

themelios



1 Editorial

4 Qoheleth in the Canon?
Current Trends in the Interpretation of Ecclesiastes
Craig Bartholomew

21 The Concept of Idolatry
Brain S. Rosner

31 The Religious Life of Theological Students
Benjamin B. Warfield

42 Review Article: New International Dictionary
of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis
Philip Johnston

46 Book Reviews

Vol. 24 No. 3

£2.00

May 1999

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* Carl Trueman, Department of Divinity and RS, King's College, Aberdeen AB24 3FX
- Managing editor* Tony Gray (RTSF)
- Editorial Assistant* Elizabeth Fraser
- Associate editors* John Bimson, Craig Blomberg, Martin Davie, Bill Houston, Tony Lane
- International editors* Kwame Bediako (Ghana), Samuel Escobar (S America), Peter Kuzmíc (Croatia), Vidar Hannes (Norway), David Lim (Philippines), Gerhard Maier (Germany)
- Review editors* Philip Johnston (OT), Thorsten Maritz (NT), Tony Gray (Systematics and other), Craig Blomberg (USA)
- Committee* Carl Trueman, Tony Gray, Rhianan Jones, Gerald Bray
 IFES representatives: Vidar L Haanes, Stefan Paas
 RTSF representative: Simon Gathercole

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@uccf.org.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.

School for Scandal

Perhaps the most important question facing evangelicals at the moment concerns the importance of evangelical beliefs. Is doctrine a matter of ultimate indifference? Do doctrinal statements merely reflect our own religious aspirations and ambitions? Can we interpret historic creeds and confessions in any way that we fancy? Or is doctrine vitally important, something which we cannot afford to ignore? The issue is, of course, a hugely complex one and raises a whole host of questions about the nature of Christianity and the function of belief, with which a brief editorial cannot hope to deal in any adequate way. Nevertheless, a few words are in order, given *Themelios'* peculiar status as a journal that identifies itself as distinctive precisely because of the doctrinal position to which it is committed and which it seeks to maintain. That position is epitomised in the UCCF statement of faith, a statement of faith understood by its authors and UCCF itself not as open to any individual's private interpretation but, in the words of the *Tyndale Bulletin*, as being consistent with the 'consensus of the Confessions of the Protestant Reformation'.¹

One of the key issues in the debate concerns the relationship of theology and history. In recent decades, much play has been made by some high-profile individuals of the separability of the historical truth of a doctrinal statement from its theological significance. The result of this distinction is, of course, that the meaning of doctrinal statements is radically transformed: one can now believe in the resurrection as a theological truth without having to believe in it as an historical event. Such a transformation in meaning makes a wax nose of the creedal tradition and points towards an understanding of the essence of Christianity which ultimately assigns no real significance to any particular doctrine.

One of the most helpful books on this issue is now over 75 years old, but still has much to say to us today. It is the little volume written in 1923 by the American scholar and church leader, J. Gresham Machen, entitled *Christianity and Liberalism*.² The book, a mere 189 pages (including index) in the Eerdmans edition on my shelf, is a passionate and cogently-argued plea for historic Christianity over against the liberal theology which Machen saw taking such a heavy toll upon the life and thought of the church in his day.

Central to Machen's case are two fundamental points. First, Christianity is built upon, and inseparable from, real, historical events. Thus, for example, when the Bible speaks of Christ's resurrection, it speaks of something that really happened to the incarnate God in space and time. It does not speak of something that is simply a metaphorical reflection of the early church's religious experience of 'the Christ-event', whatever that slippery term may itself be seen to symbolise. Secondly, doctrine matters – the historical events of God's dealings with people in history, and, supremely, his gracious saving action in Christ, have a universal significance which the church articulates through its doctrinal formulations founded on Scripture. Thus, to say that Christ died is to state a historical fact; to say that Christ died for our sins is doctrine. History and doctrine, history and the faith that grasps the doctrine, are therefore bound together inseparably. Machen's own conclusion – dramatically stated, yet one with which I find myself unable to disagree – is that, 'without these two elements [of history and of doctrine], joined in an absolutely indissoluble union, there is no Christianity'.³ As a result, this basic point, the inseparability of doctrine and history, provides a vital touchstone for those engaged in the task of Christian theology. To abandon either is effectively

to surrender the very essence of the historic Christian faith – and that is not simply the view of Machen: it is nothing less than the view the Bible itself expresses.

The lesson is a hard one – and particularly so for those of us, teachers and students, who live and work within the academic, scholarly environment. The separation of faith and history has become a basic axiom within certain traditions of theological endeavour, and this has inevitably spilled over into the wider church environment. Nevertheless, we must be absolutely clear what is at stake here: nothing less than the very essence of Christianity itself. The historicity of an event like the resurrection is absolutely axiomatic to Christianity, and it is not just Machen who claims this, but no-one less than the Apostle Paul himself. One has only to turn to 1 Corinthians 15 to see what Paul regarded as the consequences of a denial of the resurrection: 'If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith'. Paul continues: if Christ is not raised then he, Paul, is a false witness; more than that, he is to be pitied above all people as someone who has built his life upon a false hope. Paul considers the historical fact, the physical resurrection of Christ, and the doctrinal truth, the salvation and the general resurrection to which all believers look forward, as being bound so tightly together that one cannot deny the former without denying the latter.

This is hard teaching. At the very least it means that any system of thought which denies the historicity of the physical resurrection of Christ has effectively excluded itself from any right to the title of Christian. It is quite clear that Paul did not regard the difference between himself and those who denied the resurrection as one of a difference of emphasis or of two different but legitimate approaches to Christianity. No. For Paul, it was the difference between the true witness and the false witness, between those who have real Christian faith and those who do not. This is the point which Machen reaffirmed so eloquently in *Christianity and Liberalism*, and which we all, teachers and students alike, need to remind ourselves of again and again if we are to be faithful witnesses for Christ in and through our work.

This is not, of course, to argue that Christians should be obscurantist and deliberately avoid interacting with, or even learning from, those whose views are antithetical to the gospel. The best Christian theology has never taken refuge in a ghetto and engaged simply in a self-affirming monologue. The early church Fathers, the great scholastics of the Middle Ages, the Reformers and, perhaps supremely, the Puritans all engaged with the wider intellectual environment. One has only to think of Augustine's use of Platonism; Aquinas's interaction with Aristotle; Calvin's engagement with Cicero; and John Owen's interest in Maimonides to see that Christian orthodoxy has, at its best, always sought to engage with non-Christian thinking, even, to appropriate such where this is possible without a basic betrayal of the gospel. The challenge today is to do the same, but to do it in a way that resists the almost unbearable pressures to blur the boundaries which we all feel in a world which delights in pluralism, difference and its own peculiarly intolerant brand of tolerance.

Such pressures come from a variety of sources. At one level, church politics makes some of us unwilling to state the obvious concerning church leaders who deny the physical resurrection. At another level, the sheer amiable pleasantness of some theologians makes us feel awkward about criticising their views, lest we seem to have launched a narrow-minded personal attack on otherwise perfectly decent individuals. The need for the student to appease a supervisor who is, more than likely, hostile to orthodox Christianity, can prove an irresistible motive to cutting doctrinal corners. And the scholars' desire to gain credibility in the academic community can be similarly seductive. This is particularly so today when

evangelicalism can, with just a little modification and moderation, become in some contexts almost respectable. Such pressures are not to be sniffed at and none of us can be complacent and trust in our own strength. This is why we must be absolutely clear about what are at stake: reputations, finances, grades, and positions are all desirable – and none are wrong in and of themselves – but at what cost? The unity of history and doctrine, of history and faith, which lies at the heart of Paul's gospel does have eternal consequences – for those who affirm it and, let us not forget, for those who deny it. If we allow the fundamental legitimacy of the viewpoints of those who deny, for example, the physical resurrection, we make of ourselves false witnesses to the truth which all people, liberal theologians and radical church leaders as well as our next door neighbours, need to hear. Evangelical theology must never decline to the pitiful point where it becomes respectable – if it is faithful to the gospel, then it is always going to be foolishness to those wise in their own wisdom – and we must be careful that credibility in whatever sphere we work is not bought at the cost of evacuating Christianity of precisely those foolish, scandalous elements which constitute its very essence. – Something that can be done either by linguistic shifts such as that from 'resurrection' to 'Easter event' (as pointed out by Gerald Bray in the last issue), or by the uncritical admiration, endorsement or appropriation of the views of those who think nothing of denying the very foundations of the faith.

This union of faith and history is outrageous to the non-Christian – outrageous precisely because it makes unavoidable the broken Messiah hanging on the cross and the empty tomb in the garden. The scandal of this outrageous act of grace is the real scandal of the evangelical mind. Beliefs *do* matter – especially the scandalous ones – and we must beware of striving to make our evangelicalism too respectable. On the contrary, let us make our theological work, and our Christian lives as a whole, not a context in which we build others and ourselves into potential pillars for the theological or ecclesiastical establishment, but a school for scandal and for future scandalmongers.

¹ From 1966 to 1978 the *Tyndale Bulletin*, also a journal operating under the auspices of UCCF (in 1966 known as the IVF), contained the helpful statement that 'contributions are expected to be compatible with the doctrinal basis of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship and the consensus of the Confessions of the Protestant Reformation'. This is a wonderful declaration of the fact that the statements of faith are not wax-noses, subject to endless private interpretation, but have the limits of their meaning defined by the Christian creedal tradition within which they stand.

² J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). Reprinted from the original 1923 edition.

³ *Christianity and Liberalism*, 27.

QOHELETH IN THE CANON?!

CURRENT TRENDS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF ECCLESIASTES

Craig Bartholomew

Craig Bartholomew is a research fellow in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education.

Introduction

It is well known that in the first century AD there was a vigorous debate among Jewish schools as to whether or not Qoheleth 'defiled the hands'¹ – i.e. is Ecclesiastes canonical or not? At the end of the second millennium there is still vigorous disagreement about Ecclesiastes. Norman Whybray, for example, came to see Ecclesiastes as affirming joy,² whereas Francis Watson in the context of promoting a theological hermeneutic for Scripture describes Ecclesiastes as 'rigorously hope-less!'

In this article we will overview briefly the history of the interpretation of Ecclesiastes up until the start of the twentieth century, note the impact of historical criticism on the interpretation of Ecclesiastes and the recovery of a strong sense of the unity of Ecclesiastes since Siegfried's (1898) division of the book into nine sources, and then concentrate on different proposals for reading Ecclesiastes that have emerged in the latter half of this century. The aim of this exploration is to find ways of reading Ecclesiastes that will enable its distinct voice to be heard in the context of the canon of Scripture. Thus we will conclude with some proposals for a way forward in the reading of Ecclesiastes.

Up Until Historical Criticism

The Rabbinical debate about the canonical status of Ecclesiastes indicates that there were early literal interpretations of Ecclesiastes. However by the fourth century AD allegorical reading of Ecclesiastes was dominant among Jews and Christians with 'eating and drinking' being taken, as referring to the Torah or the Eucharist, and the vanity element as a warning against excessive attachment to this world as opposed to 'eternal' life. An allegorical reading of Ecclesiastes remained the dominant mode until the Reformation. It took the revival of literal interpretation by the Reformers to open up, for example, the possibility that 'eating and drinking' refers to legitimate enjoyment of the God-given creation.⁴ Whether interpreted allegorically or literally, prior to the rise of modern criticism virtually across the board, Ecclesiastes was read as Scripture with the epilogue taken to be *the* key which unlocks the book.

Historical Criticism and Ecclesiastes

Although it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that the historical critical method was resolutely applied to Ecclesiastes, modern biblical criticism has much earlier roots, and these roots gradually became manifest in readings of Ecclesiastes. Grotius (1644) argued, for example, that we have in Ecclesiastes a collection of different opinions concerning happiness which the author mixes up with his own arguments before giving his final opinion. Grotius was the first since Luther to argue against Solomonic authorship. After Grotius the view that Solomon was not the author gradually gained ground.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the critical reading of Ecclesiastes gathered momentum, but it was only with the source-critical commentaries of Siegfried (1898), Lauer (1900), McNeile (1904), Podechard (1912) and Barton (1912) that historical critical reading of Ecclesiastes emerged in the way that it had done for the Pentateuch during the nineteenth century. Siegfried (1898)⁵ pioneered the source critical approach to Ecclesiastes, identifying nine different sources in the book. Within English-speaking circles McNeile (1904)⁶ and Barton (1912)⁷ developed more moderate source-critical approaches to Ecclesiastes. As the twentieth century has progressed a radical source critical approach to Ecclesiastes has become rare, and the book has come to be seen more and more as a unity.⁸ The exception to this is the epilogue which is almost universally seen as a later addition. The prime legacy of source criticism in the interpretation of Ecclesiastes is this tendency to read the book without the epilogue. By comparison, in almost all pre-critical interpretation of Ecclesiastes the epilogue provides the interpretative key.

Gunkel initiated *form critical analysis* of wisdom literature⁹ and assessment of the forms used in Ecclesiastes has continued to play a fundamental role in the interpretation of the book.¹⁰ Crenshaw¹¹ suggests that the dominant literary type in Ecclesiastes is reflection arising from personal observation. He notes that scholars have also drawn attention to *mashal*, diatribe and royal testament forms and that Qoheleth also uses autobiographical narrative, example story, anecdote, parable, antithesis and proverb.

Galling¹² developed a form critical interpretation of Ecclesiastes in which he divided Ecclesiastes up into a large number of originally independent sayings. Such an approach clearly militates against reading Ecclesiastes as a strongly unified text. However on the macro level of the form of Ecclesiastes no consensus has been reached as regards its genre and structure,¹³ although Wright's New Critical analysis of the structure has convinced a number of scholars.¹⁴ The problem of whether Ecclesiastes is prose or poetry remains,¹⁵ with the majority of scholars treating it as a mixture of both.

The *tradition history* of Ecclesiastes has been a matter of concern throughout this century.¹⁶ Within the OT wisdom tradition Ecclesiastes has regularly been seen as a negative, sceptical reaction to mainline wisdom as represented by Proverbs.¹⁷ Gese¹⁸ identified Qoheleth with a crisis of wisdom in Israel, but scholars remain divided over the existence and extent of this 'crisis'. To what extent do we have a rigid doctrine of retribution in the OT and to what extent is Ecclesiastes a reaction to this?¹⁹ At the end of this century there is no consensus about the development of the wisdom tradition and how Ecclesiastes fits into that development. Using sociological analysis Brueggemann has suggested that

*Ecclesiastes articulates a conservative ideology that reflects social control and a concern for stability ... The emancipatory side of wisdom is reflected in the embrace of creation in the Song of Solomon, the ideological dimension is articulated in Ecclesiastes.*²⁰

This view is a development of Brueggemann's discernment of a royal (order) and a liberative trajectory in the OT.²¹

The relationship of OT wisdom to international wisdom has been an issue throughout this century. Studies of Ecclesiastes continue to concern themselves with Ecclesiastes' relationship to Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece.²² During this century the Jewishness of Ecclesiastes has received greater recognition but its relationship to Greek thought in particular continues to be debated.²³

A certain *consensus* has emerged out of a historical critical interpretation of Ecclesiastes. Very few scholars defend Solomonic authorship nowadays: most regard Ecclesiastes as written by an unknown Jew around the late third century BC. Most scholars regard the book as a basic unity with the exception of the epilogue. However, as regards Ecclesiastes' structure, message, relationship to OT traditions and to international wisdom there is no consensus.

With respect to the message of Ecclesiastes historical critical scholarship differs notably from pre-critical readings in its general rejection of the need to harmonise Qoheleth with theological orthodoxy. This loss of theological constraint has not produced agreement about the message of Ecclesiastes, as for example, the huge variety of proposals about how to translate *hebel* indicate.²⁴ Some like Crenshaw regard Qoheleth as deeply pessimistic, others regard him as also positive but to differing extents.²⁵ Crenshaw writes:

Qoheleth taught by means of various literary types that earlier optimistic claims about wisdom's power to secure one's existence have no validity. No discernible principle of order governs the universe, rewarding virtue and punishing evil. The creator, distant and uninvolved, acts as judge only (if at all) in extreme cases of flagrant affront

... Death cancels all imagined gains, rendering life under the sun absurd. Therefore the best policy is to enjoy one's wife, together with good food and drink, during youth, for old age and death will soon put an end to this 'relative' good. In short, Qoheleth examined all of life and discovered no absolute good that would survive death's effect ... Qoheleth bears witness to an intellectual crisis in ancient Israel.²⁶

In similar vein to Crenshaw, Francis Watson describes Qoheleth's vision as 'rigorously hope-less'.

*Nowhere else in Holy Scripture is there so forthrightly set out an alternative vision to that of the gospel, a rival version of the truth ... In the light of the gospel, nothing could be more illusory than the consolation of Qoheleth's celebrated realism.*²⁷

Loader likewise argues that Ecclesiastes is a negative witness to the gospel.²⁸ Whybray by contrast has recently argued that Qoheleth was mainly a preacher of joy. And Ogden asserts that Ecclesiastes' thesis 'is that life under God must be taken and enjoyed in all its mystery.'²⁹ Ellul sums up Ecclesiastes' message as: 'In reality, all is vanity. In truth, everything is a gift of God.'³⁰

Recent Readings of Ecclesiastes

Historical criticism remains highly influential in OT studies. However, in recent decades a variety of other reading strategies have developed, some of which are proving fertile in the interpretation of Ecclesiastes. In this section we will look at some of these newer approaches to Ecclesiastes.

A Canonical Reading

To a great extent historical criticism has sought to exclude theological presuppositions from its methodology by insisting that the OT should be read in the same way as any other ANE text. In the latter half of this century there has been a growing reaction to that tendency.³¹ Childs³² has sought to develop a hermeneutic which takes the OT seriously as canon. The intriguing effect of his canonical approach upon his reading of Ecclesiastes is that he reappropriates the epilogue as the key to the canonical function of Ecclesiastes, thereby undermining the one universal fruit of source-criticism of Ecclesiastes. In Childs' view the epilogue alerts us to Ecclesiastes' nature as a corrective within the broader wisdom tradition comparable to James' relationship to Romans in the NT.

Literary Readings of Ecclesiastes

John Barton and others have noted the similarity of Child's canonical hermeneutic to literary methods such as New

Criticism and structuralism.³³ Childs denies such a literary pedigree for his method. Whatever the case the conscious application of literary methods to Ecclesiastes has proved very fruitful in recent years.

New Critical Readings

The Catholic OT scholar A.G. Wright has analysed the structure of Ecclesiastes by means of a close reading of the text along New Critical lines,³⁴ and Lohfink, another Catholic OT scholar, describes his creative approach to Ecclesiastes as that of *Werkinterpretation*, the German equivalent of New Criticism (NC).³⁵ Although both Wright and Lohfink see the epilogue as an addition to Qoheleth by another hand, their approaches indicate the developing tendency to read Ecclesiastes as carefully crafted literature. Here we will briefly outline Wright's approach.

Wright argues that NC provides a method for getting objectively at the structure of Ecclesiastes and thereby breaking the riddle of this book. We have access to the structure through the patterns of verbal repetition in Ecclesiastes. It is the commitment to close reading of NC that Wright finds most attractive and helpful. NC's method:

*essentially it is to put attention, first of all, not on the thought but on the form. The critic looks for repetitions of vocabulary and of grammatical forms and thus seeks to uncover whatever literary devices the author may have used, such as inclusions, mots crochets, anaphora, chiasm, symmetry, refrains, announcement of topic and subsequent resumption, recapitulation, etc.*³⁶

Changes in genre, mood etc. and numerical patterns may also provide clues to the author's plan. Patterns thereby discerned are then related to the content of the book and where development in thought coincides with these patterns, an outline emerges. This sets the stage for Wright to redo a close reading of Ecclesiastes.

In 1:12-18 Wright finds a double introduction followed in 2:1-17 by two paragraphs that expand on this double introduction. The double introduction is marked out by its form. Each introductory section contains an introductory statement and ends with 'all is vanity and a chase after wind' plus a proverb. Wright justifies starting with 1:12 because of a general acknowledgement that this is where the book starts. 2:1-11 and 12-17 are also marked off by the phrase 'all was vanity and a chase after wind'. In this way Wright discerns four sections in 1:12 - 2:17. These sections are generally recognised but in Wright's view no one has pursued this type of analysis further. This he seeks to do by letting subsequent occurrences of the 'vanity' phrase indicate the ends of other units. In this way he arrives at four additional sections in a

short-long-short-long arrangement: 2:18-26; 3:1 - 4:6; 4:7-16; 4:17 - 6:9.³⁷ The 'vanity' phrase ends in 6:9 and is not repeated in the remaining six chapters. These four sections are all concerned with evaluating man's toil and would seem to be meaningful units. The main subject of 2:18 - 6:9 is 'toil'.

Thus in 1:12 - 6:9 Wright finds a continuity of thought. Qoheleth seeks to report the results of his investigation of life. He starts with a double introduction (1:12-15; 1:16-18) and then evaluates pleasure seeking (2:1-11), wisdom (2:12-17) and the results of toil (2:18 - 6:9). These eight units are tied together not only by the repetition of the evaluation, but also by an interlocking arrangement whereby, once the series begins, each section picks up a motif mentioned two units earlier.

Chapter 6:6-9 contains a number of phrases that recall earlier remarks. This, plus the cessation of the 'vanity' phrase, suggests that 6:9 marks a major break. Wright scrutinises 6:10-12 and finds two new ideas introduced: man does not know what is good to do nor does he know what comes after him. In verses 7 and 8 a pattern occurs with the verbal expressions 'not find/who can find', and in verses 9 and 10 'do not know' and 'no knowledge' occur with great regularity. Wright uses these phrases to mark off sections and thereby ends up with the development of man not knowing what is good in four sections in 7:1 - 8:17, and with the development of man not knowing what is to come in six sections in 9:1 - 11:6.³⁸ This brings us to the generally recognised final poem on youth and old age at the end of the book. Chapter 1:2 and 12:8, as is generally recognised, is an overall inclusion. The question in 1:3 provides the context in which 1:4-11 is to be read. The epilogue is from the editor. In this way Wright arrives at the following outline.

TITLE	1:1
POEM ON TOIL	1:2-11
I. QOHELETH'S INVESTIGATION OF LIFE	1:12 - 6:9
Double Introduction	1:12-15, 1:16-18
Study of pleasure seeking	2:1-11
Study of wisdom and folly	2:12-17
Study of the fruits of toil	2:18 - 6:9
II. QOHELETH'S CONCLUSIONS	6:10 - 11:6
Introduction: man does not know what God has done, for man cannot find out what is good to do, and he cannot find out what comes after	6:10-12
A. Man cannot find out what is good for him to do Critique of traditional wisdom	7:1 - 8:17
B. Man does not know what will come after him	9:1 - 11:6

POEM ON YOUTH AND OLD AGE

11:7 - 12:8

EPILOGUE

12:9-14

Wright is sure this is objective:

*it seems almost certain that the patterns uncovered are a deliberate device utilized by the author to provide the main structure of the book ... it is a case of verbal repetitions marking out and exactly coinciding with the repetitions of ideas.*³⁹

The theme of Ecclesiastes is thus the impossibility of understanding what God has done. Qoheleth's only advice is to enjoy life while one can.⁴⁰

Structuralist Reading

Loader⁴¹ also fits with this literary trend in his modified structuralist⁴² reading of Ecclesiastes whereby he discerns polar opposites as at the heart of its structure. These polar opposites reflect the tension between Qoheleth's view and that of general wisdom. However for Loader, Ecclesiastes is finally negative and theologically a negative witness to the gospel. It is debatable whether Loader is right in seeing Qoheleth as finally negative but Loader's discernment of polar tension in the literary shape of the book is insightful. Other scholars have developed this type of insight in different ways.

A Dialogical Reading

Perry⁴³ has recently argued for a literary reading of Ecclesiastes, but one in which Ecclesiastes is approached as the transcript of a debate between Koheleth (K) and the presenter (P). This dialogical approach, according to Perry, is the correct way to understand the 'contradictions' that have plagued commentators for so long. Ecclesiastes is an essay, a collection, a debate and the reader's task is to discern the alternating voices, which is what Perry attempts in his translation and commentary. Perry argues that Ecclesiastes elaborates on the paradigmatic contradiction in Hebrew Scripture which is introduced in the creation story of Genesis. It has to do with the way religious consciousness distinguishes itself from empirical or experiential modes of viewing life.

What seems clear is that, as against the empirically based conclusions of K that all is vanity, P counters with a series of concepts that take on the density of myths of beginnings and ultimate ends, challenging the narrowness of experiential empiricism with notions that cannot possibly be verified by the same methods. P creates a tension by reinterpreting K's devalued image of total vanity with a re-energised version of the same: 'less than All cannot satisfy man' (Blake).⁴⁴

Narrative Literary Reading

Fox⁴⁵ proposes that we read Ecclesiastes as a narrative and wisdom text, with an openness to distinguishing between narrator, implied author and Qoheleth.

It tells something that happened to someone. I would like to take some first steps in the investigation of the literary characteristics of Qoheleth as narrative: Who is speaking (the question of voice), how do the voices speak, and how do they relate to each other? I will argue that the Book of Qoheleth is to be taken as a whole, as a single, well-integrated composition, the product not of editorship but of authorship, which uses interplay of voice as a deliberate literary device for rhetorical and artistic purposes.⁴⁶

Fox argues that while modern scholarship correctly recognises more than one voice in Ecclesiastes, its presuppositions prevent the voice other than Qoheleth's from being listened to carefully. This other voice is the one we hear speaking in 1:2; 7:27 and 12:8 for example. This third person voice is not that of Qoheleth, as is made particularly clear by the way the voices interact in 7:27. It is unlikely, according to Fox, that Qoheleth would speak of himself in the third person in the midst of a first person sentence, while a writer quoting someone else can put a *verbum dicendi* wherever he wishes within the quotation.

Here we should not ask what Qoheleth or an editor could have written, but rather – what are the literary implications of the words? What are we meant to hear in the third-person sections? ... I believe the questions raised can best be answered by the following understanding of that voice and its relation to Qoheleth. That certain words are in a different voice does not mean that they are by a different hand ... I suggest that all of 1:2 – 12:14 is by the same hand – not that the epilogue is by Qoheleth, but that Qoheleth is 'by' the epilogist. In other words, the speaker we hear from time to time in the background saying 'Qoheleth said' ... this speaker is the teller of the tale, the external narrator of the story of Qoheleth. That is to say, the epic situation of the third-person voice in the epilogue and elsewhere is that of a man looking back and telling his son the story of the ancient wise-man Qoheleth, passing on to him words he knew Qoheleth to have said, appreciatively but cautiously evaluating his work in retrospect. Virtually all the 'story' he tells is a quotation of the words of the wise-man he is telling about. The speaker, whom I will call the frame-narrator, keeps himself well in the background, but he does not make himself disappear. He presents himself not as the creator of Qoheleth's words but as their transmitter.⁴⁷

Fox thus understands Ecclesiastes as operating on three levels: the first is that of the frame-narrator who tells about the second (2a), Qoheleth-the-reporter, the narrating 'I', who looks back

from old age and speaks about the third level (2b), Qoheleth-the-seeker, the younger Qoheleth who made the investigation in 1:12ff. Level one is a different person from levels two and three; levels two and three are different perspectives of the same person.

Fox's approach leads him to explore in detail the meaning of the epilogue in terms of its relationship to the main body of Ecclesiastes.⁴⁸ The didactic tone of the father-son instruction situation would have been easily recognised by the early readers of Ecclesiastes. In this way the epilogist identifies himself as a wisdom teacher. The frame narrator's first function in the epilogue is to testify to the reality of Qoheleth so that we react to him as having lived. The second function of the frame-narrator in the epilogue is to convey a certain stance towards Qoheleth and his teaching. Qoheleth is acknowledged as a wise man and his goals are praised but the frame-narrator is subtly non-committal about the truth of Qoheleth's words. In verse 10 Qoheleth is said to have sought fine words and truth but it is not said that he succeeded. This caution becomes more pronounced in verse 12 with the warning against excessive writing and speaking, the very activities Qoheleth is engaged in. Fox takes the comparison of the words of the wise with goads/nails to indicate not positive stability but their dangerous nature; they both prick and hurt. And of course the dogmatic certitude with which the overall duty of humans is stated contrasts with Qoheleth's insistence on the uncertainty of everything. In a sense the epilogue can be seen as a call to allow expression of unorthodox opinion as long as the right conclusion is arrived at. But:

*it is not only in offering a proper conclusion that the frame-narrative makes the book more easily tolerated. The use of a frame-narrative in itself puts a certain protective distance between the author and the views expressed in his work. This distance may be important even when the author is anonymous, because it may prevent the book as a whole from being violently rejected. The author blunts objections to the book as a whole by implying through use of a frame-narrator that he is just reporting what Qoheleth said, without actually rejecting the latter's ideas.*⁴⁹

Fox considers the relationship between the frame-narrator and the implied author, 'the voice behind the voices'. In a footnote Fox refers to the work of Wayne Booth who has argued that every work of literature has an implied author which 'includes, in short, the intuitive apprehension of a completed artistic whole; the chief value to which *this* implied author is committed, regardless of what party his creator belongs to in real life, is that which is expressed by the total form.'⁵⁰ This is important because the view of the frame-narrator may not be the same as the implied author, particularly in a book like Ecclesiastes where the conventional view of the frame-narrator does not cancel out Qoheleth's scepticism unless the reader

allows it to. In fact, by ending such an unorthodox book with an orthodox epilogue, the author creates an ambiguity that gives the reader freedom to choose which position align with.

Personally I think that Fox's reading of the epilogue as distancing itself from the main body of the text is incorrect, and I have argued this in detail in my *Reading Ecclesiastes*.⁵¹ Tremper Longman has recently developed Fox's view in the direction of the framework of Ecclesiastes giving us a strong warning against Qoheleth.⁵² From this perspective the speeches of Qoheleth are a foil used by the second wise man, the narrator, to warn his son against the danger of doubting, speculative wisdom in Israel. I am cautious of this reading because it leans upon a diachronic analysis of the text without establishing these strands internally and I do not find Fox or Longman's reading of the epilogue persuasive.

However Fox has certainly demonstrated the fundamental importance of a literary approach to Ecclesiastes and, in my opinion, raised one of the most important questions in the interpretation of Ecclesiastes, namely how, in a final form approach, one understands the epilogue to relate to the main body of the text. Fox and Longman are significant representatives of a few recent commentators on Ecclesiastes who have focused intensively on this problem.

Poststructuralist, Feminist, and Psychoanalytic Readings

Poststructuralism and postmodernism have yet to impact the reading of Ecclesiastes in a major way. The failure of twentieth century scholars to reach any kind of consensus about its meaning could indicate radical textual indeterminacy, but see below. As regards women's experience and Ecclesiastes, attention has tended to be focused on 7:23ff in particular, in an attempt to determine whether Qoheleth was a misogynist or not.⁵³ Psychoanalytic readings are in vogue and there has been a serious, though eccentric attempt to read Ecclesiastes along these lines by Zimmerman,⁵⁴ using insights from Freud, Rank, Jung and Adler.

Key Issues and Ways Forward

Ecclesiastes is a fascinating book that continues to capture people's imaginations. However one is tempted to despair when one realises the extent to which scholars still disagree about it. Take *comparative genre* for example. It is amazing to discover that Perdue and Fox in their exploration of this area come up with completely different lists of ANE texts that might help us in assessing the genre of Ecclesiastes!⁵⁵ And as we have seen scholars are polarised about the message of the book. Is there any way forward towards a true understanding of Ecclesiastes or is this book quintessentially postmodern and indeterminate?

While there is something wonderfully ironic about a book concerned with the enigma of life being terribly difficult to get to grips with, so that in this respect Ecclesiastes enacts its message textually, I do not think we are left to flounder with no sense of the meaning of the book. In my opinion the following steps enable us to move towards a true understanding of Ecclesiastes.

An awareness that the reader plays a vital role in the understanding of the message of a book and that problems with interpretation can stem as much from the reader as the text or the author is important when wrestling with Ecclesiastes. Crenshaw is most insightful here when he says that

*Research into the book also shows that it reflects the interpreter's worldview. That is why, I think, opinions vary so widely with regard to such basic matters as Qoheleth's optimism or pessimism, his attitude towards women ... and his advocacy of immoral conduct.*⁵⁶

Are there then right ways to approach Ecclesiastes so that it might yield its message to us? In my opinion, yes.

First, it is important that we read *Ecclesiastes* and not just 'Qoheleth'. The legacy of historical criticism is that it appears natural to exclude the epilogue and try and get behind the text to the real Qoheleth. If we are going to do this then we need to establish cogent arguments for this approach. In my opinion Fox's case for reading the book as a literary whole is compelling so that one is always on highly speculative ground when trying to get behind the text to the real Qoheleth. The way forward is to quit such speculative activity and to focus on the different voices in Ecclesiastes, asking ultimately after the perspective of the implied author. This is the way to hear the message of Ecclesiastes. Perry, Fox and Longman have done important work in this direction and such an approach needs further research.

Second, reading the text as a whole has to involve taking the epilogue seriously as part of the literary whole. An urgent issue in Ecclesiastes scholarship is to reopen the debate about how the epilogue relates to the main body of the text.⁵⁷

Third, Ecclesiastes must be read in the context of the canon of Scripture and especially of the OT wisdom literature. Fox has done seminal work on the *epistemology*⁵⁸ of Qoheleth in comparison with Proverbs and rightly argues that Qoheleth's epistemology is empiricistic whereas that of Proverbs is not.⁵⁹ However Fox does not, in my view, note the significance of this for the canonical interpretation of Ecclesiastes. Although Qoheleth goes out of his way to stress that he embarked on his quest by *hokmah*,⁶⁰ the key elements of his epistemology are reason and experience alone and these always lead him down to the *hebel hebalim* (vanity of vanities) conclusion.⁶¹ Read against Proverbs in which 'the fear of the

LORD is the beginning (foundation and starting point) of wisdom' it becomes apparent just how *ironic* Qoheleth's description of his epistemology is. Ecclesiastes is in this sense an ironic exposure of an empiricist epistemology as always leading one to a *hebel* conclusion. Whether my reading of Ecclesiastes in this respect is right or not, considerable work needs to be done on irony and epistemology in Ecclesiastes.

Fourth, considerable attention needs to be given to *the poetics* of Ecclesiastes. Sternberg⁶² has done the best work by far on the poetics of biblical (OT) narrative, but very little work has been done of this nature with respect to wisdom. Indeed it is only comparatively recently that scholars have come to recognise that the wisdom books are literary compositions in their own right.⁶³ Repetition is a significant characteristic of Ecclesiastes but it has not received much attention in terms of its function within the book as a whole. Most significant are the repetitions of the *hebel* conclusion and the joy/*carpe diem* passages.⁶⁴ The history of the interpretation of Ecclesiastes is from one angle a sustained attempt to level the book to one or other of these poles. Either the joy passages are made subsidiary to the negative *hebel* conclusion or the *hebel* passages are made subsidiary to the joy conclusion. The crucial question is how the *hebel* (vanity) passages relate to the joy passages.

I have suggested⁶⁵ that what we have in Ecclesiastes are the *hebel* conclusions – arrived at via Qoheleth's empiricism applied to the area he examines – *juxtaposed* next to the joy passages which express the *shalomic* perspective⁶⁶ on life that Qoheleth would have derived from his Jewish upbringing and being part of Israel. These perspectives are set in contradictory juxtaposition and the effect of this is to open up *gaps* in the reading which have to be filled as the reader moves forward. Thereby the book raises for the reader the question of how these perspectives are to be related to each other. Especially in the post-exilic context in which Ecclesiastes was probably written,⁶⁷ it would have been very tempting for Israelites to use reason and experience to conclude that life is *hebel hebalim*. Increasing Greek influence might also weight their analysis in this empiricist direction.

This juxtaposition would explain why readers are constantly tempted to flatten out Ecclesiastes either towards the *hebel* pole or towards the joy pole. They are attempting to fill the gaps that the contradictory juxtapositions open up. A crucial question is whether or not Ecclesiastes itself gives us clues as to how to bridge the gaps between these perspectives. I suggest it does. Understanding the irony of Qoheleth's epistemology is one major clue, telling us as it were that if you start from here you will always end up with *hebel*. Qoheleth, for this perspective, describes his approach as *hokmah* but it is actually folly because it does not begin from the fear of the LORD.

The other major clues to bridging the gaps come towards the end of the book. Normally in Ecclesiastes a *hebel* conclusion is

reached and then it is juxtaposed with a joy passage. Towards the end of the book this order is reversed (11:8 ff.) and particularly important is the exhortation prefacing the final section before the epilogue, that is, 'Remember your creator' followed by a threefold 'before ...' This exhortation to remember is virtually the equivalent of starting with the fear of the LORD. It means developing a perspective integrally shaped by a view of this world as the LORD's. In other words it is the reverse of Qoheleth's epistemology. Such a starting point does not deliver one from the struggles of life, as the very strong discussion of death (see 12:1-8) which follows makes quite clear. However it does provide one with a place to stand amidst the struggle so that the 'light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun' (11:7).

