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**SCOTTISH
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EVANGELICALS AND CATHOLICS – TOGETHER?

Perhaps for Scotland the final punctuation needs strengthening – ‘Together?!?’ This is after all the country in which a leading Scottish theologian has recently had his orthodoxy called into question apparently for, *inter alia*, evincing a more appreciative attitude towards Pope John Paul II than the Westminster Confession’s portrayal of the papacy as the Antichrist might have suggested. A few years ago the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland took the trouble to exclude this bit of the Confession from the scope of the Church’s adherence to it as its subordinate standard – a curiously otiose action, one might have thought, since *this* was obviously one issue to which all could agree that ‘liberty of opinion on points not entering into the substance of the faith’ applied. (And it was a misleading vote too, if it seemed to imply that the General Assembly took the substance of the Confession with unembarrassed seriousness.)

It is an oddity of our ecclesiastical times that those most likely to paint the present Bishop of Rome in apocalyptic colours are not your hotter Protestants but free-thinking liberals who cannot stomach his conservatism. If there is a schism anywhere in the Roman world it will be fired by the desperation of the modernizers. By contrast, Evangelicals and Catholics more often find themselves together, perhaps most frequently in the sphere of bio-ethics but also in more centrally credal issues. Members of laissez-faire mainline churches which have not practised doctrinal discipline for decades may be allowed a sneaking admiration that Rome still dares to exercise it.

‘Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium’ was originally published in the lively American monthly *First Things* in 1994. It is reprinted in a collection of essays edited by the two main animators of the project, Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus. The book is entitled *Evangelicals and Catholics Together. Toward a Common Mission* (Word Publishing, Dallas, 1995; Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1996; xxxvi + 236pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 340 66507 6). The British edition carries a preface by David Alton, M.P., but otherwise both declaration and book are North American in origin.

Among the conversationalists who produced ‘Evangelicals and Catholics Together’ (ECT) were, in addition to Colson and Neuhaus, Kent Hill and John White on the evangelical side, and Avery Dulles and George Weigel on the Catholic side. When first published ECT had enlisted endorsements from a number of other Catholics and Evangelicals, the latter including Bill Bright, Os Guinness, Nathan Hatch, Richard Mouw, Mark Noll, Thomas Oden, James Packer and Pat Robertson. The book comprises six substantial chapters: Colson on ‘The

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Common Cultural Task: The Culture War from a Protestant Perspective', Weigel on 'Faith, Freedom and Responsibility: Evangelicals and Catholics in the Public Square', Noll on 'The History of an Encounter: Roman Catholics and Protestant Evangelicals', Dulles on 'The Unity for Which We Hope', Packer on 'Crosscurrents among Evangelicals', and Neuhaus on 'The Catholic Difference'.

ECT cannot conceal its American provenance, and readers in Scotland and elsewhere, Evangelicals or Catholics, will not necessarily identify with its defence of a free market economy – let alone of 'the American experiment'. But these elements can be detached without detriment to the importance of ECT for the readers of this *Bulletin*, which is a journal of *evangelical* theology. We must, therefore, take seriously ECT's assertion that 'The two communities in world Christianity that are most evangelistically attentive and most rapidly growing are Evangelicals and Catholics.' Where Evangelicals talk of 'evangelism' (and not solely of 'mission'), Catholics use the more comprehensive concept of 'evangelization' – which embraces the larger perspective of Christian formation and growth within the life of the church. Nevertheless, it is refreshing to find this focus on the missionary task:

[T]he Christian mission to the world is vibrantly alive and assertive. We do not know, we cannot know, what the Lord of history has in store for the Third Millennium. It may be the springtime of world missions and great Christian expansion.

Yet this is no triumphalistic declaration: the next millennium may equally be 'the way of the cross marked by persecution and apparent marginalization'. Nor does ECT ignore disagreements, although the list of ten 'points of difference in doctrine, worship, practice, and piety that are frequently thought to divide us' is not the strongest section of the statement. To put it another way, this brief enumeration of differences reveals how elusive some of the supposed divides between Catholics and Evangelicals turn out to be. For example, between 'Sacraments and ordinances as symbols of grace or means of grace' Reformed theology will not wish to choose either to the exclusion of the other. 'The church as visible communion or invisible fellowship of true believers' again sets up a false choice – or at least one on which Presbyterians are likely to opt for the supposedly Catholic alternative. From a Scottish perspective of strong ministerial leadership exercised through one-person expository preaching, even 'The sole authority of Scripture (*sola scriptura*) or Scripture as authoritatively interpreted in the church' invites no instinctively straightforward choice.

That evangelical Protestants should find more in common with Bible-believing, creed-professing, Christ-loving, evangelistic Roman Catholics than with fellow-Presbyterians or fellow-Anglicans may still seem an alien, even repugnant, suggestion to some. Yet this is an era when we may expect to observe some significant re-alignments among communities of Christians – such is the gravity of the departure from the

apostolic faith that is proceeding apace in some traditional denominations. We dare not remain trapped unthinkingly in the agenda set by past divisions. Scotland has perhaps a lot of catching up to do. We badly need an Evangelical-Catholic dialogue within Scotland, and we must move to welcome developments such as the Dublin-based Evangelical Catholic Initiative, which unites 'Catholic Christians who are evangelical by conviction and committed to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ'.

The spectre of doctrinal indifferentism will already be haunting the minds of some readers. I doubt if our Catholic co-conversationalists would allow it to hover around for long. (It is a common early experience of inter-confessional dialogue that each side gains a sharpened awareness of its own distinctives.) In any case, the day is coming and now is, when orthodoxy alone will not save the church, nor enable her to grow. Which is reason enough to take ECT and the accompanying book with respectful seriousness. There are many others.

Correction

In the last issue of the *Bulletin* (14:1, Spring 1996) a regrettable misprint occurred in the article by Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh, 'Creative Tensions: Personal Reflections of an Evangelical Christian and Gaelic Poet'. On p. 41, line 8, 'anatomy' should have read 'autonomy'. We apologize to the author for this error.

AN EVANGELICAL DECLARATION ON THE CARE OF CREATION

The *Bulletin* will from time to time continue to publish significant documents of contemporary evangelical theology. The 'Declaration on the Care of Creation' which is presented here had its origins in the USA, where it was endorsed by an impressive number and range of evangelical leaders. Its launch onto the UK scene in June 1996 was co-ordinated by Professor Iain Berry, Professor of Genetics in University College, London, and former President of the British Ecological Society, under the auspices of the UK Evangelical Environmental Network, Creation Care. This can be contacted c/o Christian Impact, St Peter's Church, Vere Street, London W1M 9HP.

At a time when creation concerns threaten to become the special corner of New Ageism, inspired not a little by a romanticised reading of Celtic spirituality, the balance and maturity of this Declaration are most welcome. Many Christians feel a sense of impotence in the face of the massiveness of environmental deterioration, but it can only help if we get our thinking and our teaching straight to start with.

The Editor.

AN EVANGELICAL DECLARATION ON THE CARE OF CREATION

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. Psalm 24:1

As followers of Jesus Christ, committed to the full authority of the Scriptures, and aware of the ways we have degraded creation, we believe that biblical faith is essential to the solution of our ecological problems.

- Because we worship and honour the Creator, we seek to cherish and care for the creation.
- Because we have sinned, we have failed in our stewardship of creation. Therefore we repent of the way we have polluted, distorted, or destroyed so much of the Creator's work.
- Because in Christ God has healed our alienation from God and extended to us the first fruits of the reconciliation of all things, we commit ourselves to working in the power of the Holy Spirit to share the Good News of Christ in word and deed, to work for the reconciliation of all people in Christ, and to extend Christ's healing to suffering creation.
- Because we await the time when even the groaning creation will be restored to wholeness, we commit ourselves to work vigorously to protect and heal that creation for the honour and glory of the Creator - whom we know dimly through creation, but meet fully through Scripture and in Christ.

We and our children face a growing crisis in the health of the creation in which we are embedded, and through which, by God's grace, we are sustained. Yet we continue to degrade that creation.

- These degradations of creation can be summed up as: 1 land degradation; 2 deforestation; 3 species extinction; 4 water degradation; 5 global toxification; 6 the alteration of atmosphere; 7 human and cultural degradation.
- Many of these degradations are signs that we are pressing against the finite limits God has set for creation. With continued population growth, these degradations will become more severe. Our responsibility is not only to bear and nurture children, but to nurture their home on earth. We respect the institution of marriage as the way God has given to ensure thoughtful procreation of children and their nurture to the glory of God.
- We recognise that human poverty is both a cause and a consequence of environmental degradation.

Many concerned people, convinced that environmental problems are more spiritual than technological, are exploring the world's ideologies and religions in search of non-Christian spiritual resources for the healing of the earth. As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe that the Bible calls us to respond in four ways:

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- First, God calls us to confess and repent of attitudes which devalue creation, and which twist or ignore biblical revelation to support our misuse of it. Forgetting that 'the earth is the Lord's', we have often simply used creation and forgotten our responsibility to care for it.
- Second, our actions and attitudes towards the earth need to proceed from the centre of our faith, and be rooted in the fullness of God's revelation in Christ and the Scriptures. We resist both ideologies which would presume the Gospel has nothing to do with the care of non-human creation and also ideologies which would reduce the Gospel to nothing more than the care of that creation.
- Third, we seek carefully to learn all that the Bible tells us about the Creator, creation, and the human task. In our life and words we declare that full good news for all creation which is still waiting 'with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God' (Rom. 8:19).
- Fourth, we seek to understand what creation reveals about God's divinity, sustaining presence, and everlasting power, and what creation teaches us of its God-given order and the principles by which it works.

