

themelios



1 Editorial

5 Recent Study of the Pastoral Epistles
I. Howard Marshall



30 Scripture and Experience
Dr T.A Noble

40 The Poor in the Gospels and the Good News Proclaimed
to Them
Jey J. Kanagaraj



60 The Theology of the Cross: Subversive Theology for a
Postmodern World?
Graham Tomlin



74 Book Reviews

Vol.23 No.1

£2.00

October 1997

An International Journal for Theological and Religious Studies Students

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

Editors *General editor* Stephen N. Williams, Union Theological College, 108 Botanic Road, Belfast BT7 1JT

Managing editor Tony Gray (RTSF)

Associate editors John Bimson, Craig Blomberg, Martin Davie, Bill Houston, Tony Lone

International editors Kwame Bediako (Ghana), Samuel Escobar (S America), Peter Kuzmic (Croatia), Vidar Haanes (Norway), David Lim (Philippines), Gerhard Maier (Germany)

Review editors Richard Hess, Craig Blomberg

Committee Stephen Williams, Tony Gray, Richard Hess
 IFES representatives: Vidar L Haanes, Niek Tromper
 RTSF representative: Chris Simpson

Contributors While contributors express their own views, it is expected that they are in agreement with the theological position of the RTSF and IFES. Articles should be submitted to the general editor.

Reviews Books for review should be sent to Themelios, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester, LE1 7GP or, (North American books) to Dr Craig Blomberg, Denver Seminary, Box 10,000, University Park Station, Colorado 80210, USA.

All orders Themelios, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester Great Britain LE1 7GP
 E.mail: Themelios@ucf.compulink.co.uk

Subscription rates (including postage)

UK and Republic of Ireland: £7.50 (Students), £9.00 (Other individuals), £12.00 (Institutions)

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

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

	Students	Other Individuals	Institutions	US\$
1 year	£7.50	£9.00	£12.00	\$24
2 year	£15.00	£18.00	£24.00	\$40

(If air mail required, please add for each year's subscription £3 / \$5)

Back numbers Each issue of *Themelios* can only contain a few articles; but there is a wealth of useful material in back issues. Information about the contents and availability of back issues may be obtained from: RTSF, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GP, Great Britain.

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

ISSN 0307-8388

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without permission of the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship.

Co-published by RTSF, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GP, and IFES, 55 Palmerston Road, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middx. HA3 7RR

JAN 08 1998

The word 'context' has been in vogue for a number of years, with reference to theological work. The demand for context, however, can be made in different ways. Sometimes context and content are tied together so that what we are to say is regulated, though not determined, by the context in which we are operating. Sometimes we are directed to the milieu in which we work in a rather different way, so that the very points of reference for our thinking are challenged. It is in this latter sense that an increasing number of people urge us to bear in mind the global religious context in which we live and work. Theology, we are told, cannot be usefully pursued by seeking to relate the Christian tradition simply and directly to contemporary situations. The Christian tradition and the doctrines of the Christian faith must be understood and grasped from the very outset not as phenomena isolated from the wider religious scene, but as phenomena that belong to it and are intelligible only within it. Constructive theological work today must proceed by attending to what is said on cognate and relevant matters within non-Christian religious traditions. So we are (sometimes) told.

Obviously, there is a whole package of things involved here. A number of responses are possible to the different elements within it. What are we presupposing about 'religions' here? Even if we grant some of the presuppositions, why make other religious traditions, more than modern biology or cosmology, the determining context for theological work? Or even if we grant the demand in principle, can one in practice acquaint oneself well with one's own tradition if a number of others have to be comparatively studied? We mention these questions only to avoid appearance of a simple capitulation to all the terms of the proposal. Nevertheless, the proposal has plenty in it which deserves to be taken seriously. It is a pressing one because of the general relation of Theology to Religious Studies as academic fields. In this editorial I make the simple plea that some of us who are students of Christian theology or are interested in its academic study be prepared to consider seriously acquainting ourselves well with the field (if 'field' is the right word) of Religious Studies.

At least three reasons may debar some people from doing so. Firstly, we could end by spreading our knowledge so thin that our grasp of what in the first instance we have wanted to grasp, Christianity, is weakened. That is undeniably a risk. But we must bear two things in mind. Firstly, the cost of the fact that all Christian students studying theology are concentrating on Christian theology is that there will be a general limit to effective interaction with those whose very approach to the study of religion may be different. Secondly, if one takes care to be constantly enriched by the Word of God, intellectual study undertaken in obedience to the Lord of that Word will itself enrich, when it is properly done. Some would put this point far more strongly: our understanding of Christian faith can be enhanced by studying it against the background of what is not Christian faith as much as by sticking, in one's reading, to the texts of one's own tradition.

Secondly, we are in danger of succumbing to relativism. Those who know most about non-Christian religious traditions and study Christianity in that context seldom, we may suspect, maintain a robust view of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as traditionally understood, except in the cases of those whose missionary background has enabled them to specialize in one particular non-Christian religion. Yes, again: there is undeniably a risk. But is it a risk of a different order to that undertaken when studying the Bible in the context of modern scholarship? For decades and, by now, centuries, people have found that faith has been shaken by biblical criticism. Indeed, why pick on biblical studies? A sensitive study of

many of the principal areas of intellectual endeavour, from geology to sociology to literary criticism, will challenge faith. Is there any reason in principle why the study of religions should propel us to a relativism that undermines faith more seriously than it gets undermined by the whole business of critical thought?

Thirdly, it is practically difficult to maintain anything like a traditional view of Christian truth in the Religious Studies context. That is, whatever the effect of such studies on me, traditional convictions are just implausible to the vast majority of others operating in that discipline. Well, that may be true enough, but is scarcely a reason for steering clear of it. Then let us make our position plausible. I draw attention at this point to a recent publication under the Apollos imprint by Dr Dewi Arwel Hughes, *Has God Many Names? An Introduction to Religious Studies* (Leicester, 1996). Hughes, admitting that 'someone of my convictions is rare in Religious Studies', and referring to it as 'a subject which I love', states that 'I have seen no reason to compromise my evangelical faith throughout my study of the world's great religious traditions and of the methodology of Religious Studies'. But he adds (which is why I cite his words under this third point): 'There has been much discussion and disagreement about methodology in Religious Studies, and in many ways the discipline is still searching for an adequate method.'¹ There is a potential for evangelical contribution here, as in yet one more intellectual sphere we seek to give reason for the hope that is in us in a context which regards that hope as implausible.

I am aware that what I have said bristles with theological assumptions which, in other contexts, could not possibly be flatly stated. Also, what is said will not be relevant to every reader in various parts of the world. But many of us need to go beyond asking something like: 'What is the Christian view of other religions?' to some grasp of religion, religions, religious traditions and religious studies. Not that an intellectual grasp of things guarantees that we become more religious, or that study of religion is just a springboard for the achievement of some sort of superior intellectual apologetic. So let us give (almost!) the last word to the eighteenth-century thinker, Lessing, and his dramatic character, Nathan the Wise.

In the play of the same name, we read the parable of the rings. A man makes for one of his sons a ring with the property of making its owner beloved by God and other people. Two other sons receive two replicas which do not, however, possess this property. As the generations go on, it becomes impossible to establish by argument who has inherited the original ring; descendants of all three claim its possession, but neither documentary nor any other evidence is available to settle the issue. No evidence? Of course, there should be evidence. The proof of the true ring lies in its existential impact.

Three rings, three great monotheisms: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. A little reflection will tell us what Lessing was getting at, though he was a subtle author who did not wear his religious convictions on his literary sleeve. If there is demonstration of religious truth, it lies in the realm of love (the property Lessing thought would attract God and our co-humanity). We do not mean to conclude by swallowing Lessing any more than we began by swallowing the proposal about the context of Christian theological reflection. But reference to Nathan's parable helps to make clear that our plea for engagement in Religious Studies is not just a plea for more effective Christian engagement in the intellectual arena. It is in the service of our common aim that our Christian living should be more authentically and effectively religious altogether.

¹ D.A. Hughes, *Has God Many Names? An Introduction to Religious Studies* (Leicester, 1996), p.8.

I. Howard Marshall

A regular contributor to Themelios, I.H. Marshall is Professor of New Testament Exegesis, University of Aberdeen.

The Pastoral Epistles (PE) have generated a considerable amount of scholarly attention, if only because they cannot be left out of any commentary series, and the student has available a fair amount of help in understanding them.¹ Nevertheless, they cannot be said to stand at the centre of interest in the NT, and to some extent they have been neglected. It is somewhat ironic that conservative scholars who regard the PE as coming directly from the pen of Paul have made remarkably little of them despite their passion to defend their Pauline character. Such surveys of NT theology in general and Pauline theology in particular as I have consulted tend to ignore them in discussions of the theology of Paul; the seven-letter Pauline corpus² naturally forms the centre of such discussions for many scholars, and the PE are scarcely used even by conservative scholars, either because they find that the PE have little to add to the basic picture, or because they are aware of their doubtful status as Pauline epistles in the opinion of mainstream scholarship and prefer to base their arguments on generally acknowledged material.

More radical scholars who denied their Pauline origin sometimes did so on the basis of their alleged inferiority to Pauline thought, and hence they were tempted to allot them little authority and importance. Even today, when scholars who assign them to the post-Pauline period insist on their importance as witnesses to the character of that period, there is still sometimes a tendency to denigrate the value of their teaching, and the very fact of their late dating means that they are seen as being on the periphery of the NT.

Against this rather negative assessment, two points can be made. First, while it has been fashionable to criticize the PE for their lack of creative theological thinking, M.Y. MacDonald (1988) points out that the period when the PE were written was one that demanded not fresh thinking but the consolidation and defence of what had already been established. Consequently the PE play an important role in the institutionalization of the church. Scholars who see the PE as Pauline would probably have to say something similar about them; if they come from the end of Paul's life, their mood could well be one of consolidation rather than of adventurous theologizing. Second, there is a good case that the PE do offer a creative approach in their own context and provide a fresh restatement of Pauline theology (P.H. Towner, 1989; A. Lau, 1996).

Commentaries

We shall begin by looking at the commentary resources available for the student. We shall not be attempting to answer

Recent Study of the Pastoral Epistles

the question: 'Which is the best commentary?'³ What you use will depend very much on the purpose of your study. Are you a student preparing for examinations on the English or the Greek text? Do you want a medium-length introduction or a full-scale treatment? Are you prepared to read both sides of the questions that arise and evaluate them fairly? Are you simply wanting help with next Sunday's sermon or with an expository series? Do you want to wrestle in detail with the letters and have you got the linguistic equipment to use the tools provided?

When I was an undergraduate theological student in the 1950s and my syllabus included the Pastoral Epistles in Greek, there was not a lot of helpful material immediately available. I was aware of the volume by W. Lock (*ICC*, 1924), which was of some help on the Greek text but was rather thin compared with other volumes in the same series. I subsequently discovered N.J.D. White (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, 1910) and R. St J. Parry (CUP, 1920), which also still continue to be valuable for the student of the Greek text. On a popular level E.F. Scott contributed the volume in the *Moffat NT Commentary* (1936); more recently there was a freestanding volume by B.S. Easton (SCM Press, 1947) which expounded the case for non-Pauline authorship and was notable for a set of word-studies of the kind that William Barclay was later to develop. From the conservative side there were but two recent works. One was the newly published *Tyndale NT Commentary* by D. Guthrie (1957), which was as precious as gold to that generation. There was also the treatment of the Greek text by E.K. Simpson (1954), remarkable for its combination of outstanding linguistic material culled from his own first-hand reading of the Classics (no TLG to ease his labours!) and of pastoral comments written in his extraordinary flamboyant style. W. Hendriksen (1957) was just beginning to circulate. But that was about all, apart from short treatments in such works as the *Interpreter's Bible* (F.D. Gealy and M.P. Noyes, Vol. XV, 1955) and the *Torch Bible Commentary* (A.R.C. Leaney, 1960).⁴ Foreign works were either not easily accessible or beyond my linguistic capabilities. One knew that there was a massive commentary in French by C. Spicq (*Études bibliques*, 1947; see further below) which defended Pauline authorship, and that there were German commentaries. Here mention must be made of J. Jeremias (*Das NT Deutsch*, 1936), who took a conservative position and had important insights to offer. Since that date there has been a very considerable crop of commentaries which I must try to characterize briefly.

Starting with works in English on the English text, we have something like twenty commentaries to mention: C.K. Barrett (*New Clarendon Bible*, 1963); J.M. Bassler (*Abingdon NT Commentaries*, 1996); M. Davies (*Epworth Commentaries*, 1996); L.R. Donelson (*Westminster*, 1996); G.D. Fee (*New International Biblical Commentary*, 1988); A.T. Hanson (*New Century Bible*, 1982⁵); J.L. Houlden (*Penguin NT*

Commentary, 1976); A.J. Hultgren (*Augsburg Commentary*, 1984); L.T. Johnson (*Knox Preaching Guides*, 1987); R.J. Karris (*NT Message*, 1979); J.N.D. Kelly (*Black's NT Commentaries*, 1963); G.W. Knight III (*New International Greek Testament Commentary*, 1992); T.D. Lea and H.P. Griffin (*New American Commentary*, 1992); T.C. Oden (*Interpretation*, 1989); J.D. Quinn (only on Tit.: *Anchor Bible*, 1990); J.P. Sampley and R.H. Fuller (*Proclamation Commentaries*, 1978); J.R.W. Stott (*The Bible Speaks Today*: 2 Tim., 1973; 1 Tim. and Tit., 1996); and P.H. Towner (*IVP NT Commentary Series*, 1994).⁶

Many of these works are slight in size and would not be a first choice for serious study. The most important medium-length exegetical commentaries for the student are Barrett, Fee, Hanson and Kelly. Kelly is very much in the tradition of Guthrie, a careful exegesis by a patristics scholar whose work is all the more significant in that he does not belong to any 'conservative' camp but nevertheless upholds Pauline authorship. Barrett is an outstanding example of what can be done in a short space by a scholar who treats the letters as Scripture (inspired by the Holy Spirit through an unknown author), and has some memorable comments. Hanson sees the letters as something of a declension from Paul, and has a highly individual approach to them which never fails to challenge traditional interpretations. Fee is in effect the successor to Guthrie, a fresh defence of Pauline authorship with some helpful insights and a generally deeper theological level of comment.

Houlden is much too brief in actual commenting to give a lot of assistance but important for his sharp statement of the non-Pauline position. A more recent and helpful treatment from this angle is by M. Davies, who is especially good on providing parallels from the Hellenistic background and who draws attention to the problems posed by the patriarchal teaching of the letters.⁷

Within this group there is a new generation of commentators and series which are concerned with expounding the text for preachers, and several of these authors do so in different ways. Towner, writing on an expository level, represents the work of a specialist on the letters, and those with some background knowledge will get much by reading between the lines. Karris offers a thematic study for a Roman Catholic audience, and his enthusiasm for the letters is contagious. Johnson is another Roman Catholic who is strong on literary approaches and who accepts Pauline authorship. Oden is an American Methodist systematic theologian who has moved from a liberal to a conservative position and finds much to warm his heart in the letters. Stott treats the letters in his characteristic fashion and always has the preacher and the task of application in mind.

In addition to these shorter works we have a detailed treatment of the Greek text by G.W. Knight III (*New International Greek*

Testament Commentary, 1992) which explains the text fully and lucidly but without a lot of interaction with other scholars. He is a firm defender of direct Pauline authorship and of the non-teaching role of women. Much more in the tradition of the full-scale commentary which explores every possible alley is the work of J.D. Quinn, whose work on Titus (*Anchor Bible*, 1990) was edited and published posthumously; this is the major work in English on Titus, but its detail and the division of the material into Notes and Comment make it user-unfriendly.⁸ He dates the PE c.AD 80-85 and interprets them as urging a Pauline faith and ethics as the basis for the church's continuing mission to bring all people to faith in Jesus. On a simpler level D.C. Arichea and H.A. Hatton (*UBS Handbook Series*, 1995) do not offer a commentary in the normal sense, but a series of notes to help translators of the Bible; ordinary students, not concerned with translation into tongues other than English, will still find them profitable.⁹

On the Continent there have been a number of conservative scholars who defend Pauline authorship. Apart from the older generation of RC scholars and such conservatives as A. Schlatter, the most influential commentator to defend Pauline authorship on the basis of the secretary hypothesis was J. Jeremias. He was followed by G. Holtz (*Theologischer Handkommentar zum NT*, 1972²), who takes a decidedly idiosyncratic position in finding the eucharist everywhere in the text. But the major exposition of direct Pauline authorship comes from the revised, massive work of C. Spicq, running to two volumes (*Études bibliques*, 1969⁴). Spicq is primarily (but by no means only) a lexicographer, and his commentary is a mine of information on the occurrences of the vocabulary in other Greek sources (again all done before the TLG came on the scene!; cf. his recent *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*). This is the most thorough commentary on the epistles, with lengthy discussions of virtually every point of importance, and marked by a strong Catholic piety. A similar, but much more manageable, treatment in French comes from P. Dornier, who tends to follow Spicq fairly closely (*Sources bibliques*, 1958²). Likewise the Dutch scholar Ridderbos defends Pauline authorship (*Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament*, 1967).

But, increasingly, Continental works deny Pauline authorship. The major work gathering together the arguments against Pauline authorship is still that of H. Holtzmann (1880); you can save yourself time by going straight back to him for many of the arguments that are still current. More recently, the standard German Protestant work is the older commentary by M. Dibelius, which was revised by H. Conzelmann and translated as part of the *Hermeneia* series (Philadelphia, 1972); its particular strength is the collection of parallels in thought and expression from the Hellenistic world, but it is also marked by Dibelius's theories. These are (a) that the NT epistles tend to be addressed to general rather than particular situations and therefore contain generalities rather than precise instruction,

and (b) that the PE develop what is often called 'bourgeois Christianity', a form of the faith which has lost its hope of the imminent coming of Jesus and has settled down to a long haul in the world, and therefore involves living a life that is controlled by secular ethics rather than Christian eschatology. At a more general level, N. Brox (*Regensburger NT*, 1963) represents the new stream of RC opinion which is not bound by tradition and which tends almost to run to excess in kicking off the reins. V. Hasler (*Zürcher Bibelkommentar*, 1978) is the briefer Protestant equivalent which is undeniably stimulating in its originality but sometimes infuriating in its dogmatic statements of highly dubious interpretations.

Two recent German works stand out far above the others. On the one hand, there is the meticulous treatment of 1 Timothy by the Protestant J. Roloff (*Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar*, 1988), which is of outstanding merit in its detailed discussion of the Greek text combined with excursions on *Wirkungsgeschichte* (the history of the effects of reading the text; more or less what used to be called 'history of interpretation'). On the other hand, we have the contribution to the *Herders theologischer Kommentar zum NT* by the Roman Catholic L. Oberlinner (*Erster Timotheusbrief*, 1994; *Zweiter Timotheusbrief*, 1995; *Titusbrief*, 1996), which builds on Roloff (and therefore gives much less technical detail) and presents a profound theological exegesis of the letters. Both volumes assume post-Pauline authorship and are not uncritical of some elements in the text, but on the whole they develop a very positive theological interpretation.

Nor has the stream ended. In the pipeline we have the weighty *Word Commentary* by W.D. Mounce, and some day there will be a replacement volume for Lock in the ICC series.

Important issues in interpretation

The origin of the epistles

It is very difficult for scholars of a conservative persuasion like myself to discuss the issues without the problem of authorship being at the centre of interest. It is the most important single issue in relation to the Pastorals. Even scholars who deny Pauline authorship still find it necessary on the whole to justify their point of view, since, even if they themselves regard the issue as closed, they have to recognize that the defenders of the traditional view are by no means cranks. Nevertheless, much discussion takes place on the assumption that post-Pauline authorship can be taken for granted.

The question of authorship has two aspects for conservative scholars. In common with other scholars, they are concerned to discover how the letters were composed. But they appear to have in general a greater concern about the ethics of the production. To many (but by no means all) scholars it does not matter whether the PE or any other NT works were produced in

ways that we would regard as deceitful. They argue that we must not measure the PE by the standards of our day but by the practice of the ancient world where pseudonymity was accepted. But conservatives would reply that the question is not what were the standards of the ancient world in general, but what were the moral standards of the early Christians in the first century. Surely these moral standards must inform our modern Christian standards and evolutions, rather than vice versa. The question then becomes whether pseudonymity is compatible with early Christian ethics, or rather, whether there are kinds of pseudonymity which might be morally acceptable. For example, if a work was produced under a pseudonym similar to that of Michael Innes or Cliff Richard, where the name is known to be a pseudonym and deception is not intended, then this could be acceptable. But if deceit is of the essence of the position, then it is a different story.

Many NT scholars begin by accepting that pseudonymity actually did take place (often by citing the PE as the surest examples) and then examine whether it can be justified ethically. Some will admit that it cannot be, and are not bothered by this conclusion, but others will argue that it was acceptable. On the other hand, if it can be established that pseudonymity was not acceptable, then this becomes an argument against the likelihood that it was used by morally upright early Christians, and becomes an incentive to look for alternative explanations of the alleged pseudonymous works.

Hence arises the question: is the existence of pseudonymity sufficiently strongly attested in the NT to make it a basis for further discussion, or is there a stronger case for the moral improbability of this practice?

The acceptable face of pseudonymity?

Two major works on this topic appeared almost simultaneously in 1986. L.R. Donelson holds that in the early church there is no case of known pseudepigraphical writings being accepted as authoritative. Nevertheless, pseudepigraphy certainly took place, and therefore the important thing was to do it successfully; intentional deception was practised, and the primary justification was that 'if one had a cause which was important enough and a lie could assist, then it is "permissible" to employ a lie' (p. 19). The cause was generally that of doctrinal correctness, and the use of an apostolic name was the way to win the contest. Deceptive pseudepigraphy was well known in the ancient world, especially in religious and philosophical areas, and there are numerous examples demonstrating the lengths to which authors would go to create the impression that their works were 'authentic'. Thus the authors of the pseudo-Platonic letters 'succeed due to the consummate skill of their authors in using apparently extraneous detail in the same way any person would employ such detail in a real letter to a friend' (p. 27).

Donelson's case has to attribute to early Christians the opposing convictions that pseudepigraphy is incompatible with authoritative Christian composition and that lies are justified by the importance of preserving doctrinal truth. It is not easy to see how any single individual could combine these two beliefs, not even by the assumption of one law for himself and another for his opponents. Further, he has to allow that 'the scale on which the aura of verisimilitude is carried out in the Socratic letters makes the Pastorals look rather tame' (p. 37), and it must be remembered that the style of the Pastorals does not give the impression of an author trying to reproduce the genuine Pauline style of writing. Do they really intend to deceive?

Donelson is apparently not concerned with the moral problems that pseudonymity creates for many readers who would share the NT insistence on the importance of truth in commending the gospel. A different attitude is taken by the second major writer on the topic. D.G. Meade (1986) bases his argument on the understanding of tradition in Judaism. Later authors latch on to an existing body of tradition with which they feel themselves in sympathy and proceed to 'bring it up to date' (his term for it is *Vergegenwärtigung*) or re-express it for their own time by further writings in the same tradition. There is a 'recurring need to actualise a tradition for a future generation, and the common conviction of a continuity of revelation and interpretation which made this possible, *regardless of literary genre*' (p. 215). Pseudonymity is thus a claim to authoritative tradition rather than a statement of literary origins. This statement is repeated throughout his book until you almost believe it. But then you ask what it means and conveys. Meade cannot avoid the fact that the idea was to claim authorship by the person named and thus to deceive the readers (pp. 121, 198). The theory is unsatisfactory at several points as Guthrie (1988) has shown.¹⁰ It is interesting and significant that the one case of an apocalyptic writing in the NT, Revelation, is a book which is not pseudonymous, for there is no reason to doubt the author was called John. One is tempted to argue that if, where pseudonymity might be expected, there is none, how much less likely we are to find it elsewhere. Further, we have to settle the question of genre. Jeremias insisted that if the writings of Paul are ordinary letters, then it must be taken into account that we know of no examples of the forging of ordinary letters. The case is admittedly different with religious and philosophical writings, and the Pauline letters may be thought to belong rather in this category. But again these are usually figures of the distant past. There is surely a distinction between writing in the name of Enoch or even of Daniel and writing in the name of so recent a figure as Paul.

Much the most sympathetic attempt to come to terms with the problem is that of R. Bauckham.¹¹ The authority of the unknown author of 2 Peter 'lies in the faithfulness with which he transmits, and interprets for a new situation, the normative

teaching of the apostles. The pseudepigraphical device is therefore not a fraudulent means of claiming apostolic authority, but embodies a claim to be a faithful mediator of the apostolic message' (pp. 161f.). Bauckham is able to hold this position because he believes that the author of 2 Peter was not attempting to deceive his readers. 'Owing to the author's use of the standard conventions of the ancient "testament" genre, contemporary readers would have recognized from this section [2 Pet. 1:12-15] that 2 Peter belongs to that genre and have understood the pseudepigraphical nature of the work' (p. 203).

It emerges that Bauckham's view is that there can be a type of pseudonymity which is not open to the usual moral objections in that it was not intended to deceive the readers. This possibility tends to be ruled out of court by contemporary scholars, but it is surely worth exploration. The point to be emphasized is that the moral objection to pseudonymity is not simply that modern Christians find it difficult to be happy with the existence of canonical works intended to deceive, but much more that it is very difficult to understand how early Christians with their concern for truth could have employed deception. Granted that heretics used deception, the attitude of mainstream, orthodox Christians was firmly against the use of the device.¹²

Language and theological style

If there is substance in the argument so far, we have three possible types of scenario for the letters: Pauline authorship, pseudonymity, and non-deceptive post-Pauline composition.

Few scholars today champion direct Pauline authorship, and the most common type of theory involves the use of amanuenses. (Knight hovers between direct Pauline authorship and some secretarial assistance by Luke.) The reasons for this shift lie in the areas of style and content.

The authorship of the PE has been subject to frequent investigation on the basis of statistical study of the language. A weighty contribution to the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* by A.D. Forbes offers a significant critique of this type of research. He curiously passes over the important work of P.N. Harrison – perhaps it wasn't sufficiently 'statistical' in character – and lists five contributions:

1. He notes that W.C. Wake investigated sentence length as a criterion, but his conclusions are based on doubtful data and in any case are open to varied interpretations.
2. K. Grayston and G. Herdan undertook a much more sophisticated examination of the vocabulary of the Pauline corpus which showed that the PE, considered as a single unit, are markedly different from the rest of the corpus. But, comments Forbes, 'That this behavior is due to differing authors rather than literary form, subject matter, etc., has not been shown' (p. 189).

3. Forbes is able to point out a number of flaws in the methods of A.Q. Morton, who has written numerous works on the topic. He goes on to attempt his own examination of sentence length, and produces the interesting result that the following letters may come from the same population as Galatians: 1 Corinthians, 2 Timothy, Romans, 1 Timothy and 2 Thessalonians; but the following do not come from the same population as Galatians: Philippians, 2 Corinthians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, Hebrews and Ephesians (Titus and Philemon were excluded from the comparison in view of their brevity for this test). From this the reader may well conclude – as does the present writer – that an analysis based on sentence length distribution is untrustworthy.

4. A. Kenny's work is regarded as modest in its methods and goals. Its conclusions are regarded as sound.

5. K. Neumann's work is criticized because the presentation makes it impossible for other researchers to check it. It leads to some odd results, such as ascribing parts of Galatians to Ignatius and Revelation 2-3 to Paul, unless special pleading is permitted. Although, therefore, its conclusions are fairly conservative, they are 'too brittle to be convincing'.

Forbes is probably a trustworthy guide, although his expertise lies in the application of statistical methods to the vocabulary of the OT. Readers may well conclude in the light of his work that vocabulary and stylistic statistics have so far failed to lead to assured conclusions on the authorship of the various letters in the Pauline corpus.

However, it must be emphasized that this is not the end of the story. J.M. Gilchrist (1967) mounted a sharp criticism of the work of P.N. Harrison in which he showed that the latter repeated essentially the same argument in several different forms in his book. Nevertheless, Harrison did draw attention to an irrefutable fact, namely that the vocabulary of the Pastorals does have a different shape from that of the acknowledged Pauline letters, explain it how you will.

Further, Forbes was not able to take account of the work of D.L. Mealand (1989; 1995), who has used some refined statistical techniques on the Pauline corpus. In the second of his two articles he has analysed a variety of linguistic data, including the relative proportions of different parts of speech, word length, the frequency of different letters of the alphabet in word endings, and the use of significant items of what Harrison called 'connective tissue', and he argues that the PE emerge as distinctive at one end of a spectrum, with Colossians and Ephesians generally appearing at the other end.

Mealand's tests also throw up some anomalies within the other parts of the Pauline corpus, a fact which again shows that statistical methods are not foolproof; however, they still show that there are oddities about the PE when compared with the certainly authentic Pauline letters.

To this must be added the observation, which is less easy to state in objective terms but may none the less be valid, that many scholars, myself included, get the impression of a different way of thinking and expressing theology and ethics in the Pastorals. This is not to say that the theology contradicts that of Paul (which is manifestly not the case) but that the way the author thinks is different. Just as no competent judge would be likely to confuse two unattributed sermons, one by Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the other by John Stott, so there is a different theological vocabulary and a different manner of argumentation in the PE from Paul. This point weighs with me more strongly than the argument from linguistic style. We have to ask why it could be that when writing to close colleagues Paul would think in a different kind of way.

To be sure, one has to be cautious. It may seem to be a striking argument against common authorship that in Romans Paul employs questions no less than 84 times, but there is only one question in the PE (1 Tim. 3:5). The argument is strengthened when we note that 1 Corinthians contains 99 questions – but then it is dramatically weakened by the fact that 1 Thessalonians has only two questions and Philippians has only one. Further, questions are absent from Romans 12–13 and 15–16; evidently paranetical material is not the place to find them: they are a weapon of direct argument with addressees.

The problem is rather how it could be that Paul, writing to close colleagues and basing his ethical and ecclesiastical instructions on theological considerations, could ignore totally or virtually such characteristic themes as 'flesh', 'body', the Holy Spirit, God as Father, and the concept of being 'in Christ', and why it should be that, again writing to colleagues, he should choose to use a new vocabulary for ethical instruction (such as 'piety', 'self-control', 'conscience' qualified by an adjective). Why would he switch to a kind of argument which in effect states a point and then gives the justification for it? This is not the place to develop this point, but it is clearly of great importance.

Amanuensis theories

In the light of these observations, we can understand why scholars who maintain Pauline authorship are tending to adopt some kind of indirect theory.

One possibility is the free amanuensis theory. This is ethically acceptable, where pseudonymity is not. It would be perfectly acceptable for a writer to give an amanuensis the freedom to compose a letter of which he would approve and to which he would give his authority. This kind of theory has been championed by Jeremias, Holtz and others in the past and also more recently by E.E. Ellis and J.R.W. Stott. The question then is whether there are positive indications of its validity. Does it

adequately explain the odd features of the PE, and are there any clear indications that this process took place? One important point is that the similarities between the PE appear to demand that one amanuensis was responsible for them all. If we are dealing with letters from a later period in Paul's life, this would make possible the use of one amanuensis and the use of a different method of communication. (This fact alone means that theories which date the Pastorals at different points in the missionary career of Paul recorded in Acts are less probable.)¹³

An important 'state of the art' essay, incorporating some of the author's own original suggestions, comes from E.E. Ellis (1993). He notes that pseudepigrapha were not acceptable in the early church and that only heretics rejected the PE. He argues strongly against any suggestion of interpolation of inauthentic matter into genuine letters. According to ancient custom Paul would have retained a copy of his own letters, and he probably allowed churches to make further copies. While this procedure would allow textual variations right from the beginning, it would rule out the possibility of unauthorized and undetected interpolations. Ellis is inclined to allow the use of a secretary and of preformed traditions to account for the stylistic peculiarities in the letters. He takes the release of Paul from his (first) imprisonment in Rome as a historical certainty (with Harnack). He argues that Paul did journey to Spain and returned to Rome where he was martyred. 2 Timothy 4:10 is taken as a reference to Gaul. In view of the problems in the churches, he sent letters to his trusted co-workers in Crete and Ephesus 'which served both as instruments of personal communication and encouragement and also as vade mecum to give apostolic authorization for their teaching'. He dates Titus and 1 Timothy in AD 65 (after Paul's return from Spain) and 2 Timothy from Rome in AD 67 where he had been re-arrested and where shortly after he was executed. The letter form was adopted by Paul as a means of communicating with the churches, where they would be read aloud, and in the light of Paul's Jewish background this meant that they would be treated as 'the Word of God'. The possibility of Luke as a secretary is raised. Ellis argues for the presence of a considerable amount of pre-formed material in the letters, indicated by a number of tell-tale signs. The traditional material amounts to 43 per cent of 1 Timothy, 16 per cent of 2 Timothy, and 46 per cent of Titus. The adoption of this hypothesis may well remove a number of the difficulties for Pauline authorship. In my view, however, the tests which he proposes for the presence of tradition are not altogether convincing. One problem which is not adequately addressed is that the style of the epistles is remarkably uniform, even in the passages which are allegedly based on tradition.

Against the use of an amanuensis it should be noted that there are no positive indicators of this. There is nothing corresponding to 'I Tertius wrote this letter'. Some scholars take

'Only Luke is with me' in 2 Timothy as a possible indicator (Moule, 1965; Wilson, 1979), although there is nothing corresponding in the other Pastorals. For a number of reasons I do not believe that this hypothesis is tenable.¹⁴ The style is no closer to Luke-Acts than it is to the acknowledged letters of Paul, and the way in which the theology is expressed is not that of Luke.

