

themelios



1 Editorial: Measuring Life With Coffee Spoons

4 Professor R.V.G. Tasker

O.R. Barclay



5 The Biblical Doctrine of the Wrath of God: Part 2

R.V.G. Tasker

22 Karl Barth and the Legitimacy of Natural Theology

Rodney Holder

38 Ancient Egypt and the Hebrew Monarchies
A Review Article

K.A. Kitchen

51 Are There Essential Differences Between the Sexes?
A Review Article

Sharon James

64 The Last Word

Robbie Castleman

66 Book Reviews



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Editorial: Measuring Life With Coffee Spoons

The poverty of evangelicalism is the poverty of ambition. If T.S. Eliot captured the mediocrity of modern life in the striking line from *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, 'I have measured out my life with coffee spoons', then the sentiment would seem to apply equally to evangelicalism in the West: materialistic, narcissistic, and spiritually bankrupt.

Time and again over the last eighteen months I have been drawn to the book of Amos in the OT. One of my heroes, Klaas Schilder, a man who led the underground Dutch church resistance to Nazism during the Occupation, read and reread this book during his long and often trying ministry. Its significance for him lay in part in the fact that it addressed ancient Israel at a point in her history where she was outwardly prosperous and comfortable, in a position of relative strength both economically and politically; and yet she was sick at heart and, despite outward appearances, under the judgement of God.

This contrast applies to evangelicalism in the West at this present time. Few of us who are evangelicals do not enjoy some of the benefits which come from living in a prosperous, post-industrial society. Compared to the life my grandparents lived, mine is one of relative ease, and I suspect that it is the same for many who read this page. That is not to say that such prosperity is in itself a bad thing. Poverty is an evil, and should not be wished on anyone, ourselves included. But prosperity in all spheres brings with it temptations which must be avoided at all costs and yet which are often so subtle and imperceptible that we can fall into them without even realising it. Greed, having been promoted to the level of a cardinal virtue by society at large, can be very difficult to discern in ourselves, and can affect us wherever we happen to be located on the economic food chain. It must also be remembered that greed and materialism are not necessarily functions of disposable incomes: one can be dirt poor and unbelievably greedy; one can be as rich as Croesus and remarkably generous and liberal with money and possessions.

What is so concerning about living in a society where power and influence are increasingly construed in monetary terms is that Christians too become affected by the value scheme of the world in which they live and have their own agendas and ambitions set by the surrounding culture. It would take a whole book to catalogue the many examples of this, so I wish to focus here on just a few points which concern me as I look at the evangelical world of today.

First, I am worried about the ambitions of young Christians. The highest thing to which a believer can be called is to be a preacher of the gospel. There is no greater privilege given to sinful human beings than the responsibility of declaring God's word of judgement and grace to a dying world. Therefore, it should surely be of concern to us all that the brightest and the best of the young are not, on the whole, giving serious consideration to the preaching ministry. Time and again at conferences, I find that few of the top theological students have ambitions to enter the pulpit or go out on the mission field. Many want lucrative jobs; some wish to teach at seminaries or universities; few consider the gospel ministry. This is a complete reversal of trends earlier in the church's history, where the brightest and best were often found in pulpits, not in lecture theatres or the offices of law firms. Whatever the historical reasons for this change, it undoubtedly indicates a radical shift in priorities, where gospel ministry is no longer considered to be the supreme calling of a Christian. Now, do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that all bright evangelicals should be going in for the ministry or on to the mission field — only God's call can make a minister or a missionary; but that many are not even

considering this avenue of service is a damning indictment on an evangelical culture where the ministry has clearly ceased to be the respected and sacred calling that it once was. Those Christians have a woeful lack of ambition who put more stock in earning enough to drive a brand new Jag than in developing a church culture where the brightest and best are encouraged to consider whether they are called to preach the word of life.

Let's face it — a generation of leaders and preachers is passing away before our eyes with no obvious successors. Of course, it is good to see that Dick Lucas, Jim Packer, Sinclair Ferguson, Geoff Thomas, Don Carson and others are still writing and speaking at conferences. But the youngest of these guys is in his fifties, the oldest in his seventies. In thirty years time they will be gone and who will there be to replace them? The preoccupation of so many of my generation with academic status, scholarly credibility, and social respectability does not inspire confidence that uncompromising gospel leadership will emerge from among the current generation of evangelical thinkers. Whatever some might say, the key battles for Christ's kingdom will not be fought from the Senior Common Rooms of Oxford but from the pulpits in Britain's churches, some big, some small, some famous, some unknown. That's where the fight will be hardest; and that's where we need our toughest, our brightest, and our godliest.

I used to think that the church did not need great preachers and leaders to survive, and indeed it doesn't. The problem today is that we don't even seem to have too many good leaders and preachers coming through to replace the older generation. As Sinclair Ferguson wrote, 'the church can survive without great preachers; but she can't survive without good preachers'. The same applies to leaders. We need to be praying for such to be raised up: preachers who will preach the gospel in a straightforward, no-nonsense manner to the current generation; and leaders with the understanding of the times in which we live such that they can call the church back to its biblical roots and away from the soul-numbing materialism and crass entertainment-centred narcissism of so much that passes for church life today. That is ambition; anything less is selling the church short.

Further, in thirty years time, a large portion of our current church membership will be gone – and will there be anyone to replace them? We stand on the brink of a major crisis: very soon the churches in Britain will be dramatically smaller than they are now. Every year I pass a new night club that used to be a church building; a recent report from the Church of Scotland recommends the closure of 500 churches; and I wonder how long the nation will tolerate granting privileged status to an Anglican Church which is, for all intents and purposes, an irrelevance to most of the population. It ultimately does not matter how many theological colleges we have or how many theological textbooks are written by evangelicals – if the church has few members and even fewer leaders, these 'achievements' don't add up to a hill of beans. Indeed, ambitions to conquer the academy seem rather misplaced when the true depths of this crisis are seen for what they are. Only those scholars who talk only to other Christians can kid themselves that evangelicalism is on the verge of some kind of major triumph. Sure, it is now a more powerful voice in certain denominations than has been the case; but this is not so much the result of a revival of fortunes as of the facts that the term 'evangelical' has become almost meaningless and that evangelical church membership has declined at a slower rate than its liberal counterpart.

From the above, it should be clear that I dissent from much of the current triumphalism that some evangelical leaders have made their trademark. I worry that the glossy packaging of modern evangelicalism in the West has not halted the slide in church membership; I am concerned that so many of the churches that do claim growth have not achieved this growth by preaching the gospel but by offering

what are essentially the same commodities of entertainment and self-indulgence that the world peddles, albeit dressed up in spiritual language; and I am profoundly disturbed by the emphases in the books which clearly sell like hot cakes in high street Christian bookshops – plenty on dieting, sex, and self-fulfilment, but very little on sin, salvation and godliness. Christianity, it would seem, is all about repairing a marred self-image, not a marred divine image. As a result, I also dissent from much of the analysis of our current predicament. Church numbers are not ultimately declining because we are failing to grasp modern media and methods – though this may be a very small factor. Leaders are not being replaced and church numbers are declining because our materialism and our obsession with self have called forth God's hand of judgement against us. Only repentance for our worldliness, for our crass lack of spiritual ambition, will at the end of the day call a halt to this seemingly inexorable decline.

Perhaps some will laugh at this, but make no mistake: God is judging the poverty of ambition in our churches and in our own hearts, just as he judged ancient Israel in the time of Amos. To set materialism, academic acceptance, and entertainment at the centre of our agendas betrays a pitifully small vision of what life is all about. To cure this, we need to understand real ambition; and to do this we can do little better than recall the words of the first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism: 'What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.' If you read this sentence and it leaves you cold, then just stop and think what it means. God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the one who was there in the Garden with Adam, the one who flooded the earth, the one who called Abraham, the one who loved Isaac, the one who cared for Jacob, the one who brought his people out of Egypt, the one who raised up David, the one who manifested himself in Jesus Christ, the one who rides on the wings of the storm, in whose presence no-one can stand, and yet who numbers the hairs of your head and loves you as his precious child – this God should be your ambition, and to serve him, to enjoy him, and to do so forever, should be your highest goal. Surely Jaguars, PhDs, and telephone number salaries cannot be compared to knowing, glorifying, and enjoying *this* God. And surely the first question we need to ask ourselves is where we can serve him and in what capacity. Maybe it will mean lack of worldly credibility, lack of respect from others – even Christians! – but this will all mean nothing compared to that immense privilege of 'glorifying God and enjoying him forever'.

The next thirty years are going to be decisive for the church. Every one of us needs to think and pray about our particular role in the coming struggles. We need to put to death in ourselves those sins which sap our spiritual strength; and we need to commit ourselves to lives of prayer, worship, and self-denial in order that we might be able to stand when the going gets tough. We also need to pray that the Lord will remove his judgement from a church marked by lack of ambition and obsession with self-fulfilment, grant us as a body true repentance for these things, and raise up among us leaders and preachers with the courage and discernment to speak God's word in an uncompromising manner to the world around us. Let us not measure out our lives with coffee spoons, but with the grace of God given to us in Christ.

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PROFESSOR R.V.G. TASKER

O.R. Barclay

Professor R.V.G. Tasker (1895–1976) became well known as Professor of New Testament Exegesis in the University of London. This post was held at King's College London, which then had one of the largest theology departments in Britain. Having been moderately liberal he emerged as a conservative evangelical in the late 1940s. This followed a student mission run by the CU in 1947 at which he attended a lecture by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. This had a revolutionary effect on him. Three years later he took the chair for a similar CU mission meeting and introduced the same speaker with the words: 'I don't know who else heard Dr Lloyd-Jones speaking in this hall three years ago, but I know one man whose whole life was revolutionised by that address. That was your chairman tonight.'

He revised his book *The Old Testament in the New* for a new edition, as he adopted a confident belief in the authority of the Bible, saying that you could not excise the Apostles' teaching on their own and the Old Testament's authority without losing the whole framework of biblical doctrine. He then started publishing chiefly with the small, but growing IVP. His major contribution was in acting as Editor of The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, contributing the first volume himself on the Epistle of James and later the volume on John's Gospel. This gave the series a respect that it might not otherwise have received, when there was only one other Lecturer in a University Theology Department willing to associate himself with IVP, and no other up to date evangelical commentary series.

He faced considerable opposition, some of his colleagues hardly speaking to him, and one of them hinting darkly that he should remember that one of his predecessors had been deprived of his Chair for 'unorthodoxy'.

He was a great encouragement to evangelical theology students in particular at a time when they were often treated with scorn by an overwhelmingly liberal establishment. It helped them to believe that, even though they did not have answers to all the problems, it was not intellectual suicide, as they were sometimes told, to hold fast to an evangelical position. He was also a very gracious and humble man. He supported IVF and the CU at Kings in particular, turning up as merely a listener at freshers' meetings, because he said 'these people need encouragement'.

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF THE WRATH OF GOD: PART 2

R.V.G. Tasker

The first part of this lecture appeared in Themelios 26:2.

The Manifestation of the Wrath Of God in Jesus Christ

Enough has already been said in this study to indicate that the view advocated so persistently and so thoroughly by Marcion in the second century, and consciously or unconsciously echoed in much so-called 'Christian' teaching in recent years, that the Old Testament reveals solely a God of wrath and the New Testament solely a God of love, is completely erroneous. It can easily be disproved by anyone who is prepared to give more than superficial attention to the text of the Bible, unless resort is made to the use of the critical knife in order to eradicate evidence which conflicts with the presuppositions of the critic. As a matter of observed fact, we do not find any gradual declension in the degree of emphasis which is placed on the wrath of God during the period of revelation with which the Old Testament is concerned; nor do we find that the revelation of God as a loving Father is confined to the New Testament, though it is in the Person and work of Jesus the Christ that that revelation is uniquely and supremely made. There are few more beautiful expressions of the love of God than that contained in Psalm 103, especially in verse 8, where we read: 'The Lord is full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always be chiding; neither will he keep his anger for ever.' Yet within the same Psalter we also read 'God is a righteous Judge, yea, a God that hath indignation every day' (Ps. 7:11). It is moreover a *New Testament* writer who, when he speaks of God as Father, emphasises in the same breath his work as Judge before whom men must live in fear (1 Pet. 1:17); and it is another *New Testament* author who, echoing the words of Deuteronomy 4:24, says 'Our God', i.e. the God whom we Christians worship, 'is a consuming fire' (Heb. 12:29).

Nor is it only in the Old Testament that we read stories about sudden destruction overtaking as a divine punishment those who thwart the purposes of God or flout his mercy – stories such as that of the mauling by bears of the forty-two young hooligans at Bethel, who taunted Elisha with the words 'Go up, thou bald head' (2 Kgs. 12:22–24).¹ In the New Testament Herod Agrippa, the murderer of the apostle James and the persecutor of the apostle Peter, who so gloried in the outward apparel of his royalty and was so corrupted by human pride that he gladly received the idolatrous flattery of his subjects, when they declared that he spake not as a man but as a God, was struck suddenly by a devastating mortal

¹ For a full and careful exegesis of this much misunderstood narrative see *The Severity of God*, D.E. Hart-Davies, 47–65.

disease (Acts 12:22,23). Similarly Ananias and Sapphira are punished by sudden death for 'tempting the spirit of the Lord', even as the Israelites tempted God in the wilderness and were destroyed by serpents (Acts 5:9; 1 Cor. 10:9). Each of the two Testaments contains revelations of both 'the goodness and the severity of God', for these two attributes of the divine nature cannot in fact be separated. As A.G. Hebert has recently written, 'The love of God demands as its correlative the wrath of God, just because God does care and because he is man's true God, and he has called man to fellowship with himself, and man's rejection of that fellowship is his ruin and perdition. Because the New Testament emphasises the love of God it also emphasises his wrath, and the evangelists repeatedly show our Lord as righteously angry.'² This last sentence would appear to be a truer evaluation of the evidence of the Gospels than that made by Professor C.H. Dodd when he writes: 'The concept of the wrath of God does not appear in the teaching of Jesus unless we press certain features of the parables in an illegitimate manner.'³

When we consider carefully the evidence of the Gospels it is clear that the revelation of the wrath of God in Jesus Christ is in fact to be found as part both of his prophetic and his priestly ministry. As the proclaimer of 'the words of eternal life' he reveals the divine wrath first by calling upon men, as John the Baptist had done before him, to repent in view of the inevitable 'wrath to come' which would fall upon the unrepentant. That Jesus taught no doctrine of universal salvation, but that he rather bade men fear the final day of God's wrath is clear from such sayings as: 'Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him' (Luke 12:4, 5). And 'those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish' (Luke 13:4, 5). What Jesus saw to be awaiting the generation which he was addressing was for the most part not salvation but condemnation. It would be better, he said, for Tyre and Sidon, heathen cities, in the day of judgement than for the cities wherein his mighty works had been done (Luke 10:14). It is noticeable that Luke the evangelist, whom Dante called '*scriba mansuetudinis Christi*' does not hesitate to record all these sayings; and he also alone notes that Jesus spoke of the disaster which would descend upon God's people in the destruction of Jerusalem specifically as a manifestation of his wrath (Luke 21:23).

A similar revelation of the divine wrath is made in some of the parables of Jesus, especially those which are concerned with God's judgement. It is true that the details of these parables cannot always be pressed allegorically; but some scholars are perhaps guilty of unduly abandoning the allegorical element, which would seem clearly to be present in some of them. Thus, in speaking of the

² *The Authority of the Old Testament*, 252.

³ *The Epistle to the Romans*, 23.

parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 22, Professor Dodd writes: "To find the character of God exhibited in the King who destroys his enemies is as illegitimate as to find it in the character of the Unjust Judge."⁴ It should be pointed out, however, that at the conclusion of the parable of the Unjust Judge our Lord makes it perfectly clear that the judge is not to be interpreted allegorically, but that the argument implied is *a fortiori*. We may paraphrase Luke 18:6, 7 as follows: 'The Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge [who in this isolated instance has shown some "regard for man"] said. And shall not God [whose character is so wholly different from that of the unrighteous judge] avenge his elect, which cry to him day and night?' In the parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 22 on the other hand no such explanation is given; and the hearers would naturally suppose that in verse seven Jesus was making a prophecy of the destruction which awaited the holy city as a sign of God's anger. 'But the king was wrath; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.'⁵ In the parallel parable of the Great Supper in Luke the host is similarly described as 'being angry' with the guests who refused the invitation to the banquet (Luke 14:21). In the other parable, in which definite reference is made to the anger of the chief character in the story, the parable of the Unforgiving Servant, our Lord definitely asserts that God will deal with those unwilling to forgive in the same way as the king in the story dealt with the unforgiving slave. He himself allegorises the story. 'And his lord was wrath, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts' (Matt. 18:34, 35).

Secondly, Jesus reveals the wrath of God in the undisguised expressions of his anger, to which the evangelists draw attention on specific occasions in his prophetic ministry. The only *certain* passage in the Gospels where Jesus is *explicitly* stated to have been angry is the Marcan account of the healing of the man with the withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath, where we read: 'And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith to the man, Stretch forth thy hand' (3:5). Matthew has no parallel to the first part of this sentence; while Luke, who seems to be following Mark closely, says, 'And he looked round about on them all, and said unto him, Stretch forth thy hand' (Matt. 12:13; Luke 6:10).

It is Mark who, as so often in his Gospel, draws attention to the human emotions of Jesus, though they are never merely human emotions, for in them is revealed the divine reaction to men's words and deeds. Commentators have drawn attention to the fact that the participle expressing the angry look of Christ in this incident is in the aorist tense (*periblepsamenos*), while the participle expressing

⁴ *The Epistle to the Romans*, 23.

⁵ Many modern critical commentators regard this passage as a *vaticinium post eventum*; but, even if this subjective criticism is accepted, it remains noticeable that the evangelist, who makes this 'insertion', seems not to have felt that there was anything incongruous in the identification of the angry King of the parable with God himself.

the sorrow of Christ is in the present tense (*synlypoumenos*), the deduction being that the anger was expressed in one passing indignant glance, while the sorrow was persistent. Even so, the fact of the anger of Jesus on this occasion remains. It would seem to have been roused not merely by the desire of those present to find reasons for accusing him, but also by their failure to face up to the fact that mere abstention from wrong-doing (in the legal sense) was no adequate interpretation of the divine command to do no work on the Sabbath. 'They remained silent' when Jesus asked them the pertinent question, 'Is it lawful on the Sabbath-day to do good or to do harm? to save a life or to kill?' They failed to understand that there were occasions when not to act was in fact to do evil; and when to refrain from healing was in effect to commit murder. And how could an interpretation of the duty of Sabbath observance be justified which led to a violation of the sixth commandment? It is true that the Rabbis permitted acts of healing to take place on the Sabbath if it was believed that life was in immediate danger; and the Pharisees may well have thought that in this case the life of the man with the withered hand was not immediately in danger. Our Lord however seems to be angry that *they* should claim to be able to decide whether or not a human life was in danger. This was part of the arrogance due to sin, which blinds men to the realisation that they stand in jeopardy every hour, and have no life at all apart from him who is the Lord and giver of life. And it was this blindness (the true meaning of *porosis* in Mark 3:5) which angered and grieved the Christ.

If in Mark 1:41 the reading *orgistheis* 'being angry' (found in the Codex Bezae, three old Latin MSS, and in Ephraem's commentary on Tatian's *Diatessaron*) is original, we should have in this evangelist's account of the cleansing of the leper a second specific reference in the Gospels to an actual display of anger by Jesus. This reading, on the grounds of internal evidence, has some claim to be considered original; for, as C.H. Turner remarked, 'It is inconceivable that any scribe should have substituted anger for compassion [the alternative reading being *splanchnistheis*], while the converse is intelligible'. The anger of Jesus might indeed have been aroused by the uncertainty expressed in the leper's words, as to Christ's willingness to heal. For, as Turner added, 'to acknowledge his power but to doubt his good-will was to display the same temper as that of the scribes from Jerusalem who admitted his power but denied that it came from God'.⁶ (See Mark 3:22ff.) Ephraem's comment is worth recalling, '*Quia dixit "Si vis" iratus est; quia eddit "potes" eum; sanavit*'.⁷ But in the absence of stronger external attestation the reading *orgistheis* cannot be considered certain.

In Mark 10:14 we read that Jesus was 'moved with indignation' (*eganaktesen*) with his disciples for rebuking those who brought little children for him to 'touch'; or, as Matthew says, 'that he should lay his hands upon them and pray' (Matt. 19:13). The indignation of

⁶ A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, 56.

⁷ Quoted by Swete in *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 29.

Jesus on this occasion was called forth, it would seem, not merely by humanitarian motives. Jesus was indignant, I would suggest, because the thought that lay behind the disciples' words probably was 'What have these children *done* to *merit* a blessing at the Master's hands'? Later on, when they have some good deeds to their credit, they may come and justly claim a blessing but not now.' It was just this way of regarding the relationship between God and man which evoked the indignation of Jesus with his disciples. They were showing themselves to be Pharisees at heart. How could he refrain from bestowing his blessing upon little children, when, as he at once proceeds in effect to point out, they were living parables of the essential truth that he had come to proclaim, – the truth that, just because sin renders man so proud and self-sufficient, a new birth, brought about by the creative activity of God himself, is necessary before the human heart can receive the reign of God within it? Man has to *receive* salvation, which he can never merit however long he may live, and receive it as willingly as a little child receives the gifts that are offered him.

Just as the evangelists, in the incident of the children brought to Jesus, draw attention to this indignation with his disciples for their failure to understand the truth stated in Romans 3:20 that 'by works of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight'; so too do they show him displaying righteous wrath in cleansing the temple. The cause of his wrath on this occasion was the blind trust that the Pharisees had come to put in the temple sacrifices as the means by which the covenant-relationship with God could be maintained and they themselves delivered from the wrath to come. They failed to see the temporary nature of the Levitical system, and knew not the truth stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews that 'it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins' (Heb. 10:4). The temple moreover had failed to be 'a house of prayer for all nations'; but had become increasingly since the exile the outward symbol of the exclusiveness of Israel. It had also been turned into 'a den of robbers' (see Jer. 7:8–11), where men thought they could salve their consciences after fraudulent transactions within the very house of God itself. When Jesus in St. John's Gospel, on the first visit to Jerusalem recorded by that evangelist, 'made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables', he was not only, as the disciples came to see, 'eaten up with a zeal for the Lord's house' (see John 2:17); but was also, though the evangelist does not record this prophecy, fulfilling the words of Malachi 3:1, 2: 'The Lord ... shall suddenly come to his temple ... But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire'. In the Synoptic Gospels the cleansing of the temple is one of the last prophetic acts of Jesus and leads directly to his death and resurrection; or, to state the matter theologically, the destruction and rebuilding of the temple of his body, of which the Johannine account of the incident speaks (John 2:19–22), were the means by which a purer and universal worship would be rendered possible within the shrine of the hearts of the redeemed. In Mark and

Matthew the incident is also closely connected with the mysterious cursing of the fig-tree. Israel had been meant to be like a tree planted by the water-side which would bring forth fruit in due season. It had however become like the fig-tree which Jesus cursed. For its appearance gave the impression that it was bearing fruit while in reality it was bearing no fruit at all. Instead of bringing forth fruit worthy of repentance, which would enable it to 'flee from the wrath to come', by its showy legalism and the false security of its temple worship Israel had rendered itself liable to God's curse.

The third way in which Jesus manifested the divine wrath in his prophetic ministry was by the severity with which he denounced those whose behaviour and beliefs were contrary to what they knew to be the expressed will of God, or who deliberately rejected the divine grace which was being offered to them in his own person and work.

One of his sternest sayings was directed against those who deliberately placed stumbling-blocks in the way of an immature believer. 'Whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea' (Matt. 18:6). 'The sin of sins', it has been well said, 'is that of leading others into sin, especially the weak, the untaught, the easily perplexed, the easily misled'. The Pharisees (and later the Judaizers, who tried to rob Paul's converts of the liberty which they had in Christ Jesus) were especially guilty of this sin. It is not therefore surprising that some of the most angry denunciations of Jesus are levelled against the Pharisees; and the series of woes which occupies Matthew 23 is a most thorough and searching description of the kind of sinful behaviour, of which respectable and 'religious' people are capable, when they are still fundamentally unrepentant and therefore blind to the power of sin within them which is vitiating their intentions and their actions. The contents of Matthew 23 apply therefore not only to the Pharisees who first heard them, and who despised all whom they classified as 'sinners' because they either could not or would not keep their traditions, but to all whom Jesus satirised as 'the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance'. The contents of this chapter have been well summarised by James Denney as follows:

To keep people ignorant of religious truth neither living by it ourselves, nor letting them do so (13); to make piety or the pretence of it a cloak for avarice (14); to raise recruits for our own faction on the pretext of enlisting men for the Kingdom of God (15); to debauch the simple conscience by casuistical sophistries (16-22); to destroy the sense of proportion in morals by making morality a matter of law in which all things stand on the same level (23ff.); to put appearance above reality; and reduce life to a play, at once tragedy and farce (25-28); to revive the spirit and renew the sins of the past while we affect a pious horror of them; to crucify the living prophets while we build monuments to the martyred (29ff.) - these are the things

which make a storm of anger sweep over the soul of Jesus and burst in this tremendous denunciation of his enemies.⁸

But the 'woes' of Jesus, so eloquent of the wrath of God, are pronounced not only upon the Pharisees and all who manifest a Pharisaical spirit, but also upon those who pride themselves upon their material possessions or their personal achievements; those who are self-satisfied; those who are care-free because they are blind to any need for repentance; and those who imagine that their life must be good because it wins the approval of their fellows. The wrath of God, it is implied in Luke 6:24-26, is upon all who are in this sense 'rich' or 'full' or who 'laugh' or who are 'well-spoken of by men'.

It was just because this was the condition in which all men lay, though most of them were unaware of it, that Jesus, because he had come to reveal the love as well as the wrath of God, had to do something more than give utterance as a divinely commissioned messenger to the doom which awaited the unrepentant and the unbelieving at the hands of a righteous and angry God. In addition to a prophetic ministry he had a priestly work to perform; a work which involved nothing less than drinking to the dregs the cup of divine wrath, 'the cup of his fury', as it is called in Isaiah 51:17. He drank that cup in Gethsemane and on Calvary, when God 'laid upon him the iniquity of us all'. It was the knowledge of the bitterness of the contents of this cup that led him to pray that 'if possible the cup might pass from him' and to utter, or at least to contemplate the utterance of the prayer, 'Father, save me from this hour'⁹ (Matt. 26:39; John 12:27).

When Paul says that 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us' (Gal. 3:13) and that 'him who knew no sin God made to be sin on our behalf' (2 Cor. 5:21), he is in effect saying that Christ, sinless though he was, experienced the wrath of God towards sinners which rendered them liable to the death which was pronounced by the law to be accursed. We are not of course to suppose that in drinking this cup of wrath Jesus felt that God was angry with himself. How could the Father be angry with 'the beloved Son in whom he was well pleased', who arose from his knees in Gethsemane with the words 'Thy will not mine be done' on his lips; and who knew that God could only be supremely glorified by the passion of his Son? (John 12:31). But he did experience the misery, the affliction, the punishment and the death which are the lot of all sinners subject, as sinners must be, to the wrath of God who, just because he is all holy and all righteous, must punish sinners. It is therefore very natural that Christians should feel, when they contemplate the passion of Jesus, the relevance to his sufferings of the words put by Jeremiah into the mouth of the stricken city of Jerusalem, when God visited his wrath upon her in the Babylonian invasion: 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if

⁸ *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, 61.

⁹ It is uncertain whether these last words should be regarded as a question or a statement, i.e. as a projected prayer or a spoken prayer.

there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger' (Lam. 1:12). It was, moreover, out of the horror of experiencing that complete separation from God which is the inevitable and permanent state of the wicked that the cry of the Psalmist was heard once again in the darkness of the first Good Friday as the cup of wrath was being drained to the dregs by the Saviour. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Ps. 22:1; Matt. 27:46).

This drinking of the cup of the divine wrath on behalf of those for whom it was prepared was an essential part of his 'Father's business' which Jesus had come into the world to perform: and, when Peter sought to dissuade him from fulfilling this vocation, the Lord spoke to him with a vehemence difficult to dissociate from wrath: 'Get thee behind me, Satan'. All who would not accept him as the Lamb of God, by whose sacrifice the guilt of sinners was to be removed, were in effect choosing damnation rather than salvation, darkness rather than light, death rather than life. This is made abundantly clear in many of the sayings of Jesus recorded in St John's Gospel; and in none more explicitly than in John 3:36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him'. Equally severe is the saying recorded in Matthew 21:44, when Jesus refers to himself as the stone rejected by the builders which had nevertheless become the chief cornerstone in that new temple, where alone men can find security and obtain release from the divine wrath and then adds: 'He that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust'. Because the Jews had 'fallen on this stone', Jesus prophesied that the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (see Matt. 21:43). To fail to recognise that the mighty deeds of Jesus were in fact a divine assault upon the citadel of evil; and to attribute them to some malignant power, as the scribes who came down from Jerusalem to Galilee did, was to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit; and 'whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin' (Mark 3:29). Similarly, to refuse to see Jesus for what he was, i.e. the Son of God sent to proclaim the words of God and to do the works of God, rendered the Jews no longer the children of God but the children of the devil, doomed to 'die in their sins' and so receive the punishment prepared for the devil and his angels (see John 8:42ff.).

These are sayings of terrible severity, but they are just as much part of the revelation of God made known in Christ Jesus as those sayings and deeds of the Master which so conspicuously display the divine love and mercy. To thrust these severe sayings on one side and to concentrate attention solely upon passages of the gospels where the divine fatherhood is proclaimed is to preach a debilitated Christianity, which does not and cannot do what Christ came into the world to do, viz. save men from the wrath to come. In this connection we may welcome the words of a recent writer who remarks: 'Those who perceive only the love of God avert their eyes

from the uncongenial doctrine of the wrath of God. But in eliminating the wrath or disgrace of God they have also eliminated the grace of God. Where there is no fear there can be no rescue. Where there is no condemnation there can be no acquittal. Love must be based on justice, else it degenerates into mere affection."¹⁰ Or we may put this vital truth a little differently by saying that by seeking to eliminate Hell we must in effect also eliminate Heaven, which, in the words of the *Te Deum*, Jesus by his death and resurrection 'opened up to all believers'.

The resurrection is the abiding evidence that the priestly sacrifice of Jesus has been accepted by the just and holy God. The New Testament makes it quite clear that the good news of the first Easter day was not just that a man had been raised from the grave, but that the sacrifice of Christ the true Passover Lamb had received divine approval, and that therefore all who accepted it in faith as the means of salvation were placed in a new status with God, the status not of disgrace but grace, and were no longer of necessity the objects of his wrath, but able to enter into the divine glory as redeemed sons of God. Jesus is consequently proclaimed in the apostolic gospel as he 'that delivers us from the wrath to come' (1 Thess. 1:10). 'Being now justified by his blood', Paul tells the Romans, 'we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him' (Rom. 5:9). The believer can therefore await with confidence and assurance the day on which that wrath will finally and fully be revealed, knowing that God has not appointed him 'unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess. 5:9). For, though the wrath of God is always being revealed to a greater or less extent in the judgements of God that find expression in the providential ordering of human history, the history both of nations and of individuals, it remains true that in his mercy he endures 'with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction' (Rom. 9:22). In consequence there must be, and the Bible again and again affirms that there will be, a final day of judgement which will prove a day of full salvation for the believer, but will be a day of the uttermost wrath for the wicked.

The Manifestation of the Divine Wrath Under the New Covenant

The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that those who responded in faith to the apostolic gospel, and came under the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of Christ, were conscious of a change so great that the only human language adequate to describe it was the language of birth and resurrection. They had been 'born again'; they had 'passed from death to life'. God had delivered them 'out of the power of darkness and translated them into the kingdom of the Son of his love' (see Col. 1:13). An essential element in this conversion experience was the knowledge that they were no longer under wrath but 'under grace'. The New Testament is very far, however, from asserting that the Christian is automatically, as it were, removed from any manifestation of the divine anger. The burden of its message is that the justified sinner must become

¹⁰ F.C. Syngé, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 46.

the sanctified sinner. He is called to abide in the divine love. The essential difference between the believer and the unbeliever is that, while the latter, whether he realises it or not, is inevitably subject to God's wrath, the believer, by continual submission to the Holy Spirit, remains under grace, and so escapes that wrath.

Paul was much concerned to warn the Christians of the danger of being deluded by a false sense of security. Because they lived by faith in Christ who had sacrificed himself for them, they were under an obligation, he reminded them, to offer themselves as a sacrifice untainted by any uncleanness or covetousness; for any such moral stains would render them not, as they now had the right and the power to be, 'sons of God', but the 'children of disobedience' subject to the wrath of God (see Eph. 5:1-6). Because after formerly being 'darkness' they were now 'light in the Lord' they must 'walk as children of light' and bring forth that fruit of light which consists of moral goodness (Eph. 5:8, 9). Because they were 'risen with Christ' and were able by virtue of Christ's resurrection to enjoy the benefits of his passion, they must 'seek the things that are above ... and mortify their members upon the earth'; and these 'members' are stated to be in particular sensuality, and 'covetousness which is idolatry':¹¹ and Paul adds that it is because of these things that 'the wrath of God cometh upon the sons of disobedience' (Col. 3:1-6). Because they were 'not under law but under grace' they must not forget that there is a 'law of Christ' which has to be kept (Gal. 6:2). Because they had 'put off the old man and put on the new man' they needed to remember that the new man must be 'renewed unto knowledge after the image of him who created him' (Gal. 3:9-11). It was true, Paul tells the Thessalonians, that God 'appointed them not unto wrath but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ'; for this very reason therefore they need to respond to the call to be 'sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation' (1 Thess. 5:8, 9).

Many of the Corinthian 'Christians' in particular failed to see that Christianity was very different from the Greek mystery religions. It was not an *opus operatum* rendering them permanently secure. Those who were 'in Christ', members of the new Israel, and children of the new covenant, were not free from the obligation of worrying about moral behaviour. If it was true that 'all things were lawful unto them', it was also true that 'all things were not expedient'. Paul in his attempt to disillusion them on this vital matter recalls the fate

¹¹ A possible explanation of Paul's identification of 'covetousness' with 'idolatry' is given by E.F. Scott: 'Probably the true explanation is to be found in a Hebrew mode of speech which enforced the gravity of an offence by assimilating it to one which everyone would recognise as a very serious one' (*Epistle to the Colossians. Moffatt Commentary*, 67). Paul may however be implying that the wealth, the power, the influence which men covet tend to become their idols. There is a similar close association of covetousness and idolatry which provoke the Lord to anger in Isaiah 57 where, after a graphic description of idolatry in the first half of the chapter, God says in verse 17, 'For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him; I hid my face and was wroth.'

which overtook the majority of the Israelites during their journey from Egypt to Canaan. In so doing he makes it clear that the God with whom these ancient Israelites had to deal is the same God who has made the Corinthian Christians part of the new Israel, and established with them a new covenant inaugurated by the blood of Jesus. The story of the old Israel has been written down not just as a matter of antiquarian interest, but because it is an inspired record containing a word of God relevant for God's people at all times. 'These things', Paul asserts, 'happened unto them by way of example, and they were written for our admonition' (1 Cor. 10:11). They were historical incidents of unique significance because in them the living God acted in order to reveal to mankind an essential element in his nature. These Israelites of old, Paul reminds the Corinthians, were a privileged people no less than the Christians. They were 'under the cloud' of divine protection. They too had a saviour and experienced salvation, for they were redeemed from bondage in Egypt and enjoyed the leadership of Moses, a man endowed with supernatural power. They too had their sacraments, for they were fed with bread from heaven and drank of life-giving water from the rock. Nevertheless they were on many occasions subject to remarkable and devastating visitations of the divine wrath. 'With most of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness.'