Thus we call on all those who are committed to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to affirm the following principles of biblical faith, and to seek ways of living out these principles in our personal lives, our churches, and society:

- The cosmos, in all its beauty, wildness, and life-giving bounty, is the work of our personal and loving Creator.
- Our creating God is prior to and other than creation, yet intimately involved with it, upholding each thing in its freedom, and all things in relationships of intricate complexity. God is transcendent, while lovingly sustaining each creature; and immanent, while wholly other than creation and not to be confused with it.
- God the Creator is relational in very nature, revealed as three persons in One. Likewise, the creation which God intended is a symphony of individual creatures in harmonious relationship.
- The Creator's concern is for all creatures. God declares all creation 'good' (Gen. 1:31); promises care in a covenant with all creatures (Gen. 9:9-17); delights in creatures which have no human apparent usefulness (Job 39-41); and wills, in Christ, 'to reconcile all things to himself' (Col. 1:20).
- Men, women and children, have a unique responsibility to the Creator; at the same time we are *creatures*, shaped by the same processes and embedded in the same systems of physical, chemical, and biological interconnections which sustain other creatures.
- Men, women and children, created in God's image, also have a unique responsibility for creation. Our actions should both sustain creation's fruitfulness and preserve creation's powerful testimony to its Creator.

ON THE CARE OF CREATION

- Our God-given, stewardly talents have often been warped from their intended purpose: that we know, name, keep and delight in God's creatures; that we nourish civilisation in love, creativity and obedience to God; and that we offer creation and civilisation back in praise to the Creator. We have ignored our creaturely limits and have used the earth with greed, rather than care.

- The earthly result of human sin has been a perverted stewardship, a patchwork of garden and wasteland in which the waste is increasing. 'There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgement of God in the land.... Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away' (Hosea 4:1,3). Thus, one consequence of our misuse of the earth is an unjust denial of God's created bounty to other human beings, both now and in the future.

- God's purpose in Christ is to heal and bring to wholeness not only persons but the entire created order. 'For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross' (Col. 1:19-20).

- In Jesus Christ, believers are forgiven, transformed and brought into God's kingdom. 'If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17). The presence of the kingdom of God is marked not only by renewed fellowship with God, but also by renewed harmony and justice between people, and by renewed harmony and justice between people and the rest of the created world. 'You will go out with joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands' (Isa. 55:12).

We believe that in Christ there is hope, not only for men, women and children, but also for the rest of creation which is suffering from the consequences of human sin.

- Therefore we call upon all Christians to reaffirm that all creation is God's; that God created it good; and that God is renewing it in Christ.

- We encourage deeper reflection on the substantial biblical and theological teaching which speaks of God's work of redemption in terms of the renewal and completion of God's purpose in creation.

- We seek a deeper reflection on the wonders of God's creation and the principles by which creation works. We also urge a careful consideration of how our corporate and individual actions respect and comply with God's ordinances for creation.

- We encourage Christians to incorporate the extravagant creativity of God into their lives by increasing the nurturing role of beauty and the arts in their personal, ecclesiastical, and social patterns.

- We urge individual Christians and churches to be centres of creation's care and renewal, both delighting in creation as God's gift, and enjoying it as God's provision, in ways which sustain and heal the damaged fabric of the creation which God has entrusted to us.

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- We recall Jesus' words that our lives do not consist in the abundance of our possessions, and therefore we urge followers of Jesus to resist the allure of wastefulness and overconsumption by making personal lifestyle choices that express humility, forbearance, self restraint and frugality.
- We call on Christians to work for godly, just, and sustainable economies which reflect God's sovereign economy and enable men, women and children to flourish along with all the diversity of creation. We recognise that poverty forces people to degrade creation in order to survive; therefore we support the development of just, free economies which empower the poor and create abundance without diminishing creation's bounty.
- We commit ourselves to work for responsible public policies which embody the principles of biblical stewardship of creation.
- We invite Christians – individuals, congregations and organisations – to join with us in this evangelical declaration on the environment, becoming a covenant people in an ever-widening circle of biblical care for creation.
- We call upon Christians to listen to and work with all those who are concerned about the healing of creation, with an eagerness both to learn from them and also to share with them our conviction that the God whom all people sense in creation (Acts 17:27) is known fully only in the Word made flesh in Christ the living God, who made and sustains all things.
- We make this declaration knowing that until Christ returns to reconcile all things, we are called to be faithful stewards of God's good garden, our earthly home.

JOHN McCONNACHIE AS THE ORIGINAL ADVOCATE OF THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH IN SCOTLAND: THE PRIMACY OF REVELATION

JOHN MCPAKE, BORTHWICK, EAST LoTHIAN

Students of Scottish church history and theology are now immeasurably indebted to the editors of the *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*¹ for their considerable labour in bringing such a near-comprehensive guide into their possession. However, one or two names worthy of note have inevitably escaped attention. I wish to highlight one such, John McConnachie, whom I judge worthy of inclusion. For McConnachie might reasonably be regarded as the original advocate of the theology of Karl Barth in Scotland. If this claim can be proven, McConnachie surely deserves a place in any account of the course of Scottish theology in the first half of the twentieth century. This article seeks to justify the contention that McConnachie has earned the right to such a title, and, in particular, to focus upon what I take to be his central concern, the primacy of revelation in Barth's theology.

Introduction

John McConnachie was born at Fochabers, Moray, on October 13, 1875. He graduated M.A. from the University of Aberdeen in 1896, before proceeding to study Divinity at New College, Edinburgh. Here McConnachie gained a prestigious Cunningham Fellowship in 1900,² enabling him to study in Germany under Wilhelm Herrmann at the University of Marburg. In so doing, McConnachie stood in line with such theologians as H.R. Mackintosh, D.S. Cairns, John Baillie and Donald Baillie who had made a similar journey in their own day. Of that Marburg experience McConnachie wrote:

Like most of my contemporaries in Scotland... I was also trained in the School of Ritschl, as interpreted by Herrmann, being one of the Scottish 'caravan' of students, as Barth was one of the Swiss 'caravan' who travelled yearly to Marburg to sit at the feet of the master. I also think of Herrman as 'my unforgettable teacher,' kindest of men, to whom I owe more than I can tell.³

¹ N.M. de S. Cameron, *et al.* (eds) *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Edinburgh, 1993).

² On John McConnachie, see J.A. Lamb (ed.), *The Fasti of the United Free Church of Scotland 1900-1929* (Edinburgh, 1956), pp. 144, 194, 338; *idem*, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, vol. 9 (Edinburgh, 1961), p. 515; H. Watt, *New College Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1946), pp. 263, 264, 267.

³ McConnachie, *The Barthian Theology and the Man of Today*

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McConnachie was licensed in the Free Church of Scotland Presbytery of Forres in 1900, before being ordained and inducted in 1902 (*i.e.* after the church union of 1900) to Perceton and Dregghorn United Free Church. He was translated to Uddingston: Chalmers in 1905, before coming to Dundee: St John's in 1911, where he was to minister until his death on October 4 1948.⁴

In reviewing McConnachie's student days, we may note a parallel between his career and that of Karl Barth: throughout the course of his ministry, like Barth, he wrestled with the legacy of Herrmann,⁵ before finding in Barth a 'revivification of the Word of God'. The latter phrase is borrowed from R.H. Roberts, whose account of the reception of Barth's theology in the Anglo-Saxon world highlights a particular receptivity within Scotland to Barth's thought.

[I]t is clear from an early stage that enthusiasm for Barth's work (as opposed to mere curiosity) was primarily a Scottish attribute. J.H. Morrison, N. Porteus [sic], H.R. Mackintosh, J. McConnachie and (presumably) A.J. MacDonald were all Scots, and it would seem apparent that Barth's revivification of the reality of the Word of God as the existential core of the human encounter with the divine corresponded with their expectations.⁶

Our exposition of McConnachie on Barth will justify Roberts' contention, for McConnachie published considerably more than any other person in Scotland (and Britain?) on the subject of Barth's theology in the period up to his death. Such an active interest in matters theological led to the award of a D.D. by the University of St Andrews in 1931. His interest among the general Scottish interest in Barth is highlighted by the fact that of the four contributions by English-speaking writers in the 1936 Barth Festschrift *Theologische Aufsätze: Karl Barth zum 50. Geburtstag*, three were by ministers of the Church of Scotland – John McConnachie, Norman W. Porteous and G.L.B. Sloan.⁷ The fourth one was by Sir E.C. Hoskyns, the translator of Barth's *Epistle to the Romans*.

(London, 1933), p. 34.

⁴ See n.2 above.

⁵ McConnachie, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-7.

⁶ R.H. Roberts, 'The Reception of the Theology of Karl Barth in the Anglo-Saxon World: History, Typology and Prospect', in *idem*, *A Theology on its Way?* (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 107.

⁷ N.W. Porteous, 'Volk und Gottesvolk im Alten Testament', pp. 146-63, G.L.B. Sloan, 'Das Problem der Judenmission und die dialektische Theologie', pp. 514-22, and J. McConnachie, 'Der Einfluss Karl Barths in Schottland und England', pp. 559-70, in E. Wolf (ed.), *Theologische Aufsätze: Karl Barth zum 50. Geburtstag* (Munich, 1936).