A rather different and undoubtedly bold solution has been proposed by M. Prior (1989). Where most defenders of authenticity who have had recourse to theories of Paul's employment of secretaries to account for the differences in style between the letters have argued for a different secretary for the PE (or for the more free use of a secretary by a Paul who had otherwise dictated his letters word for word), Prior argues that the other Pauline letters (which generally bear the names of more than one sender) were written with the aid of secretaries but that these letters to individuals Paul wrote himself without secretarial assistance. He further claims that there is a difference in style between the letters of Ignatius to the church at Smyrna and to its bishop.

Second, he protests against assumptions that the three letters stand or fall together as regards authenticity and draws attention to the significant differences in character between them. In particular, the case against the authenticity of 2 Timothy is the weakest of the three.

Third, Prior concentrates his attention on 2 Timothy. He questions the normal interpretation which sees it as a farewell letter by a person who is about to face trial and probable condemnation. Instead, he reinterprets the material in chapter 4 to claim that Paul wants Timothy and Mark to come to him urgently because he wants their aid in his ongoing mission; 4:6-8 needs to be read in conjunction with what follows and not seen to be in an untenable tension. Paul is building up a mission team for future work. And the general tenor of the letter is to give pastoral help and encouragement to a Timothy about whose spiritual standing and effectiveness Paul had some serious concern.

This is a fascinating reconstruction of the situation. Prior makes some very shrewd and effective points. He contrasts, for example, the character of the PE with the acknowledged pseudepigrapha, the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*, 3 *Corinthians* and the *Epistle of the Apostles*, with which the PE show no similarities.

A key point is his interpretation of 4:6-8, where he argues that the Greek verb *spendomat* does not mean 'to die'. The point is valid, but it does not seem to meet the argument that the verb is being used metaphorically of one's life draining away in sacrifice. Further, he interprets *anulusis* as meaning 'release', i.e. from prison and bondage, for further missionary work. Here he rightly questions some of the linguistic evidence which

has been offered for the meaning 'death' here. But I am not sure that the case is convincing, since again it is not the meaning but the reference of the word which is the issue, and Philippians 1:23 clearly uses the verb with this reference. Further, Prior does not deal satisfactorily with 4:8, which seems to contrast what Paul has already done in v. 7 with 'all that remains' - the crown. Nevertheless, his work deserves to be taken seriously.

Non-deceptive post-Pauline composition

A second possibility is that the PE represent a development of genuinely Pauline material after his death. On this view the letters are the attempt by a subsequent disciple of Paul to preserve his master's teaching and apply it faithfully to the church situation of his own day. There was no attempt at deception, and the author may have edited some actual written materials from Paul.

One point that weighs strongly in favour of this theory is the lack of any compelling and clear evidence that the PE were written at a late date. There is certainly no evidence that compels a date after AD 100, and they could well be earlier so far as their content is concerned.

Arguments for a late date tend to be based on three main areas. First, there is the question of *the opposition and contrary teaching* addressed by the author.¹⁵ The majority hypothesis is that it is somehow related to second-century Gnosticism with its cosmic dualism leading to a devaluation of the world (asceticism with regard to food; rejection of marriage) and its belief that the resurrection life is already taking place (stress on knowledge as the way to salvation). Conservative scholars tend to argue that these tendencies were already present in the first century and can be detected in the opposition faced by Paul in Corinth and Colossae (*cf.* Towner, 1989, ch. 2). Another view majors on the ascetic elements and argues that the nearest parallel is the kind of Christianity reflected in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* where Paul is turned into an advocate of sexual asceticism (D.R. MacDonald, 1983; M.Y. MacDonald, 1988; Young, 1994a). This last view seems much more plausible than the first, since there is so little, if anything, that is specifically Gnostic or constitutes a specifically Gnostic complex of teaching.¹⁶ One or two recent scholars have tried to play down the Jewish elements in the opposition (Roloff, 1988), but this move does not seem to be justified. It is also clear that some of the dubious teaching could be based on a misunderstanding of Paul's own teaching (*cf.* especially Schlarb, 1990). On the whole, it seems best to conclude that the opposition represents the development of a Jewish type of Christianity with strongly ascetic features and that it stands fairly close to the type of opposition faced by Paul himself.

The second type of argument is based on *the ecclesiastical situation*. This is generally characterized in terms of

'institutionalization', i.e. the development of the church into an organized system with a hierarchical system of leadership based on 'office' to which people are appointed (the posts of bishop, deacon; an 'order' of widows) over against an earlier kind of set-up in which leadership was much more informal and individuals gifted by the Spirit were able to minister quite freely. The growth of the church and the rise of heresy led to the need for a more rigid system. Affinities are then found with the developed pattern of bishops, presbyters and deacons found in Ignatius, and the PE are generally alleged to be closer to the Apostolic Fathers than to Paul. The often-assumed equivalence of bishops and elders in the PE is increasingly challenged in favour of the view that a monarchical type of bishopric was developing. A common view is that in the PE we see the coalescence of two types of leadership, a Jewish elder system and a more Hellenistic bishop/deacon system.

The most detailed study of this area is by Campbell (1994). He argues that the term 'elders' refers to the senior people in a community and is never the title for an office. In the early churches the elders were the (single) heads of the house churches in a given area. Campbell maintains that what is going on in the PE is the legitimation of a single *episkopos* in a local area 'as leader of those who as *episkopoi* in their own households were already known as the elders in relation to the local church as a whole' (p. 196). Titus is to set up leaders *kata polin*, i.e. one overseer per city. In this way the term *episkopos* shifts from being the leader of a household church to being the overseer of a town church, whereas *presbuteroi* shifts from being the house church leaders as a corporate group to being those leaders in the town church who are not the overseer/bishop. The *diakonoi* are the new overseer's helpers. Thus there is 'moniscopacy' in the PE and the terms 'overseer' and 'elder' are beginning to refer to separate roles. It is, however, not until Ignatius that we find a clear terminological distinction between elders and bishops, and this arises because Ignatius is trying to curb the power of the elders and their cherished independence.

I have reservations concerning this theory, not least because it does not seem to do justice to Titus 1:5-9. Its significance is that Campbell is able to conclude that 'there is no solid objection to bringing down the date of the Pastorals to within ten years of Paul's death' (p. 179).

A somewhat different view is taken independently by Young (1994a; cf. 1994b). She holds that the elders do not appear to be identical with the bishops. They are senior people, but they have some responsibilities for maintaining and teaching the tradition. She postulates that the churches were moving from an understanding of themselves purely as 'God's household' to a self-identity as 'God's people', a community in which the elders are the guardians of the tradition and come to be a kind of 'governing council ...which had the authority to appoint and

advise the *episkopos*' (p. 110). As with Campbell's hypothesis, so too Young recognizes the transitional character of the situation reflected in the PE. Both views tend to support an earlier rather than a later date for the documents.

The third area for discussion lies in *the picture of Paul* in the letters. A major tendency in current scholarship is to analyse the kind of portrait of the apostle which is projected by the PE. One important question is where the author gained his picture of Paul. Did he know any of the genuine letters of Paul and made use of them in his work? Did he also know Acts or did he make use of other traditions regarding the career of Paul? Hanson is a strong advocate of the writer's knowledge and use of the Pauline letters. In greater detail P. Trummer has examined the way in which Pauline traditions are taken into the Pastorals.

A somewhat different task is undertaken by M. Wolter (1988) who wants to examine the nature of the Pastorals as Pauline traditions, i.e. as works which intend to be read as the ongoing legacy of Paul to the churches. The PE thus become the vehicle of Pauline tradition and are important for the way in which they present pictures of Paul himself and of his theology. The picture which emerges is, to be sure, rather different from that of the historical Paul. Scholars who have examined this issue generally conclude that Paul is presented much more paradigmatically as the one and only apostle, on the foundation of whose teaching the gospel rests, the exemplary convert, apostle and martyr. Such a picture could not possibly have been produced by Paul himself: it is idealized and exaggerated and represents later veneration of a founder-figure. It is part of an elaborate fiction, involving the portraits of Timothy and Titus and the other people mentioned in the *personalia*, all of which are utilized in order to provide positive and negative examples for readers to follow or reject respectively.

These scholars thus explain the apparently Pauline features of the epistles, which would be regarded by traditionalists as evidence for Pauline authorship, in terms of the conscious reproduction of Pauline 'tradition', the attempt to create a Pauline impression.

Very often such scholars assume that a post-Pauline explanation must be given of material which might well be interpreted as Pauline. More accurately put, assuming that the material is post-Pauline, they then give a corresponding interpretation of it, although one might equally well interpret it on the assumption of Pauline authorship. The vital question which then arises is: which of the two types of interpretation has claim to the greater plausibility? Here P.H. Towner (1995) has shown that the way in which scholars interpret the material in the letters can be influenced by their prior assumptions and that the radical interpretation is not necessarily the right one.

The problem of structure

A comparative study of commentaries on the PE will quickly reveal that there is a remarkable lack of unanimity on the question of the structure of the letters. Three types of approach may be listed.

1. There is the attempt to determine a logical structure in each of the letters, generally on the basis of the parameters of ancient epistolary stylistic conventions and of the subject-matter.

2. There is the view that the letters show no overall structure, and that the best that can be done is to identify and label the constituent paragraphs without trying to show how the paragraphs are related to one another. This is the view of Hanson and of Fee. It has been carried to the limit by J.D. Miller (1989), who holds that the PE have no logical structure whatever but consist of a set of isolated items loosely strung together.

3. The kind of discourse analysis practised by the Summer Institute of Linguistics has been applied to the Pastorals and produces some interesting results (Blight, 1977; Smith and Beekman, 1981; Banker, 1987).

Without going into details, I think that it can be shown that view 2 does not do justice to the character of the letters. They do show signs of careful structuring, even if that structure is not immediately obvious. A combination of insights from approaches 1 and 3 leads to an understanding of the letters as orderly compositions.

A different but related question for advocates of non-Pauline authorship concerns the character of the letters as a corpus. If the letters were not written *ad hoc* by Paul (or somebody else) and thus as individual compositions, the question arises whether they were written as independent pieces by their author, or were regarded as forming a collection in their own right, and, if the latter is the case, the further questions arise as to the order of composition or the order in which they were intended to be read. Earlier scholars argued about the order of *composition*, and some held that 2 Timothy (which has the most Pauline material in it) was composed first, then 1 Timothy, and finally, when the writer was running out of inspiration, Titus (Easton, 1947). More recent scholars discuss the order in which the PE were meant to be *read*. Most argue that 2 Timothy was clearly meant to be read last and that 1 Timothy was meant to be read first because it gives the fullest introduction to who 'Paul' is (Wolter, 1988). Quinn (*Titus* pp. 19f.) wants to read Titus first. The fact is, of course, that there is a tendency to read the Pastorals as a corpus precisely because they show common characteristics as a group, but now the argument is that they were always meant to be read as a group and in a particular order.

The nature of the theology

There have been one or two recent attempts to discuss the theology of the PE as a whole. The most important of these is that of P.H. Towner (1989), whose particular concern is with the ethics of the epistles. His major contribution is to argue that the ethical teaching is firmly rooted in theology. Consequently, his monograph does in fact cover the main issues in the letters. He demonstrates the centrality of Christology and soteriology in the letters and shows how the forms of expression may be new but the content is traditional. He is able to confirm the view of other scholars that the interpretation of the letters in terms of a waning of eschatological hope and the development of a Christian *Bürgerlichkeit* (Dibelius) is misguided (cf. Kidd, 1990; Schwarz, 1983). He rightly stresses that the epistles have a missionary dimension.

A very similar position is taken by F. Young (1994a) in her exposition of the theology of the letters, although she would place them later than Towner and sees them more as an attempt to reclaim the Pauline heritage for churches towards the end of the first century. M. Davies (1996b) devotes the major part of her introduction to the Pastorals to their theology and ethics.

The *ecclesiology* of the PE was investigated by D.C. Verner (1983), who shows the centrality of the household concept for the author over against the body metaphor used by Paul. The significance which he finds is that this is a more institutionalized understanding of the Church, and it allows the development of a patriarchal understanding of leadership and ministry with an authoritarian character. This in turn raises the question of the place of women in the Pastorals, an issue too major to be tackled as a subheading in this survey. Suffice it to say that there are two trends in interpretation. On the one hand, there is the approach of scholars like Fee who explain the apparent subordination of women in terms of the cultural setting of the time and the problems caused by the association of women teachers with the author's heretical opponents. On the other hand, there is the quite remarkable conjunction of some conservative evangelicals (Köstenberger *et al.*, 1995) and radical liberation theologians (Wagener, 1994) in claiming that the aim of the letters is to put women firmly in their place and forbid them any share in the leadership of the church as a matter of theological principle; the difference is that the former group accept this verdict and the latter strongly reject it for the church today.

That the theology is not expressed in the same way as that of Paul is patent. The major part of Donelson's monograph is devoted to a study of the method of argumentation; he devotes particular attention to the *enthymeme* or 'deductive argument' and to the *paradigm* or argument from example. The analysis demonstrates that the writer of the PE does think logically and

coherently and does not simply string thoughts together loosely, as some interpreters have held.

What we actually have in the letters is an interesting combination of a stress on traditional teaching, which must be handed on faithfully, and new ways of presenting it. Three examples will make the point.

First, there is the *Christology*, which is expressed in terms of the epiphany of Christ. This term is used to refer to both his first advent and his second advent. It conveys the reality that God himself in his saving power is revealed in Christ. This is in effect a doctrine of incarnation, yet the traditional terminology is not used, and the concept of epiphany is a fresh one which was not used by Paul (Lau, 1996). The old wine is being preserved in a new skin.

Second, there is the relationship between *grace* and *works* as ways to salvation. Again, the way in which the antithesis is presented is somewhat different from that found in the earlier Pauline letters, where the point is posed in terms of faith and works. But the more basic antithesis between grace and works lies beneath the surface in Romans and comes up clearly in Ephesians. The doctrine is Pauline, but it is expressed in a new manner; this time, old terminology and formulations are given fresh life to deal with a new situation (Marshall, 1996).

Third, there is *the nature of Christian living*. The PE use the terminology of 'piety' (*eusebeia*) and 'self-control' (*sophrosyne*) to express a way of life that corresponds to the Hebrew concept of the 'fear of the Lord' (Towner, 1989, ch. 7). They thus employ language that is characteristically Hellenistic and was very much at home in the ethical writings of the time, but they employ it in such a way that the character and motives of the conduct are genuinely Christian.

It follows that there is nothing 'tired' or characteristic of an alleged 'old age' mentality about these letters. The concept of an aged Paul, no longer able to express himself creatively, and writing in a different style from that of his peak, must be put aside as being inappropriate. It is true that the writer was consolidating rather than innovating, but he does so in a vigorous manner. He responds positively to the situation created by the opposition. For his concern is for the truth of the gospel as the message of salvation rather than with simply demolishing opponents. Elsewhere I have taken issue with the verdict of James Denney that the author of the PE was 'sometimes only orthodox'; the letters are shaped by controversy which dictates their content to a considerable extent, but the fire of the Spirit still burns brightly (Marshall, 1993).

Or does it? The debate here may be summed up by referring to two essays by Horrell (1993) and Young (1992). Horrell is concerned with the way in which scholars may reinforce and

confirm the ideology of a text instead of penetrating it critically, and argues that this can happen with some sociological approaches to the NT. He claims that while attempting to preserve the Pauline tradition the PE in fact subtly transform it; it is not only the opponents who transform Paul's teaching. One aspect of what is happening is the use of the writer's ideology to reinforce the social domination imposed by superior upon subordinate groups, men upon women and owners upon slaves (cf. M. Davies, 1996a, pp. 17-21, 45-7).

Young asks how we are to read in an ethically responsible way texts which are pseudonymous, and she claims that we should try to find out what the author wished to communicate to his implied readers. We shall ask how the Pauline tradition 'is appropriately developed further for a new situation' and how the letters challenge other readers who claim to be in the same tradition. 'In other words, a responsible reading must involve attention both to past meaning and future potential. And maybe then the suspicion or neglect with which these little letters have been treated will be superseded by a recognition of their power to transform, to communicate Paul's gospel in simple summary slogans, to motivate mission, to confirm Christian identity and even, with some critical adaptation, to structure positively relationships within the Church' (p. 120).

There, then, is the tension between those who see the PE as leading to the entrenchment of unjust power structures in the Church and those who see them as capable of renewing the Church. How may it be resolved? In the last analysis, it is a matter of exegesis of the letters within their ancient setting. The problem is how far commentators can set aside or allow for their own presuppositions in determining what the text actually says before they move into the problem of interpreting it for today. The PE thus constitute an intellectual challenge to us to discover precisely what is going on in them.

Despite the questioning by some writers of elements in the PE, there is an increasing common awareness that, whatever our answers may be to the problems of situation and manner of composition, these letters have a significant role within the canon of the NT. In their day they had an important task to fulfil in dealing with a church situation characterized by the rise of heresy and opposition to the Pauline message. They still have important things to say today to a Church that equally needs to maintain its link with its roots in the gospel and to stand firm against any modern divergences from it.

Bibliography

Commentaries

- Arichea, D.C., and Hatton, H.A.**, *Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS Handbook Series. New York: United Bible Societies, 1995.
- Barrett, C.K.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New Clarendon Bible. Oxford: OUP, 1963.
- Bassler, J.M.**, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, Abingdon NT Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- Bratcher, R.G.**, *A Translator's Guide to Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*. London: United Bible Societies, 1983.
- Brox, N.**, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, Regensburger Neues Testament. Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1963.
- Calvin, J.**, *The Second Epistle of Paul The Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996.
- Davies, Margaret.** *The Pastoral Epistles*, Epworth Commentaries. London: Epworth Press, 1996 (= 1996a).
- Dibelius, M., and Conzelmann, H.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972.
- Donelson, L.R.**, *Colossians, Ephesians, First and Second Timothy and Titus*, Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.
- Dornier, P.**, *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, Sources bibliques. Paris, 1958².
- Easton, B.S.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*. London: SCM Press, 1947.
- Fee, G.D.**, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988.
- Gealy, F.D., and Noyes, M.P.**, *The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus*, The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 15. New York, 1955.
- Guthrie, D.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale NT Commentaries. London: Tyndale, 1957, 1990².
- Hanson, A.T.**, *The Pastoral Letters*, Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: CUP, 1966.
- Hanson, A.T.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New Century Bible Commentary. London: Marshall Pickering, 1982.
- Hasler, V.**, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus*, Zürcher Bibelkommentar. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1978.
- Hendriksen, W.**, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*. Grand Rapids and London, 1957, 1960.

- Holtz, G.**, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 1965. Theologischer Handkommentar zum NT. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1972².
- Holtzmann, H.J.**, *Die Pastoralbriefe, Kritisch und Exegetisch Behandelt*. Leipzig: Engelmann, 1880.
- Houlden, J.L.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Penguin NT Commentary. London: Penguin Books, 1976 (reprinted London: SCM Press, 1989).
- Hultgren, A.J.**, *1-II Timothy, Titus, and Aus, R., II Thessalonians*, Augsburg Commentary on the NT. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984.
- Jeremias, J.**, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus*, Das NT Deutsch. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1936, 1975¹¹.
- Johnson, L.T.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Knox Preaching Guides. Atlanta: John Knox, 1987.
- Karris, R.J.**, *NT Message - the Pastoral Epistles*. Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1979.
- Kelly, J.N.D.**, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Black's NT Commentaries. London: A. & C. Black, 1963.
- Knight III, G.W.**, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 1992.
- Lea, T.D., and Griffin, Hayne P.**, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman, 1992.
- Leaney, A.R.C.**, *The Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, Torch Bible Commentaries. London: SCM Press, 1960.
- Lock, W.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924, 1952³.
- Oberlinner, L.**, *Die Pastoralbriefe: Kommentar zum Erster Timotheusbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum NT. Freiburg: Herder, 1994.
- Oberlinner, L.**, *Die Pastoralbriefe: Kommentar zum Zweiter Timotheusbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum NT. Freiburg: Herder, 1995.
- Oberlinner, L.**, *Die Pastoralbriefe: Kommentar zum Titusbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum NT. Freiburg: Herder, 1996.
- Oden, Thomas C.**, *First and Second Timothy and Titus*, Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox, 1989.
- Parry, R. St J.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*. Cambridge: CUP, 1920.
- Quinn, J.D.**, *The Letter to Titus*, Anchor Bible 35. New York: Doubleday, 1990.

Ridderbos, H., *De Pastoral Brieven*, Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament. Kampen: Kok, 1967.

Roloff, J., *Der Erste Brief an Timotheus*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum NT. Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1988.

Sampley, J.P., and Fuller, R.H., *Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, the Pastoral Epistles*, Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.

Schlatter, A., *Die Kirche der Griechen Im Urteil Des Paulus*. Stuttgart: Calwer, 1936, 1962.

Scott, E.F., *The Pastoral Epistles*, Moffat NT Commentary. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936, 1957³.

Simpson, E.K., *The Pastoral Epistles*. London: Tyndale, 1954.

Spicq, C., *Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 1947. *Études Bibliques*. Paris: J. Gabalda, 1948, 1969⁴.

Stott, J.R.W., *The Message of 2 Timothy: Guard the Gospel*, The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973.

Stott, J.R.W., *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus: The Life of the Local Church*, The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996.

Towner, P.H., *1-2 Timothy and Titus*. Downer's Grove/Leicester: Intervarsity, 1994.

White, N.J.D., *The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus*, Expositor's Greek Testament. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910.

General

Banker, J., *A Semantic Structure Analysis of Titus*, Ed. J. Callow. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1987.

Bauchham, R., 'Pseudo-apostolic letters'. *JBL* 107.3 (1988): 469-94.

Beker, J. Christiaan, *Heirs of Paul: Paul's Legacy in the New Testament and in the Church Today*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992.

Blight, R.C., *A Literary-Semantic Analysis of Paul's First Discourse to Timothy*, Ed. J. Beekman. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1997.

Campbell, R.A., *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, Studies of the NT and Its World. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994.

Collins, R.F., 'The image of Paul in the Pastorals'. *LTP* 31 (1975): 147-73.

- Couser, G.**, *God and Christian Existence in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*. Ph.D. thesis, Aberdeen, 1992.
- Davies, M.**, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NT Guides. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996 (= 1996b).
- Donelson, L.R.**, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1986.
- Ellis, E.E.**, 'Traditions in the Pastoral Epistles', in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee*, ed. Craig A. Evans and William F. Stinespring. Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1987, pp. 237-53.
- Ellis, E.E.**, 'Die Pastoralbriefe und Paulus', *Theologische Beiträge* 22.4 (1991): 208-12.
- Ellis, E.E.**, 'The Pastorals and Paul', *Exp.T* 104 (1992-93): 45-7.
- Ellis, E.E.**, 'Pastoral letters', in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1993, pp. 659-66.
- Fee, G.D.**, 'Reflections on church order in the Pastoral Epistles with further reflection on the hermeneutics of *ad hoc* documents', *JETS* 28.2 (1985): 141-51.
- Flore, B.**, *The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles*, *Analecta biblica* 105. Rome, 1986.
- Forbes, A. Dean**, 'Statistical research on the Bible', *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* VI. New York: Doubleday, 1992, pp. 185-206.
- Gilchrist, J.M.**, *The Authorship and Date of the Pastoral Epistles*. Ph.D. thesis, Manchester, 1967.
- Grayston, K., and Herdan, G.**, 'The authorship of the Pastorals in the light of statistical linguistics', *NTS* 16 (1960): 1-15.
- Guthrie, D.**, *The Pastoral Epistles and the Mind of Paul*. London: Tyndale, 1956.
- Guthrie, D.**, 'New Testament pseudonymity? A review' [D.G. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*], *Themelios* 13:2 (1988): 58.
- Hanson, A.T.**, 'The domestication of Paul: a study in the development of early Christian theology', *BJRL* 63 (1981): 402-18.
- Horrell, David**, 'Converging ideologies: Berger and Luckmann and the Pastoral Epistles', *JSNT* 50 (June 1993): 85-103.
- Kenny, A.**, *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament*. Oxford, 1986.
- Kidd, R.W.**, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles*, SBLDS 122. Atlanta: Scholars, 1990.

- Köstenberger, A.J., Schreiner, T.R., and Baldwin, H. Scott.** *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
- Lau, A.** *Manifest in Flesh: The Epiphany Christology of the pastoral Epistles*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1996.
- Lea, T.D.**, 'The early Christian view of pseudepigraphic writings', *JETS* 27 (1984): 65-75.
- Lestapis, S. de**, *L'enigme des Pastorales*. Paris: Gabalda, 1976.
- Lips, H. von**, *Glaube-Gemeinde-Amt: Zum Verständnis der Ordination in den Pastoralbriefen*, FRLANT 122. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1979.
- Macdonald, D.R.**, *The Legend and the Apostle*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- MacDonald, M.Y.**, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline writings*, SNTSMS 57. Cambridge: CUP, 1988.
- McRay, J.**, 'The authorship of the Pastoral Epistles: a consideration of certain adverse arguments to Pauline authorship', *ResQ* 7 (1963): 2-18.
- Marshall, I. Howard**, 'Faith and works in the Pastoral Epistles', *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 9 (1984): 203-18.
- Marshall, I. Howard**, 'The Christology of the Pastoral Epistles', *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 13 (1988): 157-77.
- Marshall, I. Howard**, 'Sometimes only orthodox - Is there more to the Pastoral Epistles?', *Epworth Review* 20 (1993): 12-24.
- Marshall, I. Howard**, 'Prospects for the Pastoral Epistles', in *idem*, Lewis, D., and McGrath, A. (eds.), *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honor of J.I. Packer*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996, pp. 137-55.
- Meade, D.G.**, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition*, WUNT 39. Tübingen: Mohr, 1986.
- Mealand, D.L.**, 'Positional stylometry reassessed: testing a seven-epistle theory of Pauline authorship', *NTS* 35 (1989): 266-86.
- Mealand, D.L.**, 'The extent of the Pauline corpus: a multivariate approach', *JSNT* 59 (1995): 61-92.
- Metzger, B.M.**, 'A reconsideration of certain arguments against the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles', *ExpT* 70 (1958-9): 91-4.
- Miller, James D.**, 'The pastoral letters as composite documents', Ph.D. thesis. Edinburgh, 1989.

- Moule, C.F.D.**, 'The problem of the Pastoral Epistles: a reappraisal', in *BJRL* 47 (1965): 430-52; repr. in *idem, Essays in New Testament Interpretation*. Cambridge: CUP, 1982, pp. 113-32.
- Munro, W.**, *Authority in Paul and Peter: The Identification of a Pastoral Stratum in the Pauline Corpus and 1 Peter*, SNTSMS 45. Cambridge: CUP, 1983.
- Murphy-O'Connor, J.**, '2 Timothy contrasted with 1 Timothy and Titus', *RB* (1991): 403-18.
- Neumann, K.J.**, *The Authenticity of the Pauline Epistles in the Light of Stylostatistical Analysis*, SBLDS 120. Atlanta: Scholars, 1990.
- Prior, M.**, *Paul the Letter Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy*, JSNTS 23. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989.
- Quinn, J.D.**, 'The last volume of Luke: the relation of Luke-Acts to the Pastoral Epistles', in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. C.H. Talbert. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978, pp. 62-75.
- Quinn, J.D.**, 'Paul's last captivity', in *Studia Biblica* 3, ed. E. Livingstone (JSNTSS 3). Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1980, pp. 289-99.
- Reicke, B.**, 'Chronologie der Pastoralbriefe', *TLZ* 101 (1976): 81-94.
- Robinson, T.A.**, 'Grayston and Herdan's "C" quantity formula and the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles', *NTS* 30 (1984): 282-8.
- Schenk, Wolfgang**, 'Die Briefe an Timotheus I und II und an Titus (Pastoralbriefe) in der neueren Forschung (1945-1985)', *ANRW II.25.4*, (1987): 3404-37.
- Schlarb, E.**, *Die gesunde Lehre: Häresie und Wahrheit im Spiegel der Pastoralbriefe*. Marburg: N.G. Elwert, 1990.
- Schwarz, R.**, *Bürgerliches Christentum im Neuen Testament?* Österreichisches Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983.
- Skarsaune, O.**, 'Heresy and the Pastoral Epistles', *Themelios* 20.1 (1994): 9-14.
- Smith, Robert E., and Beekman, J.**, *A Literary-Semantic Analysis of Second Timothy*, ed. M. Kopesecc. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1981.
- Towner, P.H.**, 'The present age in the eschatology of the Pastoral Epistles', *NTS* 32 (1986): 427-48.
- Towner, P.H.**, 'Gnosis and realized eschatology in Ephesus (of the Pastoral Epistles) and the Corinthian enthusiasm', *JSNT* 31 (1987): 95-124.
- Towner, P.H.**, *The Goal of our Instruction*, JSNTSS 34. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.

- Towner, P.H.**, 'Pauline theology or Pauline tradition in the Pastoral Epistles: the question of method', *Tyn Bul* 46.2 (1995): 287-314.
- Trummer, P.**, *Die Paulustradition der Pastoralbriefe*, BBEt 8. Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1978.
- van Bruggen, J.**, *Die geschichtliche Einordnung der Pastoralbriefe*. Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1981.
- Verner, D.C.**, *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*, SBL Diss. 71. Chico: Scholars, 1983.
- Wagener, U.**, *Die Ordnung des »Hauses Gottes« : Der Ort von Frauen in der Ekklesiologie und Ethik der Pastoralbriefe*, WUNT 2.65. Tübingen: Mohr, 1994.
- Warren, M.**, 'Commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles', *Theology* 63 (1960): 15-19.
- Wilson, S.G.**, *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles*. London: SPCK, 1979.
- Wolfe, B.P.**, *The Place and Use of Scripture in the Pastoral Epistles*, Ph.D. thesis, Aberdeen, 1990.
- Wolter, M.**, *Die Pastoralbriefe als Paulustradition*, FRLANT 146. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1988.
- Young, F.**, 'The Pastoral Epistles and the ethics of reading', *JSNT* 45 (1992): 105-20.
- Young, F.**, *The Theology of the Pastoral Epistles*. Cambridge: CUP, 1994 (= 1994a).
- Young, F.**, 'On EPISKOPOS and PRESBUTEROS', *JTS ns* 45 (1994): 124-48 (= 1994b).
- Ziesler, J.A.**, 'Which is the best commentary? XII The Pastoral Epistles', *ExpT* 99 (1988): 264-7.

¹ For a fuller bibliographical article see Schenk.

² I.e. Rom., 1 and 2 Cor., Gal., Phil., 1 Thes., Phm. Scholars increasingly ignore Eph., Col. and 2 Thes. in discussions of Pauline theology since even these letters are regarded as post-Pauline.

³ For earlier surveys of commentaries see Ziesler, 1988; Warren, 1960.

⁴ There were, of course, plenty of other volumes in English that one should maybe have known about. There were the nineteenth-century classics by C.J. Ellicott (London: Longmans, 1861) and J.E. Huther (Edinburgh, 1881), strong on exegesis of the Greek text. There were expositions by P. Fairbairn (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874, repr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956) and A. Plummer (Expositor's Bible, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1888). Coming right at the end of the nineteenth century was the little Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary by J.H. Bernard (CUP, 1899, repr. Grand Rapids: Baker), valuable for its textual notes. Idiosyncratic and not very helpful was R.A. Falconer (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

- 1937). Others included E.F. Brown (Westminster Commentaries, 1917). Nor should I fail to mention W.E. Vine (London, 1925): he was a fine Greek scholar, but his commentary is devotional; and R.F. Horton (Century Bible, 1901, with a good introduction).
- 5 Hanson also produced the much shorter volume in the Cambridge Bible Commentary (1966).
- 6 J. Calvin, 2 Corinthians and Timothy, Titus and Philemon, in the new translation by T.A. Smail, was published by Oliver and Boyd (Edinburgh) in 1964, and has been recently reprinted (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996).
- 7 The introductory material in the commentary needs to be supplemented by her Sheffield NT Guide on *The Pastoral Epistles* (1996a).
- 8 It would appear that Quinn left material on 1 and 2 Tim. which may reach publication.
- 9 In effect their work supersedes the earlier volume by R.G. Bratcher (Translator's Guide, London, 1983).
- 10 Meade appears to confuse anonymity with pseudonymity. If the Gospels are anonymous, as he claims (p. 114), this is not the same thing as pseudonymity. But are the Gospels in fact anonymous? Theophilus must have known who was writing a Gospel for him, and the identity of the disciple who wrote the Gospel of John was also known. One doesn't have to incorporate one's name in the text of a book to prevent it being regarded as anonymous!
- 11 Bauckham's article (1988) deals with the fact that not only the author but also the addressees of pseudonymous writings are pseudonymous. His own position on the problem is to be found in his commentary on Jude, 2 Peter (Word Biblical Commentary, Waco: Word, 1983), pp. 158-62.
- 12 The difference between orthodoxy and heresy was understood well enough by the time of the PE. See especially Skarsaune, 1994.
- 13 For the various theories concerning the placing of the PE at different points in Paul's career see especially Lestapis, 1976; Reicke, 1976; van Bruggen, 1981.
- 14 See my review of Wilson's book in JSNT 10 (1981): 69-74. One highly significant difference between Luke-Acts and the PE is in the ways in which the doctrine of the Holy Spirit comes to expression.
- 15 The letters reflect a real movement and not a fictitious or 'ideal' one; see Schlarb, 1990.
- 16 It must always be remembered that Gnosticism is a particular constellation or combination of various motifs which can one and all exist independently without necessarily having a specifically Gnostic colouring. For example, a body-soul dualism and a division of humanity into the elect and the non-elect are typical features of Gnosticism but also exist in other, earlier, religious contexts.