In the Old Testament accounts of almost all the examples referred to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:1-10 explicit mention is made of the wrath of God with Israel. When the Lord had sent quails amongst them when they lusted after flesh, we read that 'while the flesh [of the quails] was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague' (Num. 11:33). When Aaron erected the golden calf and said, 'These be thy gods, O Israel'; and 'the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play'; the Lord said unto Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them' (Exod. 32:4, 5, 9, 10).

When the people committed 'whoredom with the daughters of Moab: for they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods ... the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel ... and those that died by the plague were twenty and four thousand' (Num. 25:1-3, 9). When Israel tried the patience of God and spake against Aaron and Moses saying, 'Wherefore have you led us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?' the anger of the Lord (though this actual phrase is not used at this point) found expression in the plague of fiery serpents, until through the intercession of Moses relief was obtained by the erection of a brazen serpent to act as the medium of God's saving grace (Num. 21:5-8). When, after the earth had swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram because they had rebelled against their divinely appointed leaders, the congregation of Israel again 'murmured against Moses and Aaron', the outbreak of the plague which fell upon the people is heralded by Moses in the words 'there is wrath gone out from the Lord' (Num. 16:46). Paul clearly implies in his references to these incidents in 1 Corinthians 10 that penalties of equal severity to

those exacted by God from the ancient Israelites are liable to fall upon the Christians if they think that they are inevitably secure. 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (10:12). The Corinthian Christians, moreover, doubtless prided themselves that they were no longer heathen and profane. But Paul reminds them that the partisan loyalties which exist among them are signs that they are, in fact, sacrilegious. They are desecrating the temple in which God is now pleased to dwell. And he warns them in no uncertain manner that 'if any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are' (1 Cor. 3:17).

It is noticeable that the Epistle to the Hebrews also draws attention to the visitation of the divine wrath upon Israel during the period of their wanderings. As a result of persistent disobedience, the author reminds his readers, as he quotes Psalm 95, God 'swore in his wrath' that the people should never enjoy his rest in the land to which they were journeying. And although that rest remains as a hope for the children of the new covenant, nevertheless the opportunity of enjoying it can be lost for ever, if the readers should apostatise as they were in danger of doing (see Heb. 3:7-12 and Heb. 4). The danger of 'falling into the hands of the living God' who is 'a consuming fire' is just as real under the new covenant as under the old (see Heb. 10:31 and 12:29).¹²

When Paul reminds his readers so emphatically of the danger in which they stood he is, it would appear, not merely proclaiming a truth which is self-evident in the Old Testament, but also speaking from his own experience as a Christian. Because of these persistent warnings which he gives to his fellow Christians, if for no other reason, those interpreters would seem to be right who assume that in the dramatic description of the inner struggle in Romans 7 the apostle is in fact speaking of his own experience *since* and not before his conversion. In his pre-conversion days Paul, though separated by God from his mother's womb for the great work which awaited him (Gal. 1:15), had been all the time under the divine wrath. But so far from realising this, he had been conscious of being a blameless Pharisee (Phil. 3:6), full of zeal for God. He had kept the strict letter of the law; but that law had never really influenced the inner springs of conduct but had only fed the flames of his pride. Nevertheless he had been happy in his very self-righteousness, for he had fondly supposed that he was doing God's will. When therefore he looked back on this period of his life, which had culminated in the supreme sin of persecuting the church of God (1 Cor. 15:9) under the delusion that he was doing God's work, he could say, 'I was alive apart from the law once' (Rom. 7:9). The essential mark of the unregenerate man lies in this disclosure. He thinks he is wholly alive, when he is in fact spiritually dead. He assumes that he is the object of God's love, when he is in fact the

¹² For a fuller discussion of the 'severe' passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews reference may be made to my monograph *The Gospel in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Tyndale Press), 47-50.

object of his wrath. He has in a word no conception of the extreme gravity of his situation. After his conversion, however, Paul saw clearly that formerly he had been all the time a sinner, estranged from God, and in need of a salvation which he could never achieve for himself. But now that that salvation had come to him in the mercy of God, he was conscious of a moral struggle such as he had never known before. Hitherto he had been *wholly* 'carnal', uninfluenced by the divine spirit; and so there had been no struggle of a divided self. As a Christian he is acutely conscious of such a struggle. He knows of two forces at work within him, a 'flesh' which is still very active; and a higher self, an 'I' so influenced by the divine Spirit that his mind is now sensitive to God, hating sin, and delighting in the divine law. Between this 'flesh' and this 'I' there is perpetual conflict; but potential victory now rests with the 'I', because the 'I' is no longer just 'I' but, as he puts it in Galatians 2:19, 'not I but Christ who lives in me'. As a result of Paul's conversion, as R. Haldane well stated, 'sin had been displaced from its dominion but not from its indwelling'.¹³

When therefore Paul cries out, 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' he can at once assert, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord'. But that the moral struggle goes on even after delivery from the dominion of sin the apostle makes clear by adding *after* his grateful cry of release the words, 'So then I myself with the mind serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin'. The attempt of some scholars, e.g. Moffatt, to simplify the whole passage by transferring this last sentence of verse 25 to the end of verse 23, so that it may harmonise better with the interpretation which assumes that Paul is describing his *pre-conversion* struggle, has no MSS evidence in its support: and as the particular interpretation which it is meant to illuminate is, as we have seen, not the most probable in the light of Paul's teaching elsewhere, it should be rejected as arbitrary and improbable. As Karl Barth has well said with reference to Romans 7: 'What Paul is here asserting was well understood by the Reformers; but it is misunderstood by those modern theologians who read him through the spectacles of their own piety ... How vast a gulf separates the nineteenth-century conquering-hero attitude to religion from that disgust of men at themselves which is the characteristic of true religion!'¹⁴

We have seen that under the old covenant those who sought to thwart the purposes of God and to frustrate his plans for the salvation of his elect were subjected to his wrath in the disasters which befell them. Paul is equally certain that the divine wrath will descend upon those who, as he says in 1 Thessalonians 2:15, 'both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved'. Such wrath is due to fall upon

¹³ *Commentary on Romans*, 294.

¹⁴ *The Epistle to the Romans*, 269-70.

them, because, as the apostle says, they are 'filling up the measure of their sins'. It is more than once stated in the Bible that God delays the display of his wrath till offenders have reached a kind of saturation point, beyond which they may not pass. Thus in Genesis 15:16 Abraham is warned that 'the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full'. In the same way our Lord intimated that the Pharisees of his generation must fill up the measure of the sins of their fathers before they would receive 'the judgement of hell' from which they could never escape (Matt. 23:32, 33). That time, Paul implies in 1 Thessalonians 2:16 is now imminent. 'The wrath', he states, 'is come upon them to the uttermost'. The word *epithasen* here used would seem to denote that the wrath is so certainly and so soon to happen, that it can be almost said to have already happened. The words were fulfilled, though not completely, in the disaster of the destruction of the holy city in AD 70. That was indeed a day of wrath, as Jesus specifically calls it in Luke 21:23, where, after prophesying the siege of Jerusalem, he says, 'there shall be great distress upon the land [i.e. the land of Palestine] and wrath unto this people [i.e. the Jewish people]'. The setting of this prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in Luke 21 within a wider eschatological framework makes it clear that Jesus regarded that event as a forerunner of the final day of wrath, when he will return again to execute final judgement. To a further consideration of the biblical revelation concerning that day we must now return.

The Final Day of Wrath

The expression 'the day of the Lord' at the time of the rise of the great prophets of Israel denoted an event to which the Israelites were looking forward as the day of Jehovah's final vindication of the *righteousness of his people* against their enemies. One of the tasks of the prophets was to insist that in fact 'the day of the Lord' would be a day on which God would vindicate '*his own righteousness*' not only against the enemies of Israel, but also against Israel itself. This 'day of the Lord' throughout Old Testament prophecy remains a future reality, though there were events within the history covered by the Old Testament story which were indeed days of judgement both upon Israel and upon the surrounding nations which had oppressed her.

The certainty of this *final* 'day of the Lord', in which through the now *unrestrained* display of his wrath his absolute justice will be completely vindicated, passes over into the New Testament: and this is one of the many factors which gives unity to biblical theology. There is still a 'wrath to come', when John the Baptist begins his mission, which inaugurates the age of fulfilment to which the Old Testament is pointing. It is a fulfilment which is not finally achieved however till the *second* coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; for there is still a 'wrath to come' when the New Testament closes with the words, 'Even so come, Lord Jesus'.

The main purpose of John's mission was to enable his contemporaries to escape from that final wrath by pointing them to Jesus as the Lamb of God, through whose atoning sacrifice the sins

of the world would be taken away (see Matt. 3:7; John 1:29). But this Lamb of God was also destined to be, as is stated in John 5:22, the divinely appointed agent of God's final judgement upon men. 'All judgement has been given by the Father to the Son.' For this reason that 'day of the Lord', which is still awaited at the close of the Old Testament,¹⁵ 'the day of wrath and righteous judgement of God', as Paul designates it in Romans 2:5, is in the New Testament synonymous with the return of Jesus the divine Son of Man in glory. And an essential element in the salvation experienced by those under the New Covenant is the eager and fearless expectation by the believer of this final appearing of the Saviour. The Thessalonians, Paul assures them, if they remain faithful, will find on that day complete deliverance from the wrath to come (see 1 Thess. 1:10). God who had called them had not appointed them unto wrath but unto the obtaining of final salvation through their Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 Thess. 5:9). Those who at the moment were persecuted but were faithful under persecution would find 'rest at the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven with the angels of his power (2 Thess. 1:7). But, on the other hand, to those who knew not God and obeyed not the gospel of the Lord Jesus that day would be a day of wrath, in which they would suffer 'the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might' (2 Thess. 1:9, RSV).

In the New Testament, therefore, the final day of judgement can be called not only 'the day of the Lord' but, as it is called in Revelation 6:17, 'the day of their wrath', i.e. the wrath of God and of the Lamb; or, as some MSS read in this verse 'the day of his wrath'. In the Apocalypse of John the point is stressed that, because Christ himself has drunk the cup of divine wrath against sinners in his atoning passion, he has been entrusted with the task of being the agent through whom the divine wrath will be finally expressed. This would seem to be the main reason why believers are warned in the New Testament not to attempt to avenge themselves. By so doing they would be usurping the function which belongs to God and his Christ. In so far, however, as those who legitimately exercise authority in secular affairs are restraining evil by the punishment of transgressors, they can be said to be performing a ministry of God which, in the case of those who do evil, is a ministry in which the divine wrath is at least partially manifested (see Rom. 8:4).

But when Paul bids the Romans in Romans 12:9 to 'avenge not themselves but give place unto wrath' it is almost certain that the reference is to the manifestation of the divine wrath in the fullest sense on the final day of wrath. The presence of the definite article in this verse before the word 'wrath' and the fact that Paul follows his injunction with the quotation from Deuteronomy 32:35, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord', would seem to place this interpretation beyond dispute.

¹⁵ See Mal. 4:1: *For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.*

The final divine 'repayment' comes when, as the seer of Revelation is privileged to witness, the risen and ascended Lord opens the seals of the divine book of destiny, in which the last judgements of almighty God stand written. The risen Christ alone is worthy to open this book, because he is at one and the same time the Lamb that has been slain, and the all-powerful Lion of the tribe of Judah, who has purchased unto God with his blood men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation (see Rev. 5:9). The fact that the Lamb is also the Lion adds to the terribleness of his wrath, when he opens the seals of the book and releases the final woes and plagues which are to usher in the end. From this wrath of the Lamb all those who have had special responsibility for the conduct of human affairs, but have acted in a manner contrary to God's purposes, are pictured as hiding themselves in caves and in the rocks of the hills. For, as Swete well commented on Revelation 6:16, 'What sinners dread is not death but the revealed presence of God'. 'There is', he adds, 'deep psychology in the remark of Genesis 3:8, "And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden" ... The Apocalyptist foresees the same shrinking from the sight of God in the last generation of mankind which Genesis attributes to the parents of the race. But there will then be a further source of terror: the end brings with the revelation of God "the wrath of the Lamb"'.¹⁶

He it is, the holy Lamb of God, who through his ministering angels is pictured as gathering the vintage of the *earth* (so-called because it is the fruit of a vine in direct contrast to the True Vine whose branches bear fruit unto God), and casting it into the winepress, the great winepress of the wrath of God (see Rev. 14:9). He it is, the Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who treads the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God (see Rev. 19:13, 15, 16). And he it is who gives the nations to drink of the wine that this winepress produces, the deadly wine of the fierceness of God's wrath. All who have worshipped the Beast, or some substitute for the true God, and all who have persecuted God's people, 'will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed [i.e. in full strength] in the cup of his anger' (Rev. 14:10). At 15:7 a somewhat different metaphor is used. The seven angels are given seven incense bowls laden with the wrath of God, and are bidden to pour out their contents upon the earth. Thus in an unmistakable manner is the final and complete effusion of God's anger symbolised.

The twenty-four elders, representing the true Church of God, are pictured as giving praise to God that this supreme vindication of divine justice has come; that the divine wrath has proved stronger than the futile raging of the nations; and that God's servants, and prophets and saints, both great and small, have received their due reward (see Rev. 11:18). For whatever disasters may fall upon the earth, as the death-bringing contents of the vials of wrath are poured out, they cannot touch God's servants whose foreheads are sealed with the blessed name of their Redeemer, and whose names

¹⁶ *The Apocalypse of John* 94, 95.

stand written in the Lamb's book of life (see Rev. 7:3; 3:5). For them there awaits a return to that Paradise from which Adam was banished and an entrance into conditions of indescribable bliss, as having been brought to glory they worship God and enjoy him for ever.

They are before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their Shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life; and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes (Rev. 7:15-18).

KARL BARTH AND THE LEGITIMACY OF NATURAL THEOLOGY

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Abstract: In this article I examine Karl Barth's celebrated criticisms of natural theology. I describe how Barth broke onto the theological scene, bringing a necessary and revitalising corrective to nineteenth century liberalism. I examine the inter-war context in which Barth worked and his famous disputes with Harnack and Brunner. Central for Barth's theology is the self-revelation of God in Christ as attested in Scripture. I argue, however, that Scripture itself commends a limited natural theology, and this formed part of the proclamation of the early church. Whilst remaining deeply impressed by Barth's Christo-centrism, I argue that Barth's approach leads ultimately to an irrationalism which deprives Christians of an important means of commending the faith in a pluralist society.

Introduction

Natural theology concerns the knowledge of God available to all human beings without recourse to special revelation.¹ It is an area of intellectual enquiry with a long, if chequered history, dating back at least to the era of classical Greek thought. Within Christian theology the expression *theologia naturalis* was coined by Augustine. Natural theology found classic expression in the works of St Anselm and, supremely, in the 'Five Ways' of St Thomas Aquinas.

The fortunes of natural theology fluctuated with the advent of the Enlightenment. At first it was elevated since the alternative way of knowing God, through revelation and therefore through external authority, was deemed suspect. But then it came to be attacked by Hume and, more thoroughly, Kant who rejected the idea that one could gain knowledge of realities beyond the phenomena of space and time.

The image of the watchmaker-designer of William Paley resonated with many, but this picture succumbed to the new discoveries of Charles Darwin. However, in recent years natural theology has undergone something of a renaissance, thanks especially I believe to the work of Richard Swinburne, who has restated the classical

¹ John Macquarrie in Alister McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 402.

arguments in probabilistic terms.² Discoveries in modern cosmology, especially of the fine-tuning of the universe, have also spurred natural theological reflection. I find myself deeply impressed by Swinburne's work, and I also find the anthropic arguments coming from modern cosmology very striking and persuasive.

Arguments for the existence of God which arise out of modern cosmology comprise an important element of modern natural theology. They are also, I believe, of great value for apologetics. But there is a fundamental problem that needs to be faced. Is this approach to knowledge of God actually valid? Here I do not mean whether particular arguments are successful or not – this is clearly a matter for debate depending on particular formulations – but something much deeper and more basic. Is this an approach that Christians ought to pursue? Can it lead to genuine knowledge of God? Or is it just idolatry, substituting human endeavour for God's only true revelation of himself in the Christ of Scripture?

Following St Thomas, Roman Catholic theology has always recognised the importance of natural theology. Thus the First Vatican Council condemns those who deny that God as Creator and Lord can be known by the 'certain natural light of human reason'.³ However, there is a strong strand of Protestant theology that totally rejects this whole approach. The great pioneer of this rejection among Protestant theologians is Karl Barth, for whom natural theology is presumptuous and apologetics illegitimate.

In this paper I examine Barth's theology and ask whether his rejection of natural theology is justified. As will become apparent I believe that Barth's stance is too extreme. My own position is that there is a limited knowledge of God available to us in creation, but I believe this knowledge is God-given (it is God revealing himself), just as is our knowledge of God in Christ. To make this clear it might have been helpful, as is sometimes done, to replace the term 'natural theology' by 'general revelation', and to call God's revelation of himself in Christ and Scripture 'special revelation'. This might lead to a certain begging of the question. In any case the term 'natural theology' is widely used in the literature and unavoidable in quotations, so I retain it here.

The theology of Karl Barth

Karl Barth stands as a towering figure over twentieth century theology. Thomas Torrance argues that Barth was 'the most powerfully biblical and evangelical theologian of our age', and that he

² See especially Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, rvsd edn, 1991).

³ Quoted by Karl Barth in *Church Dogmatics* II.1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), 79. Barth acknowledges that he is doing what is condemned in a Canon of the Council, arguing that the Catholic view partitions God and that we need to know God as one – Creator, Redeemer and Reconciler. The quotation is also in Roger Trigg, *Rationality and Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 177.

ranks with the very greatest theologians of all time – including Athanasius, Augustine, Luther and Calvin'.⁴ It is therefore only with the greatest respect and trepidation that I venture to engage with what Barth says about natural theology.

Karl Barth's starting point is his desire to deny all knowledge of God apart from God's own gracious revelation of himself. God reveals himself in Christ and this revelation is made known to us in Scripture. It is by God's grace alone (*sola gratia*) that we can know him: we cannot know him by our own efforts. This divine revelation is a miracle. In contrast, 'Natural theology is the doctrine of a union of man with God existing outside God's revelation in Jesus Christ'.⁵ Furthermore, 'As the content of proclamation and theology it can have no place at all. It can be treated only as non-existent. In this sense, therefore, it must be excised without mercy'.⁶

Barth contrasts 'religion', which he sees as concerning man's own striving for God, with 'theology', which is man's response to God's self-revelation. He writes: 'The event of God's revelation has to be understood and expounded as it is attested to the Church of Jesus Christ by Holy Scripture.'⁷ Barth's shattering indictment is that in contrast to this 'religion is unbelief'.⁸ Religion is man trying to do for himself what only God can do for him. It is man justifying himself rather than through faith accepting justification by the grace of God.

Barth would affirm that God has revealed himself both in history and in creation, but all argument should be from God to the world, not the other way round. Let us look at these aspects of God's revelation in Barth's thought, beginning with history.

First: Barth does not deny that events that are recorded objectively in Scripture happened. Supremely, Barth affirms the resurrection of Jesus from the dead as an objective event. However, he denies the value of seeking historical evidence in support of this claim. Whilst the resurrection is indeed an objective event we must not seek 'proof' for its occurrence. It is to be accepted by faith.

Barth viewed the nineteenth century battles about the historical Jesus as futile and irrelevant. He also thought that reliance on history made the ordinary Christian beholden to the expert. It may be that he was reacting to the negative assessment of history in the Enlightenment, e.g. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing envisaged 'an ugly broad ditch' separating the contingent truths of history from the necessary truths of reason. Besides this, when historical research on the Bible was actually done its import was largely negative.

⁴ Thomas F. Torrance, *Karl Barth: Biblical an Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1990), ix + 1.

⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.1, 168.

⁶ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.1, 170.

⁷ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), 280.

⁸ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.2, 297–325. On p. 299 Barth states, 'We begin by stating that religion is unbelief'. The whole section is entitled 'Religion as Unbelief'.

It might be that this Enlightenment analysis is wrong. It may be that certain historical events can have universal validity and it may be that the negative import of this historical research was a result of the methods employed. Generally, following the Enlightenment, historical Jesus research made no allowance for the supernatural. Ernst Troeltsch enunciated the principle of analogy, whereby past events are deemed by fiat to be similar to present events. Thus miraculous events in Biblical times were ruled out because there was no analogy with present events. Such methods are bound to lead to a non-supernatural Jesus because they start from premises that rule out the supernatural. But this need not be so, and more open-minded premises might well lead to other conclusions, as is evidenced by more recent trends in historical Jesus research. Moreover, it has been argued that evidence from testimony can in principle make it probable that a miraculous event occurred, and that Hume's famous argument against miracles, whence much of the subsequent anti-miraculous prejudice came from, is fundamentally flawed.⁹

In the case of the resurrection, we do of course have evidence in the form of eyewitness accounts. Barth would deny that these could even in principle provide 'proof' that the resurrection occurred because the accounts themselves come from faith, and therefore from a particular perspective. What he fails to realise is that this is true of any reporting of evidence. This fact does not mean that we cannot examine the evidence for its reliability, and make a judgement. Evidence of testimony will enhance the *a priori* probability that an event occurred. The problem with relying on faith alone is the danger that our beliefs become purely subjective – a result very far from Barth's intention. One cannot escape the need for the exercise of reason, and if Christianity makes historical claims it seems only right to subject these to the tools of reason.

Barth's position regarding natural theology is consistent with his views about the apologetic value of history. When he discusses the doctrine of creation he does so by expounding Genesis chapters 1 and 2. He makes no reference to scientific views about creation, for whilst he thought at first that this might be necessary, he later saw 'that there can be no scientific problems, objections or aids in relation to what Holy Scripture and the Christian Church understand by the divine work of creation'.¹⁰ Science and the Christian doctrine are disjointed; they are about different things, but theology is primary: 'There is free scope for natural science beyond what theology describes as the work of the Creator'.

For Barth, that God is Creator is just as much a matter of revelation as everything else in the Creed: 'We are not nearer to believing in God the Creator, than we are to believing that Jesus Christ was conceived

⁹ See Rodney D. Holder, 'Hume on Miracles: Bayesian Interpretation, Multiple Testimony, and the Existence of God', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 49, no. 1 (1998), 49–65.

¹⁰ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III.1, ix.

by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary."¹¹ This is because we understand the creation as his work and not vice versa, so we have to understand God as Creator first. Science might tell us about the development of the creation over millions of years, but continuation is 'quite a different thing from this sheer beginning, with which the concept of creation and Creator has to do'. I would argue that the distinctions are not quite so sharp as this. The doctrine of creation embraces 'continuation' in that God sustains the universe and its laws in being. There seems to me to be a genuine overlap of concern here, since the Big Bang theory has something to say about the beginning, and revelation has something to say about God's creating and sustaining activity. Moreover, some cosmological models deny that the world has a temporal origin (e.g. the Hawking-Hartle model removes the 'specialness' of the first moment, and some inflationary cosmologies posit no beginning in time), so talk of 'sheer beginning' may be something of a hostage to fortune. It is ontological origin which is important for Christian doctrine – why is there something rather than nothing? – rather than temporal origin.

Another area where scientific or philosophical arguments might impinge on theology concerns the reality of the world. Most scientists are realists, because their experience of doing science leads them in this direction, though realism has been questioned by some philosophers, most recently by those of a post-modern bent. Such scientific or philosophical arguments are not invoked by Barth. For him the key is the incarnation. We can be sure that the creation is real simply because God has become a creature. Because God has become man in Jesus Christ the existence of creation can no longer be doubted. It seems to me, however, that God's faithfulness is seen in creation in other ways too. The operation of scientific laws, especially their regularity, is evidence for God's faithfulness, and provides an argument for realism. Arguably it is easier to believe in the reality of the world than in the incarnation! For Barth the great mystery and miracle is the existence of the creation.

Whilst Barth seems to break radically with a strong line of common Christian tradition, he is in harmony with traditional Catholic and Protestant thinking when he goes on to assert that God does not need the world or us. He created heaven and earth and myself, 'of sheer fatherly kindness and compassion, apart from any merit or worthiness of mine; for all of which I am bound to thank and praise him, to serve him and to be obedient, which is assuredly true' (Luther).

God created freely and by grace, and he does not grudge the creation its own reality, nature and freedom. Here Barth would find more sympathisers in the camp of Christian scientists like Peacocke and Polkinghorne. Again, Barth is traditional in asserting that it is wrong to think of the world as God (pantheism). It is also wrong to think of the world as an outflow, an emanation from God: 'That would really not be creation, but a living movement of God, an expression of

¹¹ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (London: SCM Press, 1949), 50.

himself. But creation means something different; it means a reality distinct from God: 'Creaturely reality means reality on the basis of a *creatio ex nihilo*, a creation out of nothing.'

Barth asserts that God transcends the limitations of our time and space – his time and space are different. However, that does not mean that 'there is no time in him'. In this way Barth might avoid some of the problems associated with the traditional doctrine of God's 'timelessness',¹² though he wants to retain from that doctrine the idea that God has 'presence' which we do not. In any case, God must be temporal to be a living God, and more importantly to become incarnate in Christ: 'Without God's complete temporality the content of the Christian message has no shape.'¹³

Barth agrees with Calvin that the object of creation is to be the theatre of God's glory, i.e. of his manifestation or visibility. The goodness of the world consists in its being 'the theatre of his glory, *theatrum gloriae Dei*', as Calvin says of it.

Why, according to Barth, is there no natural knowledge of God? Nicholls¹⁴ notes that for Barth God is not unknowable on the grounds of Kant's critique of pure reason. That is because we experience only phenomena, and so can only have reliable knowledge of phenomena, and cannot have knowledge of 'things in themselves'. Rather, God is unknowable because of the ontological difference, the 'infinite, qualitative distinction' as Kierkegaard put it, between God the Creator and man the creature, and because sin has corrupted man's nature. This goes further than Calvin's view that man should know God through nature (and Calvin urged the study of nature through the natural sciences), but can do so imperfectly because of the Fall and sin. For Calvin revelation in Scripture both enhances the knowledge of God as Creator and is essential for saving knowledge of God as Redeemer.

To me, Calvin has it about right. Indeed Calvin's view could be rephrased using the general/special revelation distinction that I noted at the end of my introduction. A certain knowledge of God is available to all, whether members of the Christian community or not, through God's general revelation in nature. Indeed God has implanted a religious sense in every human being whereby he can perceive God as Creator, and this religious sense gives rise to what would later be called 'points of contact' for the special revelation of God as Redeemer, in the Christ of Scripture.¹⁵ Barth denies the

¹² The traditional doctrine of timelessness is critiqued in, for example, Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, rvsd edn, 1993), 223–29.

¹³ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.1, 620.

¹⁴ William Nicholls, *The Pelican Guide to Modern Theology*, Vol. 1 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 94.

¹⁵ See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, transl. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1989), I.iii.1 and I.v.1, where Calvin writes of the *sensus divinitatis* or *semen religionis* endowed by God, and of God's manifest perfections in the whole structure of the universe, whereby 'we cannot open our eyes without being compelled to behold him'.

existence of such points of contact (see below) and asserts that even this general revelation cannot be authenticated by human reason, apart from faith.

Avery Dulles notes some of the problems with Barth's approach. How can there be revelation if men and women lack the capacity to receive it? And if the word can be received it must be distinguishable from its contradictory: 'the simultaneous yes and no cannot be final'.¹⁶ We return to some criticisms of Barth's approach later.

The Barth-Brunner debate

Barth and his erstwhile friend and colleague, and fellow dialectical theologian, Emil Brunner, famously fell out following the publication of the latter's *Nature and Grace*. Brunner was attempting to rehabilitate a natural theology and took as his basis the idea that man is created in the *imago Dei*. There is thus an analogy with the being of God – contra Barth, for whom there is no *analogia entis* which he perceives to be based on human insight, but only an *analogia fidei* created on the basis of God's self-revelation. Moreover, despite human sin there is, for Brunner, a 'point of contact' (*Anknüpfungspunkt*) in human nature for God to reveal himself, i.e. in man's recognition of God in nature and history. There is something as it were, implanted in human nature, which God utilises in revealing himself. This might be awareness of God in nature, or an awareness of what sin is so that the gospel imperative 'repent and be saved' has meaning:

It will not do to kill the dialectic of this knowledge of sin by saying that knowledge of sin comes only by the grace of God. This statement is as true as the other, that the grace of God is comprehensible only to him who already knows about sin ... A man without conscience cannot be struck by the call 'Repent ye and believe the Gospel'.¹⁷

Barth's peremptory reply was *Nein!* (the ultra-brief title of his article). He denied any such point of contact which might imply something a man contributes to his own salvation. The whole initiative of revelation is God's; there is no 'natural theology'. As Joan O'Donovan puts it,

Brunner argued for the indispensable role of the imago doctrine in articulating the universal being of sinful mankind apart from the redeeming and sanctifying grace of Christ, while Barth denied to the doctrine any non-Christological and pre-eschatological meaning.¹⁸

¹⁶ Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (2nd edn, New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1992), 97.

¹⁷ Emil Brunner, 'Nature and Grace', in *Natural Theology*, transl. Peter Fraenkel, with an introduction by John Baillie (London: Geoffrey Bles, The Centenary Press, 1946), 31; Barth's response is included in the same volume.

¹⁸ Joan E. O'Donovan, 'Man in the Image of God', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39 (1986), 433–59, 434.

In the context of the Germany of 1934 Barth was keen to deny Luther's doctrine of divinely created 'orders' such as the family, the church and the state, particularly of course the last, which prevented creation's collapse into chaos. Brunner's position was however more subtle than would be one which lumped family, church and state together. Thus he distinguishes marriage as an 'ordinance of creation' from the state which is an 'ordinance of preservation', because the latter has to do with sin. Moreover, he was aware of the dangerous 'false theology derived from nature' which was 'threatening the Church to the point of death', and he acknowledged Barth's passionate leadership in resisting such a theology.¹⁹

Brunner argued that man's being possesses a formal and a material aspect.²⁰ The formal aspect is referred to at Genesis 1:26 and Psalm 8 and gives man superiority over the rest of creation because as a rational creature he is given a 'capacity for words' and 'responsibility'.²¹ It is this formal structure which is analogous to divine being and indestructible by sin. In contrast the material image, including original righteousness and freewill, has been lost through sin. Brunner's view resembles that of Irenaeus who split man's nature in a manner not too dissimilar from this. Irenaeus thought man retained the image, i.e. rational nature and free will, at the Fall, but lost the likeness, i.e. moral virtue and righteousness. (As Luther and Calvin pointed out, Irenaeus failed to realise that Gen. 1:26 exhibits typical Hebrew parallelism.) O'Donovan believes such a definition of human nature leads to rejection of those not obviously responsible or linguistically equipped (e.g. the unborn, the mentally handicapped), a point noted by Barth himself: 'Are they not children of Adam? Has Christ not died for them?'²²

Brunner ascribes to man 'partial' knowledge of God's will and human sin. In his nature/grace dialectic, echoing St Thomas Aquinas, grace is the completion, as well as the negation, of nature. In his response of repentance and faith the formal image receives new material content, original righteousness restored. Barth sees in Brunner's anthropology man contributing to his own salvation, in defiance of the Reformation doctrine of *sola gratia*. He denies the pre-existing point of contact for divine grace. Rather this is renewed by Christ:

*Man's capacity for God, however it may be with his humanity and personality, has really been lost ... The image of God in man ... which constitutes the real point of contact for the Word of God, is the one awakened through Christ from real death to life and so 'restored', the newly-created rectitudo now real as man's possibility for the Word of God. This point of contact is, therefore, not real outside faith but only in faith.*²³

¹⁹ Brunner, 'Nature and Grace', in *Natural Theology*, 59.

²⁰ Brunner, 'Nature and Grace', in *Natural Theology*, 23.

²¹ 'That is the "point of contact": capacity for words and responsibility'; Brunner, 'Nature and Grace', 56.

²² Barth, 'No!', in *Natural Theology*, 89.

²³ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 273.

Again, he writes: 'The Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son and is therefore revealed and believed to be God, does not stand in need of any point of contact but that which he himself creates.'²⁴

Roman Catholic theologians also appealed to St Thomas' dictum, 'Grace does not destroy nature but perfects it', in order to justify a concordat between the Vatican and the Nazi regime. As with Brunner, this seemed to validate the claims of the German Christians who saw grace as not destroying *German* nature but perfecting it, and hence as seeing their own national folk-consciousness as a revelation of God.²⁵

Historical background to Barth's thought

The dialectical theology of Barth and others has much to commend it. It came like a breath of fresh air as a necessary corrective to nineteenth century liberalism which had been, as Barth claimed, man-centred in its approach to theology. In analysing Barth's theology it helps greatly to see the context in which he worked. We have already seen something of this, but it will be helpful to delve a little more into the historical background.

When Barth arrived as pastor of Safenwil in the Swiss Alps and found himself having to preach every week, he soon realised that his Reformed congregation expected to hear the Word of God spoken to them by the preacher. His university training had simply not equipped him for this task. He felt that it was essential to go back to the Bible and expound it, for it was there that God had revealed himself in Christ. A further indictment of liberalism came when Barth found that almost all his former university teachers, whom he had hitherto greatly venerated, were among ninety-three German intellectuals who made a proclamation in support of the Kaiser's war aims in World War I. For Barth, theology must issue in a distinct ethics, and from this moment he knew he could no longer follow his teachers' ethics, dogmatics, or their understanding of the Bible and history.²⁶

Barth's dialectical theology dropped on the world of the theological establishment like a bombshell with the publication of his *Römerbrief* (Commentary on Romans) in 1921, written whilst Barth was still a pastor at Safenwil. It shortly gave rise to a heated debate with his former teacher, the great Church historian and grand old man of German theology, Adolf von Harnack. In 1923 Harnack published an article entitled 'Fifteen Questions to the Despisers of Scientific Theology among the Theologians' in the journal *Christian World*. (Incidentally the title echoes that of Friedrich Schleiermacher's classic *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, Schleiermacher being the pioneer of nineteenth

²⁴ Barth, 'No!', in *Natural Theology*, 121.

²⁵ Torrance, *Karl Barth*, 143 and 183.

²⁶ Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God*, John Knox Press, 1960, 14.

century liberal theology with whom Barth is chiefly at odds). In his article Harnack wrote this:

If it is certain that everything that is subconscious, non-rational, numinous, fascinating and so on remains subhuman as long as it is not apprehended, understood and purified by reason, how is it possible to wish to belittle, even reject, this reason? Is there really any other theology than that which has a firm connection and blood relationship to science in general?

Barth's reply contained this passage:

If theology regained the courage to be objective, the courage to become a witness of the word of revelation, of judgement, and of the love of God, then it could also be that 'science in general' would have to look out for its 'firm connection and blood relationship' to theology, rather than the other way round.²⁷

This correspondence also exposes a marked divergence on the issue of history. Harnack asks how, if Jesus Christ be central to the gospel, one can ignore the findings of critical-historical study in order to find a 'reliable and generally accepted knowledge of that person'. Barth's perfunctory reply is that such a 'reliable and generally accepted knowledge ... can only be that of faith awakened by God'.

We have seen how the rise of Nazism in the inter-war period provided a further, vital context for Barth's rejection of natural theology. The Barmen Declaration of the Confessing Church, made at the Synod of Barmen on 31 May 1934, was drawn up by Barth, so the story goes, while the other delegates were enjoying an afternoon nap! It is instructive to see the text of the first article of the theological declaration and Barth's interpretation of it:

I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (Jn. 14:6).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber ... I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved (Jn 10:1, 9).

Jesus Christ, as he is attested to us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God, whom we have to hear and whom we have to trust and obey in life and in death.