The First Encounter with Barth

McConnachie's 1927 article in *the Hibbert Journal*, 'The Teaching of Karl Barth: A New Positive Movement in German Theology',⁸ offers the first significant published assessment of Barth by a Scot. McConnachie suggests that Barth's theological method is to be viewed as dialectical in nature, with the principal opponent against whom the method is deployed being Schleiermacher, 'the leader of the romantic movement which made religious experience the starting-point of theology, and the only subject of theological consideration'.⁹ McConnachie contends that in Barth's critique the very religiosity of humanity is under attack, with 'the romantic pietistic view of religion' drawing his fire once more. This Barth regards as 'a betrayal of theology, in so far as everything is based on subjective experience, instead of on the objective, that is, on God'.¹⁰ Thus McConnachie is clear on what Barth opposes, and in assessing Barth's counter to it suggests that this is governed by his doctrine of God. For Barth 'God is "the completely other," the invisible, the transcendent, the presuppositions of all events, the incommensurable yonder over against all here; the absolute, over against all relative.'¹¹

McConnachie then suggests that, in the light of this, there is for Barth no knowledge of God to be found in nature, history or human experience. 'Our only knowledge of God comes through Revelation with a capital R, that is, as it has reached us in the Bible. The distinctive view of the Bible is ... the breaking through of the divine into human life.'¹² This revelation, contained in the Word of God, is characterised by its focus upon Jesus Christ, though McConnachie contends that for Barth there is no revelatory significance in Jesus of Nazareth as such. The life of Jesus culminating in the cross, looked at from the human side, is fraught with ambiguity. The resurrection likewise is no more accessible. However, McConnachie highlights Barth's contention that if you

place it into the category of revelation, as an act of God... the Resurrection becomes the great wonder, the miracle 'direct from above,' the breaking through of the new world out of the unknown dimension into the known world.¹³

⁸ McConnachie, 'The Teaching of Karl Barth: A New Positive Movement in German Theology', *Hibbert Journal* 25 (1927), pp. 385-400.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

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McConnachie criticises Barth as being 'one-sided', with a 'religious and ethical pessimism' pervading his scheme. Further, he regards Barth as having left no place for the 'verification of faith by experience', and as failing 'to work out satisfactorily the relation between the historical Jesus and the Risen Christ... leav[ing] an unaccountable break between the earthly and the heavenly life of our Lord'.¹⁴ He sees Barth's aim, praiseworthy in itself, as being the deliverance of faith from the uncertainties of the historical and psychological, but views his project as failing because he rejects precisely the point from where our knowledge begins. However, his conclusion on the contribution of 'Barth and his group' is that

They have restored the category of Revelation to a place of honour, and called Christian thought anew to reverence the Word of God. This, and not their negative criticism, is their central contribution.¹⁵

I have reproduced McConnachie's views here in fairly full fashion, on the grounds that it is indeed the first significant Scottish assessment of Barth to appear, and because McConnachie focuses unmistakably on Barth's restoration of 'the category of Revelation' to its rightful place. Equally, McConnachie may be viewed as one whose stress, in expounding Barth, tends to fall towards emphasising the element of discontinuity between Barth's thought and that of his liberal forebears. However, for all that, it can hardly be said that McConnachie unreservedly commends the theology of Barth. Once more, we may note that only in the focus upon 'the category of Revelation' is there an unambiguous affirmation of Barth.

An Early Populariser of Barth

Nonetheless, it may be said that with this article in 1927 McConnachie began his advocacy of the cause of Barth, and as his engagement with Barth's thought deepened so the advocacy rang out the more unequivocally. That McConnachie came to be regarded as an advocate of Barth's thought may be found in the credit extended to him by others for his efforts in popularising Barth. R.H. Roberts describes him as 'a faithful populariser of Barth's work',¹⁶ while H. Jochums, in his German perspective on the reception of 'Dialectic Theology in the English-speaking World' (1935), regards McConnachie as being more sympathetic in his response than many other writers in English.¹⁷ Equally, A.L. Drummond notes that the cause of Barth in Great Britain

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 399-400.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

¹⁶ Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹⁷ H. Jochums, 'Dialectical Theology in the English-speaking World', *Union Seminary Review* 46 (1935), pp. 313-20. See p. 315.

JOHN MCCONNACHIE ON THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH was aided by 'judicious interpreters' such as McConnachie,¹⁸ while A.C. Cheyne suggests that his adherence to that cause gave 'added respectability' to it.¹⁹ Furthermore, T.F. Torrance acknowledges the extent to which McConnachie influenced him in introducing him to the thought of Barth,²⁰ and at least one other early populariser of Barth, F.W. Camfield, an English Congregationalist,²¹ found the inspiration to learn German, in order to read Barth in the original, from the reading of McConnachie's article in the *Hibbert Journal*.²² In reciprocal fashion, McConnachie acknowledged that he had been influenced by Camfield's work *Revelation and the Holy Spirit: An Essay in Barthian Theology* (1933), which McConnachie had originally examined when in thesis form.²³ In speaking of the Barthian theology as expounded by Camfield, he writes

As this is the only theology which, in my opinion, is taking seriously at the present moment the rethinking of the doctrine of Revelation, I would bespeak for this able and scholarly volume a warm welcome from the whole Church.²⁴

So, we may detect a movement in McConnachie's thought, from the critic whose 'outlook was affected but who in the end withheld their whole-hearted approval', to the theologian who could be regarded as one of the 'out-and-out converts' Cheyne refers to in his analysis of Barth's influence on Scotland.²⁵

¹⁸ A.L. Drummond, *German Protestantism since Luther* (London, 1951), p. 159.

¹⁹ A.C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk* (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 216.

²⁰ T.F. Torrance, *Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh, 1990), p. 83.

²¹ Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

²² McConnachie, 'Foreword', in F.W. Camfield, *Revelation and the Holy Spirit* (London, 1933), p. vii.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

²⁵ Cheyne, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-8.

The Further Encounter with Barth – 1931

McConnachie's books, *the Significance of Karl Barth* (1931)²⁶ and *The Barthian Theology and the Man of Today* (1933),²⁷ as well as a number of articles,²⁸ serve to emphasise this latter point, and we shall now turn to an exposition of these works. The two books expound Barth's thought, with the former assessing the early Barth, and the latter supplementing it in terms of the impact of the *Kirchliche Dogmatik I/1* (hereafter *KD I/1*).

With respect to *KD I/1*, published in late 1932 (August is the date of Barth's Foreword),²⁹ we note that McConnachie had read, assimilated and written on it by February 1933.³⁰ Of McConnachie's 1931 book Barth wrote that

I have read it attentively and I am glad to tell you that I am entirely satisfied with its contents, I acknowledge it gladly as a good and accurate introduction to the work which I am trying to do.³¹

McConnachie opens *The Significance of Karl Barth* by affirming that 'The "Barthian" movement is an attempt to recollect, what is so often forgotten, God's Revelation',³² and that in liberal Christianity the category of revelation has been particularly diminished. This is so in spite of the fact that 'the school of Ritschl, and particularly W. Herrmann, emphasised the independence of Christian experience, and sought from this point to establish the character of Christianity as a Revelation'.³³ For, insofar as human experience became the key to the knowledge of God, human beings became the centre and measure of all things. McConnachie is well aware of Barth's dependence on Herrmann in his younger days, and notes that, in addition to Herrmann's picture

²⁶ McConnachie, *The Significance of Karl Barth* (London, 1931).

²⁷ *Idem*, *The Barthian Theology and the Man of Today* (London, 1933).

²⁸ I note here in addition to those recorded above, all the articles by McConnachie on Barth of which I am aware: 'The Barthian School III – Friedrich Gogarten', *ExT* 43 (1932), pp. 391-5, 461-6; 'Natural Religion or Revelation?', *ibid.* 45 (1934), pp. 441-7; 'The Barthian Theology in Great Britain', *Union Seminary Review* 46 (1935), pp. 302-7; 'Reformation Issues Today', in F.W. Camfield (ed.), *Reformation Old and New* (London, 1947), pp. 103-20; 'The Uniqueness of the Word of God', *SJT* 1 (1948), pp. 113-35; review of Karl Barth, *Die Protestantische Theologie im 19 Jahrhundert* (Zollikon-Zurich, 1947), *SJT* 1 (1948), pp. 332-6.

²⁹ E. Busch, *Karl Barth* (Philadelphia, 1976), p. 212.

³⁰ McConnachie, *The Barthian Theology*, p. 9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³² *Idem*, *The Significance of Karl Barth*, p. 10.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

JOHN MCCONNACHIE ON THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH 'having an honoured place on his wall', Barth 'accepted without question' Herrmann's 'repeated insistence that Revelation was not doctrine' and that religious experience was the means of access to that revelation.³⁴

McConnachie then describes the new perception of the category of revelation, as worked out in Barth's *Dogmatik I* (1927), and offers a sympathetic and enthusiastic exposition of his teaching.³⁵ He commences by noting Barth's crucial concern to distinguish religion and revelation, and writes that

Here Barth makes his great assertion, on which his whole teaching hinges, that the two are not one and the same. Religion is not the subjective possibility of Revelation. *Religion* is one thing, *Revelation* is quite another thing.³⁶

Further, he emphasises the once-for-allness of the Christian revelation, and that this stands in contrast to the line of Schleiermacher and Otto for whom religion and revelation are correlates.

