology, social ethics and other such subjects. Here she is sometimes rather confused and she occasionally lapses into unhelpful sermonizing. She tries to draw a parallel between the scientists who are clinging to an outdated

materialism and conservative theologians who hold on to absolute faith. In doing so she misrepresents the latter's view by, for example, confusing absolute faith in God with a legalistic interpretation of doctrine and ethics. She also thinks that evangelical theology is anti-material. With its clear belief in the resurrection of the body this is too great a generalization.

In this reviewer's opinion the heart of her theological problem is the lack of appreciation of the incarnation and the atonement (they are hardly mentioned). Standing as I believe they do at the centre of God's purpose for the cosmos, they should be for us the great interpreting principle of the place of nature and humanity in the awesome purposes of God in his creation, preservation, and redemption of all things.

In spite of this, Angela Tilby is to be congratulated on giving us a very readable, clear, full, and in places profound explanation of the new science. She has the courage to take on the materialistic prejudices that are still far too common in the scientific community, and also to challenge the world of theology to be less cowardly in facing these issues.

At the end of the book her notes are full and helpful, there are useful suggestions for further reading, and a good index is provided.

Howard Taylor, Glasgow Bible College

**Biblical Interpretation Then and
Now: Contemporary
Hermeneutics in the Light of
the Early Church**
David S. Dockery
Grand Rapids: Baker Book House,
1992, 247 pp., \$14.99.

Moisés Silva wrote a book called *Has the Church Misread the Bible?* David Dockery sets out to answer that question, not with a straight 'yes' or 'no', but with a nuanced evaluation which appreciates the contribution of every person he discusses.

Dockery's goal is to look at patristic hermeneutics and use that to explore issues in contemporary hermeneutics. Nowhere is the survey approach more unsettling than in the first chapter on the hermeneutic of the NT. In a mere 21 pages he covers the hermeneutic options found in first-century Judaism, Jesus, Paul, and the rest of the NT, including Hebrews.

Dockery sees a 'functional' hermeneutic in the Apostolic Fathers, an 'authoritative' one in the apologists, a 'reader-centered' hermeneutic in the allegory of Alexandria, an 'author' perspective in Antioch, and a 'text' perspective in Augustine. After these have been developed and critiqued, they are compared with more modern positions, Schleiermacher, existential hermeneutics (especially Bultmann), Hirsch and Ricoeur. Two things should be noted about this section. First, while the Middle Ages get a couple of pages, the Reformation gets a single paragraph. Surprising as this is, Dockery is probably correct in doing so, for the Reformation picks from strands in the Fathers rather than introducing something entirely new. Second, the material in this section is the most difficult reading in the book. At the same time, it is nowhere near as difficult as most of the more detailed works on these topics.

When it comes to evaluating this book, our initial observation is that it is unique. First, it is unique in that it appreciates all of these inter-

preters. While Dockery critiques every one of those he discusses, he does so appreciatively. Each of them is viewed as wrestling with real issues which needed to be addressed. Each of them is seen as honest in his or her work. Each of them is presented as an example to learn from. None of them is absolutely a wrong road. This catholic appreciation in an evangelical scholar is refreshing.

Second, Dockery is even-handed in the people he selects. Schleiermacher is here, but so is the American evangelical Walter Kaiser. Bultmann is here, but so is the Canadian evangelical Richard Longenecker. In other words, we discover the full range of hermeneutic scholarship, mainline and evangelical. Neither side is rejected out of hand; neither side is given short shrift. For evangelicals, who need to see the whole scope of scholarship, this is an invaluable service. It is also an excellent example.

Third, Dockery avoids being drawn into any camp. He does not believe that the author's intention is the full story of interpretation, but he does believe that we have to start there and give it primacy. He sees value in the hermeneutics which focus on the reader, such as allegorical approaches, yet he also sees their weaknesses. He is probably least sympathetic to the existential school, yet even there he sees a parallel with concerns for relevance in the early church. He is most happy with text-oriented types of hermeneutic precisely because they are not 'pure types' - they do not fit entirely in any camp.

Still, this work does have its weaknesses. First, it is not free of bias. For example, while Dockery rightly points out that the reading and exposition of Scripture had an important place in the worship of the early church, this reviewer believes that his Baptist presuppositions show when he looks at it as the central function of the worship service. I doubt that anyone before the Reformation would have called Scripture teaching central; for in the whole church from the first to the 16th century universally and in large parts of the church since then the Eucharistic celebration, or Lord's Supper, not the sermon, was the central focus of worship.