Dr T.A. Noble

*This article is an abbreviated version of a paper given at the 50th anniversary conference of the Tyndale Fellowship in 1994. The full version of papers given at the conference, which was on the theme of Scripture, may be read in Philip E. Satterthwaite and David F. Wright (eds.), **A Pathway into the Holy Scripture** (Eerdmans, 1995).*

Dr Tom Noble is Professor of Theology at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City and Visiting Lecturer in Theology at Nazarene Theological College, Manchester.

The twentieth-century evangelical emphasis on the authority of Scripture has sometimes been accompanied by a somewhat negative stance towards 'experience'. Evangelical Christians held the conviction that Scripture was the final authority as God's revelation, and there was an accompanying tendency to associate any emphasis on 'experience' with theological liberalism.

Perhaps one of the most widely influential books prompting this negative stance was J.I. Packer's evangelical manifesto, published by IVF (as it then was) in 1958: *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*. The core of Packer's argument was that the problem of authority, the most important question the Church ever faces, was that of finding the right criterion of truth. There were three claimants: Holy Scripture, Church tradition, and Christian reason or experience, and these were adopted respectively by evangelicals, traditionalists and 'subjectivists'. The subjectivist position, however, was something of a chameleon, appearing sometimes as rationalism (building on 'Christian reason') but sometimes as mysticism. Liberalism was a form of subjectivism combining both, taking its rationalism from Ritschl and its mysticism from Schleiermacher, but the essence of the liberal or subjectivist position was that the final authority for faith and life was the reason, conscience or 'religious sentiment' of the individual. Liberals 'accepted the viewpoint of the Romantic philosophy of religion set out by Schleiermacher - namely that the real subject-matter of theology is not divinely revealed truths, but human religious experience.'

It was no doubt the reaction against existentialism in the 1950s and 1960s that strengthened this evangelical tendency to react against 'experience'. In his article on 'The Authority of Scripture' in *The New Bible Commentary*, G.W. Bromiley wrote:

The challenge of liberal humanism consists again in individualistic subjectivism which it opposes to the objectivism of the orthodox doctrine of the Word of God. Outward authority is cast off, and it is replaced by the inward authority of the individual thought or experience.²

Francis Schaeffer, too, in his popular apologetics, attacked 'upper storey experiences'.³ 'Experience' was associated with

liberalism, existentialism and subjectivism.

Perhaps the earliest of these mid-century evangelical attacks on subjectivism was an unpublished one made by Dr D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones at a private conference arranged by the IVF at Kingham Hill School in Oxfordshire in July 1941, a conference which led to the founding of Tyndale House and the Tyndale Fellowship. There Lloyd-Jones apparently ruffled some feathers by attacking what he identified as subjectivism in evangelicalism during the preceding 50 years. According to his analysis, the current weakness in biblical theology among evangelicals was that 'experience and subjectivity [in various forms] had been substituted in the pulpit for truly effective exposition of scripture'.⁴

This analysis of Martyn Lloyd-Jones's should alert us, however, to ask just exactly what the character of the evangelical tradition had been. Was an emphasis on experience a recent aberration in evangelicalism, evident only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? And was an emphasis on experience a sign of subjectivism?

The evangelical revival: *Herzensreligion*

David Bebbington, in his most helpful history, *Evangelicalism in Britain*, covering the years from the 1730s to the 1980s, identifies four characteristics of evangelical religion:

Conversionism, *the belief that lives need to be changed*; activism, *the expression of the gospel in effort*; biblicism, *a particular regard for the Bible*; and what may be called crucicentrism, *a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross*.⁵

These he identifies as the most constant characteristics of evangelicalism in Britain over these 250 years. The third of these traditional evangelical emphases, that on biblical authority, has been particularly to the fore in the twentieth century in the wake of the rise of biblical criticism and the popularity of so-called scientific humanism. But the first, conversionism, has at times in the past been more prominent, and is in fact wider than Bebbington's rather clumsy term suggests. For evangelicals have traditionally emphasized not only the initial moment of conversion, but the whole life of faith, the whole of Christian experience.

The centrality of this emphasis is evident if we trace the heritage back to the leading figures of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival. What is immediately apparent, and what has sometimes been almost forgotten in more recent times, is their tremendous debt to German pietism and its emphasis on *Herzensreligion*, the religion of the heart. What is sometimes forgotten by evangelicals today is that pietism and the eighteenth-century evangelical revival in Britain and her American colonies was not so much a reaction against

'liberalism' (if the deism of that day may be anachronistically described as such) as it was a reaction against dead orthodoxy. It is in that context that we must understand John Wesley's comment:

*A man may be orthodox in every point ... He may be almost as orthodox as the devil ... and may all the while be as great a stranger as he to the religion of the heart.*⁶

Faith therefore was not mere *assensus* but *fiducia*:

*It is not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold lifeless assent, a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart.*⁷

Genuine Christianity was *Herzensreligion*. It was a matter of 'the heart strangely warmed', of assurance ('an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine* ...'). It was a matter of the witness of the Spirit, in short, of Christian experience.

Thus, to the standard Anglican triad of Scripture, tradition and reason,⁸ Wesley added experience. Albert Outler described this as 'the Wesleyan Quadrilateral', a term he was later to regret, since it seemed to convey to some the idea of four equal factors in the shaping of doctrine.⁹ Wesley's emphasis on *Herzensreligion* or Christian experience was not unique to him, nor to the Arminian wing of evangelicalism, but was equally shared by his Calvinist brethren. Whitefield, preaching on 'Walking with God', could say that when we sit daily with Mary at Jesus' feet, by faith hearing his words,

*We shall then by happy experience find, that they are spirit and life, meat indeed and drink indeed, to our souls.*¹⁰

In his account of his own conversion he wrote:

*I now resolved to read only such as entered into the heart of religion and which led me directly into an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified.*¹¹

Most notably of course, Jonathan Edwards wrote a whole treatise on Christian experience, his *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* in 1746.¹²

Puritans and Reformers on experience

This characteristic emphasis on experience was not a new invention of the eighteenth century, however. J.I. Packer in his study of the Puritans emphasizes that Puritanism was a movement of revival: 'Personal revival was the central theme of Puritan devotional literature.'¹³ Sinclair Ferguson attributes to John Owen the axiom that the Christian life is one of 'spiritual sense and experience'.¹⁴ But for a definitive presentation of evangelical faith, we go further back to the Reformers themselves. James Atkinson maintains that the beginnings of

the Reformation were experiential, not doctrinal.¹⁵

To apprehend Luther's experience of faith, to understand Luther's religious experience,¹⁶ is to know in essence the theology of the Reformation.

He quotes the Reformer:

When I had realised this I felt myself absolutely born again. The gates of paradise had been flung open and I had entered. There and then the whole of Scripture took on another look to me.¹⁷

Similarly, the English Reformer, William Tyndale, writes of Christian experience,¹⁸ as also does John Calvin. In reference to God's revelation of his attributes in Exodus 34:6f., Calvin writes:

Thereupon his powers are mentioned, by which he is shown to us not as he is in himself, but as he is toward us; so that this recognition of him consists more in living experience than in vain and high-flown speculation.¹⁹

Clearly, too, this is for Calvin a matter of the affections and disposition of the heart:

Whoever is moderately well versed in Scripture will understand by himself, without the admonition of another, that when we have to deal with God nothing is achieved unless we begin from the inner disposition of the heart.²⁰

He takes it for granted in writing about prayer, that 'no one can well perceive the power of faith unless he feels it by experience in his heart'.²¹

Calvin saw the focus of conversion in the affections of the heart. He expresses this in his sermon on Ephesians 3:14-19:

It is not enough then to have some vague knowledge of Christ, or to engage in airy speculations, as they say, and to be able to talk a lot about him, but he must have his seat in our hearts within, so that we are unfeignedly joined to him, and with true affection. That is the way for us to be made partakers of God's Spirit.²²

But this emphasis on the heart and the affections and on experience in Calvin does not topple over into subjectivism. Experience is an integral part of evangelical faith, but in a way quite different to the later tradition of subjectivism stemming from Schleiermacher.

Calvin on experience as fully rational

According to Judith Rossall,²³ when the Renaissance humanist concern with experience in the world as opposed to the abstract knowledge of the scholastics is seen as the background to Calvin's epistemology, it may be readily understood why experience is more central to Calvin's theology than might at

first appear. For while, since Kant, experience has been treated as private and subjective, Calvin was a realist whose focus of interest lay not in the subjective appropriation of experience, but in the objective reality of that which was experienced. For Calvin, 'experience' does not refer to isolated, subjective, more or less emotional events internal to the subject, but holistically to 'the arena of human life in which events occur which properly interpreted show that man deals with God in everything'.²⁴ God acts within the world in such a providential way in all the circumstances of our lives, accommodating himself to us, so that we may perceive his actions and encounter him in direct intuitive knowledge. So the believer recognizes the Creator from the 'marks of his glory' engraven upon all his works. The appropriate response is thanksgiving, piety and love for God.²⁵

But this knowledge of God in creation only has a secondary role, since in Christ, the believer encounters not simply the power of God but his very presence:

*Hence all thinking of God without Christ is a vast abyss which immediately swallows up all our thoughts ... We cannot believe in God except through Christ in whom God in a manner makes himself little in order to accommodate himself to our comprehension, and it is Christ alone who can make our consciences at peace so that we may dare to come with confidence to God.*²⁶

But if we experience God in Christ, that can only be an experience of God in his Word. Calvin integrates 'Word of God' as applied to Christ and 'Word of God' as applied to Scripture as fully as possible. Thus: 'Scripture is vital to the experience of Christ, for only by a right understanding of Christ, perceived from the Scriptures, is it possible to find communion with him.'²⁷

*This then is the true knowledge of Christ, if we receive him as he is offered by the Father, namely clothed with his gospel.*²⁸

*To reject the gospel embodied in Scripture is to reject Christ himself, for Christ has no commerce with us, nor we with him apart from Scripture.*²⁹

It is therefore evident that, since *a priori* the Word of God which is Scripture and the Word of God which is Christ cannot be separated, we cannot know Christ apart from Scripture. Consequently, our experience of God in Christ is rational through and through. It is rational first in that it is direct, first-hand *notitia intuitiva*, and that intuitive knowledge of all real objects of experience is not only rational but the basis of all rational knowledge. It is not merely second-hand conceptual knowledge about Christ we gain – doctrines, truths, statements, propositions – but direct experiential knowledge of the living Christ himself present to us in the power of his Spirit.

That intuitive knowledge is as fully rational as abstract conceptual knowledge. But secondly and equally, this knowledge is fully rational in that it is conceptual from the beginning. It is not that the intuitive direct knowledge of Christ comes to us in a wordless, non-verbal, raw experience which may then be put into an arbitrary form of words either of our own choosing or that of the apostle or prophet. It is rather that the incarnate and risen Word only comes to us clothed in the verbal Word of gospel and Scripture.

The evangelical *via media*

A return journey must be undertaken from the teaching of the evangelical fathers of the Reformation back to the twentieth century. This allows us to look more analytically at the Anglo-Saxon evangelical tradition in the light of Calvin. H.D. McDonald, in his comprehensive and thorough study, *Theories of Revelation*,³⁰ opines that two broadly opposing doctrines of revelation appeared in England between 1700 and 1860: the subjectivist and the objectivist. Evangelicals are to be identified with neither.

McDonald traces the subjectivist tradition from the influence of Schleiermacher through Coleridge and F.D. Maurice, and back beyond Schleiermacher to the early Quakers, Barclay, Fox and Penn, with their view of revelation as the indwelling light. Broadly, this wing stressed the immanence of God, had a tendency towards pantheism and spoke of revelation primarily in terms of the Spirit. However, McDonald not only distinguishes the evangelicals from this subjectivist tendency but, unlike J.I. Packer in *'Fundamentalism' and the Word of God*, he also distinguishes the evangelicals from those he identifies as the 'objectivists'. On this wing he places the 'orthodox', quoting Bishop Butler, Samuel Clarke, William Law and others. These gave exclusive stress to the objective aspect of revelation. Revealed religion was conceived of as merely informational and conceptual, either adding a few ideas to natural religion, or as a body of disclosed truths to which assent had to be given. Broadly, this wing stressed the transcendence of God, had a tendency towards deism (sharing its rationalism although opposing it), and saw revelation primarily in terms of the Word.

By seeing the evangelicals as distinct from both subjectivists and objectivists, H.D. McDonald has given us a fuller and more accurate analysis than J.I. Packer was able to do in his much briefer and more popular manifesto. The evangelical tradition of the eighteenth century achieved a balance by doing justice to both the objective and subjective aspects of revelation, seeing revelation in terms of both Word and Spirit. The Wesleyan wing leaned slightly more towards the subjective, and McDonald characterizes Wesley's doctrine of revelation as 'revelation by the Spirit through the Word'. The mildly Calvinist tradition of Simeon leaned more towards the objective, a position

characterized by McDonald as 'revelation in the Word through the Spirit'. But both saw Scripture as objectively the Word of God, and both saw that faith and knowledge of God were not simply matters of accepting information. A living faith in the God of Scripture (and thus necessarily in Scripture too) was made possible by subjective enlightenment by the Spirit.

The evangelicals of the eighteenth century may therefore be regarded as truly the heirs of Calvin and the other evangelical fathers of the Reformation. Their view of revelation as simultaneously objective and subjective agrees with a description of the knowledge of God as relational or bi-polar. As a result of God's revelation in his Word by his Spirit, it is given in grace to the human subject to know God personally and experientially as the Divine Object. This experiential knowledge has therefore (like all genuine knowledge of the real or objective) both a subjective and an objective pole. The two are not mutually exclusive, but necessarily complementary in the relationship. Objective revelation in Scripture and in the presence of the living God in his Spirit (*The God Who is There*' in Schaeffer's title) and subjective experience of the living God through his Word in Scripture by the Spirit are therefore not contradictory in the evangelical view, but complementary.

It is fully in accord with the evangelical tradition right back to the Reformation therefore that evangelicals today, after a period of about 50 years in which the objective aspect of knowledge of God has been emphasized, should now integrate with that emphasis a new appreciation of the subjective. But if a new appreciation of Christian experience is to be welcomed as restoring the balance of the evangelical tradition, some caveats and clarifications should be borne in mind none the less.

Experience and Scripture in evangelical theology

First, a distinction needs to be made between 'religious experience' and the Christian experience of God. The study of religion and of the religious experience of mankind is valid in its own right, but as a phenomenological, anthropological, psychological and sociological study, it can tell us little or nothing about the validity or objective reference of these experiences. Study of religion is essentially a study of the human subject, not of the divine object, however that divine object may be conceived. The idea (from Schleiermacher) that there is a common core to all religious experience is unacceptable to evangelical faith.

Secondly, within Christian theology the individual's experience of God cannot be regarded as the final authority. Each may have the right of private judgement and the duty indeed to be true to conviction and conscience, but that does not mean that each is equally right! Neither can we regard the corporate experience of the Church, formulated in tradition, as the final authority. James Packer struck exactly the right note here in

'Fundamentalism' and the Word of God. There cannot be some combination of Scripture, tradition, reason and experience as the final authority. Final authority lies in Scripture alone (*sola Scriptura*), for in Scripture alone we have the Word of God. And yet tradition, reason and experience each have a role.

Positively, the relationship of Scripture, tradition, reason and experience may be characterized like this. *Scripture* alone represents the objective pole in the relationship. The truly human witness of the apostles and prophets is the result of the *prior* inspiration of the breath of God. Scripture is therefore the very Word of God to us. *Reason* and *tradition* represent the subject pole. 'Reason' is a short-hand way of referring to the activity of formulating and expressing this knowledge of the living God, gained through his Word and by his Spirit. 'Tradition' refers to the accumulated formulation of the Church, the corporate subject, in creeds and confession over the centuries. *Experience* is the intuitive, experiential, cognitive relationship between the two. The respective roles of the four are therefore well expressed in Outler's analysis of Wesley's hermeneutical method: 'Scripture as its pre-eminent norm but interfaced with tradition, reason and Christian experience as dynamic and interactive aids in the interpretation of the Word of God in Scripture.'³¹

Thirdly, the concept of experience within Christian theology must be re-cast to lose the focus on the subjective. Martyn Lloyd-Jones put his finger on a persistent evangelical weakness when he diagnosed the problem of evangelicalism as subjectivism in 1944. The danger of all talk of experience is that because of our sinful preoccupation with ourselves (the *cor incurvatum in se*) we topple over into subjectivism and become fascinated with the state of our own souls. We become preoccupied too easily with the episodes of our own spiritual pilgrimage, our 'blessed experiences'. It is as if the bride were so entranced with her emotions and the feelings of the wedding day and so wrapped up in her own reactions that she neglected to pay any attention to the bridegroom. For truly objective knowledge, the focus must be not on our experience of God, but on the God whom we experience.

Fourthly and finally, in thinking of the objective pole of revelation, there are two dangers to be avoided. On the right of the evangelical *via media* there is the scholastic idea that revelation is purely abstract and that revelation is to be equated with the Bible alone in the sense that revelation is purely verbal or conceptual or propositional. That is the position which McDonald characterized as 'objectivist' (as distinct from 'objective') and it is not true to the evangelical tradition. At times in recent decades, evangelical apologetics has sounded rather like this. On the left of the evangelical *via media* is the idea that there is some mystical or charismatic experience of God to be had apart from the rational, conceptual revelation in Scripture, or by falsely separating the incarnate Word from the

written Word, or by regarding the Scriptures as anything less than the Word of God *in toto*.

True Christian experience is rational, experiential, converting, sanctifying and life-changing knowledge of God in and through the incarnate Word by the Spirit. But as the evangelical tradition has insisted from the Reformation until today, that experience of God in Christ is to be found through the evangel, the gospel, the Word of God embodied in the witness of the apostles and prophets in Holy Scripture.

- ¹ J.I. Packer, *'Fundamentalism' and the Word of God* (London: IVF, 1958), pp. 50, 148.
- ² *The New Bible Commentary* (London: IVF, 1953), p. 21.
- ³ F. Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason* (London: IVF, 1968), p. 53.
- ⁴ Douglas Johnson, 'The origin and history of Tyndale House', unpublished paper. On the conference, see Gerald Fielder, *Lord of the Years* (Leicester: IVP, 1988), pp. 83ff.
- ⁵ D. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Britain* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 3.
- ⁶ John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. I, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), p. 220; Sermon 7, 'The Way to the Kingdom', I, 6.
- ⁷ John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. XVIII, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), p. 250.
- ⁸ Cf. R. Bauckham and B. Drewery (eds.), *Scripture, Tradition and Reason* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988).
- ⁹ Albert C. Outler, 'The Wesleyan Quadrilateral - in John Wesley', *WTJ* 20 (1985): 7-18. Cf. also *idem*, *John Wesley's Sermons: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), pp. 64ff.
- ¹⁰ *Select Sermons of George Whitefield* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), p. 170 (italics added).
- ¹¹ Timothy L. Smith, *Whitefield and Wesley on the New Birth* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1986), p. 44 (italics added).
- ¹² Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, Vol. I (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), p. 238.
- ¹³ J.I. Packer, *Among God's Giants* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1991), pp. 41ff.
- ¹⁴ Sinclair B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), p. 78, referring to Owen's *Works*, Vol. II, p. 36.
- ¹⁵ J. Atkinson, *Martin Luther: Prophet to the Church Catholic* (Exeter/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1983), p. 84.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 88.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- ¹⁸ William Tyndale, *Doctrinal Treatises* (Parker Society; Cambridge: CUP, 1948), p. 13.
- ¹⁹ J. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:10:2.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:3:16.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 3:20:12.
- ²² John Calvin, *Sermons on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: Banner, 1973), pp. 291f. Cf. also *Comm. I John* on 1 Jn.2:3 and *Comm. Harmony of the Gospels* on Mt. 13:19.
- ²³ J. Rossall, 'God's activity and the believer's experience in the theology of John Calvin' (PhD thesis, Durham, 1991).

- ²⁴ Charles Partee, 'Calvin and experience,' *SJT* 26 (1973): 169-81.
²⁵ Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:2:1, 1:5:9, 1:10:2.
²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:6:4.
²⁷ Rossall, 'God's activity', p. 97.
²⁸ Calvin, *Institutes*, 3:2:6.
²⁹ Calvin, *Comm. Gospel of John* on Jn. 12:48; *idem, Comm. Harmony of the Gospels* on Lk. 11:27;
³⁰ H.D. McDonald, *Ideas of Revelation* (London: Macmillan, 1959) and *Theories of Revelation* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1963), combined in one volume, *Theories of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979),
³¹ Outler, 'The Wesleyan Quadrilateral'.

Jey J. Kanagaraj

The author is Professor in New Testament and head of the Biblical Studies department at the Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, India.

People are recognized as poor today if they lack enough resources to live adequately by the accepted living standards of their community. Nearly one billion people, i.e. a fifth of the world's population, are defined as 'the absolute poor', who live below human decency due to malnutrition, illiteracy and disease.¹ Tear Fund statistics indicate that by the year 2000, some 25 per cent of the world's total population will live in poverty.² The most severe poverty, however, is found in the so-called 'developing countries'. According to the Worldwatch Institute, a group that studies poverty, about 25 per cent of the people in Asia lived in absolute poverty in the 1980s, about 35 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, and 25 per cent each in North Africa and the Middle East.³ In India, for instance, over 600 million live in absolute poverty, and 300 million live below the breadline.⁴ In cities like Bombay there are about 5,000 slum colonies, and more than half of Bombay's 10 million plus people live in dehumanizing conditions of poverty, inadequate housing, sanitation and water.⁵ The city is also well known for the huge number of homeless children who roam the streets. In Calcutta more than half a million children are forced to child labour, and there are at least 20,000 child prostitutes.⁶ Besides these, problems such as war, racism, tribalism, sexism, religious intolerance, malnutrition, unemployment, etc., have threatened divine justice and human dignity throughout the world.

In this situation, what is the relevance of the good news of Jesus Christ to the world at large and to the developing countries in particular? Precisely what is the good news? How can it be appreciated as *good* news by the poor? Who are these poor? Are they only those who lack enough income to live, or has the term 'poor' wider implications? Does the NT in any way answer these questions?⁷ A study of some of the Gospel passages which directly refer to the theme of 'good news to the poor' may throw some light on these major issues.

The concept of 'poor' in Jewish writings

Since the NT idea of poverty can be better understood against the background of the OT and of the Judaism of the inter-testamental period (second century BC – first century AD),⁸ a study of the concept 'poor', as it occurs in the OT and in other Jewish writings, will precede the study of the same concept in the NT.⁹

The Old Testament understanding of 'poor'

There are six different Hebrew words to denote 'poor', which is

rendered in Greek mainly by $\pi\omega\chi\acute{o}\varsigma$ and seldom by $\pi\epsilon\upsilon\eta\varsigma$. However, the main Hebrew words are עֲנִי , דָּל , and אֲבִיּוֹן . The word עֲנִי denotes a dependent because of his inferior position of answering to the one who demands the answer.¹⁰ When it is used for an economic position, it is combined either with דָּל (Ps. 82:3) or with אֲבִיּוֹן (Dt. 24:14; Ex. 16:49; 18:12; 22:29). In a more developed usage it denotes a state of lowliness or distress and hence a man in a state of reduced competence and lesser worth. In the Pentateuch עֲנִי indicates 'without inheritance of one's own' (Ex. 22:24; Lev. 19:10; 23:22; Dt. 15:11; 24:12, 14, 15). They might principally be the Levites, the foreigners, the widows and the orphans.¹¹

The Greek word $\pi\omega\chi\acute{o}\varsigma$, when it translates the Hebrew דָּל , refers to physical weakness (Gn. 41:19; 2 Sa. 13:4) and to a low and insignificant social status (e.g. Lev. 19:15; 1 Sa. 2:8). The Hebrew term אֲבִיּוֹן denotes 'the one who seeks alms', 'the beggar', and hence more generally 'the poor man'. It is also used to refer to the very poor, 'those with no roof over their heads' (1 Sa. 2:8).¹²

The term 'poor' in the OT also has a religious nuance, indicating the attitude of the one who prays to God (Pss. 35:10; 37:4; 40:17; etc.). This is especially true in the post-exilic writings. In Isaiah 51:21 and 54:11, for example, Jerusalem is addressed as עֲנִיָּה ('the afflicted one', RSV), and in Isaiah 49:13 the term 'his people' appears in parallel with 'his afflicted' (עֲנִיָּי). Israel is described as עַם עֲנִי ('a humble people') in 2 Samuel 22:28 and Psalm 18:27. In the passages where the term 'poor' has a religious sense, divine promises, not human petitions, are in focus. For example:

*He [i.e. the Lord] has delivered the life of the needy (אֲבִיּוֹן).
(Je. 20:13)*

*The poor (עֲנִיִּים) among men shall exult in the Holy One of
Israel. (Is. 29:19)*

*The Lord has anointed me to bring the good tidings to the
afflicted (עֲנִיָּי). (Is. 61:1)*

Carson observes that God's people were recognized as 'poor', owing to their extreme economic distress, which was often caused by oppression, and in this connection the term 'poor' can also mean 'lowly' or 'humble' (cf. Is. 57:15; 66:12).¹³ In lowliness and humility they turn to God in prayer not only for their own need, but also for God's glory. The term attained this religious connotation under the monarchy¹⁴ and became very clear in Psalms. In Amos 4; 6:1-10; Hosea 8; 10:3 'poor' seems to have a socio-economic sense, but in Zechariah 9:9, where the messianic king is described as 'righteous' and 'poor' (עֲנִי), the spiritual sense of 'humility' is in focus. Zephaniah 3:12 describes God's people, who shall seek refuge in the Name of the Lord, as 'a people humble and lowly (עֲנִי ודָּל)', thus linking the status of the poor with the spiritual

qualities of humility and lowliness.

'Poor' in the Wisdom literature

The Wisdom literature speaks of the poor mostly in a socio-economic sense. The beggar's life is denounced (Sir. 41:1-4; cf. 38:19), for it is better to die than to beg (Sir. 40:28). Both the rich and the poor were made by God (Pr. 22:2; Sir. 11:14; 13:3, 24). Poverty in the Wisdom books is closely associated with one's moral character: laziness (Pr. 6:6-11), pleasure-seeking (Pr. 21:17; 18:32-33), drunkenness and gluttony (Pr. 23:21) and envy lead one to become poor. One should give heed to the poor and be kind (Sir. 4:8-10; cf. Pr. 31:9). In fact, doing kindness and giving alms are equivalent to sacrifice (Sir. 35:3-4).

'Poor' in the Apocrypha and the pseudepigrapha

Not only Sirach, but some other apocryphal or pseudepigraphal books depict the poor, obviously in the economic sense, as those who need our pity and alms (*T. Issa.* 5:22; *Tob.* 4:7, 16). There is also an eschatological element in the usage of the term 'poor'. For it is said that in the new age poverty will vanish and there will be no more poor (*Sib. Or.* 3.378; 8.208). In this context of belief in God, poverty is linked with hope of final resurrection. Thus, 'those who died in poverty for the Lord's sake shall be made rich' (*T. Jud.* 25:4; cf. *T. Sol.* 10:12). A conflict between the poor and the rich, and between the beggar and the judge, concerning Law and the covenant, is envisaged as occurring on the last day (*Jub.* 23:19). As the end is near, the man of God should comfort the lowly (*i.e.* the poor) among the people (4 *Ez.* 14:13). Such an understanding of 'poor' is not much removed from the religious aspect of the term.

In the *Psalms of Solomon*, supposed to be a first-century BC document, the term 'poor' indicates the people of God whose prayer is heard by him. Consider, for example,

*Who is the hope of the poor and needy, if not you, Lord?
(Ps. Sol. 5:11; cf. 15:1)*

*Your ears listen to the hopeful prayer of the poor.
(Ps. Sol. 18.2)*

*God will be merciful to the poor to the joy of Israel.
(Ps. Sol. 10:6)*

Tobit 2:2 refers to poor persons who are mindful of the Lord. This sense of 'poor' is the same as that of ענין in the post-exilic psalms and prophecies. Bammel maintains that, materially, πτωχός is here identical with the 'righteous' and 'pious',

denoting more of an inner quality.¹⁵

'Poor' in Philo

Philo never uses the word *πτωχός* but always *πένης*. In contrast to the LXX, he even translates *אֲבִי* in Leviticus 19:10 and 23:22 by *πένης* instead of *πτωχός* (*Virt.* 90). L. Coenen thinks that by so doing Philo employs the less offensive, politer term for poor, thus making the Bible more suitable for Greek ears.¹⁶ For Philo anyone who works for a daily wage is a needy and poor person (*Spec Leg* IV.195-196). Thus he seems to understand the term 'poor' mainly in an economic sense. Philo does not really seem to present a theology of poverty.

'Poor' in the Qumran writings

Since the period of the existence of the Qumran community is generally accepted as being from 150 BC to AD 68,¹⁷ the Qumran writings provide a valuable source for our understanding of the NT. Therefore a study of the concept of 'poor' in Qumran is imperative.

The word 'poor' in the Qumran documents predominantly yields the same religious sense as it does in some of the other Jewish writings. The author of the *Hodayot* ('The Thanksgiving Hymns'), for instance (probably the Teacher of Righteousness), calls himself 'the poor' whose soul has been delivered by God (1QH 5:13f., 16, 18). But the phrases 'all the well-loved poor' in 1QH 5:21 and 'among the poor in spirit' in 1QM 14:7 indicate that a group of people was called 'the poor'. Cf. also

By the hand of thy poor whom thou has redeemed.
(1QM 11:9)

As he himself [i.e. 'the wicked Priest'] plotted the destruction of the poor, so will God condemn him to destruction.

(1Q_pHab 12:5-6; cf. v. 10)

In such passages the term 'poor' refers to all the members of the Qumran community who claimed that they alone reflected the life of the coming age.

Nevertheless, the socio-economic dimension of the term is not missing in Qumran. The members of the community should renounce their private property before they attain full membership in the community (1QS 5:2; 6:19, 22). But such a non-possession of property is not without ethical implications; for those who thus make themselves poor should practise truth and humility, justice and uprightness, and charity and modesty in all their ways (1QS 5:3-4). The implication probably is that one should renounce worldly riches before he concentrates on the study of the Law and attains moral maturity. In 1QH 5:19 the 'poor' appear in parallel with the 'fatherless':

For thou hast not abandoned the fatherless or despised

the poor.

'Poor' in first-century Judaism

Bruce Malina, who has studied the understanding of wealth and poverty in the NT world, observes that the terms 'rich' and 'poor' in first-century Mediterranean social systems indicate not so much the economic status as the two poles of society.¹⁸ While on a morally neutral level, says Malina, the rich and the poor marked the extremes of the social body in terms of élite and non-élite status, in a moral context 'rich' referred to those powerful due to greed, avarice and exploitation and 'poor' referred to those who were weak and unable to maintain their honour and dignity in society.¹⁹ By arguing that the vocabulary and system of distinctions in the theology of the Bible worked in kinship and politics,²⁰ he rightly maintains that the NT concepts of poor and rich took the cultural values of the first century seriously.²¹

In similar vein, P.H. Davids points out that, religiously and socially, the rich people in first-century Judaism were: the observant Jewish leaders, such as high-priestly families who, in practice, oppressed the lower clergy; the landowners who abused their tenants and hired labourers (cf. Jas. 5:1-6); the merchants who controlled much of the economic life of the country; and those who were associated with the Herodians and Romans and whose political power enabled them to increase their wealth in terms of lands.²² He also shows that while the middle class consisted of artisans, land-owning farmers, merchants, and socially, if not economically, the lower clergy, those who were labelled 'poor' were the peasants or the 'people of the land (עַם הָאֲדָמָה)'.²³ This group included small landowners who were dependent on the harvest for their livelihood, tenant farmers who had to pay their dues to their landlords before providing for their own families, hired labourers, fishermen, carpenters, slaves, both Jewish and Gentile, and beggars.²⁴ Further, there were scribes who were living, particularly in Jerusalem, entirely on charity or relief.²⁵ We may also include in this list the travelling evangelists and missionaries (cf. Mt. 10:8-10 par.; Phil. 4:15-18; 2 Thes. 3:8-9; Acts 18:3). Thus, as Davids puts it, the poor in the NT period 'lived on the edge of existence even in the best of times, for to be in an agricultural economy without owning sufficient productive land to provide security is to be economically marginal'.²⁶

The 'poor' in the first century were also affected socio-economically by years of famine (cf. Acts 11:28; Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.2.5), politically by Roman taxes, and religiously by the imposition of tithes which amounted to between 17 and 23 per cent of one's gross income.²⁷ Their inability to render tithes and to spend time in studying the Law led the religious leaders of Jesus' time to look down upon the poor as 'lax in their observance of the law'.²⁸ The 'people of the land' thus

were 'poor', at least in the eyes of the Pharisees, more from a religious perspective than on a socio-economic classification. Even the wealthy could be known as 'poor' if they did not follow the Pharisaic concept of purity, but they could be called 'righteous' or 'honourable' if they practised charity (e.g. Abraham and Job – see Jub. and T. Job). At the same time, it was recognized that even with plenty of charity the rich and powerful would tend to oppress the righteous. In other words, in this world, righteousness tended to make one economically poor. Therefore it was eventually accepted that the community of the righteous was in all likelihood the community of the poor and that the righteous poor of this age will reap the reward of their good deeds only in the age to come²⁰ (cf. above, the post-exilic and Qumran writings).