All this type of theology evacuates the objective content of the Christian revelation, making Christian doctrine a product of the religious mind, and basing the Word of God on faith, instead of faith upon the Word of God. Even if it uses the word 'revelation', as it does, it uses it in an entirely different sense from its use in the Scriptures.³⁷

In conclusion, McConnachie suggests that the fact of Barth's beginning on 'the plane of Revelation' excludes, in principle, the possibility of dialogue between 'Science and Revelation' because they operate on wholly other planes,³⁸ and here McConnachie refers to natural science.³⁹ Neither, McConnachie suggests, can historical science equip us with the tools to categorise revelation, for 'Historical science simply cannot cope with Revelation',⁴⁰ and is ultimately irrelevant for faith, for once more the stress is on God as the active and speaking God who transcends history. He continues in similar vein to argue that, for Barth, 'There is in the Bible... no static, traditional Word of God, abstracted from the acting Person of God. God is always the speaking Subject, not the object of Revelation.'⁴¹

McConnachie is anxious to defend Barth against the charge that his conception of revelation depreciates the historical aspect of Christianity,

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

³⁵ K. Barth, *Dogmatik I. Die Lehre vom Worte Gottes* (Munich, 1927).

³⁶ McConnachie, *The Significance of Karl Barth*, p. 67.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-92.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

and that the impact 'of his teaching will be to empty history of content'.⁴² In the face of this charge, McConnachie avers that

To say that God revealed Himself in Jesus Christ is to say that He revealed Himself in One who entered into history, and at a definite place in history, and Who is only to be found there. It is this historical aspect which, to Barth, makes Christianity a Revelation, and not a mere myth or speculation. *Revelation is History*... But it is not in the Jesus of History – and not in the historical facts of Christianity – that Barth finds the Revelation of God. In so far as Jesus belongs to historical events, He is irrelevant for salvation.⁴³

However, it does not seem to me that McConnachie has adequately resolved the tensions implicit in Barth at this point, and to suggest that 'Barth's mind is chiefly occupied with the "eternal moments," when this new strange world of God breaks through into the world of time'⁴⁴ serves only to exacerbate the tensions rather than to resolve them. Indeed, when he affirms of Barth that 'He does believe in the fact of the Virgin Birth. He does believe in the fact of the Resurrection. But in so far as they are historical events, they can only be perceived as historical events. They can never be matter for faith,'⁴⁵ might it not be contended that Barth's conception of the matter is not so far removed from that of Wilhelm Herrmann?⁴⁶

Thereafter, McConnachie seeks to set Barth's apparent neglect of 'revelation in Nature' in its wider context, and suggests that in fact 'For Barth, God is hidden also in the creation.' Similarly he contends that Barth does not deny the truth of 'natural revelation',⁴⁷ and that 'In the *theologia revelata* (revealed theology) the *theologia naturalis* (natural theology) is comprised.'⁴⁸ In truth however, these things means little to us with respect to our apprehension of revelation, since 'Nature is not capable of revealing what is beyond all the relativity of concrete existence.'⁴⁹ Once more then, we see McConnachie seeking to defend Barth and obviate charges of neglect against him. Furthermore, we note with interest that Barth could be read in terms which did not preclude the inclusion of a theology of nature, as opposed to a natural theology, a position which might be judged to anticipate that of T.F. Torrance.⁵⁰

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 276-7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁴⁶ W. Herrmann, *Systematic Theology* (London, 1927), pp. 125-7.

⁴⁷ McConnachie, *The Significance of Karl Barth*, p. 279.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

⁵⁰ See, for example, J. Polkinghorne, *Science and Creation* (London, 1988), pp. 13-15.

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McConnachie states explicitly that his estimation of Barth has altered since that taken in the *Hibbert Journal* article, and he issues a general withdrawal of his earlier criticisms.⁵¹ Thus we may judge *The Significance of Karl Barth* to be the first whole-hearted embracing of the Barthian position by a Scot. Equally we note that McConnachie now clearly sees the issue of revelation to be central to the basis of his claim that Barth stands in discontinuity with Herrmann *et al.* Further, we may observe that this embracing of Barth occurs prior to the appearance of *KD I/1*. However, as noted, McConnachie does not seem to have sufficiently acknowledged the extent to which it could be contended that Barth's position exhibits certain similarities to that of Herrmann. Indeed, the very focus on the category of revelation, along with the rejection of natural theology and of the possibility of dialogue between theology and natural science, might betaken to be not so much bold Barthian initiatives as natural extensions of Herrmann's position.

A Scottish Interlude

Within the Scottish context, it is of interest to note that McConnachie can find sufficient examples of the positions Barth opposes in the work of his fellow Scots. This in criticising Ritschl and Herrmann for seeking 'to find some basis for faith in scientifically ascertained facts of our Lord's life',⁵² McConnachie may quote H.R. Mackintosh's *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* as a typical example of that approach, and suggest that Barth begins intentionally at the opposite pole from Mackintosh in expounding his concept of revelation.⁵³ Therefore, we note that in 1931, as far as McConnachie perceived it, H.R. Mackintosh was to be regarded as one indebted to Ritschl and Herrmann for his understanding of the nature of revelation. However, we may also note that by 1935 he may observe the 'generous, if not uncritical, welcome to Barthian theology' given by one 'of the older Scottish theologians ... H.R. Mackintosh.'⁵⁴ McConnachie thus points us to the movement of thought in the theologian who has most usually been taken as the original advocate of Barth's thought in Scotland, that is, H.R. Mackintosh.⁵⁵ As he does so, we may observe for ourselves the fact that

⁵¹ McConnachie, *The Significance of Karl Barth*, p. 271.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁵⁴ *Idem*, 'The Barthian Theology in Great Britain', *Union Seminary Review* 46 (1935), p. 304.

⁵⁵ On the interpretation of H.R. Mackintosh's advocacy of Barth, see J.W. Leitch, *A Theology of Transition: H.R. Mackintosh as an Approach to Karl Barth* (London, 1952); T.F. Torrance, 'Hugh Ross Mackintosh: Theologian of the Cross', *SBET* 5 (1987), pp. 160-73.

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McConnachie's advocacy of Barth precedes that of Mackintosh. Moreover, we should remember that the volume of McConnachie's writings on Barth far exceeds that of Mackintosh, with the latter offering us only a brief article and a single chapter in *Types of Modern Theology* by which we might judge the nature of his commitment to Barth's thought.⁵⁶ Furthermore, it seems to me that the nature of McConnachie's commitment to the cause of Barth is far more unequivocal than that of Mackintosh. Therefore, if these latter points are accepted, McConnachie would seem to stand ahead of the person whom I would judge to be the only other serious contender for the title of 'the original advocate'.

In looking again at the Scottish context for typical opposition to the standpoint of Barth, McConnachie can cite John Baillie's *The Interpretation of Religion* as 'one of the ablest expositions of the modernist position', writing that 'if Roman Catholic theology leaves the door ajar between man and God, modernism flings it wide open'. He concludes that 'Barth and Baillie here face each other across a gulf over which no bridge leads.'⁵⁷ Once more, he takes Baillie to be the antithesis of Barth, in respect of the notion 'that conscience is an organ of Divine Revelation', a position which he regards as impossible for Barth.⁵⁸ McConnachie says of Barth:

Conscience is not to him the organ of Revelation. In the voice of conscience we have a broken echo of God, as He is reflected back in the conscience of His creature, who is fallen from Him.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ H.R. Mackintosh, 'Leaders of Theological Thought: Karl Barth', *ExT* 39 (1928), pp. 536-40; *idem*, *Types of Modern Theology* (London, 1937), pp. 263-319. In addition, Mackintosh makes a number of passing references, principally in book reviews. On these references, see J.L. McPake, 'H.R. Mackintosh, T.F. Torrance and the Reception of the Theology of Karl Barth in Scotland' (Ph.D thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 104-8.

⁵⁷ McConnachie, *The Significance of Karl Barth*, p. 144.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

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The Further Encounter with Barth – 1933

In turning to *The Barthian Theology* I do not propose to detail this as fully as *The Significance of Karl Barth*. Instead, I shall focus upon those places where he develops issues we have already highlighted, with the book being, quite explicitly, a coming to terms with the impact of *KD I/1*.⁶⁰ It can readily be discerned from *The Barthian Theology* that the embracing of Barth which occurred prior to the appearance of *KD I/1* is now intensified,⁶¹ such that we can further 'discern the unqualified zeal of (an) out-and-out convert'.⁶²

The first significant development which he highlights is the conflict between Barth and Brunner with respect to our capacity to receive revelation, as a result of which the question of the *imago Dei* is now very much to the fore. Of Barth he says that

He will not allow to man... any natural capacity to take hold of God. The capacity for God is lost through sin, and the lost point of contact must be restored by grace. The point of contact is to be found not outside but inside faith.⁶³

In the light of this reality, Barth is perceived to intensify the stress on the necessity of revelation, such that 'It is the Revelation itself which creates in man the necessary point of contact.'⁶⁴ Further, Barth emphasises the exclusive nature of that revelation, and McConnachie suggests, in consequence that

Barth will not have the Christian Revelation treated as a species of the *genus*, revelation. The knowledge of God, which the Church has, does not stand or fall with the possibility of man's religious knowledge. Revelation to Barth... is an event of faith. Man does not possess it as a natural capacity, but only by faith.⁶⁵

McConnachie then heightens the sense in which we are to understand the exclusive nature of revelation, when he notes that Barth, in reformulating his concept of the Word of God as expressed in *KD I/1*, was 'astonished now at what he wrote in his first edition... that the Word of God was made dependent on its reception by man', and that this shortcoming was remedied by 'a deeper stress on the objectivity of the Word of God'.⁶⁶ Thus, for McConnachie, the place of human receptivity is made to stand in the greater, and all-consuming, light of the givenness of revelation.