Second, as noted above, this work is a survey. While this is integral to his methodology, one wonders at times if the survey is not too brief. Has he really done justice to NT exegesis? In other words, has he really developed his standard of comparison enough? This question is raised over and over again, not so much in the patristic material (although occasionally there as well), but certainly in the Reformation and post-Reformation material.

Still, all in all, this is a good book. It is also generally readable (although occasionally he shows his grasp of a wide vocabulary which will confuse some readers). If you want to read a work which does equal justice to the full range of interpreters, including evangelicals, and if you want to examine the relevance of the first centuries of interpretation for today, this is certainly the work to start with. You may want to read some of the more detailed studies later, but starting with this work will give you an engaging orientation to the field, and for many it may just be all they need to read.

Peter H. Davids, Langley Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Langley, British Columbia, Canada

The Cross and Christian Ministry: An Exposition of Passages from 1 Corinthians

D.A. Carson

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993, 137 pp., \$9.99.

Exegesis (showing what a text meant to its original readers) and exposition (showing what a text could mean to contemporary readers) are related but separate skills. Professors do exegesis. Preachers, if they're good, know how to take the exegesis that's offered to them and turn it into exposition. To know how to do both things today is rare, to care about doing both things even rarer. That's what makes this book valuable.

How well then does it succeed? Pretty well. For exegesis and exposition work together in this book without one predominating over the other. There are five chapters, all of them looking at the way Paul's understanding of the cross forms his view of ministry. The first four chapters treat 1 Corinthians 1-4 and the last looks at 1 Corinthians 9. Each one has concluding 'Questions for Review and Reflection'.

There is good exegesis here, as for example in chapter 3, where the connection between 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 and 1 Corinthians 3 is appropriately emphasized (pp. 69-70), or in chapter 4, where the inferential force of the conjunction 'therefore' is clearly explained (p. 110). But occasionally there is also exegesis where conclusions are simply asserted, instead of being demonstrated (cf. p. 46, 'The *mature* in this context really must refer to all Christians . . .', or p. 82, 'It is crucial to understand that in this context "God's temple" does not refer to the human body, but to the church'; both statements, by the way, are probably correct but without a presentation of the evidence to show why they are correct they are much less useful).

There is good exposition here, as for example in chapter 1 when, after noticing how Paul is not ashamed of the low social status of the majority of the Corinthian converts (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26), the reader is asked some very good questions: 'Why is it that we constantly parade Christian athletes, media personalities, and pop singers? Why should we think that their opinions or their experiences of grace are of any more significance than those of any other believer?' (p. 29). Other examples of excellent attempts to apply Paul's insights to our generation abound (cf. pp. 65, 80 and 86, where evangelicals need to reflect carefully on what is said about 'restricting yourself to only one part of the heritage that is yours in Christ Jesus'). Occasionally, however, the exposition moves in a direction the text wasn't intended to go (as, for instance, on p. 29 where the author asks with reference again to 1 Cor. 1:26, 'When we tell outsiders about people in our church . . .', ignoring the fact that Paul has admonition and not evangelism on his mind).

So where does that leave us? With a book this reviewer finds well worth taking the time to read and think about. Not because it's perfect, but because it points us in the right direction - towards an equal appreciation for exegesis and exposition.

Jim Davis, Mercer Island Presbyterian Church, Mercer Island, WA

Rediscovering Expository Preaching. Balancing the Science and Art of Biblical Exposition

John MacArthur, Jr., and others

Waco, Texas: Word, 1992, 410 pp., hb.

This intriguing book ends with a very useful chapter for the listener to sermons, reminding them even of the value of being physically fit for the ordeal! It is, however, primarily for preachers both actual and potential. In the short term there is very useful material here. It can be very practical with even an idiosyncratic suggestion of the exact size a pulpit should be, which according to the author is 42 inches high with a very slight slant! But more seriously there are some illustrations of sermons prepared, a glimpse into the preacher's notebook and some very helpful answers to questions. There are seven 'Be's' which every preacher could do well to memorize.