This journey brings one back to the point summed up in the epilogue: 'Fear God and keep his commandments'. The epilogue is not a flippant exhortation at odds with the terrific struggle in the main body of the text. It is Ecclesiastes' equivalent of T.S. Eliot's conclusion to his *Four Quartets*:

*We shall not cease from exploration
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time.*⁶⁸

APPENDIX

COMMENTARIES ON ECCLESIASTES⁶⁹

At the turn of the century Ecclesiastes was subjected to historical critical scrutiny and the attempt to discern a variety of sources in Ecclesiastes is well-reflected in G.A. Barton's (ICC, T & T Clark, 1912) commentary on Ecclesiastes. In the course of the twentieth century scholars have moved away from the fragmentation of Ecclesiastes into sources and have increasingly come to recognise its unity. R. Gordis' mid-century commentary (*Koheleth - The Man and His World*, Schocken Books, 1951) is a good example of this trend. Whybray (*Ecclesiastes*, OTG, 1989) is a useful introduction to the present state of scholarship on Ecclesiastes. Moderate critical commentaries which largely read Ecclesiastes as a unity and are helpful theologically are Whybray (NCBC, 1989) and Murphy (WBC, Word, 1992). However these still tend to see the epilogue as a later addition to the book. How exactly we read Ecclesiastes as a whole and relate the joy passages to the vanity passages remains a controversial point.

The literary turn in biblical interpretation has reopened discussion about the shape of Ecclesiastes as a whole and is proving very fruitful in reading Ecclesiastes. Loader (*Text and Interpretation*, Eerdmans, 1986) uses structuralist insights to

analyse the polar opposites in Qoheleth's thought. T.A. Perry (*Dialogues with Koheleth*, Philadelphia, 1993) analyses Ecclesiastes as a dialogue. A.G. Wright has used new critical insights to great effect in his very useful analysis (see *The New Jerome Bible Commentary*, London, 1990). M. Fox has done the most exciting work on a narrative approach to Ecclesiastes (*Qoheleth and His Contradictions*, Almond, 1989). Fox's conclusions are controversial but his discussion of Qoheleth's epistemology and the narrative shape of Ecclesiastes are very important for a theological reading of Ecclesiastes as a whole. Tremper Longman (NICOT, 1998) has utilised Fox's insights to argue that Qoheleth's pessimistic speeches are framed by a narrator who warns in the epilogue against the speculative wisdom of Qoheleth.

In my opinion the best recent commentary on Ecclesiastes is that by G. Ogden (Readings, *JSOT*, 1987). Ogden sides with those scholars who read Ecclesiastes as ultimately affirming faith and joy rather than pessimism (such as J.L. Crenshaw, OTL, SCM, 1988). J. Ellul's *Reason for Being* (Eerdmans, 1990) and the Tyndale commentary by Eaton (1983) are also most useful for a theological reading of Ecclesiastes. D. Fredericks (*Coping with Transience*, Sheffield, 1993) interprets Ecclesiastes as struggling with the transience of life. C.L. Seow's (New York, 1997) *Anchor Bible Commentary* is particularly useful for linguistic comments.

At a popular level Kidner (*Bible Speaks Today*, 1976) still points the reader in the right direction. I recommend Ogden, to be supplemented by Fox, and Murphy for exegetical detail and Seow for linguistic detail.

¹ See R. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (London: SPCK, 1985), 274-337.

² R.N. Whybray, 'Qoheleth, Preacher of Joy,' *JSOT* 23 (1982), 87-98.

³ F. Watson, *Text, Church and World. Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 283.

⁴ Brentius (1528), quoted in C.D. Ginsburg, *The Song of Songs and Koheleth* (New York: KTAV, 1970), 112, comments, 'There is nothing better than to be cheerful, and enjoy one's life; to eat, drink, and delight in one's employment: ... Some foolish persons, not understanding these things, have absurdly taught contempt for and flight from the world, and have committed many foolish things themselves; as we read in the lives of the Fathers that there were some who even shut themselves up from ever seeing the sun ... living above the world is not living out of the world.' The resulting reassessment of Qoheleth's attitude to the earthly and material is evident also in Luther, Melancton and Piscator (1612). According to Melancton (1556), quoted in Ginsburg, *Song of Songs*, 113, Ecclesiastes 'shows us that we are to be submissive in every station of life, and perform the duties of our calling ... that we should know that to follow our calling is pleasing to God.' Catholic interpretations of Ecclesiastes continued to stress the contempt for the earthly (see Ginsburg, *Song of Songs*, 123 ff).

- 5 C. Siegfried, *Prediger und Hoheslied* (HAT) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1898).
- 6 A.H. McNeile, *An Introduction to Ecclesiastes With Notes and Appendices* (Cambridge: CUP, 1904).
- 7 G.A. Barton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes* (ICC), (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912).
- 8 R. Gordis, *Koheleth the Man and his World* (New York: Schocken, 1968), 73, notes the growing recognition of the unity of Ecclesiastes.
- 9 R.E. Clements, *A Century of Old Testament Study* (London: Lutterworth, 1976), 101, 102.
- 10 Cf. D. Michel, *Qoheleth* (Erträge der Forschung), (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 76–81; R.E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature* (The Forms of Old Testament Literature XIII), (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981).
- 11 J.L. Crenshaw, 'Ecclesiastes, Book of,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. II (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 275.
- 12 K. Galling, 'Koheleth-Studien,' ZAW 50 (1932), 276–99, *Der Prediger* (2nd ed., HAT 18), (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1969).
- 13 A.G. Wright, 'The Riddle of the Sphinx: The Structure of the Book of Qoheleth,' *CBQ* 30 (1968), 313–34, (1968) and A. Schoors, 'La structure littéraire de Qohéleth,' *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 13 (1982), 91–116, contain useful overviews of the great variety of structures that have been proposed.
- 14 See below for a discussion of Wright's analysis. It is, for example, followed by R.E. Murphy, *Ecclesiastes* (WBC), (Texas: Word, 1992), xxxii–xli, and is drawn upon by L.G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Creaton. The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 203 ff.
- 15 Cf. R.E. Murphy, *Ecclesiastes*, xxvi–xxxii.
- 16 Cf. Michel, *Qoheleth*, 66–75.
- 17 Cf. for example W. Baumgartner, 'The Wisdom Literature,' in H.H. Rowley ed., *The Old Testament and Modern Study* (Oxford: OUP, 1951), 221–27.
- 18 H. Gese, 'The Crisis of Wisdom in Koheleth,' in J.L. Crenshaw, ed., *Theodicy in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 141–53.
- 19 For a superb treatment of this issue see R. Van Leeuwen, 'Wealth and Poverty: System and Contradiction in Proverbs,' *Hebrew Studies* 33 (1992), 25–36.
- 20 W. Brueggemann, 'The Social Significance of Solomon as a Patron of Wisdom', in J.G. Gammie and L.G. Perdue eds., *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 129. On the sociological analysis of Ecclesiastes cf. also F. Crüsemann, 'The Unchangeable World: The 'Crisis of Wisdom' in Qoheleth,' in W. Schotroff and W. Stegemann eds., *God of the Lowly* (New York: Orbis, 1984), 57–77.
- 21 W. Brueggemann, 'Trajectories in Old Testament Literature and the Sociology of Ancient Israel,' *JBL* 98 (1979), 161–85. Cf. J.R. Middleton, 'Is Creation Theology Inherently Conservative? A Dialogue With Walter Brueggemann,' *HTR* 87/3 (1994), 257–77, for a critique of Brueggemann's view of creation order and see Brueggemann's reply, 'Response to J. Richard Middleton,' *HTR* 87/3 (1994), 279–89.
- 22 Cf. Murphy, *Ecclesiastes*, xli–xlv.
- 23 Cf. for example N. Lohfink, *Kohelet* (NEB), (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1993), 7–9, who tends to assume the Hellenistic character of Ecclesiastes, with Murphy, *Ecclesiastes*, xlv, who is far more cautious. Lohfink thinks that Ecclesiastes may have been written

- between 190 and 180 BC, just before the Macabbean revolt. In this context Judea belonged to the Hellenistic world and Hellenistic ideas were pervasive and competed with the Jewish tradition. 'Das Buch Koh kann nur verstanden werden als Versuch, so viel wie möglich von der griechischen Weltdeutung zu gewinnen, ohne dass dabei die israelitische Weisheit doch ihren Eigenstand aufgeben musste.' (Lohfink, *Qohelet*, 9) Lohfink assumes a high degree of Hellenistic influence whereas C.R. Harrison, *Qoheleth in Social-Historical Perspective* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1991), argues that it was minimal in Judea. Harrison, however, argues that Ptolemaic economic policy was deeply effecting Judean society.
- ²⁴ Murphy, *Ecclesiastes*, sticks with 'vanity', M. Fox, *Qoheleth and His Contradictions* (Sheffield: Almond, 1989), proposes 'absurd', G. Ogden, *Qoheleth* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), proposes 'enigmatic', the Good News Bible translates *hebel* as 'useless', Lohfink, *Kohelet*, suggest 'Windhauch'.
- ²⁵ In this respect cf. for example Murphy, *Ecclesiastes*, with Ogden, *Qoheleth*.
- ²⁶ J.L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes, Book of*, *Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. II, 277.
- ²⁷ F. Watson, *Text, Church and World*, 283-87.
- ²⁸ J.A. Loader, *Polar Structures in the Book of Qoheleth* (New York: de Gruyter, 1979), *Ecclesiastes. A Practical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986).
- ²⁹ Ogden, *Qoheleth*, 14.
- ³⁰ J. Ellul, *Reason for Being. A Meditation on Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 31.
- ³¹ Most recently Watson, *Text, Church and World*, has pleaded for 'Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective'.
- ³² B. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).
- ³³ J. Barton, *Reading the Old Testament Method in Biblical Study* (London: DLT, 1984), 153, 154, 180-84.
- ³⁴ For an introduction to New Criticism and its application to OT studies see C.G. Bartholomew, *Reading Ecclesiastes: Old Testament Exegesis and Hermeneutical Theory* (*Analecta Biblica* 139), (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1998), pp. 107-17.
- ³⁵ 'Freu Dich, Jungling - doch nicht, weil du jung bist. Zum Formproblem im Schlussgedicht Kohelets (Koh 11, 9-12, 8),' *BI* 3/2 (1995), 160.
- ³⁶ Wright, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, *CBQ* 30, 318.
- ³⁷ Wright, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, *CBQ* 30, 321.
- ³⁸ Wright, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, *CBQ* 30, 323.
- ³⁹ Wright, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, *CBQ* 30, 324.
- ⁴⁰ Wright's approach has received mixed reactions but his analysis has been widely influential. Wright buttressed this early analysis with two later articles in which he argues that there are intricate numerical patterns in Ecclesiastes which support his proposed structure.
- ⁴¹ Loader, *Polar Structures and Ecclesiastes*.
- ⁴² For an introduction to structuralism and OT studies see Bartholomew, *Reading Ecclesiastes*, 122-31.
- ⁴³ T.A. Perry, *Dialogues With Koheleth. The Book of Ecclesiastes. Translation and Commentary* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University, 1993).
- ⁴⁴ Perry, *Dialogues With Koheleth*, 36.
- ⁴⁵ M. Fox, 'Frame Narrative and Composition in the Book of Qoheleth,' *HUCA* 48 (1977), 83-106.

- ⁴⁶ Fox, 'Frame Narrative and Composition', *HUCA* 48, 83.
- ⁴⁷ Fox, 'Frame Narrative and Composition', *HUCA* 48, 90, 91.
- ⁴⁸ Fox, 'Frame Narrative and Composition', *HUCA* 48, 96-106.
- ⁴⁹ Fox, 'Frame Narrative and Composition', *HUCA* 48, 103.
- ⁵⁰ W. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (2nd ed.; London: Penguin, 1983), 73.
- ⁵¹ Bartholomew, *Reading Ecclesiastes*, 158-70.
- ⁵² T. Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (NICOT), (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), especially 37-39.
- ⁵³ See for example N. Lohfink, 'War Kohelet ein Frauenfeind? Ein Versuch, die Logik und den Gegenstand von Koh 7, 23-28. 1a herauszufinden,' in M. Gilbert ed., *La Sagesse de l'Ancien Testament* (BETL 51), (Leuven: UP, 1979), 259-87, K. Baltzer, 'Women and War in Qoheleth 7:23-28:1a,' *HTR* 80/1 (1987), 127-32. (1987), O. Loretz, "'Frau" und griechisch-jüdische Philosophie im Buch Qoheleth', *UF* 23 (1991), 245-64.
- ⁵⁴ F. Zimmerman, *The Inner World of Qoheleth* (New York: KTAV, 1973).
- ⁵⁵ See Bartholomew, *Reading Ecclesiastes*, 146-57.
- ⁵⁶ J.L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes* (OTL), (London: SCM, 1988), 47.
- ⁵⁷ See in this respect K.J. Dell, 'Ecclesiastes as Wisdom', *VT* XLIV/3 (1993), 301-29; A.G. Shead, 'Ecclesiastes From the Outside In', *Reformed Theological Review* 55/1 (1996), 24-37. 'Reading Ecclesiastes 'Epilogically'', *Tyndale Bulletin* 48.1 (1997), 67-91.
- ⁵⁸ I.e. the method Qoheleth adopts in order to arrive at knowledge he can trust as true.
- ⁵⁹ See Fox, *Qoheleth and His Contradictions*.
- ⁶⁰ Ecclesiastes 1:13, 2:3.
- ⁶¹ See Bartholomew, *Reading Ecclesiastes*, 230-37.
- ⁶² M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative. Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
- ⁶³ Cf. the superb work of R. van Leeuwen in this area: *Context and Meaning in Proverbs 25-27* (SBL Dissertation Series 96), (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 'The Book of Proverbs'. in *The New Interpreter's Bible* Vol. V, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 19-264.
- ⁶⁴ The Joy passages are, Ecclesiastes 2:24-26; 3:12-13; 3:22; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:7-10; 11:8-10.
- ⁶⁵ See Bartholomew, *Reading Ecclesiastes*, 237-54.
- ⁶⁶ A conversation with Robert Alter pushed me towards understanding the joy passages in Ecclesiastes in this way rather than as a sort of hedonism in the context of the despair of *hebel*.
- ⁶⁷ The date of Ecclesiastes particularly in relation to its language remains controversial. See B. Isakkson, *Studies in the Language of Qoheleth With Special Emphasis on the Verbal System* (Studia Semitica Upsallensia 10), (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1987), D.C. Fredericks, *Qoheleth's Language: Re-evaluating its Nature and Date* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1988), A. Schoors, *The Preacher Sought to Find Pleasing Words. A Study of the Language of Qoheleth* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 41), (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1992), C.L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB), (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 11-21.
- ⁶⁸ T.S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936, 1974), 222.
- ⁶⁹ This is a revised version of a commentary survey recently published in *Biblical Studies Bulletin*, Issue 10, December 1998.

THE CONCEPT OF IDOLATRY

Brian S. Rosner

Brian Rosner lectures in New Testament at Aberdeen University. He has a detailed monograph due for publication on the issue of greed as idolatry, and a popular version of the material is due out from IVP with the title How to Get Really Rich.

The concept of idolatry in the Bible is powerful and complex, diverse and problematic. Even though, as Halbertal and Margalit note, 'the central theological principle in the Bible is [the refutation of] idolatry' (10),¹ it is ironic that the 'category that is supposed to be the firmest and strictest of all ... [exhibits] an astonishing fluidity' (250)². A theological treatment of the subject must consider the close association of idolatry with sexual immorality and greed and attempt to answer fundamental questions: What is idolatry? What constitutes a god?

Opposition to Idolatry

In the Bible there is no more serious charge than that of idolatry. Idolatry called for the strictest punishment, elicited the most disdainful polemic, prompted the most extreme measures of avoidance and was regarded as the chief identifying characteristic of those who were the very antithesis of the people of God, namely the gentiles. Fundamental to Israel's life and faith were the first commandment and its exposition in the Shema (Dt. 6:4-5), which were from early on regarded as touching every aspect of life. The early church likewise treated idol worship with the utmost seriousness.

Idolatry is the ultimate expression of unfaithfulness to God and for that reason is the occasion for severe divine punishment.³ The portrayal of the kings in 1 and 2 Kings is especially revealing. Kings are assessed as either good or bad purely on religious grounds, that is, on the question of whether they destroyed or introduced idols. Omri, one of the greatest kings of Israel, is a case in point. In spite of his political achievements and the 'might that he showed' (1 Ki. 16:27), he is only mentioned briefly, for 'he led Israel to ... provoke the anger of the LORD their God with their worthless idols' (1 Ki. 16:26). The theme of judgement on idolatry is also widespread in the NT.⁴

The theological grounds for the judgement of idolatry is the jealousy of God. The belief that idolatry arouses God's jealousy is a sturdy OT theme with a long history. It is introduced in the second commandment (Ex. 20:5; Dt. 5:8-10) and in Exodus 34:14 ('Do not worship any other god, for the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God') it is the explanation of the divine name, 'Jealous'. In fact all the Pentateuchal references to God's jealousy have to do with idol-worship. An idol worshipped in

Jerusalem in Ezekiel 8:3 is called 'the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy' (cf. Ezk. 16:38, 42; 23:25).

The conviction that God's jealousy inevitably leads him to stern action is also deeply rooted in the OT. God's jealousy, based upon his love for those he has redeemed at great cost, motivates him to judge his people; Nahum 1:2, 'The Lord is a jealous God and avenges'. The OT is replete with texts in which God's jealousy leads him to destroy the faithless among his people.⁵ The warning of 1 Corinthians 10:22 echoes this teaching.

A common strategy in the OT for opposing idolatry was that of ridiculing polemic in which the idols are portrayed as powerless and deceptive. The main examples include Psalms 115:4-8; 135:15-18; the words of Elijah,⁶ the prayer of Hezekiah⁷ and especially the prophets.⁸ Such material stresses the perishable nature of the idols, their human origin (in the mind and skills of the maker) and lifelessness and insists that idol worship leads only to the disappointment and embarrassment of those who trust in them. Habbakuk 2:18-19 contains all these elements.

The most commonly used Greek term for idol, *eidolon*, which occurs almost 100 times in the LXX, lends itself to such polemic and is effectively a term of derision. The established association of the word with insubstantiality and falsehood provided the pejorative element in the description of an image. Paul reflects such teaching in Romans 1:18-32 and in 1 Corinthians 12:2 ('dumb' idols). To worship idols is both an error and a foolish vanity (cf. 1 Thes. 1:9-10; Acts 14:15; and esp. 1 Jn. 5:21 where idols are contrasted with the living and true God). By contrast, the usual Greek term for cultic image, *agalma*, had positive associations of joy and beauty. Disgust and contempt for idolatry is also communicated in several derogatory terms used to describe the idols. Idols are 'unclean things', a common designation in Ezekiel, 'weak/worthless things', 'that which is insubstantial', and a 'vanity' or 'emptiness'. The Israelites were not simply to avoid idolatry; the language of prohibition could hardly be more emotive and urgent; they are to 'utterly detest and abhor' the heathen gods (Dt. 7:25f).

The call to resist pagan pressure for Jews to compromise their religion by contact with idolatry is nowhere more clear than in Daniel where the king's rich and presumably idolatrous food is shunned (ch. 1). This episode is followed by that of Daniel's three companions who refuse to worship the king's golden image (ch. 3) and Daniel's refusal to pray to the king (ch. 6). According to the Book of Daniel such earthly kingdoms will ultimately give way to the everlasting kingdom of the one true God (see 2:44; 4:3, 34; 6:26; ch. 7).

It is not just that idolatry was one vice among many of which the heathen were guilty, rather, idolatry is a defining feature of

the heathen, whose way of life is characterised inevitably by this sin. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, read in conjunction with 1:9, is an early Pauline witness to this conviction. The characterisation of the heathen by the three sins of sexual immorality, idolatry and greed comes through consistently in the Pauline catalogues of vice. Furthermore, these three sins are the only vices in the Pauline letters that are considered to be such a threat that they must be 'fled' (1 Cor. 6:18; 10:14 and 1 Tim. 6:11 respectively). In Romans 2:22 Paul takes it for granted that Jews abhor and detest idols. Opposition to idolatry was in effect an exercise in redrawing group boundaries for the people of God, set within the wider framework of issues to do with identity and self-definition. In making clear what they stood for, they took pains to underscore what they stood against.

The Worship of Idols

In striking contrast to her neighbours the religion of Israel prohibited the use of images.⁹ Whereas Deuteronomy 4:12-18 explains that God chooses to make himself known through words rather than a form, Isaiah 40:18, 25 reasons that the incomparability of the Lord renders all representative forms inadequate. Nonetheless, on numerous occasions the nation failed to keep the second commandment (see e.g. the golden calf in Ex. 32-34; Micah's image in Jdg. 17-18; and Jereboam's bulls in 1 Ki. 12:28-34).

In dealing with the subject of idolatry we confront a problem of definition, for the term can be taken to mean both the worship of images and the worship of foreign gods. Both senses are valid. The second commandment extends and applies the first. At least in the Israelite understanding, a pagan deity was present in its image.¹⁰ Disagreement over the division of the Ten Commandments also belies the close relation between the first and second commandments. Whereas the conventional Jewish division takes the opening verse as the first commandment and the prohibitions of worshipping other gods and the worship of images as the second, Augustine, the Roman Catholic and Lutheran traditions consider all of this material to be the first commandment. In most cases the OT authors do not distinguish between the worship of other gods, the worship of images and the worship of the Lord using images. While a formal distinction between having gods and having images is possible and may be useful, especially in exploring teaching about the latter, for our purposes idolatry is taken in the broadest sense including material relating to both.

Just as keeping the first commandment was expected to lead to obedience to all the commandments, so idolatry was thought to lead to other sins (Rom. 1; cf. Wisdom 14:27: 'The worship of idols ... is the beginning and cause and end of every evil'), including and in particular, sexual immorality. In one sense the link between sexual immorality and idolatry could not be more

concrete. Pagan temples were often the venue for illicit sexual activities. Religious prostitution was commonly practised by the cults of the ancient Near Eastern fertility religions and it was a problem for Israel from the moment they entered the Promised Land (Nu. 25:1; cf. Jdg. 2:17). This became especially prevalent in Judah and Israel during the divided monarchy from Rehoboam, 1 Kings 14:24 to Josiah, 2 Kings 23:7. According to Exodus 34:11–16 the extermination of the inhabitants of the land was commanded so that the Israelites would avoid the practice. Deuteronomy 23:17 forbids cult prostitution for Israel (cf. Am 2:7).

Prostitution at cultic events of a festive nature was well-attested in places like Corinth and is even mentioned in the OT. It was common in the ancient Near East for orgies to take place at heathen festivals. Hosea 4:13–14 probably refers to this kind of activity, where mountain top sacrifices, suggesting a pagan altar, and prostitutes are juxtaposed. Further possible references in the OT include Numbers 25:1ff, where Phineas' slaying of Zimri for sexual immorality occurred in the context of pagan sacrifice, and Isaiah 57:3ff, Jeremiah 2:20; 3:6 (cf. 2 Macc. 6:4–5). In Judges 21:19–23 even a feast to the Lord at Shiloh was the occasion for the Benjamites to take wives by force. The description of the cult of the golden calf can be considered as an archetype of the events (Ex. 32). During the celebrations 'the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play' (Ex. 32:6). The verb 'to play' in Hebrew is clearly a euphemism for sexual activities. According to both pagan and Christian writers feasting and sexual immorality inevitably went together.

There seems little doubt that the discussion of idol food in 1 Corinthians 8–10 included the problem of sexual immorality. Paul's response to the problem of the prostitute in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 should probably be read in this light. Apparently some Corinthians were eating in pagan temples and using the prostitutes on offer on such occasions and defending both behaviours with the slogan, 'all things are lawful for me' (6:12; 10:23). As already noted, 'rise up to play' in 1 Corinthians 10:7, which alludes to Exodus 32:6, is probably a reference to prostitution on a festive occasion in a pagan temple. Revelation 2:14ff may supply evidence of such activity in Asia Minor: The church in Pergamum is guilty of eating food sacrificed to idols and of sexual immorality. All this speaks for a close literal association between sexual immorality and idolatry.

The Concept of Idolatry

Idolatry is defined by a number of twentieth-century theologians in terms of making that which is contingent absolute. For Reinhold Niebuhr, for example, idolatry occurs when we 'make some contingent and relative vitality into the

unconditioned principle of meaning' (178).¹¹ In fact Niebuhr defines not just idolatry but sin itself in such terms: 'sin is the vain imagination by which man hides the conditioned, contingent and dependent character of his existence and seeks to give it the appearance of unconditioned reality' (137-38).¹² Sin consists of placing such a high value on something that it effectively replaces God in some sense. Both the strength and weakness of this view of idolatry lies in it being so general. It can be readily applied to almost anything. To label all sin idolatry, as attractive as this may sound, does not do justice to the variety and depth of the Bible's treatment of sin. Lawbreaking, lawlessness, impurity and the absence of love are just a few of the many other ways in which Scripture conceives of different forms of sin. Romans 1 does not in fact take idolatry to be the pattern of all subsequent sins, but rather portrays indulgence in further sin, being given up to various vices, as being the appropriate punishment for giving up God in idolatry. In attempting to understand idolatry theologians like Niebuhr take a top-down approach, focusing on God as the absolute one. Another way of proceeding is to go from the bottom up, looking at what it is that idolaters do with their idols, what the charge of idolatry consists of and to what the sin of idolatry is compared.

Two Models of Idolatry

The Bible uses a number of anthropomorphic metaphors to elucidate how God relates to humankind. God is at different points king, father, bridegroom, woman in labour, judge and so on. The relevant metaphor for the dominant and most familiar conception of idolatry in the OT is that of marital relations. The depiction of idolatry as sinful sexual relations is introduced in the Pentateuch (Ex. 34:15-16) and is used extensively in the Prophets, especially Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Common to all uses of the image is the idea that Israel is married to God but is unfaithful to her husband. The betrayed husband experiences both a fierce desire for revenge and a strong urge to win back his beloved wife. If Hosea describes idolatry as prostitution, even more daring is Ezekiel for whom it is outright nymphomania. However the marital model is not the sole conception of idolatry in the OT.

Another major conception of idolatry appears in the prophets, namely the political model in which God is seen as king, and his people as his subjects. If when God is conceived of as a husband he demands exclusive love and devotion, as king he demands trust and confidence in his ability to provide for and protect those under his care, loyal service and obedience. In both the marital and political models the choice of metaphor was reinforced or perhaps even occasioned by a potent literal association. Temple prostitution and the deification of human leaders made the marital and the political models of idolatry respectively all the more appropriate.

When the Israelites requested a king in 1 Samuel 8, Samuel was displeased and prayed to the Lord. The Lord's comforting reply in 8:7-9 compares their rejection of God's kingship to idolatry. Likewise the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel denounce Israel's treaties with Assyria and Egypt in terms that add up to nothing less than the charge of idolatry, even though the literal worship of other gods is nowhere in view. Isaiah in 31:1-3 chides the nation for her treaty with Egypt against the threat of Assyria. The reliance upon Egypt is regarded as a form of deification. Since God is Israel's ruler, the nation is supposed to seek protection only from him. To seek it elsewhere is effectively to look to another 'god' ('the Egyptians are men and not God'). Isaiah 30:7 describes Egyptian help against the Assyrians as 'futility', the same word which Isaiah 57:13 and Jeremiah 2:5 employ to condemn the idolatry of the fathers. In similar fashion Jeremiah 2:17-19 describes the treaties with the Egyptians and with the Assyrians as a forsaking of God in favour of someone else. The nation is guilty of idolatry because she sought protection from, trusted and relied upon something other than God. In Ezekiel the political and marital models merge. The treaties are described in the familiar terms of marital unfaithfulness: 'You engaged in prostitution with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbours, and provoked me to anger with your increasing promiscuity (Ezk. 16:26). You engaged in prostitution with the Assyrians too' (Ezk. 16:28). In this case the request to foreign powers for protection is compared to adultery and the relation between God the king and the nation as to a husband and wife.

With a throne-room from which God rules the world, and twenty-four elders who sit on thrones and wear crowns, ruling the heavenly world on God's behalf, the Book of Revelation is not short on political imagery. Revelation portrays God's rule over against that of the Roman Empire which, like most political powers in the ancient world, represented its power in religious terms, claiming for itself the ultimate, divine sovereignty over the world. Its state religion, which featured the worship both of the deified emperors and of the traditional gods of Rome, expressed political loyalty in terms of religious worship (cf. Bauckham).¹⁵ Revelation presents an alternative, theocentric vision of the world, referring frequently to worship in its graphic portrayal of the conflict of sovereignties. Glimpses of worship in heaven punctuate the reports of God's victory over false worship on earth. Christians are called to resist the deification of military and political power, represented by the beast, and of economic prosperity, by Babylon (see Rev. 18:12-17), by worshipping the true God and living under his rule.

Texts involving the terms usually translated 'to serve' and 'to worship' supply unambiguous evidence that idolaters (and believers) were conceived of as serving and obeying their deities. Even in ceremonial contexts these words signify more than just isolated acts of cultic worship. When it is said that the people

'serve' Baal (Jdg. 10:6, 10, etc.) or other gods (Jdg. 10:13, etc.) or the Lord (Jdg. 10:16, etc.) the term implies not only the exclusive nature of the relationship but the total commitment and, in effect, obedience of the worshipper. That to 'serve' a deity involved doing their bidding is made clear in passages like Matthew 6:24/Luke 16:13 where the 'service' is rendered to a master and the Pauline phrase 'bow the knee',¹⁴ which is a synonym for worship.

Even if it is difficult to reduce biblical teaching on idolatry to a simple formula, one element common to both models, the marital and the political, is worth noting. In both cases the notion of *exclusivity* is central: in one the exclusive claims of a husband to his wife's love and affection: in the other the exclusive claims of a sovereign to protect and provide for his subjects and receive their trust and obedience in return. Thus idolatry as a concept is an attack on God's exclusive rights to our love, trust and obedience.

Greed as Idolatry

With this definition in mind, what then qualifies as idolatry? Although a number of possibilities, including pride come to mind, the NT unambiguously judges only one thing outside of the literal worship of idols to be idolatry, namely greed. The charge that greed is idolatry appears at four points. It is stated in Colossians 3:5 ('greed is idolatry'), Ephesians 5:5 ('the greedy person is an idolater') and implied in the mammon saying in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:14. Whether the worship of the belly in Romans 16:18 and Philippians 3:19 refers to Jewish preoccupation with food laws or circumcision, fleshly egocentricism or gluttony and by extension greed is difficult to say. Although falling short of explicitly branding greed idolatry, the two sins are treated as comparable in character and gravity in Job 31:24–28. Philo of Alexandria's repeated warnings against the idolatry of the love of money suggests the Jewish provenance of the notion. According to Philo the first commandment 'condemns strongly the money-lovers who procure gold and silver coins from every side and treasure their hoard like a divine image in a sanctuary, believing it to be a source of blessing and happiness of every kind.' (*On The Special Laws* 1:21–22).

In what sense is greed idolatry? Matthew 6:24 in context gives clear support to the idea that the worship of mammon instead of God involves love and devotion, using these very words, and service and obedience with the notion of rival masters. It also implies a negative judgement on trusting in wealth since the verses which verse 24 effectively introduces, 6:25–34, point to the birds and lilies in order to inspire trust in God's providential care.

Another indication that the greedy are idolaters because they love, trust and serve money rather than God is that the greedy

are condemned in the Bible in particular for their inordinate love, misplaced trust and forbidden service. A virtual synonym for 'greed', *pleonexia*, in a broad range of material is 'lover of money', *filarguria*,¹⁵ the thought of which is sometimes expressed in the form of an admonition (e.g., Heb. 13:5: 'Keep free from the love of money'). Furthermore in the OT the rich are not 'to set their heart', the spiritual organ of love and devotion, on their riches (Ps. 62:10; cf. 2 Pet. 2:14). That such love should be reserved for God is spelt out in T. Benjamin 6:1-3: 'the good man ... does not accumulate wealth out of love for pleasure ... the Lord is his lot'.

Numerous texts not only observe that the rich trust in their riches, but warn against such reliance as being incompatible with and an unacceptable alternative to trust in God. Jeremiah accuses Israel of trusting in her 'strongholds and treasures' 48:7.¹⁶ Psalm 52:7 states that the one who 'does not make God his refuge ... trusts in his great wealth' (cf. 49:13, 15). In Proverbs 'the wealth of the rich is their fortress' (10:15) and 'their strong city' (18:11); but 'those who trust in their riches will wither' (11:28). On the other hand, God is the only trust of the poor and those of humble means (Pss 34:6; 40:17¹⁷). Proverbs 18:10-11 suggestively juxtaposes trust in God and trust in money. In Proverbs 28:25 'a greedy person' is contrasted with 'the one who trusts in the Lord'.

Such teaching is carried on in the NT where the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12 warns against all active striving for the increase of material possessions as a means of security and 1 Timothy 6:17 counsels the rich not to trust in their riches but in God. The notion of trusting God, not money appears in a number of places in the NT.¹⁸ Hebrews 13:5-6 encourages its readers not to love money, with the promise of the Lord's help, implying that faith in God is the alternative to finding security in money.

Evidence of the greedy serving their wealth is less direct. It is implied in the Bible's frequent condemnation of the greedy for ignoring social justice and oppressing the poor. Furthermore the notion of sin as a ruling power can be seen in John 8:30-36 and Romans 6. Jewish moral teaching indicates in the Testament of Judah 8:6 that the love of money is 'contrary to God's commands' and 'enslaves' a person.

Greed is idolatry because the greedy contravene God's exclusive rights to human love, trust and obedience.

Conclusions

The fundamental question of theology, what do we mean by God, can be answered from a variety of angles by exploring God's various relations to the world and to ourselves. Ironically, the study of idolatry also allows us some insight into the nature of the true God. What constitutes a god? Martin Luther's

answer, reflecting on the first commandment in his larger catechism, was 'whatever your heart clings to and relies upon, that is your God; trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and idol'. We wish to confirm his view, but also to emphasise the aspects of love and service: a god is that which one loves, trusts and serves above all else. This definition suggests both the possibility and urgency of making clear the relevance of idolatry to the modern world.

In one sense idolatry is the diagnosis of the human condition to which the gospel is the cure. At root, the problem with humans is not horizontal 'social' problems (like sexual immorality and greed), but rebellion against and replacement of the true and living God with gods that fail (which leads to these destructive sins). If the story of the human race is a sorry tale of different forms of idolatry, the height of human folly, the good news is that God reconciles his image-bearers back to himself in Christ. It is no accident that the prophets envisage a time when idols will ultimately be eradicated and replaced by true worship.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (CUP, 1993).

Edward M. Curtis, 'Idol, Idolatry', *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 3:376-381 (Doubleday Image, 1992).

Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry* (Harvard University Press, 1992).

Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man. Volume 1: Human Nature* (? in London 1941 reprinted Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997).

Vinoth Ramanchandra, *Gods that Fail: Modern Idolatry and Christian Mission* (Paternoster Press, 1996).

Brian S. Rosner, *Greed, the Second Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* (forthcoming; Tübingen).

'Temple Prostitution in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20', *Novum Testamentum* 40.4 (1998): 336-51.

¹ Halbertal and Margalit, *Idolatry*, Harvard University Press, 1992.

² Halbertal and Margalit, *Idolatry*.

³ Cf. Lev. 26:27-33; Nu. 33:51-56; Dt. 29:16-28.

⁴ Acts 7:41-43; 17:31; Rom. 1:18-23; 1 Cor. 5:10-13; 6:9; 10:5-8, 22; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5-6; Col 3:5-6; 1 Pet. 4:3-5; Rev. 2:20-23; 14:9-11; 16:1-2; 19:20; 21:8; 22:15.