⁶⁰ *Idem*, *The Barthian Theology*, p. 40.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-58.

⁶² Cheyne, *op cit.*, p. 208.

⁶³ McConnachie, *The Barthian Theology*, pp. 45-6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

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The above notwithstanding, McConnachie notes that Barth does not reject the concept of analogy, but rather seeks to re-express it, such that he can claim that

While Barth rejects the *analogia entis* (likeness of being between God and man)... he does not deny the idea of analogy, but substitutes for it an *analogia fidei* (likeness through faith).⁶⁷

Further, in rejecting the *analogia entis*, he wishes to guard against the suggestion that by this Barth 'leaves no room for the Revelation of God in Nature and conscience when once the Divine image in man is restored by grace'.⁶⁸ He writes that

On the contrary, he sets forth from the position that the Word of God is, first of all, the Word of God the Creator and Lord of our being. He holds that there can be no right understanding of God as Redeemer apart from the Revelation of God as Creator, just as there can be no right knowledge of God as Creator apart from the Revelation of God as Redeemer. To the image of God lost in Adam, but restored in Christ, belongs the capacity to hear the Word of God that is spoken to us, and to know it and to receive it as the Word of God (Rom. x. 8).⁶⁹

Therefore, Barth, with McConnachie's approval, wishes to place alongside the denial of a prior human capacity to receive the Word of God, a new emphasis upon how we do receive that which is given.

Throughout our exposition of McConnachie's earliest thoughts, and in *The Significance of Karl Barth*, the central place he gives the revelation within Barth's thought is self-evident. This continues in *The Barthian Theology*, such that he asserts that 'The Barthian Movement, in its origin, might be described... as an effort "to think through again the category of Revelation." It was a recognition that Revelation had become the most vital concern of the Church of our time.'⁷⁰ We note moreover the extent to which McConnachie is in sympathy with this approach, when he writes that 'Barth has rightly perceived that the problem of Revelation constitutes the central problem for our time'.⁷¹ What then are the consequences of this perception? McConnachie's reply to this, which most fully displays the gravity of the situation he understands the church to face, might be found in the following. He contends that

The recognition that this problem of Revelation has become critical for our time, and that the very future of historical Christianity depends upon it, has led Barth and those associated with him, to set themselves against the whole modernist tendency in theology, and to seek to bring the Church back to what they believe to be New Testament foundations. For the New

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

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Testament places in the foreground not an approach of man to Reality, but an approach of Reality to man, in answer to his quest.⁷²

Therefore, there is no sense in which we can see the New Testament reflecting 'an evolutionary process of discovery'. Instead, it points to 'a revolutionary Act of God upon the world'.⁷³ In the final analysis, McConnachie understands that 'Barth proposes to put the Revelation of God in Christ into a category by itself, as describing God's approach to man in His Word.'⁷⁴ This being so, the necessity of building a philosophical basis for theology is excluded, and the possibility of seeking an apologetical dialogue with modern thought is discarded.⁷⁵

Conclusion

John McConnachie's reading of Karl Barth, whatever its defects (and I have not especially highlighted these), has this merit: it embodies a passionate desire to recover the hearing of the revealed Word of God. As such, his work merits our attention. The more so is this the case when we observe that he is in fact the first Scot – and a parish minister at that – fully to engage with the theology of Barth. Undoubtedly, theologians such as H.R. Mackintosh and T.F. Torrance have played a significant role in the mediation of the theology of Karl Barth into the English-speaking world. However, I would contend that prior to their names another one is worthy of a place, that of John McConnachie.

To highlight an omission in the *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* is not to bring opprobrium on the heads of its editors. Rather, it is to highlight the exception which proves the otherwise all-embracing coverage of the *Dictionary*. In their defence, it can hardly be said that there has been an appropriate acknowledgement of McConnachie's contribution in any other forum. Indeed, we may feel moved to ask why McConnachie's contribution suffered from such neglect in the years following his death. There is no one decisive answer to this question, but we may suggest that the fact of his being a parish minister, rather than the holder of an academic post, meant that he had no acolytes to further his own particular interpretation of Barth. Equally, the year which marked McConnachie's death (1948), also marked the beginning of the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, which may be regarded as the principal organ for the dissemination of Barthian thought within Scotland, as well as beyond. Thus, only in the first volume of the *Journal* was he able to renew his contribution to the understanding of Barth, which was no doubt in abeyance during the years of the Second

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-6.

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World War (1939-45), with the editors of the said publication noting 'with deep regret the death of Dr. John McConnachie, whose encouragement and counsel did much to bring this *Journal* into being'.⁷⁶

The speculations which I have offered as reasons for the neglect of McConnachie's work may seem to be essentially non-theological in character. However, given the almost total absence of engagement with the substance of his thought in the years following his death, it is impossible to identify specifically theological causes for the neglect of his contribution. He may simply be a prophet without honour in his own land.

Therefore, let us rectify this state of affairs by taking cognisance of the Scottish theologian who most fully and consistently exhibited the characteristics of an 'out-and-out convert' to Barth's teaching and thus deserves to be called the original advocate of the theology of Karl Barth in Scotland.

⁷⁶ Editorial note, *SJT* 1 (1948), p. 336.

ROCK CAKES AT BLANDINGS: NATURE AS A BASIS FOR ETHICS

CAMPBELL CAMPBELL-JACK, MUNLOCHY, ROSS-SHIRE

The technical title of the orgy which broke out annually on the first Monday in August in the park of Blandings Castle was the Blandings Parva School Treat, and it seemed to Lord Emsworth, wanly watching the proceedings from under the shadow of his top hat, that if this was the sort of thing schools looked on as a pleasure he and they were mentally poles apart. A function like the Blandings Parva School Treat blurred his conception of Man as Nature's Final Word.¹

Introduction

Although it is generally recognised that Clarence, Lord Emsworth, does not rank amongst the most brilliant of stars illuminating the Western intellectual firmament,² we are forced to recognise that in his encounter with the Blandings Parva School Treat he must wrestle with the basic ethical questions with which any holder of the naturalistic ethic prevalent in the Western world must come to terms: which concept of nature do we employ in our ethical considerations? and how do those who are integral parts of nature itself recognise what is right and what is wrong?

When we investigate the possibility of using nature as a basis for ethical consideration we are forced to ask 'which nature?' Do we use as our standard nature an idealised concept as in 'Man as Nature's Final Word' or fallen nature as we experience it in the Blandings Parva School Treat, an event likened to 'a reunion of *sans culottes* at the height of the French Revolution'³ In biblical terms we are forced to ask whether we consider nature as in the garden of Eden or at the foot of the tower of Babel. Is the nature with which we deal ideal nature as in the original creation and the new creation where the lion lies down with the lamb, or is it the fallen nature we experience where Samson bare-handed rips the lion asunder?

If we live at the foot of the tower and keep our eyes in the mud we face a restricted understanding of the world, which brings certain problems. The question whether any particular action should be considered right or wrong is only the penultimate ethical question. The ultimate ethical question is: what constitutes the good and is to be sought, and what is the bad and to be avoided? Our answer to this foundational question concerning the direction of life should, but does not always, enable us to have a basis upon which we can then answer the

¹ P.G. Wodehouse, 'Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend', in *Blandings Castle and Elsewhere* (London, 1980), p. 102.

² 'It has been well said that he had an IQ some thirty points lower than that of a not too agile-minded jelly-fish'; P.G. Wodehouse, 'Birth of a Salesman', in *Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best* (London, 1992), p. 160.

³ Wodehouse, 'Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend', *op. cit.*, p. 105.

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always, enable us to have a basis upon which we can then answer the penultimate questions concerning what particular actions or activities are worthy of our approval, of having a place in our desires. The citizens of Blandings Parva looked upon the annual fete at Blandings Castle as immensely enjoyable and worth looking forward to. Lord Emsworth viewed the entire proceedings as something to be dreaded in prospect and endured with stoicism. Although operating upon the same naturalistic ethic the two sides had differing conceptions of what constituted the good and the bad in relation to the Castle park and therefore reacted to the concrete situation in differing ways. Simply put, one person's meat is another person's poison. As Lord Emsworth observed, when it comes to considerations of good and bad it is possible for human beings to be 'mentally poles apart'. Do we accept this or do we attempt to find a core definition of meat and of poison, and if we do make this attempt where do we look?

Consumer Utilitarianism

All have answers to these questions, whether as a consistently worked-out coherent philosophy of life, or as with most of us, as a rag-bag of rule-of-thumb judgements and reactions. Like most of their fellow citizens of late twentieth-century western Europe the inhabitants of Blandings Parva and Lord Emsworth both attempt to answer these questions in terms of the prevailing naturalistic ethical norms of our day. Although not the only naturalistic ethic of our day, the dominant ethical philosophy of Western society is one derived from that originally developed in the late eighteenth century by Jeremy Bentham. Utilitarianism, a developed understanding of human decision-making, has gradually filtered down into naive consumer utilitarianism.⁴ This pervasive moral understanding is generally accepted by politicians, pundits, and the man and woman in the Clapham omnibus, not as a consistently developed moral philosophy but as a generally held naive world-view. Most of us live in closer proximity to the Blandings Parva School Treat than to the high table of an Oxbridge college.