Although it deals with some very significant issues, it is easily read, often, as befits a good sermon book, with illustrations from many walks of life including golf and television detective stories. There is an interesting history of expository preaching down the centuries. It includes very helpful advice but with a constant reminder that the preacher should be himself or herself with naturalness and the use of the personality given by God. The reader must be selective. Many busy pastors who are also preachers would quail at the use of time. A person who is a preacher without pastoral responsibilities could well spend his whole week in preparation, but many of us who have this responsibility week by week are also committed to a busy life of pastoral care and the two must wed. Therefore the reader will be wise in drawing from this book helpful guidelines without assuming that no preaching can be effective unless every detail in the book is carried out.

It is vital to start where the book starts, with its understanding of the doctrine of Scripture. We are reminded of some of the present challenges to that doctrine, not least in experience-centred religion and extra-biblical illumination. There is a lovely quotation from Martin Luther who likens people with views from outside Scripture as being like swarms of bees not knowing where to land. John Stott encourages contemporary preachers to be bibline in their thinking. Here too is a reminder that the Bible is not only our inspiration for preaching but should provide the material for our counselling. Often effective preaching eliminates the need for too much counselling.

There is a healthy reminder that the preacher is to be a man of God, and the book includes a very helpful exposition from 1 Timothy 6 on that theme. In the actual preparation of a sermon the book has the advantage and disadvantage of having different authors. There is inevitably therefore some repetition but it gains from being able to look at preparation from different angles. We are reminded of the great importance of careful exegesis while not forgetting that we are not intent on making theologians out of those who sit in the pews so much as good Christians.

There is a very helpful booklist with 750 titles. Some of the vital matters in sermon preparation are dealt with carefully. It is important to think in depth about the title, the introduction, the conclusion and the use of illustration. Many of us will find encouragement in the emphasis on illustration. There is a danger of expository

preaching being set over against anecdotal preaching. Certainly this book will reinforce the absolute primacy of letting the Bible speak, of drawing out the message within the context and not basing our sermons on stories or experiences. But it is essential that every sermon has illustrative matter to link it with everyday life and to help concentration. Beware of letting the illustration dictate the text. Equally beware of a sermon which becomes correct but arid.

We are reminded in this book of the value of the occasional topical exposition. There are dangers here for we can ride our hobby-horses easily and Scripture should be preached *in toto*, yet there are occasions when events dictate a message applicable to the moment and there are the occasions within the Christian year where obviously a congregation comes already expectant and their minds set in a particular way. However we approach the exposition, this book will help us to remember the sheer privilege of preaching. Amongst the many helpful quotations is this from Martin Lloyd-Jones: 'To me, the work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called.'

Philip H. Hacking, Sheffield

God, The Big Bang and Stephen Hawking
David Wilkinson
Tunbridge Wells: Monarch, 1993,
152 pp.

As modern science penetrates ever deeper into the fundamentals of all physical existence, it cannot avoid questions of God and origins. When such questions as 'What is the source of the universe?', 'What is the reason for the laws of nature being what they are?', are asked, one has reached the boundaries of all scientific enquiry. These questions naturally prompt the further question as to whether or not there is 'Someone' beyond who is the Creator of the universe. With the advent of the new cosmology, relativity theory, quantum physics, chaos theory, challenging as they do the old materialistic, deterministic and reductionist assumptions of an earlier science, these fundamental questions become even more relevant to our existence, enabling us to address questions as to purpose, meaning and freedom in the universe.

David Wilkinson's book is an attempt to explain and simplify the issues raised by Stephen Hawking and others who have written about theories concerning the origin of the universe and their relationship to belief in God. He is a Methodist minister who is also a highly qualified astro-physicist and so has an obvious expertise in his subject.

He certainly succeeds in being simpler than Stephen Hawking. He starts by introducing his readers to the awesome size of the universe, touching on such subjects as the supposed origin of stars, planets, black holes, supernovas, etc. The book continues with brief introductions to the various theories surrounding the 'big bang' and gives a simple account of relativity, quantum and chaos theories, and how they challenge the old Newtonian view of a closed mechanistic universe, so allowing us more easily to grasp our Christian belief in God as not only Creator, but also sustainer of the cosmos – who has created it in such a way as to allow for his continuing interaction with nature not only in providence but also in miracle and answered prayer.