- ⁵ Cf. Dt. 6:14-15; Jos. 24:19-20; Ps. 78:58-64; Zp. 1:18.
- ⁶ 1Ki. 18:27.
- ⁷ Is. 37:17-20; 2 Ki. 19:16-19.
- ⁸ Hab. 2:18-19; Je. 14:22; 10:3-4; Is. 44:9-20; Ho. 8:4-6.
- ⁹ Ex. 20:4-5, 23; 34:17; Lev. 19:4; 26:1; Dt. 4:15-19, 25; 5:8; Je. 10:3-5; 11:10-13.
- ¹⁰ See Ex. 20:23, 'gods of silver' and 'gods of gold'; 32:31 'golden gods', Lev. 19:4, 'molten gods'; Jos. 24:14, 'remove the gods'; 2 Ki. 17:29; 19:18, 'remove the foreign gods'.
- ¹¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man. Volume 1: Human Nature?* in London 1941 reprinted Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997.
- ¹² Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man. Volume 1: Human Nature.*
- ¹³ Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, CUP, 1993.
- ¹⁴ Rom. 11:4; 14:11; Eph. 3:14; Phil. 2:10.
- ¹⁵ E.g. Lk. 16:14; 1 Tim. 3:3; 6:10; 2 Tim. 3:2.
- ¹⁶ Compare this with. 22:21; 49:4; Ezk. 28:4-5; Ho. 12:7-8.
- ¹⁷ Cf. 68:10; 86:1; Is. 66:2
- ¹⁸ For instance in the instructions to the disciples in the mission charges (Mk. 6:8-9); in the story of the widow's offering (Mk. 12:41-44; par); the calling of Peter and Matthew to leave all and follow Jesus (Mk. 1:18-20; Lk. 5:28); the example of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1-10); the call to store up treasures in heaven not on earth (Mt. 6:19-21) and supremely in Matthew 6:25-34, the Lukan version of which is introduced by the parable of the Rich Fool (12:13-34).

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

Benjamin B. Warfield

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, the greatest of the Princeton theologians after the death of Charles Hodge, gave this as an address to young men training for the ministry. While its specific audience means that some of its phrases and content is dated and it is written in gender-specific language, the underlying general principles – that theological work is to be linked to practical Christian life and worship, and that the privilege of theological education brings with it great responsibilities – remain perennially relevant to students of theology.

I am asked to speak to you on the religious life of the student of theology. I approach the subject with some trepidation. I think it the most important subject which can engage our thought. You will not suspect me, in saying this, to be depreciating the importance of the intellectual preparation of the student for the ministry. The importance of the intellectual preparation of the student for the ministry is the reason of the existence of our Theological Seminaries. Say what you will, do what you will, the ministry is a 'learned profession'; and the man without learning, no matter with what other gifts he may be endowed, is unfit for its duties. But learning, though indispensable, is not the most indispensable thing for a minister. 'Apt to teach' – yes, the minister must be 'apt to teach'; and observe that what I say – or rather what Paul says – is 'apt to teach'. Not apt merely to exhort, to beseech, to appeal, to entreat; not even merely, to testify, to bear witness; but to *teach*. And teaching implies knowledge: he who teaches must know. Paul, in other words, requires of you, as we are perhaps learning not very felicitously to phrase it, 'instructional', not merely 'inspirational', service. But aptness to teach alone does not make a minister; nor is it his primary qualification. It is only one of a long list of requirements which Paul lays down as necessary to meet in him who aspires to this high office. And all the rest concern, not his intellectual, but his spiritual fitness. A minister must be learned, on pain of being utterly incompetent for his work. But before and above being learned, a minister must be godly.

Nothing could be more fatal, however, than to set these things over against one another. Recruiting officers do not dispute whether it is better for soldiers to have a right leg or a left leg: soldiers should have both legs. Sometimes we hear it said that ten minutes on your knees will give you a truer, deeper, more operative knowledge of God than ten hours over your books. 'What!' is the appropriate response, 'than ten hours over your books, on your knees?' Why should you turn from God when you turn to your books, or feel that you must from your books in order to turn to God? If learning and devotion are as antagonistic as that, then the intellectual life is in itself accursed and there can be no question of a religious life for a

The Religious Life of Theological Students

student, even of theology. The mere fact that he is a student inhibits religion for him. That I am asked to speak to you on the religious life of the student of theology proceeds the recognition of the absurdity of such antitheses. You are students of theology; and just because you are students of theology, it is understood that you are religious men – especially religious men, to whom the cultivation of your religious life is a matter of the profoundest concern – of such concern that you will wish above all things to be warned of the dangers that may assail your religious life, and be pointed to the means by which you may strengthen and enlarge it. In your case there can be no ‘either – or’ here – either a student or a man of God. You must be both.

Perhaps the intimacy of the relation between the work of a theological student and his religious life will nevertheless bear some emphasizing. Of course you do not think religion and study incompatible. But it is barely possible that there may be some among you who think of them too much apart – who are inclined to set their studies off to one side and their religious life off to the other side, and to fancy that what is given to the one is taken from the other. No mistake could be more gross. Religion does not take a man away from his work; it sends him to his work with an added quality of devotion. We sing – do we not? –

*Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see –
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee.*

*If done t' obey Thy laws,
E'en servile labours shine:
Hallowed is toil, if this the cause,
The meanest work divine.*

It is not just the way George Herbert wrote it. He puts, perhaps, a sharper point on it. He reminds us that a man may look at his work as he looks at a pane of glass – either seeing nothing but the glass or looking straight through the glass to the wide heavens beyond. He tells us plainly that there is nothing so mean but that the great words, ‘for thy sake’, can glorify it:

*A servant, with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine,
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that, and the action, fine.*

But the doctrine is the same, and it is the doctrine, the fundamental doctrine of Protestant morality, from which the whole system of Christian ethics unfolds. It is the great doctrine of ‘vocation’, the doctrine to wit, that the best service we can offer to God is just to do our duty – our plain, homely duty, whatever that may chance to be. The Middle Ages did not think so: they cut a cleft between the religious and the secular life,

and counselled him who wished to be religious to turn his back on what they called 'the world', that is to say, not the wickedness that is in the world - 'the world, the flesh and the devil', as we say - but the work-a-day world, that congeries of occupations which forms the daily task of men and women who perform their duty to themselves and their fellowmen. Protestantism put an end to all that. As Professor Doumergue eloquently puts it,

Then Luther came, and, with still more consistency, Calvin, proclaiming the great idea of 'vocation', an idea and a word which are found in the languages of all the Protestant peoples - Beruf, Calling, Vocation - and which are lacking in the languages of the peoples of antiquity and of mediaeval culture. 'Vocation' - it is the call of God, addressed to every man, whoever he may be, to lay upon him a particular work, no matter what. And the calls, and therefore also the called, stand on a complete equality with one another. The burgomaster is God's burgomaster; the physician is God's physician; the merchant is God's merchant; the labourer is God's labourer. Every vocation, liberal, as we call it, or manual, the humblest and the vilest in appearance as truly as the noblest and the most glorious, is of divine right.

Talk of the divine right of kings! Here is the divine right of every workman, no one of whom needs to be ashamed, if only he is an honest and good workman. 'Only laziness', adds Professor Doumergue, 'is ignoble, and while Romanism multiplies its mendicant orders, the Reformation banishes the idle from its towns.

Now, as students of theology your vocation is to study theology, and to study it diligently, in accordance with the apostolic injunction: 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord'. It is precisely for this that you are students of theology; this is your 'next duty', and the neglect of duty is not a fruitful religious exercise. Dr Charles Hodge, in his delightful autobiographical notes, tells of Philip Lindsay, the most popular professor in the Princeton College of his day - a man sought by nearly every college in the Central States for its presidency - 'he told our class that we would find that one of the best preparations for death was a thorough knowledge of the Greek grammar'. 'This', comments Dr Hodge, in his quaint fashion, 'was his way of telling us that we ought to do our duty'. Certainly, every man who aspires to be a religious man must begin by doing his duty, his obvious duty, his daily task, the particular work which lies before him to do at this particular time and place. If this work happens to be studying, then his religious life depends on nothing more fundamentally than on just studying. You might as well talk of a father who neglects his parental duties; of a son who fails in all the obligations of filial piety; of an artisan who systematically skimps his work and turns in a bad job; of a workman who is nothing better

than an eye-servant; being religious men as of a student who does not study being a religious man. It cannot be: you cannot build up a religious life except you begin by performing faithfully your simple, daily duties. It is not the question whether you like these duties. You may think of your studies what you please. You may consider that you are singing precisely of them when you sing of 'e'en servile labours', and of 'the meanest work'. But you must faithfully give yourselves to your studies if you wish to be religious men. No religious character can be built up on the foundation of neglected duty.

There is certainly something wrong with the religious life of a theological student who does not study. But it does not quite follow that therefore everything is right with his religious life if he does study. It is possible to study – even to study theology – in an entirely secular spirit. I said a little while ago that what religion does is to send a man to his work with an added quality of devotion. In saying that, I meant the word 'devotion' to be taken in both its senses – in the sense of 'zealous application', and in the sense of 'a religious exercise', as the Standard Dictionary phrases the two definitions. A truly religious man will study anything which it becomes his duty to study with 'devotion' in both of these senses. That is what his religion does for him: it makes him do his duty, do it thoroughly, do it 'in the Lord'. But in the case of many branches of study, there is nothing in the topics studied which tends directly to feed the religious life, or to set in movement the religious emotions, or to call out specifically religious reactions. If we study them 'in the Lord', that is only because we do it 'for his sake', on the principle which makes 'sweeping a room' an act of worship. With theology it is not so. In all its branches alike, theology has as its unique end to make God known: the student of theology is brought by his daily task into the presence of God and is kept there. Can a religious man stand in the presence of God and not worship? It is possible, I have said, to study even theology in a purely secular spirit. But surely that is possible only for an irreligious man, or at least for an unreligious man. And here I place in your hands at once a touchstone by which you may discern your religious state and an instrument for the quickening of your religious life. Do you prosecute your daily tasks as students of theology as 'religious exercises'? If you do not, look to yourselves: it is surely not all right with the spiritual condition of that man who can busy himself daily with divine things, with a cold and impassive heart. If you do, rejoice. But in any case, see that you do! And that you do it ever more and more abundantly. Whatever you may have done in the past, for the future make all your theological studies 'religious exercises'. This is the great rule for a rich and wholesome religious life in a theological student. Put your heart into your studies: do not merely occupy your mind with them, but put your heart into them. They bring you daily and hourly into the very presence of God; his ways, his dealing with men,

the infinite majesty of his Being form their very subject-matter. Put the shoes from off your feet in this holy presence!

We are frequently told, indeed, that the great danger of the theological student lies precisely in his constant contact with divine things. They may come to seem common to him because they are customary. As the average man breathes the air and basks in the sunshine without ever a thought that it is God in his goodness who makes his sun to rise on him, though he is evil, and sends rain to him, though he is unjust; so you may come to handle even the furniture of the sanctuary with never a thought above the gross earthly materials of which it is made. The words which tell you of God's terrible majesty or of his glorious goodness may come to be mere words to you – Hebrew and Greek words, with etymologies, inflections and connections in sentences. The reasonings which establish to you the mysteries of his saving activities may come to be to you mere logical paradigms, with premises and conclusions, fitly framed, no doubt, and triumphantly cogent, but with no further significance to you than their formal logical conclusiveness. God's stately steppings in his redemptive processes may become to you a mere series of facts of history, curiously interplaying to the production of social and religious conditions and pointing mayhap to an issue which we may shrewdly conjecture: but much like other facts occurring in time and space which may come to your notice. It is your great danger. But it is your great danger *only* because it is your great privilege. Think of what your privilege is when your greatest danger is that the great things of religion may become common to you! Other men, oppressed by the hard conditions of life, sunk in the daily struggle for bread perhaps, distracted at any rate by the dreadful drag of the world upon them and the awful rush of the world's work, find it hard to get time and opportunity so much as to pause and consider whether there be such things as God, and religion, and salvation from the sin that compasses them about and holds them captive. The very atmosphere of your life is these things; you breathe them in at every pore; they surround you, encompass you, press in upon you from every side. It is all in danger of becoming common to you! God forgive you, you are in danger of becoming weary of God!

Do you know what this danger is? Or, rather, let us turn the question – are you alive to what your privileges are? Are you making full use of them? Are you, by this constant contact with divine things, growing in holiness, becoming every day more and more men of God? If not, you are hardening! And I am here today to warn you to take seriously your theological study, not merely as a duty, done for God's sake and therefore made divine, but as a religious exercise, itself charged with religious blessing to you; as fitted by its very nature to fill all your mind and heart and soul and life with divine thoughts and feelings and aspirations and achievements. You will never prosper in

your religious life in the Theological Seminary until your work in the Theological Seminary becomes itself to you a religious exercise out of which you draw every day enlargement of heart, elevation of spirit and adoring delight in your Maker and your Saviour.

I am not counselling you, you will observe, to make your theological studies your sole religious exercises. They are religious exercises of the most rewarding kind; and your religious life will very much depend upon your treating them as such. But there are other religious exercises demanding your punctual attention which cannot be neglected without the gravest damage to your religious life. I refer particularly now to the stated formal religious meetings of the Seminary. I wish to be perfectly explicit here, and very emphatic. No man can withdraw himself from the stated religious services of the community of which he is a member, without serious injury to his personal religious life. It is not without significance that the apostolic writer couples together the exhortations, 'to hold fast the confession of our hope, that it waver not', and 'to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together'. When he commands us not to forsake 'the assembling of ourselves together', he has in mind, as the term he employs shows, the stated, formal assemblages of the community, and means to lay upon the hearts and consciences of his readers their duty to the church of which they are the supports, as well as their duty to themselves. And when he adds, 'As the custom of some is', he means to put a lash into his command. We can see his lip curl as he says it. Who are these people who are so vastly strong, so supremely holy, that they do not need the assistance of the common worship for themselves; and who, being so strong and holy will not give their assistance to the common worship?

Needful as common worship is, however, for men at large, the need of it for men at large is as nothing compared with its needfulness for a body of young men situated as you are. You are gathered together here for a religious purpose, in preparation for the highest religious service which can be performed by men – the guidance of others in the religious life; and shall you have everything else in common except worship? You are gathered together here, separated from your homes and all that home means; from the churches in which you have been brought up, and all that church fellowship means; from all the powerful natural influences of social religion – and shall you not yourselves form a religious community, with its own organic religious life and religious expression? I say it deliberately, that a body of young men, living apart in a community-life, as you are and must be living, cannot maintain a healthy, full, rich religious life individually, unless they are giving organic expression to their religious life as a community in frequent stated diets of common worship. Nothing can take the place of this common organic worship of the community as a community, at its stated seasons, and as a regular function of the corporate life of the community. Without it you cease to

be a religious community and lack that support and stay, that incitement and spur, that comes to the individual from the organic life of the community of which he forms a part.

In my own mind I am quite clear that in an institution like this the whole body of students should come together, both morning and evening, every day, for common prayer and should join twice on every Sabbath in formal worship. Without at least this much common worship I do not think the institution can preserve its character as a distinctively religious institution – an institution whose institutional life is primarily a religious one. And I do not think that the individual students gathered here can, with less full expression of the organic religious life of the institution, preserve the high level of religious life on which, as students of theology, they ought to live. You will observe that I am not merely exhorting you 'to go to church'. 'Going to church' is in any case good. But what I am exhorting you to do is to go to your own church – to give your presence and active religious participation to every stated meeting for worship of the institution as an institution. Thus you will do your part to give to the institution an organic religious life, and you will draw out from the organic religious life of the institution a support and inspiration for your own personal religious life which you can get nowhere else, and which you cannot afford to miss – if, that is, you have a care to your religious quickening and growth. To be an active member of a living religious body is the condition of healthy religious functioning.

I trust you will not tell me that the stated religious exercises of the Seminary are too numerous, or are wearying. That would only be to betray the low ebb of your own religious vitality. The feet of him whose heart is warm with religious feeling turn of themselves to the sanctuary and carry him with joyful steps to the house of prayer. I am told that there are some students who do not find themselves in a prayerful mood in the early hours of a winter morning; and are much too tired at the close of a hard day's work to pray, and therefore do not find it profitable to attend prayers in the late afternoon; who think the preaching at the regular service on Sabbath morning dull and uninteresting, and who do not find Christ at the Sabbath afternoon conference. Such things I seem to have heard before; and yours will be an exceptional pastorate, if you do not hear something very like them, before you have been in a pastorate six months. Such things meet you every day on the street; they are the ordinary expression of the heart which is dulled or is dulling to the religious appeal. They are not hopeful symptoms among those whose life should be lived on the religious heights. No doubt, those who minister to you in spiritual things should take them to heart. And you who are ministered to must take them to heart, too. And let me tell you straightout that the preaching you find dull will no more seem dull to you if you faithfully obey the Master's precept: 'Take heed how ye hear'; that if you do not find Christ in the conference room it is

because you do not take him there with you; that if after an ordinary day's work you are too weary to unite with your fellows in closing the day with common prayer, it is because the impulse to prayer is weak in your heart. If there is no fire in the pulpit it falls to you to kindle it in the pews. No man can fail to meet with God in the sanctuary if he takes God there with him.

How easy it is to roll the blame of our cold hearts over upon the shoulders of our religious leaders! It is refreshing to observe how Luther, with his breezy good sense, dealt with complaints of lack of attractiveness in his evangelical preachers. He had not sent them out to please people, he said, and their function was not to interest or to entertain; their function was to teach the saving truth of God, and, if they did that, it was frivolous for people in danger of perishing for want of the truth to object to the vessel in which it was offered to them. When the people of Torgau, for instance, wished to dismiss their pastors, because, they said, their voices were too weak to fill the churches, Luther simply responded, 'That's an old song; better have some difficulty in hearing the gospel than no difficulty at all in hearing what is very far from the gospel'. 'People cannot have their ministers exactly as they wish', he declares again, 'they should thank God for the pure word', and not demand St. Augustines and St. Ambroses to preach it to them. If a pastor pleases the Lord Jesus and is faithful to him. – there is none so great and mighty but he ought to be pleased with him, too. The point, you see, is that men who are hungry for the truth and get it ought not to be exigent as to the platter in which it is served to them. And they will not be.

But why should we appeal to Luther? Have we not the example of our Lord Jesus Christ? Are we better than he? Surely, if ever there was one who might justly plead that the common worship of the community had nothing to offer him it was the Lord Jesus Christ. But every Sabbath found him seated in his place among the worshipping people and there was no act of stated worship which he felt himself entitled to discard. Even in his most exalted moods and after his most elevating experiences, he quietly took his place with the rest of God's people, sharing with them in the common worship of the community. Returning from that great baptismal scene, when the heavens themselves were rent to bear him witness that he was well pleasing to God; from the searching trials of the wilderness, and from that first great tour in Galilee, prosecuted, as we are expressly told, 'in the power of the Spirit'; he came back, as the record tells, 'to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and' – so proceeds the amazing narrative – 'he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue, on the Sabbath day'. 'As his custom was!' Jesus Christ made it his habitual practice to be found in his place on the Sabbath day at the stated place of worship to which he belonged. 'It is a reminder', as Sir William Robertson Nicoll well insists, 'of the truth which, in our fancied spirituality, we are apt to forget – that the holiest personal life can scarcely afford to dispense with stated forms of devotion, and that the regular

public worship of the church, for all its local imperfections and dullness, is a divine provision for sustaining the individual soul'. 'We cannot afford to be wiser than our Lord in this matter. If any one could have pled that his spiritual experience was so lofty that it did not require public worship, if any one might have felt that the consecration and communion of his personal life exempted him from what ordinary mortals needed, it was Jesus. But he made no such plea. Sabbath by Sabbath even he was found in the place of worship, side by side with God's people, not for the mere sake of setting a good example, but for deeper reasons. Is it reasonable, then, that any of us should think we can safely afford to dispense with the pious custom of regular participation with the common worship of our locality?' Is it necessary for me to exhort those who would fain be like Christ, to see to it that they are imitators of him in this?

But not even with the most assiduous use of the corporate expressions of the religious life of the community have you reached the foundation-stone of your piety. That is to be found, of course, in your closets, or rather in your hearts, in your private religious exercises, and in your intimate religious aspirations. You are here as theological students; and if you would be religious men, you must do your duty as theological students; you must find daily nourishment for your religious life in your theological studies; you must enter fully into the organic religious life of the community of which you form a part. But to do all this you must keep the fires of religious life burning brightly in your heart; in the inmost core of your being, you must be men of God. Time would fail me, if I undertook to outline with any fullness the method of the devout life. Every soul seeking God honestly and earnestly finds him, and in finding him, finds the way to him. One hint I may give you, particularly adapted to you as students for the ministry: keep always before your mind the greatness of your calling, that is to say, these two things: the immensity of the task before you, the infinitude of the resources at your disposal. I think it has not been idly said that if we face the tremendous difficulty of the work before us, it will certainly throw us back upon our knees; and if we worthily gauge the power of the gospel committed to us, that will certainly keep us on our knees. I am led to single out this particular consideration, because it seems to me that we have fallen upon an age in which we very greatly need to recall ourselves to the seriousness of life and its issues and to the seriousness of our calling as ministers to life. Sir Oliver Lodge informs us that 'men of culture are not bothering', nowadays, 'about their sins, much less about their punishment', and Dr Johnston Ross preaches us a much needed homily from that text on the 'lightheartedness of the modern religious quest'. In a time like this, it is perhaps not strange that careful observers of the life of our Theological Seminaries tell us that the most noticeable thing about it is a certain falling off from the intense seriousness of outlook by which students of theology were formerly characterised. Let us

hope it is not true. If it were true, it would be a great evil; so far as it is true, it is a great evil. I would call you back to this seriousness of outlook, and bid you cultivate it, if you would be men of God now and ministers who need not be ashamed hereafter. Think of the greatness of the minister's calling; the greatness of the issues which hang on your worthiness or your unworthiness for its high functions; and determine once for all that with God's help you will be worthy. 'God had but one Son', says Thomas Goodwin, 'and he made him a minister'. 'None but he who made the world', says John Newton, 'can make a minister' - that is, a minister who is worthy.

You can, of course, be a minister of a sort, and not be God-made. You can go through the motions of the work, and I shall not say that your work will be in vain - for God is good and who knows by what instruments he may work his will of good for men? Helen Jackson pictures far too common an experience when she paints the despair of one whose sowing, though not unfruitful for others, bears no harvest in his own soul.

*O teacher, then I said, thy years,
Are they not joy? each word that issueth
From out thy lips, doth it return to bless
Thine own heart manifold?*

Listen to the response:

*I starve with hunger treading out their corn,
I die of travail while their souls are born.*

She does not mean it in quite the evil part in which I am reading it. But what does Paul mean when he utters that terrible warning: 'Lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway?'. And there is an even more dreadful contingency. It is our Saviour himself who tells us that it is possible to compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when we have made him, to make him twofold more a child of hell than we are ourselves. And will we not be in awful peril of making our proselytes children of hell if we are not ourselves children of heaven? Even physical waters will not rise above their source: the spiritual floods are even less tractable to our commands. There is no mistake more terrible than to suppose that activity in Christian work can take the place of depth of Christian affections.

This is the reason why many good men are shaking their heads a little today over a tendency which they fancy they see increasing among our younger Christian workers to restless activity at the apparent expense of depth of spiritual culture. Activity, of course, is good: surely in the cause of the Lord we should run and not be weary. But not when it is substitute for inner religious strength. We cannot get along without our Marthas. But what shall we do when, through all the length and breadth of the land, we shall search in vain for a Mary? Of course the Marys will be as little admired by the Marthas

today as of yore. 'Lord', cried Martha, 'dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?'. And from that time to this the cry has continually gone up against the Marys that they waste the precious ointment which might have been given to the poor, when they pour it out to God and are idle when they sit at the Master's feet. A minister, high in the esteem of the churches, is even quoted as declaring – not confessing, mind you, but publishing abroad as something in which he gloried – that he has long since ceased to pray: he *works*. 'Work and pray' is no longer, it seems, to be the motto of at least ministerial life. It is to be all work and no praying: the only prayer that is prevailing, we are told, with the sad cynicism with which we are told that God is on the side of the largest battalions – is just work. You will say this is an extreme case. Thank God, it is. But in the tendencies of our modern life, which all make for ceaseless – I had almost said thoughtless, meaningless – activity, have a care that it does not become your case; or that your case – even now – may not have at least some resemblance to it. Do you pray? How much do you pray? How much do you love to pray? What place in your life does the 'still hour', alone with God, take?

I am sure that if you once get a true glimpse of what the ministry of the cross is, for which you are preparing, and of what you, as men preparing for this ministry, should be, you will pray, Lord, who is sufficient for these things, your heart will cry; and your whole soul will be wrung with the petition: Lord, make me sufficient for these things. Old Cotton Mather wrote a great little book once, to serve as a guide to students for the ministry. The not very happy title which he gave it is *Manductio ad Ministerium*. But by a stroke of genius he added a sub-title which is more significant. And this is the sub-title he added: *The angels preparing to sound the trumpets*. That is what Cotton Mather calls you, students for the ministry: the angels, preparing to sound the trumpets! Take the name to yourselves, and live up to it. Give your days and nights to living up to it! And then, perhaps, when you come to sound the trumpets the note will be pure and clear and strong, and perchance may pierce even to the grave and wake the dead.

NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY AND EXEGESIS, 5 VOLUMES

Philip Johnston

Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1996; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997, \$199/£169.

Philip Johnston is the Old Testament Book Reviews Editor for Themelios

NIDOTTE, as this dictionary will be termed, is a full, rich and diverse reference work which is sure to have a long and fruitful use. It consists of over 5,800 densely packed pages of Christian OT scholarship, which is both a reflection of the growing maturity of conservative biblical scholarship and, more importantly, an excellent resource for further work. 'New International' is of course a code phrase for evangelical, however imprecise the latter term, and this is the position of the editors and most (though not all) contributors. Nevertheless, there is a truly international element among the 206 contributors. While two-thirds work in North America, others are based in the UK (29), South Africa (17) and elsewhere (25, including Japan and Nepal).

Apparently the words 'and Exegesis' were added to the title when the project was well under way, and articles already submitted were then redrafted. The addition is redundant, since all lexical and theological study of an ancient text must necessarily be exegetical, but was perhaps undertaken with an eye to widening the potential readership. This, along with the length and breadth of the work, may explain why the project took eight years.

The Dictionary has four parts: a Guide, with several significant articles (vol. 1a); a Lexical Dictionary of all Hebrew roots and many individual words, with all other words cross-referenced (vols 1b-4a); a Topical Dictionary of people, places, books and themes (vol. 4b); and several Indexes (vol. 5). While the clear spine labelling should prevent confusion, it would have been neater to put the Guide and Topical Dictionary together in volume 1 and keep the Lexical Dictionary to volumes 2-4. This would also have allowed those with fewer resources to buy a one-volume compendium.

The opening Guide covers over 200 pages, beginning with an introduction to the dictionary by the general editor. Then follow 11 articles in 7 sections: Introduction (another); Vanhoozer provides a lengthy discussion of hermeneutics (which the editor himself admits is 'somewhat complex', 14); I: Waltke deals with textual criticism; II: Merrill and Long give theological and hermeneutical perspectives on OT history; III: Longman and Satterthwaite discuss literary approaches and narrative criticism; IV: Cotterell provides a theoretical approach to linguistics, and Walton provides principles for word study;

V: Martens and Schultz treat various aspects of OT theology; and finally Conclusion: VanGemeren illustrates 'doing OT exegesis and theology' with the very detailed worked examples of Ruth 1 and Psalm 119:1-8.

These are all good articles, even if it is hard to visualize the LXX translators 'flying by the seat of their pants' (61), and would make a substantial independent introduction to OT study. But they seem somewhat lost in their present place, and I suspect they will be largely neglected. Even the two useful chapters on semantics remain rather theoretical, and advise more on pitfalls to avoid than on procedures to adopt. Further, though they are both nuanced in their discussion, the two authors give contradictory advice on the key issue of whether terms have 'core meanings'. Cottrell rejects this as a misconception (148), while Walton finds it a helpful approach (168).

The Lexical Dictionary is clearly the heart of the set, its *raison d'être*. Here each Hebrew term is examined in turn, usually under the headings ANE, OT, P-B and sometimes NT. Longer articles subdivide discussion into numbered sections. This allows for detailed discussion of a term's various uses, meanings, difficulties and interpretations. Each concludes with cross-references to other semantic fields and bibliography. For example, the article on *kpr* (cover, atone) takes up 20 pages (some 12,000 words) with nearly 50 sections (ANE 4, OT 33, P-B 7, NT 4). It interacts in detail with other scholarship, cross-references to 7 related terms, and has a 40-item bibliography. Such comprehensive, thorough, systematic study should earn *NIDOTTE* a wide, frequent and long-lasting readership.

However, several aspects are regrettable. It is immediately obvious that articles vary considerably and sometimes unexpectedly in length. *h̄zq* (strong) has a generous 20 pages, while the theologically more important *yr'* (fear) has only 6 pages. *r'pā'im* I (shades, 8 occurrences) has 7 pages of excellent discussion, including a 43-item bibliography, while *š'e'ōl* (65 occurrences) has only 1 page of brief though competent summary. Of course, frequency of use is not the only indication of importance. Nevertheless, better editing could have given greater evenness of treatment. Secondly, related articles are often by the same author, thus limiting the variety of insights. Half of the 18 articles listed under Death in the subject index are by a single author (one of the editors). Many of these are admittedly minor terms, but not all, e.g. *mw't* (death). Thirdly, the level of scholarly discussion is occasionally disappointing. Neither '*ādām* (man) nor '*iššā* (woman), written by the same author, engage with feminist studies, even though the former proposes the translation 'earthling' and the latter gives some bibliographical references. So some users of the dictionary will have richer fare than others will.

The Topical Dictionary complements the Lexical. As well as all proper nouns, it covers biblical books and themes.

For example, under 'A' there are: 13 people(s), 8 places, the Book of Amos (4 pages), and the following themes (with page length): Adoption (2), Anger (7), Animosity (6), Anthropomorphisms (3), Apocalyptic Literature (5), and Apocrypha, Theology of (7). Articles on proper nouns are subdivided as in Part 2 (where, as lexical studies they would more properly belong), others thematically. Again there is much wealth of detail and scholarship. 'Abraham', 'Baal' and many more are thorough and learned. Separate articles on Bildad, Elihu, Eliphaz and Zophar complement 15 pages on the Theology of Job. Unexpected riches include articles on Desert, Education in the OT, Particles, and Sexual Ordinances. But there is also unevenness of treatment. 'Adam and Eve' interacts with neither ANE texts nor (again) feminist readings. 'Clean and Unclean' (9 pages) contains only one paragraph on proposals regarding the rationale of animal classification (and only mentions Mary Douglas in passing), and 'Conquest' ignores the new archaeology (though lists works which interact with it).

Finally, there are four valuable indexes, each with its own introduction. The first, of Semantic Fields, indicates relevant terms and articles and other semantic fields. This is the Dictionary's most innovative feature, and will enable continual, fruitful study. But at times it is too full, e.g. 'Death' lists the root *mw̄t* with apparently three articles, but the last two of these are simply cross-references back to the first. An index of Hebrew words and phrases helpfully lists discussion outside the obvious articles. The Scripture Index includes Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (though not NT), and the Subject index appears suitably thorough.

One serious flaw concerns bibliographies. Unfortunately and inexplicably, these often omit the editor(s) of volumes of essays. This will dismay users who only have access to author-indexed catalogues, especially since many important lexicographical articles are buried in such volumes! By contrast, the same bibliographies tediously and unnecessarily include book subtitles, so space was not an overriding concern.

There are also some minor blemishes. For ease of use, volume number should precede page number at the foot of every page (as in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*), and page headings in the Guide should indicate the current article (as elsewhere in the Dictionary). Article subheadings throughout could be more visible. In Parts 2 and 3 the related terms listed for cross-reference in each article hardly need to include the term of the article itself! Abbreviations are occasionally unexplained, e.g. HUBP (1:54), P-B (lexical articles). Inappropriate assumptions are sometimes made: text critics are male (1:61), BHS editors are humanists (1:65), NIV is used (1:207). And inevitably in a work of such length and complexity, a few glitches occur, e.g. the bibliography for the Theology of Ruth is clearly truncated.

To conclude, *NIDOTTE* is a major reference work which should be in every college library and every biblical scholar's study and should be consulted constantly. Ministers and other Christian workers will also certainly profit from using it, though the cost may prevent them purchasing it. (Again, a combined volume of Guide and Topical Index would have been helpful.) At the same time, the very wealth of detail poses dangers. As with any such reference work, it is easy to get sidetracked from the immediate subject of study and explore other fascinating but irrelevant topics. Similarly, it is easy to get so immersed in the detail that one loses sight of the main issues, with the result that the study or sermon under preparation loses its focus. The dictionary is so rich that it must be used with care! Overall, *NIDOTTE* provides a tool for OT study which is nearly always competent, usually very good, and often excellent.

Philip Johnston

Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

Encountering the Book of Genesis. Encountering Biblical Studies

Bill T. Arnold
Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998,
234 pp., h/b., \$24.99

This is a fascinating illustrated introduction to the book of Genesis that could be used as a text for a high school or adult class or could even form an introductory text for a college or seminary level class. The author takes the reader on a tour through the book, pausing to highlight and discuss some of the many key issues that emerge and have made Genesis the centre of study for so many Bible students.

The book provides many helpful insights, both in the sidebars and in the main text itself. For example, there is a useful outline of the possible interpretations of the divine 'we' passages in Genesis 1:26. The discussion of the roles of the woman and the man in Genesis 3 are outlined well. Creation stories from Egypt and Mesopotamia are presented and contrasted with those of Israel. A much-needed theological perspective adds a unity and rationale to Genesis 1-11. More than a collection of stories, this is a statement on God, humanity, sin, promise, and salvation. The material on Genesis 12-50 allows Arnold to develop the major themes of narrative theology alongside the major characters in the family of Abraham. It is in these sections that the beginning student will find the greatest assistance.

Three chapters at the end discuss the origins of the book, its treatment in biblical scholarship, and its themes and directions in relation to the succeeding books of the OT as well as the NT. Arnold places the book's composition sometime between the United Monarchy and the fifth century BC,

indicating that some elements are best understood as products of the former. However, he observes a greater antiquity to the work itself, arguing for a Mosaic period origin.

Perhaps because of its intended brevity and simplicity of presentation, a volume like this is unable to cover all of the major issues. Thus the theory of Genesis 1:3 being a second creation of the earth (the gap theory) is dismissed because it 'does literary and linguistic injustice to the text of Genesis 1:1-3'. While this is true, it is insufficient for anyone discussing the issue with a gap theorist or even probing the question. Is the climax of Genesis 1 the creation events of day six, or is it the Sabbath of day seven? The former is assumed and the latter is omitted (until the book's final chapter). Does creation in the image of God have any implications for ecology and culture? Does 'Eden' mean 'pleasure' or 'abundance, (well-watered) garden'? Is the focus of 3:16 on the pain in childbirth or on a judgement in which women will need to work as hard as men? Did the entire ancient Near East 'devalue' history or did they simply understand it differently? Was there no eschatology outside the Bible; not even in first millennium Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia? Certainly, some Assyriologists would argue that there was. Also, what does it mean for the pre-Flood race to be 'genetically pure'?

Surprisingly, very little is said about the actual ancient Near Eastern evidence for items other than similar creation and flood accounts and the covenant ritual of Genesis 15. This is unfortunate when examining the issues of date and authorship. These are decided on largely confessional assumptions bolstered by early grammatical forms and the

likelihood of the patriarchal religion reflecting an early date. However, the evidence of ancient Near Eastern parallels goes much farther than these. It would have been helpful to include references to evidence from the personal names and from Hurrian customs (more widely disseminated than previously thought but still possessing a unique concentration in the Middle Bronze Age) as well as the cultural data of Egypt at the time of Joseph.

However, this may all be a matter of preference as to what can and should be included in a text of some 200 pages. Clearly, Arnold has made an attractive selection of so many of the key items and themes that this book deserves a wide reading. May its well-written and readable prose trigger a renewed interest in a balanced and eager study of this most important of OT books.

Richard S. Hess
Denver Seminary

Leading Captivity Captive. 'The Exile' as History and Ideology

Lester L. Grabbe (ed.)
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998,
161 pp., h/b., £35

This volume consists of papers presented in July 1997 at the European Seminar on Methodology in Israel's History, along with responses to some of the issues raised. The editor has also contributed a helpful introduction and concluding reflection. The Seminar arose in response to the methodological crisis affecting the study of the history of ancient Israel within critical scholarship. Until the 1960s, a moderately conservative consensus on the history of Israel (c.1200–165 BCE) and the use of the OT in this reconstruction was broadly

accepted, depending largely on the work of Albright, Bright and Wright. However, since the early 1970s, several writers have rejected or heavily disputed the historical value of the patriarchal, Mosaic and monarchic narratives, and have proposed reconstructions of this period differing very radically from the Bible's own account.

The Seminar's first volume was a programmatic collection, *Can a History of Israel Be Written?* (Sheffield, 1997). The present work on 'the Exile' (the speech marks are deliberate) follows on directly from that discussion and includes essays by most of the original participants. The major concern of this symposium is with Ezra–Nehemiah (as well as 2 Ki. 25 and 2 Ch. 36). The contributors do not speak with one voice, except in rejecting evangelical approaches to the historical books (predictably labelled 'fundamentalist') and in taking a more sceptical view than the older consensus of the historical value and ideological character of Ezra–Nehemiah. They are also all to some degree 'positivistic' in their approach to historiography, with some clearly rejecting theological realism in favour of a materialist philosophy and practising a hermeneutic of suspicion towards the writers of Ezra–Nehemiah.