Summary

Our evidence shows that in the time of the OT the term 'poor' originally meant those who had no inheritance of their own, those who were in economic need, and also those who had a low and insignificant social status. However, from the period of the monarchy until the inter-testamental period, including up to Jesus' time, the term was strongly applied to those who, in lowliness and humility, lived in dependence on God. This, however, does not mean that the understanding of 'poor' in socio-economic and political terms disappeared. Performing charity was encouraged, though begging was denounced. The religious implication can be clearly seen in Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, *Psalms of Solomon*, and more distinctively in some Qumran writings. Since the 'pious' or 'righteous' were under constant threat at the hands of evil, practically they were oppressed and made humble and hence they were 'poor'. The eschatological idea that the righteous poor of this age will receive their reward for their charitable deeds in the age to come, when God will redress all wrongs, was prevalent in the first century AD.

Now some questions remain: Whom did Jesus have in mind when he used the term 'poor'? What was the good news that he enacted and proclaimed to them? A study of selected NT passages will throw some light on these issues.

'Poor' in the New Testament and the good news to them

The word 'poor' is used in the NT about 34 times, in which it translates the Greek word *πτωχός* 31 times, the word *πένης* once, *πενιχρός* once, and the verb *πτωχεύω* once. There are several passages in the NT which use 'poor' of people who are lowly in social status – the hungry, beggars, the politically powerless – and who have to depend on others' mercy and help to survive (see Mt. 25:34-36, 41-43; Mk. 10:21 par.; 12:41-44; 14:3-9 par.; Lk. 16:20-22; 19:8; Jas. 2:3-6). There are some passages which list the poor along with the physically handicapped, such as the blind, the lame, lepers, the deaf, and

with the dead (see Mt. 11:4-5; Lk. 7:22; 14:13-21; Rev. 3:17). However, the following two passages refer to the Good News as meant for the poor and hence are important for our discussion: Luke 4:18-19 (cf. Mt. 11:4-5; Lk. 7:22) and Matthew 5:3.

The idea of 'poor' in Luke 4:18-19

According to Luke, Jesus' public ministry begins in the Nazareth synagogue with the words of the prophet Isaiah (Is. 61:1-2), which emphasize that it is to the poor that the good news is preached:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to preach the good news to
the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

This quotation is taken from the LXX by Luke with some modifications. The phrase 'to heal the broken-hearted' of Isaiah 61:1LXX is omitted and the expression 'to set at liberty those who are oppressed' is added by Luke from Isaiah 58:6. Instead of 'to declare (καλέσαι) the acceptable year of the Lord' (Is. 61:2LXX), Luke has 'to proclaim (κηρύξαι) the acceptable year of the Lord'.

G.M. Soares-Prabhu argues that Luke's omission of 'broken-hearted' and the addition of 'oppressed' are to prevent a spiritualizing interpretation of the text, for the expression 'to heal the broken-hearted' is open to such spiritualizing and the idea of setting the oppressed free has a strong social thrust.³⁰ He goes on to say that the social emphasis of the Jubilee year of Leviticus 25, to which the Isaianic prophecy expressly refers, and Luke's deliberate avoidance of spiritualizing the text show that Luke 4:18-19 is to be understood in a strongly social sense. That is, for him, the salvation Jesus announces here is primarily a liberation from the pressures of social, economic and societal oppression.³¹

However, there are several factors which seem to argue against the exclusive social thrust of the passage:

(i) The avoidance of the clause 'to heal (ἰάομαι) the broken-hearted' is not necessarily in order to prevent the spiritualizing interpretation. Luke always seems to use the verb 'to heal' (both θεραπεύω and ἰάομαι) to refer to physical healing,³² and if his main concern in Luke 4:18-19 is the spiritual dimension, then it is natural for him to omit the clause that includes the verb ἰάομαι.

(ii) The argument that Luke's choice of the phrase 'to set at liberty those who are oppressed' from Isaiah 58:6 is in order to give a strong social thrust is only partly true. In fact, Isaiah 58:6 portrays the agent of oppression as 'wickedness

(עשׂד), a character, according to the OT, that results from one's failure to have right relationship with God. Therefore the implied spiritual aspect cannot be overlooked. Also, Luke describes in Acts 10:38 the devil as the one who oppresses people. 'Devil' in the Gospels is the same as 'demon' or 'satan', who not only binds people with chronic disease (cf. Lk. 13:16) but also promotes unbelief and falsehood (cf. Mt. 13:19, 39; Jn. 8:44). Deliverance from his dominion is the sign of the presence of the kingdom of God (Lk. 11:20). Moreover, liberty in the NT is not always from social oppression, but also from the bondage of the requirements of the Law (Gal. 1:6-9; 2:7-10; 3:2, 10; 5:1-12), from the dominion of darkness which symbolizes human wickedness (Col. 1:13; cf. Jn. 3:19-21), from the slavery of sin (Jn. 8:34, 36; cf. v. 32), and from lifelong bondage to the power of death (Heb. 2:14-15). Thus it becomes increasingly clear that Jesus' ministry of freeing the oppressed implies freedom from physical as well as spiritual bondage, though we cannot separate one from the other.³⁴ However, freedom from physical ailments is viewed only as the sign of the presence of the kingdom of God, which is concerned not with food and drink but with the spiritual qualities of righteousness, peace and joy (Rom. 14:17).

(iii) The Greek word used in Luke 4:18 for 'liberty' or 'release' is ἀφεσις. Although this word generally means 'liberty', 'release', 'Jubilee', in Lukan writings it is always followed by ἀμαρτιῶν (cf. Lk. 1:77; 3:3; 24:27; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18). T. Holtz rightly suggests that the use of Isaiah 58:6 here is perhaps to stress the idea of forgiveness in ἀφεσις.³⁵

(iv) The phrase 'recovering of sight to the blind' in Luke 4:18 can better be understood in the light of Acts 26:18, where Luke metaphorically describes the 'opening of eyes' as 'turning from darkness to light', that is, 'turning from the power of Satan to God', which is further explained as receiving forgiveness of sins and the rightful share of the Gentiles among the holy people of God.³⁶

(v) As Jesus identifies himself as the messenger proclaimed by Isaiah, one can hardly overlook the background in Isaiah 61:1-2. In fact this Isaianic passage is a promise and a word of comfort to 'all who mourn in Zion' (Is. 61:3), referring to the humiliation and the poor conditions of Israel in Babylonian exile rather than to a limited group of economically poor within the people.^{37,38} If Jesus' main agenda was to liberate prisoners from jail, would he not have sought the immediate release of John the Baptist from prison (cf. Mt 11:2-6)? As in Isaiah 61:3, where the metaphorical usage of 'garland', 'ashes', etc. is quite clear, the same usage is probable in Isaiah 61:2 too. Moreover, the religious interpretation of Isaiah 61:1-3 is already visible in 11Qmelch, which is dated by G. Vermes in the first century BC.^{39,40} The expression 'to proclaim liberty to the captives' in 11Qmelch, in association with the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:13), refers to the eschatological judgment rendered by

Melchizedek to the 'holy ones of God' (11QMelch 4, 5, 9). Line 6 says, 'He [i.e. Melchizedek] will proclaim liberty for them to free them from the debt of all their iniquities' (cf. also 11QMelch 19-20). Similarly, 1QH 18:14 applies Isaiah 61:1 to the work (probably of the Teacher of Righteousness) of bringing glad tidings to 'the contrite of spirit'.

Our evidence thus strongly suggests that even though most of the people in Jesus' time lived in economic poverty and low social status, for some, at least, poverty was caused by their faith commitment to Christ and to divine righteousness. The missionary agenda of Jesus tabulated in Luke 4:18-19 seems to be mainly concerned with the spiritual aspect of poverty, although the social/economic/political dimensions of poverty are not missing. Luke's references to literal poverty warrant this conclusion (Lk. 14:13, 21; 16:20, 22; 18:22; 19:8; 21:3). This is also confirmed by the connection that exists between Luke 4:18 and 7:22 with the literal application in 7:21⁴¹. For Luke, then, Jesus' ministry to the poor has two sides: on the one hand, his gospel, having liberating power, is meant for those who are socially/economically/politically in a humiliated position and for those who are physically sick and suffering; and on the other hand, the gospel is set to those who, irrespective of their socio-economic condition, humbly accept their wretchedness before God and decide to live in dependence on him. Jesus' saving work in relation to the physically weak and the suffering seems to be the symbol or sign of the reality of his salvation and forgiveness of sins, available to those who are oppressed by the devil. These two sides of the gospel to the poor, as proclaimed by Jesus, probably constitute the 'sign and reality', or, to borrow Paul's terms, the 'σκια (shadow)' and 'σµα (substance)' (cf. Col. 2:17) of Jesus' ministry.⁴²

Now the question is: what is the good news proclaimed to the poor and expressed in this passage? In the light of the Isaianic passage we can summarize the content of the gospel as follows: God meets in Christ the poor, the imprisoned, the blind and the oppressed. The good news that God takes an interest in them and comes to them in order to release them from their bondage is communicated to the underprivileged in and through Jesus Christ just as it was communicated to the Israelites in exile by Isaiah (Is. 61:3). For Jesus himself became poor (2 Cor. 8:9), belonging to the people of the land, as the son of a carpenter who owned neither land nor a house (cf. Mt. 8:20 par.).⁴³ He accepted tax-collectors, prostitutes and sinners and even ate with them, not only to identify with them but also to transform them. In Pauline terms, Christ brought freedom from the yoke of slavery and the curse of legal obligation by himself becoming a curse for us (Gal. 3:13-14). By omitting Isaiah's reference to 'the day of vengeance of our God' but retaining the expression 'the year of the Lord's favour', Luke highlights the love and favour of God revealed in Jesus to the poor. The whole work of Jesus, particularly exorcism, was a *sign of the reality* that the kingdom of God had already come to the poor

(Lk. 11:20 = Mt. 21:28; Lk. 17:21). The meaning of the act of freeing the slaves in the Jubilee year is fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus (cf. Lk. 4:21). The same idea is to be seen in the next passage of our inquiry, Luke 6:20 (= Mt. 5:3), to which we now turn.

The idea of 'poor' in Luke 6:20

The first beatitude in the Sermon on the Plain is recorded by Luke as: 'Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God' (Lk. 6:20). Here two major questions arise: (i) Who are the poor referred to here? and (ii) What is the good news offered to them? Soares-Prabhu rightly states that Luke's three beatitudes (Lk. 6:20-21) are not meant to be three independent proclamations, as though the poor, the hungry and the weeping were three different categories of people, but that the three beatitudes are in fact the expression of a single beatitude, *i.e.* 'the Jesus beatitude', which occurs in Luke 6:20.⁴⁴ However, he is wrong in concluding that the primary reference of Jesus' beatitude is surely not religious but social and that Matthew has spiritualized it altogether.⁴⁵ He arrives at this conclusion by giving little attention to the religious use of the term עניים in the post-exilic period, though he is aware of such use. Moreover, failure to consider the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings and the Qumran documents, which provide a better background to a first-century Christian document such as the NT, is another reason why he misses the point of Luke 6:20. The following observations also prove that Luke, in the first beatitude, had primarily the spiritual dimension of poverty in mind:

(i) The social interpretation of Luke 6:20 implies that all those who belong to the lowest strata of society can inherit the kingdom of God by virtue of their poverty, an idea foreign to the NT's teaching as a whole.

(ii) It is true that hunger is a kind of suffering faced by the materially poor and that the poor are contrasted in the following woes with the rich and the well-to-do in this world. But there is no *a priori* reason why the terms 'hunger' and 'rich' could not also have been used metaphorically (cf. 'those who hunger and thirst for righteousness' in Mt. 5:6; and in Rev. 3:18 the word 'rich' is used metaphorically to denote the eschatological blessings).

(iii) The use of the second-person plural in Luke 6:20, the distinction of the group addressed from other men in verse 22, and the phrase 'those who hear' which qualifies this group in verse 27, strongly suggest that the poor, the hungry and the weeping indicate a particular group. This group is none other than the band of disciples (cf. 'And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples' in v. 20). They are also persecuted on account of the Son of Man (v. 22). Thus Marshall rightly says that the thought is not simply of those who are literally poor and needy, but of

those who are disciples of Jesus and hence who occupy a pitiable position in the eyes of the world.⁴⁶ Mary Beavis argues that the fact that the woes to the rich are also framed in the second person (6:24) mitigates this view. But she admits that 'poor' here seems to include more than just economic 'outcasts'.⁴⁷ However, the adversative 'but' expressed by *πλὴν* shows that verses 24-26 form a different unit in which Jesus addresses a different group among the multitude of people (cf. v. 17). According to Nolland, the 'poor' in 6:20 are the literally poor, but the context of their poverty, if not its cause, is that they are disciples of Jesus who are likely to suffer because of their identification with Jesus.⁴⁸

(iv) The promised blessing, as the main part of the good news to the poor, is the inheritance of the kingdom of God. The NT idea of the kingdom of God denotes the eschatological blessing which, though it lies in the future, is already present here and now in the life and work of Jesus Christ. Poverty is mentioned in the Qumran writings in connection with the eschatological inheritance (cf. 1QH 18:12-15; 11QMelch 4, 5, 19-25, where eschatology is described in terms of God's reign and the salvation that comes to 'the afflicted ones of Zion'). 1QM 11:8-15; CD 1.5:8-9; 4Q_pPs37 1:9; 1QH 5:16-19, 20-22 say that the Qumranites, to whom the eschatological promises are applicable, have borne the affliction and poverty of the exile period. Nolland rightly suggests: 'This matrix of Qumran thought offers the best point of comparison for the Gospel beatitude.'⁴⁹ If so, then the Lukan 'poor' should be understood mainly in spiritual terms, *i.e.* in terms of one's association with Christ.

For Luke, then, the oppressed community is a community which is bent by the oppressive forces in this world because of its faith commitment to the Son of Man. The community's identification with Jesus often results in deprivation of human rights, justice and equality and sets it in a situation where its members are no better than those who are materially poor. Their discipleship makes them realize their need to live in dependence on God and to receive his grace for daily survival. In this sense all Christians come to God as beggars with nothing in their hands.⁵⁰ Luke, it seems, has the same idea of 'poor' as we have seen in the post-exilic writings and the Qumran texts. This does not, however, mean that God is indifferent to the sufferings of those who are economically poor. God's love and grace are extended to all places wherever suffering and social injustice are in operation. He works in all human lives whenever hunger, mourning and exploitation prevail.

The moot question here is: how do we understand these two dimensions of God's concern for the poor in the right perspective? This is the question with which many theologians of our day grapple, to the extent that they often end up over-emphasizing one aspect or the other. Our study thus far does

not show that God's act in Christ in the lives of the spiritually poor is superior to his act among the economically poor, or vice versa. Nor does it show that Jesus promises the prosperity of God's kingdom to the literally poor. But it does show that his concern for the materially poor and oppressed is the sign of the presence of his kingdom which will actually be inherited only by those who are spiritually poor, i.e. the disciples of Jesus. In other words, Jesus' acts of charity were visible signs of God's love which is fulfilled in the eschatological salvation, and life is given even now to those who follow him by renouncing the world and making themselves 'poor' (cf. Mt. 19:27-30 = Mk. 10:28-31 = Lk. 18:28-30). Thus, in Jesus' ministry, and also in the ministry of the early Church later on, the concern for the materially needy was a leading factor to express concern for the spiritual needs of the people. While the former addresses the issue at the visible level of human life, the latter addresses at a deeper level, penetrating into the spirit, the human organ that is capable of responding to divine influences. In this sense material and spiritual poverty are interconnected, although the latter is not necessarily the result of the former, as de Santa Ana supposes.⁵¹ Our study below confirms this further.

The idea of 'poor' in Matthew 5:3

The Matthean version of Jesus' beatitude confirms our understanding of the Lukan one. As in Luke, so in Matthew too the beatitude is delivered to the disciples (see Mt. 5:1-2). Matthew's presentation of the first beatitude indicates how it was understood in the first century AD:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' (Mt.5:3)

Here the question is not: 'who are the poor?', but: 'who are the poor *in spirit*?' Matthew does not seem to have spiritualized the beatitudes, as most scholars think, for the phrase 'the poor in spirit' has already been known in the Qumran community (1QM 14:7). The idea of the poor in spirit also occurs in some OT passages. For example:

'I dwell ... also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.' (Is 57:15)

'But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble (עָנִי) and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.' (Is. 66:2)

It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor (עֲנָוִים) than to divide the spoil with the proud. (Pr. 16:19)

In the light of such OT passages, poverty of spirit may be described as 'the personal acknowledgement of spiritual bankruptcy. It is the conscious confession of unworth before God. As such it is the deepest form of repentance. It is exemplified by the guilty publican in the corner of the temple:

“God, be merciful to me a sinner!”⁵² This is essentially the same as ‘those who hunger and thirst for righteousness’ (Mt. 5:6) and ‘those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake’ (Mt. 5:10, where the same blessing given to the poor is pronounced). If in Matthew, as in Luke, the idea of ‘poor’ is principally related to one’s discipleship and faith commitment to Christ, what then is the good news proclaimed to them?

The good news is that now the poor can live in the realm of blessing conferred by God upon them. The nature of the blessing is defined in the second part of each beatitude, and in this beatitude it is the gift of the kingdom of God. The word μακάριος means ‘blessed, fortunate, happy, usually in the sense *privileged recipient of divine favour*’.⁵³ It may refer to a state of divinely given salvation, so that a statement of blessing is in effect a statement predicating salvation.⁵⁴ Hence the reference is to the joy of the one who has a share in God’s salvation and rule. To ‘be blessed’ also means to ‘be approved, to find approval’,⁵⁵ and thus the beatitudes speak of the joy that springs out of God’s approval of the lowly and the oppressed. This divine favour is manifested in God’s act of giving his kingdom to the poor – an act which Jews believed would come at the end-time. This does not mean that the poor will become materially rich by God’s approval, but it does mean that the poor come under the loving care and support of the king who is sufficient to meet human needs. What was promised to be given in the future is experienced even here and now in the coming of Jesus.⁵⁶ Because of this, Jesus takes precedence over the materially poor, and the eschatological moment takes priority over all (cf. Mt. 26:11; Mk. 14:7; Jn. 12:8). Does this exclude the church’s responsibility to the economically poor? By no means. The bestowal of God’s kingdom on the poor demands that they adopt kingdom values! The kernel of that value is: love God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself (Dt. 6:4-5; Lev. 19:18; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8). Kingdom values are to be expressed in acts of love such as: (i) preaching the good news that God loves humans and has made a supreme sacrifice for their salvation, thus calling them to be reconciled with God, the Provider; and (ii) sharing our wealth with those in need; caring for all who suffer injustice of any kind; supporting and co-operating with those who want to build a better world for humans.⁵⁷

The idea of caring for the poor is envisaged in Matthew’s presentation of the apocalyptic vision of the Son of Man in Matthew 25:31-46. C.C. Rowland sees in this scene the Son of Man identifying himself with the poor, the naked, the hungry, the sick, the strangers and the prisoners. Rowland argues that we have a polemic to the effect that blessedness is not attained by searching the heavens but by meeting the needs of the poor, the helpers and the powerless.⁵⁸

So the two dimensions of acts of love indicated above show the holistic nature of blessedness.⁵⁹

'Good news to the poor' in John's Gospel

It is commonly assumed that the Gospel of John has little to say on the concept of 'poor'. The word 'poor' (πτωχος) itself occurs only four times in John (Jn. 12:5, 6, 8; 13:29), but the idea that Jesus approaches the poor in love and compassion in order to fulfil their needs can be traced through John.⁶⁰ The Johannine Jesus went in search of the outcasts of society, the blind, the lame and the paralysed at the pool of Bethesda, and he healed a retarded and helpless man (Jn. 5:2-9). Jeremias thinks that the conversation between Jesus and this man was occasioned by a request for alms,⁶¹ in which case the man was economically poor.

God's help and favour given in Jesus to the needy is described in John by means of signs (σημεῖα). W. Nicol argues that 'sign' in John, being more than a mere miracle by which the physical needs of the poor were met, has a deeper meaning, even while the original intention of performing a miracle is retained.⁶² Just like the OT term אִיָּהּ, σημεῖον also refers to 'a symbolical anticipation or showing forth of a greater reality'.⁶³ This means, as we have shown above, that Jesus' help rendered to the materially poor and socially oppressed is rightly a symbol of his gift of eternal kingdom given to the spiritually poor. In the wedding at Cana, for example, Jesus was present to help the poor family which could not afford enough wine and hence was facing humiliation and embarrassment (2:1-11). However, Jesus' help was not confined to material needs alone; by so helping he revealed the very nature (or 'glory') of God to humans, although it was appreciated only by those who believed (2:11). The focus of the miracle is on Jesus himself as the revealer of God and as the one who transforms the Jewish religious systems and worship.

Jesus' ministry among the Samaritans, who had been neglected and treated with contempt by the Jews and 'Cutheans'⁶⁴ and hence can easily be classified as poor and downtrodden, typifies God in his approach to the socially and economically poor (Jn. 4).⁶⁵ What was the good news that was offered to them? It was the Word which had become a person to live among them (4:40)! It was Jesus who revealed himself as the Saviour of the world (4:42) and who thus brought them 'liberation from the oppression of contempt' and 'from the prisons of narrow religious traditions' (Rayan).

Jesus' concern for the hungry is well portrayed in the Johannine sign of the feeding of the multitude (6:1-15). Here too the ultimate focus is Jesus, the self-expression of God, and not the experience of having eaten full (6:26-27; cf. 4:13-14); for at the end of the sign Peter could acknowledge Jesus as Christ, the holy one of God (6:69). Similarly, Jesus' identity is

emphasized in other signs, by performing which Jesus demonstrated God's approach and access to the poor and the needy (see 5:14-15; 9:38; 11:25-27; 20:30-31). It is noteworthy that in grasping Jesus' identity, the hungry and the sick in John found their real human identity, and therefore it is no wonder that John records that the *world* has gone after him (12:19).⁶⁶ In brief, in John's Gospel Jesus fulfils the needs of the poor not just to give them temporary relief, but primarily to lead them to see God's glory and to be transformed by it.

The fulfilment of physical needs in John is also a pointer to the death and resurrection of Jesus, which, for John, is glorification rather than humiliation or defeat. For instance, in supplying the wine to the wineless, Jesus' 'hour', the allotted time by God for his death and resurrection, is anticipated (2:4); in feeding the multitude, Jesus anticipates his own flesh and blood which will be given for the life of the world (6:51-58). In raising Lazarus, 'Jesus' commitment to the poor finds its final and poignant expression',⁶⁷ for it is this sign which finally leads him to stand officially condemned to death (11:45-54, 57). Death on the cross is not only the moment of victory over the oppressor who dominates the world (12:31), but also the final and decisive moment of revealing God's glory to the oppressed (cf. 3:14-15; 12:23-24, 32-33; 13:31-32). Therefore, Rayan is right in concluding that in Jesus' cross the poor of the earth find inspiration, courage and hope.⁶⁸ In the final analysis, this is the good news to the poor envisaged by John!

Conclusion

We have observed that in NT times the word 'poor' meant not merely the economically poor and the socially downtrodden, but also godly people who were low and humble and who lived by their faith in God. Jesus brought good news to them all. Although by his message and mighty acts he literally fed the hungry, healed the sick, and liberated people from the grip of demons and of political and religious oppressors, what he did was only a symbol/sign pointing to the reality of the presence of the eschatological rule of God even now. The NT writers, Matthew and Luke in particular, did not hesitate to recognize Jesus' disciples, who were persecuted for his sake, as 'poor'. For them the disciples had already received with a penitent heart the good news that the kingdom of God had come upon them, *i.e.* in Jesus God had shown his love to them and helped them in their needs. Thus in Jesus' proclamation the good news to the poor has two sides: God's compassionate presence among the poor to meet their physical needs, and the gift of the eschatological blessings of God given in Jesus to those who make a faith-commitment to him. It is difficult, then, to understand fully the term 'poor' in Jesus' teaching without linking it with discipleship and eschatology, because the effect of the good news lies in the latter and not in the socio-economic condition of the poor. But at the same time the Synoptists,

particularly Matthew, show that the apocalyptic Son of Man identified himself with the naked, the poor, the hungry, the sick and those in prison.

The Gospels hint at the fact that one's encounter with Jesus on the spiritual plane has priority, if not superiority, over one's act of charity to the poor, although the latter often leads to the former. This is brought out more explicitly in the Gospel of John, in which Jesus' concern for the poor and the needy is expressed in the performance of signs. Any attempt by Jesus to help the needy eventually leads the beneficiaries to a greater understanding of himself as the one in whom God meets humans. Thus the holistic understanding of blessedness to those who receive the good news attains more clarity in John. However, for John it is in Jesus' death on the cross that the poor in the world can supremely find courage, hope, and transformation from their low condition.

The same is true with Paul also, at whom we have just hinted. By 'poor', he means the believers in Jerusalem who were in economic need; this need was met by his collection from the Gentile churches. But at the same time he recognizes that all, whether Jews or Gentiles, are slaves to sin and to some form of legal requirement and are thus marginalized and weak in society. The good news for them is that Jesus became a curse for them and delivered them from the curse of the law.

The situation today is not essentially different from that which was prevalent in the first century AD. The Church's involvement in social action should eventually lead her to present Christ, in whom God is meeting humans with love and reconciling them with himself.

¹ See T. Houston, 'Good news for the poor', *Transformation* 7 (1, 1990): 6; *The World Book Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 15 (London/Chicago/Sydney/Toronto: World Book, Inc., 1992), pp. 728-9.

² See B.J. Nicholls, 'Introduction: priorities in our common task', in B.J. Nicholls and B.R. Wood (eds.), *Sharing the Good News with the Poor* (Bangalore: Baker Book Trust, 1996), p. 2.

³ See *The World Book Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 15, p. 729.

⁴ See P. Johnstone, *Operation World* (Carlisle: OM Publishing, 1993⁵), p. 274.

⁵ See the Editorial in *Evangelical Review of Theology* 18 (1994): 99.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Similar questions, along with the question 'Where are the poor?', have been raised in almost all recent studies on the 'good news to the poor'. See particularly V. Samuel and C. Sugden (eds.), *Evangelism and the Poor: A Third World Study Guide* (Bangalore: Partnership in Mission-Asia, rev. edn, 3rd impr., 1987); Houston, *op. cit.*: 3-8; Mary A. Beavis, "Expecting nothing in return": Luke's picture of the marginalized', *Interpretation* 48 (1994): 357-68, who attempts to clarify the meaning of the socially marginalized portrayed in Luke-Acts without explicitly raising any questions; D.P. Brandt, 'The poor and the lost: a holistic view of poverty'.

- 8 Missiology 23 (1995): 259-66; Peter Liu, 'Jesus' proclamation and its fulfilments', in Nicholls and Wood, op. cit., pp. 44-51, who grapples with the issue: what is Jesus' good news to the poor? Cf. P.H. Davids, who observes that Jesus fits into the social situation of first-century Judaism, and H. Kvalbein, who argues that the Jewish idea of 'anāwim - piety - was taken up by NT scholars and used to explain the background of Jesus and the first Christians: P.H. Davids, 'Rich and poor', in J.B. Green, S. McKnight and I.H. Marshall (eds.), Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), p. 704; H. Kvalbein, 'Jesus and the poor: two texts and a tentative conclusion', Themelios 12.3 (1987): 81.
- 9 In Hellenistic writings two words, penēs and ptōchos, have been used. Whereas the former denotes one who has to earn his living due to lack of property, the latter denotes the complete destitution which forces the poor to beg (see F. Hauck, 'πτωχός', TDNT VI, p. 886). Although originally poverty did not have any religious value, in later Greek philosophy it was regarded as a favourable precondition for virtue (see H.-H. Esser, 'πτωχός', NIDNTT 2, p. 821).
- 10 E. Bammel, 'πτωχός', TDNT VI, p. 888.
- 11 See also the excerpt from Christian Witness to the Urban Poor, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization Consultation on World Evangelization, Thailand, 1980, as in Samuel and Sugden (eds.), op. cit., p. 46.
- 12 Bammel, op. cit., pp. 888-9.
- 13 D.A. Carson, The Sermon on the Mount: An Evangelical Exposition of Matthew 5-7 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), p. 17.
- 14 See Esser, op. cit., pp. 822-3.
- 15 Bammel, op. cit., p. 896.
- 16 L. Coenen, 'πένης', NIDNTT 2, p. 281.
- 17 See G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987³), pp. 19-29.
- 18 B. Malina, 'Wealth and poverty in the New Testament and its world', Interpretation 41 (1987): 354-67.
- 19 Ibid., pp. 357-8.
- 20 For example, in Mediterranean village society even the wealthy, 'sonless' women who lost their husbands are referred to as 'poor widows'. They are surely not poor in any economic sense, but in terms of their kinship to the society; see ibid., p. 359.
- 21 Ibid., pp. 354, 359, 366-7.
- 22 Davids, op. cit., pp. 701-4, esp. 701-2.
- 23 Ibid., p. 702.
- 24 Ibid. Cf. J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 109-19.
- 25 Jeremias, op. cit., pp. 111-16.
- 26 Davids, op. cit., p. 703.
- 27 Ibid., p. 703.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid., p. 704. A similar account in terms of the 'audience of Jesus' is given by Liu, op. cit., pp. 47-8.
- 30 G. M. Soares-Prabhu, 'Good news to the poor: the social implications of the message of Jesus', Bible Bhashyam 4 (1978): 204.
- 31 Ibid.: 205. A similar social thrust to Lk. 4:18f. is given also by G. Mangatt, 'Jesus and the poor', Bible Bhashyam 12 (1986): 157-65, esp. 159-61.
- 32 I.H. Marshall, Commentary on Luke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 182, comments that possibly Luke wished to reserve the verb ἰαμαί to describe physical healing.

- ³³ Dale Schumm finds in Lk. 4:1-19 these four aspects of Jesus' ministry: economic – as implied by 'good news to the poor'; political – as implied by 'release to the captives'; physical – as implied by 'recovering of sight to the blind'; and social – as implied by 'to set at liberty those who are oppressed', before he concludes: 'Jesus ministered to the whole person.' D. Schumm, 'Reconciliation: the mission of the Church', a paper presented in the Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, on 14 March 1996 as the Dr Frank Kline Memorial Lecture, p. 2. Though this is an interesting observation, it misses the spiritual dimension inherent in Jesus' ministry as programmed in Lk. 4:18-19.
- ³⁴ Cited by Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
- ³⁵ J. Nolland, Luke 1 – 9:20 (WBC, 35A; Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1989), p. 197, argues that by the phrase 'to open their eyes', Luke means in Acts 26:18 spiritual sight; cf. also Lk. 6:39; 14: 13, 21, where the parabolic meaning of 'blind' is possible.
- ³⁶ See Kvalbein, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
- ³⁷ Vermes, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
- ³⁸ Nolland, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
- ³⁹ See also Liu, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–51, for such a holistic understanding of Lk. 4:18-19. Liu (p. 45), who observes three kinds of interpretation of the phrase 'release to the captives', concludes that they all share the common hope that the release of the captives would be the very sign of the dawning of the age of salvation.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. also Brandt, *op. cit.*, pp. 259–66.
- ⁴¹ For Jesus' complete identification with the poor, see the careful study in M. Vellanickal, 'Jesus, the poor and his gospel to the poor', Bible Bhashyam 9 (1983): 52–64; cf. D. Harris, 'Incarnation as relocation among the poor', *Evang. Rev. Theol* 18 (1994): 117–27. The revised form of this article, entitled 'Incarnation as a journey to relocation', appears in Nicholls and Wood (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 175–88.
- ⁴² Soares-Prabhu, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 207, 209; Beavis, *op.cit.*, p. 360. Similarly Mangatt, *op. cit.*, pp. 160–1, maintains that all those who are economically poor, who have been depressed socially and who suffer diseases are the 'poor' in Jesus' beatitude. Against the view that Matthew has spiritualized the beatitude, we have observed above that the term 'poor in spirit' had already been used in the Qumran community and that the idea is found also in the OT.
- ⁴⁴ Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
- ⁴⁵ Beavis, *op. cit.*, p. 360.
- ⁴⁶ Nolland, *op. cit.*, p. 282. Cf. Rom. 15:25f., where Paul uses the term 'poor' to refer to the saints in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1ff.; 2 Cor. 8:1ff.; 9:1ff.; Gal. 2:10).
- ⁴⁷ Nolland, *op. cit.*, pp. 282–3.
- ⁴⁸ Cf. J. Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (Bombay: Gospel Literature Service, repr., 1988), p. 221.
- ⁴⁹ J. de Santa Ana, *Good News to the Poor: The Challenge of the Poor in the History of the Church* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1978), p. 18.
- ⁵⁰ Carson, *op. cit.*, p. 17; cf. Stott, *Issues*, p. 221.
- ⁵¹ See Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s. v.
- ⁵² See Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
- ⁵³ Carson, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
- ⁵⁴ Cf. Liu, *op. cit.*, pp. 49–50.
- ⁵⁵ Cf. Kvalbein, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

- ⁵⁵ C.C. Rowland, 'Apocalyptic, the poor, and the Gospel of Matthew', *JTS* n.s., 45 (1994): 504-18.
- ⁵⁶ See J.S. Pobee, *Who are the Poor?: The Beatitudes as a Call to Community* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2nd print., 1988), pp. 66-9, who argues that the 'holistic understanding of blessedness' is like two concentric circles comprised of the sacred and the secular, the former implying an order which is beyond human control but which challenges to perfection, the latter implying an order within the reach of human beings. Cf. also Brandt, *op.cit.*, pp. 259-66.
- ⁵⁷ See in this connection Samuel Rayan's admirable work, 'Jesus and the poor in the Fourth Gospel', *Bible Bhashyam* 4 (1978): 213-28.
- ⁵⁸ *Jeremias*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
- ⁵⁹ W. Nicol, *The Sêmeia in the Fourth Gospel* (*NovTSup* 32; Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 113-16; the expressions bracketed are mine.
- ⁶⁰ C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978²), p. 76; cf. R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John: John I-XII* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 529f.
- ⁶¹ See *Jeremias*, *op. cit.*, pp. 352-8.
- ⁶² Cf. Rayan, *op. cit.*, p. 220, who refers to the backward condition of the Samaritans under the dominion of Rome, the Temple and the landlords.
- ⁶³ Probably Jesus is portrayed in Jn. 12:19 as the leader of the powerless of the land - see Samuel and Sugden (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 5-6.
- ⁶⁴ Rayan, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Graham Tomlin

Dr Graham Tomlin is Tutor in Historical Theology and Director of Evangelism at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

A major issue facing Christian theology on the eve of the new millennium is the question of power. On the wider cultural level, the postmodern critique of thinkers such as Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida and especially Michel Foucault contains the charge that all claims to truth, including the claims of theology, are merely secret bids for power. Christianity, it is claimed, dominated Western society for centuries not because it was more true, but because it was more powerful than its rivals. At the local level, too, similar issues face local churches today. Where does power lie? How are clergy and church leaders to use their power? What of the abuse of religious power evident in many religious movements, from the 'Nine O'Clock Service' in Sheffield to American televangelists, even down to clerical domination in local churches today? These accusations have been strengthened by the sense that the church has often used theology to legitimate its claims to domination. Is theology merely an exercise in buttressing the power-claims of those in authority in the name of an all-powerful God? How can Christians claim to hold the truth when truth itself is seen as an oppressive assertion of power? These questions are crucial for the future of theology; as Anthony Thiselton puts it: 'These perspectives constitute the most serious and urgent challenge to theology, in comparison with which the old-style attacks from "common-sense" positivism appear relatively naïve.'¹ The result of all this is that Christian theology today needs to search its own heart and past to discover whether it holds the resources to meet such challenges.