The widely accepted view that the universe started with a 'big bang' seems to pose the question as to what, beyond nature, caused it to happen. Stephen Hawking's hypothesis of quantum gravity is an attempt to avoid this question by suggesting that the big bang is not, after all, the boundary point marking the beginning of the universe. This is a difficult concept for the layman to grasp, but Wilkinson does quite well in explaining and evaluating what is meant.

This reviewer did feel that the arguments were, in places, 'too thin'. For example, I think the author could have done better – without going over the heads of his readers – in conveying a greater sense of the mystery world of quantum theory. In doing so he would have made his book more exciting and more obviously relevant to theological discussion.

Nevertheless, as an introduction to the profound issues involved in the science-theology debate this book is a reasonable introduction for the beginner. For all who find Stephen Hawking too difficult to follow, but who nevertheless want to be aware of the issues and read them from a Christian perspective, this book will prove useful.

Howard G. Taylor, St David's Church, Knightswood, Glasgow

Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa (Regnum Studies in Mission)
Kwame Bediako
Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992,
xviii + 507 pp., £20.

Bediako's theme is the African theology which emerged in the 1960s. Its aspirations are clarified through an analogy with the Hellenistic Christians of the second century, particularly the Apologists and their successors. Bediako does not imply that the African theologians who are the subject of the second part of his study consciously drew inspiration from the patristic era. On the contrary, they show surprisingly little awareness of this period. Moreover, Bediako has been able to find hardly any scholars who have tried to postulate a link between Hellenistic and African Christian theology. Thus, his work is ambitious, even pioneering. But Bediako rests his case on the organic nature of church history. We may expect a young emerging church today to mirror those issues which young churches have faced at earlier times elsewhere in the globe.

The early church which grew up in the Graeco-Roman world had not only to face from outsiders the charge of rootlessness, but was obliged to determine for itself what was of value in the Hellenistic culture in which most of its leaders had been immersed. In the second century it was a major concern whether Christians could carve a niche for themselves within the cultured Graeco-Roman world. African Christians also face, according to Bediako, an identity problem of their own which has been largely shaped by the origins of the church in a European missionary movement which ignored any theological contribution from traditional African religion.

Bediako does not suggest that the response to the identity problem has been exactly the same

within either period. His method is to take a range of responses from each. It is enough for his purposes that they are dealing with kindred problems. For the second century he sets Tatian and Tertullian, who were highly critical of Hellenistic culture and philosophy, alongside the more favourable approaches of Justin and Clement of Alexandria. Among the African theologians E. Bolaji Idowu, John S. Mbiti and Mulago gwa Cikala Musharhamina (a Roman Catholic) exemplify positive approaches to pre-Christian African religion, while Byang Kato, who is probably the best known in the evangelical world, was decidedly critical of the whole project. Bediako sees a similarity between Mbiti's approach and that of Justin and Clement in that they were all prepared to look for the workings of Christ in contexts unaffected by the Christian Scripture. Kato for his part corresponds in many respects to Tertullian with his warnings about compromise. But Bediako wisely does not try to make the parallels too exact. He makes it clear that the theological evaluation of culture or even of past religious traditions is a complex matter, where even noted theologians with a deep respect for Scripture may sometimes fail to appreciate the concerns and approaches of others. Kato comes under particular criticism on this score; for Bediako is largely sympathetic to the motivation for African theology, as he is for the second-century Christian Apologists.

This does not mean that Bediako is uncritical toward African theology or that he is insensitive to the differences between the second-century church and that in Africa today. Indeed, the most extensive difference perhaps poses the greatest problem for African theology. Hellenistic Christians rejected many elements in their culture, particularly those directly associated with idolatry, and tended to align themselves with the philosophical tradition which in some quarters was even regarded as a counter-culture. Thus, Hellenistic culture could be recognized as anything but a unified whole; it was certainly not permeated through and through with religion. But the African theologians have been inclined to argue that African culture was consistently religious – and that this is an asset on which the Christian church should capitalize. Their stance not only raises the danger of an unhealthy syncretism, but is challenged by contemporary atheist African writers who would wish to see African culture in a more diversified way. Bediako predicts that there will be more writing from Christians on this area. No doubt the opponents of Christianity, both atheist and Muslim, will see to that.