We condemn the false doctrine that the Church can and must recognise as God's revelation other events and powers, forms and truths, apart from and alongside this one Word of God.

In expounding the Barmen Declaration Barth is adamant that in Adolf Hitler 'a source of specific new revelation of God ... demanding obedience and trust, took its place beside the revelation attested in

²⁷ An English text of the article and Barth's reply can be found in *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, Ed. James M. Robinson (John Knox Press 1968), 165 ff.; the quotation is on p. 166.

Holy Scripture ... claiming that it should be acknowledged ... as equally binding and obligatory'. That demand for equality only obscured the even more outrageous demand that this new revelation was to be proclaimed the only revelation, leading to the 'transformation of the Christian Church into the temple of the German nature - and history-myth'.²⁸

What is perhaps surprising is that Barth should equate this Nazi usurpation of God's revelation with developments in preceding centuries:

There can be no doubt that not merely a part but the whole had been intended and claimed when it had been demanded that side by side with its attestation in Jesus Christ and therefore in Holy Scripture the Church should also recognise and proclaim God's revelation in reason, in conscience, in the emotions, in history, in nature, and in culture and its achievements and developments.

The 'also' in these former demands also really meant to be an 'only'. Barth writes, '... even if we only lend our little finger to natural theology, there necessarily follows the denial of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ'. If these earlier proclamations of the knowability of God in Christ alongside other proclamations of his knowability in nature, reason and history, had been legitimate, then the same could be true of linking the proclamation of knowing God in Christ with racial purity.

An important question to raise concerning Barth's thinking is: 'Did it change?' Did the radical challenge to the possibility of knowledge of God in nature moderate when the crisis of the Nazi era was over? It seems to me that the answer to this question is, in all essentials, 'No!' Nevertheless this is not quite the angry 'No!' of the Brunner correspondence. Perhaps the key text is Barth's 1956 lecture 'The Humanity of God' (German *Die Menschlichkeit Gottes*).²⁹ Here he is more generous to his opponents: 'We are called upon today to accord that earlier theology ... greater historical justice than appeared to us possible and feasible in the violence of the first break-off and clash.' Nevertheless it was clear that theology 'could no longer continue as it was' and although the challenge was made 'somewhat brutally and severely', that challenge was indeed essential.

Whilst there is therefore no going back, Barth does acknowledge the need for a moving forward, indeed for a 'revision' (*Retraktation*). He further acknowledges that although the challenge to liberalism was right, 'we were only partially in the right'. The fundamental need in this revision is not now to see the Deity of God, which was obscured by the liberal theology, but 'the humanity of God'. The 'infinite qualitative distinction' can lead to a deity of God more resembling that of the God of the philosophers than the God of

²⁸ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.1, 172ff.

²⁹ Barth, *The Humanity of God*, 37-65.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The counterbalance is that the deity of the living God must find its meaning in relationship to man. So the infinite qualitative distinction is bridged in Christ, who 'comes forward to *man* on behalf of *God* calling for and awakening faith, love and hope, and to God on behalf of *man*, representing man, making satisfaction and interceding'.

What this new emphasis on the 'humanity of God', seen Christologically, means however, is that there is still no natural theology. 'We do not need to engage in a free-ranging investigation to seek out and construct who and what God truly is, and who and what man truly is, but only to read the truth about both where it resides, namely, in the fullness of their togetherness, their covenant which proclaims itself in Jesus Christ.' The initiative is all God's and the sequence of God's act inducing man's response irreversible: 'Thus we have here no universal deity capable of being reached conceptually, but this concrete deity – real and recognisable in the *descent* grounded in that sequence and peculiar to the existence of Jesus Christ.'

Analysis

I have to agree with Barth that God's self-revelation in Christ as attested in Holy Scripture is primary. The absolute centrality of the person of Jesus Christ to Karl Barth is deeply impressive. In the crisis of the church struggle in Germany in the Nazi period, perhaps only a theology so utterly and unequivocally Christ-centred could have been effective. Having said this, I must disagree with Barth that there is simply no such thing as natural theology. As creator, God has left evidence of himself in the natural world. Scripture itself attests as much.

We read in Acts 14:17 that God 'did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rain and fruitful seasons ...' In Romans 1:19 Paul asserts that 'What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.'³⁰ The Old Testament too appeals to the natural world as revealing God's glory (e.g. Psalm 19:1 – 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork'). In the Apocrypha, Wisdom 13:1–9 (which may well have influenced Paul in Rom. 1) presents an argument from creation to knowledge of the Creator, appealing to the findings of Greek science: 'For from the

³⁰ Douglas Campbell suggests, in opposition to the traditional view (as exemplified by Aquinas), that Paul is arguing ironically here; see Douglas A. Campbell, 'Natural Theology in Paul? Reading Rom. 1.19–20', *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 1, no. 3 (1999), 231–52. Clearly Campbell's paper needs a full treatment which I cannot give here. For the present, I would just note the dependence of Paul on Wisdom as noted above, and the passages in Acts to which Campbell does not refer (perhaps because they do not come from Paul's own pen?).

greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator ... for if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things?' Arguably the findings of science, especially of the vastness of the universe, enhance rather than detract from our perception of the glory of God.

It would seem that there is an inherent contradiction in Barth's position here. God's self-revelation in Scripture is all that matters, yet Scripture itself asserts that there is a knowledge of God to be obtained from the observation of nature. This might extend to what we can learn about God's will by observation of the animal kingdom, e.g. 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard' (Prov. 6:6). There is much appeal to nature in the wisdom literature of the OT.

Of course 'natural' knowledge of God (i.e. knowledge of God through his general revelation of himself in nature) is not adequate for salvation. In Acts 17 Paul at first commends his hearers. He even identifies the 'unknown god' that they worship with the God whom he, Paul, proclaims. Evidently the 'God of the philosophers' is 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. Astonishingly, he quotes Greek poets, Epimenides of Crete and Aratus of Cilicia, in support. Paul seems to be building on what thinking Greeks knew about God from their philosophical reflection, contemplation and experience. This all strongly suggests an *Anknüpfungspunkt*, a point of contact, for the gospel. Of course Paul goes on to call his Greek listeners to repentance because God has 'winked at' former sins and idolatry stemming from an inadequate grasp of the nature of God. In Romans 1:19ff. also, we read that human beings are without excuse because they *could* know God from creation, but in practice turned to idols and perversion. There is natural knowledge of God, but God's revelation in Christ is essential for salvation.

It is also true that natural knowledge of God does not get one to the Trinity. Some would argue that it is therefore *not* getting you to the same God as is revealed to us in Holy Scripture. Notwithstanding Acts 17, the 'God of the philosophers' is not to be identified with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who goes on to reveal himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, since there can be only one Creator and indeed the unity of the cosmos points to a single Creator, we must be speaking about the same God that is revealed in Scripture. What we learn from nature may be an incomplete and inadequate picture of God. Nevertheless, natural theology leads one not only to a Creator in the first place, but to a Creator with certain attributes, e.g. majesty and power, which are associated with the Biblical God. Arguably the universality of the laws of nature, i.e. their applicability across all of space and time, would lead one to conclude that there is only one God. This view needs to be supplemented and enriched by our Biblical knowledge of God, e.g. God is personal and is related to the world as the Triune God, and is not just some distant 'prime mover' – but the view of natural theology is not wrong in itself.

Torrance puts Barth's position thus: '... we are unable to achieve through our own natural powers and capacities the cognitive union

with God which true knowledge of him requires'. But this is grossly to overstate the claims of natural theology. We are only claiming that the existence of the universe, and the order within it, enhance the *a priori* probability that it was made and designed by some transcendent agency. In the steps of Richard Swinburne one can equate this agency to God, on grounds of simplicity, with a suitable definition of God in terms of a being possessing the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience etc.³¹ Of course this knowledge does not of itself give one a relationship with God.

We have seen also that in Scripture there is an appeal to evidence of a historical kind, which contradicts Barth's claim that such evidence is not to be sought. Especially important in this regard would be Paul's listing of eyewitnesses to the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. The gospel accounts also give eyewitness reports of the resurrection, and rebut alternative explanations for the empty tomb – especially that the disciples removed the body.

I see natural knowledge of God, far from being a substitute for, as preparatory to the saving knowledge of Christ, and providing at least one 'point of contact' for Christ to reveal himself (so, although not necessarily going along with Brunner's anthropology, I side with him on this point). In my earlier phraseology general revelation precedes and prepares for special revelation. The vast gulf between man and God because of human sin, emphasised by Barth, is also real. The revelation of Christ is necessary for salvation and must be received in faith. This revelation occurs when God is pleased to reveal himself in Christ through the proclamation of the Gospel.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer accused Barth of introducing a positivist doctrine of revelation 'which says, in effect, "Like it or lump it!": virgin birth, Trinity, or anything else; each is an equally significant and necessary part of the whole, which must simply be swallowed as a whole or not at all. That isn't biblical'.³²

David Jenkins says that Barth 'so isolates theology as not so much to make it incredible as to make it impossible for us to know whether it is incredible or not.' He goes on:

*But it is by no means clear that there is the total discontinuity between belief and unbelief which Barth posits. If there is, then we can only wait for the miracle. But as we shall not believe in the possibility of such a miracle unless it has happened to us we shall not even wait. This seems an oddly hopeless position to be in in a world which God is both supposed to have created and to have been incarnate in.*³³

³¹ Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 8.

³² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, The Enlarged Edn, Ed. Eberhard Bethge (London: SCM Press, 1971), 286.

³³ David Jenkins, *Guide to the Debate about God* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1966), 81.

John Bowden makes a similar point in the context of sharing the faith:

To take the most minor practical point: if knowledge of God is as Barth describes it, how can the Christian talk to his friend and persuade him to share his beliefs and concerns? He cannot point to any hints of God in experience, history, morality, for these are all ruled out of court. All that seems possible is to sit in silence and wait; and if nothing happens, atheism is a perfectly logical conclusion, on Barth's own premises.³⁴

Roger Trigg is critical of Barth because he seems to be irrational, along the lines of the above quotations. Barth says that we must rely only on revelation, and not on human reason, yet of course his own arguments are a product of human reasoning.³⁵ The question is, 'Why should we believe that which is purportedly God's revelation to us?' There are, after all, false prophets, and we need to 'test the spirits'. How do we know revelation is from God? The only way is surely by appeal to reason. Yet this is precisely the path which Barth denies to us.

In order to evaluate whether something is a revelation of God, we shall need the tools of reason. We shall need to have some prior concept of God in order to recognise the revelation. One source of such a prior concept is surely natural theology. Unless the critical tools of reason are brought to bear our belief is arbitrary, and impossible to commend to others. We end up in the sea of post-modern relativism, in which my beliefs and your beliefs, though incompatible, are equally tenable because we are not prepared to put them to the tests of rational justification.

Barth sees his theology as scientific and rational, not in Harnack's sense, but in the sense that it attunes its methods to its object. One important move he makes is away from revelation as propositional truths about God to God himself as truth. There are indeed dangers in thinking we can confine God too tightly in propositions made in human words (can these ever be adequate?), yet Barth's theology itself is inevitably full of propositions. Torrance notes that for Barth, in orthodoxy 'objective descriptions of the truth were confounded with or mistaken for the truth itself, so that they were not subject to its critical questioning or judgement'.³⁶ But again, the question is, 'How can we know how God judges?'

My view is different from Barth's. I believe we can recognise the existence of the Creator from the creation. I agree with Barth that we need revelation to inform us of the other articles of the creed: the doctrines of the Trinity and of the person of Christ cannot be derived from pure reason, though even here I would argue that such beliefs are, or ought to be, rational. We believe them on good grounds, though now those grounds include the Biblical revelation. Claims

³⁴ John Bowden, *Karl Barth* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1971), 111.

³⁵ Trigg, *Rationality and Religion*, 177.

³⁶ Torrance, *Karl Barth*, 226.

about the person of Christ are supported by the evidence of his life, death and resurrection. Of course faith is essential, and, moreover, faith is not simply a matter of believing the facts about Christ as stated for us in the creeds (which is more or less what St Thomas Aquinas thought). Faith involves a response: as Luther said, it is putting one's trust in the living God. At the end of the day, though, the faith of Christians is not blind, irrational faith, but faith in a God of order and reason.

There seems to be a problem here for evangelism and apologetics: we are bidden by Scripture to 'be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you' (1 Pet. 3:15), and to preach the gospel to all nations, but is conversion solely God's work of self-revelation? In one sense the answer to this is of course 'yes', but at the same time God does use human beings as his instruments. It seems to me that arguments put forward using reason may at least prepare the ground for God's self-revelation in Christ - indeed that God can and does work through such arguments - though of course God is free to reveal himself wherever, whenever and to whomsoever.

I agree with Barth, however, that for Christians Christ must remain central. Natural theology will always be of secondary importance. We must also be aware of the dangers of natural theology. For us, the main danger is not National Socialism but the more subtle and insidious danger posed by religious pluralism. Natural theology gives us a point of contact with some of the world's major religions, as it did for Paul in Athens. But we must insist that it is only a starting point and that 'Jesus Christ is goal of everything, and the centre to which everything tends. He who knows him knows the meaning of all things.' (Pascal.)

ANCIENT EGYPT AND THE HEBREW MONARCHIES

A REVIEW ARTICLE

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David, Solomon and Egypt, A Reassessment, JSOTSup 297

Paul S. Ash,
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999,
157 pp., h/b., £37

Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit. Die kulturellen Kontakte von Salomo bis zum Fall Jerusalems, OBO 170

Bernd Ulrich Schipper
Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999,
xi + 359 pp., h/b, Swiss Francs, 98.-.

Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah. New Studies, SHCANE XVIII

William R. Gallagher,
Leiden: Brill, 1999, xvii + 313 pp., h/b.

In Palestine, during the 11th to 6th centuries BC, the Hebrews passed from being a group of tribes under local leaders ('judges') into a multi-tribe group under one leader as king (Saul), and then a fully-fledged monarchy that gained effective dominance in Canaan and further north (David, Solomon) in the 10th century BC. It then broke down (c. 930 BC) into two lesser kingdoms, one (Israel) swept away by Assyria c. 722 BC, and the other (Judah) ended by Babylon in 586 BC. In Egypt, this span of time corresponds to the 'Third Intermediate Period' (21st to 25th Dynasties, c. 1070–664 BC) and the first 80 years of the 26th (Saite) Dynasty (664–525 BC). During this epoch, OT books (notably Kings, Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah) occasionally mention contacts with Egypt, while a limited number of Egyptian sources, supplemented by Assyrian records, reflect contacts with Palestine that sometimes link up with the biblical narratives.

From the outset it should be stressed that in this period the Egyptian sources are very limited indeed, because (i) Egypt's kings ruled from Memphis and the Delta, where almost all historical

records have long since perished, and (ii) most inscriptions from the better-preserved southern sites (e.g. Thebes) have no bearing at all on foreign affairs, but are mainly ritual or funerary. Thus the non-mention of biblical people and places in Egyptian texts c. 1100–580 BC merely reflects the poverty of our Egyptian documentation; it does *not* imply the non-existence or non-being of biblical people, places or episodes, as is sometimes alleged on the current fashionable wave of ultra-scepticism or ‘minimalism’ concerning the date and contents of the Hebrew Bible.

Three recently-published books on this period and topic concern us here. Two illustrate the minimalist approach (Ash, on David and Solomon only; and Schipper, on the whole monarchy), while a third attempts a more even-handed review of its theme (Gallagher, period around Sennacherib’s Palestine campaign 701 BC). For the sake of simplicity, clarity and concision, it is best here to tackle the subject by successive themes.

Chronological Setting

Neither Ash nor Schipper has any expertise in this topic, and it shows. Ash claims (26) that the death of Solomon and accession of Rehoboam (in whose 5th year Shishak invaded) cannot be dated any more precisely than within about 50 years, c. 979–922 BC, and that it is ‘impossible’ (34) to dead-reckon Egyptian dates back from 664 BC, the agreed date for the start of the 26th Dynasty. Both claims are entirely false. In fact, we *can* validly reckon back from 664 BC.¹ Before that date, Taharqa definitely reigned during 690–664 BC; 12 years’ minimum is needed for Shebitku (702–690) who had troops brought up from Nubia in 702/1 BC to oppose Sennacherib; before him, Shabako ruled 14 years, of which 13 in Egypt (716/15–702); and the 24th-Dynasty king Bakenranef reigned in 720–715. Before this, the reign-lengths of the attested 10 kings of the 22nd Dynasty back to the accession of Shoshenq I (Shishak) go back within narrow limits to 945/942 BC, 945 being preferable. This gives maximum range of up to 3 years, not 50! As in Egypt, so in Palestine. Ahab of Israel lived till 853, since he was involved in the Battle of Qarqar in 853, but Jehu ruled already by 841 BC, since he submitted then to Shalmaneser III. The two intervening Israelite kings fit exactly between these dates, on non-accession-year dating (as picked up by Jeroboam I from Egypt). On the biblical figures for

¹ Most recently, Kitchen, ‘The Historical Chronology of Ancient Egypt, a Current Assessment’, *Acta Archaeologica* 67 (1996/97), 1–13, especially 2–3. For a full-scale treatment of Egyptian chronology of this overall epoch and an outline history, incorporating the biblical evidence, see Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 BC)* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, revised 2nd edition, 1996); hereafter abbreviated as *TIP*. The new Tang-1 Var inscription of Sargon II of Assyria has Shebitku as ruler of Kush (Nubia) in 706, if not 712. But as the Assyrians use the word *sharru*, ‘king’, of all local rulers, this text does not prove that Shebitku was already king of Egypt and Nubia in 706 BC. Published by G. Frame, ‘The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-1 Var’, *Orientalia* 68 (1999), 31–57.

previous Hebrew kings, this takes the joint accessions of both Jeroboam I and Rehoboam back to c. 931/930 BC. Rehoboam's 5th year is then c. 926/925 BC, which coincides directly with years 20/21 of Shoshenq I (Shishak), close to the end of his reign. That dating is borne out by the totally unfinished state of his great works at Karnak temple, immediately after his campaign, and interrupted by his sudden death. These are the facts, and they completely destroy the false suppositions by both Ash (50–56) and Schipper (119–32). The suggestion (Ash, 32, following Hughes) that year 5 of Rehoboam was not a historical event stands refuted; and the 'difficulties' offered by Schipper (120–21) in synchronising Rehoboam's year 5 with Shoshenq's campaign are his own fault for uncritically adopting the long-outdated (and wrong) chronology of Begrich and Jepsen for the Hebrew monarchies,² in dependence on his teacher Donner.

Hadad of Edom in Egypt

In 1 Kings 11:14–22, we learn of young prince Hadad being whisked off to safety in Egypt, when David sought to extirpate the Edomite male population. Despite the authentic Egyptian features in this passage, both Ash (109f., n. 20) and Schipper (186) follow Edelman's unjustified dismissal of its historicity. Their four supposed errors fail, as follows. (i) No kingdom of Edom is possible in the 10th century BC, as no fixed buildings are known. Wrong: no fixed palaces, etc., should even be looked for in a pastoral, 'tented' kingdom; these leave almost no physical remains of substance, like the 'tented' dynasty of Manana in Babylonia. We have good textual data for rulers of Kushu (OT Kushan = early Edom) in the early 2nd millennium BC (Execration Texts); for Ramesses II attacking people of Seir/Edom, and Edomites visiting Egypt under Merenptah (both 13th century BC); and Ramesses III raiding Seir and destroying their tents (even using 'ohel, the Semitic term for 'tent') c. 1170s BC.³ Edom was not an empty land! (ii) The flight into Egypt is merely a folktale motif. Wrong: real people often sought help in

² Significantly, neither Ash nor Schipper pay attention to the indispensable (and formidable!) works on the chronology of the Hebrew monarchies by Thiele and Galil, which do not suit their minimalist agendas. These are: E.R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (1st ed., Chicago: University Press, 1951; 2nd and 3rd eds., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965, 1983); G. Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). From different starting-points, both writers converge on c. 931/930 BC for the accession of Rehoboam. Schipper's Egyptian dates (295) are also flawed for the 22nd/23rd Dynasties, being based on the false dates by Leahy and Aston following von Beckerath (refuted by me, *TIP*, xxiii–xxxiv).

³ Dynasty of Manana, see W. Yuhong, S. Dalley, 'The Origins of the Dynasty of Manana and the Assyrian King List', *Iraq* 52 (1990), 159–65. For the Egyptian references to Edom, see Kitchen, 'The Egyptian Evidence on Ancient Jordan', in P. Bienkowski (ed.), *Early Edom and Moab* (Sheffield: J.R. Collis Publications/ Liverpool: Merseyside National Museum, 1992), 21–34. Also, Papyrus Moscow 127 of c. 1100/1080 BC mentions people of Seir.

Egypt. Already c. 2400 BC, starving foreigners sought help from king Unis; about 500 years later, kings Merikare and Amenemhat I had to oppose Canaanite incursions into Egypt; c. 1206 BC under Merenptah, the Edomites came to the East-Delta to pasture and water their livestock. (iii) Hadad's pharaoh and royal mother-in-law are not named, hence were fictional. Wrong; Ramesses II, for example, married two successive Hittite princesses, but in the relevant inscriptions neither their parents (the Hittite emperor and queen) nor the princesses are named, except for giving a new, Egyptian name to the first one. But, there is no fiction here; so, neither is there with Hadad. (iv) An Egyptian princess would not marry a foreigner. Wrong; see below under Siamun. By contrast, Egyptian elements in the narrative include the apportionment of house, royal food-supply and land (as source of income) for Hadad, and the term Tahpenes, which is either a transcript of the Egyptian word(s) for 'queen', or a similar-sounding Egyptian name.⁴

Solomon's Pharaoh and his Daughter

Again, both Ash (37–46; 112–19) and Schipper (24–28; 84–157) seek to deny the probability of relevant Egyptian evidence, and hence the historicity of the Egyptian campaign and royal marriage (cf. 1 Kgs 9:16, cf. 3:1). Solomon's reign can be set at c. 970–930 BC; his marriage to a pharaoh's daughter happened early in his reign, probably in the first four years (c. 970–966).⁵ In Egypt, before Shishak and Psusennes II, there reigned Siamun (c. 979/8–960/59 BC), who overlapped the first decade of Solomon's reign. Thus he is most likely to have been the conqueror of Gezer and Solomon's in-law. From Tanis (biblical Zoan), Egypt's East-Delta capital c. 1070–715 BC, we have a damaged triumphal scene of Siamun in traditional pose smiting a foe, from a now destroyed temple wall.⁶ In a monumental context such scenes belong almost always to kings who fought real wars; but not when they appear merely as decoration on state barges or minor works of art. This distinction rules out the attempts by Ash and Schipper to deny the probable historical worth of this scene. On this relief, the fragmentary foe grasps a remarkable axe, with crescent-shaped double blades. Despite attempts to dismiss it as a shield (Green, Lance; Schipper, 27), a halter or even

⁴ For references see TIP, 273–74 nn. 182–83; plus (briefly on Tahpenes) Y. Muchiki, *Egyptian Proper Names and Loanwords in North-West Semitic* (Atlanta: SBL, 1999), 228f.

⁵ She was in Jerusalem when the Temple and other works were in progress (1 Kgs 3:1), and Hiram's timbers for the Temple came via Joppa, hence necessarily through Gezer, the town given to Solomon by his Egyptian father-in-law.

⁶ Weinstein's description of Siamun's scene as belonging to 'an unidentified king' is a howler which he now disavows; he is equally wrong to think that the axe is anachronistic in any way; J. Weinstein, 'Egyptian Relations with the East Mediterranean World', in S. Gitin *et al.* (eds), *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition in honor of Professor Trude Dothan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1998), 192f. and n. 10; his doubts about historicity are also unfounded.

handcuffs (Ash, 45), it is beyond doubt an axe.⁷ Despite Schipper (26f.), Siamun's example is wholly different in shape from the modest Palestinian-type double axes (as his figures 2 and 3 show clearly, p. 296). There is no true parallel as yet for Siamun's foe's axe-head from anywhere in the Near East; the nearest parallels are from the Minoan-Mycenaean world of the Aegean and the Balkans, but are not precise. The uniqueness of Siamun's example suggests a historical original still to be unearthed, and the reflex of a historical event. Immediately over the border of Egypt and North Sinai, the Philistines are the first group that Siamun would encounter (from Gaza onward). That he and Solomon combined to crush the Philistines' (economic?) power is only a working hypothesis, but one that makes sense. Canaanite Gezer was conveniently reduced at the same juncture; so Solomon gained this strategic site, while Siamun probably laid tribute on the Philistine pentapolis, and both rulers could dictate trade-conditions (e.g. end of transit tolls?) to the Philistines. Thus there is no factual ground whatsoever to dismiss the historicity of either Siamun's scene or of the biblical reports.

The same goes for the royal marriage. OT scholars tell us ad nauseam that Egyptian pharaohs never ever gave away their daughters away to foreigners (or commoners), always citing the remarks of Amenophis III (c. 1380 BC) to this effect. But what was true in the 14th century BC was *not* necessarily binding almost half a millennium later, in Solomon's time. The kings of the 21st and 22nd Dynasties *did* give their daughters to foreigners and commoners, as I have long since documented.⁸ The Libyan lineage of Shishak (Shoshenq I) was explicitly treated as foreign, e.g. the Thebans referred to him not as king but merely as 'the Great Chief of the Ma(shwash = Libyans)', and marked his name with the 'throw-stick' sign for foreigner. Thus when Psusennes II (last king of the 21st Dynasty)⁹ married his daughter Maatkare to Osorkon, Shoshenq's son and heir (*before* Shoshenq's accession, never mind Osorkon's, *contra* Ash, 117), he was indeed marrying her off to a foreigner. All this completely contradicts Ash's denial (118) that I

⁷ The axe should be studied from the original photo (Montet, *Osorkon II*, 1947, pl. IX), not from the very poor line drawing that is regularly reproduced. The photo shows clearly part of a handle coming down from the socket of the axe-head. The foe grasps it thus, so that he cannot harm Pharaoh with it. Similarly the foes in Shishak's great scene hold their daggers by the (sheathed?) blades, not the handle, for the same reason. Ash's remarks about Egyptian triumph-scenes (41ff.) swarm with errors too many to list here; certainly, Siamun's does not 'violate ... the genre' (43)! The axe is not 'handcuffs': in Egypt, these were an oval device with a central slot; see K. Lange, M. Hirmer, *Egypt, Architecture, Sculpture, Painting* (London: Phaidon Press, 3rd ed., 1961), plate 200.

⁸ See my *TIP*, Table 12, pp. 479 plus 594.

⁹ Despite recent statements to the contrary, the 21st Dynasty was not itself Libyan. All its kings were Egyptian in name and in lineage (where known), with only one exception, Osorkon the Elder ('Osochor'), who reigned briefly before Siamun. The parallel Theban line of military governors was essentially Egyptian (Plankh onward), with some Libyan links which are not yet precisely defined (secondary wives?).

have no evidence for non-Egyptian marriages for Egyptian princesses. This is no different to Siamun marrying off a daughter to Solomon, or a predecessor marrying off a kinswoman to Hadad of Edom. Examples with commoners are numerous, and are in total contrast to New-Kingdom practice of 500 years earlier.¹⁰ So criticisms of the Egyptian political marriages with Hadad and Solomon are misconceived. Non-mention of proper names of the pharaoh or his daughter are frivolous reasons for disbelief; the Amarna letters (14th century BC) do not name most royal daughters who pass to the Egyptian court, nor does Ramesses II in documents on his Hittite marriages. By contrast, Solomon's concern to build a house for pharaoh's daughter (1 Kgs 7:8; 9:24) mirrors precisely a royal concern to provide a fitting dwelling for the exotic newly-wed, exactly as Ramesses II had done for his first Hittite bride, according to both Egyptian and cuneiform sources (an apposite comparison overlooked by Ash and Schipper, but not by real experts like Edel).¹¹ The dowry for Solomon at Gezer was not simply a smoking ruin (Ash, 118), but the entire city-state with its strategic position and surrounding terrain. Thus, in contrast to Ash and Schipper (among others), there is no valid reason for doubting the veracity of these narratives. No evidence against them exists, and some indications point modestly in their favour.

Solomonic Trade

Ash (119–22) dismisses Solomon's trade with Egypt and Que (= Cilicia in South Turkey) as royal propaganda. But trade is *not* an ancient near-eastern propaganda theme. Schipper (73–83) follows similar lines. They insist that horses were not bred in Egypt, and that no evidence exists for the horse/chariot trade. The former point is simply not proven, the latter is misuse of the lack of source-references. Horses were not native to Egypt, but first came there in the 13th Dynasty and Hyksos period (17th century BC), and in quantity during the New Kingdom. They were bred in Anatolia, and were traded south via Que (Cilicia). But Egypt could not import from such an area when it was at war with the Hittites who ruled these lands, so it almost certainly *did* breed horses for military purposes then. There was very extensive stabling and a 'horse stud' at Pi-Ramesse, for example.¹² The Egyptians certainly manufactured chariots extensively in the New Kingdom; we have scenes of this in

¹⁰ This gives the lie to the false distinctions made by Schipper (87ff., where his mistreatment of my work ignores my 1986 and 1996 editions), Ash, Soggin and others.

¹¹ In the First Hittite Marriage Stela, 'ample villas [in her] name': translation: Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions Translated & Annotated: Translations*, II (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 96; and in cuneiform, 'a fine house(?)', cited *ibid.*, *Notes & Comment*, II, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 149 end; cf. E. Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethittische Korrespondenz aus Boghaz-köi in babylonischer und hethittischer Sprache*, II (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), 222.

¹² Cf. briefly E. Pusch, *Egyptian Archaeology* 14 (1999), 13 (area Q.IV).

tombs, and the large chariot-installations at Pi-Ramesse.¹³ There is thus no reason to deny continuing Egyptian upkeep of war-horses and chariot-building in later times, as armies still used them later. Thus, chariots could very easily have been bought from Egypt with some horses, and horses from Qe as 1 Kings 10:28–29 states. Ash omits data on the export of horses from Egypt,¹⁴ as also to Alasia (with gold chariot), to the Hittite king Hattusil III, and to Sargon II. His minimalist scepticism fails to take into account the paucity of sources on most topics in the 10th century BC. Ikeda's notes on prices are used misleadingly (121, n. 66). The price of horses sank steadily from the second millennium BC into the first; and varied by age, sex and quality of animals, then as now. Thus there is no exaggeration or fantasy here. Solomon traded with neighbouring royal courts (Hittites, Arameans), hence these were special steeds and 'Rolls-Royce' chariots in terms of cost. Schipper's inadequate notes on other trade (e.g. Red Sea) should be supplemented or replaced by other recent studies.¹⁵

One positive contribution is Ash's survey (64–97) of Egyptian-type artifacts found in Canaan from periods Iron IB/IIA, covering the United Monarchy period. Likewise, Schipper has a similar survey (41–56), with similar findings. Not surprisingly, most of this bric-à-brac comes from the coastal and adjoining regions, owing to much trade passing by sea and seaports. Almost none of these bits comes from the highlands (Judah/Israel), so they conclude that there was no Egyptian trade with Solomon's kingdom. But this logic is flawed.

(i) These paganising scarabs and amulets would have no attraction (or practical value) for the largely Yahwistic peasantry of Judah and Israel. (ii) They cannot tell us anything about the volumes of exchanged perishable goods which left no trace. (iii) Elite trade was exclusively with capitals and royal courts, not with highland farmsteads; with the wreck of pre-exilic Jerusalem, all that has disappeared. One may as well try to produce a total picture of modern world trade by counting the number and variety of cigarette-cartons on our beaches today!

The Campaign of Shishak (Shoshenq I) in Palestine

For this event, we have five possible witnesses from outside the OT: the great scene and list of place-names in Judah, Israel and Jordan at Karnak; a mere fragment of a similar scene at El-Hibeh; part of a stela of Shoshenq I from Megiddo; an allusion of the coffin of one of

¹³ For the former, cf. Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*, 1963, 202 end. For the latter, cf. E. Pusch, in E. Bleiberg, R. Freed, eds., *Fragments of a Shattered Visage (Symposium, Rameses the Great)* (Memphis, Tenn., 1991), 202–3.

¹⁴ See 228f. in Y. Ikeda, 'Solomon's Trade in Horses and Chariots in its International Setting', in T. Ishida (ed.) *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1982), 215–38.

¹⁵ For a detailed treatment of relations with Ophir, Arabia, etc., see my chapters 'Egypt and East Africa' and 'Sheba and Arabia', in L.K. Handy (ed.), *The Age of Solomon, Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 106–25 and 126–53.

Shoshenq's followers; and a broken stela at Karnak about a border-incident. The last-named incident might well have provided Shoshenq I with his excuse for raiding post-Solomonic Canaan, while his ultimate aim was much more. El-Hibeh and the coffin contribute but little. As for the great Karnak list, Ash gives a tolerable account of its contents and the king's campaign, rightly surmising that Shoshenq aimed at domination of Canaan (50–56). But errors abound. (i) Ash still insists that 'Jerusalem should appear' in it (54). But the city *submitted* to Shishak (cf. 2 Chr. 12), it was not captured by storm, and so may not even have been listed. Also several names are wholly destroyed in Row IV of the List, and Jerusalem might have been any one of these. (ii) The superscription to the list is not stereotypical prose (52, based on Breasted's out-dated translation). Rather it is in regular parallelistic poetry, it refashions traditional concepts and language, and it introduces novel features.¹⁶ (iii) Ash does not properly understand my reading of name 105/106 as 'highland of David' (54, n. 166). He cannot read hieroglyphs correctly: the w- sign is not a chick(!) but the curved rope (*w*3), and is definitely consonantal in names 76, 91 because it is initial; it is not 'problematic' in any way. And if final *d* can be rendered by voiceless *t* in Ethiopic, where *Dawit* is definitely 'David', then it is possible in Egyptian, which is also Afro-asiatic. *Bayt-Dawid* is not just a place-name, but a personal dynastic term for Judah, as is Assyrian *Bayt-Omri* for Israel. These terms *do* imply a personal David and Omri as dynastic founders.

Schipper too (119–20) gives a fair summary of Shoshenq's campaign from the list, but errs in querying the year 5 of Rehoboam (see §1, Chronology, above). His 'critical assessment' of the OT text is largely misguided (122–25). He accuses the list of numerous repetitions, especially of the word *ngb*, 'Negev', but does not realise that these occurrences are only *half* a name, each time to be combined with the following name-ring ('the Negev of X, the Negev of Y, etc.), as with the terms *hgr*, 'enclosure' (recognised in 129 n. 81) and *hydbt*, 'highland'. Of the 'highland of David', he seems blissfully unaware.¹⁷

Alongside the great Karnak List, we have the Megiddo stela, which proves that Shoshenq I did reach and take over that town, almost certainly during this campaign.¹⁸ Astonishingly, this stela is barely

¹⁶ See the new and complete translation in Kitchen, *Poetry of Ancient Egypt* (Jonsered: Paul Aströms förlag, 1999), 433–40, with introduction and notes.

¹⁷ On the probable mention of 'the highland of David' at Nos. 105/106 of the Shoshenq list, less than 50 years after David's death, and 100 years before the Tel Dan stela, see Kitchen, 'A Possible Mention of David in the Late Tenth Century BCE, and deity *Dod as dead as the Dodo?', *JSOT* 76 (1997), 29–44; popular summation by H. Shanks, 'Has David Been Found in Egypt?', *BAR* 25/1 (1999), 34–35.