The contributors all agree that the concept of exile and restoration has had a profound effect on scholarship, both in the evaluation of the OT materials (cf. Wellhausen) and in the historiography of the post-monarchic period. Beyond this, a wide range of opinion prevails. Rainer Albertz compares the biblical text with Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions, concluding that a 'theological tendency' in a work does not in itself refute its historical value (Hans Barstad

makes a parallel point). Bob Becking deals with some of the philosophical problems of writing history and the structure of the Book of Ezra (this essay would have benefited from closer interaction with Hugh Williamson's detailed discussion of the sources, historical context and literary form of Ezra). Robert Carroll considers that Ezra-Nehemiah is 'contaminated' by the interests of a 'Jerusalem-centred ideology' (Philip Davies makes some overlapping observations on the relation of the returnees to those who were never exiled). Lester Grabbe concludes that 'the biblical concept of exile and return' was based on actual events (Knud Jeppesen supports this to some extent). Thomas Thompson sees 'exile' as a myth of piety expressing a religious consciousness much more than a historical datum.

These diverse essays reflect a much larger set of critical (and religious) views held by the contributors; so it is impossible to come to a single judgement on the collection. They do, however, provoke the reader to think more carefully about the meaning(s) of 'history' as a literary construct. Evangelical readers would not share the starting point of the writers, nor most of their (sometimes rather opaque and provisional) conclusions. An excellent starting point for such readers is Phillips Long's *The Art of Biblical History* (Apollos, 1994), which is a sensitive discussion on the interplay of history, literature and theology in the biblical narratives. It would be helpful to see some interaction between Long's careful arguments and the views expressed in this volume.

Brian Kelly
Canterbury Christ Church
University College

King David with the Wise Woman of Tekoa: The Resonance of Tradition in Parabolic Narrative (JSOTSS 255)

Larry L. Lyke
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997,
211 pp., h/b., £40

This is a slight revision of Lyke's 1996 Harvard University doctoral dissertation. After methodological discussions, Lyke deals with the 'mashal proper' (2 Sa. 14:6), then 14:1-11, and finally with the whole of the Tekoite's mashal (14:1-20).

The last words of the book summarize Lyke's hermeneutical position: 'interpretation is everything'. To his 'post-modern reading sensibilities', interpretation is not attained by 'univocal readings', 'what the author or redactor wanted [the texts] to mean', but by 'multiple readings' which accrue over an extended period of time, since 'the texts represent the social and communal process of articulating core idioms and conceptualizations' (192).

Lyke finds his methodological bases in David Stern's works on the ambiguity of the Midrashic *meshalim* and Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of 'dialogization', i.e. 'the inter-relationships and dialogue between various aspects of a composite narrative'.

For this work, as the woman's mashal hardly corresponds to the events in David's biography, Lyke pays close attention to 'its verbal, motivic, and thematic particularities' for a clearer understanding of its significance, since 'the narrative represents ... a complex accumulation of overlapping biblical *topoi*, each of which must be interpreted within its present as well as traditional context'. For example, Lyke compares the fratricide of v. 6 with Genesis 4:8 and notes

resonance between them. Then, using Genesis 4:8 as 'a lens by which to view the episodes of sibling rivalry in Genesis', he moves on to the ancient Jewish traditions, which believed, for example, that Cain was the son of Sammael and that 'each of major stories of sibling rivalry in Genesis is associated with *Pesach*' (37).

Lyke devotes a fair number of pages to the views of the ancient Jewish interpreters as peerless 'careful readers of the text' (29), in order to find 'the intertextual and literary resonances' of the *mashal*.

This is certainly a well thought-out thesis which rigorously applies a post-modern methodology to the study of the *mashal* and its narrative context. Several points might be raised as criticism:

1. Ambiguity: It is a tautology to assume 'the multivocal and polysemous quality' of the text on the basis of the ambiguity of its 'multiple voices' (20). As the meaning of a polysemous word is decided by its use in a particular context, so the meaning of a *mashal* is to be determined by its particular context.

2. Intertext and context: Any narrow constituent element (e.g. 'two sons') could be found in any ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature. When we narrow down the size of the element and broaden its context, we risk level skipping, looking for a wider - intermediate - context while ignoring its immediate context. What is available from the ancient Near East, especially in Israel, is often too limited to make a definite judgement. This lack of availability could be a cause of a text's ambiguity for a (post)-modern reader.

3. Similarities: For any comparison, difference is more important than similarity, since comparison is only

meaningful when similar items are compared discriminately; see my 'Ugaritic Poetry and Habakkuk 3,' *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1988), 24-48. An over-emphasis on similarities is disastrous to the 'intertextual' study.

4. Familiarity with the ANE: It is not enough just to trace various 'parallels' with other traditions in the Hebrew Bible for understanding a *mashal*. What is needed is the 'competence' to read the Biblical *mashal* in its original cultural and historical settings, the ancient Near East, and to notice its uniqueness.

5. Authorial intention: Intertextuality ignores how the author intended his text to be understood, an all-significant concern, especially for the Biblical hermeneutics.

Finally, Lyke's frequent use of terms such as 'ambiguity', 'polysemous', 'multi-', 'association', 'allusion' and 'resonance' suggests his relativistic, pluralistic, and subjective hermeneutical position, which is typical of a post-modern approach.

David Toshio Tsumura

Tokyo, Japan Bible Seminary

The Royal God: Enthronement Festivals in Ancient Israel and Ugarit? (JSOTS 259)

Allan Rosengren Petersen

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998,

121 pp., h/b., £27.95

(Copenhagen International Seminar 5)

This book asks whether there existed an enthronement festival of Yahweh in ancient Israel, and whether the ritual explanation of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle is appropriate. Both questions have been adequately answered during recent decades, with 'almost certainly not' for the first and 'possible but improbable' for the

second. Petersen's study adds little new to the discussion. It is a revision of a prize-winning essay at the University of Copenhagen in 1992, which may explain the omission of Mark Smith's fundamental study of the Baal Cycle (1994), but not that of earlier important books like Joachim Jeremias's *Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen* (1987) and Oswald Loretz's *Ugarit-Texte und Thronbesteigungspsalmen* (1988). Many scholars who contest the ritual reading of the Baal Cycle are also absent from Petersen's bibliography.

Petersen first presents Sigmund Mowinckel's thesis that in their New Year festival pre-exilic Israel celebrated Yahweh's conquest of the powers of chaos and death and his re-enthronement. When the Ugaritic texts were found, they were read by Mowinckel's followers as ritual drama, and seen as further evidence for the existence of Israel's festival. Petersen investigates both biblical and Ugaritic arguments for Mowinckel's thesis. In the 'myth and ritual' theory of Mowinckel, Psalms 47, 93, 95–100 are considered 'liturgical': they provide the outline of a cultic drama. Petersen offers a valuable (though not new) critique of Mowinckel's method of studying the royal Psalms, arguing that almost any mythical text can be given a 'cultic' meaning if one adopts a cultic perspective. In other words, a cultic approach largely determines the result of the investigation. Petersen criticises among others Theodore Gaster's ritual explanation of the Baal Cycle in *Thespsis* (1961). He demonstrates that a cultic function of the Baal Cycle has been assumed rather than sustained, and that an inseparable connection between myth and ritual has not been proven. Petersen's most interesting chapter is his close investigation of where

the Ugaritic clay tablets have been found, and what this locus can reveal as to their *Sitz im Leben* (ch. 5, previously published in *SJOT* 8).

So Petersen concludes that the cultic hypothesis is unnecessary. On the contrary, the Baal Cycle even contains anti-cultic potential, since every human effort to influence Baal's battle with Yam and Mot (and subsequently rain and drought) is a failure – cultic acts are therefore senseless. However, this is a highly reductive view of the function of human religion. Wittgenstein argued against James Frazier that the fact that so-called primitives only asked the gods for rain during the wet season showed that their religion was much more than just 'influencing the gods'. In his other conclusions Petersen shows himself a representative of the 'Copenhagen School', which is known for its highly critical view of the OT as a collection of ideological and mostly very late writings. In summary, Petersen offers a good critique of some old theories, but fails to include recent literature and is not very convincing in his own conclusions.

Stefan Paas

Veenendaal, The Netherlands

Language and Imagery in the Old Testament

J.C.L. Gibson

London: SPCK, 1998,
ix + 166 pp., £14.99

Introducing general readers to the various types of literature in the Hebrew Bible, Gibson encourages an appreciation of its abiding significance by unpacking the rhetorical richness of its language and imagery. While his specialist expertise is evident throughout, technical jargon is generally avoided. A brief glossary of

theological terminology, however, might have been included for those unfamiliar with theological vocabulary.

The first chapter discusses some key peculiarities of Biblical Hebrew. While its overall thrust is helpful, *Themelios* readers may disagree with some observations; e.g. the interpretation of antediluvian longevity as Semitic hyperbole.

Chapter two focuses on problems that arise from some of the language used to describe God. Two categories of problematic anthropomorphisms are identified: the naïve and the nasty. As particularly repulsive examples of the latter the author suggests Genesis 2 (God as deceitful), Exodus 7 (God as unjust) and the prologue of Job (God as malevolent). Here Gibson appears to fall into the very trap that he warns readers against: exacting from the text a level of precision that the Hebrew language hardly permits. The same is true of his rather convoluted discussion of polytheistic language. Amazingly Gibson asserts – on the basis of satirical texts which lampoon rival deities or confessional texts which compare them unfavourably with Yahweh – that it is a mistake to see any of the OT writers as apologists for monotheism. However, ancient writers could surely engage the concept of rival deities without accepting their existential reality!

Chapters three and four, dealing respectively with prose and poetry, are generally helpful in offering the non-specialist some basic analytic tools. While not averse to assigning the Pentateuch to the traditional documentary sources or labelling the prose material as 'historicized fiction/fictionalised history' (36), Gibson's emphasis on the need to study the final form of the text is most welcome. Given the nature of

Hebrew Poetry, it is unsurprising that his discussion becomes rather technical in places, especially for the intended audience.

As examples of Hebrew myth (ch. 5), Gibson cites the primeval stories in Genesis, Zion ideology, the personification of death, and aspects of Israel's eschatological hope. While some mythological motifs are indisputably present, it is doubtful whether such language permeates the Hebrew Bible to the extent Gibson alleges. Moreover, his analogy between the story of Eden (Gn. 2 – 3) and Cinderella is not only unfortunate but also inexact – the Eden narrative is not 'escapist', nor does it have a typical fairy-tale ending.

In chapters six and seven Gibson considers images of God and humanity. He correctly distinguishes between images and doctrine, yet curiously illustrates this point with examples in which the distinction is perhaps too subtle (e.g. God as King, Lord of Nature, and Father). In his interpretation of the *Imago Dei* as humanity's status, not nature, Gibson is overly dismissive of alternative interpretations, encouraging dogmatism in a complex issue. Similarly, not all readers will agree that 'the correct interpretation' of 'the knowledge of good and evil' is a colourful expression for 'everything.' Gibson's discussion of humanity's sinful condition and creaturely frailty is fairly traditional. However, his conclusion that 'human pain, toil and suffering are not chiefly the consequence of sin' (148) is rather tenuous. Comments on women in the OT are influenced by current feminist sensitivities, though Gibson rightly exposes the hypocritical misinterpretation of Genesis 3:16 by our Victorian forebears. The concept of human life as a journey is the final image of humanity which Gibson considers, concluding with the

practical challenge of the OT: to discover that the ultimate balm for life's journey is the praise of God.

Certainly this book encourages us to read the OT from a more informed perspective, and for this it is to be commended.

Paul Williamson

Irish Baptist College, Belfast

Novel Histories: the Fiction of Biblical Criticism (Playing the Texts, 2)

R. Boer

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997,
221 pp., h/b., £45.00.

This is not a simple book to categorise, as the author acknowledges. Boer himself calls it a work of metacommentary, that is, something which is 'beyond' commentary and which reflects on the work of biblical interpretation. His special concern is to locate trends in biblical study against the background of other movements in cultural and literary criticism, whether or not biblical critics are aware of this broader perspective. The discussion is influenced by two particular cultural and philosophical trends. Firstly, this is an exercise in postmodern biblical criticism, and though Boer is not an uncritical advocate of postmodernism, that is clearly where his sympathies lie. This involves for him partly a disaffection with all forms of historically oriented criticism and partly a fondness for a freer, 'more playful' approach to biblical interpretation. Secondly, and perhaps a little surprisingly in the 1990s, his underlying methodology is derived from Marxism. This leads to a frequent use of dialectical techniques and to the inclusion of political economics as an important component in the processes of biblical interpretation.

The interplay of these various movements merely forms the backcloth to Boer's main argument, which is worked out at three interrelated levels. At the basic level, Boer engages in a reading of Martin Noth's seminal work *The Deuteronomistic History*, which in his view has marked similarities with the historical novel. Both Noth's work and the historical novel are regarded as constructs involving a combination of fact and fiction. The second level relates the former discussion to wider cultural perspectives, especially realism and modernism. The assumptions underlying *The Deuteronomistic History* and the historical novel are realist, in seeking to provide direct access to reality, and also modernist, in their need to probe beyond the surface of their sources. The third level forms a counterpoint with the other two and takes the form of a short novel. Its characters are drawn from the rest of the book, and include such varied individuals as the biblical scholars Martin Noth and Keith Whitelam, the novelist Sir Walter Scott, and the Marxist literary critics Georg Lukács and Frederic Jameson.

This description makes the book sound complex, and in truth it is not always easy to keep track of the overall argument. In particular, this reviewer found the interwoven novel something of a distraction, though as it functions as ironic illustration rather than an essential part of the argument, the problem is not too serious. The heart of the book focuses on the relationship between realism, modernism and postmodernism. In Boer's view, modernism remains the dominant cultural movement in biblical studies, including much that is usually regarded as postmodern. Conservative biblical criticism, which is mentioned only in passing, is by contrast often predominantly realist, though it

can involve a mixture of realism and modernism. Boer's own preference is for a postmodern biblical criticism marked not by a demand for new methods, which is a feature of modernism, but by a market place of ideas jostling uncomfortably alongside each other.

The result is an interesting pot-pourri which puts some familiar trends in biblical studies into perspective. The implications of relying on the theory of a Deuteronomic History as an explanation of a major chunk of biblical history are especially salutary. But the alternative proposed here is no more appealing. This is partly because Boer's postmodernism can only promise a future utopia so vague that it cannot yet even be described. But it is also because he finds no place for a reality which combines the supernatural and the historical. While the book is certainly of value, it is unlikely to satisfy those who have become convinced that God was and is active in the real world.

Martin J. Selman
Spurgeon's College

Mark: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament

*Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall (eds),
Thomas C. Oden, vol. 2
Downers Grove: IVP, 1998,
+ 288 pp., \$39.99.*

With this volume a distinctive new commentary series is inaugurated. Tom Oden's passion for ancient Orthodoxy, born of his dramatic conversion from liberal Methodism and coupled with the possibilities of current computer technology, has created this 27 volume project on both Testaments and the apocrypha. All of the extant Greek and Latin Fathers up to AD 750

are mined for their exegetical remarks on Scriptural texts and a representative sampling is printed, pericope-by-pericope, in the fashion of ancient Christian catenae or the Jewish Talmuds.

An introduction to the commentary surveys the ancient evidence for the authorship of Mark (supporting John Mark, the companion of Peter and Paul), provides an apologia for this kind of book (not supplanting but supplementing historical-critical work) and explains the procedure for discovering the sample comments that are printed (not limiting the search to explicit works on Mark since they are quite rare, especially *vis-a-vis* Matthew and John). An appendix elaborates on the latter. In between one encounters a delightful potpourri of ancient commentary. An extremely helpful part of the book's format is an 'overview' section, between each passage of Scripture and the actual quoted remarks, that summarises the main points made in the excerpted selections along with their authors' names in parentheses.

As one who has authored commentaries on Matthew and 1 Corinthians and felt guilty for not researching more ancient exegeses than the readily accessible works of Chrysostom and Augustine, I found this volume very reassuring. What has been bequeathed to us in the more standard secondary literature of the Greek and Latin fathers is largely representative. I did not find all kinds of new views on texts I had never read before. And, as conservative scholars have been arguing for some time, the Patristic period did not just allegorise narrative. That appears in these selections, to be sure, but so does much sober, responsible observation of the meaning of Mark.

What does dominate is theological reflection, especially about such

issues as the union of Christ's divine and human natures or the nature of the Trinity, even though Mark's Gospel normally does not seem to have had these topics consciously in mind.

Occasionally, there are some surprises: Palladius on being holy yet drinking wine in moderation (under 2:19) early Christian appropriation of the Phoenix myth (on 4:3), Ephrem the Syrian on a virtually immaterial conception of resurrection bodies (on 5:13), and Tertullian on women having the same sexual respect as men (on 7:26; cf. also on 10:8) and on spouses married for all eternity (on 12:25). It is also unclear what textual basis this series will adopt. The translations of Mark follow the RSV (why not the NRSV?) and include Mark 16:9; 20 without footnote or asterisk (probably because there is significant Patristic comment on these verses), yet elsewhere disregard variants of the Byzantine tradition, even when some of the snippets of comment cited presuppose them.

Overall this is a landmark series that will fascinate scholars and lay-people alike.

Specialists will undoubtedly quibble over the selection of certain writers and remarks rather than others. However, for all of us who have neither the time nor inclination to read the enormous volume of potentially relevant writings from antiquity just for an occasional biblical insight, the *Ancient Christian Commentary* will be a vast improvement over the 'hit-or-miss' citations found in most modern commentaries, and further volumes in the series should be eagerly awaited.

Craig L. Blomberg
Denver Seminary, Denver

The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel

Susan B. Garrett
Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998,
x + 212 pp., \$20.00/£12.99

Garrett's *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel* is a wide ranging and thoroughly engaging study of the stories in the Gospel of Mark in which Jesus is presented as subjected to the attempts of Satan, human adversaries, and even his own disciples to sway him from a particular path of obedience that Mark calls 'the way of the Lord'. It begins with the observation that the theme of the *peirasmos* (testing) of Jesus is a major feature of Mark's narrative. It appears, she argues, not only in Mark 1:12-13 (Mark's version of the story of Jesus' wilderness testing); but also in Mark 8:11-13 (the story of the demand for a 'sign'); Mark 10:1-12 (the story of a dispute with the Pharisees about divorce); Mark 12:13-17 (the story of the attempt of Pharisees and Herodians to entrap Jesus with a question on the payment of the *kenson*), and - in Garrett's eyes most importantly - at Mark 8:27-33 (the story of Peter's 'confession' with the will of God at Gethsemane); Mark 14:43 - 15:15 (the narrative of Jesus' arrest and trials before Jewish and Roman Authorities) and Mark 15:16-39 (the story of Jesus' Crucifixion). From this she concludes quite rightly that this theme might provide a valuable key to what Mark was 'up to'. It gives us insight not only into the purpose for which Mark wrote his Gospel, but into Mark's theology (his vision of God), his Christology (his vision of who Jesus was and is), his soteriology (how and why Jesus' death 'saves'), his ecclesiology (Mark's vision of the church), and the nature of the duties of discipleship. But how is this theme of Jesus under

peirasmos to be understood? Garrett answers this question by appealing to the Markan 'temptation' stories and setting them squarely within what she contends were the dominant cultural models or 'interpretive conventions' about *peirasmos* with which Mark and his readers would have been familiar. These are, she claims, first, the 'Job model' of affliction (ch. 1) wherein Satan, with God's permission, subjects the righteous to suffering in order to determine whether the tested one's resolve to remain faithful and obedient to God can be broken; second, the 'Wisdom of Solomon model' (ch. 2) in which wicked human beings test God's righteous one with extreme adversity or death because they have been blinded by the devil or their own iniquity to the fact that God has destined his servant for salvation and eternal life; third, (ch. 3) the model found in 4 Maccabees, Pseudo-Philo, and the Epistle to the Hebrews which asserts that if the righteous sufferer obediently endures *peirasmos* even unto death, God will regard that death as a sacrifice which atones for human sin.

Garrett's gambit is, I think, on the whole successful. One of its many virtues is that it shows how taking seriously the cultural context in which Mark was written is still the essential tool not only for delimiting the intended meaning of Mark's text but also for arbitrating some interpretative disputes (see, for instance Garrett's discussion on pages 104-15 of whether the 'cup' referred to in the Gethsemane story is a 'cup of wrath' or a 'cup of suffering'). Garrett's elucidations of various first century notions concerning *peirasmos* are valuable in their own right as succinct yet comprehensive studies from which scholars as well as students will learn much.

My only complaint is that one prominent biblical model of *peirasmos* namely, that associated with God's wilderness testings of Israel, is only briefly explored and never taken up in her discussions of Mark 14:43 - 15:15 and Mark 15:16-39 where, to my mind, it applies. Since within these texts, Mark uses such ascriptions of Jesus as 'Son of God', and 'King of Israel' seemingly to identify Jesus as the embodiment of the people of God as well as the individual righteous Israelite, surely this model would also have been seen by Mark and his readers as standing behind Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion testings.

Despite this, Garrett's book is one which students of the Gospel of Mark will not want to ignore.

Jeffrey B. Gibson
Roosevelt University

Literary Studies in Luke-Acts. Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson

Richard P. Thompson and Thomas E. Phillips (eds)
Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1998,
xviii + 372 pp., \$25.00

Joseph B. Tyson of Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, has made his scholarly reputation mainly in the areas of Lucan studies, the Synoptic Problem and the relation of Christianity to Judaism. This volume by twenty colleagues and former students is concerned to develop these issues further. The authors who are most likely to be known within the constituency of this journal are Darrell Bock, who argues from Qumran evidence that a charge of sedition could be understood as one of blasphemy in the case of Jesus, and David Moessner who offers a close study of the use of the Psalms cited in Peter's Pentecost sermon.

The veteran opponent of the 'Two-Document Hypothesis' and defender of the 'Two-Gospel Hypothesis', William Farmer gives a critical survey of recent writing in this area, concluding with the promise of a book showing how Mark has used Matthew and Luke as his sources. William Walker continues his case that the author of Acts knew, and tried to correct the impressions that readers might get from the Pauline epistles (here Galatians).

Several of the essays develop literary approaches to Luke-Acts. John Darr argues that the picture of Gamaliel is ironic rather than presenting him as eirenic. Charles Talbert offers a helpful survey of how ancient auditors would have recognised the phenomenon of conversion in Acts. Philip Shuler discovers some Hellenistic rhetorical motifs in the way that Luke narrates the birth stories, placing John and Jesus alongside each other and comparing them. Robert Tannehill argues for a reading of Scripture in the light of the dual command to love God and our neighbour, so that human benefit flows from the reading; this may involve us in saying 'no' to some passages of Scripture.

While Robert Brawley argues for a positive understanding of God's promises to the Jews in Luke-Acts, Jack Sanders defends his view that there is anti-Semitism in Luke-Acts against Helmut Merkel and Craig Evans. Thomas Phillips shows how Luke uses the two 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' stories to indicate subtly that nothing can be 'done' to achieve it (other than repentance and faith in Jesus Christ).

Finally, in this selective survey, one article is quite different from all the others. Susannah Heschel uses archives to tell the little-known story of Christian scholars supporting and encouraging anti-

Judaism in Nazi Germany. It is a harrowing tale and makes one ask whether Christians today would have the strength of their convictions to resist the awful pressures of a totalitarian state.

This rapid survey indicates that this is a volume of very mixed character with contributions of varying worth from different points of view. It is a volume that libraries will want to have, not only as a tribute to a highly respected scholar and teacher but also for its contribution to the ongoing debate on NT interpretation.

I. Howard Marshall
University of Aberdeen.

Gospel of Luke (NICNT)

Joel B. Green
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997,
xcii + 928 pp., \$50.00

Commentaries on the Gospel of Luke have seen a reversal of fortune in the last quarter century. There was a time in the seventies when one had to go back forty years to find a good commentary. Now we are flooded with a depth of riches. One might think it would be impossible for anything fresh to be said. Yet this commentary by the professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary is a solid contribution to Lucan study. Green has chosen to examine the gospel from the perspective of a literary reading of the gospel. This choice allows him to highlight the text and stay focused on issues it directly raises. This perspective, along with the sociological insights he brings to the study, is the strength of this commentary.

Green knows Lucan studies and the discussion of Lucan issues. He argues that Luke's story is ultimately about God's acts through the ministry of Jesus. He is sensitive to Luke's close

connection to Acts and often notes how the gospel's story is developed in Luke's second volume. He is careful about how Luke develops the christological portrait of Jesus, moving carefully from the basic portrait of Jesus as Messiah and prophet to a deeper understanding as the story moves into Acts. For Green, the gospel details how Jesus engaged in a ministry of release in fulfilment of promise and how Jesus is particularly concerned with the plight of the marginal. Jesus' healing and ministry of exorcism indicated that he was engaged in a great cosmic conflict with the forces of evil. Jesus sought to reverse the cultural expectations in relationships. The culture focused on reciprocity and was concerned to make sure those of status were honoured and those who lacked it were ignored. Jesus sought a new way of relating. Luke also details how Jesus came to be opposed by the leadership of the nation, as well as how Jesus called his disciples to a demanding discipleship. All of these emphases are on the mark.

Green does not merely repeat traditional views. His readings of the parables in particular are fresh, containing many distinct approaches that are fuelled by his literary perspective. Though not all of these details of interpretation were convincing to this reviewer, the readings were often worthy of consideration and often yielded helpful reflection about what was really happening in the passage. There is much of great value in Green's study.

What are the commentary's limitations? With the choice to focus exclusively on a literary reading, Green accepted certain limitations. If one wishes to understand how Luke relates to the other synoptic gospels as it tells Jesus' story, then this study

will not be of help. Often Green fails to treat or develop points of intense debate in Lucan exegetical study that surround Luke's presentation as a historian. Part of the reason for this omission is that the interpretive tension emerges from Luke's relationship to the other Gospels. Green consistently stays out of these discussions as a point of method. This emphasis is signalled in the introduction when the issue of authorship is handled in one page, failing entirely to raise elements that are a part of this discussion from the church tradition or even options for dating. Such discussions are treated as if they are not very relevant to understanding the Gospel more precisely and are incompatible with a literary reading. This defines 'literary reading' in a very narrow and extremely formal manner. Green will introduce issues of sociological observation, however. This may indicate a little inconsistency in his approach.

In justifying a strictly literary reading, Green seems to downplay the significance of historical reality and setting for Luke. Green highlights the evangelist's emphasis on 'interpretive persuasion – that is, not with validation of events but their signification' (pt. 2, 19 and particularly 20). Though he does not dismiss history as entirely as this quote might initially suggest, it is not clear by his handling of the text how he addresses their connection. This kind of play of interpretation or signification against historicity seems ill-advised, arguing for a separation of relationship that more likely should be read as connected, giving Theophilus 'certainty' about what he has been taught in the fulfilled events surrounding Jesus (Lk 1:1–4). Granted Luke is not a chronicle of a modern sort (19, n. 62), but neither does that mean that interpreters should ignore this other dimension quite as much as

Green does. The decision is acknowledged in the introduction and reflects a consistent direction in Green's approach. He cannot be faulted for not attempting to do something he feels is not required by this approach. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to point out how this decision surfaces significant, inherent limitations in the literary reading approach (just as an exclusive focus on historical questions also introduces interpretive limitations).

Similarly, the commentary stays focused on Green's reading and his justification for that particular view. Frequently he does not engage the larger interpretative debates or options in any detail. For example, a discussion of the major dispute over kingdom of God in Luke 11:20 is entirely lacking and the dispute over how to render 'your sons' in 11:19 is handled in one footnote without a complete discussion of the options. When these disputes are surfaced, Green is often content to let them be noted by bibliographic references in the notes with no detail about how the cited works relate to the debate. Sometimes, even in central texts, the fact that the issue is much debated is not indicated at all (e.g., does Luke really view all Lucan healings as demonic in all cases on the basis of Luke 4:16b-20 (212)? See the counter argument in C. Tuckett, 'Luke 4, Isalah, and Q', in J. Delobel (ed.) *LOGIA, Les Paroles de Jésus - The Sayings of Jesus*, BETL 59, (Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 1982), 343-54). On the other hand, the resources Green does cite are up-to-date and among the best available. Unfortunately, only those who pursue these references or who already know the area will appreciate how well Green's notes supplement his treatment. When occasionally Green does choose to engage in historical

detail, the remarks are quite insightful (e.g. 85, n. 14).

Green is also ambiguous on one important point of Lucan theology. He expresses a less than certain position about how Luke regards the future of Israel (e.g. 739). In discussing the 'times of the Gentiles', he notes that the term gives an indication of a temporary period and cites Acts 1:6-8 as leaving the question unanswered. Yet a reading of Acts to 3:18-26 shows that the 'rest of the story' of Israel's hope can be found by reading about 'the establishing of all God spoke by the mouth of his prophets of old' (21). This suggests that notes of hope for national Israel from the OT are still a key element in Lucan hope.

Other minor observations can be made. Applications have to be sifted out, as there is no conscious effort to point them out. Sometimes the technical literary jargon obscures the clarity of the point being made (e.g. the term 'co-text' is used frequently, though it is defined in the introduction). These features will make parts of the study harder going for pastors or serious lay people.

In sum, this is a fine commentary and a unique contribution to Lucan studies for its focus on the literary reading of Luke. For this concern, this commentary has no equal. On the other hand, there are key issues relating to Luke that do not get sufficiently treated as a result of this focus. Those who want discussion on these other, important questions will need to supplement Green's study with one of the other full studies on Luke.

Daniel Bock
Dallas Seminary

The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary

Herman Ridderbos

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997,
xiv + 721 pp., \$42/£25

Herman Ridderbos' commentary on the Gospel of John demonstrates that mature theological reflection, conversant with the theological heritage of the church, and insightful exegesis, attentive to the biblical text, nurture each other in rich and fruitful ways. The subtitle of Ridderbos' comprehensive work on John – 'a theological commentary' – aptly captures its dual purpose. It is a commentary, and thus aims to elucidate and explain the actual text before it, in this case the Gospel of John as we have it in its present canonical form. But as a theological commentary, the work offers far more than a description of the theology of the Fourth Gospel, although it does that as well. This commentary actually engages in theological reflection with and on the text. Although Ridderbos pursues his goal rather differently, his commentary is a major theological work, such as the classic older commentaries of Hoskyns and Bultmann offered in other guises.

Ridderbos dispenses with some of the traditional trappings of the commentary genre. He does not discuss in any detail vexing questions such as authorship, audience, date, and so on, nor does he engage in speculative theorizing on the possible origins of the Gospel. It is clear that Ridderbos is conversant with the issues and questions. But the task of the exegete, as he sees it, is to engage the text 'as the Christian Church adopted it' (xiii). Nevertheless, he does open the book with what he terms a *theological introduction* to the Gospel, and here one will immediately discover the deft hand of a sure exegete with

critical, historical, and theological sensitivities all brought to bear on the discussion.

The proof of any commentary is in using it. Does the commentary helpfully open up difficult passages? Does it force us to think carefully about the text? Does it ultimately help the reader to engage the very subject matter of the Gospel itself? Time and time again, as one delves into Ridderbos' commentary, the reader will find these questions answered affirmatively. In spite of the many commentaries on the Gospel, Ridderbos is able to offer fresh insight into it. He is no slave to recent fashion in interpretation of John, although clearly willing to avail himself of insights into the text which historical and critical methods can afford.

So, for example, as one reads his discussion of the prologue (Jn 1:1-18), one finds that Ridderbos can ably discuss such critical questions as the sources and historical background which may lie behind the prologue. But this discussion is added almost as an appendix, where Ridderbos treats and discusses the views of major commentators on this question. In the commentary itself, Ridderbos lays out his reading of the text. He typically does not address difficult texts by laying out all the possible options, and showing the arguments for and against each one. Rather, he allows his reading of the text, in dialogue with other views, to remain the main feature of the commentary, relegating more technical discussions to virtual excursions and footnotes. Thus, for example, a rather detailed and lengthy discussion of 'The History of Religions Approach' to the prologue and of 'The Logos and "Wisdom"' are included, but in smaller print, and in between the actual exposition of the text.

The material is there: but Ridderbos does not burden his exegesis with too much focus on these technical matters. In reading the commentary one often has the distinct impression of reading theology more than exegesis. Ridderbos offers theological reflection on and elucidation of texts for which the actual preliminary exegetical study often lies buried beneath the surface of the commentary. Precisely here the commentary is refreshing and useful. In grappling with Ridderbos' theological implications and conclusions one will be forced to rethink previous exegetical decisions.

Ridderbos' work is not for the faint of heart. He expects a lot from the reader and assumes quite a lot about the readers' knowledge of critical issues in interpreting the Gospel, of theological matters, and Greek grammar and syntax. Because he does not address introductory issues (such as authorship, date, and so on) in any systematic fashion, the student will have to ferret these out from the commentary, if they are matters of primary concern. Not likely to be a beginning students' first choice, the commentary will be most useful to those who have a good working knowledge of the Gospel and the issues involved in its interpretation, and want to probe once more the theological depths of the Fourth Gospel with a sure guide. Here Ridderbos will not disappoint.

Marianne Meye Thompson

Fuller Theological Seminary

Your Father the Devil? A New Approach to John and 'the Jews'

Stephen Motyer

Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997,
260 pp., £19.99

Among NT scholars today, there is a widespread view that the NT falls into a regrettable anti-Semitism at various points. John's gospel is seen as a prime culprit, notably in chapter 8:31-59, where Jesus describes his Jewish opponents as being children of 'your father the devil'. Readers of *Themelios* who appreciated the brief editorial comment criticising this view in a recent issue (vol. 23.2, February 1998) by Dr. Stephen Motyer of London Bible College, will also now appreciate the published form of Dr. Motyer's London University Doctoral thesis. In it Motyer argues that, far from being anti-Semitic, the gospel would have been heard by Jews in the late first century AD as a meaningful response to their confusion and trauma associated with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. He speaks of the evangelist standing alongside his fellow Jews, sharing their pain, and he comments that 'with great creativity he carved a gospel which not only recorded the story as he understood it, but he told it in a way which brought out its deep relevance for Israel in her need, and as passionately and attractively as possible' (220). Motyer suggests that John's gospel, far from being an embarrassment to us today after the Holocaust, is, if correctly understood, a model.

Motyer reaches this conclusion by an impressive argument. He starts with a substantial and very useful discussion of method, reviewing critically the approaches of recent scholars, such as R.A. Culpepper, J.L. Martyn, and J. Ashton. He is sharply critical of J.L. Martyn's influential thesis that John's gospel reflects the painful split

between church and synagogue following the Council of Jamnia, quoting Wayne Meeks' comment about a 'red herring in johannine research'. He also seeks to plot a path between modern literary (synchronic) approaches that focus on the text and ignore historical context and old historical (diachronic) approaches. The method he offers is one, to 'seek, within the text indications of its social setting', i.e. to look for 'points of sensitivity' in the text; two, to look outside the text for a historical background which may account for these points of sensitivity; and three, to return to the text and read it against the background identified.

Motyer then proceeds to identify various 'points of sensitivity' in John, including the temple and its festivals, the law and its meaning, revelation from heaven, Judaism and 'the Jews', faith and signs. Having discussed these, he then goes out of the text and finds that these points of sensitivity fit very well the concerns of the Jews in the period after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. It was a period of agonising over what happened – over temple, law, revelation and the future, with different Jews and Jewish groups offering different explanations. John's gospel seems to fit this context.

Having argued this, Motyer can return to the text, and he looks particularly at 8:31–59, but in the broader context of the whole of John 5–12, suggesting how these chapters would have been heard in the context he has proposed. He finds all sorts of connections: in chapter 9, for example, the story of the man born blind, discusses the relation of sin and suffering (very relevant to Jews after AD 70), describes the restoration from 'exile' (blindness in the man's case), and a transference of worship from the synagogue to Jesus. One of the key issues being

debated in the gospel is, clearly, the question of Jesus: is he the prophet like Moses of Deuteronomy 18, who people should listen to, or is he the false prophet of Deuteronomy 13 who proclaims 'gods you do not know' and who should be put to death? John's gospel is remarkably honest in portraying both sides of such arguments.

On the controversial chapter 8, Motyer finds no anti-Semitism: the strong language has plenty of parallels, e.g. in the accusations that Jesus is demon-possessed; and it functions as in the OT prophets like Hosea, namely as a strong appeal. 'You are of your father the devil' is not an ontological statement about an unchangeable state, but a moral accusation. 'Interpreted against this background, even, "you are of your father the devil" becomes, in its context, a passionate appeal to change direction' (212). Motyer concludes that the passages he examines in John's gospel fit the context of the late first-century Judaism as he proposed, with its interest in 'sin, death and judgment, freedom and slavery, Abraham and the covenant, vision and eternal life' (210).