I believe Bediako does succeed in elucidating the African theological scene through the parallel with the second century. In the process he highlights theological questions vital to missiology – e.g. how general relates to special revelation, how Christ has been active outside the Judaeo-Christian tradition, whether a synthesis is possible between local religious tradition and the Scriptures. This means that this book is valuable far beyond the two contexts with which it deals immediately. It would be a pity if it were seen simply as another tome on how Christianity should be proclaimed or manifested within some indigenous culture. It is much more because rather than grappling with specifics, it turns to the vital, overarching themes of Christian identity and of integrated Christian discipleship.

Graham A. Keith, Ayr Free Church of Scotland

**Teaching for Commitment.
Liberal Education,
Indoctrination and Christian
Culture**

Elmer John Thiessen
McGill: Queen's University Press,
1993, xi + 321+ pp., pb.

Thiessen sets forth his case for a system of education that has a 'healthy commitment' as part of its expression and intention. Writing from a North American perspective, he addresses particular charges against Christian 'fundamentalist' schools. Recent studies have accused these institutions of religious indoctrination. Thiessen examines the charges and particularly the meaning of indoctrination. Indoctrination in terms of content and of method are considered. Thiessen argues that the view that indoctrination can take place only with respect to religious and moral doctrines is philosophically indefensible. Scientific views can also be indoctrinated. More importantly, Thiessen analyses the charge that religious indoctrination uses non-rational methods such as dogmatic assertions without evidence, or the misuse of evidence, or the misuse of a teacher's authority. However, none of these can be restricted to Christian teaching. Furthermore, the development of any rational world view requires the acceptance of some beliefs. As the individual continues to be educated these are tested and modified according to personal experience. However, no one begins to learn any subject without a personal history in which they have been a part of a family and a larger community that has somehow influenced their beliefs. Critical openness is a necessary part of education but it can only exist where 'there is something to be critical about'. These are the convictions that everyone possesses and that need to be questioned and tested. But it is wrong to assume that an individual can think without taking into account their own history of development and prior commitments. Thiessen finds that many of the charges of indoctrination apply to American public schools as much as to Christian schools.

However, his discussion is important outside America. Thiessen argues for a rational or normal autonomy as the goal of education. Children are properly nurtured in the religious tradition of their parents. They are also nurtured in a way that exposes them to a variety of viewpoints. At the same time they are taught critical rationality as a means to reflect on these different views and to evaluate their own beliefs. The goal of nurturing should be both religious commitment to their own tradition and an autonomy that provides the critical tools necessary to make an 'autonomous' decision for or against Christianity. Thiessen concludes that in our present religious pluralism there should be a variety of schools reflecting the particular religious commitments of the parents in a community. This study considers important issues in both education and pluralism. It argues for an approach that is compatible with faith and yet encourages both tolerance and critical evaluation of other faiths. It recognizes the total person and their family/community environment as part of the educational process. Thiessen has made a theoretical and practical contribution to the question of religious pluralism in contemporary society.

Richard S. Hess, Glasgow Bible College

**Two Kingdoms: The Church
and Culture Through the Ages**

Robert G. Clouse, Richard V.
Pierard and Edwin M. Yamauchi
Chicago: Moody Press, 1993, 672 pp.

I have long felt that a reviewer of a book should judge a volume not by its cover, as shoppers often do, but by the intent and purpose of the author or, in this case, the authors. We can discover an author's purpose – at least, of this kind of book – in two ways: first, we check the preface, and then we try to trace the development. Then, as I understand the duty of a reviewer, we ask how well the author accomplished his or her purpose. In my case, I examined this book as a reader and as a teacher. I wanted to know what readers the authors had in mind as they wrote this volume. And I asked, 'Would I use this book in my classes?'

There are a lot of books out there that purport to tell the story of Christianity's development over the centuries. The authors of *Two Kingdoms* acknowledge that it is impossible 'to mention every person, idea, and movement' in the history of Christianity. So they opted to 'focus on some neglected aspects' of Christianity. They felt that other surveys had neglected the involvement of Protestant evangelicals; and that Christian doctrine, ecclesiastical controversies and denominations had received ample attention. They decided to concentrate on the expansion of Christianity outside the Anglo-American areas.

The authors are three rather well-known American evangelicals who have been active in the renewal of evangelical scholarship during the last three decades, especially through the Conference on Faith and History. They are all experienced teachers in the undergraduate university classroom. These facts, I think, help to explain the substance of *Two Kingdoms*.

While the authors wave few flags for supernaturalism, they also make no effort to hide their evangelical commitments. 'The survival and growth of the church', they write, 'is a remarkable tribute to the power of God in the world' (p. 14). But they tend to treat theology not by tracing revealed ideas so much as by introducing theologians.