¹⁸ Note in passing that the paper by F. Clancy, 'Shishak/Shoshenq's Travels', *JSOT* 86 (1999), 3–23, is wholly unreliable. He wrongly tries to reattribute the Megiddo stela of Shoshenq I to a king Shoshenq IV (whose second cartouche is entirely different), and to down-date Shoshenq I to c. 800 BC following the maverick David Rohl. His views of Jewish priests penetrating Karnak Temple to find the Shoshenq scene are pure fantasy, as is most of his geographical 'rewriting' of Shoshenq's campaign.

mentioned by Ash (56), though it is rightly seen to indicate that Shoshenq intended to maintain control over Canaan, a plan ended by his sudden death. With the same basically correct interpretation of the stela,¹⁹ Schipper (129–32) is more thorough, but he too exhibits a basic inability to read hieroglyphs. Shoshenq's prenomen here (as everywhere else) *Hedjkheperre Setepenre*, not *Hedjkheperre Setepenamun* (contra Schipper, 130f.), and the damaged group over the Shoshenq-cartouche cannot possibly be 'Son of Re' (goose + circle), but is 'Lord performing the rites' (*Neb ir khet*).

Such is the very inconsistent quality of these two books. This brings us to the end of Ash's work, except to say that his end-note on Sheba at least attributes its queen to the right part of the map (Arabia).²⁰ He has an extensive bibliography and brief indexes.

From Osorkon I to Osorkon II

For the period of the twin Hebrew monarchies, we are concerned solely with Schipper until 701 BC. Osorkon I (c. 924–889 BC), son and successor of Shoshenq I/Shishak, concerns us on three counts. First, he, his father Shishak and his grandson Osorkon II all maintained relations with Byblos, and broken statues of each of these kings were found there. To those of Shoshenq I and Osorkon I, the local kings of Byblos (Abibaal and Elibaal) added dedications in Phoenician to their local goddess, Ba'alat-Gebal, 'the Lady of Byblos'. Most commentators correctly regard these statues as marking the good relations between Egypt's rulers and Byblos, via which they obtained Phoenician timber. The pharaohs dedicated them in the temple of Ba'alat-Gebal, where the local kings then added their own dedications. Other views exist, e.g. that of Redford, that these pharaohs imposed their rule on Byblos, for which there is no justification. And now, at the opposite extreme, Schipper dismisses them as being pieces traded to Byblos and only later reused by the Byblite kings. Again, for such a view there is no justification.²¹ On the contrary, the statues show that Egypt's involvement with the Levant did *not* cease at the death of Shishak.

Secondly, just after his father's death, in years 1–4 of his own reign, Osorkon I embarked upon a spending-spree of unparalleled dimensions. He gave nearly 400 tons of silver and gold to the temples of Egypt, much of this being listed in detail. Some may have come from trade, and some from inherited wealth of the pharaonic state. But it is surely more than coincidence that this spending-splurge (like his father's, on huge new temple-buildings in Thebes and

¹⁹ A view derived from the study by D. Ussishkin, 'Notes on Megiddo, Gezer, Ashdod and Tel Batash in the Tenth to Ninth Centuries B.C.', *BASOR* 277/278 (1990), 71–91, esp. 71–73.

²⁰ For more (and pertinent) information and analyses see my essays in *Handy* (n. 15 above).

²¹ Schipper (173–77) cites Helck's view that Middle-Kingdom statues were thus removed from Egypt to Syria under the Hyksos; but 500 years earlier, the situation was radically different, and Helck's view is not absolutely proven in all cases for the Middle Kingdom either.

Memphis) immediately followed the looting of the gold, etc., from Solomon's and Rehoboam's Jerusalem.²²

Thirdly, there is the mysterious notice in 2 Chronicles 14:9–15 about Zerah the Kushite who briefly invaded Judah with a myriad of troops and 300 chariots, to be defeated by Asa in his 14th year, c. 897 BC, which is contemporary with Osorkon I. In line with nineteenth-century dogma, Schipper dismisses the Chronicler here as inventing the incident for the theological reasons (133–39). This will not do; the Chronicler often preserves authentic material not otherwise available to us. A very good example is the Sukkiim in Shishak's forces (2 Chr. 12:3), not mentioned in Kings, but known to be the Libyan Tjukten of Egyptian texts (a fact ignored by Schipper).²³ Kush is Nubia, along the Nile south of Egypt. No army of Kush could reach South Palestine except via the Red Sea (impractical and unknown), or via Egypt (impossible unless with a pharaoh's backing and control). Kush(an) was not a current term for Edom since patriarchal times, and 9th-century Edom would not have a vast force with 300 chariots. It is for this reason that the perfectly sensible suggestion has often been made, that it was Osorkon I who sought plunder in Judah (aping his father's exploit), but was content simply to send a large force under a general instead of going himself; and this failed. Defeat is never celebrated by any pharaoh officially, so we can expect no word of it from Osorkon I.

Two reigns later, we come to Osorkon II (c. 874–850 BC; not 874–835/30 BC, as Schipper following Aston). By 853 BC, Assyria had become a menace to the lesser kingdoms of Syria and Palestine, so in 853 BC many of them jointly resisted Assyria at the Battle of Qarqar. Among these allies, came '1,000 soldiers from Musri', i.e. Egypt. This identification for Musri is clear and beyond doubt; the only other Musri was east of the Tigris and not involved in Syria. There was no other, as the Arabian and North-Syrian 'Musris' are spurious, despite Schipper's attempt to revive the Syrian one (144–49). The 'Musri' of the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III sent 'tribute' that included hippos, rhinos, and monkeys, indubitable African fauna. That Osorkon II allied himself with the Levant kings against Assyria is supported by the finding of an alabaster presentation-vessel of Osorkon II in the ruins of the palace of Omri and Ahab at Samaria, the kind of prestige object that pharaohs commonly sent in such cases. Schipper typically dismisses the piece as stemming from Phoenician trade (177–81). But ordinary trade was with fluids in pottery amphorae, not alabasters. Alabasters were for very precious ointments and the like; the assumption of Phoenician

²² For accessible, illustrated discussions, see A.R. Millard, K.A. Kitchen, 'Does the Bible exaggerate King Solomon's wealth? Where did Solomon's Gold go? Shishak's Military Campaign in Israel confirmed', *BAR* 15/3 (1989), 20–34. On the immensity of Shishak's building-programme, cf. Kitchen, 'Egyptian Interventions in the Levant in Iron Age II', in W.G. Dever et al. (eds.), *Symbiosis, Symbolism and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel and their Neighbors* (ASOR/AIAR Centennial Volume, 2001, in press).

²³ Full references in Kitchen, *TIP*, 295, nn. 289–292 (Sukkiim, n. 291).

intermediaries here is gratuitous. A link at this time between Egypt and Israel set a precedent for what happened later, when Hoshea of Israel appealed for help to Osorkon II's sixth successor, Osorkon IV (or 'So').

So and Osorkon IV

Much ink has been spilt over 'So, King of Egypt' in 2 Kings 17:4. The nearest king of Egypt to whom Hoshea might send was the 22nd Dynasty in Tanis (Zoan). In 725 BC, date of that event, the king there was certainly Osorkon IV (prenomen, Akheperre), attested in Bubastis by the Nubian conqueror Pi(ankh)y in 728 BC. His 23rd-Dynasty neighbour was king Iuput II, further south-west at Leontopolis, not known to be visited by any Hebrew envoy. Tefnakht I, Ruler of the West, reigned at Sais deep in the swamplands of the West-Delta. *Contra* some OT scholars, he played no part whatsoever in Near-Eastern politics, nor did his city Sais (sometimes illegitimately emended into the Hebrew text to replace 'So'). All of this is accepted by Schipper (149–58), which is all to the good, given the factual basis for this situation, fully set out elsewhere.²⁴ Osorkon IV did not attempt to aid the distant Hoshea in 725 BC, but did send his general Re'e to help Hanun of nearby Gaza (unsuccessfully) in 720 BC, and found it expedient to send a tributary gift of horses to Sargon II on his doorstep (at El-Arish), to buy him off, being named by the Assyrian ruler as (U)shilkanni. Soon afterwards, Osorkon IV disappeared, with the Nubian (Kushite) reconquest of Egypt by Shabako in c. 715 BC.

The Years around 701 BC

Here, Gallagher's recent work joins with Schipper. Schipper (210–16) is unduly influenced in his estimate of the value of the OT record (2 Kgs 18–19; Isaiah 36–39) by nineteenth-century criticism which automatically condemned as unhistorical any passage that invokes divine intervention. By contrast, rationalist scholars who examine ancient annals (e.g. of the Assyrians) find that these too are permeated with divine interventions (by the god Assur, etc.), yet habitually accept their historicity without demur! The same rule should apply to the OT and its neighbours alike.

Gallagher's work on 701 BC begins by clearing the ground of preliminary matters. First, he surveys the sources for Sennacherib's campaign, quite rightly dismissing the theory of two Palestinian campaigns of Sennacherib, for which there is not a scrap of respectable evidence.²⁵ The only real reason for this theory is the occurrence of 'Tirhakah, king of Kush' in 2 Kings 19:9 (parallel Is. 37:9; strictly it is just the words *melek Kush*, 'king of Kush', since

²⁴ For full discussions, see Kitchen, *TIP*, 372–76, 551–52, and xxxiv–xxxix.

²⁵ The recent popular paper by W.H. Shea arguing the contrary (in *BAR* 25/6, 1999, 36–44, 64) is totally misleading, cites only American sources on a subject where the real work is non-American, and wrongly dismisses as 'unworkable' the real solution.

in 701 Shebitku, not Taharqa, was king in the Nile Valley). It is now universally accepted that Taharqa did not rule supreme in Egypt and Nubia until 690. For many generations OT scholars assumed an anachronism without investigating matters further. But the answer lies in the biblical text itself: these very passages continue their story down to the death of Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:36–37; Is. 37:37–38), which only happened in 681 BC. By then, Taharqa had already been king for 10 years, so the Hebrew narrators simply used his later title to identify him. Just as we would say today, ‘Queen Elizabeth II was born in 1926’, which she was, but not as queen then. It really is just as simple as that. On his stela Taharqa himself uses the same technique of back-reference.²⁶ Second, Gallagher usefully works through several passages in Isaiah (21; 22; 10:5–19; 14:4–21), showing that they refer to the situation in 705/4 and 704/3, not 701.

In chapters 3–5 Gallagher gives a lucid and convincing account of the Assyrian advance through Phoenicia in 701, and of Sennacherib’s bringing Philistia to heel. The heart of his book, chapters 6–9, is devoted to the next phase of Sennacherib’s enterprise, the reconquest of Judah, to which is added an Appendix on why Hezekiah rebelled. Gallagher’s examination of the Assyrian narratives is very illuminating, illustrating how their order is not always chronological but sometimes thematic. In chapter 7 he closely examines the Hebrew text of 2 Kings 18–19, considering 18:13–16 to be an overall summary (often called ‘source A’) separate from 18:17 – 19:37 (‘source B’). This may be so, but is by no means proven. On the other hand, he is well able to show that there is no factual basis for arbitrarily dividing up ‘B’ into two intertwined ‘sources’ B1 and B2; this can be dismissed. Chapter 8 returns to historical evaluation, and brings to bear a mass of valuable material on many points, such as the use of propaganda by the Assyrians (using data from both Assyria and World War II to illustrate the techniques used). From his treatment overall, the battle at Eltekeh should not be confused with the subsequent threat of a further attack by Egypto-Nubian forces (with Taharqa), while the Assyrians were occupied with Jerusalem and Lachish and Libnah. The speeches of the Rab-shaqeh to the Jerusalemites find good backgrounding for authenticity. And there is much else besides. The book closes with a useful select bibliography and good indexes.

The 7th and 6th Centuries BC

Here, we return to Schipper to complete the epoch. During 674–664 BC, the intrigues and interventions by the Kushite kings of Egypt with the Levantine kinglets drew down the wrath of Assyria, so that Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal repeatedly invaded Egypt to subdue her, imposing Assyrian garrisons in the Delta to ward off

²⁶ Again, the whole business has been thoroughly sorted out, long since; see my *TIP*, 158–61, 383–86, 552–59, 584–85, xxxix–xlili; plus remarks in my Jerusalem ASOR Symposium paper (n. 22 above). Later Gallagher himself trips up on this same point, using false comparisons (221–22).

Nubian interference. After 664, the Saite 26th Dynasty under Psamtek I quietly reunited Egypt and kept alliance with Assyria while rejecting her overlordship. By then, Assyria could not argue, being pressurised from the east. This is all treated reasonably well by Schipper (217ff.), along with trade-contacts on the limited finds known (247ff.), Egyptians in Mesopotamia (265ff.) and in Hebrew sources (272ff.), and Levantines in Egypt (277ff.) Most of this is useful and informative. The book ends with a final summary, extensive bibliography and moderate indexes.

In Closing

To sum up, Ash's work is the poorest of the three; its minimalist stance is not justified by the known facts and background, the work is frankly superficial, despite an outward show of erudition. Schipper's industrious work is far more thorough in its more extended field, and contains much of value, but is also marred by its unrealistic nihilism and its nineteenth-century style of subjective criticism, which cannot be justified on the known external facts, the only evidence that counts. Gallagher's large work on one historical episode is an altogether more even-handed and more objective treatment of the biblical and other texts, and is of very considerable value, his *faux pas* over Taharqa excepted. Use and enjoy Gallagher, use Schipper very critically, forget Ash!

ARE THERE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SEXES?

Sharon James

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Created or Constructed? – The Great Gender Debate

Elaine Storkey

Paternoster Press, 2000, 129 pp., £8.99

Elaine Storkey is regarded by many as the leading British evangelical spokesperson on gender issues. Her latest book directly addresses the vital question 'created or constructed?' This review article summarises each chapter, and then offers a critique.

Created or Constructed? Three words summarise a debate that rages through university campuses. During the 1960s and 1970s it became popular to assert that all the masculine and feminine characteristics which we associate with being male or female are purely the result of social conditioning. They are not essential to our being. In other words sex – the biological fact of being male or female – is a given. But gender – maleness and femaleness – is an artificial social construct from which we need to be liberated. So Judith Lorber writes:

When we no longer ask 'boy or girl?' in order to start gendering an infant, when the information is as irrelevant as the colour of a child's eyes ... only then will men and women be socially interchangeable and really equal. And when that happens there will no longer be any need for gender at all.¹

From the 1980s onwards, sex itself has been viewed by some as a construct. In universities it is commonplace to hear that sexuality is plastic. The very idea that there is any essential difference between the sexes has been defined by some academics as heresy.²

¹ Quoted in Germaine Greer, *The Whole Woman*. Doubleday, London, 1999, 324.

² Robert S. McElavaine defines essentialism as the heresy that there are biological differences between males and females. Wendy Shalit, *A Return to Modesty*, Touchstone, 2000, 87. Shalit discovered this heresy in a first year philosophy class. When she mentioned 'difference' between the sexes she was denounced as an 'essentialist'. 'What's that?' she enquired. 'Someone who believes in differences between the sexes' replied her classmates. 'But aren't there?' she asked. 'No!' they all chorused. She went on to write *A Return to Modesty*, which argues that many young women today are pushed into promiscuity, and miss the beauty and romance of preserving their virginity for their husband. Along the way there are clear-sighted denunciations of those who deny the obvious differences between men and women.

Summary of contents

Chapter 1: History Lessons

The framework for the discussion is outlined: the pre-modern, modern and post-modern eras. As background, Storkey explains that during the nineteenth century, unmarried middle class women were a liability. It was not considered respectable for them to work to support themselves and so they ended up as dependent on male relatives. By the end of the nineteenth century, such women were able to take up opportunities in education and professional employment, and also by then the mission movement had absorbed large numbers of women. After the First World War many other professions opened up to women and by the time of the Second World War women were ready to move into the vocational spaces vacated by the men who were called up. Following the Second World War, men returning from the forces needed employment. Many working women found that to return 'home' was in fact a liberation from the demands of employment outside the house.

This explains why, during the 1950s, there was a strong sense that the man and father should be the breadwinner and the wife and mother, the carer at home. This attitude may be described as *pre-modern* and is characterised by an emphasis on tradition and predictability. There followed a massive reaction. During the *modern* period (1960s and 1970s) there was a questioning of authority, of patriarchy and of tradition. Everything was up for grabs. Since the mid-1980s or so we have moved into the *post-modern* era, an age of relativism. The rest of the book sets out to answer the question 'created or constructed' according to the thinking of each of these three eras.

Chapter 2: The Pre-modern in Sex and Gender

Manhood and womanhood created or constructed? 'Created' was the answer in the 1950s. This pre-modern era was characterised by 'essentialism: the idea that a certain "essence" defines the centre of our identity as human beings, and as men and women.'³

*Pre-modern thinking about gender relations, if indeed it can be given the label 'thinking', was therefore largely at the level of assumption rather than analysis or explanation ... A woman's place was in the home, women were intuitive, nurturant, passive, instinctual, good with their hands, but easily distracted.'*⁴

The pre-modern mind justified such stereotypes by appeals to creation and tradition: 'Certain branches of the church claimed to find reinforcement of this essentialism in biblical teaching, insisting that it is implied in the very order of creation.'⁵

³ Page 11

⁴ Pages 11-12

⁵ Page 13

In the pre-modern era there was no distinction between sex and gender. Storkey concludes: 'The main problem with the pre-modern position is now well-recognised. It rests on a biological determinism which reduces all the complexity of human relationships to basic genetic or anatomic categories.'⁶

Storkey briefly examines the arguments that biology lies behind gender differences, and finds them too simplistic. Rather, she argues, 'the social framework: the location, upbringing, expectations, and belief structures that people hold'⁷ – each play their part.

Chapter 3: Modernism and Gender Relationships

Manhood and womanhood, created or constructed? The 1960s and 1970s saw a shift: sex was agreed to be created, whereas gender was thought to be constructed.

To begin with, the feminists of the 1960s saw biological difference as a bad deal for women. They campaigned for abortion on demand and 24 hour nursery care so that women would not be disadvantaged by their reproductive function. Some argued that science should move towards getting men to take their fair share of pregnancy, and seriously discussed wombs implanted into male bladders.

But such thinking actually maintained biological essentialism. What if, instead of beginning with difference, one began with sameness, with shared humanity?

*... humans are socially constructed, not biologically created. Being a human person is not just about instincts or drives, that would be animal behaviour. But as humans we think and act. We are as much products of social change as of any biological evolution.*⁸

Thus, the focus moved from biological, reproductive or physiological differences, to 'the way society was structured and the roles which resulted'.⁹ Sex (basic physical difference) was distinguished now from gender (learned attitudes and roles).

Modernists argued that the sexual division of labour had less to do with any innate difference than to do with the greater power held by men. Similarly, domestic violence, incest, or sexual assault was less to do with innate biological urges than with the greater power held by men. Power is the key: '... We have constructed cultures which have rewarded men for being men, and penalised women for being women ...'¹⁰

Most feminists now argued that the biological differences had been used in the past as a smokescreen for discrimination. Even the

⁶ Page 14

⁷ Page 20

⁸ Page 25

⁹ Page 26

¹⁰ Page 28

'natural' division of labour where the mother takes prime responsibility for caring for children was challenged: some feminist writers challenged the myth of the maternal instinct.

But feminists differed fiercely among themselves:

- A. 'Liberal' or 'equality feminists' placed emphasis on similarity, not difference. They believed that equality of opportunity in education and employment was the answer.
- B. 'Socialist' feminists saw the whole capitalist system as oppressive.
- C. 'Radical' (often 'Separatist') feminists saw men as the problem – they stressed difference not sameness, and many rejected heterosexuality.

Chapter 4: The Post-modern Experience

In a sense the debate 'created or constructed' becomes redundant in a post-modern age. For the words 'created', 'constructed', 'sameness', 'difference', 'essentialism', 'sex', 'gender' are 'just words', signifying different things to different people. Each individual's own experience is the only reality. The logical conclusion is that we each make our own reality. We choose our own sex and gender because sex in any universal sense is constructed just as much as gender. Neither was created.

Post-moderns reject 'modern' feminism: in particular they criticise the search for equality. 'Egalitarianism in effect means the disappearance of women. They are admitted into the structures as token or lesser men'.¹¹ Women must maintain their own identity. This implies an emphasis on difference – except that as we have seen, even the term 'difference' is denied any universal meaning.

Chapter 5: Gender and 'Difference' in Popular Writings

Post-modern feminists writings are incomprehensible to most readers. Instead the popular market has been flooded with a range of books on the differences between the sexes.

One best seller is *Why Men Don't Iron* by Anne and Bill Moir. Storkey objects to the way the authors use 'masculinity' (a 'gender cultural term') interchangeably with 'maleness' (a 'sex biological term'). She argues that the 'science' purported by the authors looks alarmingly like the 'tired old stereotypes used for years to justify old gender roles'.¹² For her, the Moirs are 'non-scholars'¹³ who have exhumed the corpse of biological essentialism, dressed it up in new clothes, and paraded it down the catwalk. She mocks the way that they seem to be ignorant of the latest post-modern arguments. To Storkey, they are just pre-moderns who wish to abandon the

¹¹ Page 43

¹² Page 52

¹³ Ann Moir has a D.Phil (Oxon) in genetics.

quest for equality. For the Moirs lament the way that gender neutrality (the insistence on sameness) has emasculated men: they wrote this book to further an understanding of the differences between the sexes so that men can be 'real men' again.

Another best seller is John Gray's *Men are From Mars: Women are From Venus*. This too, says Storkey, 'rests on essentialist assumptions which are never examined'.¹⁴ However, Gray's purpose is 'benign' – for he simply wants to help men and women to relate more happily, and to dispel the misunderstandings that result when they fail to understand their differences.

Garrison Keillor also 'slides between nature and culture',¹⁵ but is forgiven because he writes as an entertainer rather than a theoretician:

*... he can also succeed in spite of inconsistencies because he brings the very ambiguities alive in his writing, and that is where his readers are. For even in our social conventions most people are not clear whether men and women are created or constructed, and most people are unsure what they want men and women to be like. So Keillor engages all our sympathies when he describes the dual messages which men and women receive from each other.*¹⁶

These and many other writers, entertainers, and advertisers have as their main theme the differences between the sexes. Yet, Storkey argues, we are no nearer clarifying or defining any essential gender differences. She implies that the great flood of material on difference is actually just reinforcing old stereotypes.

Dismissive as she is of the 'mass paperback market', Storkey is more positive about 'competent researchers'¹⁷ such as Carol Gilligan, Nancy Chodorow, Lillian Rubin, Lynne Segal and Deborah Tannen; and she also mentions the burgeoning literature on masculinity. All this literature, while avoiding crass biological essentialism and giving due weight to considerations of nurture/culture come up with a broad consensus on the differences:

*... men and women are said to demonstrate different ways of interacting, expressing emotions, playing games, having a conversation, handling authority, giving and receiving instructions, initiating friendships, reacting to problems, establishing connections, relating to hierarchies, appraising situations and taking control ... Men are more likely to be separate, individualistic, oppositional, thinking in terms of binaries, whereas women show greater 'connectedness' and orientate themselves empathetically towards others. This is a conclusion similar to that of Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous, although with different philosophical underpinnings.*¹⁸

¹⁴ Page 55

¹⁵ Page 56

¹⁶ Page 57

¹⁷ Page 61

¹⁸ Page 64

Storkey gives anecdotal evidence to support such differences between the sexes, but seems sympathetic with the attachment model of explanation – the boy's need to separate from his mother, and the girl's more permanent attachment to her mother. She concludes that there is helpful material around on improving relations between the sexes (notably Deborah Tannen's work) and that the best of this steers the middle way between 'abandoning or stereotyping differences between men and women'.¹⁹

Chapter 6: From Social Science to Theology

A multitude of non-academic Christian books on sex and gender are available, but: 'too many of them rehash old ideas based on biological essentialism plus gender stereotypes, but support this with quotations from the Bible'.²⁰

Our study of Scripture is inevitably affected by the philosophical assumptions of our own age and by our culture. We never read the Bible neutrally and we need to maintain humility – recognising that we may well be blinkered in various ways by the context in which we find ourselves:

*we need to constantly examine the assumptions that we bring to any reading of the Bible, and some of these assumptions are related to sex and gender. For, in our striving to be biblical we may be merely cultural in off-loading some of the pervading, unexamined attitudes and ideas about the relationship between men and women which we then unconsciously impose on Scripture.*²¹

Even Bible translation is affected by our assumptions. Take for example Romans 16:1. Why do translators not say 'Phoebe, a deacon (or minister) of the church at Cencrea?' Because they assume that because she was a woman, this cannot have been what Paul meant, even though it is what he said.

Storkey asks: 'How much do we take prevailing cultural ideas or arguments into our own mind-set (including ideas of biology and roles) and then overlay them with theological justification?'²²

Chapter 7: Sex and Gender in Theology: From Pre- to Post-modernity

There is an unavoidable 'pre-modernity' whenever one talks of our humanness as derivative. If we are brought into being by a Creator, and thereby dependent on that Creator for our existence, we have already come down on one side of the creation/construction debate. Yet there is more to the pre-modern position than just believing that sexuality is put into the creation by God, for our sexuality can be given, and yet

¹⁹ Page 74

²⁰ Page 75

²¹ Page 81

²² Page 83

our 'differences' can also be developmental and cultural. But there is little acknowledgement of this in the pre-modern mentality.²³

Pre-modernity in a Theology of the Sexes

'Many theological writers through the ages saw difference as total, almost deterministic'.

Storkey quotes some of the more offensive and misogynous comments by the early church fathers. From our own day, William Oddie is quoted as providing a 'classical exposition of a pre-modern view of difference: fixed, immutable, God-given. The whole of male-female reality is permeated by their differences which are reflected in biology, roles, and spiritual identity'.²⁴

Many evangelicals who maintain role distinctions are the product of a 'consumerist, American, macho culture ... often nationalistic, rightwing and patriarchal'.²⁵ They are too blinkered to see that their assumptions are cultural rather than biblical. Many of them are so ignorant that they confuse gender concepts and sexual difference; many of them cling to biological essentialist views which 'masquerade as biblical wisdom'.²⁶ But now there is not only an 'unyielding essentialism',²⁷ there is an appeal to the principal of authority: 'the belief that women's nature decrees them as different from men, and thus subservient to men'.²⁸

Modernism in Theology and Gender

Although there were Christian women involved in the first wave of feminism, feminist theology was developed from the 1960s onwards. One development was the discovery of the 'hidden history' of women both in Scripture and church history. Another development was the rejection of pre-modern notions of difference. The focus shifted to similarity – the shared humanity of men and women. Some feminist theologians found ways to interpret the Bible which allowed the old restrictive attitudes to be left behind. Others began to reject the Bible as irrevocably chauvinist – and there are many variations in between.

The Bible as Canon

Biblical feminists accept the Bible as God's Word. They reject biological essentialism, and argue that culture shapes gender roles. They differ from many other feminist theologians because the Bible is seen as normative – above female experience.

²³ Page 84

²⁴ Page 87

²⁵ Page 88

²⁶ Page 88

²⁷ Page 90

²⁸ Page 90

A Canon outside the Canon

Other feminist theologians do not allow that the patriarchal texts in Scripture can be normative. Thus Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza places authority in the 'women-church' – the experience of women. Only those parts of Scripture which mesh with the lives of those who struggle against patriarchy are to be accepted. Locating experience as the final authority means that Fiorenza could be placed equally within post-modernity rather than modernity.

A Canon within the Canon

Rather than looking outside Scripture for the final authority, Rosemary Radford Ruether looks within for those core elements which faithfully reflect the redemptive message of liberation and justice.

Post-modernity in Theology and Gender

Post-modern writers deconstruct God altogether. Mary Daly sees God as a verb not a noun – 'the *I am* of women coming into their own authentic liberation'.²⁹ Carter Heyward sees god as the verb 'to god' which for her equals lesbian lovemaking.

Summary

Feminist theology reacted against the essentialism of the pre-modern attitude, and against the 'abuses of a religion which has sometimes used its authority to deny both full humanity and full dignity to women'.³⁰

Chapter 8: Post-post-modern Postscript

Storkey acknowledges that each perspective (pre-modern, modern, post-modern) incorporates some insights, while containing considerable weaknesses. She prefers to start from another point: a credal starting point. We accept our sexuality as a 'given'. We are accountable to God for how we express our sexuality (there are boundaries). We should distinguish between sex and gender – but it is a mistake to view sex as creational and gender as cultural in too rigid a way.

The Bible does not tell us how to be 'masculine' or 'feminine' – it tells us how to be Christian. The Bible includes the perspectives of difference, similarity or sameness, complementarity (not hierarchy) and union. The four have to be held together – otherwise you end up with hierarchy on the one hand or androgyny on the other.

²⁹ Page 105

³⁰ Page 107

A Critique

The strength of this book is that Dr Storkey is a Christian who has read widely in modern feminist writing, and has the necessary background knowledge in history, sociology and theology to interact meaningfully with current thinking. Her purpose is to outline recent developments in thinking *vis-a-vis* gender. If one takes the book as an overview of how modern thinkers have handled the question 'created or constructed?' then there is much of interest. If one is looking for a Biblical treatment of the question, this is not the book to turn to. The concluding chapters about theology are really too brief to be useful, and her concluding comments about the Biblical evidence are even more frustrating.

Her protestation of academic neutrality at the beginning ('I have tried to present the ideas of others as faithfully as I have presented my own',³¹) and the brief Biblical affirmations at the end sit uncomfortably with the tone of the rest of the book. For much of it resembles a 'spot the heretic' tract – the heresy in question being biological essentialism. This is variously referred to as crass, outdated, unthinking – a corpse that should be left to slumber peacefully in the grave.³² The sin of all sins is to be trapped in pre-modernity, and to fail to draw the 'obvious' distinction between sex and gender.³³

Let's remind ourselves that this monster (biological essentialism) is the idea that there are certain fixed characteristics which go along with being male and female. These characteristics are rooted in our being, connected to the way we are made, and express themselves even independently of nurture or societal influence. According to the modern mind-set this notion is dangerous because it imprisons men and women in certain stereotypes. Storkey associates it with a relentless determinism: it implies that we are denied free choice and responsible decision making. For her the logical conclusion of biological essentialism would be, for example, to accept that men are predestined for promiscuity ('you can't blame them – they're just being men!').

Yet Storkey herself concedes that there are differences between men and women beyond the merely physical. She seems to believe that these are constructed not created: they are the result of nurture and culture. This is the only way to allow any individual to develop in their own way and express themselves even in a way opposite to popular stereotypes. But it is impossible to *prove* that these differences are purely the result of nurture and culture. When one looks at the differences – differences which Storkey accepts – why not allow that they were part of God's good design? Surely, if as Christians we accept that God created man and woman with distinctive physical characteristics, that's already accepting

³¹ Page vii

³² Page 53

³³ Page 88

biological essentialism. (By affirming sexual difference we distance ourselves from post-modernists, who say 'choose your own sexuality'.) Why not go one step further and say that God's good design went deeper than the merely external physical appearance? The efforts of some modern feminists to deny the maternal instinct show just how foolish the doctrinaire rejection of essentialism is. I cannot see why we cannot give thanks for God's good design, rejoice in the complementary differences, but *also* affirm that God created everyone as an individual. There will always be exceptions to the general rule, and each human being is to be valued for what they are and the gifts they have.

Storkey pleads for humility, and points out that:

*In our striving to be biblical, we may be merely cultural in off-loading some of the pervading, unexamined attitudes and ideas about the relationship between men and women, which we then unconsciously impose upon Scripture.*³⁴

Here she is probably alluding to traditionalist theologians who assume that men should be breadwinners and women should be at home, and then find texts to justify it. Yet while she is quick to condemn anyone stuck in the mire of *pre-modernity*, she seems oblivious of the way in which her thinking seems stuck in the *modern* perspective. Modernity insists on a dogmatic division between sex and gender and is intolerant in condemnation of stereotyping. Storkey buys this line wholesale. Any who differ with her on this are stupid, badly read, outdated and wrong (yes, she did plead for humility!). She is anxious for women (and men) to be liberated from restrictive expectations. She detests a rigidly hierarchical interpretation of Scripture which would imply that men are more significant and valuable than women. She groups together misogynists, chauvinists, biological essentialists, and those who believe that God created men and women for distinctive callings. Guilt by association is the name of the game!

Try coming at discrimination from a different angle. When we look at wife battering, incest, or any other of the abuses of women that have gone on through history, it is inadequate to blame a pre-modern mind-set or a belief in biological essentialism. Rather, blame sin! God's good design that men and women should complement each other and live in harmony was wrecked by the Fall. The battle of the sexes commenced in Genesis 3:16 and continues to this day. Sin means that all aspects of our manhood and womanhood are tainted, relationships are distorted, and every social structure may discriminate in various ways against men and women. In calling for men and women to be viewed as equally in the image of God, and to be treated with dignity and respect, we are challenging *sin*, rather than a *concept* of biological essentialism.

The other way in which Storkey seems to be in thrall to the modern perspective is in her use of the word 'stereotyping' as a smear.

³⁴ Page 81

All stereotyping is by definition wrong: there isn't such a thing as 'masculinity' or 'femininity' – they are just socially constructed stereotypes. Certainly, says Storkey, the Bible doesn't say anything about being masculine or feminine – just about being Christian.

Really? It seems that Storkey has absorbed the 'sameness' mentality of the feminist thinking of the 60s and 70s. (Just as Charles Sherlock did when he wrote *The Doctrine of Humanity*.³⁵ The only certainties were physical, so his chapter on women focussed on menstruation, and his chapter on men focussed on phallic symbols.) I have read Storkey's book four times now but I still can't find *any* specific reason given to rejoice in my womanhood. As one woman has said, 'We've been fully liberated to be human now, but please, can we be liberated to be *women* again?'

The concluding section of her book affirms, albeit briefly, that the Bible includes the perspectives of difference, similarity, complementarity and union. Both man and woman were created equally in the image of God and both were given the creation mandate. Together, and equally, they were to represent God on this earth – ruling and stewarding the earth on his behalf. They were to work together as a team to fulfil that mandate. Agreed. However Storkey refuses to acknowledge that they were not designed to work in the same way. In Genesis 2:15 it is Adam who is commanded to work the garden. Eve is made 'from him' and 'for him' (1 Cor. 11:8, 9) to be a 'suitable helper' for him. She is created with the capacity to bear and nurture new life. There are many pointers to the way that God ordained Adam to be the leader in the relationship: especially the way that he was held to account after the Fall, and the way that in the NT he is regarded as the leader of the old humanity (Rom. 5:12ff.; 1 Cor. 15:22). The way that they were cursed after the Fall (Adam with regard to working the earth; Eve with regard to marriage and motherhood) points to the fact that from the beginning they had different primary callings, for which they were equipped by the many providential differences.

Storkey will not admit that men and women were created for different primary callings because for her, this belief is inextricable from chauvinist oppression. She seems unable to differentiate between extreme misogyny, the traditional teachings of the church, and current complementarian thinking. For her, anyone who believes in 'headship' must logically believe that 'a woman's moral responses are ultimately reduced to being about whether they are obedient or disobedient to male structures'.³⁶ She ignores the careful qualifications to submission made by all responsible complementarians. As a wife, my submission is always 'in the Lord'. Jesus is Lord, not my husband! My moral responses are ultimately reduced to obedience to Christ. But *part* of my obedience to Christ is to respect the various authority structures ordained by God – in the church and state as well as in the family.

³⁵ Leicester: IVP, 1996

³⁶ Page 110

Storkey picks the worst arguments advanced by traditionalists and assumes that anyone who 'still' believes in headship must hold those views. Is that good scholarship? What if we picked the most irresponsible of arguments ever put forward by feminists, and assumed that all feminists accepted those arguments? Or what if we identified a Bible-believing Elaine Storkey with a Bible-deriding Mary Daly? Storkey would, rightly, be incensed.