Motyer's book is to be warmly recommended. It is well written and fully documented, though not lightweight or reading for beginners. Its comments on method are helpful, though I wondered whether Motyer's acquiescence in the modern tendency to look for the implied reader rather than for the author's intention was necessary. (He did allow the author's intention in occasionally!). His observations about the Jewish background to the debates in John's gospel were repeatedly illuminating, even if he occasionally overplayed this, e.g. seeing more significance in Jesus' absence from the festivals in chapters 6 and 8 than the text

probably warrants. Motyer admits that some of the points of sensitivity that he identified as characterising Judaism after AD 70 also characterised the period before AD 70, and I would have been interested to see more discussion of the case for an early dating of John; he engages rather little with the views of John Robinson. He also discusses very little the question as to how much of what he examines actually goes back to Jesus, and whether this would affect his argument at all. I suspect that many of Motyer's insights would apply to the words in Jesus' context as in the evangelist's later context. There are other detailed questions that might be asked: Motyer argues well that the 'signs' in John's gospel are understood as evidence for faith, but his explanation that 'faith' by itself does not lead to eternal life in John's gospel (even in Jn 3:16; 20:31) did not persuade me, though it is true that John knows of 'faith' that is partial or inadequate. Finally, I wonder if Motyer's proposed context for the gospel fully accounted for the massive stress on christology in John - on Jesus as the word from God, on Jesus as 'my Lord and my God'. The first letter of John suggests that John's church at some point had a split over the issue of christology, and the major point of sensitivity in the gospel is arguably christology. Motyer makes some interesting brief remarks about a possible Ebionite christology; but I suspect that there is more to be said - about christology and ecclesiology, and that the writer of John had a broader range of questions to address than Motyer brings out.

His book remains a most useful and stimulating discussion, which takes our understanding of John's gospel forward significantly.

David Wenham
Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

A Reading of the Parables of Jesus

Ruth Etchells

London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998,
vi + 200 pp., £9.95

A funny thing happened last spring as I went to order supplementary texts (in addition to my own) for my triennial elective on Jesus' Parables. Every single one I had used the last time (Jeremias, 1972; Kistemaker, 1980; Wenham 1989; and Sider 1994) had gone out of print! In fact, I could not locate another reasonably conservative text that treats *every* Gospel parable. Needless to say, the arrival of Etchell's volume this summer sparked my interest. The back blurb heralds it as an 'important and ground-breaking' application of literary criticism to the parables. The author is 'a lay-theologian', former principal of St Johns College in Durham where she taught English and theology.

Etchells divides the parables thematically into those on God's sovereignty, right humanness and the last things and discusses how each functions as both metonymy and metaphor. Metonymy here refers to how the story line hangs together as a coherent, generally realistic whole. Metaphor refers to the symbolic level of meaning, often, though not always triggered by a surprisingly unrealistic element. Etchells deliberately does not interact with scholarship but she has clearly read widely. Her comments form a generally reliable guide to the meaning and function of the parables, although it is not clear where she stands on conventional tradition criticism. Sometimes texts in their canonical form and setting are treated as equivalent to what Jesus himself meant, sometimes only the Evangelists' intentions are said to be in view, and occasionally the two are distinguished.

John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism: A Historical Study

Joan Taylor

London: SPCK/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997,
360 pp., £25

Once in a while creative thoughts appear. Is Christ the gardener in the parable of the barren fig tree? Is Luke 16:16 the key to uniting the parables that surround it? Is Noah's flood the key OT text behind the parable of the two builders? A few improbabilities occur, too. The prodigal's request for his portion of the inheritance was *not* standard; the woman's ten coins do *not* mark her out as particularly poor; and the mustard seed, leaven, and seed growing secretly are no longer generally understood as focusing most on the period of growth. A recurring theme involves Jesus' message of hope, balanced by the inevitability of judgment for those who insist on rejecting salvation.

The book is nicely and imaginatively written, though I did have to look up five new words for me ('minatory', 'temporise', 'distrain', 'cantatory', and 'choric'), and I found the style that tolerated 83 sentence fragments (and I am sure missed some) in 200 pages distracting, if not distressing.

Despite the publisher's promotion, I found little here that was 'important and ground-breaking', given the quantity of recent parable research. But if we've reached the stage where publishers must take so many books out of print every 3-5 years, then presumably the same tasks must be repeated simply to preserve key ideas in print! This book does that quite well. If it survives another three years I should even like to require it of the students in my elective.

Craig L. Blomberg
Denver Seminary

This book reflects a renewed interest in 'the historical John' sparked by the more general reappraisal of Second Temple Judaism. Taylor's contribution may be set along side those of R.L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet* (1991), whose interest is also in the historical John, and of Markus Öhler, *Elia im Neuen Testament* (1997), who approaches his task in a more literary critical fashion.

Taylor sets out her case in six chapters. In dialogue with Webb and others, she first examines any possible relationship between John and the Essenes. Despite the close geographical proximity of John's activity to Qumran, there is no link to the Qumran Essenes. Any contact would have been with urban Essenes but '... the overwhelming impression is that John should probably not be seen as having any direct relationship with the Essenes ...' (48).

Taylor's chapter on 'Immersion and Purity' is probably the most illuminating. Here she places John's practice firmly within Jewish purificatory immersions. But John's was not symbolic, did not confer forgiveness, and was not initiatory. Rather, John baptised those who had turned back to God. Outward purity could only follow inward purity. 'With repentance and its proof in the practice of righteousness, the heart was rendered pure; God cleansed the heart and granted remission of sins. Now pure inside, one could become pure outside, and therefore immersion naturally followed' (100).

John's teaching (ch. 3) generally had its basis in Isaiah. John's particular emphasis was upon *zekhut*, a later rabbinical term referring to 'the protecting influence of freely chosen good conduct over and above what was required by the law' (124). John castigated those who, as children of Abraham, thought they could depend on inherited *zekhut*. He demanded that they act righteously beyond the call of duty, especially in giving to the poor, and in light of the impending imminent judgement. John also called notorious sinners to righteous living, although he did not require them to leave their professions. In this regard, Taylor's discussion of John's counsel to women who were prostitutes is particularly interesting, if inconclusive. Some of John's teaching could well have been attributed to Jesus by the Evangelists.

Taylor does not think John's relationship with the Pharisees was hostile. In fact, this 'influential religious grouping' (211) may well have considered John to be a good man. They might have differed with him on the necessity of righteous deeds before outward purification but on most ethical issues they were close to John. To be sure, Matthew and Luke dissociate John from the Pharisees and Jesus from both John and the Pharisees, but Mark's picture has all of them firmly linked, a far more historically credible portrait.

After discussing the death of John (ch. 5), Taylor considers John's relationship with Jesus. Clearly, they were linked. Both were prophets but Jesus 'asserted of John precisely what John denied - that he, John, was Elijah' (315). In much of his teaching, Jesus was a faithful follower of John. But he also 'demonstrated that he was in possession of the prophetic spirit and that the end was here ...'

(316). More controversially, Taylor suggests that 'It seems likely that Jesus came to John at the Jordan River as a repentant sinner, though whether he was or not is impossible to ascertain; decision about this will rest on people's fundamental beliefs.' (315).

Quite properly, Taylor considers Second Temple Judaism as the context in which to understand John. But the gospel pictures reflect modification by the early church as it moved away from Judaism. For instance, instead of predicting the coming of the agent of God, he predicted the arrival of Messiah Jesus. His baptism was not for outward purification following inward purification; it was a prelude for Christian baptism with water and Spirit. The list of differences between the historical John and the John of the gospels continues. 'Such a defensive, apologetic tone in the NT writings concerning John is obvious ... The Gospel writers may have considered John's centrality at the origin of the Church a threat, but we do not need to continue to think so' (320-22).

This is a fascinating mixture of sound historical judgement and arguments advanced on the most slender of evidence. Taylor's discussion on immersion and purity as well as John's relationship with the Pharisees is particularly helpful. Less convincing is her attempt to separate John completely from the Essenes; unless the NT writer's have their picture of a Jesus who was not a sinner completely wrong, her speculation concerning the reasons why Jesus underwent John's baptism is just wrong-headed.

In sum, this is a book that contains a wealth of valuable insight. But most readers of *Themelios* may find Webb's portrait of the historical John more

persuasive than Taylor's. The publishers have recommended a paperback price that would present a serious challenge to the average student's budget.

K.E. Brower

Nazarene Theological College,
Manchester

The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity

John T. Cairroll and Joel H. Green (with Robert E. van Voorst, Joel Marcus, Donald Senior)
Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995,
xviii + 318 pp., h/b., \$24.95/£16.99

This valuable book on a critically important subject has a complex history. The original setting for some of the ideas and discussion was a study group within the Society of Biblical Literature on the subject of the Passion Narrative and Tradition in Early Christianity. The two primary collaborators wanted 'to offer a cohesive statement developing a particular interpretive approach to the death of Jesus in early Christianity'. In order to do this they jointly wrote ten of the chapters, while asking the three other contributors to write one chapter each on a specialist topic. The book thus consists of an 'introductory essay on 'The Gospels and the Death of Jesus in Recent Study', followed by chapters on the death of Jesus in each of the four canonical gospels, one on Paul's theology of the cross, another on Hebrews, 1 Peter and Revelation, and another (by van Voorst) on extra-canonical passion narratives. These discussions of biblical matters are then supplemented by five further essays on historical and theological issues: the historical meaning of the cross; the question of responsibility for the death of Jesus; the role of the OT in the passion narratives (by Marcus); the relationship between

Jesus' death and discipleship (by Senior), and a concluding discussion about the meaning of the atonement.

There is a wealth of material within this book for students and scholars in particular. In general the treatment is up-to-date and stimulating, although it is probably worth noting that different chapters have quite different levels of interaction with the scholarly literature. For example both authors have previously written on Luke; hence the sections devoted to Luke come fully documented, whereas other sections are much more sparsely annotated. We might also note that the focus is as much (sometimes more) on the passion and rejection of Jesus as specifically upon his death. Further we might suggest that the nature of the cohesive approach promised in the introduction is not always made sufficiently clear in the following chapters.

This book has numerous strengths. An appropriately broad range of material is dealt with and fairly sensible conclusions are generally reached. The discussions of the gospels in particular are helpfully informed by a wide range of narrative and literary approaches. This throws interesting light, for example, upon 'his blood be upon us and upon our children' (Matt. 27.25) which is taken as somewhat ironic: 'The death of Jesus - precisely because it is the shedding of innocent, sacrificial blood - creates the possibility of forgiveness even for the persons who bear responsibility for putting him to death' (48). The historical discussion broadly supports the historicity of the main features of the gospel accounts: Jesus was condemned both by a Jewish court (because of his threat to the temple and priestly status) and by the Roman prefect.

The book also has some weaknesses. Leaving aside differences of opinion or conviction on a number of exegetical details, perhaps the most important issues arise out of the concluding attempt at theological synthesis. The attempt, of course, is to be applauded and the four-fold coordinates by which contemporary theological reflection can check its bearings are fair enough *as far as they go*: lostness, cruciform ethics, divine initiative in salvation, human equality. The problem seems to be that the previous chapters have not really provided sufficient ammunition for a convincing theological conclusion. For example, no attempt is made to investigate the OT covenantal and sacrificial motifs that cluster around NT approaches to Jesus' death; nor are the theological factors behind penal substitution adequately addressed. Indeed penal substitution gets a rough ride here, although no indication is given that our authors have actually read any twentieth-century defence of this traditional doctrine.

I read this book with interest and found it to be both informative and stimulating, without in the final analysis finding it very satisfying. Further debate might profitably focus on just what aspect of the cross gives coherence to the richly multi-faceted contours of Paul's thought, and on whether penal substitution can survive contemporary attacks. Perhaps some *Themelios* readers will take up these further challenges.

Peter M. Head
Oak Hill College

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (NICNT)

Paul Barnett
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997,
662 pp., \$45.00

The *Second Epistle to the Corinthians* by Paul Barnett (Bishop of North Sydney, Australia) is part of an endeavour by Eerdmans Publishing Company to rework volumes in the New International Commentary series in the light of the advances made in the field of NT scholarship over the last 20–30 years. The commentary on 2 Corinthians, originally done by Philip E. Hughes, has the distinction (along with Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, James, 1 Peter and 1–3 John) of being a completely new work by a different author – rather than a revisionary effort by the original author (as with John, Acts, Ephesians–Colossians–Philemon, 1–2 Thessalonians, Hebrews). Welcome changes include the fact that each pericope is introduced by the NIV (instead of the stiff cadences of the American Revised Version). Those without copious knowledge of Greek will find this commentary tough going. Page footnotes add 154 pages to the overall length (although about 50% are a mere referencing of the underlying Greek text).

Some of the Greek is transliterated and kept in the text (see, for example, 448 'gift [*dorea*]' and 'grace [*charis*]) but most of the Greek is found in the footnotes in untransliterated form. Additionally, there is not always good co-ordination between the English translation in the text and the corresponding Greek in the footnotes. On page 43, for example, seven English words are italicised but only two corresponding Greek terms are underlined (footnotes 161–62). Also, English and Greek word order do not always

correspond and the matching of terms is not always correct (see, for example, 42, 'convicted ... persuades ... (being)', while footnote 160 has *peiqomen ... sunecet ... krinantes*).

At points the volume is not terribly user-friendly. The language is not always gender accurate (e.g. 220 (4:4) = 'he' (the hearer) now 'sees'). Cross-references are too few, and it is not always easy to find where something is treated. For example, text critical matters are dealt with in the footnotes at the beginning of each pericope, rather than under the specific verse in question. This would be all right if they were cross-referenced, but they are not. One also wishes that the critical issues surrounding the unity of the letter were given more attention. The author argues for the unity of the letter but only a scant paragraph is given to 2:14 - 7:4, 6:14 - 7:2, and chapters 8-9 in the 'Introduction' (with no cross-references to the commentary). A bit more attention is given to chapters 10-13, but not enough to explain the shift to biting sarcasm at 10:1ff. and the blunt warning, 'I will not spare those who sinned earlier' at 13:2 - hardly what one would call anticipation of a 'joyful reunion' (386). The argument for unity would have been strengthened by observing that Paul's expressions of confidence in chapter 7 fall in line with the typical arm-twisting formulae used in the body closing section of the Hellenistic letter.

The current series editor, Gordon Fee, identifies a single goal for the commentary, namely, 'to bring the busy pastor and student up to date on the interpretation and theology of 2 Corinthians (ix). The strength of this commentary is the latter; its weakness is the former. The volume is more of a biblical theology than it is a systematic exegesis of the text. In

one respect the book fills a much needed vacuum today. Very little has been done in commentary format with the theology of Paul's letters and the author takes great pains to tie together the theological threads of 2 Corinthians. His theological handling of 4:6-18 (which avoids Greek dualistic pitfalls) and 6:3-10 (the nature of the gospel ministry) are particularly good. His identification of Paul's major challenge as that of Corinthian triumphalism is on target and the major theme as 'power-in-weakness' based on the motif of the resurrection of the crucified one is certainly correct. Another strength is the author's first-hand acquaintance with a wide range of primary sources which help in setting forth the first-century religious and theological milieu. Also, the theologically focused introductions to each pericope are themselves worth the price of the volume.

However, if one is looking for the exegetical fine points of the text, this volume will surely disappoint. For one, there is little exegesis in the body of the commentary. Points of original text, grammar, word meaning, translation, cultural background and interpretative options (where they occur) by and large are relegated to the footnotes. Add to this the fact that often no rationale is given for the exegetical decisions that are reached. At times textual variants are preferred without carefully weighing the evidence (e.g. 159 n. 1 'our hearts'; 255 n. 2 'put on', without mention of transcriptional probabilities). Scholarly alternatives are rejected without a specified reason (e.g. 258 n. 15 'Views to be rejected are ... '). Conclusions are reached without adequate justification: e.g. 1:3: 'Blessed be the God *even* the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' lacks a grammatical rationale and skirts the theological issue; in 3:14 the

subject *katargeitai* means 'the veil', but in verses 7, 11 and 13 'the glory'; *o de* in 5:5 is actually transitional ('Now he who', following grammars and translations), not contrastive ('But he who'). Theology overrides context at points, e.g. in 3:12-13: 'We are bold and not like Moses' is a contrast between Paul and Moses, not between unveiled believers and veiled Israelites. Decisions quite often are theologically, not exegetically, driven (e.g. 'freedom' in 3:14-17 is from spiritual ignorance, not from an inability to keep the Law; in 6:14 'at the present time' refers to the mundane 'now', not to 'the day of salvation').

If one is looking for interaction with the range of scholarly interpretation, this is also not the commentary to choose. There is little engagement with interpretive issues in the commentary proper. Even in the footnotes interaction with scholarly opinion is often bypassed or summarily rejected with 'contrary to so and so' (e.g. 262 n. 39; 265 n. 56). Sometimes scholarly advances are dismissed outright. For example, the author translates *apokrima* in 1:9 as 'a death sentence' - even though Colin Hemer has shown that the term is not used in this way in first century Greek usage (*Tyndale Bulletin* 23:103-107). *Kaphieuontes* is translated 'those who adulterate the word' in 2:17, despite Scott Hafemann's demonstration that there is no extra-biblical evidence for this meaning (*Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, Eerdmans). *O de kurios* in 3:17 is equated with 'the Lord Jesus' (189), although Gordon Fee and others have established that the article + *de* + noun is a standard Jewish formula for interpreting words from a text that has just been cited (*God's Empowering Presence*, Hendrickson). Emerging scholarly consensus are eschewed with little

discussion. According to the author, Paul's opponents are Palestinian Jewish legalists, not charismatic Hellenistic Jews. The primary challenge at Corinth is continuing immorality and idolatry, not spiritual arrogance and anti-authoritarianism. During his last visit Paul was opposed by the leader of a libertine faction, not by someone challenging in principle Paul's apostolic authority.

One disappointment is the lack of practical application. Only three and a half pages of a fifty page introduction deal with the letter's application to pastoral ministry, and even here the author argues against application. One also wishes for some practical explication of the promise of divine encouragement in time of trouble (1:3-11), the need to reaffirm love for an erring member who has repented (2:5-10), the importance of not being outwitted by Satan (2:11), death as a going home to be with Jesus (5:6-8), new creation in Christ (5:17), being ambassadors for Christ (5:17), and the guidelines and models for whole-life stewardship in chapters 8 and 9 - to name just a few. There are also some knotty problems that need clarification. Is Paul's reverse psychology in chapters 8 and 9 a model we should adopt today? What in practical terms does Paul mean by being unequally yoked with unbelievers (6:14ff.)? Is Paul arguing for an equality of finances in chapter 8? And if 'to receive God's grace' means 'to be saved' (as Barnett believes, 6:1-2), is Paul then saying that believers can lose their salvation?

Finally, the author's reading of 2 Corinthians is hardly an unbiased one. The first person plural 'we' of chapters 1-13 is read as Paul's self-conscious identity with the Isaianic suffering servant of Isaiah 40-55 and the second

person plural 'you' is understood of 'captive Israel' (140). So much is this the case that Paul's citation of Isaiah 49:8 in 2 Corinthians 6:2 becomes the key verse of the entire letter. To reject God's grace is to reject God's Suffering Servant (Paul) and so to miss out on salvation. The point is a crucial one. There are no models for pastoral ministry. There are no principles for the work of evangelism either. By limiting the 'we-you' of the letter to Paul-Corinth, all the lessons about ministry become uniquely Paul's, the Corinthian church's and no one else's. So, for example, the godly grief that produces repentance and salvation in 7:9 applies uniquely to the Paul-Corinth relationship (374-76). There are a few places where the author widens the 'we' to include what is referred to as 'the new covenant people' (1:18-19; 3:12-18; 4:14, 16 - 5:10, 18a, 21). But why this should be so is far from clear. They just *are*. Yet, Paul did not write theology for theology's sake. While it is important not to trivialise Paul or his teaching, it is also important to recognise that he addressed local congregations at their points of need. Paul as 'a revelator of the glory of God in a way' that can't be duplicated or imitated is at odds with the numerous calls that Paul makes to colleagues and churches alike to imitate his life and his teaching (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Gal. 4:12; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thess 1:6,7; 3:7 - 9; 2 Tim. 3:10-11, 14).

Linda L. Belleville

North Park Theological Seminary

Encountering the New Testament

Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough
Grand Rapids: Baker/London: Angus Hudson,
1998,
448 pp., \$44.99.

With this textbook we have arrived at an entirely new era in theological publishing. This volume is a production masterpiece reminiscent of some of the recent Lion publications. It is handsomely bound and illustrated, with glossy paper, colour photography, charts, diagrams and sidebars, and an attractive layout to make even the most disinterested student want to learn something about Scripture. What is more, it comes complete with a cd-rom in a pocket in the inside back cover. On this cd appear glossary terms, review questions, photo tours, and video clips of the two authors summarising each chapter and explaining key theological concepts. In addition, brief films take the interactive computer operator throughout the Mediterranean to view the sites surveyed in the NT literature, with beautiful music playing in the background. One may call up the major divisions and topics of each chapter for further interactive review. The authors have also worked hard, and largely succeeded, at composing a text which is not 'over the heads' of relatively biblically illiterate first-year undergraduates, but which nevertheless does not 'dumb down' the content.

The book follows the canonical sequence of the New Testament, treating the typical introductory information and surveying the actual contents and key themes of each book. Additional chapters treat such issues as: 'Why Study the New Testament'; 'The Middle East in the Days of Jesus'; 'The

Gospel and the Four Gospels'; the life and teachings of Christ; critical and hermeneutical approaches to the New Testament; 'The Modern Study of the Gospels'; 'The Modern Search for Jesus'; and the life and teachings of Paul.

There is no question that this book is highly attractive, interesting to read, easy to follow, and generally pitched at the right level. The authors' warm evangelical Christian faith also shines through as they self-consciously commend Christian discipleship to their readers. The footnotes and bibliography interact with the most current literature, though the quality and scope of items actually cited, especially the commentaries, are inconsistent. Revelation seems to be dealt with strikingly briefly. Elwell has written most of the material on the Gospels, Yarbrough most of the material on the Epistles. The latter is perhaps of a little higher quality.

A few anomalies appear. The reference on page 29 to a recent study dating an ancient manuscript of Matthew's gospel to around AD 60 includes no note that this study is almost certainly wrong! Twenty-four of the twenty-seven NT documents are called letters, including Luke-Acts and Revelation (40). Matthew is said to stress Jesus as 'Savior of Israel and the World' (81), even though that title is unique to Luke, while no reference to Matthew's unique emphasis on Jesus as 'Son of David' or 'Royal Messiah' appears. It is curious to read that Mark emphasises the resurrection (92) when in fact he never narrates that event at all. And not one of the three explanations given for the Messianic secret in Mark (95) involves the most important probable explanation, namely Jesus' desire not to fuel misguided nationalistic expectation among his contemporaries. On page 335,

intriguingly, we have a map of Paul's fourth missionary journey complete with stops in Tarrasco, Toletum (both in Spain), Crete, Miletus, Ephesus, Philippi, Nicopolis, and Rome, with all of the dates attached! One has to read the actual text to determine that not one of these pieces of information is securely known. In the introduction to the epistle to the Hebrews, no mention is made of any location as a possible provenance of the letter. James, 1 Peter, and 1 John are not arranged from longest to shortest (contra 274); in fact, the reverse is true. The reason for the canonical sequence - James, Peter, John, Jude - seems rather to be the decreasing relative importance of these four authors in the earliest period of the life of the church.

Little room is given throughout this volume for less conservative evangelical theories regarding authorship, date or composition of individual books. Without exception, the most conservative or traditional information is given. But unlike most other surveys or introductions, other views and the authors' reasons for rejecting them are seldom even presented. Curiously, Elwell and Yarbrough do a very good job of concisely presenting and refuting objections to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians and 1 Peter. Similar treatment with books that are more consistently questioned (Ephesians, the Pastorals, 2 Peter) is needed. Our authors altogether reject the 'new look on Paul' without presenting it in enough detail for a beginner even to understand the options. Elwell and Yarbrough also clearly favour a hierarchicalist position in the debate over women's roles. One particularly unusual sidebar appeals exclusively to Jesus' choice of twelve male apostles as a reason for holding this view and suggests that rejection of this

position illustrates a reader-response hermeneutic (176)! On other topics, however, such as spiritual gifts, the millennium, and whether or not Hebrews 6 teaches the apostasy of genuine Christians, our authors are more even-handed in presenting the options and do not take a clear stand. Particularly sensitive and balanced sidebars appear throughout the book on such topics as homosexuality, hell, universalism, and the 'social gospel'.

The book has been extremely well proof-read, but I did notice William Ramsay's name misspelled twice (256, 259), and Scot McKnight's likewise (76, 136), even though both names are spelt correctly elsewhere in the volume.

This textbook has so many strengths that it may well become the standard for the next generation of teaching college and university freshmen in the United States. If indeed today's students, so saturated with a lifetime of viewing television, video, and computer screens, can only learn well when one produces all the 'bells and whistles' that this book plus CD have generated, then Elwell and Yarbrough are a must. If I were still teaching undergraduates and were convinced that my students were good enough to handle superior content even when presented in a less attractive or varied format, I think I would stick with Robert Gundry's well-established *Survey of the New Testament* (Zondervan, 1993). But for everyone else, Baker may have inaugurated a series that reflects the wave of the future.

Craig L. Blomberg
Denver Seminary

Theology in Rabbinic Stories

Chaim Pearl

Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997,
vi + 180 pp., \$12.95/£8.99

'Rabbinic literature is divided into two chief parts, called *halakah* and *aggadah*. The first is the legal discussion and decisions; the second comprises all the rest. In this volume we are concerned with the second part, the *aggadah*.' Here in the introduction to this fine book, Chaim Pearl, until his recent death the grand old man of modern Judaism, spells out his subject. The book consists of seven sections: Beginnings (on God and creation), Torah, Aspects of Jewish History, Ethics, The Mysteries, The Nations, and Miscellaneous. Of these, the second, third and fourth sections are the longest. In all, there are fifty 2-4 page portions, each of which contains a paraphrase of the story under discussion, an explanation of its origin and characters, and appraisal of its rôle within Jewish tradition and doctrine, and an application to contemporary Judaism.

There are three striking emphases in the book. The first is the emphasis on ethics. Almost every page is soaked in ethical concern, and there is contempt for so-called piety that does not issue in concrete behaviour (86). Interestingly, however, Pearl argues that self-sacrifice is not required by rabbinic teaching, though 'there is still room in Judaism for the ideal of selfless love' (94).

Secondly, Pearl is careful to articulate where his authority lies: his is 'a Judaism which appeals to reason' (5), but he is also careful to ground many of his expository observations in scripture. On the other hand, twice in the opening pages, he makes clear 'that our

Judaism does not rest on the Bible as it has been interpreted throughout the ages' (20), or 'as it has been interpreted and developed in the course of history and tradition' (28). This is exemplified in the story where Moses is permitted to see into the future, and hear Rabbi Akiba expounding Torah. Moses was sad, thinking that his Law had been forgotten and replaced by another. But hearing Akiba say that the source and authority for his teaching was the Torah given at Sinai, Moses was reassured (19).

Pearl's aim is to discern the authentic voice of Judaism, uncontaminated by the influences of Greece and Rome in the early period, and Babylon in later times. This is sometimes clear, but sometimes involves exploring the contradictory voices of the tradition and allowing both to stand.

Thirdly, there is the question of suffering which dominates the book. 'The central problem for religious faith is why God allows suffering' (67). Reference is made in particular to God's participation in the nation's sorrow. For example, when a man reports to Elijah that he heard God weeping over the exile and the destruction of the Temple, Elijah replies; 'I swear that such a divine lament is heard not just once; but three times every day God mourns like that' (67). The holocaust is a constant point of reference in the book, as is the persecution that has characterised the history of Judaism down the ages.

But while the content is extremely serious, the way in which the stories are told is quite delightful. This is one of the great strengths of the book. It is extremely easy to read, with the narratives reproduced in folk-tale style. The charm of the story-telling, and the often profound expositions

combine well. There is the occasional quirk: Pearl has a strange approach to the historicity of the accounts, for example. The evidence is innocent until proven guilty, though he is essentially anti-miracle (139), and recommends a rationalistic approach to interpreting them: so the origin of a valley filling up with gold coins came perhaps 'as the glow of the setting sun fell on the stones' (83).

Students should not look to this book to contribute to their understanding of Judaism in NT times: this book spans a much broader time-frame. However, there are some interesting snapshots of the first-century, featuring Rabbis Hillel, Shammai, and Johanan ben Zakkai. In view of the crises of Roman occupation and the destruction of the Temple, what comes across is an anxiety among the rabbis for the future of Torah-study as the only guarantee of the future of the nation. The book is thoughtfully and humorously put together, and the blend of charm and depth is very salutary. It is an enjoyment to read.

Simon Gathercole
Durham

Judaism Volume 1

George Foot Moore

Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1997,
x + 552 pp., h/b., £45.00/\$59.95 for both
volumes.

Judaism Volume 2

George Foot Moore

Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1997,
viii + 485 pp., h/b., £45.00/\$59.95 for both
volumes.

Paul The Jewish Theologian

Brad. H Young

Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1997,
xx + 164 pp., \$12.95/£9.99

These books by Moore and Young lie at either end of a scholarly chain. The Moore volumes are reprints of his 1927 *magnum opus* on the nature of early Rabbinic Judaism. Moore's work was a decisive influence on E.P. Sanders' 1977 book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Sanders' revised view of the nature of Judaism has, in turn, led to the production of a range of books which attempt to re-think Paul's relationship to Judaism in the light of his work. This is what Young's book does.

George Foot Moore portrays Judaism as a religion of grace and forgiveness. He draws attention to the opportunity for atonement in Judaism. Even after the ending of the Temple sacrifices in AD 70, forgiveness is possible. The sole condition is now repentance. Moore then argues that repentance means the same thing for the rabbis as it does for Christians. He even quotes the definition of repentance from the Westminster Shorter Catechism and then writes, 'With the omission of the words *in Christ*, this definition completely embodies the rabbinical teaching' (515).

Moore's book remains very valuable. He quotes his sources at length (usually in translation but occasionally in Latin), and they are often sources that are difficult to get hold of. It must be borne in mind that Moore is trying to describe standard Rabbinic Judaism at the time of the Mishnah (about AD 200). This means that he does not give much weight to many sources, such as apocalyptic texts, which NT scholars see as being important for understanding Judaism of the first century AD. Of course, Moore also gives no weight to the Dead Sea Scrolls. The jars in the caves of Qumran had not yet been discovered. Moore's task is itself complex. He does show sensitivity to the dates of the texts he is using, but the texts are from a wide range of periods and discerning which ideas reflect the period under study is often difficult. The further task of unifying those ideas in a coherent scheme of standard Rabbinic Judaism is also problematic. Caution needs to be exercised about any large synthesis such as Moore's. Moore's sharp edge is the contrast between his Judaism of grace and the typical Christian presentation of Judaism as a 'religion of works'. His work contrasts particularly clearly with parts of the collection of Rabbinic texts gathered by Strack and Billerbeck. Much of Moore's case is convincing but there are limits on how far this line of argument can go. The Jewish scholar, Jacob Neusner, famously attacked E.P. Sanders for what Neusner saw as Sanders' 'remaking of Judaism in the image of liberal protestantism. When all is said and done, the Rabbinic religion of grace results in authoritative texts that include thousands of detailed rules. The contrast with, say, Paul's Christianity is very marked.

Brad H. Young tries to minimize the distance between Paul and

Rabbinic theology. As well as being influenced by Sanders, and hence indirectly by Moore, Young is also strongly influenced by Krister Stendahl's *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*. Young follows Stendahl's view that Paul sees Gentiles as being saved through becoming Christians while Jews are saved through traditional Judaism. The question that we are left with if we embrace Stendahl is: What, then, did Paul think was wrong with Judaism? Various scholars have offered answers, most notably Lloyd Gaston. In Gaston's view, Paul sees Israel's 'misstep' as essentially being the rejection of the mission to the Gentiles. Young's view seems to be that Paul does not criticise Judaism at all. This is a strange reading of the text. The strangeness reaches its peak with Young's assertion that 'Paul recognized that when some of the Jewish people rejected his preaching of Jesus, they were really only reaffirming their own strong faith in God' (30). Young cannot be correct. For Paul, the gospel is the power of salvation for Jew and for Greek (Rom. 1:18). In Romans 1-3, Paul goes to great lengths to show that Jew and Gentile are equally under sin and that Christ's sacrifice is the means of justification for all. Young offers a number of parallels between Jewish texts and the NT. He discusses Pentecost, the possible application to the Gentiles of the covenant with Noah, and the phrase 'in a glass darkly' in 1 Corinthians 13:12. This last one, a comparison with Numbers 12:8, is particularly interesting. However, the overall package in the book is unconvincing.

Peter Oakes

Northern College and
University of Manchester

**The Inclusive Language Debate:
A Plea for Realism**

D.A. Carson

Grand Rapids: Baker Books/Leicester: IVP, 1998,
221 pp., £9.99

This book begins and ends with a consideration of a phenomenon, by no means an exclusively modern phenomenon, which Carson calls 'Bible rage' - the sort of furious and unreasonable reaction against novelty in Bible translation that leads Christian people to mutilate copies of Scripture with a power drill or hound teachers from seminaries. The current crisis erupted when *World* magazine, an American publication, spotlighted in a somewhat sensationalist fashion the intention of Zondervan to publish an inclusive language version of the NIV (NIVI) in the US. After a few months of intense and very public debate Zondervan backed down.

Opposition to the NIVI came mostly from churches, institutions and scholars who have adopted a strongly traditionalist or 'complementarian' stance on the broader issue of the relative status of men and women. Inclusive language translations were denounced as a capitulation to an insidious feminist agenda. What makes this book especially valuable, therefore, is that it is a defence of the principle of inclusive language translation from within the complementarian camp. Carson's overriding concern is to show that it is neither biblical anthropology nor ecclesiology that are at stake here; the problem is rather one of the theory and practice of translation, and much confusion has arisen, in his view, because the arguments against inclusive language translation have been devised by people with good intentions but a poor grasp of linguistics and the practicalities of translation.

The theoretical core of the book is a discussion of the technical difficulties involved in the process of translation. Because languages differ widely in terms of structure, vocabulary and cultural presuppositions, it is never possible to convert a thought from one language to another without some loss or distortion of meaning. 'Translation is treason', it is always a compromise. This is true not least with regard to grammatical gender. Carson treats the reader to a fascinating perambulation through the gender systems of some of the world's more obscure languages in order to demonstrate both the largely arbitrary nature of linguistic gender and the impossibility of fully replicating the nuances of one system in another.

This then provides the basis for a discussion of the principles for gender-inclusive translation proposed by the leading protagonists in the debate: on the one hand, the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT), which is responsible for the NIV and NIVI; and on the other, the *ad hoc* group of journalists, Christian leaders and scholars who wrote what have become known as the Colorado Springs Guidelines. Chapters on passages of exegetical and doctrinal importance and on the slippery and subjective question of whether the English language is really in the process of abandoning generic masculine forms neatly round out the discussion. Carson is vigorous but even-handed in his assessment and quick to acknowledge the legitimacy of some of the criticisms levelled against the CBT. In the end, however, he remains convinced both for linguistic and pastoral reasons that the option of an inclusive language translation is highly desirable. His concluding admonitions to *World* magazine and the Colorado Springs signatories are forthright and

permissible, one imagines, only because he shares their wider goals.

The debate over the validity of inclusive language translations of Scripture is still in its early stages and this book reflects the *inchoate* state of scholarship. Carson makes extensive use of private communications, magazine articles, unpublished essays, conference papers and material available on the Internet. How much further the matter will be carried remains to be seen, but at least we now have a well-reasoned, instructive and accessible rejoinder to the precipitate reaction of conservative evangelicals in the US to the NIVI.

Andrew Perriman
Muscat, Oman

Speaking of Women: Interpreting Paul

Andrew Perriman
Leicester: Apollos, 1998,
237 pp., £19.99

Many evangelical works have been published recently arguing that women can fulfil every ministry in the church, and that husbands do not have a unique leadership role. Andrew Perriman advocates this position but jettisons many popular egalitarian arguments. He denies for example that the word *kephale* means source and that Ephesians 5:21ff. calls for 'mutual' submission. He does not believe that 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 is a non-Pauline interpolation, or a quotation from the Corinthian church that Paul is contradicting. He does not believe that *authentēo* in 1 Timothy 2:12 means to instigate violence, or to misuse authority nor does he believe that the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:12 is given primarily because women at Ephesus were teaching false doctrine.