One theme in Western theology which can claim to do this is the theology of the cross. Sometimes forgotten, sometimes remembered, this "thin tradition" which has functioned like an antiphon beneath the high triumph song of Christendom² has impressive credentials as a kind of theology possessing an in-built resistance to the abuse of power. It has shown itself on several significant occasions to be capable of mounting a serious critique of theologies which are used to legitimize claims to power, and to offer instead an alternative vision of both God's use of power and that of those who claim to be his people. This article outlines three specific examples of theologians who have turned to theology which begins at the cross in order to address power-struggles within the church of their time.

Paul in Corinth

1 Corinthians, probably more than any other NT writing, has been the beneficiary of sociological analysis over the past two decades. This research, carried out principally by Gerd Theissen yet with other notable contributions,³ has been

complemented by interest in the role which rhetoric plays in the letter, both the interest shown by the Corinthians in *sofia logou*, and in Paul's own use of rhetoric.⁴ In all, these new perspectives have helped us to see the letter in a new light, and to appreciate that it is impossible to understand the dynamics of the early development of the church in Corinth purely in doctrinal terms, as older scholarship tended to do. There is clearly a socio-economic dimension to the tensions in Corinth, from the way in which the Eucharist was conducted (cf. 11:22), to the tendency to seek justice in secular litigation (only the rich could afford to go to court),⁵ and even over food offered to idols.⁶ This is to say nothing of the social mix which made up the church itself (1:26), with the inevitable tensions that brought in a very status-conscious society.

Having said all this, social factors do not explain everything in the Corinthian church. There are still some real ideological issues which divide the church from Paul and, presumably, the Corinthians themselves. Most of the literature on 1 Corinthians concludes that it was not so much a case of four separate parties slogging it out, following Paul, Apollos, Cephas or Christ (as 1:12 might suggest), as a matter of two sides being involved.⁷ On one account, an axis lies between Paul and Cephas, perhaps reflecting a Gentile-Jewish divide in the church.⁸ Others have tended to see Paul and Apollos as the major foci of loyalty in the congregation. Recently, perhaps, the pendulum has swung more towards the Apollos theory,⁹ and the idea that the disputes in Corinth caused division, less between Jewish and Gentile Christians than among different groups of Gentile believers in the church. This is normally attributed to several different factors, such as: (i) interest in rhetoric and Apollos's skill at it, and the Acts 18 evidence that he had visited Corinth, contrasting with uncertainty as to whether Peter ever did; (ii) the virtual disappearance of Peter from the Paul-Apollos argument in chapters 3 and 4, and the absence from the letter of the normal contentious issues in Jewish-Gentile Christian relations, such as law, promise, circumcision and the like; and in general (iii) factors involving the Hellenistic context of Pauline churches, in which there has been a recent growth of interest.¹⁰

Gerd Theissen has shown how most of the people named in the letter were probably of high social status, and most probably supporters of Paul. There is also evidence to suggest that 'some' within the church were disdainful towards Paul, perhaps because of his lack of rhetorical ability (as opposed to Apollos) and his artisan status (ch. 9), who at the same time disparaged the poorer members of the church.¹¹ It is arguable that this same group claimed that 'there is no resurrection from the dead', that 'there are no idols in the world' (8:4), argued for the right to eat in pagan temples, possibly joining in the cultic meals in honour of idols (8:1-13; 10:7-33), and displayed a strange mixture of sexual licence (5:1) and asceticism (7:1). It is possible to suggest ideological settings in first-century Corinth

which would explain the origin of some of these ideas and practices. For example, local Epicureans, who held that knowledge of the essential principles of matter gave them power and superiority over others who lacked it, would have held a number of beliefs and practices which bear striking resemblance to some Corinthian positions. They believed, for example, that at death people simply cease to be, and that resurrection of any kind is nonsensical. They had a reputation for keeping themselves separate from the rest of society, in a way similar to those who ate apart at the Eucharist, and perhaps they felt that they had no need of those less gifted than themselves (12:21). They held ambivalent attitudes to sex, encompassing both kinds of the sexual attitudes mentioned above. Although not actually atheist, they held the gods to be of no account, distant and uninterested, and thus held that one could engage in pagan worship without its necessarily meaning anything, much like some Corinthian Christians seem to have done (8:10). And, of course, like all good first-century upwardly-mobile Greco-Romans, they were interested in wisdom and rhetoric.¹²

In any case, it is a fair guess that the church in Corinth was experiencing a power-struggle between two groups of wealthy Christians. One, perhaps converted by Apollos's rhetorical style and charismatic ability, may have been still influenced by close association with ideas and practices most evident in the Epicurean group in the city, and uncritically brought these ideas into their new Christian faith to justify their behaviour. In reaction, a number of those who had been in the church longer, originally converted by Paul, began to disapprove. (Had they already written to him to complain about those who associated too closely with immoral men - 5:9?) On this scenario, this argument had quickly degenerated into an argument about names and loyalties, one side disparaging the ministry and abilities of the other's 'leader'. The poor in the congregation, for example Chloë's slaves (1:11), saw just an argument over names. The rich took sides, some even staying aloof from the quarrel by claiming to follow the distant Peter. Paul, it seems, has to address two quite separate problems, namely *boasting* by those who followed Apollos and valued rhetoric, knowledge, wealth, status and charismatic gifting, so disparaging both the poor and Paul himself, and *quarrelling* between these and Christians who thought they were remaining loyal to Paul. Both of these attitudes, of course, touch on the use of power within the church.

Paul's response centres upon the cross of Christ, as the place where God has revealed his 'wisdom', or his 'characteristic way of working'. As he begins a carefully argued reply in 1:18, he shows that their unity, so easily fractured, is found in the fact that Christ has died for them. Paul was not crucified for them, Christ was. They were baptized not into Paul's or Apollos's death, but into Christ's.¹³ Their dispute over who baptized whom would 'empty the cross of its power' because it denied the

reality of the unity which the cross achieved. The cross stands as the bedrock of the teaching which gave the church its original identity and unity (15:3).

Furthermore, the cross answers not just Corinthian quarrelling, but Corinthian arrogance as well. God's wisdom is exemplified in his scandalous choice of a crucified Messiah as the means of salvation, a relatively low-status group of people for the majority of his church in Corinth, and a weak, rhetorically unskilled and spiritually exhausted apostle (1:26-2:5). The cross gives value to the weaker, poorer brother, as one for whom Christ died (8:11). Whereas these Corinthian Christians disdained the poor and Paul, *God had chosen them for his purposes*. The cross thus deconstructs both competitiveness and arrogance.

Beyond this, the cross acts as a model for the use of power, or more specifically, the cross as exemplified in the life of Paul the apostle. Paul appeals to the Corinthians to imitate him (4:16) in his role as servant/slave (3:5; 4:1). As chapter 4 proceeds, the imagery of crucifixion creeps into the text, as Paul portrays the apostolic life as one of shame, suffering and degradation. Paul's boast is that he 'made himself a slave to all, that I might win the more' (9:19); that by choosing the life of a common artisan he became socially 'weak, in order to win the weak' (9:22). Paul's own life has taken on a cruciform shape, sacrificing his own social power and status for the sake of others. The true content of Christian wisdom is not 'knowledge' but 'love': in other words, self-giving towards one's fellow-believers, and especially the poor. It is this pattern of life he recommends to these Christians, namely the way of servanthood, the way of the cross. A theology which begins at the cross is, for Paul, the radical antidote to any religion which is only a thinly veiled copy of a power-seeking culture.

Martin Luther

After Paul developed his *theologia crucis* in Corinth, the theme lay pretty well dormant for many years, at least in mainstream Western theology. Throughout the patristic and medieval periods, most theologians were wary of viewing the cross as directly revelatory of God and his ways. This was due partly to their reluctance to question the impassibility of God (too close an association between the cross and the being of God would seem to compromise this), and partly to the 'two natures' Christology which neatly enabled them to ascribe the suffering of Christ to the human rather than the divine nature. For example, although Tertullian was the first to coin the phrase 'the crucified God', this seems little more than a rhetorical flourish for him: he is not really interested in developing a theology from this point. Despite his great theology of atonement, Anselm fights shy of reading any implications for the doctrine of God from the cross. For Thomas Aquinas, the cross is a contingent, not a necessary, means of salvation.

God could have chosen to save the world in another way, had he wished. So it is hard to see how the cross could have any great theological significance for him either.

When Martin Luther begins to outline his *theologia crucis* in the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518, he does so without the help of a long tradition of use within academic patristic or medieval theology. Where then does he get the idea from? In part, he appears to get it from 1 Corinthians itself. Towards the end of his first set of Lectures on the Psalms (the *Dictata super Psalterium* of 1513–15), and then during the period leading up to Heidelberg, 1 Corinthians 1–2 is quoted with remarkable frequency. As with Luther's other Reformation insights, however, it would not be true to say that he simply rediscovered this theology by sitting alone in his Wittenberg monastery with St Paul. Luther gained his interest in the cross as the heart of Christian life and thought not so much from mainstream academic theology, which had largely forgotten this type of theology, but from popular traditions of practical spirituality and piety.

Contemplation of the sufferings of Christ was the heart of late-medieval piety. Many popular works had appeared which helped the meditator to focus upon the sufferings of Christ, some reminding people of the efficacy of the sacraments, some aiming at a more affective individual response to Christ's sufferings.¹⁴ At several points in his early writings, Luther shows himself to be distinctly aware of this practice of Passion Meditation.¹⁵ Luther particularly commends the second of the above kinds, whereby the sufferings of the cross are expected to have an emotional impact upon the meditator. However, he takes it further by insisting that meditation on the cross is not meant merely to evoke sentimental sorrow for Christ, but sorrow for one's own sins which put him there, and a sense of thankfulness for God's love and forgiveness.

Besides this tradition of popular passion piety, Luther seems to have learnt his *theologia crucis* from at least one other source as well. Bernard of Clairvaux has long been recognized as an important influence on the young Luther,¹⁶ yet his role in suggesting the themes of the theology of the cross to him has not. Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs, standard fare in the monastic circles in which Luther spent his early years, contain several themes which found their way into Luther's developing *theologia crucis*, for example the importance of suffering for the Christian, the dialectic between God's proper and alien work, the insight that God reveals himself in Christ's lowliness and humility rather than his glory and power, and the idea suggested by Exodus 33 of God revealing his 'back', taken up by Luther in the Heidelberg Disputation.

What Luther gained from late-medieval monastic and popular Christian life was therefore not so much theology as spirituality. In fact, much of the young Luther's problem is his experience of dissonance between this late-medieval spiritual

tradition and the semi-Pelagian theology of the *via moderna* which underpinned it.¹⁷ On the one hand, this spirituality taught him constantly to examine his sins, to despair of himself so that he would acquire humility, and to value suffering as God's way of making him penitent. On the other hand, his theology taught him to value works of contrition, penance, indulgences, masses, to nurture the growth of his humility as a virtue, and to try to love God above all else in the strength of his own unaided natural powers. Within the young Luther, therefore, a spirituality of self-accusation lived uncomfortably alongside a theology of self-justification. What his spirituality led him to accentuate (his own nothingness and worthlessness before God), his theology told him to deny. It was not just his experience, but the spirituality which he had learnt, which was at odds with the prevailing theological resources available to interpret it. Due to this mismatch, theological concepts such as *iustitia dei* and *poenitentia*, which were intended as consolatory, became terrifying. Luther found in them not peace of heart, but uncertainty and despair over his ultimate salvation, because they set before him a standard of holiness which his spirituality taught him he could never achieve. Luther found himself caught between a spirituality and a soteriology which he increasingly felt to be mutually incompatible.

One of these had to go, and it was the soteriology of the *via moderna* that finally gave way.¹⁸ Popular and monastic spirituality did not remain unchanged, however. Luther's response to this crisis was a theological reworking of late-medieval spirituality. Some elements of this spirituality were rejected, yet other elements of passion meditation and Bernardian theology helped him to move beyond it. He radicalized these spiritual traditions, and in the process took them far beyond both the *via moderna* and even the *via antiqua* of the Thomists, who had held the line against trends in late-medieval soteriology which implied some kind of co-operation between people and God in the drama of salvation. This response was in fact the development of the *theology* of the cross. The *theologia crucis* can therefore be seen as a revolt or protest of popular and monastic piety against the dominant privatized speculative theology of late-medieval scholasticism.

It seems that sometime towards the end of 1515,¹⁹ Luther arrived at a realization that the cross was not just the way God chose to save the world, or the path to be trod if salvation was to be achieved, but that it reveals God's characteristic way of working in the world. God condemns before he saves. If God is to be able to save him, the sinner must be made passive, brought to a sense of his own powerlessness before his creator. He can only come with empty hands. God reveals this pattern in the cross, where Christ too is made passive before God, before he can be raised. On the cross, Christ seems to be suffering defeat, yet, to the eye of faith, God is working out the salvation of the world. In this theology, therefore, revelation is back to front, hidden, and contrary to what is expected. Things

are not what they seem and the sign and the thing signified are out of joint. What seem to be valuable (human piety, wisdom, philosophy) are in fact worthless, and what seem weak and negligible (the experience of suffering, temptation, awareness of sin and failure) are in fact God's precious work to humble and then save the sinner.

How, then, did this new understanding of the cross help to resolve Luther's dilemma? All the contrition, self-accusation and awareness of sin which late-medieval spirituality evoked in a monk like Luther seemed to him a barrier to his acceptance by God. His spirituality taught him to magnify his own unworthiness, his distance from God. If he had nothing he could offer to God, how could it help him to be told: '*to him who does what in him lies, God most certainly communicates grace*' (*facienti quod in se est infallibilite Deus infundit gratiam*). This new understanding of the cross as the revelation of God's ways with sinners gave a new meaning to his experience of despair about himself. Far from a disqualification from grace, it became the only qualification for it. As Anders Nygren put it, for Luther we have 'fellowship with God on the basis of sin'.²⁰ God saves only sinners, teaches only the stupid, enriches only the poor, raises only the dead.²¹ Therefore, to be saved, one must become sinful, foolish, poor, helpless, exactly what his spirituality had led Luther to acknowledge himself to be.

Another way of expressing this dissonance in Luther's experience is that revelation was divided from salvation. The way God had revealed himself in Christ bore no particular relation to the way he saved people in the present. Christ's life, death, suffering were past actions which could arouse emotional sympathy or validate the sacraments, but which were quite definitely *past*. Because Christ had suffered, there was no great need for the sinner to suffer now. God, it seemed, had acted one way in Christ and another in Luther. For Christ, God was saviour; for Luther, he was judge.

At the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518, Luther's theology centred upon two assertions: that God first condemns in order to save, and that he reveals himself at the cross. At the core of Luther's theology lies the connection he makes between these two insights. The way God saves people in the present, and the form in which he has revealed himself historically, are joined at the cross. The vital clue for understanding the way God works is always the cross: God works and reveals himself in suffering and weakness, not strength and glory, whether in Christ or the Christian, in the first century or the sixteenth. God's activity in the present is always continuous with his revelation in history. Luther's *theologia crucis* is therefore an assertion of the unity and continuity of God's action in history and in the present, in revelation and in salvation. He is not one God in Christ and another God for us. This is why Luther insists that to know God is to know him in Christ alone, or in the words of the Heidelberg Disputation, 'true theology and the knowledge of God are in the

crucified Christ'.²² The theology of the cross roots God's present action in his revelation in history, and refuses to sever the two. It therefore asserts in the strongest possible way the faithfulness of God to his promise and his revelation.

This theology, bred by his meditation upon the themes of 1 Corinthians 1-2 in the spirit of late-medieval spirituality, thus became for Luther the vantage point from which he conducted a polemic both against scholastic theological power which had become the monopoly of experts and remote from the realities of everyday Christian life, and against the power, prestige and wealth of the papal church. In this church, the wise and the powerful fed off one another, and the Indulgence controversy of 1517 was a prime example of false theology being used to legitimate an oppressive practice which only served to increase papal wealth. If God's action in the present is continuous with his action in Christ, then the papacy and the church needed to model themselves on the weakness and poverty of the cross, rather than on images of imperial power. They needed to seek sufferings and the cross, not the false peace of Indulgences.²³ The papacy's failure to do that simply betrayed not just its moral deficiency, but also its theological misunderstanding. As in Corinth, so in Wittenberg, theology which began at the cross had served to critique the abuse of power.

Blaise Pascal

In seventeenth-century France, the crucial question was no longer Luther's 'Where can I find a gracious God?' but rather Montaigne's 'What do I know?' It was also a place where theological controversy was closely intertwined with political power. Blaise Pascal's theological career saw him engaged in polemic on three fronts at once, against the confident dogmatism of Cartesian Rationalism, the sceptical tradition of Montaigne and Pyrrhonism, and on behalf of the Jansenists against their sworn enemies, the Society of Jesus. The place of the cross in Pascal's theology has seldom been noticed; in fact, Pascal's significance as a theologian is not often recognized as much as it should be, perhaps in deference to his reputation as apologist, satirist and scientist.²⁴ Yet, for Pascal, the cross was the decisive hallmark of Christian life and theology, a stone against which these contemporary trends, whether rationalist, sceptical or Jesuit, all stumbled.

Uniquely among 'orthodox' apologists of his day, Pascal had a great interest in the identity of God. Many seventeenth-century apologists such as Antoine Sirmond, Pierre Charron, Jean de Silhon and Yves de Paris had tried to prove God or the immortality of the soul.²⁵ The attempt had failed, thought Pascal, not so much because it chose the wrong methods, as because it aimed to prove the wrong God, a God susceptible to proof.

Especially after 23 November 1654, his 'night of fire',

commemorated in the famous *Mémorial*, sewn into his coat and found only after his death, Pascal identified God as the God of the Augustinian tradition represented in his own day by the movement associated with the Abbé de Saint-Cyran, the convent at Port-Royal outside Paris, and by Jansenism.²⁶ In one particularly important fragment of the *Pensées*, L449,²⁷ he argues that much of the contemporary argument against Christianity does no harm at all to the Christian God, but merely undermines the God of deism. Pascal is quite clear what Christianity is NOT. It is by no means 'the adoration of a God considered great and powerful and eternal; that is really Deism, almost as far distant from true Christianity as atheism'. Instead Pascal depicts the true God of the Christian, the God of the Bible. Using the motif of the God of the Patriarchs, as in the *Mémorial*, this God, far from being merely the 'author of geometrical truths and of the order of the elements', is one who fills the soul and heart, directly invading the interior emotional life of believers to bring about a sense both of their own *misère* and his mercy, who desires intimacy with them at the deepest level of the soul, a jealous God who instils in those whom he possesses an insatiable and exclusive desire for himself. In place of the impersonal creative force of deism, or even of Cartesianism,²⁸ Pascal evokes an intensely personal, passionate God. Pascal's God is not object but subject, the Augustinian God of love and consolation. This passage is in effect an exposition of the 'God perceived by the heart, not by the reason' (L424), a God apprehended in an entirely different way from the God of the deists, pagans or Epicureans, and at an entirely different level of human cognition. God is known in this radically different way because he is a radically different kind of God.

This God can be approached only by love, not speculation, through moral reorientation, not rational deduction. This God therefore hides himself from human attempts to find him through objective observation. Pascal's famous theme of the Hidden God is a direct result of his belief in Jansenist theology.²⁹ Pascal's world is not the neat Thomist world where God gives clear indications of his existence and nature, but the deeply ambiguous, fallen Augustinian world which speaks simultaneously of God's presence and his absence. For human creatures to know this hidden God will involve a much more radical solution than contemplating obvious proofs in nature. It will involve not just an engagement with God as object but an encounter with him as subject. At the heart of Pascal's discussion of these questions lies the symbol of the cross, again strongly coloured by the themes of 1 Corinthians 1-2.

Firstly, for Pascal, in one range of fragments of the *Pensées*,³⁰ the cross *hides* God from unbelievers, where God 'hides himself from those who tempt him but reveals himself to those who seek him' (L444). From the perspective of indifferent unbelief, all that can be seen in God's revelation is this foolishness and obscurity, and thus the cross closes the door to an abstract,

speculative knowledge of God.

Secondly, the cross *reveals* God to those whose hearts have been moved to find him.³¹ The cross represents for Pascal the dialectic of fall and redemption. It indicates that there is a God, that humanity is fallen so it no longer recognizes him clearly in his creation, and that God has sent a redeemer to rescue it (L427, 431). Once Christ and the cross, the act of reconciliation between man and God, are understood, both God and human wretchedness, both human *grandeur* and *misère*, are understood. When this dualism is grasped, with all that it implies about both the reality of God, and yet human inability to see him, the reason for the obscurity of God behind creation is understood: we do not see him because we are blind to him. In the light of Christ (and this principle of creation and fall understood within him), everything in creation now 'bursts forth with proofs of these two truths'. Without him, all remains confusing. To grasp that Christ was crucified for the sins of the world is to confess one's own fallenness and epistemological weakness, the obscurity in one's own mind. It is to understand that failure to see God clearly in creation is not caused by the fact that he is not there, but by human blindness which can only partially glimpse truth. Christ crucified therefore becomes the key which unlocks the mysterious ambiguity of nature and reveals God to the seeker.

Thirdly, another set of fragments shows how, for Pascal, the cross represents the pattern of the Christian life, and the way in which the transition is made between unbelief and faith, namely through the crucifixion of self-will, the willingness for moral and spiritual reorientation which is the evidence of God's touch of grace.³² As recent scholarship has tended to think, the famous argument of the 'wager' is not intended to compel belief. It is in fact a device intended to show that the real reason for unbelief is not that faith is illogical (any gambler weighing the odds would opt for belief over unbelief any day), but that the unbeliever simply does not want to believe.³³ The obstacle to belief is not epistemological but moral:

... if you are unable to believe, it is because of your passions, since reason impels you to believe, yet you cannot do so. Concentrate then not on convincing yourself by multiplying proofs of God's existence, but by diminishing your passions. (L418)

From these three insights, all focused on the cross, Pascal is able to address the three opponents of Augustinian theology in seventeenth-century France.

1. The followers of *Descartes* fail to take into account the cross as representing man's fall, his consequent epistemological blindness, and his need for grace. Because their minds are unenlightened by grace, those confident of rational powers see only the apparent foolishness of Christianity, which bars the way to an objective, direct rational knowledge of God. God is

hidden from these *dogmatistes*, and until they recognize their sin and their need for the sacrifice of the cross, they remain in a false light, thinking they see while they are blind. Reason is always blinded by passion, and until the moral issue of desire is addressed, it is useless as a tool for discovering truth. They fail to understand the cross, the hiddenness of God.³⁴

2. *Pyrrhonists*, on the other hand, propose universal doubt, where nothing can be known at all. For Pascal, however, the revelation of God in Christ who was crucified is the perspective from which truth can be grasped, once the inner disposition to believe has been given. Knowledge is possible to those who have grasped the fundamental principle which the cross contains: man's degradation and his potential. Truth is the sole possession of God, it rests not on this earth, but in his presence alone (L131), yet the cross is the sign (*chiffre*) that St Paul gives (L268) which enables us to begin to grasp it. The Pyrrhonists have failed to account for the way in which God does make knowledge possible, so that their reductionism, although true from the perspective of indifference, is not total, and is overcome from the perspective of faith. Pascal's qualification 'having no certainty *outside of faith*' in L131 is highly significant. Outside Jesus Christ and the cross there can be no self-knowledge or knowledge of God, life or death (L416, 447, 449). Conversely, in Jesus Christ crucified there is true knowledge, which not even the acids of scepticism can destroy.

3. The *Jesuits*, who were dedicated to the elimination of the Jansenist movement, were known for their flexible approach to ethics and their accommodation of a wide variety of behaviour within the church, brilliantly lampooned in Pascal's earlier *Provincial Letters*. For Pascal, such moral laxity suggested that it was possible to become a true Christian without the need for deep moral change. Jesuit moral theology allowed a sinner to receive absolution, attend mass and live with a clear conscience while remaining exactly as he was. When Pascal accuses the Jesuits, in both the *Pensées* and the *Lettres Provinciales*, of preaching 'Christ not crucified', of 'suppressing the scandal of the cross',³⁵ Pascal's charge is that they have neglected the third aspect of the cross which we noted in the *Pensées*, namely the cross as signifying the profound moral realignment that needs to take place if a person is to come to know and love God. When they 'hide the mystery of the cross' they deny Pascal's fundamental insight that conversion, the change of perspective, takes place initially through moral, not intellectual, reorientation.

Towards the end of Pascal's short life, as the royal absolutism of the court of Louis XIV grew (and of course Jesuit confessors were regularly to be found among the great and the good of the time),³⁶ he stood against the Jesuits, insisted on the importance of holding to the Augustinian God in opposition to trends in seventeenth-century French theology which were abandoning it, and undertook extreme self-denial with an eye on the poor

during his final months. All this should perhaps not be read purely as world-renouncing negativity, but as an eloquent form of dissent from the economically comfortable, morally lax and socially divisive theology of his day, which took little notice of the poor and suggested that conversion to Christ made few demands for moral and economic change. For Pascal, a theology centred upon the cross was the only kind which could stand against the sell-out of the French church to political or intellectual power.

Conclusion

In these three examples, theology which begins at the cross has shown itself to be truly subversive. Although not an approach which has dominated Western theology, and which for long periods seemed almost forgotten in the halls of academic thought, it was kept alive more in popular spirituality and worship than in academic life. As such, it has proved a much-needed corrective to triumphalistic power-seeking theology within the church. A *theologia crucis* can offer a number of significant resources for us today.

1. It reminds us of the unity of God's action in the past and in the present, in revelation and in salvation, in Christ and in us. The believer and the church should not be surprised if what happened to Christ happens to them. The *theologia crucis* is for these theologians an insistence on the *paradigmatic* nature of the cross: it is not solely a soteriological event which remains locked in the past, but is a paradigm of the way in which God always works. For this reason, atonement theologies which regard the cross as purely a past action, the benefits of which one simply enjoys in the present, are inadequate if they fail to make the connection between God's action in Christ and God's action in the ongoing life of the church or the Christian.

2. It stands as a critique of theology which becomes exclusively academic. This is not just because of the tendency of academia to forget this theme, but more because it insists on the involvement of the theologian with God himself. For salvation and the knowledge of God to take place, there must be a conformity of the knower to what is known. In other words, the God who reveals himself in the cross of Christ can be known only from the cross of the Christian and the church. The forms of these 'crucifixions' are different, yet all three insist on the necessity of the personal experience of being humbled, becoming powerless, whether socially, soteriologically or epistemologically, and on the fact that only from that perspective can God rightly be known. This means that Christian existence today must be shaped by the form of God's self-revelation, the crucified Christ. Quite simply, it becomes difficult for a church to use power in manipulative ways if its theology is founded upon the cross, and it seeks to remain true to the God revealed in it. Instead, the church's use of power must be marked by the way God in Christ has used his power:

in its giving power to those who lack it, and in the use of power to advance the interests of those disadvantaged by power relations.

3. In the face of postmodern critiques of the notion of power, the *theologia crucis* is a protest against forms of relationship between people, or between people and God, which are based primarily on manipulative power rather than love. It is not an ideology, but because of its insistence on the unity of God's action in the past and the present, it makes demands on actual relationships within communities, the way leadership operates, and the way those on the margins are heard. Because the *theologia crucis* depicts the God who does not abandon power, but who uses it for the healing and salvation of his creation, exercising his own power in the foolish, powerless vulnerability of the cross, it can therefore offer an alternative model of power for the Christian community.³⁷ The truth revealed in *theologia crucis* is not oppressive, but liberating, because it is inseparably connected to self-giving Love as its mode of expression. It tells of the God who places himself at the service of his people, and invites his people to follow suit.

- ¹ A.C. Thiselton, *Interpreting God and the Postmodern Self* (SJT: Current Issues in Theology; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), p. 16.
- ² D.J. Hall, *God and Human Suffering: An Exercise in the Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), p. 114.
- ³ G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982); P. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1987); A.D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); D.G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996).
- ⁴ M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1991); S.M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); D. Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994); B. Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Steve Walton, 'Rhetorical criticism: an introduction', *Themelios* 21.2 (1996): 4-9.
- ⁵ B.W. Winter, 'Civil litigation in Corinth: the forensic background to 1 Cor. 6.1-8', *NTS* 37 (1991): 559-72.
- ⁶ Theissen, *Social Setting*, pp. 121-43.
- ⁷ See N.A. Dahl, 'Paul and the Church at Corinth according to 1 Corinthians 1.10-4.21,' *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies presented to John Knox*, eds. W.R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule and R.R. Niebuhr; (Cambridge: CUP, 1967) pp. 313-35.
- ⁸ So, notably, G. Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989) pp. 64-80, and M. D. Goulder, 'Sofia in 1 Corinthians,' *NTS* 37 (1991) pp. 516-34.
- ⁹ See e.g. Witherington, *Conflict*, pp. 83-7.
- ¹⁰ E.g. T. Engberg-Perderson, *Paul in his Hellenistic Context*

- (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994).
- ¹¹ 'Some' are arrogant, thinking Paul will not return (4:18); 'some' of the congregation 'say that there is no resurrection of the dead' (15:12); there are 'those' (toj) who want to judge Paul (9:3) One group of people eats food offered to idols, leaving others (8:7) defiled. Paul addresses the man who has knowledge (*gnisij*), who eats with a clear conscience at a pagan table, asking him to consider the 'weak man ... the brother for whom Christ died' (8:11). Some separate themselves from the rest of the congregation at the communal meal (11:17-22). Some feel themselves to be self-sufficient in the realm of spiritual gifts, having no need of others: (12:21). Others are made to doubt their value to the body because they lack certain gifts (perhaps the *sof* ... and *gnisij* mentioned in 12:8); (12:15,16). One group separates itself because it feels its spiritual gifting is superior; another group feels it does not belong, because it does not come up to scratch.
- ¹² For Epicurean influence in the church at Corinth, see N. De Witt, *St Paul and Epicurus* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1954), although he goes too far in speculation on Epicurean influence in Pauline churches. Also, A.J. Malherbe, 'The beasts at Ephesus', *JBL* 87 (1968): 71-80; *idem*, 'Self-definition among Epicureans and Cynics', in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* Vol. 3, eds. B.F. Meyer and E.P. Sanders (London: SCM, 1982), pp. 46-59.
- ¹³ 1 Cor. 12.13, cf. Rom. 6.4, Gal. 3.27f..
- ¹⁴ See K. Ruh, 'Zur Theologie des mittelalterlichen Passionstraktats,' *ThZ* 6 (1950) pp. 17-39; M. Elze, 'Züge spätmittelalterlicher Frömmigkeit in Luthers Theologie,' *ZTK* 62 (1965) pp. 382-402; M. Nicol, *Meditatio bei Luther* (FKDG 34; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1984).
- ¹⁵ Particularly in the Hebrews Commentary, at LW 29.210 (WA 57-3.209.16-21) written in early 1518, the Good Friday Sermons of 1518, and his *Sermon von der Betrachtung des heyligen leyden Christi*, published in 1519.
- ¹⁶ E.g. B. Lohse, 'Luther und Bernhard von Clairvaux', in *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Rezeption und Wirkung im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*, ed. K. Elm (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), pp. 271-301.
- ¹⁷ On several occasions he even describes this sense of being at war within himself, for example in the Romans commentary, while discussing his former difficulties with scholastic theology: 'I could not understand in which way I should regard myself as a sinner like other men and thus prefer myself to no-one, even though I was contrite and made confession... Thus I was at war with myself.' LW 25.261 (WA 56.274.2-11).
- ¹⁸ L. Grane, *Contra Gabrielum: Luthers Auseinandersetzung mit Gabriel Biel in der Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam 1517* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1962), has shown how Luther's target in this work is Biel's theology and soteriology.
- ¹⁹ This date is suggested by an analysis of Luther's exposition of Ps. 4, a passage he reworked in late 1515 in the light of his new understanding 'according to the cross of Christ'.
- ²⁰ Quoted in B.A. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), p. 114.
- ²¹ In the Romans Commentary LW 25.418 (WA 56.427.3-4).
- ²² Thesis 20, LW 31.53 (WA 1.362.18-9).
- ²³ See Theses 93-5 of the 95 Theses of 1517. Cf also G. Rupp, 'Luther's 95 Theses and the Theology of the Cross,' (ed. C.S. Meyer; *Luther for an Ecumenical Age: Essays in Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1967)

- 24 p. 67-81.
- 24 Although see for example J. Miel, *Pascal and Theology* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1969).
- 25 For the works concerned and more extensive lists of contemporary apologists, see J.E. d'Angers, *L'Apologétique en France de 1580 à 1670: Pascal et ses Précurseurs* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1954) pp. 35-46.
- 26 For Pascal's relation to Augustine see P. Sellier, *Pascal et Saint Augustin* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1970). For introductions to Jansenism and Port-Royal see L. Cognet, *Le Jansénisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961); F. Hildeshelmer, *Le Jansénisme en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Publisud, 1991); R. Taveneaux, *Jansénisme et Réforme Catholique* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1992).
- 27 This way of numbering the fragments of the *Pensées* is taken from the Lafuma edition in *Pascal: Œuvres Complètes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963). The same numbering is used by A. Krailshelmer in the Penguin Classics edition of the *Pensées* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966).
- 28 Pascal's attributed criticism of Descartes, that he treats God merely as a *chiquenaude* (a 'flick of the fingers') to start the world off, places Cartesianism under the same critique as Pascal applies to deism (L1001).
- 29 Cf L. Goldmann, *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the Pensées of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), although his understanding of the Hidden God as a 'Tragic Vision' implies an inevitability about human separation from God, whereas for Pascal it might rather be called a comic (or perhaps tragi-comic) vision, implying a serious condition but one which is not inevitable, and from which there is the possibility of a joyful outcome, the certainty of faith.
- 30 E.g. L241, 253, 268, 964.
- 31 E.g. L291, 808, 834, 842.
- 32 E.g. L271, 964. Also see Pascal's letter to his sister, *Œuvres*, 278.
- 33 B. Howells, "The Interpretations of Pascal's 'Parl,'" *Modern Languages Review* 79 (1984) 45-63.
- 34 See S. Melzer, *Discourses of the Fall: A Study of Pascal's Pensées* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), for a fascinating recent study of this aspect of Pascal's thought.
- 35 See the 5th *Lettre*, *Œuvres*, p. 388, and L834. R. Parish, *Pascal's Lettres Provinciales: A Study in Polemic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), argues that the two works share a fundamental unity of purpose and perspective. On this particular point, see pp. 82-3: 'The burden of the refutation in the *Lettres Provinciales* is identical to that in the *Pensées*: the Society of Jesus, by its suppression of the 'scandale de la Croix' and all that follows from it, does not just offend the sacred truth; it also, it is asserted - in paradoxically, the very act of proselytizing - makes the claims of Christianity inefficacious and so, ultimately, unbelievable.'
- 36 M. Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits* (London: Hamilton, 1969).
- 37 See A.C. Thiselton, *Interpreting God*, p. 19-26, for a useful discussion of Christian alternatives to manipulative models of power to those in the postmodern debate.