This book is a missed opportunity. Manhood and womanhood are part of God's good creation, which Satan loathes and seeks to destroy. His strategy through most of history was to *over-emphasise the differences*, and for men to use their greater physical strength to oppress women (this is still his strategy today in much of the non-western world). The feminist movement rightly worked against discrimination. But once equal opportunities were achieved, Satan's next strategy was to *deny the differences*. When we are told that gender is just a construct, or that our sexuality is plastic – Satan is at work to overthrow God-given distinctions. In academic circles and in the media he seems to have triumphed. It has become trendy to mock stereotypes, it is fashionable to deride biological essentialism. Public policy is driven by the radical feminist agenda, and the effects have been devastating – as has been powerfully documented by Melanie Phillips.³⁷ But everyday experience affirms differences – hence the widespread popularity of those works on difference so derided by Storkey.

Within this cultural context Christians need to affirm loud and clear that the idea of plastic sexuality, fashionable as it is, runs counter to the Bible. For God created male and female, he designed marriage as an institution to unite one male with one female. Maleness or femaleness is intrinsic to our identity as human beings. Indeed, we may infer that we will be either male or female for eternity, *even after the functions associated with our sexuality have ceased*. When Jesus was presented with the hypothetical scenario of a woman who married seven brothers in turn and was asked whose wife she would be after the resurrection, he replied that there would be no marriage then. He never denied the fact that the woman in question would still be a woman, and the husbands in question would still be men! Christ was incarnate as a man, and when he was raised from the dead he was clearly recognisable as the man he had been – not some kind of androgynous sexless being.³⁸

³⁷ Phillips, Melanie, *The Sex Change Society: Feminised Britain and the Neutered Male*, Social Market Foundation, 1999. Phillips argues that most families still choose to follow what may be called 'traditional' sex roles – the husband/father as primary breadwinner, the wife/mother as primary carer. Radical feminists hate this pattern, and have influenced those policies which have sought by various means to break it down. She exposes these efforts, and the suffering that has ensued.

³⁸ Daniel R. Heimbach, *Eternally Fixed Sexual Being*. Paper presented at the Building Strong Families Conference, sponsored by Family Life and CBMW, Dallas, Texas, March 2000.

Rather than joining Storkey in the fashionable campaign against stereotypes and biological essentialism, is it not more urgent that we affirm with unqualified clarity that men and women are created not constructed? Rather than falling in with Storkey's belief that the Bible has nothing distinctive to say to men as men and women as women, is it not imperative that we give men and women a positive vision of God's design for manhood and womanhood?

THE LAST WORD

Robbie Castleman

It's hard to be awe-struck any more. By anything. A hermeneutic of suspicion is applied to life.

In entertainment, what used to dazzle us at the movies is just wires, painted scenery and the blue or green screen. Computer enhancement is the new magician. We know it's just a good trick.

In relationships, people just wait for disappointment. Brad Pitt gets married, but declares, 'I'm not hung up on "happily ever after". Go where you need to go.' Pre-nuptial agreements replace the covenant.

In the church, Sunday morning services are designed to make people at home and comfortable, not holy and confronted. The *mysterium tremendum* is replaced by microphonic technology. We come boldly to the couch of Grace and plop on down next to the Almighty. No awe. No fear of the Lord. No transformation either.

Conformed to the world, the service (and I purposely avoid using the word 'worship' for both theological and exegetical reasons) is understood to be the best advertisement there is for attracting new members. In the denominationally unfettered USA, 'church hopping' is often normative. Getting your needs met is the key to how long you bond with a community. This is the unstated prenuptial agreement for being part of the Bride of Christ.

Annie Dillard in her book *Teaching A Stone To Talk* confronts this loss of awe when she writes,

Why do we people in churches seem like cheerful, brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the Absolute?... On the whole I do not find Christians, outside of the catacombs, sufficiently sensible of conditions. Does anyone have the foggiest idea of what sort of power we so blithely invoke?... We should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping God may wake some day and take offence, or the waking God may draw us out to where we can never return.

Returning reverence to the relationship we have with God can begin with the Christian scholar. We need to approach the study of God as 'holy ground' again. To be awe-struck again and again by the Truth and Grace of God is good for our souls as well as our studies. St. Bonaventure wrote the following in the preface to his *Handbook on Being a Rational Christian*,

First, therefore, I invite the reader to the groans of prayer through Christ crucified, through whose blood we are cleansed from the filth of vice - So that we do not believe that reading is

sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without wonder, observation without joy, work without piety, knowledge without love, understanding without humility, endeavour without divine grace, reflection as a mirror without divinely inspired wisdom.

To those, therefore, predisposed by divine grace, the humble and the pious, the contrite and the devout, those anointed with the oil of gladness, the lovers of divine wisdom, and those inflamed with desire for it; to those wishing to give themselves to glorifying, wondering at, and even savouring God, I propose the following considerations, suggesting that the mirror presented by the external world is of little or no value unless the mirror of our mind has been cleansed and polished.

As you return to your studies and work, having finished this issue of *Themelios*, ask the Lord for the grace to *marvel* once again at the mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Return boldly to the *throne* of Grace and be awe-struck by this privilege. Your desk, study, pew and sanctuary are holy ground.

Book Reviews

Old Testament

The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology (Evangelical Theological Society Studies)

Daniel I. Block
Grand Rapids/Leicester: Baker Academic/Apollos,
2000 (2nd ed.),
176 pp., \$19.99/£14.99

This is the second edition of a book first published in 1988. Yet, as the author says, this is not merely a reprint, but 'modifications appear on virtually every page, and several chapters have been thoroughly reworked in light of the new discoveries'. Its aim is to examine the relationships between deities and nations and to determine the ancient Near Eastern perceptions of these.

Block poses four questions, largely corresponding to the main chapters: the origin of the deity-nation relationship; its everyday expression; its nature; and the circumstances and manner of its termination. He concludes with an examination of Ezekiel 8-11, to illustrate the significance of his study for the interpretation of the OT. Overall, the book shows that in many ways the Israelite approach to their relationship with their patron deity resembled that of their neighbours. At the same time it highlights those areas in which the Israelite perspective differed drastically.

The author demonstrates from a number of extra-biblical sources that the most common concept of the deity-nation relationship was

territory-based. This contrasts with the OT where the primary association is with a people. The conclusion that Israel was unique among her neighbours in this respect and in their belief that God had called them to himself to be his people, is difficult to escape. This is reinforced by a comparison of the way in which deity-nation relationships are expressed. A discussion of human names and divine epithets leads to the conclusion that the notion of 'national deities' is somewhat misleading, since among nations outside Israel no exclusive allegiance is demanded, but rather other deities are tolerated.

Block draws an analogy with the feudal association of lords and vassals, and to test its appropriateness he then examines deity-land and land-people relationships. While several expressions relate to Yahweh's ownership of the land of Israel, the most explicit statement of this demonstrates that his primary association is still with the nation. As for the relationship between peoples and lands, the available extra-biblical texts seem disinterested in the notion, whereas for Israel it was a critical issue. At the same time there was a widespread notion that the deity's favour or disfavour was seen in the state of the land. Finally Block turns to the motif of divine abandonment, focusing particularly on Mesopotamian texts and Yahweh's abandonment of the temple in Ezekiel. Again he notes similarities but also significant contrasts between Israelite and Mesopotamian thought.

Block presents his study with logic and clarity, covering all the major questions. If it has a drawback, it is that material is drawn from various

periods of history, as the author himself acknowledges, with no place given to the evolution of thought in Israel or surrounding nations. Yet the nature of the work precluded this, and it is of great value in painting an overall picture, and in extracting principles which seem to hold good whatever the period. As a book that sets Israelite religious thought against the wider ancient near eastern background, displaying similarities and contrasts between them, it is to be highly recommended.

Simon J. Sherwin

Tyndale House

A History of Israel (Fourth edition)

John Bright with an Introduction and

Appendix by William P. Brown

Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000,
xxii + 533 pp.

Since its first edition in 1959, Bright's *History* has become probably the most widely influential textbook in its field, covering the period from before the patriarchs up to the rise of early Judaism. New, expanded editions were issued in 1972 and 1981 to take account of more recent archaeological evidence (or different ways of reading the data) and the developing sociological disciplines. There has been no rewriting for this version: the substance (23–464) is completely identical with the third edition, including its pagination. What distinguishes it are William Brown's Introduction (1–22), which sets Bright's work as a historian in context and explains the principles that underlie his magnum opus; and the Appendix (465–85), which presents an update on scholarship on the history of ancient Israel since 1981.

Both essays are of great value in appreciating Bright's aims and achievements. In the Introduction Brown shows that Bright began by charting a relatively conservative course between the historical reconstructions proposed by Martin

Noth (a fairly sceptical work of tradition criticism) and Yehezkel Kaufmann (a fairly literalist following of the biblical text). The differences which Brown notes from the first to the third editions are interesting illustrations of responses to changes and currents within the discipline in the 1960s and 1970s.

Three principles in particular governed Bright's approach. First, archaeology was placed at the forefront of historical research as an 'objective control' on the biblical record. Bright remained indebted to his mentor Albright, following his 13th century dating of the exodus and conquest, and his generally positivist interpretation of the archaeological record. Alongside this, Bright came readily to agree that Israel's origins and its occupation of the land were more diverse and complex than a superficial reading of the text might suggest (137–43).

Second, Bright had a basic, though not uncritical, confidence in the historical authenticity of the OT narratives. He believed (or hoped) that extra-biblical parallels from Nuzi and Ebla would corroborate the Bible's portrayal of the patriarchs, and argued that 1–2 Samuel and 1 Kings 1–11 were virtually contemporaneous with the events described (37; 95–103; 184). Although he differed at some significant points in his historical reconstruction from the Bible's own historiography, Bright largely affirmed the structure and content of the biblical narrative. At each stage of that narrative, as well, Bright sought to set the Bible's account against the wider backcloth of the ancient Near East.

Third, Bright believed the history of Israel was also the history of its faith. It was the Mosaic covenant which gave Israel its true identity as a people delivered and constituted by Yahweh, and it was in obedience to that covenant that Israel sought to conduct itself throughout the course of its history. Mosaic Yahwism

was aniconic and functionally monotheistic, a religion sharply in contrast with those of Israel's neighbours (159–62).

These leitmotifs can be discerned throughout the work, and it can be readily appreciated how Bright's work comported more or less with a moderately conservative Christian reading of the OT. However, as the Appendix succinctly shows, the critical landscape has changed beyond recognition in the past generation. If a consensus ever existed about the principles mentioned above, that has now broken down and each of them has become very problematic.

The archaeology of ancient Palestine is no longer practised (as it was under Albright) with a view to illuminating Israel's faith and scriptures. Instead, archaeologists today attempt to reconstruct the history of early Iron I Palestine with only occasional reference to the Bible. In its place, anthropological and social-scientific methods are increasingly used in the task of historical reconstruction.

Second, the tendency in some circles to date the OT histories to the Persian and Hellenistic periods and the recognition of their ideological character are understood as factors that qualify (or even disqualify) their status as a reliable witness to the pre-exilic period. The lack of extra-biblical evidence for Abraham, Moses and David is cited in support of a minimalistic interpretation of the biblical data.

Finally, the character of pre-exilic Yahwism and the antiquity of covenant as a primary religious principle are hotly disputed on artifactual and literary-critical grounds.

Given these controversies, we may well understand the hesitations the new student has to step upon this terrain! However, as holders to a historical and incarnational faith, we must resist the temptation to treat the OT exclusively as theology, even if

that is its primary character. The historiographical and literary dimensions of the Bible need also to be appreciated. The new perspectives for studying the past (which are often in conflict with each other) must be patiently understood and answered on their own terms. We await a new consensus on what 'the new archaeology' and social science methods can legitimately establish. In the meantime, Bright's *History* is an enduring achievement from which the discerning reader will still profit, and its re-issue with these essays is warmly welcomed.

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Proverbs, The Old Testament Library

Richard J. Clifford

Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999,
xvi + 286 pp., h/b., £25.00/\$39.95

In his preface, Clifford makes the disarming comment that the instructions found in the book of Proverbs are 'remarkably empty of "content"', and that its maxims are 'often trite'. This is too much of a generalisation. But, paradoxically, this very banality becomes for Clifford a key to understanding the book. If the content of Proverbs is banal, the forms used to express this content are not. As a result, Clifford focuses more than most commentators on the poetical devices and the rhetorical figures of Proverbs. When discussing a saying, he often points out the subtle arrangements of material into well crafted and concise units, of which the aims are to engage and persuade the audience. He shows well that the meaning and force of a proverb is inextricably linked to its poetical form, and in many cases he considerably clarifies the meaning of a whole saying.

The introduction discusses standard matters such as the date of composition and editing of the book,

its historical context, the wisdom literature that Proverbs inherited and its own influence on later literature. A large place is given to a discussion of Mesopotamian wisdom texts, since Clifford clearly believes that the wisdom of Israel is best understood against a background of Mesopotamian ideas. Some of these ideas guide his interpretation of passages still little understood (Lady Wisdom, the 'foreign woman' of Proverbs 1-9, the seven men of 26:6). While these are interesting, the reader will have to remember that explanations borrowed from foreign texts remain speculative. Two other sections discuss, though regrettably too briefly, the distinctive ideas of Proverbs and the meaning of the book for today.

In the commentary, chapters 1-9 are divided into 'Ten Lectures' interrupted by three 'Interludes' and three 'Wisdom Poems'. Chapters 10:1 to 22:16, which constitute the first long collection of the 'Proverbs of Solomon', are divided into sections corresponding to the traditional chapter divisions. The end of the book (22:17 - 31:31) is examined according to the divisions within the text itself. Each section has an introduction, which discusses matters of date, provenance, literary structure and interpretation, followed by the author's own translation, textual notes and a verse-by-verse commentary. In his translation, Clifford seeks to render into English the 'compression and wit' of the Hebrew proverbs. This is a difficult task and perhaps his translation is too modern and idiomatic to be able to capture the Hebrew poetry well. It removes the staccato effect of the Hebrew, as well as the ambiguity often present in the original. But at least it is a fresh translation that provides the reader with some new perspectives on the text.

Individual proverbs are clarified in a variety of ways: through grammatical points, the semantics of words, comparisons with modern translations, cross-references, and

cultural references. Overall the comments are of a rather technical nature, and readers will still have quite a bit to do on their own to find contemporary relevance.

In short, Clifford's commentary is a richly informative reading of Proverbs, and a helpful tool in the study of the book. Whilst not being itself a meditation on the text, readers will find it useful for prompting their own intelligent reflection on the Book of Proverbs.

J-M Heimerdinger

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Joel and Amos, New Century Bible Commentary

Richard J. Coggins
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000,
xii + 170 pp., £9.95

This NCBC volume focuses on an exegesis of the final shape of the biblical text, without troubling the reader too much with theories of literary origin. As a consequence its emphasis is not so much on the history of the books of Joel and Amos, but more on their ongoing relevance for ancient and modern readers. Within these parameters Richard Coggins has written a readable commentary, with some interesting insights on matters of 'inter-textuality' between the twelve minor prophets. However, his emphasis on a literary approach bears unmistakable and in my opinion unnecessary post-modern characteristics, since he actually separates the final shape of the books from their historical roots. It is possible that there were prophets named Amos or Joel, according to Coggins, but it is not very important. Thus he leaves behind the classical view that at least some parts of the book must be read against an eighth-century background. Instead, he argues that our knowledge of any historical circumstances of these prophetic books is very incomplete and hardly ever decisive for dating.

Basically this is a healthy argument, but Coggins pushes it a little bit further towards a more or less 'pure' literary approach. In fact, he seems implicitly to lean towards the Copenhagen School, because he prefers external dating criteria to the well-known internal references e.g. Amos 1:1; 7:10-17. Of course these books can be read against the background of different times and places, and to do so produces meaning – this is the very essence of tradition. But this does not imply that they were written in these ages or that every meaning thus gained is of equal value.

While this 'flat' literary approach of Coggins must be underlined, his commentary can still be used critically. His introductions have an interesting and refreshing emphasis on literature and inter-textuality, though they promise more than his treatment of the texts actually provides. His textual commentary turns out to be a fairly classical exegesis, in which literary and structural approaches do not play an important role. In short, Coggins offers an up-to-date and rather fashionable approach to these two prophetic books, and a not too elaborate or far-fetched exegesis of their contents. This makes this commentary a useful handbook, which should be complemented on a student's bookshelf by one that is less extreme on matters of literary origin and dating.

Stefan Paas

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The Shape and Message of Book III (Psalms 73–89), JSOT^{Sup.} 307

Robert L. Cole

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000,
262 pp., h/b., £50.00

This published version of Cole's doctoral thesis represents a 'canonical' approach to OT exegesis. Cole aims to demonstrate both that

parallelismus membrorum is a feature of whole texts, and that Psalms 73–89 represent a continuing dialogue between Israel suffering in exile and God answering their laments. This dialogue is characterised by what Cole calls *dis legomena*, 'twice-only occurrences of specific forms in a specified corpus of texts'. Cole's work is not so much a new insight into the overall compilation of the psalter, already well represented by, e.g., G.H. Wilson and David Mitchell. It is more a detailed application of the theory to virtually every strophe of the psalms under investigation.

Thus Psalms 73 and 74 lament that the optimistic view of kingship presented in Psalm 72 has not been fulfilled, because of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC. Psalms 75 and 76 are a divine response to this complaint, affirming God's eventual triumph. In Psalm 77 a pious individual (a Zion resident, the king perhaps?) reiterates his grief and faith, after which in Psalm 78 God explains why Israel had to be punished. Psalms 79–80 are pleas by the community for divine mercy. In Psalm 81 God tells them they had failed to keep his festival properly, and in Psalm 82 he condemns their leaders. Psalm 83 calls for judgement on the foreign oppressor nations, and Psalms 84–86 describe the life of the righteous (also the king?) culminating in residence in Zion, where Psalm 87 reports that even Gentiles will receive blessing. Psalm 88 revisits the laments of 73–74, but is now the voice of a Davidee in the depths of Sheol, to whom Psalm 89 tells of the eventual restoration of the Davidic covenant, even implying an immortal kingdom and an immortal king. This is not yet a reality (89 ends on a note of dismay), but Book IV (Pss. 90ff.) responds with a promise that in God's good time (not reckoned as ours is) that kingdom will come.

Cole does not disallow the existence of earlier collections of psalms as building blocks of the present psalter.

But he pays too little attention to the question of who may have assembled Book III, when and why. The dialogue Cole envisages would presumably have been a feature of the pre-restoration theologies of the early sixth century, or of the monarchist tendencies later that century. But part of Cole's evidence for his exegesis of Psalms 73-89 is their headings, which should almost certainly be dated much later. The heading of Psalm 86 ('A prayer of David') is particularly problematic, since Psalm 72 had already concluded that 'the prayers of David son of Jesse are ended'. Cole has to translate the latter as 'the prophecies of David [including all his utterances] are perfected', and he comments that 'what follows can only repeat what has already been said or plead for its institution' (p. 139). It would have been good to see greater recognition of the disparate elements in these psalms, and of the later editorial work implied by their headings. (Goulder is quoted on the psalms of Korah, but not on those of Asaph.) A brief appendix considers several *dis legomena*, but a stronger case needs to be made for these to bear the weight of editorial theology ascribed to them.

The book is well presented, with few misprints, and written with a palpable conviction that the dawn of the messianic kingdom is adumbrated in the dialogue of Book III. Even if the case is overstated, this makes for an exciting and thought-provoking read.

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New Testament

Galatians. New International Biblical Commentary

L. Ann Jervis
Carlisle: Paternoster/Peabody,
Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999,
172 pp., £8.99/\$11.95

This commentary is part of a series, based on the NIV translation, which attempts to make the results of solid biblical scholarship available to general readers and students. As with other volumes in the series, the comments are organised section-by-section and consist primarily of an exposition of key terms and phrases. Additional notes at the end of each section treat more technical issues such as matters of textual criticism. In addition to a 30 page Introduction, the book includes a bibliography of works for further reading plus Subject and Scripture indices.

Jervis is no stranger to Paul. In addition to several published articles, her dissertation on the purpose of Romans, completed under Richard Longenecker, was published by Sheffield University Press. Furthermore, she co-edited a volume of essays on the 'The Gospel in Paul' in honour of Professor Longenecker, also published by Sheffield.

According to Jervis, Paul writes to counter 'confusers and agitators' (2) who have entered churches he planted. These people attractively advocated that Gentile believers adhere to Jewish practices and proclaimed the death of Christ in manner different to Paul. Jervis posits an early date for Galatians and tentatively holds that the Galatian churches were in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia (central Asia Minor).

Regarding Paul himself, Jervis holds that he stood both in continuity with the Judaism of his day, yet

transcended it in important ways as well. On this point, she stresses that because Paul states that he received his gospel through a 'revelation' (Gal. 1:12), 'it does not follow directly from Jewish hopes and beliefs' (4, see also 18, 19). For Jervis Judaism was part of Paul's 'former life'; 'suggesting that he sees his faith in Christ as separate from the religion into which both he and Christ were born' (42). In summary, she comes down much stronger on this side of discontinuity. In my view, this is the weakest point in an otherwise fine introductory commentary on Galatians. I believe Paul understood himself as fully within the 'religion' of his Jewish forefathers. Messiah had come in an unexpected manner and inaugurated the prophesied new covenant. Yet this occurred 'in accordance with the Scriptures' (Rom. 1:2; 1 Cor. 15:3). It may have taken a revelation for Paul to fully grasp what God had done. But a gospel revealed through a 'revelation' no more demands that what is revealed constitutes a new religion than does a prophet word 'revealed' to a prophet.

Theologically, Jervis sides with those who find 'union with Christ' (Schweitzer) or 'participationist eschatology' (Sanders) at the heart of Paul's theology. At the same time, she does not downplay the typical alternative to these views, justification by faith. According to the Jervis, justification by faith plays an important, though not quite as comprehensive, role in Paul's theology as the more participationist categories she favours. Furthermore, in line with a recent trend in interpretation, she adopts the subjective genitive reading of the Greek phrase *πίστις Χριστού*, the 'faith of Christ' rather than the objective genitive 'faith in Christ' (Gal. 2:16; 3:22). This translation emphasises Christ's faithfulness rather than the individual believer's act of faith in effecting salvation. Finally, Jervis sides with the 'new perspective on Paul' (Dunn), namely that observing the Mosaic Law

functioned not to earn one salvation, but to mark one off from other peoples as a Jew.

All in all, I found this a useful exposition on Galatians. Jervis stakes out her positions clearly and provides a reliable guide through the text. Those familiar with the interpretive minefields dotting the landscape of Galatians will appreciate her ability to simplify complicated exegetical issues. At the same time, such readers will always wish for more detailed treatment of this matter or that. Yet, such extensive analysis of the text lies beyond the purpose of this series. Although an abundance of fine critical commentaries on Galatians have appeared in recent years, a solid introductory volume has been lacking (the exposition of John Stott being somewhat dated). This commentary helps fill that void.

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The Letters of John The Pillar NT Commentary

Colin G. Kruse

Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans,
Leicester: Apollos, 2000,
xxii + 255 pp., h/b., £14.99

This medium sized commentary offers a very accessible and reliable explanation of the three Johannine Epistles. The English text used is the NIV, but the argument is based upon the (transliterated) Greek. Despite the fact that it is more expensive than the alternatives, this commentary is a first buy for students and pastors.

Kruse's perspective on the Epistles is dominated by the view that their author is involved in a dispute with heretics which has to do with the correct interpretation of the Fourth Gospel. In this respect his approach is not unlike that of Raymond Brown's massive commentary, and

indeed Brown is the author most frequently referred to. Both commentators thus do not read the letters as timeless tracts concerning love and light, but Kruse manages to give a very edifying exposition of these polemical writings. A major difference between Brown and Kruse is the fact that the latter unashamedly works from Evangelical presuppositions. He does not refer to many other commentators; people like J.L. Houlden, J.R.W. Stott and T.F. Johnson never occur in this book, and others are only mentioned very sparingly. Relevant articles are adduced at the appropriate places.

The first fifty pages of the volume are devoted to the usual discussion of introductory matters. Kruse first paints a convincing picture of the historical situation addressed which accommodates all three epistles and describes the contribution that each of them seeks to make. He hesitates to refer to the author of the epistles as 'John' mainly because he is under the spell of Eusebius' notorious suggestion that next to the apostle John there was an elder of the same name. Nonetheless he (in my view rightly) interprets 1 John 1:1-4 as the testimony of an eyewitness. When discussing the identity and position of the adversaries, Kruse quotes at length from early Christian sources so that the readers can evaluate the evidence for themselves. I would be so bold as to venture that his final conclusions in this respect, viz. that the adversaries were *docetists* similar to the ones combated by Ignatius, would have been even sharper had he profited from interaction with my essay in *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 53 (1999) 17-24, in which I refer to the Apocryphal Acts of John as a remarkable parallel. When Kruse arrives at the ever problematic questions of the genre, form and structure of the first epistle, the discussion becomes quite technical. He basically relies on D.F. Watson for his conclusions in this area.

The exposition is followed not only by indices of authors and texts, but also by an appendix which gives the text of references to Cain (cf. 1 John 3:11-12) in the Bible and extrabiblical literature; the commentary itself, however, hardly interacts with these texts so that they are just there for the sake of interest. Interspersed between the comments there are some twenty 'Notes' on words or subjects requiring some extra attention. These notes are generally very helpful, not least because they are well cross-referenced and can be found in the table of contents. Only the one on the antichrist I found rather thin. In his explanation of disputed verses and subjects Kruse always first mentions the alternatives and then states his preference, though there are occasions when he frankly concedes that no firm decision can be made. Such is the case in regard to the apparent perfectionism in 1 John. No specific attention is paid to contemporary application. Errors are few; I just noted that B.D. Ehrman has become B.E. Ehrman.

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Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results, JSNTS 170; Studies in New Testament Greek, 4.

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Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed (Eds.),
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999,
425 pp., h/b., £55

Stanley Porter has already edited a notable collection of essays on the subject with Don Carson (*Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek*: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), and Jeffrey Reed has produced a major monograph on the topic, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997; essentially a revision of his doctoral thesis at the University). It may come then as no surprise

that the volume under review is not for the faint-hearted. It is not an introduction, but assumes a more general understanding of linguistics and a particular knowledge of Discourse Analysis (DA) itself – here largely identified with Text-Linguistics, rather than Pragmatics. The book seeks to illustrate four major different *approaches* to DA currently in use in NT studies: revised forms of Halliday's, Systemic-Functional Linguistics; the colon-analysis and related approaches pioneered by J.P. Louw and the South African School; the Literary-Semantic Structure approaches to deliberative discourses and narrative analysis of SIL, and a broader trawl of 'Continental' approaches. The collection comprises a relatively brief methodological part (4 chapters), followed by 14 chapters offering samples of a range of the above DA approaches to the Gospels and Acts (Part II); the Pauline Corpus (Part III), and the General Epistles (Part IV).

The essays on theory and method in Part I, are strangely diverse and unrelated: a very brief and basic discussion of 'the Role of Context' in understanding Discourse' (by Nida); a more comprehensive (and Hallidayan) account of what makes for 'cohesiveness' in discourse (by Reed); a response to the so-called 'Critical Discourse Analysis' of Fowler and others (by Porter, usefully illustrated by engagement with Philemon), and a creative look at machine-searchable 'tagged texts' and how they might be used in DA (by O'Donnell, largely using Jude).

The strength of the book lies in Parts II–IV, and in the way the individual contributors bring their different DA approaches to a range of texts, each choosing his or her tool for the job in hand. The bulk of the essays are on narrative (160 pages). Two, by Longacre, are devoted to the narrative macro-structuring of the episodes in Mark, as a whole, and to the finer complexities of 5.1–43 in particular.

Several other essays address how writers 'foreground' (= subtly emphasise) important aspects of the narrative, e.g. through use of historic present, imperfective and stative verbs, lexical repetition, 'fronting' and other departures from 'neutral' word-order, etc. Comparisons are perhaps odious, but I found the two essays on Acts by Martin-Asensio (on the Stephen narrative) and Todd Klutz (on the Sons of Sceva) to be the most illuminating of the set.

Of the 70 pages devoted to the Pauline corpus, only one essay tackles an undisputed Pauline (Erickson's helpful contribution on the semantic structure of Romans 5:12–21). Louw gives a very brief discourse reading of Ephesians 1:3–14 (which unfortunately fails to react with other notable attempts at the text-linguistics and semantic structure of the passage: Schnackenburg, Caragounis, etc.). The remaining essays are on the Pastorals, examining the development of 'information/topic flow', and how this is marked by use of particles (Levinsohn), and Titus 2:15 as keystone in the discourse structure of the letter (Wendland). Finally, the three essays of Part IV (50 pages) address Hebrews 6:4–6 (Snyman); the discourse structure of 1 John (Olsson), and the question of how to decide where 1 John 1 ends (J. Callow).

It is difficult to review such a disparate set of essays. Most have a careful eye to methodological issues, and well illustrate the approaches adopted. So this will be a useful collection for courses on Linguistics of Biblical Texts, and may help some doubting Thomases among NT scholars to appreciate the cash value of methods introduced. Here is another fine example of the diverse and creative energies of the NT department at Roehampton, and of those with whom they are in dialogue.

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**Conflict in the Miracle Stories.
A Socio-Exegetical Study of
Matthew 8 and 9, JSNTSup 152**

Evert-Jan Vledder

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997,
276 pp., h/b., £50/\$78

This work is revised version of a dissertation accepted by the University of Pretoria in 1994. The author intends to investigate the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in Matthew 8 and 9 and its relevance for the whole Gospel. The book contains five chapters.

Chapter 1 deals with inadequate explanations of conflict in the miracle stories. Three different types of scholarly interpretation are distinguished. The first group stresses the christological function of the miracle cycle, the second the ecclesiological and the third takes up the aspect of conflict. Vledder criticises former interpretations of the Matthean miracle cycle for their insufficient understanding of conflict and develops his own model, adapting conflict theory and socio-exegetical methods for his own purpose.

In chapter 2 Vledder attempts to synthesise the conflict theories according to R. Dahrendorf and R.A. Coser because of their emphasis on the dynamic structures of society and the permanent presence of conflict (60-63). The author asks for the definition, the causes, the units and the functions of conflict. Vledder defines conflict as the 'permanent presence of antagonism ..., opposition and incompatibility between two or more persons or groups' (67). Actually, only two groups are involved in one particular conflict.

Causes for conflict are incompatible interests between classes because of issues like survival, the pursuit of own interests, inequality, scarcity of resources, control over resources, power and distribution of power, authority, privilege, status and

prestige. The struggle for power and authority are the most important factors in social conflict. Classes are qualified especially by authoritative relations and have contradicting interests with other classes.

Vledder modifies the model originally developed for industrial societies by using G. Lenski's stratification model of so-called 'advanced agrarian societies'. The rulers, the governing class and the retainer class constitute the upper classes, the merchant, peasant, artisan, unclean or degraded and the expendable the lower classes.

The function of conflict is to establish and maintain the identity of groups and their boundaries against the surrounding world (103). Conflict can go through different stages with increasing intensity. Because the solution of one conflict can introduce another, Vledder speaks of an 'ever-ongoing spiral' of conflict.

Chapter 3 discusses the social location of the Matthean community. While the Jewish leaders are part of the retainer and ruling class, Matthew's community consisted of 'voluntarily marginalised' members from non-elite and a few members from upper classes, supporting the interests of the 'involuntarily marginalised'. The conflict in the narrative reflects the struggle for supremacy between formative Judaism and the Matthean community after the destruction of the temple, competing for support from the lower classes. At that time the Matthean community was not completely separated from Judaism.

Chapter 4 is the exegetical part of Vledder's work. He begins his observations with Matthew 7:29, where the crowd as the audience of the Sermon on the Mount accepts Jesus' authority and not that of the scribes. There is an 'assumed' conflict between Jesus and the leaders, although they do not appear before 9:3. The crowd is the 'potential follower' of Jesus as well as the

Jewish leaders. The healing of ritually unclean and their reintegration into society intensify the tensions with the leaders. Jesus breaks through the traditional rules and values acting mercifully on behalf of the marginalised. Vledder shows other lines of conflict in Matthew 8 and 9: with scribes regarding discipleship and forgiveness of sins, with Pharisees regarding uncleanness. But the acts of the Matthean Jesus are the touchstone for the relation with the leaders, because the Pharisees regard 'mercy' as their own 'core value'. They are the dominant group within Judaism and the counterpart of Matthew's community after 70 CE trying to replace the lost institution of the temple. Vledder's fundamental assumption is that the narrative of Matthew, though telling a story about Jesus' life, is transparent to the situation of Matthew's community.

Vledder's book is very helpful to think once more about the underlying conflicts of Matthew's Gospel. His discussion of conflict theory and his summary about the social location of Matthew's Gospel are stimulating. However, there are deficiencies as regards form and content. Although the book is structured in sections and subsections, the headings are not numbered. The abundance of different material and the arrangement of arguments are sometimes confusing and make the reading process difficult. There remains doubt about the prominence of social conflict in both chapters of Matthew. The concluding remark of the Pharisees in Matthew 9:34 that Jesus acted as an agent of evil may serve as one example. One wishes a more intense application of conflict theory to exegetical work.

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Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence

Robert E. Van Voorst

Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000,
xiv + 248 pp., £12.99

This book does what it says on the cover and offers a useful introduction to and survey of traditions about Jesus preserved by secular writers, Jewish writers and traditions, and the non-canonical writings of early Christianity. Copious citation of the ancient evidence in English translation will make it a useful resource for students, and some full footnotes will make tracking down secondary discussions and primary language texts a possibility for those interested.

Van Voorst begins with an interesting survey of the sceptical arguments (or at least assertions) against the historic existence of Jesus. He then discusses a range of 'classical' writings that refer to Jesus (Thallos, Pliny, Suetonius, Tacitus, Mara bar Serapion, Lucian of Samosata and Celsus). His discussions of Pliny, Suetonius and Tacitus are helpful and cautious, pointing out that much of their information about Christ must have been drawn from encounters with Christians (although perhaps Suetonius and Tacitus had access to additional sources).

On Jewish writings Van Voorst has a full and cautious discussion of Josephus' references to Jesus, concluding that Josephus did include a moderate and neutral description of Jesus' ministry which was improved by Christians. He notes that Josephus connects Christ with his followers, the Christians, and suggests that Josephus' knowledge of Jesus may have also been derived in part from encounters with Christians. Paul Barnett recently made the important point that this common feature among non-Christian references to Jesus can only be explained by a consistent

perspective among these Christians, that is a self-consciously backward looking and even historical perspective in which their contemporary sense of identity was expressed in relation to a Jesus of past history (Barnett, *Jesus and the Logic of History*).

Van Voorst discusses a range of rabbinic material concluding that rather than preserving historical memory most of it arose in polemic against Christians. He is (rightly) negative about attempts to find Jesus in the Dead Sea Scrolls or medieval Jewish literature (*Toledoth Jesu*).

An oddity of this book, never really defended, is a whole chapter on Jesus in the Sources of the Canonical Gospels (M, L, Q, and the Signs Source). Although not without interest, and generally fairly cautious, this material is known from inside the NT, and its appropriateness within this book is questionable.

The last chapter discusses (with ETs) Jesus in later Christian writings and concentrates most attention on the unwritten sayings of Jesus, seven or eight of which might be authentic; the Coptic Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, the Secret Gospel of Mark and the Ascents of James. He misses some details here, especially the early Greek papyri of both Thomas and Peter and is, in my opinion, a bit too positive on Thomas' date and significance. This is a huge issue but one example might suffice. Van Voorst argues that 'the lack of christological titles in the *Gospel of Thomas* may indicate that Jesus did not claim these for himself' (203). Notwithstanding the complexity relating to Jesus' claims for himself, this argument ignores the clear anti-christological *Tendenz* intrinsic to the theology of *Thomas* (note the revision of the Caesarea Philippi confessions in Saying 13). I remain something of a doubting *Thomas* on this issue.