Perriman's thesis is altogether simpler. Paul called for wives to submit to their husbands; he called for the women in Corinth to be silent in the public meetings of the church (except when they were standing, with heads covered, to pray or prophesy); he prohibited the women at Ephesus from teaching in the assembly. Paul was being consistent with the patriarchal culture of the day: he wished to avoid *both* the confrontation between Jewish and Gentile believers *and* the needless offence to outsiders. In accepting all this, Perriman refrains from hermeneutical gymnastics that leap over the 'plain sense' of the text. Instead he argues that the patriarchal culture of Paul's day was a temporary condition. He provides an exegesis of the Pauline texts which, he claims, indicates that 'at the back of Paul's mind' was the possibility of a world in which the stain of patriarchy had been washed away. Male leadership was inevitable in the New Testament age. Paul regulated it, ameliorating it as far possible by exhorting husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. But society accords equal rights to women now, and it is only appropriate that the church follow suit. If we lag behind the Church may well languish as an irrelevant anachronism.

The overall argument is clear. But what about the detailed exegesis? With regard to 1 Corinthians 11:3, the passage has to do with propriety in worship, not authority, says Perriman. But can it not relate to both? With regard to the word *kephale* (1 Cor. 11:3, Eph. 5.23) Perriman argues at length that it does not have connotations of authority; it signifies prominence or pre-eminence. But he fails to prove that the persons referred to, as *kephale*, had no authority. The fields of meaning overlap. Perriman's case has

already been broadly made by Richard Cervin, and refuted by Wayne Grudem in the appendix of *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (1991, 425-49). The weakest section is on Ephesians 5:21-24, 'No inference, therefore about the logical status or the character of the man's headship is drawn directly from the headship of Christ' (56). But this statement is only possible because at this point Perriman ignores verses 25-33. The section on 1 Timothy 2:12ff. is also problematic. Paul *seems* to be saying that the prohibition is based on creation. Perriman argues that verse 12 is a parenthesis, so that the prohibition against women teaching is not creationally mandated - just a necessary response to the prevailing local conditions. The brackets are vital to the argument, but stubbornly hypothetical.

So with regard to both marriage and ministry, 'Paul regards the authority of the man over the woman not as a theological absolute but as a given cultural reality' (204). We should not preserve an outdated (patriarchal) pattern of leadership that will prove a stumbling point in the modern world. In marriage, we can speak 'either of a joint headship or of a division of headship, depending on how responsibilities are apportioned within marriage' (209-10). The husband does not 'have to feel that he must take *ultimate* responsibility' (210). The modern world has moved beyond a hierarchical understanding of gender. Perriman suggests that Paul, if alive today, would have welcomed this. But the world has also moved beyond respect for any authority whatever. Do we then accommodate to that and reject all authority structures?

This book is a persuasive and consistent argument for

egalitarianism, although egalitarians may not welcome the rejection of several cherished interpretations. Does it succeed? Perriman does not attempt to evaluate the 'practical experiments in egalitarianism' that have taken place in family and church (11) although he says such a task is necessary. He falls in the dual aim of taking on board the concerns of the complementarians (11) and arbitrating between the two sides (11). This is because he equates submission with being dominated; and in rightly rejecting a 'chain-of-command' type marriage he goes straight over to the roleless marriage (the logical fallacy of the excluded middle: there is a complementarian middle way!) He treats male leadership as something negative: but complementarians - including women - view it positively. On the Titanic nine men died for every one woman, because the husbands gave their lives for their wives and children. Was that the 'stain' of 'outdated patriarchy'? Or was it an illustration of Christ-like servant leadership: being willing to take ultimate responsibility but also to make the ultimate sacrifice?

Sharon James
Leamington Spa

Faith and Power: Christianity and Islam in Secular Britain

Lesslie Newbigin, Lamin Sanneh, Jenny Taylor
London: SPCK, 1998,
x + 177 pp, £12.99

This significant study states two key premises at the outset. First, British Muslims have been recently raising issues that British Christians have neglected for too long, and second, Christianity provides the best resolution of these issues.

In part one of this work, Lesslie Newbigin regrets that the British

have lost their identity. Multiculturalism, while offering certain clear advantages, poses a number of problems which British society has not yet resolved. Newbigin discusses the rise of secular society, which led to the progressive discarding of religion in the West with accompanying decay. This has resulted in great pessimism in the United Kingdom and specific problems for which secular society has no answer. Newbigin argues that the response to this situation has come from a re-emergence of religion, particularly in the form of religious fundamentalism, of which Muslim fundamentalism is the most prominent and most vocal form.

In the second part, Lamin Sanneh addresses Islam, Christianity and public policy. He points out that Muslim political activity has disrupted the long-standing separation between the state and religion in the West, and he opines that 'we are faced instead with a Muslim resolve to make Islam count in the public realm' (28). He points to widespread Muslim dismay at the way that Christians have caved in to secular society on issues such as misuse of the name of Jesus, the adaptation of the Christian scriptures to respond to bandwagon fads, and the acceptance by Christians of a demotion of religion to the private sphere. Sanneh states that 'Muslims are justified to charge Christians with compromise, if not surrender' (34).

In Part Three Jenny Taylor addresses what she terms 'the multicultural myth'. She includes a useful discussion focusing on the great ethnic and theological diversity of Islam, and concludes that 'Islam is not a seamless whole' (79).

The force of Taylor's contribution lies in her critical engagement with grassroots issues. She cites the

case of 13 year-old Shazia Shafee, a girl of Pakistani parentage who was withdrawn by her parents from her school in Sheffield for 20 months, without any resulting action being taken by teachers, social workers or the Foreign Office for fear of encroaching across a multicultural divide. As the girl in question was a British citizen, technically her family could have been liable to charges of abduction, denial of the right to education of a minor, possible physical abuse and facilitating underage sex by marrying her off to a peasant cousin in a village in Pakistan. The inaction by authorities, accompanied by an official silence, represents what Taylor refers to as 'Multiculturalism and the cult of silence'. She goes on to point out how the cult of silence condones 'almost total cultural separatism - in fact, informal apartheid' (92).

Taylor discusses integration and assimilation as alternatives to multiculturalism. She points out that Muslim thinkers in Britain are especially opposed to assimilation, considering it a threat to the survival of the Islamic community in the United Kingdom. Taylor calls for 'a vision of integration that does not threaten people's need to develop in their own way' (103). This would prevent the emergence of minority colonies, such as is seen among Asian ghettos in Britain and would serve to forge a sense of common purpose among disparate elements, thus overcoming the problems with present multicultural policies and assimilationist ideologies.

In the final part of this work, Lesslie Newbigin returns to consider the possibility of establishing a Christian society. He provides a set of useful recommendations to the church as to how it can re-engage with the world. He concludes by

distinguishing between Christian and Muslim approaches as follows: 'Christians agree with Muslims that God's will is to be done in the public no less than the private sphere. The question is: what kind of obedience does God desire?' (162). Newbigin answers by stating that God desires obedience freely given as an expression of love, not given out of fear of divine punishment. He clearly identifies the former with Christianity and the latter with Islam.

Newbigin writes in a lucid, logical and persuasive manner throughout this work. Likewise, much of Sanneh's thinking is hard-hitting and incisive, though at times his contribution is somewhat marred by being overly academic and at times stylistically pompous. However the heart and soul of this work lies in Taylor's contribution, which belies the fact that she is the least known of the authorial trio. No doubt more will be heard from her in the future.

This excellent work deserves close attention and wide publicity. It is directly relevant to social issues relating to Britain and other Western societies where non-Christian minorities are increasing in number. It should be required reading for diverse study programmes and interest groups.

Peter G. Riddell

London Bible College

Faith and Praxis in a Postmodern Age

Ursula King (ed.)

London: Cassell, 1998,

vii + 200 pp., £13.99/h/b., £35 00.

It is in the nature of collections to be patchy, but it is rare that one finishes a batch of essays with such a sense of disappointment from having just watched the B-team play. There are a few noble exceptions. Gavin d'Costa well

describes the failure of theology to heed the lessons drawn by Edward Said in his classic *Orientalism*. The author makes it clear that the ultimate meaningfulness of 'other religions' (itself a loaded term) will be resolvable beyond, eschatologically, rather than trying to trace the different religions back to a prehistoric core. Keith Ward charts the downfall of the Enlightenment Project with a critique of the Cartesian 'world as a machine' legacy and the Kantian presupposition that everyone plays by the rules (the world is just not like that), and of a liberal, cheap grace theology, but runs out of space to give any remedy, except for calling (intriguingly) for 'a properly scientific narrative which could yet build purpose and value into objective reality'.

Less happy is the idea that postmodernity is created by a respectable philosophy (see King's 'Introduction'). For R. Gill it is 'an intellectual credo which denies the existence of universal and trans-historical standards of truth and morality'. However the contributions by R.R. Ruether and A. Primavesi are lightweight. Stephen Batchelor ends his contribution by saying that Buddhism is nothing much like Postmodernism and it is certainly less cynical, while Cohn-Sherbook (on Israel), Prozesky (on S. Africa) and Northcott (on global economy and the UK) do not really provide much to do with Postmodernism, but rather statements on 'the state we are in', and somewhat journalistic at that. Martin Forward's essay on Postmodernism and Islam merely has a few pages summarising Akhbar Ahmed's eponymous book. In turn the editor attempts a captain's innings with some discussion of how postmodern spirituality is postmodern just because it wishes to 'pierce beyond history'. The widespread interest in

spirituality today is linked to the modern emphasis placed on the subject, on the discovery of the self and a more differentiated understanding of human psychology' (99). Does this mean that 'Postmodernism' should be better called 'late modernism'? How then is it prescriptive enough to be a philosophy rather than a mere sociological phenomenon?

Mark W Elliott

Nottingham University

Christ the Self-Emptying of God

Lucien J. Richard

New York: Paulist Press, 1997,

236 pp., £12.99

Lucien Richard attempts to develop and renew a kenotic approach to theology in this impressive and stimulating book. Despite its relatively brief form, it operates as a kind of systematic theology, shaped by the central theme that God's nature is defined and expressed as kenosis, God's self-limitation, or self-emptying. After a survey of the contemporary cultural context, it moves into several chapters on Christology where the cross, presented as the necessary culmination of Jesus' life of self-giving love, is seen as the defining centre to any christological formulation. It proceeds to examine key NT texts, particularly of course, the hymn in Philippians and Mark's gospel (although strangely without reference to Gundry's commentary on Mark as an Apology for the Cross). In patristic theology, Richard suggests that fear of Arianism led to such a stress on the divinity of Christ that the distinctive and crucial insights of kenotic theology were lost. He concludes that the doctrine of divine impassibility is to be rejected as incompatible with any idea of kenosis as definitive of

God's nature. The Incarnation is to be seen not so much as 'an assumption of a human nature by the eternal Logos, but a self-emptying on the part of God'. As such, human nature is not in essence in opposition to divinity, but complementary to it, specifically designed to reveal God. Creation and Incarnation are continuous with one another in that both are acts of self-emptying and self-limitation on the part of God. The book closes with some interesting insights offered by this approach to the understanding of suffering, and an account of what a 'kenotic church' might be like.

The book stimulates, provokes, and has much to offer as an exploration of this theme as a foundation for an understanding of God. It still leaves questions however. Richard conveys little sense of the cross as atonement, as achieving/enacting the reconciliation between God and his broken world, yet it is surely this very theme in the NT which makes the cross such an evocative symbol of God's self-giving love for humanity and a model for Christian life and relationships. The cross can act as the criterion of an understanding of God and for Christian life only because it is the place where God has 'reconciled the world to himself' and it must be debatable how far the cross can act in the central way Richard wants it to without a stronger doctrine of atonement. Secondly, at the heart of the book is a methodological shift away from an older model of kenotic theology which begins with an understanding of God and Christ, and then decides 'how much of the divine being can be brought within the limits of human existence'. The difficulty with this is that the image of self-emptying implies that there is something to be emptied; self-limiting implies there is a self to be limited. If the essence of God is defined as self-

limitation, the language and image of kenosis does not work as neatly as it did with a firmer understanding of God's transcendence and independence of creation, which Richard loses in his preference for process theology. Thirdly, the high level of abstraction in the book becomes frustrating. One longs for a little more historical rootedness, or even some clearer idea of what this might mean in practice, rather than some general insights about liberation, compassion and love. Nonetheless, despite these caveats, the book has some important things to say, and provides a contemporary account of kenotic theology which will hopefully stimulate more thought in this important area of contemporary theology.

Graham Tomlin
Wycliffe Hall

Evangelicals and Truth: A Creative Proposal for a Postmodern Age

Peter Hicks
Leicester: Apollos, 1998,
240 pp., £12.99

Despite its title, this is not a book just on truth, but also on epistemology, in particular, the way one should structure one's beliefs. The book falls into three parts. Part One is a whirlwind tour of the history of philosophy. Hicks begins by describing the traditional pre-postmodern concept of truth, continues by analysing evangelicalism, proceeding to interrogate the history of philosophy on its concept of truth and its views on how one should structure one's beliefs. He then races through, from Plato to postmodernism in 17 breathless pages.

In Part Two Hicks interrogates the history of evangelicalism starting with the Reformation, and then

proceeding through a rather idiosyncratic list of representative figures in the history of evangelicalism: Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, Charles Hodge (Hicks' speciality), B.B. Warfield, J. Gresham Machen, P.T. Forsyth, James Denney, Carl Henry, Helmut Thielicke, Herman Dooyeweerd, Cornelius van Til, Francis Schaeffer, Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Bernard Ramm, Anthony Thiselton, Peter Cotterell, and Max Turner. Out of these, only Hodge, Henry and Thielicke gets a chapter to himself. Despite the variance among these thinkers, Hicks treats them all sympathetically and attempts to extract a common set of epistemological views from them, to stand as the evangelical tradition. Hicks concludes Part Two with a survey of the contemporary evangelical scene. Having completed his historical surveys of philosophy and evangelical theology, he ambitiously tries to 'explore what evangelicalism might have to offer in the face of the collapse of our concept of truth' (133). This may well surprise some readers, as it did the reviewer, who was not aware that our concept of truth had collapsed. Hicks puts forward his replacement basis for truth: the concept of God. He then goes on to analyse this concept and that of the image of God, aspects of human personhood, truth in the Scriptures, and concludes by trying to show how his replacement preserves all the best features of evangelicalism.

Hicks' work is strongest in his historical exposition of other theologians, but the reviewer found the other parts disappointing. There is hardly any discussion of what truth actually is: the correspondence theory of truth is briefly quoted from Edwards, but no mention is made of any other theories. In addition, many times when Hicks uses the word 'truth'

he seems to mean 'knowledge': 'truth can be expressed in personal and in propositional form' (142) – what is actually at issue here is the difference between knowing a person and knowing a proposition. Hicks also frequently talks about the 'justification of truth' (19, 21, 191), but again truth *per se* needs no justification, it is our beliefs that need justification. I found even Hicks' principal thesis confusing: on one and the same page (155) he says both 'I shall pick up ... the use of the concept of God as a basis and justification for truth' and 'it is not the intention ... to introduce the concept of God in order to supply an explanation for meaning and truth'. Also, Hicks never defines key terms such as 'reason'.

However, the book includes a useful glossary, detailed footnotes, and a fairly good index, and is attractively set out.

Daniel Hill

King's College, London

Picking up the Pieces: Can Evangelicals Adapt to Contemporary Culture?

David Hilborn

London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1997,
322 pp., £8.99

Hilborn has undertaken an urgent task for contemporary evangelicals. He has sought to chart, through extensive interviews and reading, the impact of cultural change upon evangelicals. The primary attention of the book is on the situation in the United Kingdom and so Hilborn deals extensively with such leaders as David Tomlinson and Clive Calver along with events like Greenbelt and the Sheffield Nine O'Clock Service.

Written in an engaging style the result is a book that provides an impressionistic snapshot of

evangelicalism today. The views of evangelical leaders are compiled primarily from Hilborn's personal conversations and anecdotes. The first half of the book deals with the meaning of postmodernity and the challenge it presents to evangelicals. The second half is rather warmer to postmodernism and outlines the positive developments of evangelicalism in areas such as worship and social action. The methodology of this approach is somewhat dissatisfying. The views of significant leaders are brought in for some subjects but not for others. Hilborn does not justify his selection of some movements or events and exclusion of others: for example, there are a number of references to the work of Greenbelt but little mention of UCCF, IFES or any other student Christian grouping. Given the impact of postmodernity in higher education one might expect a consideration of the response made by an evangelical student movement.

In a final chapter on theology and doctrine Hilborn makes the simple (but important) point that doctrine is more than propositional truth. Though it cannot be less than this, it must be more than the bare statement of abstract propositions. It is unclear to me who would disagree with this point. Certainly, none of those interviewed and nor the literature of evangelicals Hilborn surveys give this impression. Presumably, the group he has in mind are the 'conservative evangelicals' by which he means UCCF, the Proclamation Trust and the Banner of Truth who he equates with Enlightenment Rationalism (66). However, no evidence is given in his work that any of these groups restrict doctrine to mere propositional truth and deny the relational, doxological and political dimensions of those truths.

Hilborn closes his work with a kind of charter for postmodern evangelicalism. This is essentially a push for a certain kind of evangelicalism that does not adopt the radical stance of Tomlinson's 'post-evangelicalism' but is less culturally conservative than classical evangelicalism. However, a conservative view of culture was never a defining part of evangelicalism and so it remains unclear what, exactly, Hilborn is rejecting. He offers such ambivalent statements as 'postmodern evangelicals will be less concerned with the formal inerrancy of Scripture than with its functional authority' (285). The meaning of 'less concerned' is not given. If he means that the practical authority of Scripture is more important than mere intellectual assent to the reliability of scripture then we must again ask who would disagree with this point? Another statement describes postmodern evangelicals as those who 'accept that God can act in a supernatural way today' which, again, is not something characteristically denied by classical evangelicals. However, Hilborn continues that they will 'thus be open to the full range of charismata' (285). No reason is given anywhere for his assumption that belief in God acting today implies belief in the continuing availability of the full range of charismata from prophecy to apostolic office.

Evangelicals do have a massive cultural task before them and Hilborn does a service to the church by cataloguing the views and ideas he has done. The book is written in an accessible style with attention to the devotional implications of theology. However, the untidy methodology and authorial agenda weaken its scholarly usefulness.

Christopher Sinkinson
Bournemouth

New Dimensions in Evangelical Thought: Essays in Honor of Millard J. Erickson

David S. Dockery, (ed.)
Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998,
470 pp., \$34.00

New Dimensions in Evangelical Theology consists of essays by twenty-six evangelical theologians. With the exception of Alister McGrath and Wolfhart Pannenberg, all of the contributors are from North America. There are two chapters on biblical theology; six on historical theology; ten on systematic theology; five in applied fields; and three related to the work of theologian Millard Erickson, in whose honour this book is published. As the title suggests, this collection of essays is intended to inform the reader regarding recent evangelical theological thought. Though there is considerable variation among the chapters with regard to both character and quality, this book does provide theological students with a broad and suggestive evangelical introduction to current theological issues and scholarly literature. Some of the chapters focus on current discussions within evangelicalism (e.g. C. Pinnock on theological method, B.A. Ware on eschatology, B.A. Demarest on spirituality), while others provide an introduction to current discussions of topics which are being significantly addressed by both evangelical and non-evangelical scholars (e.g., T.R. Schreiner on NT theology, M. Anderson on Reformation theology, R.V. Rakestraw on angels and demons). Some essays draw upon and engage evangelical literature almost exclusively (e.g. L.I. Hodges on scripture, T.S. Rainer on evangelism), while others introduce the reader to a wide range of scholarly perspectives (e.g. Schreiner on NT

theology, Anderson on Reformation theology, J.S. Feinberg on the doctrine of God). In some cases the authors limit themselves to describing current scholarly discussions, while in other cases the authors also articulate, or at least suggest, their own constructive proposals. As might be expected with a multi-author work of this kind, there are very few explicit connections between chapters. Nonetheless, there are some interesting serendipitous linkages, such as Anderson's consideration of 'popular belief' in his chapter on Reformation theology and Demarest's discussion of the Protestant heritage in spirituality. Taken as a whole, the book provides an illuminating window into the current state of North American evangelical theological scholarship, and is thus a useful resource for theological students. (In this respect, the book is a fitting tribute to Erickson, a widely respected senior statesman among evangelical theological scholar-educators.) By virtue of the people the editor enlisted to make contributions, the reader is introduced to the thought of both senior scholars who, like Erickson, have been formative influences on the shape of evangelical scholarship in their respective disciplines in recent decades (e.g. W.C. Kaiser Jr., J.R. Williams, Pinnock, C.F.H. Henry, R. Nicole, Demarest), as well as well as younger scholars who are increasingly significant voices within evangelicalism (e.g. Schreiner in NT, B. Nassif in Patristics and Eastern Orthodoxy, A.E. McGrath and S.J. Grenz in theology). Usefulness to students is further enhanced in that most, though not all, of the chapters contain abundant bibliographic information, several chapters being bibliographic essays (Garrett on recent studies in Patristics, Anderson on Reformation studies,

Nicole on the Holy Spirit). In his chapter on evangelical theological education, Timothy Weber chronicles the 'mainstreaming' of North American evangelical seminaries from the 1940s onwards. This book provides a sampling of the scholarly and theological fruit which has been born in no small measure (though by no means exclusively) in and through the professors and graduates of these schools. And, this sampling demonstrates both that evangelical theological scholarship has in many ways matured as it has been 'mainstreamed', and that evangelicalism now entails an increasingly diverse range of perspectives. Future developments in evangelical thought will demonstrate whether or not we have the maturity to be proper stewards of this diversity.

W. David Buschart
Denver Seminary

Is the Church of England Biblical? An Anglican Ecclesiology

Colin Buchanan
London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998,
vi + 377 pp., £14.95

Evangelicals in the Church of England have often been accused of lacking an adequate ecclesiology: this is a major response to that charge. Bishop Buchanan is well placed to offer astute comment having been both a lecturer and a participant in many of the Anglican ecclesiological discussions of the past 40 years.

Buchanan writes as an evangelical primarily for evangelicals. He places this book between two other recent publications: Kevin Giles' *What on Earth is the Church?* (SPCK, 1995), which is largely biblical; and Tim Bradshaw's *The Olive Branch* (Paternoster, 1992) which is more doctrinal and focuses on twentieth century ecclesiology. This book seeks

to combine the two emphases. With the recognition that an Anglican ecclesiology needs to be Biblical, Part I of the book covers 'Biblical Data'. He then covers historical matters in Part II, 'The Early Church', and much of Part III, 'The Church of England Then and Now', which begins with the events of the Reformation. Here, the biblical principles are applied to the Church of England of today. There is also much interesting material in the Appendices and Notes of Part IV, including lengthy comments on 'Establishment', 'Episcopacy' and the 'Anglican Communion'.

Buchanan is often highly critical in his assessment of the contemporary Church of England in the light of the Scriptural witness, and he also has many thought-provoking challenges for evangelicals. To mention just one of many: a leading theme is the importance of the geographical principle of church organisation and the need to return to the New Testament model of a single church for an area, rather than competing denominations. This emphasis on the unity of the visible church is also linked to a 'higher' doctrine of the sacraments than is usual for evangelicals. Indeed there are few aspects of ecclesiology that Buchanan does not touch on with clarity, and often originality. There are also many practical suggestions for reform.

In terms of the Anglican debate, Buchanan places himself firmly in the line of, what he calls the 'ecclesiologists' who committed themselves at the 1967 Keele conference to work within the Church of England as it is. He contrasts this with the 'constitutionalists' (a succinct statement of which is found in J.I. Packer's *A Kind of Noah's Ark*) who looked back to the church as it was defined by its foundation

documents. However, I wonder if his understanding of truth as an eschatological ideal we move towards, as well as a Biblical deposit we return to, gives a greater contentment to live with the current plurality than some evangelicals would be happy with.

This book is engagingly written. It is described as 'intermediate scholarship' with the aim of introducing a wide audience to a rarely discussed area. There are few endnotes and little direct engagement with secondary sources, although it is clear he has read widely. In his 'Introduction' he notes that his return to Episcopal office significantly reduced the time he had to write this book. There is a consequent sense of material having been rather thrown together at points. This is therefore not perhaps a definitive statement, but it is a stimulating call to further reflection and contemporary biblical faithfulness. While the focus is on the Church of England, and assumes a certain knowledge of its workings, there is much material of wider interest. There is nothing comparable on the market.

Andy Saville

Tonbridge

Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge

Kevin J. Vanhoozer

Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Leicester: Apollos, 1998,
496 pages, h/b., \$29.99/£14.99

Stanley Fish's *Is There a Text in This Class?* has become a defining work for post-structural or postmodern literary criticism. Fish represents one of two major wings of this movement – reader-response criticism – which, along with its counterpart deconstructionism, argues that the

meaning of a written work is either the product of the interaction of a reader with the text or the wholesale creation of the reader. Given the pervasiveness of these trends in literary thought, especially across the universities of the Western world, a rigorous critique of their tenets seems crucial. Anthony Thiselton is the one evangelical Christian who has previously and consistently tackled this job in his many writings, but this monumental work by a scholar who has taught at both Trinity International University in the States and New College, Edinburgh, now emerges as the one volume that is thorough, convincing *and readable* in demonstrating the incompatibility of numerous recent interpretive fashions with the Christian faith in particular and with successful interpersonal communication in general.

Vanhoozer creatively and perceptively links the three major movements in modern literary criticism – that have focused in turn on authorial intention, textual meaning, and reader response – with the three persons of the Triune God. 'A trinitarian theology of the Word of God conceives God as author, as message, and as power of reception' (161). If there is a God who wants to communicate with his creation and who has made humanity in his image to communicate meaningfully with one another, then authorial intent must be a focus for a speech-act to succeed. This is not to revive the 'intentional fallacy' of trying to recover an author's state of mind but it is to pay careful attention to textual clues that successful communicators do leave in their written works to point to their purposes. If God, the Son has become incarnate in Christ, the Word, as a definite sign, as part of the Father's communicative efforts, then it stands to reason

that all words have limits on what they can mean, especially when they are interpreted in the larger contexts of sentences, paragraphs and literary forms or genres. Apart from these assumptions, human agency and freedom themselves are threatened. If the Holy Spirit exists in part to illumine human hearts as to the meaning and significance of inscripturated words, then it makes sense that part of his more general work with all people is to enable accurate interpretation, even though it is never perfect or exhaustive because of human fallenness and finitude.

This book at its heart is therefore a theology of hermeneutics. But Vanhoozer explains that he did not begin the project with that intention. It started first of all as a more philosophical and logical critique of the untenability of postmodernist hermeneutics and as a defense of the recoverability of meaning in texts. A substantial percentage of the book still serves these goals, so that it is by no means only Christian or Trinitarian readers who can benefit from and should read this tome. Following N.T. Wright, Vanhoozer persuasively defends a critical realism (meaning can be adequately determined) as a conscious alternative to both naive realism (meaning can be comprehensively determined) and non-realism (meaning cannot be determined). He recognises the valid points that postmodernism, even in its most deconstructive forms, have made, primarily against attempts to use texts in authoritarian fashion. But he ultimately demonstrates that it is the critical realist, not the deconstructionist, who commands the moral high ground. Until one has attended carefully to something other than oneself and has allowed for the possibility of a text to transform us (possibilities

that are logically incompatible with purely reader-oriented theories of interpretation), one has not read responsibly.

It is impossible to summarize the nuggets of wisdom that appear on almost every page of a detailed work of this nature. Though the work could probably have been shortened by avoiding the frequent repetition of themes, the book does drive home numerous countercultural insights in its current form that an abridged version might not have accomplished as effectively. Vanhoozer, like Thiselton before him, draws on 'speech-act' theory at numerous points, including to redefine the difference between stable 'meanings' and endless possible 'significances' in ways that should forestall the harsh critique that has beset an advocate of authorial intention like E.D. Hirsch. Meaning is a function of illocution; significance, of perlocution. Like Fish, Vanhoozer writes in a delightfully entertaining way and has woven in numerous plays on words, not least in his subheadings of sections, reminding us that more traditional interpreters can be as creative as more *avant-garde* ones. Vanhoozer's command of the secondary literature is magisterial and he practises what he preaches (as virtually all reader-response critics sooner or later do not) in his handling of others' writings. Perhaps my only regret after working through this book is that it was published with Zondervan without any reference to a forthcoming British edition, because sadly, Zondervan's works are still not adequately consulted either in the English-speaking world outside the US or in non-evangelical circles within the US. Like Vanhoozer's published thesis on Ricoeur, this work is worthy of Cambridge University Press (or Oxford, or Fortress in the

US). One can only hope it will somehow get to the people who really need to read it – today's 'cultured despisers' of either traditional hermeneutics or Trinitarian Christianity, or both.

Craig L. Blomberg
Denver Seminary

Hans Küng Breaking Through

Hermann Häring
London: SCM Press, 1998,
377 pp., £19.95

Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities

Hans Küng and Helmut Schmidt,
London: SCM Press, 1998,
152 pp., £9.95

Hans Küng is by any standard one of the more notorious of contemporary theologians. As a doctoral student he endeavoured to prove that Protestants and Catholics need not regard justification by faith as a divisive issue.

Later, in the wake of Vatican II, he pushed his own (Catholic) church to the limit by accepting a form of *sola Scriptura*, by demanding a modern approach to critical questions of theology and exegesis, and finally by calling into question the doctrine of papal infallibility. It was this last bit of daring which finally forced Rome to act, and in December 1979 he was deprived of his status as a Catholic theologian. Naturally that only made him seem to be a martyr in the eyes of most academics, and although the Roman church has stood by its decision, Küng himself has gone on to carve out a remarkable career on the border between the church and the world.

Hermann Häring's lengthy study of Küng's theological pilgrimage is a

defence of his former teacher and a plea for his rehabilitation as a recognised Catholic theologian. What this amounts to is a plea for liberal Catholicism to be accepted as the post-Vatican II norm. The famous agreement between the Catholic Küng and the Protestant Karl Barth on justification was based on a shared liberalism, not on the traditional teaching of either side in this debate, so it can hardly be regarded as a 'historic agreement' between the two forms of Christianity. Both men are universalists, which immediately sets them apart from any kind of orthodoxy, whether Protestant or Catholic. Protestants will sympathise with Küng's questioning of papal infallibility, but as that is clearly Catholic teaching, the Roman church is fully within its rights to insist on conformity from one of its licensed theologians. Complaints of unfairness and persecution are misguided, a point which Häring obviously finds hard to accept.

Küng himself has gradually moved out of the Christian world, which has come to seem very restrictive to him, and into a kind of transcendental humanism. This is made clear by the second book, which is a declaration on global responsibilities put together by him and endorsed by a wide selection of prominent politicians and others. His argument is that human rights also entail responsibilities, a dimension that has sometimes been lost sight of in recent years. He pleads for a balance between the two, and it is difficult not to agree with his aims. Unfortunately, Christians have to insist that apart from Christ, the goals which Küng is aiming for will never be realised. Indeed, even if everyone on earth were a Christian, the legacy of Adam's sin would still be with us. This is not a popular message, and we cannot

expect the impressive gallery of world leaders assembled here to approve of it, but it is the truth. Noble aims and good intentions are all very well, but only repentance and regeneration in Christ can bring them to pass. Here, orthodox Christians speak a different language to that of Küng, and we must part company with him. On this issue, Evangelicals are closer to the pope than we are to Barthian Catholics, which leaves us with divided sympathies when we read books like these. Küng may be a long way from John Paul II in his outlook, but in another way he is just as far from Evangelicals, a point which emerges clearly in both of these books.

Gerald Bray

Beeson Divinity School, Alabama

Hans Frei and Karl Barth: Different Ways of Reading Scripture

David E. Demson

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

For me, there are two Hans Freis and two Karl Barths. There is the Frei of *The Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative* and the Barth of the prefaces to *The Epistle to the Romans* and, for that matter, the *Church Dogmatics*. They are intelligible and extraordinarily illuminating on the task of biblical interpretation. But there is also the Frei of *The Identity of Jesus Christ* and the Barth of the body of the *Romans* commentary. I have found them unintelligible so I haven't known whether or not they are illuminating.

This narrowly focused study of *The Identity of Jesus Christ* and aspects of the *Dogmatics* is elegant. This elegance is in the service of sifting some important underlying issues. Yet, for one who is a (British) biblical scholar rather than an (American) systematist, it is

hard going. This very fact, however, illustrates the complexity of inter-disciplinary work in hermeneutics. Consider, for example, the contrast between myth and gospel. I have always thought of that as implying a contrast between liberal and conservative interpretation. I have then been able to take a stance in relation to myth like that attributed to the religious man in Luke 18 and thank God that I do not see the gospel as myth, as other people do. But for Demson/Frei, a mythological reading is one in which 'one reads the gospel story of salvation and comes to a deeper understanding of the self, and this deeper understanding is salvation' whereas the Gospels themselves are 'identity descriptions' of 'a specific ... unsubstitutable person'.

The irony is that the standard fare of much of our devotion, especially in the evangelical-charismatic circles with which some identify, is something uncomfortably like Demson/Frei's Gnostic reading. It studies the gospels and finds people like ourselves – not just in the disciples, but in Jesus – and in finding ourselves, thinks that we find salvation.

But Demson's focus is on the way in which the unsubstitutable Jesus comes to be ours. Here his point is that Frei provides no link between him and us except the literary form of the Gospel narratives. It is in connection with this that Frei made his great contribution to the study of biblical interpretation in *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, reminding us that living by Scripture means letting ourselves be embraced by this narrative and living in it as the real world, rather than conforming the biblical narrative to what we think is reality.

In contrast, in Barth the link between the Gospels and us is not

merely a matter of narrative but of witness. Barth emphasises Jesus' gathering, upholding, and sending of the apostles. Integral to the story of Jesus' coming to save us is the story of Jesus' forming a people to witness to that saving. So we discover the presence of Jesus Christ not merely by means of Word – Scripture and expository preaching – and sacraments (Frei) but by means of our inclusion in the apostolate (Barth).

Does this description help? Well, as I have indicated, I found the book tough going. Here is a sentence: 'For Barth, the descriptive structure of the gospel story is an exponent of the gathering, upholding, and sending of the apostles; therefore, the gospel story is to be read as a function of this gathering, upholding, and sending'. Professor Demson has learned from Barth how to do theology, but from Frei how to write it. Perhaps this limits the usefulness of this contribution, within the constituency of those interested in Scripture and hermeneutics.

John Goldingay

Fuller Theological Seminary

Truth and the Reality of God: an essay in Natural Theology

Ian Markham

Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998,
x + 145 pp., h/b., £18.95

In this work, Ian Markham attempts to outline a case for, and the contours of, a natural theology. After rejecting the enterprise of two leading philosophers of religion – Swinburne and Phillips – on the ground that they fail to work with a proper view of religion, which is an all-embracing world-view making claims about the whole of reality, Markham turns to the celebrated work of Alasdair MacIntyre.

He agrees with him that we base ourselves intellectually on a rationality constituted within a specific tradition, but he wants to press for a bolder realism in a bolder way than MacIntyre does. Reflection on communication and translation shows how our language is meant to refer to external reality; reflection on logic shows the fit between logic and that external reality. This enables the move that is at the heart of the book. The possibility of truth depends on the reality of God. Either the fit between language, world and logic is arbitrary, which is highly implausible, or it indicates God, which is highly plausible. Here, Markham grafts a version of the Cosmological Argument – fully sensitive to its location within a particular religious tradition – on to the characteristically Augustinian persuasion that the existence of Truth indicates the existence of God. In two concluding chapters, the author invokes Nietzsche as an ally to the extent that he saw the connection between truth and deity and then sketches out some implications for natural theology ethics and inter-religious conversation.

This is a somewhat frustrating book. In his introduction Markham tells us that he has chosen to cast his bread upon the waters rather than prepare a substantial meal that will take ten years to cook: 'Although I am confident that each part of my argument can be defended, I am conscious that I have not always done the defending in depth or detail' (4). Still, we were not prepared for the dismissal of Barth in about six lines or Phillips in about eight nor for such a flurry of unsubstantiated statements in the concluding chapter as, '[t]he Reformers felt ... that redemption was an essential prerequisite for any knowledge of God' (122);

'atheists are rarely inclined to be as intolerant and petty as Christians often are' (123); 'it seems [in relation to the knowledge of truth] clear that God-desires ambiguity and complexity' (126); 'God must have not only allowed but delighted in the wisdom of the Buddha' (128). But what of the core thesis? Again, it is swiftly argued. Supposing one grants the coherence of language, world and logic (and it is for philosophers of logic, not philosophers of religion, still less theologians, to assess some of this), is Markham right in specifying two options at this point: either the fit is arbitrary, or it is made possible by God? Will not Far Eastern philosophical traditions resist either conclusion? I do not know how successfully they may do so, but then this is the frustration – the landscape goes by very quickly. Having said that, Markham's whole tone is certainly not that of the dismissive dogmatist, so that he inculcates in this reader, at least, a preparedness to hear him further on these crucial points. And, theologically, the move to align realism, truth and God as the author does is quite a welcome project on the contemporary scene. If, philosophically, he has not had time to deliver, it is not because it manifestly can't be done; it is, because it is asking a lot in less than 110 pages of text.