With this approach to the Christian story, the book's subtitle – 'the church and culture through the ages' – proves to be a bit misleading. 'Culture' is a stylish term currently but in this case it promises more than it delivers. The church's relationship to culture proves to be mostly factual material narrating a host of ways that the Christian story is intertwined with world events, primarily in the expansion of Christianity.

This story of Christianity's expansion into a variety of cultures is the outstanding strength of the book. The authors' knowledge of so-called secular history is evident on virtually every page. *Themelios* readers familiar with other historians will understand a comparison: this volume is in the Latourette tradition rather than the Bainton tradition. In their intentional neglect of theology, the authors provide little insight into the ways that Christian truth adapted to pagan ideals, which I consider the most profound level of 'church and culture'.

The design of the book is also revealing. We can detect it, as we should, in the table of contents. In this case, we find three major parts: Early and Medieval Church, AD 1–1450; The Reformed and Revived Church, 1300–1789; and The Advancing and Global Church, 1789–Present. As a teacher of Christian history I found this development of the Christian story intriguing.

ing. Why the strange blend of general and specific dates? I never found a clear answer to that question but the divisions suggest, I think, that Christianity is treated against the backdrop of first Western and then world history. Otherwise, why tuck the theologically significant Protestant Reformation within the rise of modern European states? And why mark the global church period by the French Revolution rather than some distinctively Christian event such as William Carey's trip to Asia or the Puritan settlements in the New World?

To help the student with the problem of sequence and identity, visuals are scattered throughout the volume. The time line charts – in every chapter – are especially helpful for the novice in Christian history.

So, would I recommend this book to the readers of *Themelios*? To all? No. To some? Yes. Let me explain. As most of us know, history has been conspicuously absent from many degree programmes in recent decades. So the general reader will find this book tough going. Too many significant terms go undefined; too many historic giants go unidentified – for the general reader.

This is my biggest question: What is the assumed knowledge level of the reader? If the book is intended for the general reader, then it assumes knowledge of too many terms that pass quickly before the reader without adequate identity or meaning. And, given our entertainment-oriented public today, can we introduce our readers to Christian history without identifying the church in understandable theological terms?

But this is to question the book the authors did not write and did not intend to write. That is why my answer to the recommendation question is also a 'yes'. I recommend the book, but especially to those who have had a course in Western Civilization or World History. The authors assume a familiarity with world history, so much so, in fact, that I suspect the book is intended for advanced undergraduate university students. And readers who want to discover how Christianity relates to world history will find this a detailed and straightforward account of the story. Judged in the light of that purpose, the book, I think, succeeds admirably.

Bruce L. Shelley, Denver Seminary,
Denver, Colorado

**The Caroline Captivity of the
Church. Charles I and the
Remoulding of Anglicanism**

Julian Davies
Oxford: OUP, 1992, 400 pp., £45.

No British king has been the object of more opposing judgments than has Charles I. Vilified by democrats and canonized by a certain type of Anglican, Charles' life was marked by so many contradictions that it is almost impossible to give a fair assessment of him. On the one hand, he was a faithful husband and a devout member of the Church of England. In his eyes, the church was the cornerstone of his kingdom, the one institution which he, as the monarch, was duty-bound to govern and protect. On the other hand, Charles had such an idiosyncratic understanding of what that duty entailed, and such an exalted idea of his own ability to impose his views on others, that he alienated a large proportion of his subjects and eventually destroyed both himself and the church establishment which he was trying to secure.

In telling this story, Dr Davies puts the blame squarely where he thinks it belongs – on the shoulders of the king himself. The widespread view that Charles was propelled onto his fateful course by the fanaticism of Archbishop William Laud is carefully dismantled by a painstaking review of the evidence. It turns out that Laud was a moderate in comparison with Charles, and that he often mitigated the impact of the king's decrees in his own diocese. On the whole, though, Laud was Charles' loyal and enthusiastic servant, who shared much of the king's ecclesiastical vision and was normally a willing instrument of royal policy. The main point however is that it was Charles, and not Laud, who determined what that policy would be. The difference between them was that Charles believed in divine-right monarchy, whereas Laud believed in divine-right episcopacy. These views could easily conflict, especially as Charles felt that many of his bishops were less than totally enthusiastic for his vision of the church.