Walking in the Ways of the Lord: The Ethical Authority of the Old Testament

Christopher J.H. Wright

Leicester: Apollos,
1995, 319 pp., pb., £15.99.

Wright continues his work on Old Testament ethics within third volume, containing a collection of previously published essays dealing with method, approaches and specific issues. He proposes a paradigmatic application of the Bible to ethics. This is based on a scheme of history that outlines creation, fall, redemption and new creation. There is a triangular model of the ethical agenda in which God occupies the apex and the two corners of the base include either the people and land of Israel in the Old Testament scheme or the Church and 'fellowship' in the New Testament. In the final redemption, humanity and the earth are found at the two corners of this triangle of relationships. Wright finds an authoritative guide for ethics in Scripture insofar as God has revealed himself in historical acts that form the basis for specific commands and insofar as creation has brought a specific structure to the world. In one essay Wright traces various views on the ethical application of Old Testament law and teaching from early Christianity to the present, including the use of narrative texts as a source for ethics. However, noting the difficulty of agreement on ethics from clear legal imperatives, he asks how much more difficult it will be to reach a consensus on the implications from narrative sources. For Wright, the created order provides a basis for a coherent ethical system. Creation and its revelation and covenant brings about an ethical response to God's grace, and leads to a promised blessing. In a

review of Gottwald's *The Tribes of Yahweh*, Wright identifies with the view of premonarchic Israel as socially and politically egalitarian. In the last part of the book, he considers some specific issues: the land, the Jubilee Year, the state, human rights and the redress of corruption. In contrast to New Age philosophy, the Bible portrays the land as distinct from and dependent on God. Wright finds in the Jubilee Year a mechanism for preserving family values with legal and economic measures to restrain and alleviate debt. The work is useful as a means of addressing many important questions about the value of the Bible for ethics in an age of relativism and religious pluralism. There is some overlap of content in the essays but the reader will obtain a better understanding of the issues present in this growing field.

Richard S. Hess,
Denver Theological Seminary

The Triumph of Elohim, From Yahwisms to Judaisms. Biblical Exegesis and Theology 13

Diana V. Edelman

Kampen: Kok Pharos
1995, 262 pp., pb.

This work sets out to explore the inclusive monotheism of ancient Israel, *i.e.* the presence of a variety of deities tolerated and subsumed under one name. This was apparently introduced by Zoroastrianism and brought to an end the polytheism that was present through the pre-exilic period. Edelman argues that the exclusive use of Yahweh (along with the generic word for 'god', *el*) in personal names in the Bible and on seals of the pre-exilic period reveals the upper call status of the name bearers who sought advancement in the state by naming children after the

state deity. It must have been a huge upper class given the large number of seals and other sources for names! The presence of various deities in the pantheon of Yahweh is explored by Handy who identifies four levels of status with Yahweh and Asherah at the top. He uses evidence from the first millennium to recreate the development of Yahweh as chief deity of the pantheon in Israel and Judea. Schmidt suggests that the aniconic tradition was limited to the prohibition of images of the deity as person, animal or astral body. Thus a horned Phoenician demon could depict Yahweh, as found on the Kuntillet Ajrud pithos. Thompson reflects on 'inclusive monotheism' as a product of Persian and Hellenistic perceptions that created, rather than influenced, much of biblical tradition. Bolin considers a letter from the leader of the Jewish community at Elephantine to the Persian authorities in which he equates the local Jewish deity, Yahu, with the Persian high god, Ahura Mazda. Davies contributes an evaluation of Hecataeus and Ben Sira as well as the matters of circumcision and the appearance of scriptures as indicators of the emergence of Judaism.

Edelman's concluding article discusses the depiction of deities on coins in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. There seems to have been no objection to their appearance until the end of the Persian period at which time substitutes were sought. Under both Ptolemaic and Seleucid control, Palestine continued to avoid minting coins with pictures of deities or rulers so portrayed, except for a brief time during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. This collection of articles reflects a commonly agreed presupposition that the biblical sources' portrayal of a monotheism in the pre-exilic

period of Israel's history was either non-existent or insignificant for study.

Richard S. Hess,
Denver Theological Seminary

The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period

William M. Schniedewind
Sheffield: JSOT Supplement 197,
1995, 275 pp., hb., £30.00.

Schniedewind's thesis is that the post-exilic period saw a change in the understanding of prophets, with a loss of the classical prophet who ministered to kings and the emergence and highlighting of the 'inspired interpreter' who is reapplies the message of the Scriptures to the needs of the present. Schniedewind uses a variety of studies on aspects of the books of Chronicles as a means to study and demonstrate this thesis. He begins with an important study of titles and inscription formulas that demonstrate that the Chronicler (author of Chronicles) used traditional formulas in new and different ways. For examples, titles and inspiration formulas used by the classical prophets only of false prophets are used by the Chronicler of true prophets.

Schniedewind then studies the prophetic speeches of Chronicles which are not also found in the books of Samuel and Kings. He observed that speeches by individuals who were given the title, 'prophet', or something similar often interpreted previous biblical events and texts. However, those speeches given by messengers without such titles regularly exhorted and encouraged. He applies this to early post-exilic Judaism and argues that at that time prophecy had come to mean the interpretation of biblical texts.

While this is a legitimate conclusion, the assumption that this role did not exist in pre-exilic prophecy seems to rest upon the view that the Chronicler's only source was the Deuteronomistic History. This presupposition has not gone unchallenged in recent scholarship.

In order to establish his thesis that Chronicles rewrites the Deuteronomistic History of Samuel and Kings, Schniedewind argues that the word of Yahweh, as used in the Deuteronomistic History and in the earlier prophets, refers to the prophetic word. In Chronicles, however, it signifies the post-exilic interest in the written law of Moses. The promise to David of a dynasty (2 Samuel 7) is rewritten by the Chronicler (in various texts) to refer to the promise of a temple as well. Again this reflects the key importance of the temple in post-exilic Jerusalem. Where caution is required, however, is in Schniedewind's assumption that the ability to identify textual differences in Chronicles (vs. Samuel and Kings) and to associate them with theological interests of the post-exilic period must mean that the Chronicler could not have used other earlier sources for this information.

Schniedewind's brief chapter on the Levitical singers argues that for the Chronicler they were inspired like David. Among Israelite and Judean kings only David is portrayed in a prophetic role by the Chronicler. This stresses the unique contribution of David as cult founder in the view of the writer. It is this last point that is developed in the book's conclusion. The classical pre-exilic prophets were and would be associated only with Kings. In the post-exilic era, the prophetic figures would become inspired interpreters of the earlier prophets. These later prophets would address new situations in the context of a people of God without a king of

their own. It is this change which forms the major thesis of Schniedewind's book, and one that he argues cogently.

Rick Hess,
Denver Theological Seminary,
Denver

The Message of Isaiah (Bible Speaks Today Series)

Barry Webb
Leicester: IVP,
1996, 252 pp., pb., £9.99.

This is a superb addition to a very good series. It is concise and lucid, dealing with 66 chapters in just 250 pages. Yet this commentary does not fall into superficial comments but is full of theological depth and insight. As is the style of this series, the commentary does not deal with each individual verse but rather looks at paragraphs at a time. Almost exclusively, comments on the Hebrew are confined to footnotes. The same is true for scholarly arguments which most Christians can read and profit from. I must say that by the end, I was beginning to eagerly plan a sermon series on Isaiah.

The unity and authorship of Isaiah remains, of course, a pint of ongoing scholarly debate. Webb's brief discussion of this is in the introduction (see pp. 33-37). He regards Isaiah as a basic unity though acknowledging a role for Isaiah's disciples in the years immediately after his ministry in recording the last half of the book. This Isaianic school is faithful to Isaiah and is reflected in 8:16-17. Webb sees clear evidence of editorial activity in the book but not to the extent of the majority scholarly opinion at present. Thus the book is pre-exilic in its entirety. This accounts for the lack of specifics in chapters 40 - 66 and the so-called anonymity of the

prophet there. Isaiah 40 is Isaiah's recommissioning, hence there is no need to name him again. There is a structural unity to the book, reflected in the visions which begin and conclude it (pp. 25-29).

The commentary is divided into seven parts: The Lord is king (1-12), Lord of the nations (13-27), Human schemes and God's plan (28-35), In whom shall we trust? (36-39), Comfort my people (40:1-51:11), Grace triumphant (51:12-55:13) and, Waiting for a new world (56-66).

This commentary is a fine example of biblical theology at its best. It is rich in cross-references to both Old and New Testaments, these forming the bulk of the footnotes. Webb does full justice to the prevailing historico-political situation of the eighth to sixth centuries BC which provide Isaiah's immediate context. However he recognises that the prophecy of Isaiah finds its culmination in Jesus Christ as the end of a process of fulfilment. For example, the promise of a sign to Ahaz in chapter 7 is, in addition to being a threat, is also a promise of God's preservation of a remnant of his people. The remnant in Isaiah's day was just part of a process leading to Jesus Christ (p. 63). Similarly the apocalypse of Isaiah 24-27 anticipates that of Revelation (p. 105).

This biblical theology guides the application of his commentary. Though here is hardly any extensive discussion of modern issues, parallels or illustrations, as one might expect in an exposition, Webb's expression of the theological continuity of God's purposes, character and relationship with his people mean that the reader is naturally drawn in to Isaiah's message. The excellence of this commentary is that the points of application need only be brief and pithy, as they are, for it is

Isaiah himself who still speaks today. It is terrific to read an Old Testament commentary so rich in theological appreciation.

The commentary is based on the NIV text which is not quoted in full. I noticed just a few typographical errors (e.g. pp. 175, 214, 248). I also wonder what the worst of all sins is, pride (p. 150) or idolatry (p. 180)?

This commentary is a welcome addition indeed to the series, with Oswalt and Motyer means that the student or preacher now has a wealth of resources available.

Revd Dr Paul A Barker,
Ridley College, Melbourne

Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve (BXAW 217), and

Redaction Processes in the Book of the Twelve (BZAW 218)

James Nogalski
Berlin: Walter de Gruyter,
1993, 301 pp., and 301 pp., hb., £54.95 and
£56.95/\$82.00 each.

Since at least the time of Jesus Ben Sirach (c. 200 B.C.E.; Sir 49:10), the twelve Minor Prophets have been appreciated as representing in some fashion a single unit. Recent years have witnessed an increase of scholarly interest in the process by which these books came together into their final form and canonical order. Several studies have noted the existence of catchwords linking adjacent prophetic works. Nogalski proposes that these lexical links are evidence of intentional redactional activity in the shaping of the book of the Twelve. That is, these books were not juxtaposed because of these terms, but rather these catchwords and phrases were deliberately added to establish

connections; indeed, says the author, certain books themselves were created to unite other texts and give the Twelve thematic coherence.

These two volumes are a revision of Nogalski's doctrinal dissertation, completed under the supervision of Professor O.H. Steck at the University of Zurich (1991). The first volume begins by surveying the history of scholarly research and then demonstrates the consistent phenomenon of catchwords occurring at the beginning and the end of adjoining prophetic books. What follows is a detailed presentation of his theory of a multi-level redactional history of two collections of books that were the 'precursors' of the Book of Twelve (hence the title). What he labels the 'Deuteronomistic Corpus' (Hosea-Amos-Micah-Zephaniah) was brought together because of common judgement themes and later expanded in the post-exilic period with passages of restoration; the second group was the 'Haggai-Zechariah Corpus' (Haggai-Zechariah 1-8). He works to establish a subsequent level of redaction, more fully explained in the next volume, grounded in catchwords and phrases, which would, on the one hand, to in these two corpora together and, on the other hand, facilitate the creation of the Book of the Twelve.

The second volume focuses on the other six Minor Prophets. Nogalski suggest that to the combined corpora were added Johel, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Malachi. Joel was the key. According to the redactional hypothesis, Joel (like Obadiah) was a literary work produced for the Book of the Twelve. It served to refer back to Hosea as well as to introduce themes developed in the other Minor Prophets. What is more, Joel helped fashion the Twelve to reflect the macro-structure of

Isaiah. A final stage of redaction annexed Jonah and Zechariah 9-14. Nogalski would date the Joel-level redaction to the first half of the fourth century and the latest addition to after 322 B.C.E.

Nogalski's is a sustained technical argument trying to demonstrate historical and theological rationales for the catchword phenomena in the Book of the Twelve. Although his work present a helpful listing of these data and interesting suggestion for its formation and structure, some important methodological questions do arise. First, Nogalski for the most part follows traditional form critical criteria for the dating of phrases and lines in each prophetic book. This sort of approach is fundamental to his thesis, as he must endeavour to try to sort out levels of redaction to coincide with his understanding of the development of the final canonical shape. Literary readings that would see more unity in these books and not so quickly explain 'disruptions' in the text with redactional activity are discounted. For example, he mentions some studies highlighting literary coherence in Amos 1:3-2:16 (*Literary Precursors*, 82-97) but then interacts extensively with only one (published in 1930!). Perhaps this methodological perspective reflects his training on the European continent, but surely he has neither fully grappled with these literary reading nor appreciated their possible implications for his enterprise. Though seeking an intricate, and admittedly, hypothetical 'literary' reconstruction of the Twelve, he does not appear to be sensitive to reading each book or the twelve literarily.

Many will question, too, the dating of certain books, such as Joel. Again, the consequences for

his proposal would be far-reaching. Lastly, the issue of the catchwords themselves deserves some mention. Some of the connections seemed forced; some of the words that are highlighted are common terms and are not limited to the beginnings and ends of the prophetic books. Perhaps attention to the phrases and more exceptional words clustered in shorter passages would help substantiate more clearly signals of deliberate linkage.

Nogalski has done a great service by underlining the reality of a certain sort of unity of the Twelve based on catchwords and phrases. What many will debate is his concept of the Twelve's redactional history. His work, however, stand is as a valuable starting point for the future attempts at alternative explanations.

Daniel Carroll R.
Denver Seminary, USA

Minor Prophets I (New International Biblical Commentary, 17)

Elizabeth Achtemeier
Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson,
1996, 390 pp., pb., £7.99.

Elizabeth Achtemeier's work is the first of two volumes in this series dealing with the minor prophets. Under examination in this volume are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah.

In the foreword, the editors R.L. Hubbard and R.K. Johnson state that they have sought to align the series with what has been called 'believing criticism'. 'This approach', they write, 'marries probing, reflective interpretation of the text to loyal, biblical devotion and warm Christian affection.' This reviewer find that such an approach, which clearly identifies a target readership,

provides a refreshing freedom from the constraints of many OT commentaries wherein the commentator dare not trespass into the NT. As the series is directed toward professing Christians, Achtemeier – herself an astute theologian – provides a good deal of interplay between the prophetic texts examined and the NT. Further, in her respect for the 'living tradition' of the prophetic message, she does not shy away from drawing modern parallels between the prophetic oracles and today's society. It must be said, however, that nearly all the modern parallels Achtemeier draws upon are American. (Can *any* commentary be truly 'international'?) Still, this in no way diminishes the value of the work.

As implied in the series title, all the commentaries are based on the New International Version of the Bible. Rather than the commentator providing a new translation, the commentary is meant to be read alongside the NIV. Happily this does not 'straightjacket' Achtemeier's commentary. To the contrary, she is not hesitant to point out perceived failures in the NIV's translations. For example, in her comments on Amos 2:6-16 (p. 184) she writes: 'In typical fashion, the NIV has interpreted the text of this oracle in its translation ... Especially to be deplored is the NIV's omission of connecting and contrasting conjunctions and exclamations that are found in the original Hebrew and that highlight the emphases of the original prophecy ... All of these small words are exceedingly important for getting at Amos's meaning, and the NIV has tamed the original.' This parting of company with the NIV in regard to its treatment of the Masoretic Text is also indicative of the attention to details given by Achtemeier. She is not afraid to take a minority stance with

respect to current scholarship or to propose emendations to the Masoretic Text if it yields a clearer understanding of the biblical passage. Thus, her insights are as worthwhile for those adept with Hebrew as for those who have no control of the language.

This reader has one problem with the format of the volume. Following many of the sections of commentary one find 'Additional Notes' tagged on at the end. From my point of view, if a comment is worth making, then it is work making within the main body of commentary rather than appended at the end of the chapter sub-section.

No commentary can cover every possible aspect of a biblical text, thus it would be gratuitous to criticise Achtemeier's treatment of particular passages. I do, however, find one omission in her work which calls attention to itself. Nearly all the books found in Achtemeier's 'Further Reading' are themselves commentaries about the particular prophets under discussion in her volume - not surprisingly perhaps. However, I feel that the general discussion of each of the six prophets under examination could have benefited from the use of a book such as Robert Wilson's *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* which looks at the entire phenomenon of prophecy. In this reviewer's opinion, the uniqueness of biblical prophecy is brought into clearer focus when seen within the greater context of the ancient Near East. Nevertheless, Achtemeier has given us a lively engagement with the prophetic legacy of half the minor prophets, through the eyes of one who is both a scholar and a woman of faith. Those who are interested in 'believing criticism' will not be disappointed.

Jack N. Lawson,
Temple Ewell, Kent

The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Volume 2

Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, eds
Leiden: Brill,
1995, viii + 367-906 pp., hb., £81.00.

The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Volume 3

Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, eds
Leiden: Brill,
1996, vi + 907-1364 pp., hb., \$154.50.

Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament. Lieferung V. Aramäisches Lexikon. 3rd edition

Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, Benedikt Hartmann and Philippe Reymond eds
Leiden: Brill,
1996, 1661-1801 pp. hb., \$85.00.

These volumes continue the publication of this most important of lexical tools for students of the Hebrew Bible. The second and third volume of the English translation continue the procedure of the first volume, with Richardson's exemplary translation of the earlier third edition of the German work. The first volume of this translation was reviewed in *Themelios* 21.2. It was published in 1994 and provided access for English readers to words beginning with the first eight letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The two additional volumes cover the remainder of the Hebrew alphabet, except for the last two letters. It is unfortunate that the two final letters were not also included in the third volume, itself about one hundred pages shorter than the second volume. The result means that users of

the translation will need to wait for a fourth volume before having the complete dictionary of the Hebrew language of the Bible.

Nevertheless, Koehler and Baumgartner's lexicon represents the most advance complete dictionary of biblical Hebrew available. The older Brown, Driver and Briggs is probably the best single volume source for study. The work of Koehler and Baumgartner follows similar principles of lexicography with a survey of cognate terms in various Semitic languages, a listing of all or (in cases where the word has a high frequency of occurrence) most of the occurrences in the Bible, and discussion of the various nuances of usage and meaning. Koehler and Baumgartner are able to update the cognate section with the addition of much more information from the language chronologically and geographically closer than those at the disposal of Brown, Driver and Briggs; especially Akkadian and Ugaritic. The latter had not yet been discovered when the Brown, Drive and Briggs completed their work. It also seems that Koehler and Baumgartner are less inclined to use source critical distinctions in their discussion of terms. The major advantage for many student users will be that nouns, adjectives, and other non-verbs are not grouped together and listed under a single trilateral root, along with all the verb forms of that root. Instead, non-verbs are listed as separate entries in the lexicon, and thus are much easier to locate.

The final fascicle of the German edition of Koehler and Baumgartner's lexicon appeared while the translation of the earlier fascicles were already underway. It includes all the Aramaic words found in the Aramiac sections of Ezra and Daniel. Like the earlier parts in

this lexicon the cognate and lexical information provided it contemporary with the date of publication. The organisation and types of information are similar to that found in the Hebrew fascicles, with similar advantages as those already mentioned.

Although the prices of these volumes put them (unfortunately) beyond the reach of all but the most dedicated Hebrew students, it is hoped that they will find their way into theological college libraries and other reference collections where they can enjoy the maximum use and study that they deserve, and can provide encouragement and support for study of the Bible in the original languages.

Rick Hess,

Denver Theological Seminary

The Theology of the Gospel of Luke

Joel B. Green

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1995, 170 pp., pb., £9.95.

Joel Green, now teaching at Berkeley in California, has contributed an impressive volume to the Cambridge NT Theology series. His chapters take us to 'the world of Luke's gospel', 'the purpose of God in Luke's gospel', 'Jesus, John, and the Jewish people', 'mission and salvation', 'the way of discipleship', 'Luke's gospel in the church'. The book covers a lot of ground, and is very 'modern' in its approach, bringing together redaction criticism, sociological thinking and hermeneutical reflection (including on the contemporary relevance of Luke). The author covers a lot of ground in less than 200 pages; he writes as an expert in Lukan studies, but at a reasonably accessible and non-technical level (though it is not always very simple, and probably not a beginner's book!).

The book offers a more rounded approach to Luke than some others, not simply focusing on things that distinguish Luke from Mark - indeed making rather little of such source-critical comparisons - but looking at Luke's thought as a whole. The author is very familiar with scholarly discussion of Luke, but the book is not a guide to other scholars' views, so much as the author's own well-informed synthesis. The author offers a sensible, balanced view of all sorts of key Lutheran subjects, such as eschatology, Judaism and Jewish hope, poverty and riches, etc. Sometimes the material is spread around (*e.g.* on wealth), and students will not find all their Lukan essay topics covered in one convenient location!

The author emphasizes the importance for Luke of the plan and purpose of God, and has good things to say about the relationship of the divine plan and human involvement with that plan. He also stresses the way Luke's Jesus overturns the oppressive hierarchical relationships of unredeemed society (helpfully noting Luke's emphasis on women, among other things). He sees Luke's emphasis on the poor in this context: I wondered if he was in danger of downplaying the straightforward materialistic demand in Luke to 'sell your possessions and give to the poor', but he is right to see Luke's emphasis on the poor within the broader context of Jesus' concern for the marginalized and as part of his general concern for life within community. I wondered too whether his correct emphasis on the inextricability of history and interpretation led him to play down Luke's interest in 'the facts': Luke surely wanted his readers to know 'what really happened' as well as what those

happenings meant within the plan of God.

David Wenham,
Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians

B. Witherington III
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Paternoster,
1995, 492 pp., illustrated £24.99.

Paul has traditionally been seen as suspicious of all rhetoric. Precisely because he disowns 'persuasive words of wisdom' in Corinth, even recent studies in rhetorical criticism tend to concentrate on the Corinthians' love of *σοφία λόγου*, while for Paul, it is incompatible with the simple gospel of the cross (see for example Duane Litfin's 'St Paul's Theology of Proclamation', Cambridge, 1994).

Ben Witherington's latest offering in an impressive list of contributions to the study of the NT paints a different picture. Witherington's Paul is no cultural Philistine, avoiding any trace of rhetorical language (as if he could have done anyway!) but a careful and skilful rhetor. To be sure, like Cicero and Isocrates, Paul eschews the guileful ornamentation of Sophistic rhetoric, and in terms of oral performance was not particularly impressive, but all the same as a writer, he uses many of the techniques of standard rhetorical practice as expounded by the likes of Quintilian and Aristotle.

The value of this approach to Paul emerges at its clearest in his treatment to 2 Corinthians, and in particular in the question of the unity of the letter. Witherington argues plausibly that attempts to partition the text are due to a failure to grasp the rhetorical nature of Paul's discourse, his skilful use of digression, irony, abrupt

changes of tone and argumentative method, much of which can be paralleled in the rhetoric of the time. Read in this light, with a keen eye for rhetorical strategy, subtle shifts of style and a sense of humour, Paul's intentions and persuasive power become much clearer.

One of the comments on the back cover calls this a 'state-of-the-art' commentary and so it is. Witherington's grasp of the literature is extensive (the book includes a wide-ranging bibliography on the letters), using the latest sociological, philosophical, anthropological and archaeological studies to reconstruct the situation into which Paul wrote the letters. The picture he paints is not, it has to be said, dramatically new: like much recent scholarship, he sees the background to the problems of 1 Corinthians in Gentile Graeco-Roman Social structures, religious and political life, rather than in Hellenistic-Jewish influences. The trouble is caused by a group of *nouveau riches* Gentile converts, attracted by the unwitting Apollos' Alexandrian rhetoric. At this stage there is no significant opposition to Paul, so the letter is not so much a defence of his authority as an appeal for unity. By the writing of 2 Corinthians, Hellenistic Jews, (not Judaizers) have unsettled the congregation and instilled a deep distrust of Paul.

The commentary rushes through the material at a great pace, sometimes a bit too quickly, assertion occasionally replacing detailed argument. Its conclusions will not convince everyone. Is there really no opposition to Paul in 1 Corinthians? Does not 1:12 imply at least one group within the congregation who think other leaders are preferable to Paul, and 9:3 nascent questioning of Paul's authority? Witherington's suggestion of

'Roman Imperial Eschatology' as the background to the Corinthian view of the resurrection addressed in chapter 15 is unconvincing and struggles to find evidence in the text to support it. Moreover the link between the two letters is difficult. On this reading the problems in 2 Corinthians seem quite different to those in 1 Corinthians. The context has apparently changed from Gentile wisdom to Jewish, and it is hard to see where the continuity lies.

These do not detract however from an interesting, well-written and up-to-date piece of work. The author regularly introduces judicious comments relating the theology and method of the letters to the modern church. Here is a commentary with its eyes firmly on the ancient context and with the occasional perceptive glance into the modern. Well worth the money.

Graham Tomlin,
Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

Galatians (NAC30)

Timothy George
Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman,
1994, 463 pp., \$27.99.

This is one of the first NT volumes in a forty-volume series on the whole bible based on the NIV. Like the NIC series, it is solidly evangelical in orientation and directed toward both educated church members and those with vocational theological training. This means that more technical discussions are in the footnotes and are thereby limited in length due to the format. While this makes for smoother reading in the body of the text, those who want more technical discussions will be a bit frustrated. However, as a dual-focused commentary (and series), this format works well.

Stylistically, this commentary (and series) emphasizes 'how each section of a book fits together so that the reader becomes aware of the theological unity of each book, and of Scripture as a whole' (p. 8). There is a resulting concentration upon 'theological exegesis, while providing practical, applicable exposition' (p. 9). This helps explain why the editors chose a church historian (and dean!) with expertise in the Reformation period as the commentator. As a purist (i.e., NT scholar), I may want to quibble over such a choice, but in light of the focus and emphasis of the series, Timothy George is a delightful selection. He constantly brings interesting insights from the history of interpretation that specialists in other areas might not have. While there are downsides to such a choice, one can look to other commentaries on Galatians for such discussions (e.g., Longenecker, or Betz). Therefore, the uniqueness of this commentary amidst the plethora of works on Galatians is its theological sensitivity and regular reflection upon the history of the interpretation of Galatians.

It is necessary to identify where a commentator stands on major interpretive issues in Galatians. In this light, I believe George rightly identifies the recipients of Paul's letter as residents of South Galatia (p. 46), dates the letter around A.D. 49-50 *before* the Jerusalem conference (p. 48), sees a unified opposition from Judaizers (the traditional view; p. 60), and shows meaningful sensitivity to salvation history and Paul's 'two age perspective' (pp. 34-38). Additionally, he believes that the genre is that of a 'pastoral letter' (p. 623) and identifies the structure of the epistle along the traditional lines of Galatians 1-2 = 'History', Galatians 3-4 = 'Theology', and Galatians 5-6 = 'Ethics' (pp. 65-

66). He provides a synthetic outline of this structure (p. 74) and more developed section outlines throughout the exposition (pp. 75, 203, and 349). He also asserts the traditional understanding (now being challenged) that Paul was curbing an antinomian threat of libertinism in his discussion (now being challenged) that Paul was curbing an antinomian threat of libertinism in his discussion of the flesh/Spirit conflict in Galatians 5:13-26.

Perhaps of more foundational importance is Dean George's stance on the 'new perspective on Paul' with its far-reaching implications for the interpretation of Galatians. The new perspective redefines the inherent legalism and works of righteousness of first century Judaism as more an issue of 'covenantal nomism' which emphasizes the identity markers and boundaries of the covenant people. If this is a true picture, the Paul is not combating a classic works-righteousness view of *entry into salvation* in Galatians, but rather the Judaizers' wrong understanding of the *identifying marks and behavioural restraints* of those who are already within God's covenant people. While George leans to the former, he at least interacts periodically with the latter. However, such interaction has not profoundly moved him from the traditional understanding of Judaistic legalism.

George's tone is refreshingly warm and passionately orthodox throughout his commentary. This is invigorating and commendable and gives his comments more heart and personality than most expositions. This texture plus his insights from historical theology make this a helpful volume to own. Should it be added as a 'must-have' eighth to the outstanding seven now available

in English (Lightfoot, Burton, Bruce, Betz, Fong, Longenecker, and Dunn)? Perhaps, but for different reasons: not on the creative strength of the expositions, but on the sensitivity to theology and the history of interpretation. Such sensitivity makes this a useful addition to those who own two or three of the other works.

Walt Russell,

Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California

The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae

Clinton E. Arnold

Grand Rapids: Baker,

1996, xii + 378 pp., pb., \$18.99.

In this stimulating work, Dr. Clint Arnold (the author of an earlier ground-breaking book, *Ephesians—Power and Magic*, 1989), has reassessed the nature of 'heresy' at Colossae which Paul opposed so strongly in his letter to the church there. Drawing upon archaeological evidence from Asia Minor, including little-known 'angel' inscriptions and magical texts and, but a careful re-examination of Paul's letter, Dr Arnold shows that 'the Colossians tried to combine the apostle's teaching about Christ with local pagan and Jewish folk beliefs'. As a result they were 'blind to the liberating power of the indwelling Christ, the supreme Creator and Lord of all spiritual principalities and powers'.