OK. A summary paragraph. This is a useful book, appropriately cautious in most areas, with a lot of valuable and

up-to-date bibliographical material in the notes. I am sure I shall refer to it again in the future.

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John

Rodney A. Whitacre

Leicester: IVP, 1999,
562 pp., h/b., £11.99

This is a substantial, yet readable commentary. It provides an informed and helpful exposition of the content of John's Gospel and throughout its presentation keeps in mind the impact this Gospel's portrait of Jesus is meant to have on believing readers. Professor Whitacre of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Pennsylvania, who has already written a major scholarly monography on the Johannine literature (*Johannine Polemic: The Role of Tradition and Theology*, 1982), has now been able to offer to a wider audience the mature fruit of his extensive knowledge and reflection on John's Gospel.

Whitacre treats introductory issues succinctly in 32 pages. He manages to state the main options on these issues and to give his preferred conservative view in an undogmatic way. He is inclined to think that, although there may have been later editing, the bulk of the Gospel is the work of one author and that that author was John, the son of Zebedee. He considers that the distinctive Johannine teaching and style may come from the historical Jesus and that Matthew 11:25-30 provides an indication of this style within the Synoptics, so that 'perhaps John took the oracular style Jesus used at times and told the whole story in that form of expression' (23). On the purposes of the Gospel, Whitacre holds that the primary purpose was assurance for Christians in the context of conflict with the synagogue and the claims of a mystical strand of Judaism, but that the result was a presentation that

was also effective for evangelism. The introduction ends with a brief discussion of key characteristics of Johannine thought, such as dualism, symbolism and irony and a major of clusters of themes treating Father, Son and Spirit, then light, life and love, and finally faith, humility obedience and community.

The book's main contribution, however, is the careful attention paid to the text in the 450 plus pages of commentary. Here Whitacre shows his acquaintance with a whole range of scholarly resources without ever allowing these to become obtrusive or to distract from his own exposition. More than many of the more detailed standard commentaries he draws on pre-modern writers such as Augustine, Chrysostom and Calvin to good effect. Readers will also find references to the thought of such writers as George MacDonald, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. The stance Whitacre adopts to questions of their historicity of the material in the Gospel narrative is a conservative one, and the emphases of the commentary are exegetical, doctrinal and devotional. The application to the church today is primarily in terms of the devotional impact the text is meant to have on the lives of individual believers. A representative quotation – this is one from the exposition of John 18:40 about Barabbas – will give potential readers something of the flavour of the commentary's style of application.

The crowd was choosing between two different approaches to liberation as represented by two men identified, in different ways, as 'son of Abba'. Here is the deceptiveness of sin that has been evident since the Garden of Eden. There is a path that looks right and seems to be of God, yet it is actually against him and his ways. The people choose their own path of liberation rather than God's, and they therefore choose 'not the Saviour, but the murderer; not the Giver of life, but the

destroyer' (Augustine In John 116.1). Every time we choose sin we do the same, whether the sin is blatant or deceptive (445).

Those looking for help with this sort of reflection will find Whitacre's commentary a valuable addition to the IVP New Testament Commentary Series.

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Making Sense of Paul: A Basic Introduction to Pauline Theology

Virginia Wiles

Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2000,
xiii + 160 pp., £9.99/\$16.95

This book has been written primarily for the benefit of that peculiarly North American constituency, college students, and therefore it would be appropriately used in a UK context by beginning theological students and interested lay people. It is very much a student textbook with the now familiar devices of boxes inserted in the text, helpful diagrams and the occasional illustration, reading checks at the end of each chapter, and a brief bibliography (almost entirely North American: Tom Wright scrapes in, but James Dunn doesn't!). The aim is to communicate to students, whether Christians or not, that Paul has something to say of value for the modern person. The treatment is thus focussed on people trying to make sense of themselves and their experience and is intended to get them to think about themselves in helpful ways and to find in Paul a valuable aid to this process.

Part I deals with Paul's heritage as a Jew. He was not a convert from Judaism to Christianity, but remained a Jew who gained a new understanding of Judaism. The crucial terms righteousness and law are carefully analysed in a fresh way. Part II, takes up his understanding of sin, slavery and death, areas in

which he saw the problems that had been recognised by Greco-Roman philosophers from his Jewish standpoint. Part III considers Paul's creative contribution to dealing with this problem. Christ was central to Paul's experience, and fundamentally: 'Christ means simply this: the revelation of God's righteousness'. (Always beware of sentences containing 'simply' or 'merely'!) Grace is displayed in the cross, but the author rejects the view that the cross delivers us from a future death because Christ has intervened and died for us; rather we are sinners who have already entered into death, and Christ joins us in this death and dies with us. Just how this participation of Christ in our death saves us is not really made clear: his death seems to show how God is for us, and thus gives us a new perception of God. This leads into a new life in which the Spirit is determinative and delivers us from misperceptions of the law. The Spirit sets us free to be ourselves as God intends us to be. Finally, the author comes to the resurrection of Jesus, and develops the familiar 'now/not yet' pattern of eschatology, before concluding with some attention to faith, hope and love.

The structure of this book tends towards that of the typical fairy story in which after much adventure 'they all lived happily ever after' but we never hear what 'living happily ever after' actually meant. So here it takes 82 pages to work through Paul's background and the problem of sin, leaving a mere 60 pages to deal with the solution to sin and very little space indeed for the ongoing Christian life. There is some tendency to deal primarily with the human situation and not to focus sufficiently on Christ; the definition of Christ cited above does not do justice to him as a person who mattered supremely to Paul. And to say that the gift of justification comes with no qualification does not do justice to what is said elsewhere in the book about the necessity of faith-commitment.

These and other criticisms apart, the book is characterised by a real effort to involve the readers in rethinking what they may have learnt mistakenly about the nature of religion, Jewish and Christian. This is no detached approach to theology! It does more to show the relevance of the problems that Paul was discussing than some more conventional introductions to his theology. It is, then, an introduction, to get people thinking well, and it will at least get them excited and started on the road.

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Paul's Metaphors Their Context and Character

David J. Williams

Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999,
xxv + 385 pp., h/b., £14.99/\$24.95

One's first response to reading the title of this book is two-fold: on the one hand, finally! On the other: is this not too much for a single volume? The author himself says that 'this is a book about metaphors'. There is a real need for such a study in Pauline scholarship because Paul, in his letters, used and/or created many metaphors. Interpretations of individual metaphors lead to particular understandings of the lines of argument to which they belong.

Williams organises the great number of metaphors which he identifies in Paul's letters in twelve sections: Life in the City; Life in the Country; Family Life; Providing for Physical Needs; Slavery and Freedom; Citizens and Courts of Law; Manufacturing and Marketing; The Business World; Travel; Warfare and Soldiering; Cultic Observances; Public Shows; and Sporting Events. This classification is intended to reflect the domains from which most of Paul's metaphors are taken. The author also adds two appendices - *A Select Chronology of the Roman Empire* and *Ancient*

Authors and Texts. These provide succinct information about the life and writings of particular ancient authors discussed or alluded to in the book.

The discussion of each metaphor is short. The domain is described and the relevant texts are briefly discussed. The end-notes of each section provide basic information concerning the Greek meanings of words and bibliographical references for further reading (including other ancient texts relevant to the metaphor under discussion). A detailed outline helps readers find their way.

Williams does not enter the detailed debates about how metaphors work, he only affirms his presuppositions. He works with the Aristotelian definition of metaphor ('the application of an alien by transfer', *Poetics*, 21.7) and considers that a metaphor is an aid toward the perception of a truth. Also, he does not explain his selection criteria, i.e. why a particular expression/word is being analysed or not. He mentions only that the distinction is 'difficult' to make. His description of the background/environment is accurate and informed, but he does not offer comprehensive surveys of available alternatives for any given metaphor. Also he does not do much to help the reader to follow and evaluate the reasoning behind his exegetical decisions.

In sum, being accessible to the general reader and horizon-opening for the student of the Bible, this book is at once pioneering (at least in Pauline studies) and introductory, thus inviting further more detailed study. It should become an important resource for the backgrounds of Paul's metaphors.

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Jesus the Seer: The Progress of Prophecy

Ben Witherington III

Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999,
Xvii + 427 pp., h/b., £18.99/\$29.95

This book is a diachronic and cross-cultural approach to the study of prophecy: it examines the evidence for phenomenon of prophecy as it is found in sources relating to the eastern Mediterranean and the adjoining Middle east from the period c. 1600 BC to c. 300 AD.

The definition of a prophet is based on that of Grabbe. In Witherington's words, 'A prophet is a person who speaks in the name of a god (usually Yahweh) and claims to pass on a revelation from that god. Divine revelation is a *sine qua non* of prophecy'.

Lamenting the fact that most studies of Hebrew prophets and prophecy begin (and often end) their discussion with the writing prophets of the eighth century BC and later. Witherington chooses instead to begin further back with an account of 'the larger 'cross-cultural prophetic culture that had been extant for centuries'. Thus he begins with the discoveries of an archives of cuneiform tablets at Mari on the Middle Euphrates. These tablets include terminology similar to that in the OT from a period well before the era of classical prophecy, and they indicate the practice of consulting such figures about the future.

Discussion of the evidence from Mari is followed by non-Israelite evidence from Ammon concerning the mysterious figure of Balaam known also from Numbers, and these two discussions underlie Witherington's thesis that Israelite prophecy was part of a larger phenomenon of Semitic culture that Israel shared with its neighbours and which gave a role to both women and men. Successive discussions move from pre-monarchic prophetic figures like Elijah and

Elisha who appear at times of crisis, and in whose activity prophetic sign acts and miracles come to the fore whereas oracles recede into the background.

With Hanson, Witherington argues that apocalyptic emerged from prophecy. Contra Hanson, he sees it as having emerged during the exile in the writings of Ezekiel, although he allows that it developed fully only in the post-exilic age. In Daniel 8-12 is found the first example of *ex eventu* prophecy, and this phenomenon recurs in Inter-Testamental literature where apocalyptic dreams and visions supersede traditional oracular prophecy and its messenger formula. The living voice of prophecy has not died, however; it has just changed its voice. This shift, he suggests, arose from a conviction held by many Second-Temple Jews that they were living in an age of fulfilment. This contributed in turn to the rise of sectarian Jewish movements such as those based at Qumran or centred on John the Baptist or Jesus of Nazareth. Such Jews, suggests Witherington, were less interested in the generation of new prophecies than in the fulfilment of old prophecies.

Witherington's descriptions of Jesus is as a prophetic sage, a Jewish seer and eschatological prophetic indebted both to the Elijah-like eschatological and messianic prophet tradition and also to the Son of Man figure of the apocalyptic tradition. His message was in considerable continuity with that of John the Baptist. This characterisation, argues Witherington, explains the majority of the authentic synoptic tradition. 'It explains how Jesus viewed himself, why he acted as he did in regard to the signs, exorcisms and miracles, why he took the steps he did during the last weeks of his life, and why he suffered a violent end as a result.' Along the way Witherington presents useful extended critiques of the recent work of Allison and of Wright.

Paul is also shown to be a prophetic figure, and three further chapters discuss the development of Christian prophecy from Paul and the situation at Corinth through NT and the other early Christian texts to the sources pertaining to Montanism. This includes a useful critique of Boring's argument that the sayings of Christian prophets came to be blended with the sayings of Jesus. Just as OT prophecy was treated against its ancient Near Eastern background, so too these texts are discussed in the context of the polytheistic prophecy of the Graeco-Roman world.

This is a wide-ranging book, perhaps strongest in its discussion of Jesus material, and its breadth is both its weakness and its strength. Specialists in particular areas may wish to take issues with various details. For example, although Witherington is aware that no work of this nature can be exhaustive, nevertheless it is unfortunate that he laments the lack of monographs on Montanism when he appears to have missed the important contribution of Trevett. Those who have time to read the whole work should benefit from it, but sometimes it reads more as a series of useful discussions of different prophetic phenomena than as a continuously argued monograph. Nevertheless in an age of over specialisation this wide ranging book is to be welcomed both as a whole and as a collection of useful forays into various disputed questions along the way.

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The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation

Brad H. Young

Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998,
332 pp., h/b., £14.99/\$24.95

In the much-ploughed field of parable studies, an important corner concerns itself with the relationship between the parables of Jesus and those of the Jewish Rabbis. Brad H. Young is a former pupil of David Flusser, a noted authority in this area at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and brings linguistic expertise and immersion in the Jewish sources to his task.

His main burden is that the parables of Jesus should be understood as Jewish tales which chime with mainstream Jewish theology of the time. The book is organised around themes that he finds in the parables of both Jesus and the Rabbis: prayer, grace, reconciliation, discipleship, Torah. He shows that many of the images and scenarios presented in Jesus' parables have some kind of parallel in other Jewish literature – masters and kings, treasure in fields and so on.

The selection of Rabbinic parables is fascinating. My favourite illustrates the relief of both Israelites and Egyptians at the time of the Exodus:

The fat man was wondering 'When can I get off the donkey?' The donkey was wondering 'When will he get off me?' When the time came for the fat man to get off, I do not know which one was more glad.

In other respects, however, I found this book unsatisfying.

First, *historically*. The thesis that the parables of Jesus and those of the Rabbis belong to a common genre can easily obscure two key facts: that there are considerable differences between the two sets (on which see Craig L. Blomberg's *Interpreting the Parables* [Apollos 1991]); and that the Rabbinic parables in their written

form post-date the Gospels in theirs. While the Mishnah and other Rabbinic literature no doubt preserved much material that had long been a part of Jewish oral tradition, the distinctions in date and content between the two sets of parables call for a more nuanced comparative treatment.

Second, *stylistically*. Young is repetitious, and this contributes to an air of tendentious defensiveness. Assertion often simply substitutes for argument. For example, he says he finds the translation 'falsely accused' in Luke 16:1 (the shrewd steward) 'not convincing', but by way of support simply states: 'The unrighteous steward was involved in wrongdoing and was not falsely accused' (236). A 'suggestion' that the parables in Luke 15:3-7 originally followed the call of Levi is quickly re-cast as fact, though qualified: 'He told these stories at the dinner table of Levi. At the very least, both the story of Levi and the parables contain nearly identical themes' (188-90).

Third, in *literary awareness*. The crucial question is surely what Jesus and the Rabbis respectively do with their common stock of images. Again, Young tends to smooth over the differences and he draws little from recent work on the parabolic *form* of discourse. He often writes about the parables 'teaching a message' in a way which misses their subtle indirections.

Fourth, *hermeneutically*. There is a positivism here characteristic of historical-critical scholarship in its heyday, but which now looks tired. Interpretation of the parables of Jesus will vary depending on the particular ancient context in which they are set and on the aims and interests of the interpreter. The Rabbinic parables provide one important context, but if one is concerned with the specific aims of Jesus, one will need a wider range of Jewish sources to get nearer the mark. Significantly, Young's most effective chapter, that on the Good Samaritan, hardly depends on any

Jewish parables, but on Jewish sources more generally. In discussing Christian interpretations, he can be insensitive to what the interpreters are doing. When Clement uses the image of sowing to point to the truth of resurrection (1 Clem. 24), one thing he is clearly *not* doing (*pace* Young) is interpreting the parable of the sower!

Fifthly, Young does not draw significantly on recent *sociological* studies of the NT period that can help us, for instance, to imagine the all-too-real situations of oppression behind a parable such as that of the unforgiving servant. In his haste to see a common 'theological' theme between such a parable and Rabbinic counterparts, Young (despite the conventional anti-allegorical protestations) continues the time-honoured tradition of seeing figures such as the master as direct windows on to God, without stopping to consider the hard questions about an implied comparison between Yahweh and a first-century despot who is happy, in principle, to torture his subjects and imprison their penniless families. Such questions may suggest that the parable is rooted in an earthy wisdom tradition, and speaks of God (if at all) much more indirectly than we have usually assumed.

Sixthly, there is a *theological* imbalance arising out of these other shortcomings. I believe Young is right in his main contention that Jesus' parables were concerned to inculcate a true obedience to Torah; Christians who have been accustomed to read the parables simply as illustrations of a Pauline message of justification by faith should pay careful attention – and should especially be challenged by Young's close linkage of the stance of Jesus with that of the Pharisees (overstated but a useful corrective). But the elision of important differences between the Rabbis' parables and those of Jesus make for a flawed overall picture. Above all, Jesus' self-understanding as the final Prophet is surely revealed in these remarkable stories which

(unlike their Rabbinic counterparts) do not simply interpret the Torah, but speak to situations with their own, direct authority.

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Historical Theology

A Dictionary of the English Bible and its Origins

Alec Gilmore
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000,
192pp., £9.95

This somewhat curious reference work is a listing of all the names, places and versions of the Bible which have gone into the making of the number one best-seller in the English language ever since printed translations became readily available in the late sixteenth century. The author must be congratulated for his breadth of coverage, which extends to German and other scholars who have made a significant contribution to Biblical scholarship, and also for the way in which he has highlighted special subjects in separate boxes. For example, under 'glosses' he takes the trouble to give several examples from both the Old and the New Testaments. He does the same for 'harmonisation', '*lectio difficilior*', 'corruptions', 'dittography' and a host of similar topics which are seldom explained in as concise and informative a manner as this.

The book is also of great value for those times when you need to know what the New Century Version is, or what Miles Smith did. Such occasions are admittedly rare as far as most of us are concerned, but they do occur, and it is often not easy to find the necessary information at short notice. Just reading this book through is an education in itself, and it would make an ideal gift for a student who is beginning a course in Biblical Studies. It is also the sort of book which every

pastor should have to hand as a resource for answering those obscure questions which some churchgoers have a way of asking.

The book is so wide-ranging that its main fault seems to be overkill, as when the author includes the following as a separate entry: 'Istanbul, Turkey. The modern name for Constantinople.' Similarly there is an entry for 'clay', which tells us that it was used by the ancient Sumerians as writing material and one for the Solway Firth, pointing out that it is the site of the Ruthwell Cross, on the old pilgrim way from Lindisfarne to Iona. All very interesting of course, but only marginally related to the dictionary's main theme.

In terms of theological stance, the book is as neutral as it is possible to be, and generally avoids passing controversial judgements. For example, Mr Gilmore describes 'Q' as a non-Markan source common to Mathew and Luke without pronouncing on whether it ever had an independent existence of its own. This kind of scholarly reticence increases the value of the dictionary, since the reader can be fairly certain that he will be given the simple facts, and not a particular interpretation of them. Evangelical readers will be particularly grateful for this, since in the opening paragraph of his preface the author makes it clear that he has no time for them, calling them 'people who had either got on the wrong bus or not been sharp enough to alight in time and strike off in a different direction'. So blatant an expression of his own prejudices is singularly unfortunate, since many prospective buyers will probably read that and put the book straight back on the shelf. That would be a pity, because the book itself does not reflect its author's bias in this respect and will make a very useful addition to any theological library.

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Christianity in England from Roman Times to the Reformation, Volume II: From 1066 to 1384

Kenneth Hylson-Smith

London, SCM, 2000,
xiv + 338 pp. £19.95

After successfully completing a trilogy of the history of English Christianity from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II, Kenneth Hylson-Smith is now completing the story by writing another trilogy which goes back to the origins of Christianity in Roman Britain and traces its development up to 1559. He makes no claim to be a scholar doing original research, but it is clear that he has read widely in the scholarly literature and his conclusions are generally fair in their representation of this. Moreover, Mr Hylson-Smith is writing from a distinctly evangelical standpoint, which makes these earlier volumes specially interesting. No-one would claim that the medieval church is a favourite topic among evangelicals, and it is greatly to Mr Hylson-Smith's credit that he has tackled the subject in such a balanced and comprehensive way, without falling prey to the lure of a pseudo-medievalism.

This second volume of the trilogy opens with the Norman Conquest and ends with the death of John Wyclif, who (in some sense at least) was the forerunner of the Protestant reformation. During this period the kingdom of England formed two provinces (Canterbury and York) of the western church, which in theory was centred on Rome but which in practice derived much of its spiritual and intellectual life from France. The Norman Conquest opened England up to French influence on a massive scale, and so England was able to participate directly in the finest achievements of medieval civilisation. This included the building of the great cathedrals, not to mention innumerable parish churches, the establishment of the universities, the

development of legal norms in church and state and the production of great theology. It also involved the crusades, the spread of the monastic life and later on, the appearance of mysticism. In all of these events, English men and women played a notable part and made lasting contributions to European culture as a whole.

Mr Hylson-Smith brings all this out in a well-written narrative which pauses long enough to inform the reader of the necessary background, but which never overstates its welcome in any particular place. The far-reaching reforms introduced by the Normans are explained in their wider European context, and the important role of the monarchy throughout the period is stressed. This is important, because the later actions of Henry VIII cannot be properly evaluated unless it is understood that he was relying on centuries-old traditions that he thought supported his behaviour. The fact that he was able to persuade a significant body of opinion that he was right about that cannot be ignored, and this volume gives us the framework for understanding the later reformation debates.

Above all, Mr Hylson-Smith does his best to avoid judging the medieval church by what happened later. He recognises that the thirteenth century was a time of great achievements on every front, and portrays the fourteenth century as a time of disasters which did much to undermine them. The hundred years war and the black death undoubtedly had serious and largely negative effects, and it is true that England was still recovering from them two hundred years later. It is also true that the papacy underwent a series of crises which greatly diminished its prestige and made its relative efficiency in such matters as tax-collecting appear in a bad light. In all of this, it is the provincial nature of the medieval English church that comes through most clearly of all.

Even John Wyclif was a European, rather than an English reformer, as the subsequent fate of his ideas makes plain. His theses were taken up in Bohemia and from there found their way into the thinking of Martin Luther, whose English disciples brought them back to the mother country. Lollardy, the popular preaching movement which disseminated Wyclif's teaching, had managed to survive in some places, but it was moribund and seems to have given way completely to the Lutheran reformation. Neither of the two versions of the Lollard Bible, for example, appeared in print before 1850, when they were published as much for their curiosity value as anything else.

Mr Hylson-Smith's book is an excellent read, and provides just the right amount of information students and other interested lay people will want. Its evangelical tendencies will be especially welcome to many, and make his book one of its kind. For those wanting to pursue matters further, there is an extensive bibliography along with some very helpful endnotes, as well as a glossary of unfamiliar terms. The author has set himself a high standard for the third and final volume, dealing with the reformation itself, which will undoubtedly be the most controversial in the whole series. Yet that event is incomprehensible without the background which this volume contains, it is to be hoped that readers will absorb its lessons before proceeding to the more familiar but also more complex events which were to follow the medieval period.

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Tertullian's Theology of Divine Power (Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology)

Roy Kearsley

Carlisle/Edinburgh: Paternoster/Rutherford House, 1998,
x + 179 pp., £19.99

Whether or not you are aware of it, there is a quiet revolution that is taking place within mainstream evangelical thinking. It is long overdue and completely necessary for the survival of evangelical Christianity into the 21st century. It has to do with the thorny subject of 'tradition'. For too long evangelicalism has attempted to articulate its faith with little recourse to the rich tradition of Christian thought that formed its identity within the first five centuries of its existence. Rather, a benign trust in *sola scriptura* – Scripture alone has dominated the ways in which we articulate our faith. And yet, as Daniel Williams points out in his recent and challenging book, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism*, 'For evangelicals to ignore or to be in ignorance of the great tradition of the church is to have lost their foundational heritage. With its passing, the faithful will have less and less of a place to stand when challenged by pseudo-theology. An absence of the church's theological past will produce believers who are not sure how to interpret their Bibles apart from relative or fashionable opinion ... The Tradition as found in the ancient confession, the rule of faith, and the doctrinal theology of the Fathers provides truth about God, in fact, primal truth about God. These sources point us beyond ourselves and ask us to peer out from the confines of the Protestant "ghettos" we have created into the main street of catholic Christianity' (217).

Roy Kearsley's book, *Tertullian's Theology of Divine Power* is another successful publication in this series that seeks to focus attention on a much-neglected thinker of the Church. To most, Tertullian will be a

by-word merely for charismatic excess. But in this volume, Kearsley very helpfully shows how Tertullian's theology, and particularly his understanding of the power of God enabled him to address the issues of the day. Kearsley shows how Tertullian's understanding of power was developed in relation to creation, incarnation, the church, the future hope and the Trinity. Only a creation derived from the good will of an all-powerful God merited to be called 'good'. This in turn provided the reason for the incarnation – sin is not the ultimate power: God is. Thus, the incarnation precipitates the Church which is, once again, the creation of a good and all-powerful creator whilst, at the same time, being a visible sign of what is still to come. The goodness of creation demands its recreation, not its destruction.

This is a serious attempt in showing the continued relevance of Tertullian for today. In a church-culture that increasingly leans towards notions of divine power in terms of servanthood Tertullian's theology is a necessary corrective. The God who re-creates does so by virtue of his sovereign power as a good and powerful creator. This has significant implications for our understanding of incarnation, church and ultimately divine identity itself. All in all it is a book well worth reading.

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Christian Literature: An Anthology

Alister E. McGrath, (Ed.)

Oxford: Blackwell, 2000,

xx + 796 pp., £15.99

This is another big book in a series of anthologies issued by Blackwell. It contains a very wide selection of Christian texts and texts about Christianity, from the patristic period to the present. There is a concentration on English-language texts, but non-English texts include

Greek, Latin, Irish, German, French, Italian and Russian in translation. Each is introduced by a brief essay, and many have panels with details of the author's output and related critical studies. Following each is a set of questions focusing on the issues arising from the text.

The texts here are broadly well-chosen, with some fine literature being presented. I was struck by the power of Cyril's *Catechetical Lectures*; the passage from *Piers Plowman* is a fine choice, capturing the imagistic quality of the writing; the contemporary selections generally are incisive, ironical and witty. One might carp at the selection. Why a tedious and very short passage of Dante? Why a bit of *The Waste Land* when Eliot's *Four Quartets* meet the criteria of selection so much better? Still more might one question the choice of translations: Hamer's version of Cædmon's *Hymn* obscures the triadic structure of the first and last lines, which has been interpreted as having Trinitarian significance. Underhill's translation of *The Cloud of Unknowing* begins, 'That a very contemplative list not to meddle him with active life' and becomes less comprehensible. There are numerous transcription mistakes, too: page 15 *ont* for *not*, page 28 *steins?*, page 57 *froth* for *from*, page 73 *rues?*, page 84 *And do think not?*, page 130 *after* for *deter*, and so on and on. The questions struggle to find the right level: some are too simple, whereas others demand both knowledge and sophistication.

Sadly, readers tend to give more weight to the editorial material than to the texts themselves. In this material we have inconsistency: a text about 'Antony' of Egypt, and questions about 'Anthony' (74); 'Queen Rhadegunde' on page 115, and 'St. Radegunde' on the next page; some Latin titles are capitalised and translated and others are not; *The Dream of the Rood* is in inverted commas and (for example) *Beowulf* is

italicised. We have spoonerisms: *catechumenates* for *catechumens*, page 82, *hermetical* for *eremitical*, page 88. We have aimless repetition: the same, and only, footnote is repeated on pages 52, 63, 81 and 88. We have misleading information: Bernard of Clairvaux was not the first abbot of Cîteaux (194); the translation of the *Vexilla regis* of Fortunatus is not from J.M. Neale's 1851 collection (116) but from *Hymns A&M Revised*, from which the earlier work differs considerably. I do not understand the assertion that *Ancrene Wisse* has 'verbal illustrations' (206), or that The Exeter Book Riddles are written in 'a standard indeterminate form of Saxon verse' (151).

The introductions to the English and Irish sources 600–1050 contain some garish howlers. The Anglo-Saxon invasion is placed a century or more late (123). Cædmon, who was illiterate, 'is known to have written extensively' (126). Cædmon's *Hymn* is given in 'the' Northumbrian version (126) when there are five such versions, all different. The description of Old English verse as 'accentual-syllabic', and half-lines as 'hemistichs' (127) is unhelpful. Bede did not 'pen' the *Death Song* (133). 'The most reliable text' (137) of *The Dream of the Rood* is the only text, and there are no grounds for dating it to 750. There is nothing 'Nordic' about it (141).

The Junius Codex, dated 'ca. 870', was also apparently written 'in the late tenth or early eleventh century' (142). The 'commentaries' on Genesis, Exodus and Daniel (142), are actually poems. The 'very literal' translation of one of the Exeter Book riddles (151–52) makes several unnecessary changes. The introduction to Ælfric's *Passion of St Edmund* contradicts the text: we are told Ivar and Ubbe were spending the winter in Norfolk when the text tells us Ubbe stayed in Northumbria; we are told Edmund was captured in a battle when the text tells us that he never fought one (161–62). Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi* is

consistently referred to as *Lupi Sermo* (167), and we are told Ethelred did not return as king after Swegn's death when he did (167-68).

Most of these texts do not have references to 'major studies', which means that the writer has not bothered to look. But the introductions to Ælfric and Wulfstan do, citing as one of two books *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry*. This raises the question whether the writer was aware that Ælfric and Wulfstan wrote in prose. But the book is hardly a 'major study': it has two references to the Edmund story (320-22 and 422), and five very brief references to the *Sermo Lupi* (51, 165, 307n, 312, 389n).

Excellent texts. But if the editorial material had been theology, it would have gone straight into the editor's bin. The book's indifference to accuracy and literary scholarship will not help students, and it will give scholars good reason for dismissing a Christian perspective in this area.

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Gnosis and Faith in Early Christianity

Riemer Roukema

London: SCM, 1999,
xi + 212 pp., £14.95

This gnosis related to the origin of the world, the purpose of life on earth, and the way in which a human being can achieve spiritual redemption. According to this gnosis human beings have a slumbering heavenly nucleus in them which comes from the most high God. However, they have forgotten this original heavenly part of their inner being. During life on earth it is important to become conscious of it again and thus, through the true gnosis, to restore contact with the divine. In this

way, human beings who are open to gnosis can find the way back on high again.

Thus on page three the author summarises what Gnosticism is.

Unlike Michael Williams' recent influential book (*Re-thinking Gnosticism*), Roukema is more student friendly: he wants to deal in simple classifications of what Gnosticism was, rather than saying there was no one such thing (just as questions such as 'the essence of Christianity' are unfashionable). Likewise in listing what the Gnostic texts are - and doing this near the start is helpful - he does not share for instance Filoramo's reservations as to what might be included as properly 'Gnostic', such as the three 'Hermetic texts' (*Asclepius, On the Ogdoad and the Ennead on spiritual regeneration and the Acts of Peter*). Textual evidence for what the Gnostics thought comes from three types of sources: (1) the fathers who opposed them; (2) the three ancient codices 'discovered' in the nineteenth century; (3) the capacious *Nag Hammadi* jar found in Upper Egypt in 1945. He then briefly introduces the texts, from the *Gospel of Thomas* to *The Exegesis of the Soul* and *Apocryphon of John* and many others.

Next, Roukema gives us samples from Gnosticism at different stages of development. It is an introduction, a taster, not a comprehensive survey. First he tells us about Simon and Helen according to Irenaeus, then the *Nag Hammadi* text, *The Exegesis of the Soul* with their common themes of a loss of the Father's house, prostitution and redemption in the shape of a husband redeemer. However, in the latter text, the OT is approved, and there is little reference to 'gnosis', whereas *The Myth of Saturnilus*, as reported by Irenaeus, does have a dualism between creation and redemption and their respective 'gods'. Anyway, against the view prevalent in the last generation of scholarship, Gnosticism did not only

get going with the systems of Basilides, Valentinus and Marcion in the second century. To think so is to deal with a representation of Gnosticism in the mirror of early Christianity and as if it were simply a deviant form of Christianity.

The author then jumps to explore the 'background' to Gnosticism: a mix of Jewish and Greek influences. This is why the Hebrew Bible is often appreciated, and why the theme of exile and return and references to Homer are apparent, but *The Exegesis of the Soul* does seem *exceptional*. Then there is very brief account of Jesus of Nazareth and his 'cult' – too brief to be useful before the Third Section: 'A Closer Look At Gnosticism'. He argues that it is creation dualism which distinguishes Gnostic from Catholic Christianity, but it is not much more 'Hellenised' than Catholic Christianity of that time. The Valentinians may seem strange to us, but they were thought of as Christian heretics.

One of the great mysteries is that these texts, based on 2–3c Greek originals were Coptic and made by Pachomian monks. For what reason – easier to refute the heresies contained within them? or for their own spiritual edification? What about the connections with Syriac poetry of orthodox provenance and the fact that the Syrian (so, Roukema) churches accepted *The Acts of Thomas* as much as the Manichees did. Roukema makes too much of Clement of Alexandria's use of the term 'gnosis'. While Roukema is right to say that some early Christians allegorise away the OT, this was not typical: they referred the application to Christ, the Church, the Christian life, the Last Things. Conservatively Roukema distances Jesus from the Gnostic (and 'Jesus Seminar' picture of him), the central message of Christianity (the goodness of creation, the persistence and value of some form of embodiment), and criticises their elitism. For all the selectivity,

necessary in a short Introduction, Roukema has failed to get under the skin of the historical Gnostics and presents us with a pleasant liberal re-assertion of the value of incarnational Christianity.

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Thomas Gillespie and the Origins of the Relief Church in 18th Century Scotland

Kenneth B.E. Roxburgh

Bern: Peter Lang, 1999,

xvi + 272 pp., £26.00

This book is the Edinburgh University PhD thesis of Dr Kenneth Roxburgh, Principal of the Scottish Baptist College in Glasgow and editor of *The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*. It is the third volume in a series entitled 'International Theological Studies: Contributions of Baptist Scholars'.

Thomas Gillespie was the founder of the Relief Church, one of the Presbyterian secessions from the Church of Scotland. In some ways this secession was a microcosm of the much greater split in 1843 when the Free Church of Scotland was created.

A minister had been presented to the parish of Inverkeithing by the heritors against the wishes of the parishioners. Gillespie and others supported the congregation in its opposition to this settlement. The matter went back and forward between Presbytery and Assembly until ultimately the General Assembly instructed that the induction of the minister must proceed. Gillespie continued to oppose this decision and was deposed from the ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1752. Gillespie formed the Presbytery of Relief (the Relief Church) in 1761.

The significance of Gillespie, however, does not lie solely in the formation of the Relief Church. His story touches many of the great men and

movements of 18th century Scottish life. Dr Roxburgh tells us that he was converted through the preaching of Thomas Boston, that he was involved in the Cambuslang Revival of 1742 and that he corresponded with George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards.

If there is a minor weakness in the book, it is in Roxburgh's attempt, in chapter 6 and in the conclusion, to demonstrate the influence of the 'Enlightenment ethos' on Gillespie's theology. The evidence he presents for this influence is singularly unconvincing. For example, he writes, 'In his preaching Gillespie used terminology which was characteristic of the Enlightenment, including words such as "enlightened" and "light" to describe both scriptural revelation and the experience of conversion'. Or again, 'The optimistic spirit of the Enlightenment can also be discerned in the emphasis which Gillespie gave to the free offer of the gospel'. He even argues that, 'The optimism of the Enlightenment was also reflected in his emphasis on the doctrine of assurance of salvation'. It would be relatively easy to demonstrate that such language and doctrinal emphases are also evident in pre-Enlightenment Calvinist theologians.

This, however, does not seriously detract from the overall value of the book that is a useful addition to the scholarship of the period. Indeed, we are deeply indebted to Dr Roxburgh for this study of a much-neglected figure and it is to be hoped that it will lead to further work on 18th century Scottish church history and theology.