From the very beginning of his reign, Charles was determined to impose order and discipline on a church which to his mind had got dangerously out of control. He was deeply opposed to theological controversy, and did his best to put a stop to it. This has given him (as well as Laud) a reputation for Arminianism, but Dr Davies shows that this is not correct. Charles did not want the church to take *any* position on so contentious an issue as predestination, which he preferred to leave to the judgment of the individual conscience before God. What concerned him much more were the rites and ceremonies of the church, of which a distressing number were being neglected or corrupted by the time he became king (1625).

Rather than bow gracefully to a trend which he could not control, as his father had been inclined to do, Charles was determined to put matters right. To that end he prosecuted ministers for canonical disobedience, and did his best to give his bishops control over parochial discipline. He thought that the clericalization of the church would increase his own authority over it, and seemed to be unaware that the majority of the clergy were hostile to his whole programme. To make matters even worse, Charles was lax in matters where his Puritan clergy were especially strict – notably in the case of Sunday observance. Charles not only allowed Sunday sports but did his best to encourage them, a move which aroused the Puritans to anger and did little to counteract the effects of his rigidity in other areas.

More ominously still, at a time when Protestantism was fighting for survival on the Continent, Charles did little to support the cause which he was nominally pledged to defend. His own wife was a Catholic, and there were a few prominent conversions to Rome among the smart set at court. Charles was a loyal Anglican himself, but his perceived tolerance of the enemy did him no good. At last, his attempt to impose a High-Church Anglicanism on Scotland led to a revolt which was the beginning of the end for him.

Dr Davies presents a balanced and judicious review of Charles and his policies, in which he decisively discounts the impact of Laud and Arminianism on the course of events. Not until 1640 could it be said that Laud's vision of divine-right episcopacy merged with Charles' idea of divine-right monarchy, but by then it was too late for Laud to influence events in any way. Rather, it appears that Charles' concessions to Laud were part of an attempt to make the latter a scapegoat for royal policies which had failed. Dr Davies argues that some highly-placed persons realized this, and shielded Laud from his eventual fate for over four years.

Today, the legacy of these events lives on in our churches, whose divisions largely reflect positions taken in response to Charles I and his policies. Theological students are still familiar with the great divide between 'Calvinists' and others, more vaguely labelled 'Arminians', and the great doctrinal works of the period continue to be printed and purchased, if not read. Dr Davies is both an evangelical theologian and a first-class historian of this vitally important period. Theological students would do well to familiarize themselves with his book, and through it to become acquainted with the wider issues which shaped the destiny of British Christianity at that critical time.

Gerald Bray, Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama

Converting the Past: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Moabite Historiography (Oudtestamentische Studiën 28)

Klaas D. Smelik

New York: Brill, 1992, viii + 209 pp., Gld. 95.00/US\$54.50.

Smelik has collected several studies on different passages from the Hebrew Bible and one on the Moabite stone. These are introduced with a chapter on biblical historiography. Every chapter had been preceded by one or two essays by the author, originally published in Dutch. Overall the work's strength lies in its literary and thematic analysis of the biblical texts under consideration. Its attempt to relate the results of these studies to history creates some need for caution.

Thus Smelik argues that the Hebrew Bible, like Ancient Near Eastern historiography, is unreliable because apparent contradictions can be found between texts themselves and between texts and the archaeological evidence. The solution for the biblical historian is to extract from a text its 'hidden meaning' or ideological truth and to apply that to a later period in which it best fits. However, in practice this method produces ambiguous results at best. For example, in Smelik's application of the Sihon and Og story to the sixth century, he identifies an ideology of Israelite antipathy toward Transjordanian states. Such a perspective could be applied with equal force to known conditions in Israel during the centuries before or after the sixth. Even the world of the ninth-century Moabite stele would suit. Smelik's argument that 1 Samuel 13:1 is correct when it states that Saul ruled two years runs counter to all the other biblical evidence, as well as Josephus and those versions which address the issue.

In his discussion of the ark narrative, Smelik helpfully explores some of the main theological themes of the relevant texts: God's house and property are not divinely guaranteed, David will replace Saul, Saul and his successors are rejected. The occurrence of these themes throughout Samuel helps to demonstrate Smelik's thesis that the ark narrative is not a literary unit separate from the rest of Samuel. He is less successful in refuting an early date for Samuel, something to which he devotes little space anyway. The attempt to address the relationship of the archaeology of Shiloh to Jeremiah 7 makes no reference to the recent excavations of I. Finkelstein.