For more than a century New Testament scholarship has recognized some mixture of pagan and Jewish religious ideas lying behind the self-styled 'philosophy' at Colossae, but the nature and extent of the syncretism has been disputed. First, a Gnostic interpretation of this philosophy was thought to

be the key, the pagan mystery cults, and more recently Jewish mysticism (that involved a visionary ascent to heaven for which the initiate prepared by rigorous ascetic practices) has increasingly held sway among scholars. Dr Arnold acknowledges that the Christians at Colossae lived in an environment of religious pluralism and syncretism. His thesis is that the beliefs and practices of the opponents at Colossae were 'a combination of Phrygian folk belief, local folk Judaism and Christianity, (p. 243). Features include:

- 1 The 'veneration of angels' that took place in the context of magic, not only in pagan circles but also within Judaism, where monotheism still prevailed. Angels, as supernatural servants and emissaries of Yahweh, were perceived as accessible supernatural beings who came to the aid of people in need. They had not taken on divine status, nor were there among Jews in Asia Minor 'angel cults' (in which angels were worshipped in the same way as Yahweh, with ascriptions of praise and glory). The disputed expression, the 'worship of angels', refers to this veneration of angels, and was an appropriate description of calling on angels in magical invocations for help and protection from evil powers in the affairs of daily life
- 2 Initiation into a mystery religion. Dr Arnold's researchers have reaffirmed the earlier conclusions of Martin Dibelius and Sir William Ramsay that the key term *embateuo* in the phrase 'entering the things he had seen' (2:18) was a technical term for the second stage of a mystery initiation, in which a person was led through a series of ecstatic visionary

experiences. Initiates, having passed through a new and victorious life experience, believed they had the knowledge and authority to judge others, while they themselves had been delivered from the powers of darkness.

3 The *stoicheia*, regarded as evil spirits as evil spiritual powers and feared by the adherents of the 'philosophy' who perceived them to be operating directly in the daily affairs of life. In a semi-magical way the Colossians invoked angels for protection. For Paul, however the *Stoicheia* were an integral part of this present evil age. The rules and regulations (cf. 2.21) imposed by them were unnecessary and represent a reversion to a form of slavery under the 'powers' themselves. Believers had already been freed from this demonic tyranny through their identification with Christ.

4 In this remarkable syncretism at Colossae, folk Judaism made a major contribution, as the references to 'wisdom' (from a Solomonic magical tradition), the term 'philosophy' itself, sabbath observance, festivals and new moon celebrations, and 'humility' show.

In conclusion, the author sets out Paul's theological response to these syncretistic challenges at Colossae (pp. 246-309), in terms of Christ's supremacy over and defeat of the powers, and of the significance of Christians participating in his divine fullness. This exposition of Paul's response is a fine piece.

Dr Arnold's book is a creative and convincing reassessment of the Colossian heresy. He may have solved the meaning of disputed phrases such as 'the worship of angels', 'things he has seen on entering' and the *stoicheia*. At the same time, his

work is a helpful corrective to the dominant Jewish mystical interpretation of the last few years that has not satisfactorily accounted for the pagan elements within the syncretism.

Peter T. O'Brien,
Moore College, Sydney

Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul's Imprisonments

Craig S Wansink
Sheffield; Sheffield Academic Press,
1996, 293 pp., cloth, £35.50.

Wansink's volume, originally a PhD thesis under Wayne Meeks, is best divided into two parts: the first, an examination of literature from the Greco-Roman world surrounding prisons and the concept of imprisonment (covering sources from many different backgrounds over an 800 year span); and the second, an analysis of several features of Philippians and Philemon (as the two traditionally genuine Pauline letters among the Prison Epistles), in light of the 'rhetoric of imprisonment'.

The first part of this volume is eye-opening, and should be read by any who wish to understand something about prisons in the ancient world. Wansink is thorough in his examination of the sources and very good at knitting the many different types of literature into a consistent narrative. Reading his descriptions, one catches many glimpses of the potential exegetical pay-off of such material. However, this being said, there are aspects of his analysis of the ancient sources which perhaps need a little more attention.

The first of these is that, in his survey of literature spanning the entire Greco-Roman period, he naturally must take into many

Christian works which post-date the Pauline epistles in question throughout the rest of the book. Although he does introduce a caveat to this fact, noting that each species of literature he uses as evidence has its own *Tendenz*, he does not develop this in his examination of the sources. There are further problems with drawing historical data from other types of literature discussed, such as the ancient romance or novel, but the most telling difficulties are with the late Christian literature. A second area of concern is the very fact that the Pauline corpus and Acts are left almost entirely out of the discussion of ancient prisons. This is reflective of the trend in NT criticism to disparage the usefulness of NT sources, but harmful, in the end, to Wansink's otherwise very helpful epitome of ancient prisons.

Especially convincing in the second half of the book are Wansink's discussions of Phil. 1:19-26 and the background and occasion of Philemon. Anyone dealing with these two areas in future will need to avail themselves of Wansink's arguments here. Problems with the second half revolve mostly around the fact that this study is not as well organised, nor long enough, nor edited as well as it could have been (lack of attention to precision in grammatical and text-critical arguments is especially jarring), and so, several arguments or avenues of interest are not played out as fully as readers may hope. It is also unfortunate that the two halves of the book are not more closely related – the promise of exegetical pay-off, mentioned above, is not fulfilled as often as one might hope.

In closing, the very weaknesses of this study make it obvious that further investigation needs to be carried out in this area. Three specific topics come to mind:

- (1) an examination of the implications of the rhetoric of imprisonment for Ephesians, Colossians, and even 2 Timothy (these are briefly examined in the conclusion to the book, but one gets the definite impression that presupposition, rather than research, is operative there);
- (2) a full discussion of the relationship between honour/shame and imprisonment (Wansink briefly touches on this [pp. 135-36], but not in nearly enough depth); and, finally,
- (3) a discussion of the relationship between the sort of open, house-arrest imprisonment that Paul is said to have experienced in Rome to the material Wansink examines concerning less open imprisonment.

Brook W.R. Pearson,
Roehampton Institute, London

Introduction to the New Testament Textual Criticism

J. Harold Greenlee
Massachusetts: Hendricson,
1995, 160 pp., pb., £8.99.

Since first published in 1964, this book has enjoyed the position of one of the best books of its kind. This revised edition received a warm welcome from a NT scholar as a 'useful and important primer for years to come'.

The author expresses the aim of this book as 'simply to present the facts and principles of NT textual criticism that are generally accepted', which he seems to have achieved remarkably well. However, this book is not only a simple presentation of facts and principles but provides practical guidance. Greenlee leads the readers to practise textual criticism, providing example and sample questions.

The three questions he raises as the point of departure succinctly summarize the purpose and structure of this book: 'What did a book of the NT look like when it was first written? How were the books of the NT handed down through the centuries so as to reach us as we now know them? Can we safely conclude that the NT today accurately represents what the authors of these books originally wrote?'

To answer the first question the author describes the material used to produce the book in the time of the NT. The author describes the papyrus and parchment paper, stylus and reed pen and quill pen, etc., and the scroll and codex, and how they were made and what characteristics they had in relationship with the NT books. Also the styles and abbreviations used in the NT manuscripts are explained.

To answer the second question the author introduces the sources of the NT according to three divisions of 1) Greek manuscript, 2) versions, 3) patristic quotations. Equipped with illustrations his explanation provides readers with vivid idea of what the manuscripts look like. He also explains the transmission of the text according to the progress of history, and how the variants were produced by the intentional errors of the scribes. The kinds of changes and errors found are introduced. He explains how text critics collected, and arranged and published Greek texts.

Lastly, the history of development of modern textual criticism is summarized, the textual theory of representative scholars are introduced, the local texts are explained, and some important modern editions of the Greek NT are listed. Also practical methods of textual criticism are explained, for example, how to read the critical

apparatus of some editions of the Greek NT, how to solve the problem of variants by investigation of internal and external witnesses on established principles, and how to collate and classify the manuscripts. Also the reader/students of the NT are encouraged to practise the textual criticism for themselves.

Written succinctly and easy to read, this book can be recommended not only to beginners of NT studies but also to all who think seriously about their canon of faith.

Young Chul Whang,
Roehampton Institute, London

Whose Bible is it anyway?

Philip R. Davies
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,
1995, 150 pp., hb., £27.00/\$40.00.

This collection of six diverse essays considers matters about the Bible and its interpretation. The lengthiest presentation argues that the Hebrew Bible can best be taught in a university setting by severing its connections with Christian theology. The emphasis on a conscious objectivity is commendable but the reduction of theology and other ideologies to two systems in which the nontheological approach is more 'open' to alternatives raises questions about the diversity of theological methods that exist on the present horizon. It is not at all certain that a nontheological approach is more open than some theological alternatives. Davies considers the canon and argues that the concept of an agreed upon group of texts with authority is not found in the early Church. He asks an extremely important question about canon. However, it would have been good to consider all the evidence (e.g. the report of

Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality

Rebecca Merrill
Grand Rapids: Baker,
1997, 272 pp., \$16.99

Melito of Sardis from the second century). The second half of the book attempts to illustrate Davies' approach. Thus the eating of fruit in Genesis 3 is part of the deity's will in order to achieve the goals of human domination of the earth and their multiplication and filling of the world. The Abraham narratives are stories about the patriarch and his buddy, Yhwh, and how they try to get the better of each other. The psalms of lament are examples of how the elite and literate class forced the oppressed elements of society to pay for written prayers about their miserable condition. Daniel 7 is an account of how an older god dies and is replaced by a younger deity. While these interpretations are very creative, they do not always consider all the implications or constraints of the textual data. For example, the analysis of Genesis 3 is a good one but why assume that this was God's will at the time that it occurred? Could it not have been the divine will for humans to have the fruit, but only after a maturing process that was cut short according to the narrative? Davies assumes that most of the ancient Israelite society was illiterate and therefore had to pay the elite to write prayers of lament. However, his argument would seem to produce the opposite effect, it would drive any more people to learn how to read and write so that they did not need to pay others to write for them. Perhaps the point of the book is to stimulate thought and discussion. In this it succeeds.

Richard S. Hess,
Denver Theological Seminary

The veritable flood of books on the role of women continues, and there is no sign of the flood abating. Since books and articles on this topic are exceedingly common, we need to discern at the outset the distinctive contribution of any new work on the issue. Ploughing old ground at this point in the discussion is not fruitful for readers or writers. One of the virtues of this book authored by Rebecca Merrill Groothuis is that she has written one of the clearest books in defense of egalitarianism. If readers desire a lucid and logically forceful case for egalitarianism in a volume that is of moderate size, then Groothuis' book is the one for them. The work is divided into two relatively equal parts. In the first section of the book Groothuis makes a sustained case for her notion of equality. She titles the first part of the book, 'The Biblical Case for Gender Equality.' In the second part of the book she interacts with texts which are advanced by traditionalists, titling this part, 'Assessing Traditionalist Proof Texts'.

In my estimation the second part of her book does not warrant its publication. Her response to the biblical texts is essentially a retread of arguments which are quite familiar to those engaged in the discussion. The contribution of the book surfaces in part one, and what she says here drives the engine of the entire book. Groothuis argues at some length that the notion that women are subordinate in role but equal in essence is logically fallacious. She notes that subordination in and of itself does not necessarily

connote inferiority of being. For example, children for a certain period of their lives are subordinate to their parents. But if anyone insists that all women, in all circumstances and for all their lives are subordinate to men, then (says Groothuis) it follows that women are inferior to men. Traditionalists have not been willing to face the fact, according to Groothuis, and thus they have equivocated in saying that women are equal in being and essence and yet have a different role. The only way to preserve a truly biblical view of equality, says Groothuis, is to recognize that equality of essence between men and women also involves equality opportunity. This is not to say that all women are qualified to serve, say, as pastors. Her point is that all roles must in principle be open to women, and if women have the ability and talent to fulfill the task under consideration, then they should not be prevented from fulfilling that role merely because of their gender.

Groothuis' book certainly merits a detailed response, but that is not possible here. The fundamental flaw in the book is that biblical exegesis is not the foundation of her argument. Even though part one is titled, 'The Biblical Case for Gender Equality', there is scant evidence that biblical interpretation informs her discussion, nor is it at all clear that Groothuis derives her view of equality from the biblical text. She brings to the text her western, democratic, and enlightenment view of equality (p. 46), and her whole argument flows from this philosophical starting point. It is instructive, therefore, that when she confronts the biblical texts in part two, she often reminds readers that more than one view of the passages in question is 'possible'. And given her view of equality, it is unsurprising that the egalitarian view wins out. The

structure and argumentation of the book illustrate the point being made, for her philosophical notion of equality informs the first part of the book, and *then* analysis of the biblical texts follows. Many texts, of course, have more than one 'possible' meaning, but the task of the interpreter is to discern which view is the most probable. For example, it is certainly 'possible' that the word *kephale* means 'source'. But the improbability of such a definition has been demonstrated by the thorough studies by Grudem and Fitzmyer, articles which Groothuis does not even mention in her endnotes. I am unpersuaded that Groothuis' work reveals a patient listening to the text to see what is really there, even if that word is alien to our culture. The model utilized is not faith seeking understanding, but reflects a method where one's understanding is imposed on faith. I realize that different opinions exist on the role of women in evangelical circles, and thus what worries me more than the conclusions in the book is the method employed. If applied to other areas of evangelical theology, the effects would be deleterious indeed.

Thomas R. Schreiner,
Bethel Theological Seminary

Ethnicity and the Bible **Biblical Interpretation Series Volume 19**

Mark G Brett, ed.
Leiden: Brill,
1996, x + 509 pp., hb., \$158.25.

This volume addresses an extremely important topic with a collection of essays by a variety of authors. Unfortunately, only four of the twenty-one authors write from places other than Australia, Canada, Europe, and the U.S.A. Brett's own introduction provides a useful survey of the modern and ancient issues of ethnicity

that dominate the volume. In many cases, the writers discern value on both sides of the issues, generally in terms of both drawing boundaries and defining different people groups and in terms of appreciating the ambiguity and intermixture between them (though, not all, for example Edelman object to any positive evidence for discerning early Israel despite the contrary conclusions of many archaeologists working in the field). Levenson's essay is a particularly good one with its nuanced survey of the difficulties in defining universalism and particularism in Judaism and Christianity; a survey that concludes with a recognition of the need for the preservation of both. Despite Matthew's accounts such as the one about the magi at Christ's birth, Sim concludes that the Matthean community of Christ was exclusive to Jews. The remaining New Testament essays study the epistles. Paul's views and especially his epistle to the Galatians attract two writers who consider multiculturalism (Barclay) and the creation of a new identity part from Jew and Gentile (Esler). For Stegemann, the statement about Cretans in Titus 1:12 is 'an ancient form of racism'.

The second part of the volume considers the cultures of indigenous peoples and the politics of interpretation. Richard and Hawley speak for Latin American and outlines hermeneutical principles that not only describe the interpretation of the Bible but also serve as a basis for reconstructing both Christianity and society. Thanzauva and Hnuni examine the hermeneutics of tribal peoples in India and consider how laws such as those governing the alien might be used to protect and empower these minorities. Hume provides examples of the assimilation

of Christian teaching into aboriginal traditions and beliefs. Jobling and Rose discuss stereotypes, including Philistines and women, and then criticise the new literary critics (Polzin, Alter, but especially Sternberg) for exclusivist methodologies and assumptions. Apparently, none of these has the opportunity to respond in this book. Riches discusses some results of a project that examines Western and African readings of the Bible, although there is a distinct emphasis on evaluating Sanders' method in relating Paul to Judaism. Craffert and Segovia conclude the essays with two contributions emphasising tolerance and openness to non-Western approaches of biblical interpretation and application. Like all collections of essays, this one is a mixture of quality and quantity. Nevertheless, it is one of the few substantial introductions to an increasingly relevant and important area of biblical theological studies.

Richard S. Hess,
Denver Theological Seminary

Who Needs Theology: An Invitation to the Study of God

Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson
Leicester: IVP,
1996, 150 pp., pb., £9.99.

As a college student I recall pinning a comic strip from Peanuts on my notice board which gave expression to what I occasionally felt myself, 'Who needs theology?' Now, I find myself at a theological college trying to instil into similarly questioning minds how exciting and exhilarating a subject theology can be. This book by Grenz and Olson admirably fulfils this task for the seminary student as well as for the Christian who seeks a deeper understanding of his/her faith

(whilst also utilising Peanuts to good effect).

The book begins with an *apologia* for theology. 'Everyone - especially every Christian - is a theologian ...' This is a sobering thought for those Christians who deride theological reflection as an unnecessary waste of time and energy. The next chapter develops the ideas that not all theologies are equal. The authors differentiate between five types of theological reflection: folk, lay, ministerial, professional and academic. Whilst not all theologies are equal, they are interrelated and the lay person cannot do without the academic theologian. The following chapters of the book attempt to define and defend theology, state its aims and tools, before culminating in two closing chapters on theology and life.

Theology is defined as 'reflecting on and articulating the beliefs about God and the world that Christians share as followers of Jesus Christ'. The aim of 'good theology' being to ground the lives of Christians in 'biblically informed, Christian truth'. Here the authors are at their most convincing. In their emphasis upon the need for Christians to decipher the truth through sound theological reflection they show how heresies prosper when they become indifferent to their intellectual task. Being faithful to Christ means 'living in accordance with a set of beliefs'. This includes disciplining the mind and not merely having certain feelings and emotions.

The tools utilized by the theologian being the biblical message, the theological heritage and the thought-forms of contemporary culture. It is here that the authors are at their least convincing. Despite their claims to the contrary they betray the tendency apparent in most modern theology of relativizing

the biblical messages. Is the doctrine of the Trinity or the Atonement - which they define most admirably - an expression of God's 'once and for all' revelation of himself given in his Word or a mere 'model of God and of God's relationship with the world'? Do we have in the Bible a 'literal and direct' revelation of God, or only an 'analogue or disclosure models that have a structural similarity to the divine reality' (p. 79)? The authors favour the latter.

Although theology must address the questions that the world is asking it must never forget that in the end 'the world's questions are not questions that lead to life'. In its fundamental task theology must be ever faithful to the questions that God is asking of the world.

A book such as this, that is intended to commend theology to students and lay persons, should have included a list of books for further reading and study. But despite these shortcomings this volume deserves its description as an invitation to the study of God and provides a valid answer to the question, 'who needs Theology?'

Euros Wyn Jones,
Welsh Independents' College,
Aberystwyth

The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age: Theological Essays on Culture and Religion

Kevin J. Vanhoozer ed
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
1997, 166 pp., pb., £12.99.

Must the empirical fact of the presence of many different religions (plurality) lead to the acceptance of pluralism as a worldview (the belief that the triune God has other names)? With the growing heterogeneity of populations and cultures,

this question is becoming increasingly urgent. At the Fifth Edinburgh Dogmatics Conferences, August 31 to September 3, 1993 a group of scholars addressed this question, and this volume is a collection of their papers presented at that conference.

The contributors deal with a wider variety of intertwined issues. Lesslie Newbigin argues that Christian doctrine, with its prime model in the doctrine of the trinity, should play an explicitly, vigorous part in the debate that is taking place in the public square. It has something to say to the prevailing tendencies toward individualism and the exercise of power. Gerald Bray discusses the way the apologists related their views to those of pagan philosophy around them. Stephen Williams considers the phenomenological similarity and differences of Trinitarian Christianity and other world religions. Kevin Vanhoozer argues that one can engage in dialogue with those of other religious persuasions, without assuming that all are talking about the same subject matter, by inviting others into the narrative that relates God in his trinitarian relations. Roland Poupin considers the question of whether there is a genuine trinitarian experience within Sufism. Colin Gunton relates the question of whether there is pluralism to the broader issues of how we gain knowledge, exploring the relationship of general revelation, natural theology, and a theology of nature, to the question of the Trinity, and Henri Blocher examines the issues of transcendence, immanence, and the Trinity. The final three chapters by Trevor Hart, Gary Badcock, and Richard Bauckham, deal with the relevance of the respective views of Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, and Jürgen Moltmann to the topic of

the Trinity and religious pluralism.

As is typical of symposia, the chapters differ in their quality and relevance to the topic. Each of the authors demonstrates wide knowledge of the pertinent literature and the significant issues related to the subject. Theological students will probably find the most helpful chapters, with respect to general theological topics, to be those of Newbigin, Williams, Gunton, and Blocher. A more explicit indication of the logical relationships among the several chapters, and the way in which these are progressively expected to contribute to the overall subject, would be desirable. As it is, the chapters seem somewhat scattered in their focus. Some authors rather explicitly contradict each other (e.g., Vanhoozer and Gunton on Narrative). And, in light of Vanhoozer's work on speech-act theory, the reader would expect a more explicit relating of that discipline to the topics at hand.

Factual and typographical errors are few and only one (notes 42 and 44 on page 55) is egregious. For the most part, the essays reflect an evangelical and biblical theology rejecting pluralism, but in an irenic fashion. In most cases, they presuppose a considerable familiarity with major world religions and with the debates about their interrelationships, at a level not usually possessed by students in the early stages of theological study. This is an important contribution to literature on religious pluralism, but not as an introduction.

Craig Blomberg,
Denver Theological Seminary,
Denver.

Not the Way It's Supposed to Be, A Breviary of Sin

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr
Leicester: Apollos,
1995, xiii + 198 pp., £14.99.

Recently someone who informed us that he had just started and Alpha Course initiated a discussion on the internet. He challenged Christians to respond with an explanation of sin which was free from theological jargon and reserved the right to fail unsatisfactory answers. I would have been tempted to submit Cornelius Plantinga's breviary of sin. The book is a fresh attempt to demonstrate the reality of the traditional Christian understanding of sin by exposing its nature and dynamics within contemporary culture and society. Thus Plantinga seems to present the 'main themes that arise from within the Christian understanding of sin ... through some of the currents of modernity in order to present them afresh in a common idiom, illustrated from a variety of literary, journalistic and general sources'. (p. xiii)

In my judgement the project is very successful although the contemporary illustrations take for granted a largely American readership. Who are the writing to when they write to the IRS? More seriously, a narrow cultural focus makes the book less useful for other contexts where many of Plantinga's examples would either seem remote or else confirm prejudices about the shortcomings of US society! We would need different versions rather than mere translations of the book for various parts of the world but this is inevitable. Different illustrations might be required to illuminate the reality of sin in, say, Japanese, Pakistani or Nigerian contexts of society and culture. In spite of

this the book develops an explanation and analysis of sin that no member of the Christian community can ignore.

The introduction sets out Plantinga's aim to expose as the root of the whole range of human miseries. Thus sin distorts our character, corrupts powerful human capacities, perverts special human excellencies and consequently both causes and results from misery. In addition, sin operates in some way or other as a casual factor in the evil we experience through the accidents and large scale human and natural catastrophes which appear to be beyond our moral control. All of this presupposes the idea of sin which Plantinga proceeds to develop in the first chapter, introducing the sub-title of the book. There is a Christian understanding of the world in terms of the way things are supposed to be as designed and intended by God and Plantinga develops this in terms of the concept of *Shalom* as found in the writings of the Hebrew prophets. Thus the way things ought to be is 'the webbing together of God, humans and all creation in justice, fulfilment and delight' (p. 10). Conversely sin is 'not the way it's supposed to be' but is to be explained as corruption, perversion and disintegration.

Although Plantinga recognises the traditional definition of sin as a religious as well as moral concept: 'Sin is a culpable and personal affront to a personal God' (p. 13) he is also making important assumptions about the relationship between God's will and the moral order. Ideas of *shalom* in terms of universal flourishing, wholeness and delight imply that we can appreciate this goodness in its own right, not just because it is an order of things commanded by God for reasons it is impossible for hum beings to appreciate.

'God is, after all, not arbitrarily offended' (p. 14), is as much a remark about our ability to appreciate his consistency as we 'agree on many of the broad outlines and main ingredients of a transformed world' (p. 11) as a purely theological statement. In contrast to some theological views, which hold that a genuine understanding of sin must be confined to the Christian community, Plantinga considers that many of his arguments are entirely comprehensible to adherents of other religions and secularists. Thus his book also assumes the apologetic function of extending awareness of sin beyond the confines of the Christian community.

The book's analysis and illustration of sin yields useful insights into the meaning of traditions doctrines such as total depravity which can naively be considered to include the malfunction of human rational process as such. Instead Plantinga shows how it is the purposes and motives behind our rationality which are polluted and corrupted: 'Sin attaches to intention, memory, thought, speech, intelligent action ... and transforms them into weapons' (p. 77). The same rigorous scientific method can be used to 'conquer a disease ... or manufacture one and sell it to terrorists' (p. 77) just as sound procedures of argument can be used to establish true beliefs and important moral principles but also to attack and undermine their influence on people's lives. Indeed, as Plantinga shows, sin is parasitic on the good and wholesome and: 'The smartest blows against shalom are struck by people an movements of impressive resourcefulness strength and intelligence'. (p. 89). Equally useful is the recognition that 'moral evil is social and structural as well as personal: it comprises a vast historical and cultural matrix that includes

traditions, old patterns of relationship and behaviour, atmospheres of expectation, social habits' (p. 25) and the discussion of culpability in situations where states of mind and structures are outside our control or awareness of evil.

Other themes explored by the book include evasion and self deception, the relationship between sin and folly and addiction which is described as 'a dramatic portrait of some of the main dynamics of sin' (p. 147). Typically the discussion is aptly illustrated, important points are well made and it would be difficult to disagree with the conclusions. The analysis of envy as motive for attack has a consistent and uncomfortable ring of truth as does the final chapter as it describes various ways in human being attempt to shrug off responsibility for evil.

There is an overdone cleverness and slick point scoring in some contemporary Christian American writing which I can find irritating to read (perhaps because of my own cultural bias). However, I enjoyed this book which, apart from everything else, is a good read. Certainly Plantinga had little trouble in finding targets that were easy to hit but his examples are always well chosen and appropriate. Sentences like: 'In sin as on ice, people coming out of a skid tend to oversteer (p. 86) are worth filing away for future use. Naturally, many of his insights originate from previous thinkers and names like C.S. Lewis appear frequently in the footnotes which also confirm the impression that Plantinga is thoroughly acquainted with the academic theological and philosophical background to his material.

Perhaps the need for this book and its future revisions and successors is best expressed by Plantinga's concluding comment: '... without full disclosure on sin,

the gospel of grace becomes impertinent, unnecessary, and finally uninteresting'.

Alan Russell,
Ballywalter

The Holy Spirit

Sinclair Ferguson
Leicester: IVP,
1996, 288 pp., pb., £14.99.

When I was an undergraduate, some two-and-a-half decades ago (alas), it was often said that good books on the Holy Spirit were very hard to come by. (The textbook from which I was taught was George Hendry's *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology* which was even then somewhat dated in its feel if not in its content.) And then came the charismatic movement but still good books on the Spirit were in equally short supply. It is true that we had Dunn on the NT evidence, Lampe's unitarian *God as Spirit*, C.D.F. Moule's binitarianism and latterly Tom Smail's creative fusion of Barthian orthodoxy with charismatic experience but somehow the Holy Spirit remained theology's Cinderella despite the then current talk of prophecy, tongues, gifts and renewal. It would be an overstatement to say that we have had to wait until now for a balanced treatment of the doctrine (much good work was produced during the 1980s including that by Yves Congar and Smail) yet we can now safely say that this excellent volume in IVP's 'Contours of Christian Theology' series should fit anyone's bill as a 'good' book on the Spirit.

Sinclair Ferguson's eleven chapters include so much that is profitable: on the Spirit in Scripture; the Spirit in Christ; faith, repentance, and holiness; the church as the sacramental

community of the Holy Spirit; spiritual gifts including that of preaching; the Spirit in creation and in redemption as well as the Holy Spirit as the author of order. The emphasis is reformed (though irenically so) and there is much evidence of Calvin's explicit influence and that of the Puritan giants John Owen and Jonathan Edwards, yet Ferguson writes with an enviable lightness of touch and always with present-day concerns well to the fore. Not all *Themelios* readers will agree with his cessationist conclusions (though this reviewer finds them on the whole compelling) nor will they concur with each of his interpretations of the Scriptural material. I doubt, for instance, whether the contention that, 'there is only one kind of tongues-speaking in Scripture, and this is a God-given ability to speak foreign languages ordinarily unknown to the speaker' can, in fact, be sustained. Neither is it not altogether clear how the concept of spiritual illumination which he affirms will automatically safeguard Christians from the subjectivism which he sees as being endemic in much current thought and practice. Yet generally Ferguson is balanced, erudite and often hugely impressive. Like Calvin he reaches both the heights and the depths in his treatment of union with Christ and participation in him through the Spirit; this is reformed theology at its most sublime. In all this is an exceedingly stimulating and heart-warming contribution to our understanding of the Spirit's person and work: without doubt a 'good' book indeed.

Densil Morgan,
University of Wales, Bangor

The Church: Contours of Christian Theology

E.P. Clowney
Leicester: IVP,
1995, 336 pp., pb., £12.99.

Clowney provides the reader with a thorough introduction to conservative ecclesiology. Although the *Contours of Christian Theology* series is written with all levels of theological students in mind, it will benefit those with little or no background on the subject the most.

The foundation of the work is Clowney's belief that the church started as the people of god in the OT rather than at Pentecost. This stress is both on the need for the Christian to see the church as a universal entity and the importance of the local church in day to day affairs of the Christian. The work of the individual Christian is necessary and important, but in order for the church to carry out its mission the individual Christian must see the importance of the church in the plan of God. The church is Christ's representative on earth. As that representative it needs to carry out the commands of God in unity so that it may be a collective witness to the world. The problems of ecumenism are discussed with the conclusion that the gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be watered down if the church is to be an effective witness.

There is interaction throughout the work with both Roman Catholic and conservative scholars. In his discussion of Roman Catholic views, the hallmark of the author is fair, and balanced criticism. This is evident in his treatment of Matthew chapter 16, church government and sacraments. Most of the interaction, however, is with conservative scholars. Clowney does not accept any

view uncritically, but presents his view based on the biblical evidence and uses the relevant secondary literature to argue his case.

A helpful use of the historical issues is seen throughout the book. Clowney uses examples from pre-Chalcedonian theology, Reformation theology and modern theology to allow the reader to understand important background issues and grasp necessary concepts. This is one of the strong points of the work.

A good interaction with contemporary issues is also present. This is especially seen in chapters 16 and 17, entitled 'The gifts of the Spirit in the church', and, 'The gifts of prophecy in the church', respectively. Clowney also devotes a chapter to the ministry of women in the church. This chapter, however, tends to skirt the main issues and enters into a somewhat confusing discussion on family.

In an otherwise valuable and very readable treatment, one minor criticism should be mentioned. Clowney tends to use certain slippery terms without any discussion of definition. For example his use of terms of 'fundamentalism' and 'evangelicalism' lead to some confusion. Clowney's use of evangelicalism could be seen as synonymous with fundamentalism (pp. 22-3). Most scholars would not form that close of a bond between the two movements, in fact many view evangelicalism as somewhat of a reaction to fundamentalism (C.F. Henry, G.M. Marsden).

Clowney has provided the beginning to intermediate student of ecclesiology a valuable work in the conservative tradition. While the book claims to be written for theological students, ministers, and church leaders it is doubtful that the more advanced of that group

will profit greatly, other than reviewing some important issues and concepts in the doctrine.

Craig D. Allert,
Roehampton Institute
London

Touching the Soul of Islam

Bill A. Musk
Crowborough: Monarch,
1995, 256 pp., pb., £8.99.

'A society's culture is a reflection of its soul'. So begins yet another easy-to-read book from Bill Musk that invites us beyond the theory of the text-books and the prejudices of western liberalism to consider how Muslim people think and live. In *Touching the Soul of Islam*, Musk dons his 'cultural anthropologist' hat to explore Middle Eastern culture. The aim is so to hear the 'Soul Music' (the title of the last chapter) of Muslim people that 'our apostolic mission will be more suitably fulfilled as we learn to express it in ways appropriate to human spirits very different from our own' (p. 20).

Each chapter takes two themes in tension. 'Male and female', 'Family and individual' and 'Honour and shame' follow ideas common to many writings on non-western cultures, but Musk brings them to life with his storytelling gift and quotations from contemporary literature. Other themes may be less familiar. 'Hospitality and violence' and 'Brotherhood and rivalry' illuminate different sides of cultures with strong group cohesion. 'Time and space' and 'Language and silence' explore priorities, relationships and communication. 'Resignation and manipulation' considers how people respond to a totally powerful God.

Each chapter considers implications for Christian

witness, for Christian minorities, and for converts. I particularly appreciated the use of Middle Eastern cultures to illuminate the Bible. Have you wondered why Abraham did not leave Haran until his father died, or why all of Achan's family were executed because of one person's sins? Chapter 3, 'Family and individual', offers a convincing explanation. Chapter 5, 'Hospitality and violence', brings the parable of Lk. 11:5-8 alive in the context of Middle Eastern hospitality, but also traces themes of violence through the Bible. Chapter 8, 'Brotherhood and rivalry' explores NT ideas of brotherhood and their implications for the church. There is much food for thought here.

There is also much to help Christians in their witness. Appreciation of the relationship between Biblical and Islamic themes can help us to introduce Muslims to a Bible that speaks directly to them, and to avoid confusing them with our own explanations.

However, the reader needs to note that Musk is dealing specifically with Middle Eastern culture: while much of the book is also relevant to other Islamic cultures, some is not. I found myself constantly asking whether any given aspect of culture was Islamic or merely Middle Eastern, and what might be the relationship between the two.

Musk does not explore this, but is aware of his limitations (see p. 19). Study questions on each chapter encourage reflection on what might apply to particular Muslims. They also challenge readers to reflect on their own culture, their understanding of Scripture, their spiritual life, and their relationships with Muslims. If you don't have time to read the whole book, it would be worth just reading these questions: you

might then make time for reading the rest!

The bibliography is also worth reading. It ranges from contemporary Arab novels through anthropological and sociological studies to stories of converts and books by Christian missionaries. The index is disappointing until you learn to subtract 2 or 3 from each page reference number.

I hope that this book will be widely read and thought on, and that the whole church of God may pray with Musk (p. 210):

Clothe us in your Spirit, that we, reaching beyond the known and familiar and entering the unique worlds of our fellow men, may bring those who know you not within the clasp of your perfect salvation; to the glory of your holy name. Amen

We need to pray and work for this in more contexts than that of Islam!