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'Good and Proper Men' Lord Palmerston and the Bench of Bishops

Nigel Scotland

Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2000,
272 pp., h/b., £40.00

There have been two evangelical upsurges in the history of the Church of England; one has been during the second half of the twentieth century; the other was during the last years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. This book by Nigel Scotland, the Field Chair of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, takes as its subject the culmination of the first period, when the Episcopal bench was for the first time crowded with evangelical bishops. In 1860, according to Scotland ten out of the twenty-three English sees were occupied by men of that school. The figure should in fact be eleven, for the author omits one evangelical appointment from 1848, John Graham, bishop of Chester. So nearly half the members of the bench were of that persuasion and several others were in close sympathy with it. This study does not, however, confine itself to the evangelicals. Rather, it takes the groups of fourteen bishops selected or advanced by Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister from 1857 (with a gap) to 1865 for analysis. The evangelical predominance among them, Scotland confirms, was a result of the influence over the Prime Minister of his stepson-in-law Lord Shaftesbury, the lay leader of the party. They are usually supposed to have been a lightweight set of men, weak in character and administrative ability. But this book reveals that judgement, based as it was upon prejudiced contemporary opinion, to have been wide of the mark. They were, as was to have been expected, orthodox in their teaching and consequently hostile to *Essays and Reviews*, the manifesto of advanced Broad Churchmen issued in 1860;

and they were also notably attached to Protestant principles, the memory of the Reformation and the harassment of ritualists. But equally they were men of scholarly talents, six of them having achieved a first at university. Palmerston may have been averse to appointing theologians ('The knowledge of mankind', he once remarked, is 'not acquired in musty libraries and easy chairs.'). but he was quite willing to choose able classicists. They were, furthermore, men of a new breed. They were not remote aristocratic figures but men of pastoral temperament. Thirteen of the fourteen had parochial experience, they made themselves available to their clergy and they took a keen interest in the people of their dioceses as builders of churches and schools, relievers of the poor and promoters of parish lay workers. They were activists, holding mass confirmations, running missions and trying to raise clerical incomes. They also urged more frequent communion – that is monthly celebrations. Few of them had time for frequent contributions to debate in the House of Lords. The process of ecclesiastical reinvigoration was already well under way, as Scotland rightly recognises by referring to the work of Arthur Burns, but the Palmerston bishops set the style for their successors. In developing this case, the author adopts a wise strategy by dealing with the salient qualities of his subjects as a group. He does not bring out the extent of the erastianism or put Palmerston's ecclesiastical policies in the wider context provided by David Steele's *Palmerston and Liberalism*. Nor does he avoid a few slips and repetitions. But he does establish his case. In the future it will not be possible to criticise this group of bishops, with their evangelical majority, as lacklustre or insignificant.

D.W. Bebbington

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Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment

Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark (Eds.)
Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999,
xix + 344 pp., £24.99

In the second half of the twentieth century there was a substantial body of scholarship that emphasised the contrast between theology of the early Reformers and that of the later generations of Protestant orthodoxy, which lapsed into scholastic methods. On the Reformed side the contrast between Calvin and Calvinism (to the detriment of the latter) was stressed by scholars such as Basil Hall, the Torrance brothers, Brian Armstrong and R.T. Kendall. As the century drew to a close, however, a reaction set in and the Protestant scholastics have had a much better press. Richard Muller is one of the leading figures behind this reassessment.

The present volume is a collection of eighteen essays by a wide range of leading scholars in this field. The volume falls into five parts: (1) Luther and Calvin; (2) Early Reformed Orthodoxy; (3) The British Connection; (4) From High Orthodoxy to Enlightenment; (5) The Rise of Lutheran Orthodoxy. Thus the volume as a whole traces the roots, the rise and the decline of Protestant scholasticism. The papers are on average sixteen pages long and generally focus on specific questions, but the overall effect of the volume is to give one a good feel for the movement as a whole. This is not, however, a book for beginners but presupposes a broad knowledge of the period. Taken as a whole the papers argue strongly against the crude model of decline and betrayal by the Protestant scholastics. In its place they argue not that there was no change at all, but that the picture is far more complex than once was thought. For example the reception of Aristotle involves far more than merely accepting or rejecting him. Peter Ramus, for instance, did not so

much reject Aristotle as offer an alternative and modified tradition of Aristotelianism.

Thanks to several decades of careful scholarship (well documented in the *Select Bibliography*) the era of Protestant Scholasticism is today much better understood. This is to be welcomed. The case for continuity has been well put (in this volume as elsewhere) and the crude caricature of decline and betrayal can no longer be sustained. Care needs to be taken, however, lest the pendulum swing too far in the other direction, lest the genuine changes that took place be forgotten in the concern to emphasise continuity. At least one thing has changed significantly. The Protestant scholastics have been studied carefully and future assessments of the process of development no longer have any excuse for not being based on reliable accounts of the different figures involved. The present volume contains a substantial and useful quantity of such reliable accounts. For those with an interest in this topic it is a 'must'.

Tony Lane

London Bible College

Evolution, Science, and Scripture: Selected Writings

B.B. Warfield

Edited and with an Introduction by Mark A. Noll
and David N. Livingstone

Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000,
347 pp.

'The purpose of this book', its editors state, 'is to introduce and republish the most pertinent theological reflections of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921) on the relationship between science and Christianity, with special attention to Darwin, Darwinism, and evolution' (13). This collection of weighty writings is a companion to Charles Hodge's *What is Darwinism? and Other Writings on Science and*

Religion, also edited by Noll and Livingstone (Baker, 1994).

There are 31 reviews of books by a range of authors, some well-known (e.g. Kuyper, Bavinck, Orr) and others rather more obscure, and 7 substantial articles: 'The Divine and Human in the Bible' (1894); 'Charles Darwin's Religious Life' (1888); 'Darwin's Arguments against Religion and against Christianity' (1889); 'The Present-Day Conception of Evolution' (1895); 'Creation, Evolution, and Mediate Creation' (1901); 'The Manner and Time of Man's Origin' (1903); 'On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race' (1911); and 'Calvin's Doctrine of Creation' (1915). The editors acknowledge John Murray's critique (1954) of Warfield's reading of Calvin, but draw attention to 'the lengths to which Warfield was prepared to go in order to establish that Reformed orthodoxy could readily embrace evolutionary change' (38).

Warfield carefully distinguished three ways in which God has worked in and through the physical world, and believed that, properly applied, these concepts were compatible with the theology he found in an inerrant Bible. 'Evolution' referred to developments arising from forces placed inside matter at the original creation, and directed to predetermined ends through providential superintendence. 'Mediate creation' meant the action of God upon matter to bring something into existence which could not have been produced by the forces or energy latent in matter itself. 'Creation *ex nihilo*' was the way that God made the original stuff of the world. In the editors' estimation, 'Warfield's commitment to solid empirical science and to the *concursum* of divine and natural action gave him extraordinary balance in sifting his era's difficult questions of science and faith' (44).

The editors acknowledge that Warfield's 'writings on evolution, or,

more broadly, on science ... cannot, of course, pronounce definitively on theological-scientific questions at the beginning of the twentieth century'; nevertheless, they find his sophisticated and nuanced arguments much more helpful than the 'heated strife that has dominated public debate on this subject' since Warfield's own time: he is 'one of the best-kept secrets in American intellectual history' (14). However, intelligent-design theorist William Dembski argues that Warfield's approach – a virtually mechanistic account of creation, allowing for at least occasional supernatural intervention, with sustaining providence – has few advocates these days, and prefers to interact with Hodge (Dembski, *Intelligent Design* [IVP USA, 1999], 92–93); and the claim on the book's cover, that Warfield demonstrates how theologians have not always thought that naturalistic evolution and Christian creation are 'irreconcilable ideologies' (my emphasis), is surely over-stated.

No doubt some advocates of theistic evolution will, in polemics against creationists, continue to point to Warfield as an 'inerrantist' who could embrace evolutionary concepts. This begs important questions, not least exegetical ones – and there is little hard exegesis as such in these essays. It is frustrating that a question such as 'did animals come under the law of death for man's sin?' is fleetingly mentioned (235–36), but not explored further.

In sum, then, this collection is of unquestionable value as an historical resource for the serious student of Warfield, but its relevance to the present-day dialogue between science and theology is debatable. In this respect, it may only serve to add fuel to the fires of 'heated strife'.

Philip Duce
Leicester

Christianity and Western Thought, Volume 2: Faith and Reason in the 19th Century

Steve Wilkens and Alan G. Padgett
Leicester: Apollos, 2000,
436 pp., h/b., £16.99

Wilkens and Padgett have produced an enjoyable and helpful survey of intellectual thought during the nineteenth century. A century is a somewhat arbitrary dividing line for ideas and their account really takes us from the legacy of Kant up to the First World War. These form helpful bookends to a stream of philosophical and cultural movements that deal with many common issues and ideas. The book is largely chronological though each chapter tends to deal with a certain theme like romanticism, confessionalism and Darwinism. Much space is devoted, as one would expect, to major thinkers such as Schleiermacher, Hegel and Marx. However, there is also detailed treatment of the various lesser figures who nonetheless contributed to the intellectual climate of the day. The accounts are remarkably accessible and yet scholarly. The authors provide a reliable, descriptive account of important ideas but also set those ideas in a biographical and historical context that helps to make sense of them. Colourful details bring the history of individuals to life. The authors have succeeded in providing an account that is both academically rigorous and a compelling read. This blend is no mean feat.

The book is stronger in descriptive than in evaluative content and this makes it an ideal introductory textbook to difficult ideas. The authors clearly demonstrate the great optimism and creativity of the age with which they deal. It is certainly a textbook that avoids giving the impression that secular works of genius can be neatly summarised and dismissed in a few lines. The brief assessments of each thinker are given in a way that fuels further thought

rather than giving a definitive response. Extensive endnotes aid the reader to follow the arguments further.

It has been some years since the publication of the first volume in this series by Colin Brown. His useful survey of the history of philosophy from ancient times reached the Enlightenment with the remainder awaiting a second volume. Wilkens and Padgett pick up where Brown left off but in doing so have changed the flavour of the series. What had been a rapid survey of philosophical thought over the centuries has now become a more focussed and detailed study of themes from a short period. This second volume is a more thorough kind of text emphasising depth rather than breadth. A third volume is promised to complete the series. As a series this will make for a rather unbalanced collection with one volume covering eighteen hundred years followed by two covering two hundred years.

This is an attractively produced hardback which compared with almost any other hardback in the area of philosophy is great value for money. It is marred by a handful of typographical errors, all of which are minor and more an annoyance than misleading. The next volume is to be eagerly anticipated.

Christopher Sinkinson
Bournemouth

Systematics

This we believe. The good news of Jesus Christ for the world

John N. Akers, John H. Armstrong and John D. Woodbridge (Gen. Eds)
Grand Rapids, USA: Zondervan, 2000,
252 pp., h/b., \$14.99

Sensing the need for a fresh articulation of the gospel, several prominent evangelicals determined to draft a wide-ranging statement. That appeared in *Christianity Today* magazine in June 1999 as 'The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration'. It was also reprinted in the last but one *Themelios*.

This symposium opens up, illustrates and applies that statement. The contributors include Ravi Zacharias, J.I. Packer, Kevin Vanhoozer, Scott Hafemann, Ajith Fernando, Joni Earlickson Tada, Joseph M. Stowell and Timothy George. Their collective stature and expertise are impressive, but this volume is accessible to any thoughtful Christian. Its usefulness is enhanced by questions for discussion after each chapter.

Some serious challenges to gospel proclamation today were one reason behind the statement. These include religious tolerance (where gospel work is forbidden), pluralism (no need to present the gospel to other faiths) and inclusivism (salvation only by Christ, but others do not need to hear of him). Another challenge is Christians' lack of gospel knowledge: 'When it comes to setting forth just how Jesus saves, most of us flounder'.

The last wide-ranging gospel statement was probably *The Fundamentals: a testimony for truth* in 1910-15. The Lausanne Covenant came, but in the 1980s and '90s broad evangelicalism had uncertainties over justification that 'revealed a pressing need for a fresh statement'. So this

emerged, based on 'the infallible scriptures' and with 'the doctrine of justification by faith alone' central.

The book's 12 chapters move naturally from 'Is there any purpose to life?' to 'Does God have a plan for the world?' Intervening chapters look at the bad news about us; who Jesus is; why he died; his resurrection; the Holy Spirit; the nature and destiny of the Christian life; practical help in witness; and unity, love and truth. Crucial chapters are written by an African, a Sri Lankan – and, movingly, Joni on heaven.

The statement clearly sets out the gospel as 'the only way to know God'. It is fully in line with the historic creeds and confessions. At its heart it sees Christ's 'mighty substitutionary transaction as the achieving of ransom, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, and conquest of evil powers'. It denies 'that any view of the atonement that rejects the substitutionary satisfaction of divine justice, accomplished vicariously for believers, is compatible with the teaching of the Gospel'.

When some elsewhere argue against substitution, or view it as merely one 'model' among several, this statement is particularly welcome. Moreover, the eighteen concluding 'affirmations and denials' give a clarity and vigour to the statement that are rare in broad evangelical circles. (When were evangelicals last unafraid to define terms both positively and negatively?)

Scott Hafemann's chapter on 'Why Jesus had to die for my sins' is particularly timely. It faces the reality of God's wrath and shows that 'the real barrier to our forgiveness' is God, since 'on what basis can God forgive any sin without compromising his own justice and integrity?'. The book is equally clear on many other crucial issues. For example, the lost are 'facing eternal retributive punishment'. Or: 'we deny that the witness of personal testimony, godly living and acts of mercy

and charity to our neighbours constitutes evangelism apart from the proclamation of the gospel'. Or this: 'Truth is not only more important than unity, but is in fact the basis of unity'.

The statement and book deserve to be widely read and followed. Here is the authentic, unadulterated biblical message; hence, here is evangelicalism. If there are valid concerns that 'evangelical' is being stretched beyond recognition, here is a welcome and needed recall to its biblical breadth and narrowness.

Bob Horn
Leicester

Sin, Death and the Devil

Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds)
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000,
v + 132 pp., £9.99

This book has its origin in a conference of Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars, prompted by cultural shifts in the secular West that the present Pope terms a 'culture of death'. Braaten is executive director of the Centre for Catholic and evangelical theology and has already co-edited books with a similar ecumenical perspective with Jenson.

Jenson introduces the essays by suggesting that our culture is headed towards nihilism. Christianity stripped away belief in pagan idols, but atheism has begun to strip away belief in God. Nihilism is the way sin, death and the devil lead us; they all exist parasitically on the good.

In 'Sinsick' Stanley Hauerwas argues that sin is like a sickness and not merely a matter of free choice. Conversely, medicine has become a new religion, with hospitals as its cathedrals. A Christian view of sin and death requires a review of contemporary attitudes to medicine. Hauerwas commends Aquinas' view that sickness and death result from

Adam's Fall; our physical constitution is unchanged but we have lost divine blessings meant to keep us alive and well.

In 'The Problem of Original Sin' Gary Anderson argues that the Genesis story should be read in the light of the NT. Just as the rabbis understood Genesis in relation to Torah and Israel's election, so Christians understand it in relation to Jesus. Isolated consideration of original sin may just as well cause despair or resignation as repentance, but Christian liturgy and *Paradise Lost* see the Fall as the context for God's greater redemption. The story of Adam and Eve affirms that all humanity exists in the context of God's mercy. However, the question of whether Paul compares and contrasts Christ to a merely symbolic Adam is not directly answered.

In 'Eucharist as Sacrament of Union', A.N. Williams explores the Bible; Anglican, Lutheran and Roman liturgy; and Aquinas and Calvin, arguing that the Eucharist strengthens our union by symbolising the unity of God and humanity in the incarnation, the unity of the Trinity and the unity of the people of God in Christ. Lack of intercommunion among denominations displays the importance of agreed faith to Christian unity.

Gilbert Meilander, in 'I renounce the devil and all his ways', follows Augustine, offering 1 John 2:15-16 ('all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the father') as an analysis of means by which the devil tempts us. The lust of the flesh includes sensory desires, e.g. for food as well as sex. The lust of the eyes means empty longing and curiosity; the modern world, with its craving for visual entertainment, is full of this temptation. The pride of life includes the desire for affirmation apart from God. Meilander argues that the early Church needed to stress renunciation of the world because of the grip of

paganism; we need to rediscover this in our post-Christian culture.

Richard John Neuhaus takes the papal encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* as his guide in 'the gospel of life is the gospel'. Preaching and moral teaching are inseparable. Abortion and euthanasia are therefore anti-gospel. Unfortunately there is no attempt to nuance 'Thou shalt not kill' to deal with legitimate queries, e.g. concerning just war.

In 'Oh Death, Where Is Your Sting?' Vigen Guroian points out that belief in the resurrection of the body marks Christianity out from Hindu religion. In Orthodox theology and liturgy Christ's descent to Hades defeats death and the devil and is symbolised in baptism. There is however, no interaction with theologians who question the exegetical basis for a descent 'to hell'.

Occasionally I felt that the essays lacked Biblical depth or were more concerned to preach to the converted than to hone tools for missionary engagement. Overall, though, the ecumenical perspective provides a refreshing breadth of theological concern compared with some evangelical theology, and addresses neglected themes in a stimulating way.

Patrick Richmond
Leicester

Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns

D.A. Carson (Gen. Ed.)
Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000,
416pp, h/b, \$27.99

'How do you communicate truth to a world that isn't sure what truth is - or even if truth is? How do you commend spiritual absolutes to people who insist there are none?' Questions like these inspired the 'Telling the Truth' conference at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in May 1998 and this

book is the published form of most of the papers given at that conference. It is, in short, a highly valuable collection of essays all connected in some way to the crucial issue of what biblically faithful and culturally relevant evangelism should look like in our post-modern world.

The book is made up of two of the conference's opening plenary sessions (both by Ravi Zacharias), two closing plenaries (by Ajith Fernando and Don Carson) and then twenty-four of the various seminars given. These are divided into sections: The Challenge (religious pluralism and post-modern epistemology); Critical Topics (biblical theology, Christ-centred preaching, sin, conversion); Crucial Passages (Rom. 3:21-26 and 2 Cor. 5:1-11); Church, Campus, Ethnicity; This Relational Age; Experiences and Strategies. The contributors are robustly committed to the unchanging gospel but the book's greatest value is that the complex interface between this gospel and the soul of post-modern culture is probed on such a multitude of fronts that nearly every chapter offers astute insights. Old paths are revisited freshly, new ones forged faithfully.

Given that this is the make-up of the book it is inevitable that some chapters stand out as more satisfying than others. This reviewer found 'Epistemology at the Core of Post-modernism: Rorty, Foucault and the Gospel' among the most helpful, as well as Colin S. Smith on 'Keeping Christ Central in Preaching' and Don Carson's treatment of Acts 17 in 'Athens Revisited'. As someone currently involved in student ministry, I found Jensen and Payne's chapter on 'Church/Campus Connections: Model 1' very thought-provoking indeed. Conversely, in his stimulating paper 'The Touch of Truth', I was not fully persuaded by Ravi Zacharias' exegesis of Acts 24:22-26 and the contact points he suggests these verses give us with postmodernity. Also, Mark E. Dever's chapter 'Communicating Sin in a

Postmodern World' is invaluable for its wisdom on communicating and on the postmodern world but it contains little unpacking of the multi-faceted way the Bible depicts sin and the ways in which the sinfulness of sin might be meaningfully communicated today. If reading the chapters through consecutively, the book does develop a slightly repetitive feel towards the end as issues of relationships come up again and again – however, I don't think the book's usefulness lies in being read like this and such repetitiveness is inevitable, given the conference origins of the material, where different seminars would have touched on a lot of the same issues.

These are minor criticisms – this is a book to sharpen all involved in Christian ministry and is highly recommended. It will be very stimulating for all those in student ministry and, although there is a strong American orientation to quite a few of the chapters on strategic initiatives, a weary minister will find, rightly contextualised, many revitalising ideas here. This reviewer agrees with the editor's endorsement: 'Anyone interested in evangelism in the Western World will read these chapters with delight and profit. Where particular priorities or perspectives seem a little removed from where you sit, you will find more than adequate stimulation from the rest of the book.'

David Gibson

London

Searching for an Adequate God

John B. Cobb Jr and Clark H. Pinnock (Eds)
Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000,
xiv + 269 pp., \$26.00/£15.99

This book is subtitled 'a dialogue between process and free will theists' most of whom appear to live in California and to have come from conservative religious backgrounds. Autobiographical information of this sort is normally relatively

unimportant, but in this symposium it becomes highly significant. Not only do several of the contributors dwell at length on their journey away from evangelical orthodoxy, but others remark on the unusually personal nature of their colleagues' theology! Some readers may find this irritating, but in many ways it is a refreshing trait. Most theologians write from a standpoint of personal commitment to one view or another, but leave their readers to guess why they think the way they do. In this book all is revealed, and the reader can decide for himself how much weight should be given to points of view which spring from an individual spiritual journey.

The contributors are meant to be a mixture of 'free will' theists, of whom Clark Pinnock is probably the best known, and process thinkers ('theists' or 'theologians' is an awkward way to describe them), and the brief introduction sets out both positions extremely clearly. As Clark Pinnock says on page x:

We both insist that God is love and therefore filled with compassion and sensitivity. We do not believe that God determines the course of events unilaterally. We believe that the future is open and that some kinds of change even belong to the divine perfection and are not alien to it. We believe that God not only affects creatures but that creatures affect God. We both think that God suffers when things go badly for creatures. We both hold to the reality of libertarian freedom and consequently we both recognise that genuine evils exist. Both models are impressive ways to get at important things we both care a lot about.

Having laid the groundwork so eloquently, the book goes on to develop different aspects of the subjects mentioned, and brings out certain differences between process and free will thinkers. For example, the latter are more likely to believe in

the reality of life after death, and to express their beliefs using more obviously Christian language than the former do. Indeed, the outside reader may be confused by the fact that many of the 'free will' contributors describe themselves as 'evangelicals', even as they make it clear that they distance themselves from the Evangelical mainstream. David Wheeler, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Los Angeles, appears to be in a category all his own. He calls himself an 'evangelical', but one who thinks that the insights of process/relational thought have a great deal to offer him in his ministry! Whose side is he on, or is that question appropriate?

The book tends to be a series of reflective essays rather than a systematic presentation of two broadly defined positions, which makes it difficult to say who stands for what. About all that can be said for certain is that every one of the contributors is opposed to 'classical theism', though unfortunately that option is neither defined nor represented in the symposium. Calvinism apparently qualifies for this opprobrium, but as the few references to it caricature its approach (by claiming, for example, that it holds that God is the creator of evil), it must be doubted whether the authors of the symposium really know what they have rejected. Time and again, the orthodox reader longs to say that the problems raised by them were answered centuries ago by the elaboration of the all-important distinction between 'person' and 'essence' which allowed Christian theology to triumph over the false dilemmas posed by the dualistic philosophies of antiquity, and to proclaim the sovereign and omnipotent personal God of the Bible.

When looking at free will or process thought, the traditional believer is struck most of all by the lack of humility that both sides display in their approach to God. As the book's

title says, they are looking for a God who is 'adequate', by which they mean a God who satisfies their own moral and philosophical demands. But the mind of a sovereign God cannot be contained by any human scheme, however noble it may be. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and the problem of evil (in particular) has defied human solution since the days of Job and beyond. Why do evil and suffering exist in a world controlled by an omnipotent and absolutely good being? We do not know the answer to this – all we can say is that the God who made us also sent his Son to take our suffering upon himself and pay the price for the sin and evil which we have brought into the world. We also know that if we trust in him, he will protect us against the effects of whatever evil may befall us in this life, and take us to dwell with him in eternity. It may not be much to offer the philosophers, but to others it is the bread of life. Is there anything more 'adequate' than that?

Gerald Bray

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Alabama

The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity

Gavin D'Costa

Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000,
187 pp., £13.95

This recent work from Gavin D'Costa is a delight to read and presents a formidable argument. D'Costa has been a significant theologian in the field of Christian responses to other religions for many years. This book develops original and creative ideas from a Roman Catholic position, which deserve careful consideration by anyone concerned with multiculturalism. In the past the author has been one of the proponents of the threefold typology for cataloguing the Christian response to other religions: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. However, in this book he dispenses with

that typology and argues that all significant positions are forms of religious exclusivism. They all maintain the exclusive truth of a normative framework in which other religions are understood. This is as true of John Hick's pluralism as it is of Karl Barth's exclusivism. D'Costa extends this analysis beyond the confines of Christian theology to demonstrate how it is also true of the Dalai Lama's Tibetan Buddhism and various forms of Hindu thought. This is a liberating insight. Conservative Christian thought has been too easily labelled and dismissed by using the category of exclusivism.

The first part of the book provides a powerful critique of religious pluralism. D'Costa demonstrates that the pluralism of Hick, Knitter and Cohn-Sherbok, far from being neutral, is really a covert form of the modern liberal agenda. For this reason pluralism is not really compatible with any of the major world religions. In the case of Hick, 'Agnosticism is the inevitable outcome of this flight from particularity' (28). In contrast to western forms of religious pluralism, D'Costa sees greater strength in the kinds of pluralism that have developed among the eastern religions. Though Radhakrishnan and the Dalai Lama seem to offer pluralist interpretations of the world religions, they still privilege their own religious outlook. While this undermines their claim to be treating religions as of equal value, it is, at least, intellectually more respectable than western pluralisms.

In the second part of his book D'Costa develops a fresh response to pluralism by drawing upon the doctrine of the Trinity. He uses the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in order to argue for the global presence of God. This does not mean that all religions are somehow inspired by God but that a Christian can be an optimist regarding what they will find when in the process of dialogue with a member of another religion. Furthermore, this position

allows for a frank admission that the central claims of the Christian faith are normative; 'Trinitarian exclusivism can acknowledge God's actions within other traditions, without domesticating or obliterating their alterity, such that real conversation and engagement might occur' (47). D'Costa argues for a position that makes its theological commitments explicit. As a Roman Catholic significant space is given to discussing the relevant church documents including those of the Second Vatican Council in order to claim that his position is true to that tradition. There is also an extended discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John, which provides a Biblical argument for his position. Too often Christian attempts at a theology of religions have only paid lip service to Scripture. This exegesis leads D'Costa to note 'we must be *extremely reticent* about any abstract talk of the "spirit in other religions", for this bears little Johannine rhetorical sense' (128).

The closing chapter discusses some practical implications of Trinitarian exclusivism for inter-religious prayer. Religions must be seen as different and not subjected to some neutral meta-narrative. Nonetheless, D'Costa argues that the Christian has grounds for great optimism regarding the spirit being at work in inter-religious encounter and co-operation. He seems to be far more optimistic than his exegesis of John would allow. Indeed, John's negative account of those who do not believe in Jesus demands serious thought in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit. Despite this reservation the argument of the book breaks new ground for Christian responses to other religions and deserves consideration by evangelicals.

Chris Sinkinson
Bournemouth

What Anglicans Believe in the Twenty-First Century

David L. Edwards
London: Cassell, 2000,
119 pp., £9.99

David Edwards may well be described as the 'John Stott' of the liberal end of the theological spectrum. He is widely read, thoughtful and a first-class communicator. It was therefore highly appropriate that he and Stott should engage in a theological dialogue published as *Essentials*. The Evangelical reader of this present volume will not be surprised to find himself having the same 'yes but ...' reaction that Dr Stott displayed in his conversations with Dr Edwards.

What Anglicans Believe is, in the words of its author, 'written for people who think for themselves and who are willing to think about God'. In other words, it is written for the honest seeker. Even a basic knowledge of Christian belief is not taken for granted and matters are explained simply, yet not simplistically in a clear and refreshing style.

The framework chosen is a basic 'We believe' pattern with a focus on what, the author claims, are beliefs integral to Anglicanism as defined in terms of its historic formularies, but more descriptively from what different groups which make up membership of the Anglican communion as it is now constituted believe (evangelical, catholic, liberal). The approach is one of a genial celebration of the positive contributions each tradition has to make without wishing to 'unchurch' anyone.

There is much which is helpful, with clear orthodox statements about the person of Christ, the nature of the Trinity and some excellent material on prayer, holy communion and the importance of Christians engaging with society.

The fundamental weakness, and so consequential disquiet felt in reading

the book, is the lack of grounding in Scripture as authoritative. While reference is made to the Church of England's position on this, Edwards refuses to be unambiguously guided by it. This is most evident in his chapters on the Jesus as 'Son and Lord' and its discussion on the cross, and 'We believe in love' and the matter of Christian morality.

Edwards defines sin as 'everything in us that refuses to accept our own proper dignity in the home of God our Father' (54). This is hardly the serious view of our rebelliousness which the Bible takes. Accordingly, his understanding of the cross is not that of a propitiuous sacrifice offered on our behalf, but 'the placard of God's love' (97). The cross achieves nothing vis-à-vis God, how can it when his attitude towards us is always one of love? But it is meant to affect our attitude towards him, but just how is difficult to grasp. Edwards tells us that 'Many Christians have spoken of Jesus carrying the consequences of humanity's sin.' and 'Many Christians have spoken of Jesus death as our 'redemption' and Romans 5:8 and 2 Corinthians 5:18 are quoted in support (28). As a matter of description, he is correct, but do such statements carry authoritative weight about what is true and therefore to be believed as 'immutable non-negotiables', especially when coming from an apostle? That is, are they prescriptive for us today? Not according to Edwards who gives pride of place to individual and collective reason.

And so given the low place Scripture figures in Edwards' scheme it is not surprising to find that on the matter of homosexual practice, Edwards urges that our moral valuation should be modified in the light of 'recent knowledge', which in effect means allowing such practice for those who are so disposed so long as it is not promiscuous.

In many ways, what we have in this book is an example of the beliefs

against which the early IVF stood. They had the wit to recognise that the 'yes but ...' had profound implications. While there is much with which we can agree (in so far as what is said agrees with Scripture), we must respectfully point out the inadequacies of a theological framework which does not arise out of the principle, 'Scripture alone' and the confusion that results.

Melvin Tinker
Hull

Trinity, Time, and Church: A Response to the Theology of Robert W. Jenson

Colin Gunton (Ed.)
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000,
x + 331 pp., h/b., £25.00

Robert W. Jenson is one of the foremost American theologians living today. Having written extensively on a wide variety of topics including the doctrine of the Trinity; eternity and time; the theology of culture; politics; the sacraments and the list could almost hint at exhaustiveness; he has established himself in the theological discourse of both Church and academy. With the recent publication of his two-volume *Systematic Theology* he has reached that stage in his career where he has provided the material for fruitful exchanges with fellow theologians. This collection of essays is an example of just how fruitful such an exchange can be.

The prestige of the contributors is impressive and Colin Gunton has managed to draw together theologians from diverse church persuasions as well as a representative of Jewish theology. The aim of each paper is to present, assess and critically engage various aspects of Jenson's contribution to theology which is by no means easy to assess at such an early time. However, not all papers do that: some contributions (such as Seitz's, Pannenberg's and Wilken's to some extent) are essays standing on

their own, advancing their own proposals quite independently of the work of Jenson. This is not to take anything from the otherwise outstanding interest that they present for the reader. The rest of the essays, nonetheless, stick to the editorial instructions and creatively and critically engage with the work of Jenson.

The twenty-one essays gathered in this volume are enough to make it extremely usable as a critical introduction or a reference source to Jenson's work, although some familiarity with it is presupposed but not critically counted on. The scope of each chapter, however, plainly shows that this is no mere introduction, as each writer develops his own argument over against, in dialogue with, or starting from Jenson, or simply – as one writer put it – in Jensonian mode.

The volume starts off with a personal memoir by Carl Braaten, Jenson's closest associate. Then follows James Buckley's characterisation of Jenson's theology along three lines: the drama of God, a revisionary metaphysics and a liturgical test. Seitz's piece is an investigation of the attribution to Jesus of the name of God and of the relationship between the two names. Jewish theologian David Novak, in an essay emerging out of both academic interaction and friendly exchange with Jenson, argues for a kind of philosophical theology on the basis of the intelligibility of the world (granted at creation) over against cabalistic theologies. Wolfhart Pannenberg's part in this collection is all about timing. He offers a slightly more conservative understanding of the relationship between God and time in the sense of emphasising that God is not subject to the march of time. This aspect is indeed illustrative of a critical tendency of many of the present contributors to warn Jenson against collapsing God into history, as well as Christ into Church.

Douglas Knight then criticises Jenson's concept of time by reworking the relationship between time and spatiality. Gunton takes up a similar line of inquiry whilst challenging Jenson's language of 'withinness.' He argues that creation does not take place within God *simpliciter*, but within the person of the Son. Gabriel Fackre's essay marks the transition toward matters more this-worldly with his interpretation of Jenson as reading with a relentless consistency the classical *loci* through the lens of the *finitum capax infiniti*.

In 'Once again, Christ and Culture', Christoph Schwoebel compares the respective approaches to the question of Christ and culture of H. Richard Niebuhr and Robert Jenson and wonders whether in the case of Jenson it is more a case of the relationship between Church and culture. Whereas in Niebuhr the Church is relativised through emphasis on the Lordship of Christ, in Jenson the Church becomes an extension of the incarnation. Gerhard Forde's essay touches on the three phases of Jenson's soteriology: the encounter with Barth, the dialogue with the Reformation and the resurrection. All these phases betray a narrative quality of Jenson's theology. However, in Forde's opinion, this becomes problematic when aspects of the narrative are left into oblivion. Tuomo Mannermaa defends the Lutheranism of Jenson's doctrine of the Trinity while pointing out the link between the doctrine of justification and a trinitarian ontology.

Jeremy Ive rehearses the same criticism of Jenson for running the risk of collapsing God into history and divinising history in turn. Robert Wilken's is a brilliant piece of Augustinian exegesis in 'Jensonian mode' investigating the proper place of the Holy Spirit and arguing that there is no such thing as reading the Scripture without the aid of tradition.

Then there follows an article by a Roman Catholic which at points seems more Evangelical than Jenson, the Lutheran, by pointing out the danger of Jenson's putting the church alongside the three persons of God. A.N. Williams argues that Jenson's theology has gradually drifted towards neo-Thomism in the three periods of his publishing career. However, such an interpretation is not entirely unproblematic, as David Yeago argues. Rather, Jenson's whole ecclesiology can be seen as taking up significant themes in the ecclesiology of the reformers that have been pushed to the side and widely forgotten.

Richard John Neuhaus' essay brings the volume back to the question of culture. He compares the work of Jenson with that of Hauerwas, Milbank, Pannenberg and Newman with respect to the public reality of the church. Stanley Hauerwas carries this engagement forward in person by addressing some pressing yet idiosyncratic questions to Jenson about his hesitation to commit to non-violence. G. Meilaender sums up this section by arguing that there is a consistently articulated theological vision of politics in Jenson.

Closing up the collection are two articles, the first of which is on the nature of the sacraments in the theology of Jenson. In this informed piece, G. Wainwright does indeed present, assess and critically engage with this aspect of Jenson's thought. The last article is Carl Braaten's argument that there is a close connection between eschatology and mission and that this can be shown in respect to the task of theology; the identity of God, the purpose of the church and the meaning of eschatology.

To sum up: this is a most informed volume, comprising some excellent articles both on the theology of Jenson and standing on their own. It is indeed a pity that such a volume lacks a preface (although announced in the

contents), which might have guided the reader through the intricate articles gathered here.

Adonis Vidu

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The Person of Jesus Christ

H.R. Mackintosh (Edited by T.F. Torrance)
Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000,
ix + 94 pp., £8.95

This book was originally published in 1912, being an edited version of a series of addresses which Professor H.R. Mackintosh of Edinburgh University gave to a students' conference in Swanwick in 1911. Professor T.F. Torrance says in his introduction to this new edition that it constitutes '...the inner evangelical heart of Mackintosh's great work. *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, published that same year by T. & T. Clark Ltd. In their International Theological Library...'

The overwhelming impression in reading this volume is of a man who was spiritually as well as theologically acquainted with the subject of his book. Indeed, he makes it clear in the Preface that only with spiritual knowledge and insight can we truly understand the Christological issues. He writes, 'our insight into the fact of Jesus will depend on our spiritual attitude and temper' and points out that, in our own experience, a sense of God's presence may 'wax and wane with our loyalty to duty and our practice of secret prayer'.