This world-view, which depends upon a pragmatic evaluation of our observation of what occurs around us, has led in our day to an interesting and important twist in ethical understanding, particularly in societies such as ours which are heavily influenced by capitalism. Instead of holding a particular field of human activity, the economic process in increasing prosperity, up against the bar of certain abiding ethical principles discerned from observation of what occurs in creation, today's consumer utilitarianism does the reverse. It manipulates ethics in such a way that a single aspect of our natural existence, the economic process of

⁴ Cf. Alvin Ward Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (New York, 1970).

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material increase, is accepted as ethically proper without prior justification, and economic progress itself is regarded as a basic standard observable within creation by which we can evaluate a wide spectrum of individual actions and social processes. In our society a particular aspect of nature is held to form a basic plank in the formation of our ethical understanding; the 'good life' tends to be understood in terms of material possessions and level of disposable income. This concept informs the activity of trades unions in their battle for higher wages, improved working conditions and increased leisure time, as much as it establishes the model for the activities of industrial corporations. It also shapes the policies of governments which can establish social services only on a basis of the utilities or consumption possibilities which they can provide for the electorate.

In the opening remarks of his Introduction to *The Principles of Morals and Legislation* Bentham makes a direct appeal to nature as supplier of ethical standards, not initially through a discernible system of natural law or natural rights but through our everyday human experience of pain or pleasure.

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do.... The *principle of utility* recognises this subjection.⁵

The message at the heart of utilitarianism is that motives do not exist and we must not evaluate actions in terms of revealed law or of good or bad motives. All that matters in the evaluation of the ethical quality of any action is its effect in terms of utility within our created existence. Utility itself can only be determined by observation of nature, by reflection upon our own experience of pain or pleasure in the midst of the present creation. 'Pleasure is ... the only good... and pain is... the only evil.'⁶

Bentham adopted a view which held that the 'greatest possible good for the greatest possible number' was the essential ethical purpose in life and was to act as the norm for the actions of governments. Such an understanding of utilitarianism led Bentham to adopt what were for his day some radical political and economic positions such as the nationalisation of life-insurance companies. In Bentham's wake Clarence, Lord Emsworth, can cast his eye upon the roistering multitude enjoying the dubious delights of the Blandings Parva School Treat and, despite his own deepest doubts, murmur that somehow the greatest number are enjoying the greatest good. But things move on.

⁵ Bentham, *The Principles of Morals and Legislation* (New York, 1948), pp. 1, 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

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Utilitarianism as an approach to human activity is an ethical system in the service of economic expansion. It provided strong moral support for the start of the industrial revolution, and as such became particularly influential in the burgeoning science of economics. An important modification was introduced at this time, especially under the influence of John Stuart Mill. Although as a practising politician Mill argued for radical causes such as the public ownership of natural resources, suffrage for women and compulsory education, as spiritual heir of Adam Smith he held to the view that the possession of goods was the most important 'utility' and the performance of labour was an instance of 'disutility'. He provided an early Victorian philosophical example of the jibe that work is the curse of the drinking classes. It is from this root in the early nineteenth century that we today find philosophical justification for the naively-held assumption that the acquisition and possession of the greatest number of utilities which bring pleasure is a morally valid aim upon which to focus one's activity. It is generally held in society that within certain accepted parameters, of decreasing influence, the endeavour to acquire the greatest possible quantity of goods at the cost of the least possible output of exertion is *a priori* to act in an acceptable and responsible manner which will benefit others as well as oneself.⁷

Utilitarianism as applied to economics quickly assumed an individualistic cast. Mill held that when people sought their own freedom and welfare they were at the same time promoting the freedom and welfare of society as a whole. Underlying Mill's thought is a reading of nature which leads to the assumption of general human benevolence and deep faith in the continual progress of individuals toward a goal where the greatest number experience the greatest happiness.

Yet no one whose opinion deserves a moment's consideration can doubt that most of the great positive evils of the world are in themselves removable, and will, if human affairs continue to improve, be in the end reduced within narrow limits. Poverty in any sense implying suffering may be completely extinguished by the wisdom of society, combined with the good sense and providence of individuals.⁸

In the last decade we have seen, with the emergence of the 'new right' in the UK and the USA, a return to economic and social libertarianism. In the West, political, social and economic liberalism has laid hold of

⁷ Unfortunately, the shadow of Babel lies over all creation and the consequences of the pursuit of individual utility do not always benefit society. The increasing structural unemployment experienced in the industrial West is to be expected from a world-view which teaches us to regard labour as a disutility to be avoided. This is an example of 'progress' in utilitarian terms, which enables us to produce ever-increasing quantities of goods with ever-decreasing 'disutility' of labour.

⁸ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism: Liberty and Representative Government* (New York, 1951), p. 3.

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this view of nature as determinative of human ends and aims to such an extent that Lord Emsworth should today be able to enjoy the solitary delights of the gardens at Blandings Castle and console himself with the thought that if the citizens of Blandings Parva were to exert themselves to the same extent as his ancestors, then very soon they too could have castles and parks of their own to enjoy rather than intrude on his.

The elements of this economic movement can be understood within two social principles. First, that public morality, the legal structures and the socio-economic order should allow unobstructed freedom to the forces of economic growth and technological development. Secondly, these forces will actualise themselves in accordance with a process of 'natural selection' or continual competition in the marketplace between independent production units striving against each other on the basis of maximised return on capital.

Bob Goudzwaard defines the spiritual characteristics of modern capitalism, based upon utilitarian ethics, under four heads:

1. The urge for economic and technical advancement is considered essential to our self-realisation, and this is obtained through interaction with nature.
2. This advancement is made possible by the concept that free competition belongs to the natural order in which the equilibrium of the marketplace leads to social harmony.
3. This advancement is justified by the legal norms of the revived natural law conception which regards pricess emerging from free competition as just, and which views the activity of government as limited primarily to the protection of already existing rights to property and contract.
4. This advancement is morally justified on the basis of the ethics of utilitarianism, which evaluates human activity only in terms of utility and which considers the increased acquisition of goods as the most important source of utility.⁹

We live within a society which is remarkably homogeneous, whatever the political views professed by individuals or groups. There are differences in underlying philosophy between right and left. The libertarian principle of justice appeals to the conception of relative natural law, which requires the state to protect the rights and liberties of the individual based upon private property. Relative natural law would be actualised in a situation where the individual was freed and enabled to maximise his or her inherent created potentials. Orthodox socialism holds to a conception of absolute natural law, which can be realised only on the basis of a return to communal property. Absolute natural law would be actualised in a community within which each renders to the other in accordance with his or her economic need and in which distinctions based upon class are removed.

⁹ Bob Goudzwaard, *Capitalism and Progress* (Grand Rapids, 1979), p. 34.

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Whilst these differences between right and left are striking, they share common roots. Whether, as in libertarianism, primacy is given to the individual, or, as in socialism, it is given to the community, it is the autonomous human being interpreting nature who, either alone or in community, determines his own destiny. In either case some conception of natural law and the greater human good is basic. Both look upon human happiness as being the result of our interaction with nature, and regard the possession or otherwise of property as of fundamental significance for the greater human good. The order of nature is held to promote the maximum of earthly happiness by means of the free, general operation of the marketplace.

The discussion between right and left in our society has been narrowed down to the question of who is entitled to the fruits of economic progress. The question at issue within society is one of *distribution* – who gets what in terms of income, welfare and economic power. Fundamental questions as to what constitutes the nature of the good are not discussed. A narrowly naturalistic ethic is accepted on all sides. Lord Emsworth as proprietor wished to enjoy the gardens of Blandings Castle in peace and solitude, ruminating on the health of the Empress of Blandings, his prize black Berkshire sow, and enjoying the fruit of the labour of the tyrannical Angus McAllister, his gardener. The inhabitants of Blandings Parva think that they too should be able to enjoy the fruits of McAllister's labour and have the opportunity to enliven the proceedings by bunging an occasional rock cake at Lord Emsworth's top hat. Both, whether they realise it or not, act according to what they conceive of as nature and its laws. Both seek out what they think of as their greatest good. Both live in the shadow of the tower of Babel, peer dimly into the surrounding confusion, and long for differing versions of the new Jerusalem.

Can Christians Respond to Lord Emsworth's Problem?

Were he to enquire of us, what advice would we give to the Revd. Rupert Bingham? Vicar of the neighbouring village of Mutch Matchingham, Beefy Bingham is also husband of Lord Emsworth's niece Gertrude. Where would we have him stand as he tries to approach his little corner of Shropshire with a Christian view of the world? How do we as Christians respond to the problem faced by both Lord Emsworth and the citizenry of Blandings Parva as they endeavour to establish what is good and right and what is bad and wrong? Do we choose sides and assure one of them that they have the right in the matter and that nature, perhaps as created by God, demands that either the individual or the corporate body fulfil themselves in the maximum possible satisfaction of their abilities and desires?

As we look at the history of Christian activity, including that of Reformed Christians, we are forced to concede that in dealing with social

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progress in a practical way Christian political and social organisations and pundits have failed to distinguish themselves from secular organisations and pundits and to display a style and an aim which are distinctly Christian. Synthesis with the development of society is the mark and reproach of modern Christendom. Like other groups we have been intensely involved in the debate about the distribution of the fruits of progress and less than concerned about the underlying direction of progress or what constitutes progress.