Ida Glaser,
Crosslinks, London.

Submitting to God: Introducing Islam - Communities of Faith Series

Vivienne Stacey
London: Hodder and Stoughton
1997, 117 pp., pb., £6.99.

There is an amazing amount of information in this short book. It is the first in a new series on world faiths edited by Walter Riggans, General Director of the Churches Ministry among Jewish People. His preface tells us that the intention is to produce a resource, written from a Christian perspective, that will both 'capture the essential and timeless values of each faith' and 'give full attention to contemporary issues and personalities'. The motivation is to be the principle of loving our neighbours as ourselves, so that each faith is to be treated with

the same honesty and generosity as Christians might hope for from people writing about Christianity.

Each book is to be similarly organised. The present one has ten short chapters, on world view, key figures, the community of the faithful, sacred texts, fundamental doctrines, spirituality and worship, ethics and morality, religious structures and propagating the faith. The final three pages, entitled 'Concluding Reflections', are a call to recognise common humanity and the challenge presented to both Christians and Muslims by a secular, post-modern world. Stacey finishes with an affirmation of her Christian faith and by making explicit the attitude which undergirds her writing:

From a biblical perspective I see no need for competition, estrangement or hostility between Muslims and Christians or between Muslims and Christians or between Muslims and Christians and those of other convictions. I believe in the uniqueness of the revelation of God in Christ but I always want to share this faith in love and humility. (p. 104).

This conclusion does not come from someone who is seeking to idealise Islam, but from someone who has travelled widely in the Muslim world and has lived for more than twenty years as part of the Christian minority in Pakistan. She is aware of human rights and problems and of jihad (p. 78-9), of the difficulties associated with conversion (p. 99-101), and of Islamic mission in Europe (p. 94-5); but she treats all these with an understanding of Muslim perspectives, a recognition of common human weaknesses and a loving, Christ-centred warmth. If even a little of this understanding and warmth 'rubs

off on her readers, the book will have served an eternal purpose.

Its stated purposes are, however, somewhat ambitious. Is it possible to cover so broad a field in so few pages, one wonders? The choice must be a superficial treatment or a very large amount of material packed into a small space. Stacey chooses the latter option, leaving little room for explanation or reflection. She succeeds in including most of the information that might be included in a basic module in Islam, and does it in accessible language and in short, digestible sections. She also gives details of different Islamic organisations and communities.

However, the book is not one to read from cover to cover without some prior knowledge. It is a mine of useful information for someone already familiar with basic Islam, or could function as an introduction for someone who was happy to read only few pages at a time. I would most recommend it as a handbook for anyone doing a course on Islam. There is a good index and a glossary, and the bibliography includes many interesting books that might not be included on a basic reading list.

What I liked best were the references to living Muslim communities and the occasional quotations from Muslim poets. The first helps the reader to understand the diversity and humanity of Muslim peoples, and the second to feel something of the heart of those who are seeking after God. Perhaps the most memorable quotation is from the Iranian poet, Saadi. It gives a reason for Christians to attend to other faiths:

'You who remain indifferent to
the burden of pain of others
Do not deserve to be called
human. (p. 102)

Ida Glaser,
Newcastle upon Tyne

Human Nature at the Millennium: Reflections on the Integration of Psychology and Christianity

Malcolm A Jeeves
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House and
Leicester: Apollon,
1997, 254 pp., pb., £14.99.

Academic and research psychologists will appreciate this latest volume of Dr Jeeves, a honorary research professor at the University of St Andrews School of Psychology in Great Britain. In many ways this book is an update of two of his earlier books, *Psychology and Christianity: The View Both Ways* and *Psychology through the Eyes of Faith* which he jointly wrote with David Myers. Dr Jeeves' distinguished work as a research psychologist in the area of neuropsychology eminently qualifies him to review the status of academic and research psychology as we near the end of the 2nd Christian Millennium. He reviews the current status of brain research as it related to mind, spirituality, and behaviour. He discusses human versus animal nature as well as consciousness research and how each of these topics relates to determinism, free will, and responsibility. His concluding chapter, entitled the Future of Science and Faith: Beyond Perspectivalism?, looks to the future of the integration enterprise.

Material in this book is written at an advanced level best suited for advanced undergraduates of beginning post-graduate students. Jeeves has written helpful, closing summaries of each chapter. Readers unfamiliar with a specific area may benefit from reading this closing section of the chapter before reading the chapter, although his six page summary of the seven page chapter 13 slightly stretches the meaning of the word 'summary'.

Most American readers will be disappointed, however when they read the author's evaluations of the applied branches of psychology: clinical counselling, and psychotherapy. This disappointment reflects, in part, the difference between the field of Christian psychology in Britain and its characteristics in North America. In Britain the emphasis of Christians working in the field of psychology has been in the academic, research, and experimental branches of the discipline. Perhaps this impression Americans have of British Christian psychology is because of the Christian authors published and readily available in the US: Jeeves and Donald Mackay as two examples. Most of the clinical material coming from Christians in Britain has more of a pastoral tone to it. The scene in North America is quite different. If anything, the larger number of Christians working in the field labour in the applied branches as opposed to the research branches of psychology. Likewise, most of the integration work done in North America by Christians has been in the applied fields.

Jeeves has chosen to reflect on the integration of the applied branches of psychology at the end of this millennium by focusing on the critiques of Robyn Dawes whose 1994 work, 'House of Cards', is very critical of the field of psychotherapy. While all responsible clinicians will grant that the field of psychotherapy is deserving of some sharpening criticism, they would also expect a more extensive set of reflections on Christian integration work in the applied branches of our discipline than Jeeves has given us.

We appreciate that Jeeves has identified his attitudes on this subject. Those psychologists working at the more

experimental, biological end of the psychological continuum view with considerable scepticism the claims to be scientific made by most to the personality theorists' (p. 170). Yet Jeeves gives his readers little evidence that he is aware of the empirical revolution that has occurred in the field of personality theory in the last five years: namely, the strong research base for the Big Five trait theory. The author holds similar attitudes toward psychotherapy an counselling.

Academic psychologist, perhaps including Jeeves, sometimes seem to be embarrassed that the field of psychology has an applied arm. They express great antipathy to all things not proven empirically, and they have a point. But the antipathy is mutual. Applied clinicians wonder how they can use the work of the academic researcher who labours over hemispheric brain studies when the next narcissistic personality client comes for his appointment in one hour. The gap between the research and the applied branches of our field is as wide as ever, as evidenced in the US by the rift between the American Psychological Society and the American Psychological Association. In the 215 footnotes in the book, Jeeves refers to only four articles in the *Journal of Psychology and Theology* and no articles in the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*. We do not know why the author has chosen not to include this mass of American integrative work in his book evaluating the status of integration.

I fear there may be two misuses made of this title. 1. The anti-psychology movement in the US will no doubt use the criticisms Jeeves makes of psychotherapy as part of their reckless assault on the entire field of psychology. 2. Clinicians will be discouraged by the style of language

Dr Jeeves has chosen to use regarding psychotherapists: 'so-called professional psychotherapists' (p. 152), approvingly utilising material from Dawes who speaks of the self-preservation and self-aggrandisement motivations of clinicians (p. 153), and his call for the church to move to lay counsellors who are 'ready to offer their talents without financial rewards to their fellow Christians' (p. 153). (Jeeves makes this call without the logical corollary to it: that we should abandon use of a professional, trained clergy since lay persons can do it as well and won't be paid for their service). This language may drive clinicians further away from the collaboration with researchers that Jeeves says they so desperately need.

Readers looking for an excellent summary of the integration enterprise between academic psychology and Christianity will find no better title anywhere. Readers who are interested in a helpful summary of the integration enterprise between academic psychology and Christianity will find no better title anywhere. Readers who are interested in a helpful summary of the integration enterprise between applied psychology and Christianity will have to look elsewhere, however,

James R Beck,

Denver Seminary, Denver, CO

The Discerning Reader: Christian Perspectives on Literature and Theory

David Barratt, Roger Pooley, Leland Ryken eds
Leicester: Apollós/Grand Rapids: Baker,
1995, 320 pp., pb., £10.99.

The Discerning Reader is a collection of essays addressing a variety of issues faced by the Christian student of literature. The book is separated into two

main sections, one theoretical, the other dealing with exemplary texts in the study of English literature. The first section addresses broad introductory topics such as the function of literature, the literary 'canon', and the rôle of interpretative communities in the process of reading as well as the more specific 'schools' of criticism, such as Marxist/materialist criticism, 'Christian poetics', feminist criticism, and deconstructionism.

Section two moves from the Bible in literary criticisms through Shakespeare, Milton, the Romantic poets, and Hardy, on to two more recent authors, Margaret Atwood and Thomas Pynchon.

The editors' aim is lofty - to produce a sort of hand-book for Christian students of literature. It fulfils this goal in part, covering as it does the more important schools of criticism and major texts of the Anglo-American literary tradition. There is a problem, though, in the assumed 'Christian perspective' from which this takes place.

What exactly is the 'Christian perspective' with which the majority of the authors in this volume approach literary studies? Unfortunately, a lack of discussion of this point leaves the reader feeling that the kind of Christianity being brought to bear is more of an *ideology* than a religion. Perhaps it is a natural conclusion to the 'postmodern' age, with its supposed emphasis on multiplicity of voices and approaches, that Christianity, once the dominant voice, should be clamouring to be allowed to sing in the choir.

A noticeable exception to this trend in the book was found refreshingly in a postscript to John Schad's essay discussing Thomas Pynchon's *The Cry of*

Lot 49: 'I am not sure how helpful it is to speak of a 'Christian reading' ... In one sense ... the answer to how I arrived at a Christian reading (if I ever did) is by being a Christian - being a Christian not only when reading but also when not reading ... [A]t the same time as seeking to save the text I also sought to lose it; that is, to allow the novel to rewrite the text that is Christianity without my beliefs foreclosing that process. If one name for the Christian God is Word or speech, then in one sense there is, in language, no outside of God.' (pp. 262-3) This is perhaps the only place in the book where the problem of Christianity and culture is addressed without an assumed ideological conclusion.

An essay that seems almost out of place in the book is Leland Ryken's on the Bible. Ryken's appeal to 'traditional criticism' as the basis for any reasonable literary criticism, but specifically for literary approaches to the Bible, is fraught with many difficulties, not least of which is the question of where one would find this 'traditional' criticism. Apparently, it is a criticism uninformed by any of the copious discussion that has taken place on the subject since the days of the 'New Criticism'. That Ryken figures as one of the editors of this book may explain why most of the criticism discussed and practised in this volume comes across as 'common-sensical', ending up with a group of mostly pedantic readings. It seems that, in search of the 'Christian reading', many of the authors in this volume have forgotten the overarching title, *The Discerning Reader*.

Brook W.R. Pearson,
Roehampton Institute, London

God and the Mind Machine: Computers, Artificial Intelligence and the Human Soul

John Puddefoot

London: SPCK,

1996, xii + 145 pp., pb., £7.99.

John Puddefoot offers a Christian response to possibilities raised by the growing field of computer science and artificial intelligence (AI). What, if any, are the limits of AI? Can a computer have a mind? How does the advent of AI affect our understanding of the human soul? Does Commander Data of Star Trek have a soul and will he go to heaven? His treatment of the subject is intelligent, lucid and engaging. The slender volume is easy to read, though the author's penchant for parenthetical statements is occasionally distracting. The text reads like a dialectic warning both those who exhibit too much enthusiasm for the potential of computers ('strong AI') and those who show too much fear or disbelief (many 'religious people'). The author's conclusions are suggestive rather than dogmatic.

God and the Mind Machine begins with the claim that 'to become a creature such as ourselves an android will need a mind, an inside-looking-out quality such as we enjoy' (p. 4). This is followed by an argument for a Spinoza-like monistic 'dual-aspect' theory of the mind (pp. 42-45). That is, there are not two-kinds-of-stuff (body and mind) but only one-kind-of-stuff (seen from the 'outside' as the brain and from the 'inside' as the mind). The mind, or 'inside-out' self-awareness, comes into being by means of the world stimulating the brain towards an outward orientation (p. 44). The author doubts, despite a future of spectacular advances, that symbol-processing computers will ever attain a mind in this

sense (p. 135). But he does think that, possibly, minds could be *grown* in a manner similar to how he takes God to have grown human minds out of creation (p. 123). God created the universe and set into motion the processes of evolution. Through evolution God does indeed 'plays dice' with the world (p. 82) and in this creaturely freedom the possibility of human minds was actualized. The AI community, according to Puddefoot, will have its best chance of success if it sets up a free environment (perhaps with neural nets) in which a mind (of some kind) can be called forth by the outside world (pp. 135-136).

Puddefoot succeeds in his task to raise awareness of many thorny issues at stake in the AI debate. His warnings, such as against head-in-the-sand approaches towards the potential of AI, should not be ignored. Nevertheless the thoughtful Christian is likely to question some of the author's philosophical and theological claims. Two come to mind. First, his monistic dual-aspect theory of the mind. Puddefoot rehearses some familiar points against dualism, such as its putative denigration of the material world (p. 39), its Greek origin (p. 40), and its failure to account for resurrection bodies (pp. 40-41). But dualists may feel that their view has been unduly caricatured in Platonic and Cartesian terms. Recently significant alternative dualist accounts have been proffered, such as Charles Taliafero's 'integrative' dualism (*Consciousness and the Mind of God*, CUP, 1994), which attempts to avoid the perils of asceticism. One may also question whether the (pre-Hellenistic) Genesis account of mankind's origin counts decisively for or against either view of the mind/body relationship. It is the NT which provides, arguably, the best evidence for dualism

(cf. Mat. 10:28; Lk. 8:55; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:22-24). But far more troubling is Puddefoot's monistic account of bodily resurrection. He adopts a position (akin to John Hick's) which suggests that at death 'I' cease to exist and that at resurrection another exact 'I' is recreated. He explains that 'knowing what it is in its freedom allows the same thing to be remade in the same freedom' (p. 130). But, many will want to know is this remade 'same thing' *actually* 'me'? It is not just a second someone who is *just like* 'me'?

Second, one may question his doctrine of creation. For example, even those who do not count themselves as literal six-day creationists are likely to be uneasy with Puddefoot's robust an constant (almost Dawkinsian) enthusiasm for the explanatory power of the theory of biological evolution (cf. pp. 15, 18, 84, 85, 95, 97, 123). The virtual personification of Evolution and its causal role in the 'production' of life (p. 95) leave an impression of God's action in the world which verges on semi-deism. There is also a tendency to diminish the biblical view of mankind's special creation and unique relation to God. That is, the view which maintains that God created (*bara*) man in his own image, called him '*very good*', intimately covenants with him, and in time even becomes a man to redeem a people for himself, does not fit well with the author's claim that human beings were displaced from their position as God's special creation by Darwin' (p. 85). In fact, according to Puddefoot God did not create human beings at all, he *grew* them (p. 123).

In the end whilst Puddefoot's argument prods and pokes, it fails to persuade. If one finds dualism logically viable and theologically satisfying, and

affirms God's continued activity in the world and immediate special creation of man (including soul and mind), the likelihood that humans will prompt a computer to grow a mind or soul out of matter is virtually precluded as the author himself admits (pp. 39-40). Despite this I would recommend *God and the Mind Machine* to those interested in acquainting themselves with the basic technological and philosophical issues surrounding AI. But I suspect that those seeking deeper theological analysis of AI and computer science will wish, alas, that there had been a bit more substance to its body.

Michael Andres,
Kings College, London

A Critique of Spirituality

J F D Pearce
Oxford: Latimer Studies 52,
1996, 53 pp., pb., £2.00.

In this brief booklet Pearce examines some of the current attitudes and fashions within the growing world of 'spirituality'. Written from an Anglican perspective, the booklet criticises much of the contemporary scene which attempts to provide short-cuts and easy answers to the issues of spirituality. Setting out a list of guidelines by which any spiritual life must be checked, Pearce not only negatively attacks certain strands of church life, but also brings in a positive note by emphasising some of the benefits of what have come to be regarded as 'non-evangelical' routes in spirituality. These include fasting, silence, liturgy and spiritual direction. Such a short work can only provide an outline, but it is a shame that more detailed analysis is not given of why, for example, liturgy has been abandoned. Such investigation may provide us with more creative and intelligent

ways by which liturgy can be re-introduced. Nevertheless, a helpful corrective in what is becoming an all too confusing subject area in the church.

Tony Gray,
Leicester

Journeying into God: seven early monastic lives

Translated and introduced by Tim Vivian
Minneapolis, Fortress Press,
1996.

The continuing interest among Protestants in the spiritual writings of 'mystical tradition' is further served by this useful collection of seven accounts, mostly excerpted from longer 'lives' of these exemplary monks. All of them withdraw into deserted, sometimes literally desert areas, to live in caves and off whatever vegetation was around. The settings are shared between Upper Egypt and Palestine.

Apart from Antony, the father of monasticism, part of whose tale is told here after the Coptic *Life of Antony*, the characters line up in increasing order of obscurity. That much of this fertile ground has already been worked is apparent from the excellent and right up-to-date annotations with references to secondary literature. The author has also provided introductions to the excerpts, highlighting the more significant passages and drawing out, to some extent the meaning for today. Two small cavils are: the omission of any maps; the reader is referred to maps in Hirschfield's *Desert Monasteries*, but who is going to have a copy handy? Also, I would have liked the *primary sources*, the texts and translations set out at some point more clearly and fully than is the case of p. 193.

What links each figure at the

centre of each account is the idealization of the virtues of courage and fortitude and the corresponding spiritual humility. The reader is usually implicitly invited to stand in the sandals of the narrator, or in the case of Pambo, to identify with him, the novice as he seeks enlightenment. The collection kicks off with Antony and the pattern is set: someone goes into complete isolation, and paradoxically, after fifteen years or so, the place is full of people wanting to imitate him. The pioneer had made unholy land holy, and lesser mortals can live the same life without having to go through quite the same amount of agony. 'If he could do x, then you can do fix' especially as the spiritual power let loose by his doing x is available in this place; he is, as are all the heroes in this book, not so much a type of Christ but one who is *in loco Christi*.

Therapy in the shape of unconscious forces coming to the surface - to which evangelicals have been introduced, say, in the writing of Richard Foster on fasting and prayer - plays a large part on the rationale of the fights with demons. The demons are shown to have no reality externally - they may seem to be in wild animals or in men that leave one bruised, but in truth they are internal, and the fathers were not so naive as to think otherwise. The gospels serve as inspiration, as do the Elijah narratives and the Psalms from the desert, in other words those Scriptural texts which speak of holy men filled with God's power working the fringes of civilisation. This raises the question of why these people left for the desert, one which the author is not too concerned about answering. Was it for peace and quiet to pray. To get away from constraining external obligations, or to fight demons on

their home ground (*i.e.*, the non-human world)?

The historicity of the stories, especially the relating of visions, miracles and seemingly objectively visible events of an unusual character is another question skipped around by the author. His overall tone is far from sceptical, yet 'The tale of Abba Pambo was never meant to be read as a historical document: it is written for those seeking a deeper understanding of God. It is an extended parable, set in its own archetypal landscape.' Failing to resolve the deeper question of: did all these weird things happen, and in what manner? led this reader to be a little cynical when the author continues: 'Pambo is like us'. No he isn't. (Except in the limited sense, yes, that he is a novice.) Who else has seen Christ himself come and attend to the body of the deceased spiritual master, Cyrus, who marvellously dies on the same day as Shenoute (surely a ploy to elevate Cyrus to the same level as the more renowned Egyptian leader)? The point of the account is to show that there is no spirituality which goes any further than where Cyrus is at. As Cyrus says himself: 'There is nothing beyond me except darkness and the punishments that sinners are enduring'.

The issue of women and spirituality is raised in the chapter on Syncletica. She has a life in her own right, not just a brief mention as a colleague of Melania the Younger. There is a lot of scholarly literature to be read and, *pace* Lucien Regnault's theory that women made only a minimal contribution, she is an example of many women who simply did not have their stories recorded. Sometimes exaggeration to make a point is permissible, but it is hard to be sure that the orders of virgins mentioned in 1 Timothy were

continued even in one locality through into the Fourth Century. At times he is aware of stepping between two camps (conservative orthodox and liberal feminist, on the question of the comparative influence of spiritual and social forces), at other times unaware (!): 'Gregory of Nyssa wrote the *Life* of his sister Macrina, and yet their brother Basil, the 'father of Eastern monasticism', whom Macrina profoundly influenced, does not once mention her in his writings. Thus the mother of Eastern monasticism remains essentially unknown' (at p. 39). I cannot think of a better example of self-contradiction in the space of two sentences. It is not 'God' but prayer that Syncletica held to be what she was looking for in wanting to be a monk; presumably this came after her father suggesting she could (para. 6, p. 48) be a monk *with* her husband. The threat to the continuation of the family line is not such a big factor in the explanation of the parental opposition, since married daughters would not continue a line as such. The factors are more social in the sense of the cohesion of society, and personally, in the sense of a father's anxiety about his daughter. Where women's issues are concerned, the author in his comments seems to stray into jargon he elsewhere avoids: 'the theme of renunciation (*annunciation*, really)' (p. 44). A terrible play on words or on the next page: 'she broke her silence and so moved into history, with its own shifting boundaries and territories of deep silence'.

The stories then are about pioneers and their rites of passage, more about leaving home, winning over the first temptations and dying or handing on one's spiritual mantle to others than much about what happened on a day to day basis in the monasteries subsequently founded. One of the interesting

places in the book is where ostensibly on George of Choziba the author sketches the dimensions and contents of caves and allotments in the Judean desert. A short analysis of monasticism in all its types (coenobitic, eremitic, semi-anchoretic) would have been helpful. Prayer makes one calm and good at dealing with crisis in other people's lives, *viz.* Abba Aaron's miracle working. On a theological level the stories of George tell us about how developed (by 631) were the ideas of the Virgin Mary's intercessions and the communion of saints and how those on earth could join in with the interceding powers of those already above, while the benefits for the political realm of spiritual powers are salient in Theognius' *Life* (c. 530). Much of all the stories, but especially the later 6th - 7th century ones, are to do with holy men as brokers, go-betweens. The last story (of Onnophrius) even suggests, as was to be continued by the hesychastic tradition of Mt Athos, that holy men could return to the place of Adam before the fall even after grave sexual sin, as evidence by the submissiveness of snakes to them, the visitation of angels with the Eucharist, the richness of the gardens of fruit, the harmony between two 'brother' monks.

The book is meant to serve as an introduction to early monastic studies. Yet it also tries to introduce lesser-known characters. The combination of these two targets usually works. However, these stories are hard to read all at once. At times the response may range from wonder, through respect, to consternation and scepticism. The deprecation of sexuality may rankle particularly. However they do engage our responses and speak of the otherness of God to a Church which thinks more of marketing and the affirmation of

solutions to the world's problems only on shared common sense.

Mark W. Elliott,
Glasgow

Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland from the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of the Empire

David Hempton
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1996, 191 pp., pb., £9.95.

The days when the pronouncements of churchmen made much difference in British politics are long behind us', Tory M.P. Edwina Currie is reported to have said in response to an attempt by Cardinal Hume to make abortion an election issue in Britain. We might not regard Mrs Currie as an authority on church history but Professor David Hempton's Cadbury Lecture of 1993, now published by the Cambridge University Press, provide impressive evidence to support her judgement. Hempton's conclusion is that by the middle of the present century, 'In both the corridors of government and the world of labour, Christianity came increasingly to be seen as a private matter for the individual and as a community matter for the churches, but the real power and political influence lay elsewhere'. (p. 168)

The titles of the lectures and the chapter headings in the book indicate the range of his survey: The Church of England, a great national consensus?, the Methodist Revolution?, Evangelicalism in Scotland and Wales, The Making of the Irish Catholic nation, Ulster Protestantism and rebellious Loyalism, Religion and political culture in urban Britain., and Religion and Identity in the British Isles, integration and separation. Hempton suggests

that he may have been fooling ' to try to bring to life a diverse and variegated spectrum of religious communities from Argyll to Armagh, from County Cornwall to County Clare, from the Welsh valleys to the Scottish highlands, from Birmingham to Belfast' (p. xi), but Professor Linda Colley of Harvard, herself the author of an important study of British national identity, and the role of Protestantism in forming it, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, considers that he has been brave rather than foolish and commends his book enthusiastically. This reviewer would echo his commendation for in these lectures we find information, illumination and wisdom, often overturning popular received opinion. Not the least merit of this book are the copious footnotes indicating the scope and depth of Professor Hempton's research and pointing readers to recently published work and also to material still accessible only in these university libraries.

For some Christians this account of the decline of ecclesiastical institutions and their marginalization in modern British society will be depressing. Everywhere in these islands except perhaps for the Roman Catholic church in Ireland and the Protestant churches in Ulster, churches which once stood at the centre of national life, contributing significantly to distinctive national identities - Anglicanism in England, Presbyterianism in Scotland, Nonconformity in Wales - have been pushed to the circumference, declining in numbers and influence. Others may take a more optimistic view, believing that the churches are being liberated from the crippling role which has imprisoned them since Constantine made the church the partner of the state. The French historian, Jean Delumeau, asked pertinent

questions about Christianity and modern secularization: 'Have we not for too long called Christianity what was in fact a mixture of practices and doctrines with frequently little connection with the gospel message? If this is so, can we still properly talk of dechristianization?' (J. Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire*. ET 1977, p. 231).

Finlay Holmes,
Union Theological College,
Belfast

Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century

Timothy Yates
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1994, xvi +275 pp., £12.95.

This book is a decade by decade study of the history and theology of mission from 1900 to 1990, excluding the disastrous forties.

Formally, the book is an interweaving of three missiological strands:

- (1) Surveys of the most important mission conferences held this century: New York, 1900, Edinburgh 1910, Jerusalem 1928, Tambaram 1938, CWME Mexico 1963, Vatican II Lausanne 1974 and Nairobi 1975.
- (2) Portraits of some of the most important missions writers and statesmen (there is almost nothing about women in this book), especially (alphabetically) Karl Barth, Hendrik Kraemer, John R Mott, Stephen C. Neill, J.H. Oldham, William Paton and MAC Warren.
- (3) An unfolding of the changing understanding of an important missions issue, namely the relationship between Christianity and other religions, from the writings of

J.N. Farquhar to those of John Hick and Lesslie Newbigin.

Yates begins with the Student Volunteer Movement, the Edinburgh Conference 1910, Commission 4, the writings of Farquhar and A.G. Hogg, the widespread fear of advancing Islam, the longing for unity, and mission as expansion, 'a comprehensive plan for world occupation' (p. 31).

His second chapter on mission as *Volkskirche* (1910-1920) may be of most interest, because not available elsewhere in English. This is a discussion of the German missionaries Bruno Gutmann in East Africa, and Christian Keysser in Papua New Guinea, their (later more controversial) ideas of Volk, Blut and Boden.

From the 1920 to 1940 period Yates discusses the Jerusalem conference in 1928, the Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry 1932-1933 and its controversial outcome, the book *Rethinking missions*, and the debate about other religions leading up to Tambaran 1938, which was dominated by the great Dutch missionary Hendrik Kraemer.

After World War II Yates focuses, in the 50s, on his mentors M.A.C. Warren, S.C Neill and K. Cragg, on the somewhat sterile arguments about mission as presence versus mission as proclamation, and the events leading up to the incorporation of the International Missionary Council into the WCC at New Delhi in 1961.

For the 1960s Yates focuses mainly on Roman Catholic mission, especially Vatican II documents, liberation theology, base ecclesial communities and *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. This is balanced by emphasis in chapter 7 on evangelical missions, especially on the Lausanne 1974 conference and

its sequels; faith missions, especially Wycliffe Bible Translators and the New Tribes Mission; and Donald McGavran, the father of the modern church growth movement.

The final chapter focuses on pluralism and its effect on the theology or religions from Hocking and Hogg to Hick, Newbigin and the re-evangelisation of western culture.

Yates has selected his topics carefully, conscious of how difficult it is to use a wide-angle lens without distorting effects. He writes meticulously and conscientiously; he muffles the stridency of some debates; his fire is heavily banked down: a glow or flame is visible only occasionally. Since he writes as a scholar, of statesmen and conferences, there is little sense of what it feels like to be an ordinary missionary in the year after year slog of presence, encounter, evangelism, church planting, suffering, separation, joy. There are some curious omissions; almost nothing about decolonisation; nothing about the upheaval caused by the Chinese revolution and missionary exodus; very little about Third World missions.

This is a very helpful reference work. It points up the need for a new Dictionary of World Mission.

Howard Peskett,
Trinity College, Bristol

BOOK REVIEWS

- Christopher J.H. Wright* **Walking in the Ways of the Lord: The Ethical Authority of the Old Testament** Richard S. Hess
- Author?* **The Triumph of Elohim, From Yahwisms to Judaisms. Biblical Exegesis and Theology 13,** Richard S. Hess
- William M Schniedewind*
The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period Rick Hess
- Barry Webb*
The Message of Isaiah (Bible Speaks Today Series) Paul A Barker
- James Nogalski* **Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve (BXAW 217) and Redaction Processes in the Book of the Twelve (BZAW 218)** M. Daniel Carroll R.
- Elizabeth Achtemeier* **Minor Prophets I (New International Biblical Commentary, 17)** Jack N. Lawson
- Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, eds **The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Volume 2 and The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Volume 3**
- Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, Benedikt Hartmann and Philippe Reymond* eds **Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament. Lieferung V. Aramäisches Lexikon. 3rd edition,** Rick Hess
- Joel B. Green,* **The Theology of the Gospel of Luke,** David Wenham
- B. Witherington III,* **A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians** Graham Tomlin
- Timothy George,* **Galatians (NAC30)** Walt Russell
- Clinton E. Arnold* **The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae** Peter T. O'Brien
- Craig S Wansink* **Chained in Christ: The experience and rhetoric of Paul's imprisonments** Brook W.R. Pearson
- J. Harold Greenlee* **Introduction to the New Testament Textual Criticism** Young Chul Whang
- Philip R. Davies* **Whose Bible is it anyway?** Richard S. Hess
- Rebecca Merrill* **Good News for Women: A biblical picture of gender equality** Thomas R. Schreiner
- Mark G Brett, ed.* **Ethnicity and the Bible Biblical Interpretation Series Volume 19** Richard S. Hess
- Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson* **Who Needs Theology: An invitation to the study of God** Euros Wyn Jones
- Kevin J. Vanhoozer ed* **The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age: Theological Essays on Culture and Religion** Craig Blomberg
- Cornelius Plantinga, Jr* **Not the Way It's supposed to be, A Breviary of Sin** Alan Russell

- Sinclair Ferguson* **The Holy Spirit** Densil Morgan
- E.P. Clowney* **The Church: Contours of Christian Theology** Craig D. Allert
- Bill A. Musk* **Touching the Soul of Islam** Ida Glaser
- Vivienne Stacey* **Submitting to God: Introducing Islam Communities of Faith Series** Ida Glaser
- Malcolm A Jeeves* **Human Nature at the Millennium: Reflections on the Integration of Psychology and Christianity** James R Beck
- David Barratt, Roger Pooley, Leland Ryken eds* **The Discerning Reader: Christian perspectives on literature and theory** Brook W.R. Pearson
- John Puddefoot* **God and the Mind Machine: Computers, artificial intelligence and the human soul** Michael Andres
- J F D Pearce* **A Critique of Spirituality** Tony Gray
- Translated and introduced by Tim Vivian,* **Journeying into God: seven early monastic lives** Mark W. Elliott
- David Hempton* **Religion and political culture in Britain and Ireland from the Glorious Revolution to the decline of the empire** Finlay Holmes
- Timothy Yates* **Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century** Howard Peskett

Selected Books Received

- Ben Witherington III *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 1995.
- Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, 1995.
- R. Norman Whybray *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 1995.
- B. Koppany III *Tempting Letters: Letters from an Experienced Demon to a Novice*, 1995.
- J.D. Douglas *Twentieth-Century Dictionary of Christian Biographies*, 1995.
- David W. Hall *The Practice of Confessional Subscription*, 1995.
- Ted M. Gorman *A Faith for All Seasons: Historic Christian Belief in the Classical Expression*, 1995.
- A.J. Conyers *A Basic Christian Theology*, 1995.
- R.C. Sproul *Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification*, 1995.
- Hunsinger van Deusen *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Inter-disciplinary Approach*, 1995.
- Robert R. Gottfried *Economics, Ecology, and the Roots of Western Faith: Perspectives from the Garden*, 1995.
- Joel B. Green *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, 1995.
- Leon Morris *The Gospel according to John (NICNT rev.)*, 1995.
- Benjamin W. Farley *In Praise of Virtue: An Exploration of the Biblical Virtues in a Christian Context*, 1995.
- Thomas F. Torrance *Theological Science*, 1996 (reprint of 1969 edition).
- Robert E. Coleman *The Coming World Revival*, 1996.
- Sydney H.T. Page *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons*, 1995.
- Bruce J. Malina *On the Genre and Message of Revelation: Star Visions and Sky Journeys*, 1995.
- Alistair McGrath (ed.) *The NIV Thematic Study Bible*, 1996.
- J.C. Ryle *Holiness*, 1996 (abridged version of 1879 edition).
- Brennan Manning *The Relentless Love of Jesus*, 1996.

themelios

**'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone'
(Ephesians 2:20)**

**Themelios: foundation; origination;
endowed institution; solid ground or base**

**'... "state of the art" perspectives and surveys of contemporary
problems and solutions in biblical, theological and religious
studies ... an indisputable guide to current theological thought.'**

I H Marshall

(Professor of New Testament Exegesis at the University of Aberdeen)