Stephen N. Williams

Union Theological College,
Belfast

After our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity

Miroslav Volf

Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998,
xii + 314 pp., \$28/£18.99

This is one of the most stimulating books I have read in recent years. As a genuine example of evangelical systematic theology, it does more than merely arrange biblical teaching in a convenient fashion, or simply summarise and critique what great theologians have said on the theme of the church. Volf takes the further step of showing how the formulation of this doctrine is influenced by the way other key doctrines are conceived. In particular, he is concerned to show how conclusions about the doctrine of the Trinity influence one's ecclesiology. At the same time he demonstrates how ecclesiology is profoundly influenced by perspectives on eschatology and soteriology. This whole exercise exposes the differences between Catholic, Orthodox and Free Church ecclesiologies and provides a significant challenge to all three. Read with an open mind, this book could actually achieve great things in the ecumenical sphere because it offers some radical and helpful perspectives on thorny issues that have divided Christians over the centuries. It is the inaugural publication in a new series called 'Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age', edited by Alan G. Padgett.

Volf, who is Professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, engages first in a critical dialogue with the Catholic and Orthodox ecclesiologies of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and the metropolitan John Zizioulas. Interaction with the arguments of Ratzinger and Zizioulas continues throughout the second part of the book where Volf expounds his own

ecclesiology. His purpose is to counter the tendencies towards individualism in Protestant ecclesiology and to suggest a viable understanding of the church in which person and community are given their proper due. His ultimate goal is to spell out a vision of the church as an image of the triune God.

Exploring first the question of ecclesiality (what makes the church the church), Volf rightly insists that eschatology is the key. The future of the church in God's new creation is the mutual personal indwelling of the triune God and his glorified people (Rev. 21-22). Participation in the communion of the triune God is anticipated in the present through faith in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. Wherever the Spirit of Christ is present 'in its (sic) *ecclesially constitutive* activity, there is the church'. Against the Catholic view that the church is constituted in the Spirit through the sacraments and that the office of a duly consecrated bishop is essential for the ecclesiality of the local church to be established, Volf explores certain NT perspectives, with particular focus on the implications of Matthew 18:20. He comes to the interesting conclusion that 'public confession of faith in Christ through the pluriform speaking of the word is the *central constitutive mark of the church*'. Sacraments can be an indispensable condition of ecclesiality only if they are a form of the confession of faith and an expression of faith. Ordained office is desirable but not necessary for ecclesiality.

The gathered congregation is the primary expression of church and denominations can only be called 'church' in a secondary, rather than a strictly theological sense. However, 'the same presence of Christ through the Spirit

that makes each local church "independent" of the other churches simultaneously connects them with one another'. Indeed the 'openness' of every church toward all other churches is 'an indispensable condition of ecclesiality'. This is a challenging perspective that needs a better grounding in Scripture and further exploration of its practical implications.

Developing the link between soteriology and ecclesiology, Volf argues that there is no pure, ecclesially unmediated faith. Moreover, 'it is only through life in the congregation in whose confession I participate that I discover the meaning of the confession of faith'. Nevertheless, this ecclesial activity of mediation is meaningful only if it leads one to entrust one's life to God in faith. Faith does not require a priestly office but it is mediated through the priesthood of all believers. Yet Volf cannot escape the need for a priestly office of baptising and celebrating the eucharist. A helpful reflection on personhood in the ecclesial community forms a bridge to the chapter on Trinity and church.

Volf rightly highlights the limits of the correspondence between the trinitarian conception of God and ecclesial communion. This is important in an era when glib analogies are too often easily drawn. The correspondence is grounded in baptism in the name of the Trinity. 'Because churches, in the power of the Holy Spirit, already form a communion with the triune God, ecclesial correspondence to the Trinity can become an object of hope and thus also a task for human beings'. However, although inter-ecclesial correspondence to the Trinity is important, 'it can nonetheless be conceived only in analogy to the pivotal intra-ecclesial correspondence

to the Trinity'. Thus, Volf continues to maintain the primacy of the local church as the anticipation on earth of the heavenly or eschatological communion with God in the new creation. At the same time, he is concerned to press the implications for communion between churches, challenging the exclusivity of Catholic, Orthodox and Free Church alike. The work finishes with chapters on structures of the church and the catholicity of the church, flowing out from the writer's arguments about Trinity and church.

This is a complex book that will repay careful study. It is not an exhaustive treatment of the subject: there are significant gaps in the writer's treatment of biblical material (e.g. perspectives from the OT and the Pastoral Epistles). Volf's egalitarianism leaves him in some difficulty with regard to hierarchy and subordination in Trinity and Church and there are topics that are barely touched upon. But there is a breadth and logic to his approach that should provoke fruitful discussion and a rethinking of entrenched positions by Christians of every persuasion.

David Peterson

Oak Hill Theological College,
London

The Cosmos and the Creator: An Introduction to the Theology of Creation

David A. S. Fergusson
London: SPCK, 1998,
115 pp., £9.99.

The book is a reworking of Professor Fergusson's Cunningham Lectures delivered at the University of Edinburgh in 1996. The four lectures have been crafted into four chapters: creation in the Bible, in cosmology, in evolution, and as related to evil and the end of life.

In the first chapter Fergusson explores the idea that humans are created in

God's image and concludes that the phrase in Genesis describes not human nature but our role as God's agents in the exercise of dominion over nature; this dominion being one of stewardship, not domination. We are also provided with some biblical resources which suggest that we should guard against an anthropocentric picture of the universe. Animals have their own dignity and purpose in the overall harmony of creation.

The next chapter, which focuses on cosmology, begins by arguing that the doctrine of creation out of nothing is not directly derivable from Scripture. Nevertheless, we are told, the development of this tenet is consonant with the biblical picture of a deity who freely creates a wholly contingent universe. Fergusson explicitly distances himself from Process theism and the sort of emanationalism found in Moltmann. He goes on to provide a brief overview of recent discussions of the so-called Cosmological Proof for God's existence and gives the arguments lukewarm approval. The chapter concludes with a theological discussion of the Big Bang theory with especial reference to the recent non-theist interpretations of Stephen Hawking.

Chapter three looks at Evolution in the context of its Creationist detractors. Fergusson feels that the combined evidence from the fields of cosmology, geology, palaeontology, and biology provides overwhelming support for the evolutionary hypothesis. However, he disagrees with Richard Dawkins that a naturalistic explanation will suffice. Divine action is interpreted as the interplay of God with an intrinsically creative universe. Finally the chapter revisits the animal kingdom and provides a fascinating summary of the changing attitude to animals throughout Church history as well as a stimulating ethical discussion of their status.

Chapter four contains a discussion of the various options in explaining evil and suffering, and recommends an attitude not of disinterested enquiry but protest and struggle whilst holding firm to eschatological hope. A correct biblical understanding of this hope, according to Fergusson, involves recreation not evolutionary extension as postulated by exotic theorists like Frank Tipler.

Although only an introduction and summary, this short book explores an area of current interest due to the pressing questions raised by spokespersons from lobbies as varied as Green Ecologists, Feminists and New Age thinkers. I valued, in particular, the thought-provoking discussion on the role and value of animal life and the healthy anti-patriarchal insight that, 'God's action is one in which the creation is redeemed from within rather than over-ruled from without' (85). Fergusson then quotes with approval Simone Weil's memorable phrase, 'Creation is abdication' in that creation involved a kenotic act whereby God withdrew his power so as to enable the cosmos to exercise a certain creative autonomy. I warmly recommend this volume.

Rob Cook

Redcliffe College, Gloucester

Science and Theology: An Introduction

John Polkinghorne

London: SPCK/Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998,
viii + 144 pp., £10.99

Duet or Duel? Theology and Science in a Postmodern World

J. Wentzel van Huyssteen

London: SCM Press, 1988,
xviii + 182 pp., £12.95

Science, Life and Christian Belief: A survey and assessment

Malcolm A. Jeeves and R. J. Berry

Leicester: Apollos, 1998,
305 pp., £16.99

Academic studies in 'science and theology' are now well established, and in recent years many courses have been inaugurated in universities and colleges. John Polkinghorne is a well-known, major contributor to this challenging discipline. The purpose of *Science and Theology* is to provide an introductory textbook which 'attempts the humble but useful task of surveying the whole intellectual scene in an even-handed manner, recording as clearly as possible the variety of issues under discussion, explaining the possible treatments they can receive, and surveying the opinions of those writers who have made significant contributions to the field' (1).

Polkinghorne begins with general considerations and progresses 'in a spiral fashion' to more specific questions. The topics covered are: the nature of science; the nature of theology; a brief account of particularly relevant aspects of the scientific picture of the world (quantum theory, cosmology, chaos and complexity theory, time); the nature of the human

person; the nature of God as understood in 'the broad Western tradition'; the nature of divine action in the orderly universe described by science; subjects central to Christian belief (revelation, Christology, the Trinity, eschatology); a simplified survey of 'the ecumenical scene', with science posited as 'a creative meeting point for mutual encounter'; and some comments on ethical issues which arise from scientific activity. The presentation of these wide-ranging and complex issues flows logically and is, in general, admirably clear and concise.

As a 'scientist-theologian', Polkinghorne appreciates a strategy of 'bottom-up thinking', 'seeking to move from evidence to understanding in the quest for motivated belief' (2, cf. 68 (the nature of God), 109 (Christology), 126-127 (ecumenical debate)). For Polkinghorne, theology and science each have a due autonomy which the other must respect, but since 'knowledge is one and created reality is one', in general there must be 'consonance' between them. However, while science may not place constraints on Christology, 'In considering the doctrine of creation ... theology must respect what science has to say about the evolving processes of the universe' (117-118). Polkinghorne accepts the mainstream cosmological and biological evolutionary scenarios, and these inevitably exert significant control over his presentation of issues and responses to them.

As with Polkinghorne's previous books, evangelical readers will find this survey to be a frustrating mixture of orthodox and liberalising emphases and elements, needing careful sifting.

Polkinghorne gives postmodernity a fleeting mention (12, 'sociologists of knowledge'): for Wentzel van

Huyssteen, Professor of Theology and Science at Princeton Theological Seminary, it is the central issue in *Duet or Duel?* Van Huyssteen's basic thesis is that 'a constructive appropriation of some of the epistemological issues raised by the postmodern challenge to religion and science will make it possible, first, to collapse rigid, modernist disciplinary distinctions into a more comprehensively interdisciplinary space, where, secondly, traditional epistemic boundaries and disciplinary distinctions are blurred precisely because the same kind of interpretative procedures are at work in all our various reasoning strategies, and, thirdly, through a creative fusion of hermeneutics and epistemology, reasoning strategies as distinctive and different as theology and the various social and natural sciences may be revealed to share the rich resources of human rationality' (31).

After a useful introduction to 'the postmodern challenge' (1-39), van Huyssteen's strategy is to argue that 'evolutionary epistemology, rightly understood, will reveal the biological roots of all human rationality and should therefore precisely lead to an interdisciplinary account of all our epistemic activities' (32). This strategy is pursued through interaction with cosmologists Stephen Hawking and Paul Davies; examination of Charles Darwin, with a section on the response to him by Charles Hodge (94-104); critical engagement with Richard Dawkins; drawing on the response to Dawkins, Hawking, Peter Atkins et. al. by Keith Ward; and finally, utilization of the evolutionary epistemology developed by Franz Wuketits.

For van Huyssteen, 'the theory of evolution by natural selection has

for ever changed our perceptions of the origins of life, of the ongoing development of life processes, of various and complex cultures, of the way we perceive reality, and of the way we now know our concrete embeddedness in this reality' (131). His response to this incredible claim is essentially to expound a post-foundationalist, theistic evolutionary epistemology, within which he finds the required 'interdisciplinary space' for the complementary duet between science and theology. The references to 'Christian theology' are vague, and much of the closing discussion is cast in generalities. The (occasionally exact) repetition of sentences and paragraphs throughout the book becomes somewhat tiresome.

Science, Life and Christian Belief by distinguished Science Professors Jeeves and Berry, is a revised version of Jeeves' *The Scientific Enterprise and Christian Faith* (1969). It offers a comprehensive survey of the background, framework of understanding and current state of the sciences and their interaction with the Bible and Christian belief. The subjects covered are: Hebrew-Christian and Greek influences on the rise of modern science; God, creation and the laws of nature; the nature of the scientific enterprise; explanations, models, images and reality in science and religion; God and the physical universe; creation and evolution; biblical portraits of human nature; genetics and reproduction; brain, mind and behaviour; psychology; ecology and environmental issues; the implications of science. The discussion is detailed, with substantial endnotes. Each subject requires a searching review in its own right.

By their own admission, Jeeves and Berry write as working research scientists rather than

theologians, philosophers or historians of science (11). In their guide to 'science and faith' (cf. 12, 26, 243), they barely acknowledge what they call 'the 'postmodernity' debate, with its assumptions that all beliefs are relative' (52, cf. 61). They 'fully accept the revelation of God in his written and living Word; the problem in every generation is to interpret this revelation in a consistent way. This has sent us back repeatedly to check to the best of our understanding what the Bible *actually* says, as distinct from how it has been *conventionally interpreted*' (12, their italics). So, the Bible is permitted to set its own agenda (137) – but our interpretation of the Bible may change in the light of scientific, or 'secular', knowledge (243–45, 251–52). All this sets hermeneutical alarm bells ringing.

In places, exegesis is compromised: e.g. the handling of Romans and Genesis to assert that only spiritual death came to humanity through Adam's fall (110–13, 235) – a revival of a Pelagian doctrine for consonance with confident acceptance of biological macro-evolution (where physical death is established as part of the 'natural order'). Indeed, in the whole contentious area of Genesis, creation and evolution, the discussion proceeds essentially by assertion of the authors' preferred position supported by selective quotation: there is little acknowledgement of, or interaction with, scientific critiques of evolutionary theories and exegetical or doctrinal critiques of theistic syntheses (108–109, 117–20, 128–33).

A significant claim with regard to 'the core of the book' is 'the need to appreciate the complementarity of scientific (or causal) and formal explanations, which may involve divine activity. The latter can be approached only by faith'

(131, cf. 12, 80–82, 115, 154, 168–69, 216–17, 244, 249). So, for these authors, 'An understanding and acceptance of modern science does not – and cannot – prove anything about the existence and activity of God' (248).

Overall, then, Jeeves and Berry are right in so much of what they affirm, but can be profoundly wrong in what they deny. Their book represents something of an end-of-century manifesto, and, like its predecessor, will no doubt become a standard text. Nevertheless, for all its ostensibly evangelical atmosphere, it should be used with discernment, and different readers will probably find different sections particularly valuable – or particularly unconvincing.

Philip Duce

Independent Theological Academy, Wolverhampton

Animals on the Agenda

Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto (ed.)
London: SCM Press, 1998,
xx + 297 pp., £15.00

Whenever theologians detect a cultural bandwagon rolling by, it is difficult to resist the two equally dangerous responses of jumping on for the ride, or turning our backs. Historically the church, especially evangelicalism, has often done the latter; finally turning around to find that society has almost disappeared over the horizon. Andrew Linzey has clearly decided that Christians need to decisively 'climb aboard' the animal welfare movement, which, in its British form, resembles not so much a bandwagon as a juggernaut. His many books attempt to establish the single point that most of historic Christianity has shown scant concern for animals but that the Bible itself has a much more positive attitude towards the

creation in general and animals in particular. Andrew Linzey demonstrates his clear agenda by entitling his introductory chapter *Is Christianity Irredeemably Speciesist?* The prior labelling of 'mainstream Christianity' as 'speciesist' and his assumption that the church needs 'redemption' from this view leaves us in no doubt about the purpose of the book.

Animals on the Agenda began life as a research project of the Centre for the Study of Theology in the University of Essex. It comprises twenty short papers divided into four parts: 'Understanding Scriptural Perspectives', 'Wrestling with the Tradition', 'Disputed Questions' and 'Obligations to Animals'.

Part one deals with biblical issues. Generally the articles are disappointing; seeking to understand both the Old and New Testaments in terms of conflicting traditions with no serious attempt at a unifying biblical theology of creation. Richard Bauckham's analysis of the evidence in the gospels is a welcome exception to this. Bauckham argues that at least some first century Jews were concerned for the ethical treatment of animals and that Jesus assumes that such compassion was good. He shows how Jesus uses *rabbitic qal wa-homer* argumentation to portray God as both intimately concerned for animals, but even more concerned for humans. Thus Jesus himself seems to steer between the animal liberationist view, which ascribes equal rights to animals and the view of many Christian theologians of the past, who saw animals as solely created for the utility of mankind.

The second section comprises four articles dealing with Christian tradition. Some aspects of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and modern Roman Catholicism

thought are each examined. The articles are by no means comprehensive either in their individual topics or in their overall coverage, though they do serve to bring a little historical perspective.

The third section of the book deals with theological and philosophical issues, whilst the final section comprises some stimulating and informative essays on the contemporary situation from evangelical, Anglican and Roman Catholic perspectives. It is in the third section that the diversity of presuppositional frameworks becomes clearest. Stephen Clark makes a strong case for re-establishing a classical theistic worldview as the only truly viable way forward. Several other contributors, on the contrary, advocate a major revision of our whole view of God towards the pantheism of process theology. Here we come to, perhaps, the major limitation of this work. It is not a debate since there is no interaction between contributors, nor does it set out to make a single coherent case. The common denominator between contributors is simply that they function broadly within the Christian tradition and they have a concern for animal welfare. The different essays in fact serve to illustrate the massive divergence of worldview between those who share a common instinctive compassion for the animal kingdom. Perhaps in order to give some coherence to the book, each section has an introductory essay from Andrew Linzey. However this reviewer is not convinced that Linzey always gives a fair summary of the articles and there is no doubt that his agenda is to challenge all statements which in any way nuance the case for animal welfare.

Overall the book deals with a wide range of issues, though in a patchy and sometimes contradictory way.

In many ways it highlights the fact that, both within the Christian world and beyond it, the animal rights movement is a campaign in search of a worldview. The patchiness of this book means it will not serve as an introductory primer but for those already wrestling with the issues there is much food for thought.

Peter Comont

Magdalen Road Evangelical Church, Oxford

Christian Ethics – An Introduction

Bernard Hoose (ed.)

London: Cassell, 1998,
xii + 337 pp., £20

First, a note of caution: the back cover points out that, '(t)his book is about the state of *moral theology* today'. Whilst the editor notes, in his introduction, that stereotypes of Protestant and Roman Catholic approaches to Christian ethics no longer hold as once they did, the field of 'moral theology', so designated, is self-consciously the field of Roman Catholic moral discourse, and hence the persuasion of most, though not all, of the authors we find in this collection. The collection itself is divided into two parts; the first dealing with the 'fundamental themes' of moral theology, the second gathering contributions to applied ethics, itself sub-divided into sections on social ethics, interpersonal and sexual ethics, and medical ethics.

Readers of this review may well turn first to the opening chapter handling the Bible and Christian ethics. Tom Deidun's essay will leave many innocent enquirers feeling fairly battered; the 'scientific naivety' of 'Biblical theology' is exposed in the second paragraph. Nevertheless, there is good reason to persevere, because Deidun does raise important

hermeneutical questions which the evangelical student will have to face squarely.

There is variation in length of the essays presented, but, more importantly, in substance. In many ways this is inevitable, but it does mean that the collection as a whole is in danger of falling between two stools, sometimes a little too basic for the initiated wanting a grasp of current debate, or a little complex for the novice. The essays on Natural Law, the Human Person, Virtue ethics and Feminist ethics are all clear and concise, basic introductions to the topics. For other subjects some knowledge of philosophical theology or metaphysics is probably helpful to overcome language barriers, for example, in an otherwise good introduction to the theory of the fundamental option.

By way of highlights in the second section of the book, Karen Lebacqz provides an excellent contribution on the subject of 'Justice', with pithy descriptions of the liberal and communitarian positions that dominate current secular thought, moving to the distinctive Christian tradition where 'justice is primarily determined by God. Justice has to do with fulfilling the demands of relationship. Human justice is intended to reflect divine justice and is not created solely by the human community.'

The debate over 'Morality and Law' is a perennially important one and Patrick Hannon's essay is well grounded in the historical debate on this issue in the UK.

Also enjoyable is the editor's own essay on the subject of 'Truth and Lies', a clear challenge to the incoherent preconceptions we often hold on this issue and the special pleading we then find ourselves engaged in. The essay is balanced with pastoral wisdom,

'we would do well to remind ourselves of the damage that can be done to a person who lies too easily, as, perhaps, most of us do. Truthfulness is ... a habit or virtue that we need to acquire and nourish.'

An essay that really should be included but is not is one on 'Proportionalism', which is a big player in contemporary moral theology and yet merits little more than a paragraph in Curran's essay on 'Absolute moral norms'.

Finally, the scope of the medical ethics section is to be commended for encompassing a provocative consideration of organ transplantation, a subject, perhaps, many of us take for granted. This said, the last piece on 'Hypnosis and general anaesthesia' is a bizarre inclusion, which seems almost to have slipped in from between the covers of an altogether different book, failing to connect with the high level of theological and moral reflection displayed in preceding chapters.

Andy Draycott
Canterbury

Ethics and the Old Testament

John Barton
London: SCM Press, 1998,
xii + 100 pp., £7.95

The five chapters of this slim book began life as lectures to a non-specialist audience and reach print without needing to display their learning in footnotes. They are a model of lucid writing that leads readers through the material without patronising them. Overall, Barton, Professor of Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford, offers us good reasons for reading and reflecting on the OT as we ponder what it means to be human. There is a cogency to Barton because he

anticipates the difficulties that the culturally embedded quality of the OT generates, and the plurality of voices and perspectives that emerge within the spectrum of its canonical writings. Those who adhere to the King James version, to a theonomist or reconstructionist attachment to death penalties, or to a Barthian emphasis on divine command and declaration will not find Barton as enjoyable a read as did the reviewer.

In clearing the ground in the first chapter on 'The Vitality of Old Testament Ethics', Barton uses phrases like 'categories of thought which are alien to modern thinking' and 'internal inconsistencies'. He admits as obvious the patriarchal colouring, even in the Ten Commandments which address 'the free adult male Israelite'. These are noted as givens which do not detain Barton for long because he is more impressed by 'a unified vision of how to live well' that is conveyed 'through the particular and the specific', rather than by treatise. Like Martha Nussbaum's enthusiasm for Aristotle's particularity and practical insight, Barton champions the rootedness and specificity of Israel's ethics.

In chapter 2, on 'Ethics and Story', Barton uses the Nathan, David and Bathsheba story to illustrate the way the OT involves the reader, or rather the way the story works on us 'to illuminate the darker reaches of our own corrupt nature'. He finds far more in the story to reflect on than the breaking of specific commandments. A simplified moralistic reading diminishes OT narratives. Their story form demands more of us than identifying the goodies and the baddies, or the correlation with laws in the Pentateuch.

The 'Three Ethical Issues' of chapter 3 turn around ecology,

sexual morality and property and are chosen for their contemporary relevance. Barton grapples rather well with charges against the OT that it is philistine, fierce and materialist.

The fourth chapter offers a delightfully simplified overview of the Protestant and Catholic starting points in 'Divine Commands or Natural Law' as the basis of ethics, and makes a case for the pervasive observation and reflection approach in the OT that has often been tied too tightly to Wisdom literature.

The final chapter 'Why Should We be Moral?' examines motivation by taking three time axes attached to motivation clauses. Promise holds out a future reward. Remembering God's past actions induces gratitude. That leaves the present, where the OT holds out integrity as its own reward.

This book is reader-friendly. For theological students doing OT modules, it is worth reading early on. It is not a substitute for more extensive, weightier exegetical or hermeneutical treatments such as Chris Wright's *Walking in the Ways of the Lord* (Apollos, 1995) but it is not meant to be. It will probably provoke – in my view, helpfully. It should also help with communicating the OT to non-specialists.

Deryck Sheriffs

London Bible College

Fertility and Faith: The Ethics of Human Fertilisation.

Brendan McCarthy
Leicester: IVP, 1997,
288 pp., £12.99

The avowed aim of the book is to concentrate on ethical and theological complications of the debate surrounding the Warnock

Report from a Christian perspective. The focus is on the status of the human embryo and the nature of marriage and family life, in particular the relationship between the unitive and procreative aspects of sexual union. Written by a pastor of a community church in Northern Ireland, there is a blend of personal experience and perspective, through experience of two children dying at birth and investigation of fertility treatment, and an attempt to propound or work towards a convincing foundation for a Christian approach.

The first five chapters offer a series of overviews of Warnock's agenda, the nature of morality and its relationship with legislation, the biblical approach and then a theological approach to the status of the human embryo, followed by a discussion of sexual ethics. The next eight chapters offer a way into the key topics and issues in fertility including artificial insemination by husband, by donor, egg and embryo donation, in vitro fertilisation (IVF), surrogacy, embryo research, the storage of gametes and embryos and abortion. These chapters are divided into two main sections with a survey of the Warnock position and Christian submissions both favourable and unfavourable, followed by analysis offering the author's perspective on what are regarded as the crucial elements and responses.

The last chapter offers a series of observations by way of conclusion. This is critical of Warnock both in terms of the inadequacy of a basis for morality within the report and a lack of clarity in the connection between law and morality. At the same time, there is equal criticism of the Christian contributions to the debate in terms of the tactical focus, the lack of agreement and disparity of Christian submissions

this allowed a confused and confusing message to be given both to society and to government. In particular the author argues that when it comes to the status of the human embryo a simple appeal to Scripture is inadequate, appeal to tradition will not lead to a unified Christian approach, and that both metaphysics and science fail to address the issue properly. The book argues for a dynamic understanding of personhood and the embryo as well as suggesting that the complication of issues of sexual ethics must and do revolve around a few essential principles about the status of embryo and children, responsible parenthood, the link between the unitive and procreative aspects of sex, and making genetic parenthood the basis of legal parenthood.

The author requires that Christians will not embrace his views wholeheartedly, but offers a means of greater understanding of the issues for Christians, thus enabling them to engage better in debate with others. Many will wish to debate the use of Scripture yet the book does offer an interesting analysis and survey of Warnock. It might have been more effective if written earlier in the ongoing debate in and with the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority. The scope of the book is too vast to do justice to the detail of each issue and approach and to the inter-connections between them. Many will be unhappy with the conclusions about surrogacy, which seems more concerned with the autonomy of individuals than the welfare of the child.

E.D. Cook

Whitefield Institute

Interpreting Death: Christian Theology and Pastoral Practice

Peter C. Jupp and Tony Rogers, (eds)
 Cassell: London, 1997,
 218 pp., £14.99

Interpreting Death is concerned with the changing culture and theology of death and the funeral in Britain. The collection of essays arose out of the Churches' Group on Funeral Services at Cemeteries and Crematoria and is written from an ecumenical Christian perspective. It is intended for professionals concerned with Christian funerals and ministry to the dying and bereaved and other people wanting to understand the implications of these changing attitudes and practice within contemporary society.

The editors accurately and usefully note that death, which has become institutionalised and no longer part of our common experience, is often a taboo subject in contemporary society. In the last fifty years in Britain, burials have been increasingly replaced by cremations and the location of the funeral service is shifting from a church to a crematorium chapel. The authors argue that these shifts are changing the nature of funerals, their liturgy and the theology of death.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one investigates the changing patterns and context of funerals in Britain and the impact of these changes on funeral ministry. These chapters explore Christian beliefs about death, the after life and human mortality. The second half of this section explicitly discusses a theology of the funeral and disposal of bodies. The funeral acknowledges mortality and death, while pointing to the hope that Christ's death and resurrection provide.

Section two is more practical and usefully focuses on issues of bereavement and faith. These chapters highlight the significant role of funerals for the bereaved. The role of belief within bereavement, the impact of death and loss on faith, the stages of grief and potential role of clergy are also discussed. One chapter addresses the existence of belief in life after death in contemporary society. The section concludes with a discussion of three key contemporary issues which face all those involved with death, bereavement and funerals: non-standard funerals, peri-natal death and HIV and AIDS.

Section three specifically focuses on the liturgy of the funeral from Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Churches' perspectives, exploring some potential core elements of funeral liturgy and the current trend toward adapting traditional services to be more personal. It also examines some differences and implications of committal in the crematorium rather than burial.

This collection of essays provides a useful overview of issues surrounding death. It highlights a significant change and shift in funeral services, in practice and liturgy, from burial to cremation. The editors do not stop there and helpfully explore the implications of this shift for individuals and wider society. They also recognise the danger that the role of the Christian church and its clergy are becoming more removed from wider society at this critical point in life.

Although this book offers a helpful introduction, many different ideas are presented within it. This may leave some readers with the impression that the sections and themes are not given enough in-depth analysis. Furthermore, the

mixture of theoretical and practical material may be unsatisfactory to some readers. Yet, this mixture provides a necessary balance when looking at issues of death and theology, their importance and impact on people's lives. To be effective, theory and practice should inform one another.

The ecumenical approach and spectrum of authorship may not appeal to all Christian readers, but can be very helpful when approaching the difficult issues surrounding death and funerals. Overall, the editors are clear about the aims and purposes of the volume and this book can serve as a useful resource and starting point for those involved with or interested in this crucial area.

Katherine Wasson
Middlesex Hospital

Healing through the Centuries: Models for Understanding

Ronald A.N. Kydd
Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998,
xxi + 237 pp., £9.99/\$14.95.

Divine healing is defined by Kydd as the 'restoration of health through the direct intervention of God' (xv), and is exemplified in the healing ministry of Jesus. His 'priorities, concerns and approaches should provide the model to which the ministry of the church should be compared' (xvi). Healing, for Jesus, had both a narrow and a wide focus: the former, said to be Jesus' main concern, involved the healing of individuals, the latter the healing of situations and indeed of the world itself. Kydd suggests that historically the church has mainly been concerned with the narrow, the sheer breadth of Christ's ministry overwhelming his followers and leaving them with practices only partially reflecting his own.

Healing through the centuries is examined with a two-fold emphasis: the belief that the ideal healing model of Jesus (outlined in ch. 1) is sufficiently boundless to have engendered a number of models and a constant eye to the question of verification. Three criteria suggested by Latourelle are cited approvingly: there should be (1) solid historical proof of (2) unusual events, beyond medicinal science to explain, in (3) a setting of prayer and holiness.

Six different models of healing are offered which, it is claimed, comprehensively represent the historical practices, i.e. the narrow focus, of the orthodox Church. Each is explained by a - more or less - critical discussion of a number of its practitioners, but Kydd notes that they are not exclusive, often overlapping in practice. The models are Confrontational (Early Church; J.C. Blumhardt; J. Wimber), Intercessory (Saints on High; Brother Andre; Mary of Mejugorje), Reliquarial (Bones, St Medard), Incubational (Mannedorf; Morija), Revelational (William Branham; Kathryn Kuhlman), and Soteriological (Oral Roberts). All are acceptable because each has resulted in verifiable healings and can find justification in the ministry of Jesus. Kydd argues that divine healing has not only taken place throughout history, but is also taking place today. But since divine healing occurs in numerous settings he rejects the concept of a 'stereotypical' healer and further argues that an ability to heal is no sign of doctrinal orthodoxy. Ultimately, he concludes that healing is a mystery rooted in the grace of God.

The culmination of over thirty years of personal wrestling with divine healing by a Pentecostal scholar, this is a remarkable book. Rarely does one find a sensitive

appreciation of healing traditions as far apart as the veneration of relics and the meetings of Kathryn Kuhlman. The author has also travelled extensively in connection with those he describes, providing an immediacy which alone makes the book required reading.

But many critical questions go unanswered. How exactly do the models relate to the ideal model of Jesus? Is their partiality simply inevitable, the result of human frailty? And although Kydd's historical study necessarily reflects the narrow, what is the significance of the wider aspects of healing in Jesus's ministry for Christians? Equally the relationships between the models are not developed in terms of their own polemic. Is it satisfactory to simply suggest, as Kydd does, that attitudes to reliquial healing will be decided by personal theology when he himself is convinced of their efficacy? Healing may be no sign of doctrinal correctness but at what point does doctrinal incorrectness call into question the orthodoxy of the healer and the source of the healing? Are Branham's well-known heterodox teachings totally irrelevant here?

In conclusion, Kydd has succeeded in gathering significant historical information on the models he outlines, but the task of processing the material into a suitable form for critical Christian reflection remains.

John Lyons
Sheffield

Explorations in Theology and Film: Movies and Meaning

Clive Marsh & Gaye Ortiz (eds)
Oxford: Blackwell, 1997,
x + 286 pp., £13.99

The practice of overlapping two distinct disciplines, film studies and theology, has been gaining acceptance and followers for a number of decades now. As interdisciplinary studies grow and develop, this is a field rich in material for exploration. This volume is an excellent introduction to both the theory and the practice of looking at films through theology (and vice versa).

The contributors come from a range of backgrounds, both theologically and professionally: academics in the fields of film studies and theology are included, as are those involved in parish ministry and evangelism, both British and American. In this fact alone the book demonstrates the widespread appeal and interest which the subject generates. Evangelists use film in their engagement with society, and lecturers develop hugely popular courses in film and theology.

The work is divided into three sections. The heart consists of 13 papers examining particular films or film-makers, including amongst others *Terminator* and *Terminator 2*, *The Piano*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Shane*, *Awakenings*, *Dead Poets Society* and the films of Scorsese. The choice of films is largely popular, representing one of the issues concerning the 'feel-good' factor of mainline Hollywood cinema. Some of the essays are more successful than others. Rhoads and Roberts' examination of domination and mutuality in *The Piano* and the Gospel of Mark is fascinating, illustrating recent readings of the Gospel which have

become influential. The analysis of the *Terminator* films is interesting yet predictable, and the contrasting of two different interpretations of *Dead Poets Society* is useful in illustrating the subjectiveness with which this discipline struggles. Less convincing is the examination of the spirituality of *Shirley Valentine*, although this still forces the reader to re-examine their interpretation of the film, as most of the essays also succeed in doing. Telford's analysis of the portrayal of Christ in the movies is of great interest to any theologian, reflecting something of Schweitzer's analysis of the *Quest* and its progression (135), especially as Telford informs the reader that Verhoeven (director of *Robocop* and *Showgirls*) is proposing a film based on the work of the Jesus Seminar.

The top and tail of the book are also extremely informative. Part One includes three essays which splice the two disciplines of film studies and theology together, offering a basis for the rest of the work. Part Three includes two very important essays. The first, by David Jasper, responds with criticism to some (perhaps all) of the essays in the main body of the book, and raises some very important questions concerning interpretation and analysis. The universality of themes of salvation, redemption, sin, guilt, messiah, etc., may have more to do with the universality of such biblical themes within humanity, rather than any great theological intentions of directors (see his comments on the interpretation of Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* by Malone, 239). The concluding essay begins to look at the implications of postmodernism for the interplay of these two disciplines, and is a useful starter on the issue.

All in all, Marsh and Ortiz have provided an entertaining,

informative and reliable guide to the interplay between theology and film.

Tony Gray
Leicester

Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: drawn principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology

Richard A. Müller
Grand Rapids: Baker/Carlisle: Paternoster, 1985,
340 pp., £14.99

This re-launch of a decade-old book comes at a time when, although our Protestant forebears are not positively fashionable, there is at least a trend towards appreciating their skill. Where their theology seems complex it may often be due to their conviction that they had to give an answer to the intricacies of the non-Reformation positions, just as we might today, be encouraged by the sight of our theologians engaging with contemporary thought. Much of it is therefore the Protestant version of pre-Reformation scholasticism.

Just who were these people? A list of authors is given from whom the contents of the word-list have been drawn. There seems an unfortunate mixing-together of primary and secondary sources on pages 14-15, but those who are clearly the former include Johannes Altenstaig and his theological lexicon and 'vocabulary' (which, surely, must be 1617, not 1517), J. W. Baier, J. Gerhard, A. Polanus, Turretin. H. Heppé's Reformed *Dogmatics*, that compendium of so much Reformed writing of the early modern period, also appears to be a major source of supply for this 'dictionary'.

The majority of entries in the alphabetical sequence are given one-line explanations, often just a translation of the Latin (far less

Greek, understandably). There are times when this verges on the humorous. Do we really need the entry: *peccata enormia*: 'unusually great sins'? Also, one wonders at the usefulness of introducing entries such as *Trinitas* or *homo-* and *homoto-ousios*, given that these strictly belong to the Greek patristic era, and can be more usefully and accurately explored in their range of usage in the pages of Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Furthermore, the entry on *enhypostasis* seems a bit misleading. At times the whole thing seems a bit slanted in favour of the Calvinists, such as the idea that the *extra calvinisticum* (that the Word remained in heaven in his fullness, even while he shared human existence and accommodated its limitations), can be traced back to the early church as *the* orthodox belief. Moreover, Lutherans and Arminians are not always clearly distinguished, but perhaps that is deliberate.