In chapter one, Professor Mackintosh first explores the significance of Jesus as Messiah and as Son of God. In one striking passage, he goes so far as to say that '*everything* in Christian religion hangs on the spiritual veracity of Jesus' profession of Messiahship. The question is not peripheral; it is central and supreme' (11).

In chapter two we are drawn into a discussion about the way in which

Christian men and women experience Christ in redemption and the implications of that experience for an understanding of his Person. Here are explored such concepts as the felt presence of Jesus Christ with men and the conquest of sin attained through Christ. It is in this context that he develops the notion that in Jesus Christ we have a perfect revelation of God the Father, culminating in the thought-provoking words, 'Christ saves, yet only God can save. There, in a simple and elementary reflection, lies the original but also the permanent foundation of a great thought which men naturally have felt, so hard - the Divinity of Christ' (47).

In the third and final chapter Mackintosh is at his most profound and also his most worshipful as he explores the reality that God was in Christ, with all the implications and ramifications of that for Christian life. He does not do so in any mystical or irrational way, rather he insists on the place of reason or logic in our theological deliberations and stresses the importance of demonstrating to a somewhat sceptical world the truth and reality of the things about which we speak.

The book concludes with an 'Appreciation' by T.F. Torrance of his erstwhile teacher entitled 'Hugh Ross Mackintosh: Theologian of the Cross', originally published in the *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* (1987) 160-73. In this article Professor Torrance seeks to expound Mackintosh's theology and, *inter alia*, to indicate the close similarity between Mackintosh and Karl Barth. It is very difficult to assess this essay because of the various references to comments made by Mackintosh in classes that Professor Torrance attended, as well as to published works. One would have to say, however, that although the exposition offered by Professor Torrance of Mackintosh's Christology may be accurate, it could not have been

constructed merely from the contents of this book.

Overall, the impression left by the book is of being intellectually and spiritually challenged and fed at the same time. I not only enjoyed the book, it did me good to read it.

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The Knowledge of Christ (Problems in Theology)

Raymond Moloney

London: Continuum, 2000,

148 pp., £14.99

There is an interesting question that underlies the current popularity in wearing the wristlet with the initials WWJD (What would Jesus do?). It is this: how can we be certain of Jesus' mind on any and all matters? And behind this lies the question being addressed in Raymond Moloney's book, *The Knowledge of Christ*. It concerns our understanding of Jesus' own self-consciousness and self-knowledge. As Mascall correctly points out in relation to this very subject, 'It is both ridiculous and irreverent to ask what it must have been like to be God incarnate'.

It must be stated at the outset that this little book is very much one that dares address this question, and does so from a Roman Catholic tradition. As such, it makes little sense to anyone with scant knowledge of this tradition and its theology. It is clearly a book for theologically aware readers. This may be a negative for some, but given the subject matter of the book, it makes sense that this is being addressed from within the Roman tradition. Put bluntly, it is only from within this robust tradition that the subject of Jesus Christ's self-consciousness, as one who is both fully man and fully God, can be discussed. It has an aristocratic history and yet is also given serious

reflection given the problems modern psychology raise in relation to any traditional two-nature Christology.

The author makes a difficult subject relatively readable. What he does is to summarise three key Roman Catholic thinkers in order to wrestle with the issue – and correctly so, for as he admits, the NT itself does not fully answer the question on its own. Yet, if we are to be able to answer the question of what Jesus would do in any given situation, we also need to have confidence in our ability to know his mind on these matters: something more easily said than done. Enter the theologians, Rahner, von Balthasar and Lonergan to whom Moloney turns in order to address the problem. In essence they locate the answer in terms of Jesus' relationship with God his Father. From this relationship came his self-understanding both as the man Jesus of Nazareth as well as the Word become flesh. Consequently, our Lord's self-knowledge is to be understood within the matrix of his own vision of God and his understanding of Son.

I like this: no quick fix or instant knowledge. Thus, as with our Lord, so with ourselves – our knowledge of self and of Christ is carved out of a prior relationship with God who is our Father.

What was less satisfactory, was the degree to which Moloney's book completely failed to address the role of the Spirit in the formation of Christ's self-knowledge. In so doing, he perpetuates the Achilles' heel of traditional, Chalcedonian, two-nature Christologies: the divinity of the Son fulfils the functions of the Spirit. In essence, Jesus of Nazareth has no need of the Spirit. In so doing, the link between the risen Christ in his exalted humanity and my own struggling discipleship is broken. To this extent, Moloney replaces one problem in theology for another.

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The Problem of God in Modern Thought

Philip Clayton
Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge,
UK: Eerdmans, 2000,
516 pp., h/b., \$40.00/£25.00

This is a challenging contribution to the contemporary debate about the existence and nature of God. It contains useful responses to the religious scepticism of post-Kantian philosophy, but delineates a pantheistic concept of God contrary to the Scriptural revelation of the triune God.

Professor Philip Clayton begins by arguing convincingly that language about God can be 'constitutive', that is, can 'refer to an object and express actual positive content about it' (5). This is in response to those who, after Kant have asked how language and ideas about God can be said to be anything other than hypothetical, since they are not, according to Kant, derived or based on human experience or anything in nature. They are simply concepts that may be posited as true, while practical reason and ethical living is carried out 'as if they were true. To his credit, Clayton refutes the 'epistemic dualism' which led Kant to argue that all 'data' not gathered on the basis of empirical intuition (including claims about God) could not properly be called knowledge. Such a dualism (of sense impressions versus ideas of reason) is untenable, since it is not clear on the basis of empirical intuition that such a clear-cut division is appropriate (22).

Instead, Clayton argues that the concept of God can function as the *telos* of all rational enquiry, and Kant's dualism should not determine in advance 'which sorts of propositions are knowable and which are not' (28). Such decisions can be made only on the way, and the concept of God provides a good and coherent means of directing the way.

In setting out his own theory, Clayton provides an impressive historico-philosophical study of modern philosophers, from Descartes (chs 2 and 3), to Leibniz (ch. 4), Kant (chs 5 and 6), Spinoza (ch. 7), Fichte (ch. 8), and Schelling (ch. 9). But it is Schelling's pantheistic development of Spinoza's pantheist philosophy that Clayton finds most convincing.

Arguing that the best model of God is as the 'ground of being', Clayton maintains that we are the 'beings that stem from this ground' (478). Opposing the traditional theistic view of God as an infinite being who has created finite beings who are not just quantitatively but also qualitatively different to him, the boundaries of this quality are less defined and more blurred. For Clayton, the 'finite is included within (or participates in, or stands in a part/whole relation to) the infinite' (479).

However, we wonder how the ontological integrity of the finite can be maintained if it is qualitatively related to the infinite. For the Christian, assorted problems arise. How does such a model of God cope with the moral disjunction that now exists between God and the world? If the world is included within God, where then is the moral distance if the finite is included within the infinite? Or is God in some way responsible for the moral failure of the world? The traditional view of theism maintains an ontological distinction as the basis for the moral distinction. Clayton's model fails to do this, and shows itself to be inconsistent with the evidence of Scripture and the revelation of the triune God in Jesus Christ. This is, a stimulating, if difficult book.

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Christianity in a changing world. Biblical insight on contemporary issues

Michael Schluter & the Cambridge Papers Group
London: Marshall Pickering, 2000,
xvi + 351 pp., £9.99

This book collects together short papers, previously published individually as 'Cambridge Papers' dating back over the last decade and its introduction is convincingly apologetic:

for a Christian, meeting secular thought on the basis of common rational discourse is a match played at home. But the Christian must also recall that secular knowledge is to be set in its fullest context, its theological context (xv).

In his foreword David Jackman identifies the bewildering array of questions that Christians are being asked on social, political and ethical issues, suggesting that 'We know that there must be biblical principles which are relevant, but we are not always sure of their location, or once found, the validity of our interpretative processes'. Readers are assured that, agreeing or not, they will have their framework for thinking challenged and changed.

The hermeneutical question Jackman raises for us is certainly one that crops up as we read through sections as diverse as: Human Identity and Sexuality; Christianity and Society; Crime and Justice; Economics and Finance; Science and Medicine; History and Providence; Postmodernism and Culture. So, is a 'biblical' reading necessarily equivalent to a 'theological' one? Do we really seek 'biblical insight' or are we after *theological* (too dry?), or better still, *evangelical* insight on contemporary issues gained as we reflect in the light of the Bible? We would be advised to assess the authors as seeking to work humbly under this second self-understanding. Nevertheless, this collection, framed as it is, and

throwing up what some readers may identify as *conservative* (is this a theological or modern liberal category anyway?) applications may alert us to the need for caution with our easy shorthand. Clearly this is not an area that the essays sets out to address but, as the papers tacitly adopt a method, the framework questions must responsibly come back to the reader's mind. The collection may then be helpful to readers as a companion in that churchly task of continually seeking a renewed mind to test and approve what is God's will.

A little gem in the collection (and immediately interesting to students) is John Coffey's essay on 'Engaging with Cinema'. All essays are accompanied with useful endnotes, but this particular essay recommends further reading and lists a few websites that deal responsibly with Christian reflection in this area. Also worthy of note is the forthright paper from Ranald Macaulay on 'The Great Commissions' and Michael Ovey's trinitarian emphasis in 'The Human Identity Crisis'. The section on science was weaker as useful factual information seemed to be filtered uncritically through the secular utilitarian prism causing us to query whether the managerial aspect of popular 'stewardship' discussion in Christian circles is helping us as much as we like to believe.

This collection is accessibly engaging for student readers and stimulates thinking far beyond the methodological to an examination of our settled assumptions and practices as Christians living in the world.

Andy Draycott
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Eschatology

Hans Schwarz
Grand Rapids, Michigan:/Cambridge: Eerdmans,
2000,
xv + 430 pp., \$26.00/£16.99

For this German Lutheran professor of theology eschatology is 'Christian reflection on the end of our lives and of the world in general'. This scope is broad enough to include both theological thought and secularist futurology which asks what is going to happen to the material world that we know.

An introductory chapter asks whether people still care about the future and argues briefly for the bankruptcy of secular thinking on the matter.

The biblical material is investigated developmentally, looking at views of human destiny, the concept of future judgement by God and the growth of the messianic hope. In the NT attention is centred on the eschatology of Jesus and the Evangelists, Paul and some of the early church writers. This discussion is principally on the coming of the Kingdom and the Messiah. There is some repetition of it in the ensuing survey of modern theologians from A. Ritschl onwards, including figures such as M. Borg and A.A. Hoekema and the expected scholars (C.H. Dodd, O. Cullmann, J. Moltmann and J. Hick), liberation and feminist theologians. It concludes without any attempt at synthesis or evaluation.

The discussion changes key as the author looks at secular understandings of the future from the nineteenth century onwards, noting the views of scientific materialists and evolutionists, the danger of an ecological holocaust and the contributions of philosophers, New Age religion and secular humanism. This is a digression from the main theme of the book, since little account is taken of it later on. What is important here is Schwarz's exposure

of the way in which secularists do not take the fact of sin with anything like sufficient seriousness.

In his own contribution to the discussion Schwarz begins with the problem of death which is to be seen as the gateway to the eschaton. He considers the question of immortality, including the evidence of near-death experiences and philosophical considerations, before noting that immortality is a gift of God rather than an innate quality; consequently our only hope for ultimately fulfilment lies in a resurrection hope based on Christ's resurrection. This raises the question of what lies between death and resurrection, which is solved by arguing for the timelessness of the divine sphere.

Schwarz moves on to controversial areas of hope: he firmly rejects what he calls 'travelogue eschatology' with its timetables and sees the concept of a millennium as a 'pastoral comfort'. He discusses the idea of universal salvation sympathetically, concluding that it is something for which we should hope but certainly cannot affirm; in any case people can be saved 'only for Christ's sake' (351). He is more dismissive of purgatory. Finally, he considers 'the new world to come', argues that the signs of the end (like the Antichrist) are being fulfilled now, and the church is called to anticipate the new world proleptically in its own life. He strongly defends the fact of final judgement as the prerequisite to salvation, and says that it has a twofold outcome. There is a brief discussion of heaven and somewhat less of hell.

The reader will learn a lot from this book with encyclopaedic knowledge of Bible, theology and secular thought. Unfortunately it attempts to do too much and leaves the reader dissatisfied. Thus, for example, there is no proper NT basis for the discussion of the post-mortem state. The topics discussed in the biblical section are not those taken up in the

later, systematic section. The helpful discussion of futurology doesn't lead to any real consideration of the relationship between secular hopes and possibilities and Christian doctrine. The survey of evangelical positions on the millennium is too brief to be helpful. The nature of hell is virtually untouched, although the very brief statement that the various biblical descriptions contain words 'taken from present negative experiences and attempt to transcend them' (402) maybe says it all. The general outlook of the book is on the conservative and evangelical side, and it is useful to have the perspective of a Continental theologian of a Lutheran persuasion on a discussion largely been carried on in North America. But what should be the evangelical attitude to universal homecoming? I have always believed that there will be people who are finally lost and that therefore there is no point in hoping that there might possibly be a universal homecoming, although there is point in praying for the conversion of as many people as possible so that the population of hell will be as minimal as possible. But how can I pray that hell will in fact be empty, when Scripture plainly implies that there will be those on the right and on the left when the Son of Man sits in judgement? Should we not rather be doing much more than we are doing to bring the gospel to those who are in danger of being eternally lost?

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On the Interpretation and Use of the Bible with Reflections on Experience

Ronald S. Wallace

Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, x + 137 pp., £7.25

This is an odd book: more pastoral than academic and yet presented as a would-be academic contribution,

although as a contribution to what is not entirely clear. It is nevertheless easy to read and thoroughly edifying. Wallace essentially reflects on a long career of reading and teaching the Bible and makes some good and compelling points of a more or less theological nature on how to use it, and occasionally on how to interpret it.

The reader is introduced anecdotally to Wallace's view of the Bible. He offers three main presuppositions for his study: inspiration (where the Gospels 'resound' as if 'God himself were speaking them'); revelation (God shows us what he is like); and 'salvation history' (the Bible is history with a purpose). This last perhaps reveals the book to be a product of its author's time, as do two later chapters entitled 'Central Issues in Interpretation' which treat typology and allegory as the only such issues. Much of the time what Wallace says is balanced and reasonable (allegory can be overdone but has value; typology has a clear NT warrant but again can be stretched), and he frequently chastises his own younger spiritualising excesses. But it is hard to believe that these are really the central issues in interpretation today, and what is of merit in them would, I suspect, be widely taken as read.

Similarly, chapters on 'Interpreting the Text' and 'Applying the Word' reflect a mildly Barthian Reformed approach and speak wisely and warmly of allowing a vision of God to provide a framework for exegesis. He focuses on the 'spiritual' context (the church as a worshipping community) as a more fundamental requirement than the academic one but without down-playing good historical-critical hard work. His reflections on 'application' explore how the ten commandments should be read Christologically. In a brief chapter on 'Openness and Surrender' he marshals Calvin and Luther to the task of claiming that sheer spiritual stubbornness is a large part of our

problem in reading the Bible. All these points are well made and well taken.

For all this the oddness is never far away. Wallace makes the bizarre decision 'superficially to clutter the book up with references to my sources of information' in order to 'give it a possible circulation within the wider academic community'. In fact the footnotes are entirely superficial and frequently leave us none the wiser: names with short titles, no publication details, sometimes just editors or article titles with no reference at all, and in precisely two intriguing cases references to recent works which are averred to have 'little similarity' with his own discussion. One thinks of Lesslie Newbigin's approach here, and suspects that Wallace should have taken the road less footnoted. In the notes we do have, Barth beats the Reformers by a short head, and Von Rad brings up the rear. Again this leaves the reader feeling like a listener to someone else's problems. Perhaps tellingly, the closing chapter focuses on the need to recover a firm belief in miracles as a key to seeing the Bible as historically reliable. It seems to me unlikely that this is quite where we are at in our credulous age of supermarket spirituality.

I found myself agreeing with Wallace much of the time, but finding myself hard-pressed to imagine a student to whom I could recommend this. As a devotional resource it might fare better, but its semi-academic style will deter casual readers, and irritate academics.

Richard Briggs

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Religious Studies

Academic Freedom and Christian Scholarship

Anthony J. Diekema

Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000,
214 pp., \$22.00/£14.99

This book is directed principally to Christian colleges and secondarily to other institutions of higher education in the USA. However alongside matters of parochial concern it raises some fascinating issues related to scholarship everywhere and particularly of interest to Christian scholars.

The great theme of the book is academic freedom. The author was president of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan from 1976 to 1996. He mounts a robust defence of academic freedom from both political and religious interference from both outside and inside Christian colleges. Powerful churches or denominational bodies can exercise undue influence to keep professors tied down and similarly college administrators may keep too tight a rein on what is taught and published. He gives a definition, 'Academic freedom is the right and obligation to constantly pursue truth, and to teach and publish it along the way toward the goal of finding ultimate truth'. He then draws on his experience to illustrate a number of threats to academic freedom. These include: ideological imperialism and dogmatism, political correctness and intolerance of religion (the anti-religious bias found in secular universities), censorship of opposing views and what he calls 'the chilling effect' and self-censorship fostered by the need to keep in line with the authorities in the interests of job security and promotion. This in the States is the quest for academic tenure. There are also subtle threats from government requirements of institutions. He urges and illustrates

vigilance and patient but strong stances against all such threats.

He goes on to point out that recent acceptance of the influence of worldviews on scholarship has not made any difference to the policy statements of institutions or to their adjudication of cases involving academic freedom. These still operate on the basis of the old Enlightenment paradigm of objectivity and pure reason. He therefore calls for guidelines on academic freedom to involve worldviews both of the institution and of individual scholars. He accepts that academic freedom is not to be understood as a 'do-as-you-like' freedom. Professors and colleges exist in communities of mutual responsibilities. It is interesting that Diekema bases this claim on the sociologist Durkheim rather than the Bible. For such communities he recommends a 'Socratic covenant' and he makes suggestions for the contents of such an agreement. These suggestions include declarations on the part of professors and the institution of their worldviews and the institution's commitment to defend academic freedom in the sense Diekema understands it. If in their pursuit of the truth the professors change their worldviews and their new worldviews are incompatible with the mission statement of the college, they should resign and the college should do all they can to help them find appropriate alternative posts. Such covenants could replace tenure as guarantees of academic freedom.

It is in his discussion of academic freedom and worldviews that some of his most interesting points are made. He argues that to acknowledge the role of worldviews does not involve acceptance of relativism or postmodernism. He sees postmodernism as a 'temporary obstacle', something which threatens to destroy all standards, evaluation, acceptable methods and order and as such he thinks it will self-destruct and leave the academic field. But how does he

avoid relativism? He acknowledges the plurality of worldviews in the academy but he urges that the point of scholarship is the pursuit of truth. In this he retains the idea of objectivity.

All scholars should seek the ideal of objectivity in the subject of their expertise; that is, they must allow that subject to be what it intrinsically is. Regardless of worldview and personal inclination toward biases, the scholar may not distort or ignore the commonly known information that must be fundamental for the pursuit of truth in a discipline.

Here and in his reference to 'objectively observed events' Diekema's way of putting matters reads like the Enlightenment view he acknowledges elsewhere has gone. A further debatable point: does he take sufficient account of the sometimes destructive consequences of academic freedom? Admittedly he hedges it round with a commitment to moral order in both academy and society yet he defends Salman Rushdie without any consideration of the offence which that writer gave to thousands of Asian Muslims.

This is a stimulating reflection on a major issue for all involved in higher education and provokes continuing debate about how Christian scholars can help people to think about significant aspects of life and culture today.

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Themes and Issues in Judaism

Seth D. Kunin (Ed.)

London: Cassell, 2000,

vii + 306 pp., £16.99

This collection of essays adopts a phenomenological approach to key aspects of Jewish practice and belief. All are written by leading scholars who are practising Jews within some

section of the diverse Jewish religious community. We might expect chapters on Jewish worship, Jewish rites and Jewish sacred writings; but we also have fascinating treatments of unexpected themes like sacred space, myth and history or attitudes to nature. Moreover, the titles of some chapters do not reveal the full range of their contents. For example, I did not anticipate perceptive reflections on Jewish views about free will and determinism in the chapter on making moral decisions. In short, there is a wealth of important insights to be gleaned by those with the patience to read through the whole book. The chapter on moral decisions is one of several which provide invaluable insights on the differences between Judaism and Christianity.

All the essays set out relevant biblical and rabbinic material, and make little attempt to conceal tensions or contradictions that may have emerged as the traditions have unfolded. To a lesser degree they also explain how these traditions have grappled with modern challenges (e.g. the rise of feminism, or contemporary ecological concerns). Often the writers helpfully point out where responses have varied and where this has given rise to different branches within Judaism. For the most part they have refrained from passing judgement on such developments. This makes for a comprehensive and sympathetic treatment, although at the same time it does downplay the controversy. Very few criteria, for example, are given for identifying a development that would undermine the Jewish tradition. But perhaps this observation relates as much to the character of Judaism as it does to this book.

The editor has prefaced the book with an important introduction in which he uses a structuralist framework taken from anthropology to give a holistic view of Judaism. He is at pains to affirm that he wants to employ a structuralism that allows for transformation rather than the static

picture with which structuralism has often been associated. He believes that Judaism is best understood as a religion which works with sharp dichotomies and allows little scope for mediating elements. There is, for example, a clear distinction between Israel and the world, between Jew and Gentile. The Jewish religion has not been comfortable with intermediate categories – an observation that may help us to understand the difficulties of early Jewish Christians in accommodating Gentile believers. There is also a rigid distinction between the Creator and his creation – a feature which has interesting implications for the Christian doctrine of incarnation. The editor also suggests that the divisions within Judaism in the modern era reflect something of a breakdown in the old dichotomies and a greater readiness to accept mediating categories.

Kunin's analysis, which also forms the basis for his own first chapter on sacred space, is the most difficult part of the book, especially for those unused to anthropological ideas. Fortunately it is not necessary for an appreciation of the other essays, and Kunin himself suggests that readers should feel free to bring their own perspectives to the material in the different chapters.

In spite of the diverse authorship the book does successfully convey the ethos of Judaism, though there is a tendency to minimise the fragmentation in contemporary Judaism. Anyone wanting to grasp the character of Judaism would gain much from reading the whole book. I will also be using it as an insightful reference work on the main areas of Jewish practice or belief.

Graham Keith

Ayr

Ungodly Fear: Fundamentalist Christianity and the Abuse of Power

Stephen Parsons
Oxford: Lion, 2000,
320 pp., h/b., £18.00

This is a book of two halves. The first half (chs 1–6) contains case studies of episodes of abuse which have allegedly taken place in various fundamentalist churches. These are supplemented by the author's comments upon the organisations and ideas responsible for the abuse. Chapter 6 focuses on the incident involving David Koresh at Waco, Texas in 1993 and its background. The second half (chs 7–10) tries to place the fundamentalist mindset into a wider context in order to understand and critique it. In chapter 7 Parsons attempts to define fundamentalism, evangelicalism, and the charismatic movement before moving on to a critique of the 'fundamentalist doctrine' of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Much of the previous discussion would have benefited from having this chapter first; it is key to understanding the perspective of the author and the central thesis of the book, which is that '[a]ny insistence on the inerrancy of Scripture is often accompanied by increased and often inappropriate power on the part of the leaders in a church' (226).

There are some important warnings in this book which fundamentalist/charismatic Christians need to heed. The excessive triumphalism of 'Christianity à la John Wimber' as it is called, and the health and wealth gospel, can be damaging to many, particularly when coupled with an atmosphere that encourages a sense of spiritual dependence upon the leadership. The dangers of the approach to counselling which involves the use of 'pictures' being given by God to diagnose spiritual problems are well highlighted. Even in less charismatic churches, it is good to highlight that all ministers

need to learn how to deal openly and fairly with views contrary to a perceived 'party line' within their church without coercion.

For Parsons, however, the real problem is not so much the sinful nature of the leadership but the link between doctrine and abuse, in particular the doctrine of inspiration – the 'arbitrary imposition of dogmatic ideas of divine authorship' (11). Other doctrines are also seen as highly dangerous; in one startling section on child-rearing practices, the use of smacking ('violence against the young') is linked to the substitutionary doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine of hell, the destructive Calvinist doctrine of people like Jonathan Edwards (who apparently lived without any assurance of conversion or salvation!), via Hitler's Holocaust, the racism of the Ku Klux Klan and the imposed submission of women, to the 'sodomasochistic fantasies' of the book of Revelation (51–57). The links are subtle of course, but the overall impression of lumping these things together is not a pleasant, or a very dispassionate one.

The (deliberate) lack of footnotes is a problem throughout the book; it took me quite some time, for example, to locate a quotation from J.I. Packer incorrectly used on page 244, because there is not a single book by Packer listed in the ten page bibliography. Overall, although I found some of the stories in this book to be most moving and could empathise with others, I was profoundly disappointed by the classic liberal doctrinal assaults made, most unfairly, on the back of them. The use and abuse of power in the local church is an essential subject for Christians to be aware of, but I would rather recommend Paul Beasley-Murray's book *Power for God's Sake* (reviewed in *Themelios* 25.1) because Beasley-Murray critiques his own tradition. Parsons' book can help evangelicals to see how they are perceived by liberals. Oddly,

for a book with an avowedly pastoral intent, it makes no attempt to help those who do hold doctrines such as the inspiration of Scripture to avoid potential dangers. The only antidote to abuse, it would seem, is to abandon such beliefs in favour of classic liberalism.

Lee Gatiss

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Your God Shall Be My God

Jonathan A. Romain

London: SCM Press, 2000,
241 pp., £13.95

Any book dealing with the subject of conversion is likely to be of interest to evangelicals. However, it is important to note that this subject is not dealt with in this volume in biblical perspective but involves instead a study of the way in which people change religions. 'Conversion' as used in the title thus has no reference at all to a Christian understanding of the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit but is simply a synonym for movement between religious traditions. The author, himself a Jewish rabbi, asks why many of his fellow Jews forsake their religious upbringing and become Christians? Or why do Hindus become Muslims? Or indeed, what is it that attracts people nurtured in Christianity to Buddhism? And so on.

At first glance it might seem that a book like this has little of importance or relevance to say to those of us concerned with Christian witness in a pluralist society. The author offers as an appendix, a 'Guide for Those Considering Conversion' in which, among other things, he suggests that the seeking soul should investigate different religious traditions 'to find out which has the values and lifestyles that appeals most to you'. Clearly, conversion is viewed here as involving simply a rational choice not that different from the way consumers select items from supermarket

shelves and such a concept is indeed far removed from an evangelical understanding of conversion.

At the same time, a book like this is not without value in that it demonstrates the existence of widespread religious longings within Western Society, provides evidence of considerable movement across religious barriers, and presents Christians with the challenge of a culture in which the credibility of the gospels is tied to its ability to change peoples' lives and provide human hope and meaning. Thus, provided Romain's work is read at this level, it is not without considerable interest to modern Christians even as they recognise that its description of conversion falls a long way short of the kind of transformation to which they are able to bear witness.

David Smith

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Pentecostalism and the Future of the Churches

R. Shaull and W. Cesar

Grand Rapids, Michigan:/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000,
xiv + 236 pp., \$25.00/£15.99

This book is written by Waldo Cesar, a Brazilian sociologist, and Richard Shaull, Emeritus Professor at Princeton Theological Seminary. Both are evangelicals but neither have a Pentecostal experience. Although coming from differing disciplines, they share a common interest in the growing impact of Pentecostalism as a world phenomenon. In order to assess the extent of this influence they engaged in field work in Brazil, much of it located in the Universal Church of the Reign of God situated in Rio de Janeiro.

The book is in two parts. In the first section, Cesar offers a theological assessment of Pentecostalism and in the second Waldo seeks both to identify and analyse those aspects of Pentecostalism that he sees as

significant in its present growing impact. Despite their conservative mainstream evangelical viewpoint, the two authors have become remarkably warm and positive in their attitude both to Pentecostal experience as well as to the movement's impact, particularly among the poor.

Cesar who makes use of several personal stories and testimonies, identifies a number of significant facets of Pentecostal worship. Participants are aware of the power of the spoken word and congregational repetition that both engenders solidarity and creates faith. Speaking in tongues 'which approximates to Jazz', as opposed to classical music, is an important verbal expression that transcends the normal limitations of language. Pentecostals have firm beliefs in demons and in a future heaven, the former providing an explanation for the injustices of the world and the latter offering an ultimate way out of present suffering. Significantly however, it should be noted that far from withdrawing from the world, South American Pentecostals have become increasingly active in the political arena.

Shaull picks up on this activism in his second section. He perceives a new paradigm of salvation emerging in Pentecostalism. The human problem, traditionally sin, is now seen in terms of impotence in a world dominated by demonic forces. The solution, traditionally the free gift of forgiveness, is now beginning to be seen in terms of the renewing power of the Holy Spirit to work healing, miracles and prosperity. The human response, traditionally the offering of one's life in service, is now seen in terms of appropriating God's power to take possession of what has been lost. This, as Shaull sees it, is much more empowering and appealing to the marginalised poor than a message which simply tells them they are condemned sinners who need forgiveness. For Shaull who comes from a Reformed theological tradition

and can never remember having heard a sermon on the gifts of the Spirit, this is the one great thing about Pentecostalism. It demonstrates that the Christian faith has the power to transform people's lives.

This is an interesting and significant book and will be of particular interest to Reformed and Conservative evangelicals who want to read a fair-minded thoughtful book by two scholars who remain in their own tradition.

Nigel Scotland

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Ethics

Christ and Consumerism: A Critical Analysis of the Spirit of the Age

Craig Bartholomew and Thorsten Moritz (Eds)
Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000,
177 pp., £14.99

'I shop, therefore I am', as an adaptation of Descartes' famous dictum may be a bit hackneyed by now, but it is a good way of conveying the spirit of consumerism that dominates contemporary Western culture. In this volume eight Christian academics from a variety of specialities tackle the issue of consumerism with the conviction that 'Jesus' followers today *must* examine their priorities in life lest we unwittingly take on the spirit of our age' (xi). Five of the contributors, including the editors, hail from the school of Theology and Religious Studies of Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education.

Craig Bartholomew sets the scene with an introductory essay describing the characteristics of consumerism. Colin Greene of the Bible Society then examines 'Consumerism and the Spirit of the Age'. This is a very helpful essay on the church and cultural

engagement which, in my opinion, is not linked strongly enough to the theme of consumerism. The third essay entitled 'The Old Testament and the Enjoyment of Wealth' by J. Gordon McConville shows from a study of OT law how 'consumption of the good things of the world is bound up with matters of right and wrong, relationships with God and with fellow creatures' (37). This is followed by Thorsten Moritz' 'New Testament Voices for an Addicted Society' that grapples with the hermeneutic gulf between our context and that of the NT but concludes that we cannot avoid its challenge to adopt a lifestyle that is radically opposite to the culture of consumerism.

Craig Bartholomew then returns with a stimulating piece on 'Consuming God's Word: Biblical Interpretation and Consumerism'. He rejects Clines' 'market philosophy of interpretation' in favour of consuming the word as Ezekiel was commanded to do when he was called to the prophetic office (Ezek. 2:8 - 3:11). The next essay, 'Postmodernism Is Consumption' by Alan Storkey of Oak Hill College takes us to the world of economics. I found this illuminating, powerful and sometimes very uncomfortable! In the next essay entitled 'Life and Death and the Consumerist Ethic' Gordon Wenham, the OT scholar, tries his hand at ethics. The case is made that consumerism, exemplified by the impermanence of marriage, the inconvenience of many pregnancies and the validity of euthanasia, is oppressive and destructive. Nigel Scotland's 'Shopping for a Church: Consumerism and the Churches' examines the impact of consumer culture on contemporary ecclesiology. He begins in the spirit of the other contributors who see consumerism as an idolatrous ideology but ends advocating 'The Benefits of Consumerism' (145ff). The final chapter by Graham Cray, the Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, on 'The Toronto Experience in a Consumer Society, while recognising that there

may be 'consumerist' elements in the charismatic/Pentecostal movement, argues convincingly for the validity and need for the Christian experience that is the focus of the movement.

As with most multi-authored volumes the quality of the contributions is not uniform but even the least satisfying parts of this volume has something worthwhile to offer. The book illuminates the mind and challenges the heart to take more seriously what it means to be a disciple of Christ in an age dominated by consumerism.

Dewi Hughes

Theological Advisor, Tearfund

Poverty and Christianity

Michael Taylor

London: SCM, 2000,

135 pp., £10.95

The four chapters of this book were first delivered as public lectures by the author who is currently Professor of Social Theology in the University of Birmingham. From 1985-97 he was the director of Christian Aid. He is, therefore, well placed to tackle the issue of 'poverty and Christianity'.

In the first two chapters he discusses two challenges to his faith that resulted from direct contact with immense poverty and suffering. The first was the realisation that poverty and the suffering that flows from it are normal. This forced him to look again at the problem of evil and contemporary theodicy. He is attracted to Vanstone's God, (described in *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*), who makes mistakes, lacks foreknowledge and needs to learn like his human creatures. But he was surprised to discover from his contact with Christians and theologians who live constantly with poverty and suffering that they are hardly concerned with theodicy. They are much more concerned with doing something rather than talking about poverty.

The second challenge to his faith was the realisation that all humanitarian effort, Christian or otherwise, does not seem to make that much difference to the level of inhumanity in the world. This leads him to discuss sin, which he understands as insecurity rather than perversity, and principalities and powers, where he accepts Wink's demythologised understanding, as reasons for the lack of success of a better way. In this context Southern theologians help us to see that the success of a Western Christianity closely wedded to earthly power may in fact be a failure of true Christianity. He concludes by expressing hope not in a Paradise lost and regained but in a process in which God and humanity strive together to create 'a world out of chaos for the first time' [63].

In Chapter 3 he discusses the place of Christian theology or doctrine in framing social policy. He found that in both Christian Aid and the World Council of Churches there was a lot of scepticism about the contribution of theology to development policy. However, as director of a major research project running in 21 countries from 1999-2001 he has attempted to devise a methodology for its inclusion. But what he has in mind is the pooling of individualistic experiences. There is no authoritative doctrine beyond the individual subject.

In the fourth and final chapter he describes what is needed to create a world out of chaos, or to at least move in the direction of such a world. What he calls the 'marks of creativity,' that he has observed in his many visits to the Third World, are Participation, Confrontation, Solidarity and Sacrifice. Having looked at the doctrines of atonement and the life of Jesus of Nazareth he concludes that these marks are compatible with Christianity.

Taylor makes a valiant attempt to preserve the significance of his subjectivist understanding of

Christianity face to face with poverty but leaves one wondering whether what he tries to preserve is worth the effort. His Christianity offers nothing that cannot be found equally well elsewhere. He may end his volume emphasising hope but what real hope is there from a 'god' who is locked in a process of learning and is no more in control than we are. Real hope can only come with help from a transcendent God of grace.

Dewi Hughes

Theological Advisor, Tearfund

BOOK NOTES:

**Israel in the Books of Kings.
The Past as a Project of Social Identity**
JSOTSup 272

.....
James Richard Linville
Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998,
331 pp., £50.00

An urbane and well-written study of the portrayal of Israel in Kings. Linville's working assumption, following the lead of P.R. Davies in particular, is that Kings should be seen as a reflection of post-exilic views on the nature of Israel rather than as a source for earlier Israelite history. Linville is at his strongest in assessing previous scholarship, with a satisfying demolition of attempts to use Deuteronomistic historiography as the hermeneutical key to Kings. His own interpretations of Kings are less satisfying, notably the attempt to bring together a reading of Kings from the post-exilic period with a reconstruction of social realities of that period. But still, an interesting book.

Philip Satterthwaite
Cambridge

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