Our ethical discussion is empty unless it is anchored in the world in which we live. The scene of confusion below the incomplete tower of Babel and our longing for the harmony of the garden are our everyday experience. Like Lord Emsworth and the citizens of Blandings Parva we have our own idealised pictures of what the gardens should be like, of how they should be developed and enjoyed. Angus McAllister, the man given responsibility for nurturing the garden is in constant dispute with Lord Emsworth, proprietor of the grounds, whether the path beneath the yews should be grass or gravel. It is our intrusion within the creation which results in the conflict.

Progress

If we could live securely within that kingdom where there is no more darkness, we could look at our surrounding environment and know peace and fulfilment. If on the other hand we could accept that the nature surrounding us was the only given we could embrace the natural *status quo* with equanimity; if this were so it would be possible for us to recognise the reality surrounding us and try to live by the structures which we discern within creation. What we require, however, is a reference point which enables us to discern and evaluate that which lies within nature and the direction of our lives. We live in the midst of a becoming creation and have planted within us an impulse to seek the better and best. We are eschatologically oriented.

As part of creation humanity forms a group which does not quietly acquiesce in existence as such. For us goodness does not correspond to a static ideal of perfection; humanity constantly reaches out. Those who have already grasped the promise in Christ are dissatisfied sojourners, aware of the antithesis between sin and grace and unable to accept this world as it is. Consequently Christians work within creation, pursuing the divinely-given cultural task of unveiling the creational potentials in covenant love to serve the present and coming Christ. The non-believer, although rejecting the promise in his heart, is also unavoidably a constituent part of the becoming creation. Beguiled and enraptured by the attraction of the static 'things' of the world and in rebellion against his own created purpose, he cannot help, despite his destructive inner motive, but erupt into constructive movement. Retaining the marred and deformed image of God we are not yet totally alienated from our created purpose.

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The good performed by the unregenerate is evidence of that created purpose which they cannot deny.

Nature Preserved

Having brought the cosmos into existence God did not abandon it after the Fall but preserves and cares for created nature in such a way that it is held on course toward the goal of his intention in the fulfilment of the covenant relationship. The preservation of the creation, despite the entrance of sin, is an action of God by which he allows the continuation of the world in order that by later instances of the covenant he might bring about a full salvation in Jesus Christ.

The creational structures with their preserving function and their potentialities are not an end in themselves but a means to a greater purpose. By maintaining our existence and exhibiting clearly the care and love of God, the creational structures, even after the Fall, exist to lead us to God.¹⁰ The preservation of creation points us towards salvation and the fulfilment of all that is at present seen only in shadow or hidden by rebellion. The creation itself and our cultural activity within it exist through and for the sake of God's grace in redemption.

Creational Structures

The structures of creation within which the children of God, obedient and disobedient, continue to live remain valid despite sin's advent. The fundamental conditioning laws which make possible the existence of things, events, social interaction *etc.*, remain in force. Every aspect of creation is subject to the laws of God. These laws, the multiplicity of created patterns, norms and legislation established by the Creator and discerned in special and general revelation, are the structuring framework outwith which it is inconceivable that anything could exist.

Not all laws discernible within nature are of the same character. A law of logic differs from a moral law, the law of gravity is of a different form from a law concerning the metabolism. The rebel against God can never totally deny God without also denying himself; if he lives in anger and rejection of God he distorts his own innermost relationship; he cannot flee from reason into unreason, from logos to chaos; he cannot absolve himself from the law of gravity; if he is cut he bleeds. Without law 'the subject drops away into chaos, or rather into *nothingness*'.¹¹ The structural laws forming creation remain for all; what has changed due to the entrance of sin is the way in which we humans encounter, utilise and

¹⁰ Calvin reminds us that the contemplation of God's goodness evident within creation is meant to lead us to 'bestir ourselves to trust, invoke, praise, and love him' (*Institutes* 1:14:22).

¹¹ H. Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (Jordan Station, 1983), vol. I, p. 12.

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develop the structures for creation. It is this rebellious misappropriation which is the result of our alienation from God.

There is a vital difference between the laws of nature and the norms of nature. We cannot disobey a natural law for these are structural laws discerned within nature. If I step out of a sixteen-storey window without any support the law of gravity will operate according to certain fixed structural principles. Likewise Boyle's law cannot be broken, but only observed, understood and utilised. We can, however, transgress the creational norms, those ordinances of creation placed by God concerning the process of cultural, ethical and historical development. Natural laws are analytical descriptions which are obeyed involuntarily, creation ordinances are norms which can be deliberately violated.

But although they can be violated these creational norms still hold true.

Even the most ungodly ruler must continually bow and capitulate before God's decrees if he is to see enduring positive results from his labours.¹²

Outward and coincidental conformity by the unregenerate to the law ensuing from the norms of existence imposed by our created nature need not be equated with the obedience rendered by the regenerate conscience attempting with the help of the Holy Spirit to live by the Word of God. Nevertheless, such unregenerate conformity should not be dismissed as being of no value. Without outward conformity to the creational structures life itself would become an unbearable chaos of terror and evil.

The Fall has made special structures, such as the church in its institutional form and the state, necessary within creation. But even these special structures are based upon the created nature of the structures of all that surround us.

Neither the structures of the various aspects of reality, nor the structures that determine the nature of concrete creatures, nor the principles which serve as norms for human action, were altered by the fall.¹³

If we deny this we are led to the conclusion that the Fall was utter and corrupted the very nature of creation, that total depravity is in fact utter depravity. This would mean that sin itself had become autonomous and existed independently over against God. Thus is God robbed of his sovereignty and Satan is allowed a realm of detached and autonomous authority. Sin, however, is not autonomous and does not manifest an independent principle of origin or authority. Sin could not exist independently of God for sin is sin because it effects a wrong relationship with God. The Fall into sin which effected the spiritual death of humanity exerts its dreadful influence upon temporal reality as a consequence of the radically redirected focus of human hearts, the direction of our lives. The structures of creation remain; if they did not there would be no 'thing'.

¹² H. Dooyeweerd, *Roots of Western Culture* (Toronto, 1979), p. 37.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

The Image of God

Despite the tragedy of the Fall, natural humanity still retains remnants of the original gifts of God. By these we mean those remnants of the original physiological constitution accorded to humanity when God created us in his own image. This means that fallen humanity, as an organic part of creation, retains those facets of character which we need in order to live within creation and point us towards the true direction of our lives. The ability to choose, to love and to seek glory, planted in our hearts from the creation, still remains.

Since imaging relationship has been disordered by the Fall, the employment of our natural abilities is fearfully corrupt and distorted, and yet these abilities are not completely withdrawn. If our natural, created endowments were totally withdrawn we would cease to be human and would not know existence. The Fall, whilst rendering us prone to every sin and unable to please God because all our actions spring from a covenant-rejecting motive, has rendered us neither irrational nor hopelessly psychotic. Fallen human beings, as individuals and members of society, are able to perform deeds of relative good, because we still, as integral parts of God's creation, live and have our being within the creational structures. Our fallen nature remains human nature.

Created in God's image we bear within our psychological constitution the ineradicable realization that God is Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. These intuitions, rejected and suppressed by the unregenerate, are not acquired by observation or understanding, for they are innate. For us to eradicate completely our knowledge of God we would have to destroy ourselves. In maintaining that all unavoidably perceive the existence of God Calvin said, 'Man cannot move unless he experiences that God dwells in him.'¹⁴

Bipolar Revelation

Whilst in our decision-making we must acknowledge our natural constitution, what we cannot legitimately do is to treat creation itself as though it were somehow impregnated with final causes, as though nature could in some way substitute for God by providing from within itself either a bridge to the divine or an independent opening to self-understanding. As T.F. Torrance reminds us, without reference to God nature is

meaningless, something that is complete and consistent in itself but without any ontological reference beyond itself. It becomes merely a game to be enjoyed like chess.¹⁵

¹⁴ John Calvin, *Sermons on Job* (Grand Rapids, 1952), p. 158.

¹⁵ T.F. Torrance, *Ground and Grammar of Theology* (Belfast, 1980), p. 91.

This does not mean that we can dismiss nature as playing no part in our ethical decision-making or in our understanding of ourselves. Some argue that in the revelation contained in Scripture we have a full and clear representation of a good life. We have the great law of wholehearted love towards God and neighbour and the detailed legislation which instructs us how to live a life of love. We have the example of God himself in Christ, the true man, showing us what life truly is. We have the picture of the kingdom where there will be no more death or tears. With such a complete revelation of God's will for our lives what need do we have for the investigation of nature?

The Word is spoken into a becoming creation which is being led to its consummation. Christ the true man walked within created nature and posted signs today of the world to come tomorrow. As we try to establish our ethical standards we must recognise that ethics as a study does not establish ethical norms, but merely uncovers and investigates them. This investigation cannot be split into two neat categories – what we hear when God speaks in his Word and what we discern within creation – sometimes referred to as the split between special and general revelation. Knowledge of and from God and knowledge of and from the creation share the same ultimate foundation in God the Creator.¹⁶

God Speaks in Nature

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion taught by Paul in Romans 1 that even 'men who suppress the truth by their wickedness' (1:18) should be able to comprehend 'God's invisible qualities' which are to be 'understood from what has been made' (1:20). The verb *kathoratai* (have been clearly seen) denotes perception by the senses and indicates that through physical examination the observer is able to receive information and make judgements based upon the evidence in nature. The invisible qualities of God are 'understood' (*nooumena*, present passive participle of *noeo*, 'to perceive, apprehend, understand, gain insight into'). This leads us to conclude that even fallen man can gain some knowledge of the character of God by rational reflection upon what has been created. Paul seems to be saying that the visible data within the created order provide facts upon which correct theistic conclusions can be based.