But these are minor quibbles. Particularly worthwhile entries are found on Christology (*communicatio idiomatum, forma Dei/servi*), soteriology (*tustitia, mediator, meritum de congruo, decretum*), and anthropology (*Homo, imago dei, persons*) which was a particularly clear and helpful account of the development from the Cappadocians through Boethius to Aquinas and on through the Reformers. In this connection, we should observe that it is not only Protestant scholasticism, but scholasticism as a whole to which we are introduced. Some entries are superb, notably that on *praescientia, persona* and *voluntas*. The word-book method sometimes fails to work in that there are gaps through which knowledge slips, e.g. no telling statement of nominalism, despite its appearance in entries such as *universalia*, or a real treatment of voluntarism,

despite entries on *voluntas Dei*. Therefore a list of supplementary reading would have been valuable. Also, summaries of, say Scotus's position on *voluntas* or Calvin on *accomodatio*, while admirable in their clarity, are perforce too brief.

It is unlikely that one would consult this as a reference book. Rather, its use may be in exposing one's own ignorance as one flicks through it (ignorance, not just of the terminology, but also of the conceptuality) and thereby filling some holes of understanding. Some introduction like this is vital for getting acquainted with the roots of what has been hitherto the main bough of Protestantism, or even for reading Barth intelligently. But how many people today want to do either?

Mark Elliott
Nottingham

The Concept of Equity in Calvin's Ethics

Guenther H. Haas
Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997,
205 pp., £19.99

Calvin's works are such a vast ocean that one is always grateful for clear guides that chart its reaches and trace its currents. The present work, which began life as a Toronto dissertation, lays out, in a mode more expository than analytical, when and how Calvin speaks of 'equity' in ethical contexts. The author's conclusion is that this concept is 'the theme of central importance in Calvin's social ethic, in a similar way that union with Christ lies at the heart of his theology', but I doubt if the book justifies the definite article in preference to the indefinite. This is partly because the edges of the concept remain somewhat fuzzy: is it to be discerned whenever Calvin uses the equivalent Latin or French noun (*aequitas, équité*), and only then, or in all uses of

cognate forms also (e.g. the adjective *aequus*), or also in other vocabulary, such as the *ius/iustitia* family?

A survey of earlier discussions of the concept, from Aristotle to Aquinas, helpfully distinguishes four main understandings of equity: 1. The correction of positive law, especially when its generality is inadequate (Aristotle); 2. An interpretive principle of law in effecting justice (Roman, Stoics); 3. Natural law or right (the same, and Augustine); 4. Mitigation of law out of love or mercy (Augustine and Justinian). Haas finds all but the first in Calvin's expositions of scriptural law, which illustrates the versatility of the concept in the Reformer's works. Furthermore, I do not think Haas gives adequate weight to Calvin's appeal to equity, in the third sense, to criticise some provisions of Pentateuchal legislation. He is aware of these instances, but seems reluctant to take their full measure, perhaps partly because they have implications for Calvin's view of Scripture and show that the content of his notion of equity is, at least in part, non-biblically determined.

Less satisfactory is Haas' survey of four Reformers 'with whose teaching Calvin was familiar, and who had some influence of Calvin's thought' – Zwingli, Bucer, Luther and Melancthon. This is too vague, and actual dependence is not investigated, although Haas is surely right in general to look to classical-humanist inspiration. But a research project remains to be tackled on Calvin's sources.

The central expository chapters are well organised and lucidly written, require no knowledge of original languages and focus heavily on biblical law. Brief looks at equity in state and in church and in connection with usury round off the book. Its strength lies in its

balanced and careful systematic (no questions about development in Calvin's thought) presentation of Calvin's teaching. It is sympathetic without being uncritical. Haas detects incoherence in Calvin's invoking 'two types of equity' to vindicate the twin decrees of election and reprobation. But what predominantly emerges here is Calvin's versatility in deploying 'equity' to a variety of integrating, harmonising and sublimating ends in interpreting legal and ethical parts of Scripture.

The book is likely to interest students investigating Calvin on law, along with John Hesselink's monograph.

D.F. Wright

Edinburgh University

The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to Consensus

G. Michael Thomas

Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998,

ix + 277 pp., £19.99

This volume, in the Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monograph series, is based on Michael Thomas' doctoral thesis. It is a solid and well-argued piece of work which challenges previous contributions to the vexed question of the extent of the atonement as expressed in Reformed Theology.

The book covers the period from 1536 to 1675. After a brief discussion of the medieval background, the focus turns to the sixteenth century with an assessment of the positions taken by Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, Zanchi and the Heidelberg theologians (Ursinus, Olevianus etc.). The next main section deals with the Synod of Dort and the Arminian controversy. This is followed by one dealing with the Amyraldian question, beginning with John

Cameron before going into a detailed study of Amyraut himself and the debates following upon his views. The final section is Thomas' conclusion in which he draws the threads of the argument together and makes a bold suggestion as to the way forward for Reformed theology.

Those who have studied the modern debate on the subject of the extent of the atonement in Reformed theology will know that it is a complex subject indeed. The question originally centred on whether or not Calvin taught limited atonement, a discussion which began with a dispute between Paul van Buren and John Murray and continued through the writings of Roger Nicole, Brian Armstrong and Robert Godfrey, before being opened out into the wider Calvin versus Calvinism debate involving R.T. Kendall, Alan Clifford, Paul Helm and others. More sustained (and contradictory) contributions by C.D. Daniel and J.H. Rainbow have simply added to the controversy.

Thomas' contribution is most significant. His study of the key figures and movements is thorough and his arguments deserve careful consideration. His thesis is that there has never been a consensus within Reformed theology but rather that there have always been two elements held in tension: the universal offer of the grace of God in the gospel and the doctrine of predestination. The former seemed to require a universal atonement while the latter seemed to require a restricted and limited atonement. Different theologians emphasised the one point or the other and hence two contradictory views on the extent of the atonement were held within Reformed theology.

Thomas demonstrates that these two views were in evidence throughout the period and that, at different times, the one

emphasis or the other prevailed. Interestingly, he rejects the all too common (and simplistic) Calvin versus Calvinism debate, representing this distinction as a failure to recognise the complexity of the issue. Similarly, he rejects the argument which implies that there was complete agreement on the extent of the atonement within the Reformed tradition with the exception of the Amyraldians.

In a postscript at the end of his concluding chapter, Thomas reveals his own view as to the way forward for Reformed theology. This postscript argues that Barth's understanding of predestination cuts through the difficulties which, as Thomas has demonstrated, exist within the Reformed tradition and offers a solution to some of the apparently intractable difficulties. It is not clear whether this postscript appeared in the original thesis, although it seems unlikely since it is presented starkly and without argument or support.

While not agreeing with all of his historical analysis, particularly his judgement on Beza and on the Synod of Dort, the present reviewer believes that Thomas has provided considerable help to those who are interested in the debate concerning the extent of the atonement within the Reformed tradition. It must also be said, however, that his contribution is greatly weakened by the unwarranted addition of the postscript arguing for something like Barth's view on predestination, a postscript which bears no relation to the substantive argument of the book. Far better to have left the book as an historical assessment of the debate within Reformed theology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and to have written another book arguing for the way forward.

A.T.B. McGowan

Highland Theological Institute, Elgin

The Federal Theology of Thomas Boston (Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology)

A.T.B. McGowan

Carlisle: Paternoster Press/Edinburgh:
Rutherford House, 1997,
xix + 228 pp., £19.99

It is sometimes naively assumed that tradition is something which is only of importance for Christians of an Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic persuasion. Protestant belief, it is thought, is shaped not by tradition, but by the Bible alone. As the 17th century writer William Chillingworth famously put it: 'The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of the Protestants'.

The reality is in fact somewhat different. For a start, the Protestant Reformers themselves were heavily indebted to the theologians who had preceded them, as their copious references to the early Fathers clearly demonstrate. Moreover these Reformers themselves, and the Protestant Confessions of faith shaped by their theological insights have come to be treated as theologically authoritative within the various Protestant Churches.

Within the Reformed tradition, and particularly the Scottish Reformed tradition, great importance has been attached to the theology of John Calvin, and the statements of faith produced by the Westminster Assembly, particularly the *Westminster Confession* of 1646. The traditional assumption has been that Calvin and the Confession teach the same theology, but in recent years this assumption has been questioned by scholars such as R.T. Kendall and J.B. Torrance who have argued that on a number of important issues there is discontinuity between Calvin's thinking and the teaching of the Confession.

Andrew McGowan's study of the theology of Scottish theologian Thomas Boston forms part of this debate about Calvin's intellectual legacy.

The debate centres on the question as to whether the teaching of the Westminster Confession about a covenant of grace between God the Father and those predestined by Him to salvation (what is known as 'Federal Calvinism') is or is not in line with Calvin's theology. A number of those inclined to believe that it is not have argued that the theology of Thomas Boston breaks with the Federal tradition and represents a return to an approach nearer to that of Calvin himself. Dr McGowan argues, in my opinion persuasively, that this is not the case. As he puts it:

Those who regard Boston as representing a protest against federal theology, or who believe that there were elements in his theology which if followed through would have led him to abandon federalism altogether are, we believe, mistaken. At no point does Boston articulate any disagreement with the Westminster Confession of faith, nor can anything he wrote be interpreted in such a way.

From what I have said so far it might seem that Dr McGowan's work will only be of interest to those who are professionally or confessionally concerned with the development of Reformed theology. However its appeal ought to be wider than this. Boston's writings were concerned with vital issues like the extent of the atonement, the nature of justification, the connection between repentance and faith, and whether it is right to make a universal offer of the gospel, and in his exposition of Boston's thought McGowan provides an illuminating discussion of these issues and engages with the thought of wide range of

theologians and writings ranging from Augustine to ARCIC II. His book ought therefore not only to be of interest to students of the Reformed tradition, but to all theological students, ministers, and ordinary lay Christians, who have a reasonable knowledge of systematic theology, and who want to think further about the nature of the gospel and how it may be properly proclaimed.

Martin Davie

Oak Hill College

Citizens and Exiles: Christian Faith in a Plural World

Michael Nazir-Ali

London: SPCK, 1998,

198 pp., £12.99

Readers who have appreciated the Bishop of Rochester's previous books on mission, interfaith dialogue and Islam will welcome this successor to his 1995 book *Mission and Dialogue*. This interesting, thought-provoking and wide-ranging volume explores Christian systematic and applied theological themes with reference to the cultural pluralism of particularly the West. His aim is to open Christian eyes to God's reconciling activity in the world and to suggest ways in which Christians can get involved in this work, whether through interfaith dialogue; through the building of local and global community; through advocacy on behalf of the poor and oppressed; or through the reduction of conflict in society.

Part One of the volume, 'What Christians Believe About God', begins with a brief overview of some concerns raised by religious pluralism. With reference to the impact of Christianity upon, for example, Neo-Platonism, Sufism, and the Hinduism of Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore and

Gandhi, Nazir-Ali demonstrates that ideas cross cultural boundaries; there is a process of influence and change as faith communities encounter each other. 'In my view ... there is intelligibility and translatability between religious traditions so that at least some of the beliefs and values of the one can be explained to the other. This is the basis both of dialogue and of mutual accountability. I believe, moreover, that interaction between religious traditions results in change, not only for individual adherents, but often for the tradition as a whole' (13). It is on the basis of this important presupposition that the following chapters are argued.

The following chapters in Part One explore a variety of issues including the notion that there is an underlying unity of religions, the significance of the belief in a supreme being (even monotheism) in primal religions, and theologies of religions based on the idea that Christ is the fulfilment of all that is best in other faiths - a thesis to which he is clearly sympathetic and to which returns several times throughout the book. Furthermore, arguing that the basis for interfaith dialogue must be Trinitarian, much of Part One is devoted to discussions of the doctrines of God, Christ, salvation and the Holy Spirit in the light of religious plurality. For example, concerning God, making much of the universal awareness of 'the divine' and sympathetic to natural theology, he draws on the doctrine of general revelation to argue that Scripture and our experience provide support for the view that 'God is working in the cultures and histories of all people' (133).

Although Part One had necessarily touched upon Christian belief about humanity and the world, Part Two, 'What Christians Believe About the World', provides more

focused discussions of human nature, culture, society and ethics. Again, he provides some interesting and valuable comments on a variety of issues from interfaith dialogue to the sale of church buildings, and from fundamentalism to Christian attitudes to poverty and injustice.

Nazir-Ali has provided an honest and stimulating book from which Christians will benefit. Although some *Themelios* readers will be unhappy with aspects of his thought, generally speaking he provides a theologically conservative, open-minded and creative understanding of Christian belief which makes use of such diverse thinkers as Teilhard de Chardin, Gerhard von Rad, J. V. Taylor and Kenneth Cragg. Certainly those interested in exploring theologies of religions and models of interfaith dialogue will find it a thought provoking read. Whilst in a longer review I would want to take issue with some of his conclusions, on the whole I found what he had to say refreshing and positive. Indeed, my main frustration with the book was that he left many of his arguments in an embryonic form and didn't develop them further. That is to say, he tends to point at ideas and begins to take the reader down what appears to be a promising path only to abandon him or her and follow another path. Sometimes it is clear where he is leading the reader, whilst at other times it is much less clear and one wishes he was in the next room discuss the matter further. Of course, looking on the positive side, this has the effect of stimulating the reader's own thinking in areas of unparalleled importance for the Church at the end of the twentieth century.

Chris Partridge
University College Chester

Facing Hell: The Story of a Nobody. An Autobiography 1913-1996

John Wenham
Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998,
ix + 279 pp., £8.99

Known to most undergraduate students of theology through his *Elements of New Testament Greek*, John Wenham's autobiography was written in the final years before his death in 1996. The book can be divided into three categories.

Firstly, as a personal autobiography, Wenham writes engagingly and honestly. His reflections on his own spiritual pilgrimage, his relationships with his wife and family, and a whole host of other matters is delightful. His conversion and subsequent Christian witness is a story worth telling in its own right. However, at a second level, the book works extremely well as an insight into the history of modern evangelicalism, albeit from a personal point of view. Deeply involved with bodies such as the Tyndale Fellowship, Inter Varsity Fellowship (now the UCCF), the Theological Student's Fellowship, and Latimer House in Oxford, John Wenham saw and worked with many of the great evangelicals of this century. Wenham was not shy in recording his observations and critiques of various manifestations of evangelicalism, and represented a healthy willingness to interact with and learn from other traditions. However, throughout his theological career, he never allowed himself to compromise his theological convictions, convinced of the need for the church and the academy to work together.

Thirdly, the autobiography portrays its apologetic nature in dealing with the issue of the doctrine of hell. More so in his

latter years, John Wenham was well known for his advocacy of the conditionalist position, believing that those in hell are finally destroyed because immortality is only given to those who are saved. That is, those who are not saved, those in hell, do not receive immortality, and hence ultimately cease to exist. At times side-lined because he held this position, he maintained it to the end and wished evangelical scholars to interact seriously with the arguments presented. The book includes a thorough defence of his position, with some additional comments regarding various attempts to refute it.

There are many reasons to recommend this book, and it cannot fail to be of interest to all evangelical students of theology. In spite of its historical and doctrinal usefulness, this reviewer valued it most highly for the witness it is to a most inspirational life.

Tony Gray

Leicester

Far from Rome, Near to God

Richard Bennett and Martin Buckingham

Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1997,

xvi + 362 pp., £5.95

This book contains the stories, written by themselves, of 50 Roman Catholic priests who have been converted. Each of the testimonies contains a description of how the priest came to recognise certain key elements of biblical Christianity which he had not previously understood: that salvation is by grace; that justification is by faith; the significance of the Bible; and the failure of the Roman Catholic Church to teach these truths.

The authors are involved in organisations which seek to evangelise Roman Catholics.

Martin Buckingham is the director of 'The Converted Catholic Mission' and Richard Bennett is director of a similar organisation in the USA, the 'Berean Beacon of Oregon'.

It is always good to read of people who have come to a knowledge of the deep truths of the faith for the first time and to be challenged afresh as to our own understanding and proclamation of these truths. To that end the book is helpful and reminds us of the essential elements of any truly biblical experience of grace and salvation.

It has to be said, however, that after the first five or ten testimonies, the book begins to pale. It is simply too repetitive. One can see the value in the organisations which the authors represent keeping a record of the testimonies of converted priests but to publish them in this manner will test the perseverance of most readers.

It is also disappointing that most of the priests whose testimonies have been chosen are those who studied before Vatican II. The picture of the Roman Catholic Church which is presented, therefore, is of a Church which many would say has since changed significantly. This is not in any sense to suggest that the modern Roman Catholic Church has a different view of grace and salvation from the pre-Vatican II Church, but there have been important changes of emphases and a greater openness to the Bible and to 'separated brethren'. It would have been good to have heard from more recent converts.

At a time when the 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together' movement has sparked such fierce battles in the evangelical world (and this reviewer's sympathies are more with R.C. Sproul than with Coulson and Packer et. al.) it does

no good to pretend that the modern Roman Catholic Church is identical in every respect with the medieval or even the 17th century Roman Catholic Church. We need to engage critically and biblically, but honestly and wisely.

This book is a heart-warming record of the salvation of a number of individuals who have discovered the grace of God in the gospel, but it contributes little to a better understanding of the present Roman Catholic Church and may even be judged to give a false impression.

A.T.B. McGowan

Highland Theological Institute,
Elgin

**Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest
for an Authentic Asian Christian
Theology**

Hwa Yung

Regnum Books International, 1997,
273 pp.

It is painful but salutary to read this Malaysian Chinese scholar's analysis of Western academic theology. Hwa believes that western dualism and enlightenment thought have produced theologies that are largely, though not completely, irrelevant to the mission of the church in Asia, and probably elsewhere. Having explored the effect of western theology on theories of mission that have been influential this century, he proposes four criteria for a missiological theology. These are, first to address the sociopolitical context of the church; secondly to empower the church in its evangelistic and pastoral task, redressing the western blindspot regarding the supernatural; thirdly to address the problem of inculturation, writing into the appropriate worldview, taking account of indigenous

learning patterns and living styles; and fourthly to be faithful to the Christian tradition of truth, which Hwa normally locates in the Scriptures. Although his exploration is applied primarily to the Asian scene, his categories are a helpful grid for preparing theological teaching for western as well as Asian cultures. If more western theologians were able to put these issues at the top of their agenda, their work would greatly increase in value to the church at large.

Hwa's consideration of contextualization challenges both those who want to modify the biblical message to accommodate a target culture or to conform to a pluralist agenda, as well as those who naively assume that the same pattern of teaching is appropriate for anywhere in the world. 'The gospel must be incarnated into Asian soil without losing its distinctives' (121). We are a pilgrim church, called in some ways to grow distinctively different from our surrounding culture while being culturally relevant in what we say and do. In practice this is easier said than done. For example, some will be surprised that Hwa defends Paul Cho Yong-gi's authoritarian leadership style and prosperity gospel as appropriately Asian and arguably biblical. Other Korean theologians have argued against that, stressing the need of servant leadership and a theology of suffering. However, differences of opinion should not divert us from the urgent task of seeking to attain both contextual relevance and biblical integrity.

The second part of the book analyses the work of a variety of Asian theologians both before and after colonialism. These include Matteo Ricci, Nehemiah Goreh, Sadhu Sundar Singh, Toyohiko Kagawa and others from the earlier period; D.T. Niles, M.M. Thomas,

Kosuke Koyama, C.S. Song and the Korean Minjung Theology from the post-war ecumenical movement; and Vinay Samuel, Cho Yong-gi and the Asian Theological Association's work as examples of contemporary evangelical thinking. Hwa highlights significant contributions in most of them, but find that all fail to meet his criteria in some respect. A significant number whose work is considered are not primarily academic theologians. Hwa makes no apology for including those whose thinking was born of passionate involvement in the church's mission, especially as they have had such significant influence on Asian Christian thought and practice.

Hwa's title (*Mangoes or Bananas?*) expresses his concern that much Asian theological thinking is, like a banana, white on the inside. He longs for a mango theology for Asia, yellow throughout! His agenda includes an Asian Christian hermeneutic, Christian apologetics that engage with Asian religions, systematic theology that relates to Asian realities, and work on personal and social ethics. And he wants it all to be communicated at grass roots level. This call to a new agenda for theological research should be weighed carefully by all engaged in such work.

Dick Dowsett

Glasgow

BOOK NOTES:**A Guide to Genesis, 2nd edition**

John Hargreaves
 London: SPCK, 1998,
 xiii + 175 pp., pb., £7.99

This is a second edition of a study guide intended mainly for lay Christians in developing countries. The international flavour is well represented in the text and the many well-produced photographs. A few pages on each section of the biblical text include outline, interpretation, notes and questions. Standard scholarly views are summarized in passing (with other views occasionally noted), though the book concentrates on relevance and application. It has many appealing aspects and should be well used.

An Introduction to the Psalms

Hermann Gunkel (completed by Joachim Begrich), translated by James D. Nogalski
 Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1998,
 x + 388 pp., h/b.

At last, 65 years after the German original, an English translation of one of the seminal works in modern Psalms study. This is a book which all students refer to but few ever read, and many tutors will be enormously grateful to Mercer for enabling them to direct their students back beyond the secondary literature to Gunkel's own presentation.

The translation is generally very good. In particular, it succeeds (where many others fail) in rendering long and complex Germanic sentences into shorter and simpler English ones. Thus the move from one scholarly culture and time to another is greatly facilitated. Occasionally the translation contains quaint

phrasing (as in the opening description of the psalter as 'most beloved'), but only rarely is the original meaning obscure (as on p. 3, line 5). It is a great pity that the original page numbers are not indicated, as this would have enabled following up references in subsequent literature. Nevertheless, this is an essential resource for every library, and will allow many to appreciate the depth and nuances of Gunkel's work within its own scholarly context.

Philip Johnston
 Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

**The Woman Will Overcome the Warrior:
A Dialogue with the Christian/Feminist
Theology of Rosemary Radford Ruether**

Nicholas John Ansell
 Lanham: University Press of America, 1994,
 xi + 383 pp.

In this in-depth study, Ansell provides an evangelical analysis of Ruether's theology which is sympathetic to her position. Not afraid to be critical where necessary, Ansell also makes a good case for the Christian feminist theology of Ruether to be heard. A helpful text for those exploring this issue further, but not a place for the student beginning examination of feminist theologies.

**Mary and Human Liberation:
The Story and the Text**

Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, introduced by Edmond Hill, edited by Helen Stanton
 London: Mowbray, 1997,
 x + 262 pp., £14.99

As well as including a full English version of the original text, this volume traces the controversy surrounding the publication of *Mary and Human Liberation*.

Originally published in 1990, the work caused consternation amongst Roman Catholic church officials, and eventually resulted in Balasuriya's excommunication. The text itself focuses on the role of Mary in society and theology, and in particular the way presuppositions determine the standing of both people and doctrines within the church. As a text there is little original, yet its fascination comes from the reaction it provoked. The following pages enclose copies of official letters, including those from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's office. A fascinating study for all those interested in church power and authority, and the politics behind the theology.

Be an Expert in Interpreting the Bible

Richard Briggs
Bletchley: Scripture Union, 1998,
64 pp., £3.99

Claiming that the book will only take a mere 137 minutes to get through, Briggs here aims to unpack and explain hermeneutics to the un-initiated. If Gadamer, Ricoeur, Fish, and Thiselton have proved incomprehensible and irrelevant, then this is the ideal starter for students and non-students alike. Briggs has an accessible and light humoured approach which, when used together with examples, demonstrates the excitement that can accompany the interpretation of a text. He covers issues of truth, context, reading, genres, engagement with the text, and different models of hermeneutics (with a particularly fascinating parable of the sausage making machine and the art gallery). The space even permits for a light hearted but honest glossary of terms. This is most obviously a starting point, and will not answer all the problems posed by modern

and postmodern hermeneutical theory. However, a great place to start, an excellent example of bridging the academic and church worlds, and a wonderful model to follow.

A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs

David W. Bercot, Editor
Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998,
xx + 704 pp., h/b.

This impressive volume collects together quotes from patristic sources relating to more than 700 theological, moral and historical topics. Ranging from central topics such as the nature of Christ and the Trinity, to historical figures such as Marcion, this volume is comprehensive and would serve as a quick reference tool for all interested in the fathers yet who do not have immediate access to the original sources. Although it cannot be a replacement for such study of the primary texts in their context, it will be hopefully act as an enticement for many into the study of patristic theology and history.

Matthew

Thomas G. Long
Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997,
xii + 331 pp.

Part of the Westminster Bible Companion Series, this volume offers an exposition of the text based on the NRSV. Long sees the theological key as the great commission, and seeks to apply the text to contemporary disciples of Jesus. It is clearly presented without detailed academic footnotes or debates, yet attempts to place the narrative in its historical and biblical context.

Urban Theology: A Reader

Michael Northcott (Ed.)
 London: Cassell, 1998,
 xvii + 347 pp., £19.99

Michael Northcott, on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Urban Theology Group, compiled this work. As a reader it offers a valuable set of essays and references. Forty-eight readings are arranged into twelve sections (interacting with both theological and sociological topics), with introductory essays leading the reader on towards further study. The comprehensiveness of this reader is demonstrated in the subjects which it covers – including sin, power, unemployment, gender, poverty, worship and mission. It also interacts with the important Faith in the City. This work will be an essential reference tool for all studying in this subject area.

People of the Blessing: God's Love as found in the Psalms

James Jones
 Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship, 1998,
 188 pp., £5.99

Originally published as a Lent book, this follows a path through the Psalms reflecting and meditating on the blessing offered by God to those who trust Him. Each section includes a reading from the Psalm, an outline of the particular blessing promised by that psalm, Jones' personal reflection on the passage, words from Jesus from the NT which link with the theme, and a prayer.

Prayers Encircling the World

London: SPCK, 1998,
 viii + 278 pp., £9.99

This collection of prayers was published to celebrate 300 years of ministry of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Three hundred prayers from sixty countries are collected under sections that deal with the church year, and with the church's different ministries. Reflecting a truly global Christian community, with an extremely poignant final section on justice, freedom and peace. Useful not only as a devotional aid, but also as a theological reflection on the contextualisation of theology.

The Gospel of John in the Light of the Old Testament

Claus Westermann
 Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998,
 vi + 106 pp.

Westermann begins this study based on the understanding that the Old and New Testaments have a reciprocal relationship, and that the story of Jesus as presented in John requires the backdrop of the Old Testament in order to enable full appreciation. At the very least it contributes to the growing conviction that neither NT studies, OT studies, nor systematic theology can be carried out in isolation.

Message for the Millennium: Forty Days at the Feet of Jesus the Teacher

David Winter
Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship, 1998,
158 pp., £5.99

A devotional aid for Lent, David Winter divides the teaching of Jesus into various sections in order to present his radical message a new for the millennium. The devotions gradually lead up to Easter week, with a special section concentrating on the person and nature of Jesus and his mission. Not a conventional commentary, nor an introduction to the life of Jesus, this book aim to present Jesus' teaching in manageable bite-size chunks.

Pastoral Foundations of the Sacraments: A Catholic Perspective

Gregory L. Klein & Robert A. Wolfe.
New York: Paulist Press, 1998,
190 pp., \$14.95

Relying heavily on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the two authors set out an exposition of the sacraments in an attempt to relate them to their everyday pastoral situation. Much of the theology contained in this work would not be agreed with by evangelical theologians, yet as an insight into current Catholic thought as to how parish life involves its own ritual dimension, this would be a helpful guide.

Truth and Love in a Sexually Disordered World

David Searle (Ed.)
Carlisle: Rutherford House, 1997,
xii + 93 pp., £3.99

A fascinating little book which engages with contemporary theological and pastoral issues concerning sexuality. Biblical essays are provided by David Searle and Geoffrey Grogan, David Wright offers helpful insights into the current homosexuality debates, and other contributions root the issues in pastoral concerns. This volume will be a helpful tool for the ordinary church member.

Tony Gray
Leicester

BOOK REVIEWS

- Bill T. Arnold* **Encountering the Book of Genesis. Encountering Biblical Studies** Richard S. Hess
- Lester L. Grabbe (ed.)* **Leading Captivity Captive. 'The Exile' as History and Ideology** Brian Kelly
- Larry L. Lyke* **King David with the Wise Woman of Tekoa: The Resonance of Tradition in Parabolic Narrative (JSOTS 255)** David Toshio Tsumura
- Allan Rosengren Petersen* **The Royal God: Enthronement Festivals in Ancient Israel and Ugarit? (JSOTS 259)** Stefan Paas
- J.C.L. Gibson* **Language and Imagery in the Old Testament** Paul Williamson
- R. Boer* **Novel Histories: the Fiction of Biblical Criticism (Playing the Texts, 2)** Martin J. Selman
- Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall (eds)*
Thomas C. Oden **Mark: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament** Craig L. Blomberg
- Susan B. Garrett* **The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel** Jeffrey B. Gibson
- Richard P. Thompson and Thomas E. Phillips (eds)*
Literary Studies in Luke-Acts. Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson I. Howard Marshall
Daniel Bock
- Joel B. Green* **Gospel of Luke (NICNT)**
- Herman Ridderbos* **The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary** Marianne Meyer Thompson
- Stephen Motyer* **Your Father the Devil? A New Approach to John and 'the Jews'** David Wenham
- Ruth Etchells* **A Reading of the Parables of Jesus** Craig L. Blomberg
- Joan Taylor* **John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism: A Historical Study** K.E. Brower
- John T. Cairroll and Joel H. Green (with Robert E. van Voorst, Joel Marcus, Donald Senior)*
The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity Peter M. Head
- Paul Barnett* **The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (NICNT)** Linda L. Belleville
- Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough*
Encountering the New Testament Craig L. Blomberg
Simon Gathercole
- Chaim Pearl* **Theology in Rabbinic Stories**
- George Foot Moore* **Judaism Volume 1**
- George Foot Moore* **Judaism Volume 2**
- Brad. H Young* **Paul The Jewish Theologian** Peter Oakes
- D.A. Carson* **The Inclusive Language Debate: A Plea for Realism** Andrew Perriman
- Andrew Perriman* **Speaking of Women: Interpreting Paul** Sharon James
- Lesslie Newbigin, Lamin Sanneh, Jenny Taylor*
Faith and Power: Christianity and Islam in Secular Britain Peter G. Riddell
- Ursula King (ed.)* **Faith and Praxis in a Postmodern Age** Mark W. Elliott
Graham Tomlin
- Lucien J. Richard* **Christ the Self-Emptying of God**
- Peter Hicks* **Evangelicals and Truth: A Creative Proposal for a Postmodern Age** Daniel Hill

<i>David Hilborn</i> Picking up the Pieces: Can Evangelicals Adapt to Contemporary Culture?	Chris Sinkinson
<i>David S. Dockery, (ed.)</i> New Dimensions in Evangelical Thought: Essays in Honor of Millard J. Erickson	W. David Buschart
<i>Colin Buchanan</i> Is the Church of England Biblical? An Anglican Ecclesiology	Andy Saville
<i>Kevin J. Vanhoozer</i> Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge	Craig L. Blomberg
<i>Hermann Häring</i> Hans Küng Breaking Through <i>Hans Küng and Helmut Schmidt</i> Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities	Gerald Bray
<i>David E. Demson</i> Hans Frei and Karl Barth: Different Ways of Reading Scripture	John Goldingay
<i>Ian Markam</i> Truth and the Reality of God: an Essay in Natural Theology	Stephen N. Williams
<i>Miroslav Volf</i> After our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity	David Peterson
<i>David A. S. Fergusson</i> The Cosmos and the Creator: An Introduction to the theology of Creation	Rob Cook
<i>John Polkinghorne</i> Science and Theology: An Introduction	
<i>J. Wentzel van Huyssteen</i> Duet or Duel? Theology and Science in a Postmodern World	
<i>Malcolm A. Jeeves and R. J. Berry</i> Science, Life and Christian Belief	Philip Duce
<i>Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto (ed.)</i> Animals on the Agenda	Peter Comont
<i>Bernard Hoose (ed.)</i> Christian Ethics - An Introduction	Andy Draycott
<i>John Barton</i> Ethics and the Old Testament	Deryck Sheriffs
<i>Brendan McCarthy</i> Fertility and Faith: The Ethics of Human Fertilisation	E.D. Cook
<i>Peter C. Jupp and Tony Rogers (eds)</i> Interpreting Death: Christian Theology and Pastoral Practice	Katherine Wasson
<i>Ronald A.N. Kydd</i> Healing through the Centuries: Models for Understanding	John Lyons
<i>Clive Marsh & Gaye Ortiz (eds)</i> Explorations in Theology and Film: Movies and Meaning	Tony Gray
<i>Richard A. Müller</i> Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms	Mark Elliott
<i>Guenther H. Haas</i> The Concept of Equity in Calvin's Ethics	D.F. Wright
<i>G. Michael Thomas</i> The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to Consensus	A.T.B. McGowan
<i>A.T.B. McGowan</i> The Federal Theology of Thomas Boston	Martin Davie
<i>Michael Nazir-Ali</i> Citizens and Exiles: Christian Faith in a Plural World	Chris Partridge
<i>John Wenham</i> Facing Hell: The Story of a Nobody. An Autobiography 1913-1996	Tony Gray
<i>Richard Bennett and Martin Buckingham</i> Far from Rome, Near to God	A.T.B. McGowan
<i>Hwa Yung</i> Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology	Dick Dowsett

Proclaiming Christ in a Pluralistic World

SCHLOSS MITTERSILL, AUSTRIA

How can we proclaim Christ in Europe at the dawn of the third millennium? What are the peculiar challenges faced by Christian theologians in our contemporary pluralistic world? What are the similarities between this world, and the world of the first century Christians? Are there particular responses and critiques which theology can provide, as we seek to be witnesses for Christ in both the academy and in our lives?

This conference, aimed specifically at students of theology and religious studies, will give an opportunity to think through some of these issues, and to allow each student to think through how they relate to God in their faith and their studies.

The IFES European Theological Students Conference aims to:

- impart a broader, European vision of the task of theology
- give opportunity for fellowship among theological students in Europe
- help you think about the implications of an evangelical, biblically based approach to theology in general and to our experience of God in particular.

VENUE

Schloss Mittersill - an International Christian Conference and Study Centre, a 12th century castle which stands 1000 metres above sea level. It enjoys magnificent views over the Pinzgau Valley and the town of Mittersill.

The facilities are excellent. Sports include tennis, volleyball, table tennis, and mountain biking. There is an open-air swimming pool in the town, and there are plenty of beautiful places to walk through and explore. During each conference we take a day trip to a local beauty spot - in 1999 some walked up a nearby mountain, others visited the Krimmel water falls. There is also good sized theological library on sight, which conference members can use.

The Schloss is a residential study centre, and on hand are other theological scholars who will be willing to help students in whatever way possible. As a venue the Schloss is excellent, taking into account both the mind (theological resources), the spirit (Christian fellowship) and the body (good food and accommodation!)

COST

(In Austrian Schillings)

Conference Fee	2450	AS
Booking Fee	300	AS
Total	2750	AS

The non-returnable booking fee is payable in advance. The conference fee is payable on arrival at the conference, although if you wish you can pay the balance of the fees in advance. The fee includes three meals a day, accommodation and morning coffee. You would be advised to bring some extra money for books, refreshments, etc.

BOOKING

Space is limited, so you need to book early. Send the attached form along with the booking fee of 300 AS. You can pay by Eurocheque or girocheque (payable to Schloss Mittersill), or an equivalent sum in US dollars or any West European currency.

Bank transfers can be made to Raiffeisen Mittersill, bank code 35039, account 42010

Please arrive on the 7th for registration between 1500 and 1800. The conference ends with breakfast on the 14th.

CONFERENCE LANGUAGES

English will be the main language, using simultaneous translation. Other languages may be available if your party can bring a translator but this must be arranged in advance with the conference. Please contact the secretary if this is required, otherwise we cannot guarantee translation.

PROGRAMME

The programme consists of a series of lectures and Bible expositions which will explore the main theme and complement each other. The programme also includes small fellowship groups, seminars, workshops, a question panel, time for prayer and worship, and a conference service. There will also be plenty of time in the programme to interact with our speakers.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact either Schloss Mittersill:
Schloss Mittersill, A-5730 Mittersill,
Austria (Telephone: 06562-4523)
or the secretary of the planning committee:
Tony Gray, RTSF Secretary,
38 De Montfort Street, Leicester, LE1
7GP, England Tel: (44) 116 255 1700
EMAIL: rtsf@uccf.org.uk
WEBSITE: www.uccf.org.uk/rtsf

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 indispensable guide to current theological thought.'**

I H Marshall

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



RTSF