The chapter on the Moabite Mesha inscription is again helpful in distinguishing literary aspects, especially regarding the main speakers and their speeches and the syntactical distinctives in different sections of the text. A large part

of the chapter is devoted to the identification of the sites of Jahaz and Kir-hareseth. Jahaz is identified with Khirbet Libb between modern Madaba and Dhibon. Smelik's proposal that Kir-hareseth is a derogatory name for Dibon is interesting but it is not clear that any of the arguments he presents substantiate his conclusion that 2 Kings 3 has no relationship to history. Here he relies on the arguments of others for his conclusion about the historicity of the text.

Smelik's study of the dual record of Hezekiah and Sennacherib in Isaiah 36–37 and in 2 Kings 18–19 provides a good example of intertextuality in the book of Isaiah. The study persuasively argues that these texts relate thematically and linguistically to other texts in Isaiah 1–39 and in chapters 40–66. The results have important implications for literary studies and canonical criticism. The same cannot be said with respect to historical criticism. Demonstrating an interdependency does not provide conclusions regarding the prior dependency of one text on the other or on the dating of various texts. Nor does it provide much that can be concluded about which came first, the text in Isaiah or the one in Kings. It is true that Smelik calls into question assumptions about the necessary priority of the Kings text. However, he does not thereby demonstrate that the text was incorporated into Kings from the book of Isaiah, or that it is largely unhistorical, or that it must have been written after 600 BC.

Smelik's final chapter compares the two portrayals of Manasseh in Kings and Chronicles. The former views Manasseh as the most wicked of kings but must then explain why his reign was the longest of any king. It does this by interweaving the sins of the people which predate and postdate Manasseh and thus uses their transgressions as the ultimate basis for the destruction of the kingdom, which even the reforms of Josiah could not prevent. On the other hand, the Chronicler does not portray Manasseh as the most wicked but actually ascribes more transgressions to Ahaz. Following Williamson, Smelik suggests that the Chronicler portrays Manasseh as a model of the nation's sojourn in exile. For this reason Manasseh is led off to Babylon rather than Nineveh. For this reason he repents and is returned to Jerusalem. Again, much of this analysis is useful and important material. What is not clear is that it can make any statement about the historicity of the events which it relates. Smelik's work is a model of the virtues and problems of recent literary approaches to what remains traditional historical criticism. The literary analysis is often the best available, insisting upon the importance of the whole text. However, literary analysis by itself cannot critique historical worth.

Richard S. Hess, Glasgow

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BOOK REVIEWS

- Raymond Brown* **The Message of Deuteronomy: Not By Bread Alone (Bible Speaks Today)** (Paul. A. Barker)
- J.W. Kleinig* **The LORD's Song: The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles (JSOTS 156)** (Martin J. Selman)
- F.B. Huey* **Jeremiah Lamentations: The New American Commentary Vol. 16** (Rebecca Doyle)
- Paul D. Wegner* **An Examination of Kingship and Messianic Expectation in Isaiah 1-35** (Daniel Schibler)
- William L. Holladay* **The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses** (Geoffrey Grogan)
- Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., Robert K. Johnston and Robert P. Meyer (eds)* **Studies in Old Testament Theology** (Elmer A. Martens)
- Walter J. Houston* **Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law (JSOTS 140)** (Philip Jenson)
- Jeffrey A. Fager* **Land Tenure and the Biblical Jubilee: Uncovering Hebrew Ethics through the Sociology of Knowledge (JSOTS 155)** (Daniel I. Block)
- John Nolland* **Luke 9:21-18:34 (Word Biblical Commentary 35b)** (Darrell L. Bock)
- W.M. Swartley* **Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story** (Thomas R. Hatina)
- Nigel Watson* **The First Epistle to the Corinthians (Epworth Commentaries)** (A.C. Perriman)
- In-Gyu Hong* **The Law in Galatians (JSNTS 81)** (Todd D. Still)
- L. Gregory Bloomquist* **The Function of Suffering in Philippians (JSNTS 78)** (Todd D. Still)
- D.A. Carson* **A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers** (A.C. Perriman)
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'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone'
(Ephesians 2:20)