Whilst it is possible to argue that the references in Job 38-9 and Psalms 8, 19, 93 and 104 to being able to interpret creation aright are all within the context of faith, there are important New Testament texts which specifically refer to the ability of humanity, including the unregenerate, to read creation aright to some extent. Christ appeals to the

¹⁶ Cf. C. Van Til, 'Scripture does not claim to speak to man, even as fallen, in any other way than in conjunction with nature'; 'Nature and Scripture', in *The Infallible Word*, ed. N.B. Stonehouse and Paul Woolley (Phillipsburgh, 1978), p. 263.

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creation ordinance, how it was 'at the beginning' (Matt. 19:4), in order to counter those trying to trap him with questions concerning marriage. In Acts 17: 22-31 Paul in his Areopagus speech refers the Athenians to the knowledge of God, however inadequate and distorted, which they had gained from observation of and reflection upon the world around. In Romans 1:18-21 the apostle speaks clearly of our ability and responsibility to read creation aright and draw from it valid conclusions about God and our relationship with him and consequently with each other. To relegate the creation which we see around us in nature to the background of our thinking is unbiblical. Sin has made a radical difference, but that radical change is seen in the religious heart of creation, in the life and direction of mankind. The human heart has turned from his Creator and looked at creation from an autonomous perspective. As Calvin, speaking of creation, reminds us:

Most people, immersed in their own errors, are struck blind in such a dazzling theatre... to weigh these works of God wisely is a matter of rare and singular wisdom, in viewing which they who otherwise seem to be extremely acute profit nothing. And certainly however much the glory of God shines forth, scarcely one man in a hundred is a true spectator of it.¹⁷

The great failing of natural theology, as traditionally understood, is similar to that of fundamentalism, that it has tried to abstract the existence of God from his act. Knowledge of the world cannot be abstracted and made to stand on its own, for it is only truly intelligible when held in polarity with our actual knowledge of God revealed in his Word.¹⁸ Likewise knowledge received from special revelation cannot be held as though it was spoken into a vacuum and exists without reference to creation. In his Word God approaches fallen mankind in a fallen world and his voice impinges upon our created existence and gives us no peace until we find true peace. God's voice is always immediate. It speaks to us where we are, and we cannot duck and dive and weave and take refuge in the hope that we can carve out an autonomous kingdom where nature, including ourselves, without any reference to God will supply us with guidance.

There are three sources of ability which enable us to discern from nature, however dimly, our place and ability to function within creation. These are: the continuing existence of creational structures and norms

¹⁷ *Institutes* 1:5:8.

¹⁸ Calvin, *Institutes* 1:6:2: 'However fitting it may be for man seriously to turn his eyes to contemplate God's works, since he has been placed in this most glorious theatre to be a spectator of them, it is fitting that he prick up his ears to the Word, the better to profit. And it is therefore no wonder that those who were born in darkness become more and more hardened in their insensibility; for there are very few who, to contain themselves within bounds, apply themselves teachably to God's Word, but rather they exult in their own vanity.'

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subsequent to the Fall; the continuance of humanity's essential character as image-bearers within creation; the ability to acquire rational knowledge through reflection upon the facts surrounding us. Not only do we know intuitively whom we are as created humanity in relation to God, we can also discern and understand to some extent, although not to any saving effect or true understanding of God, the revelation within created nature. If, as we maintain, the natural person is able by reason of innate constitution and by use of fallen reason to discern from within the created order the most fundamental and important fact of existence, then surely that same innate constitution and ability to reason will enable us to function within the creation of which we are an integral part. If 'God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen' (Rom. 1:20), then what is visible can also be clearly seen and understood and human beings, however rebellious, can live and move and have their being in God's creation. That many fail to discern from nature, even that viewed from the ruins of the tower of Babel, any true knowledge of God or his creation is not a matter of lack of reason or ability, but a matter of will, a refusal to allow God to impinge on their view of the world.

Conclusion

Those who have already grasped the promise in Christ are 'strangers in the world' (I Pet. 1:1), aware of the antithesis and unable to accept the world as it is. The regenerate read nature aright for what it truly is, creation. Consequently Christians work within creation, pursuing the divinely-given cultural task of developing its potentials in covenant love to serve the present and coming Christ, 'For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come' (Heb. 13:14).

We should advise Beefy Bingham to speak to Lord Emsworth and the citizens of Blandings Parva of the true direction and destiny of the garden, of nature, not as an immediate source of personal gratification or utility, but as a harbinger of that new creation yet to come and for which we, as constituent parts of nature, were created – the new heavens and new earth. The creation has an inner structure directed towards progressive development, and what is latent shall be disclosed.

Historical development is nothing but the cultural aspect of the great process of becoming which must continue in all the aspects of temporal reality in order that the wealth of the creational structures be concretized in time. The process of becoming presupposes the creation; it is the working out of creation in time. Time itself is encompassed by the creation. The process of becoming, therefore, is not an independent autonomous process that stands over against God's creation.¹⁹

¹⁹ Dooyeweerd, *Roots of Western Culture*, p. 79.

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All creational history moves towards the goal of the new heaven and earth. The ultimate meaning of transcendent purpose is centred in an expected future in Christ. The goal of Christ's redemption is the renewal of the entire cosmos. Rather than seeing the gospel message of the incarnation and sacrificial death of Christ as an intrusion into an utterly blind nature we should follow the lead of Calvin and see that,

In the cross of Christ, as in a splendid theatre, the incomparable goodness of God is set before the whole world. The glory of God shines, indeed, in all creatures on high and below, but never more brightly than in the cross, in which there was a wonderful change of things (*admirabilis rerum conversio*) – the condemnation of all men was manifested, sin blotted out, salvation restored to men; in short, the whole world was renewed and all things restored to order.²⁰

An abstract conception of creation as an undifferentiated substratum yielding autonomous information upon which we can base ethical decisions fails to grasp the full importance of the incarnation and atonement, and thus fails to grasp the full importance of the creation itself. Beefy Bingham should tell his hearers that, yes, the gardens are there to be tended and enjoyed to the full. He should also tell them that we must study them and examine them carefully and if we do we shall learn much for our benefit and growth, for even the ants can teach us industry (Prov. 6:6). But he should also tell them that we can discern from nature true and clear principles for life only when we see them from the perspective of the Christ who has come and who will come again. Only when seen in this way shall we understand the origin, the present status, and the eventual destiny of the nature of which we are a constituent part.

Beefy could do much worse than teach Lord Emsworth and the citizens of Blandings Parva to sing the first and last verses of Cecil Frances Alexander's hymn,

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful—
The Lord God made them all.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty
Who has made all things well.

²⁰ Calvin, *The Gospel according to St John*, transl. ed. D.W. and T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh, 1961), on John 13:31.

THE METAPHORICAL IMPORT OF ADOPTION: A PLEA FOR REALISATION¹ I: THE ADOPTION METAPHOR IN BIBLICAL USAGE

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After a careful perusal of Philip Schaff's three volumes on *The Creeds of Christendom*² it is almost unbelievable to discover that after nearly two thousand years of theological reflection the church has in its possession possibly only six confessions which include a chapter on the doctrine of adoption. We say 'possibly' for Schaff by no means quotes all the confessions in full. That said, the discovery not only stands but is also substantiated by the fact that two of the chapters – in the Savoy Declaration (1658) and the Baptist Confession of Faith (1689) respectively – were derived from a seminal chapter in the mother of seventeenth-century confessions in the English-speaking world – the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647).

A study of the Westminster Confession (WCF) reveals that the twelfth chapter on adoption derives its uniqueness almost solely from the fact that it is there! While this factor ought not to be underestimated the chapter is, nevertheless, the shortest chapter in the Confession:

All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption; by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them; receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of eternal salvation.³

¹ This article was originally an investigatory essay written at New College, Edinburgh. It was subsequently re-worked and presented as a paper for the *Kolloquium für Graduerte* at the Evangelische Fakultät, Tübingen. I am indebted to Dr Gary Badcock, Mr David Wright and to Professor Emeritus Otto Betz for their helpful suggestions.

² P. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., sixth edition, 1931 (Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1990).

³ The Shorter and Larger Catechisms, having also been compiled by the assembly of divines at Westminster, slightly supplemented the teaching of the Confession. Both Catechisms ask the question 'What is Adoption?' The former replies (Q.34) 'Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God'; while the latter replies (Q.74) 'Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given

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Of the Westminster standards Robert Candlish in his significant but controversial Cunningham Lectures on the Fatherhood of God declared: 'I never have had any scruple to affirm that their statements on the subject of adoption are by no means satisfactory. No doubt all that they say is true; but it amounts to very little.'⁴

The fourth of our six chapters is found in the Confessional Statement of the United Presbyterian Church of North America (1925) – a confession described by Schaff as 'the boldest official attempt within the Presbyterian family of Churches to restate the Reformed theology of the sixteenth century'.⁵ The fifth in our list is entitled 'Of Justification and Sonship' and forms Article XI of the Basis of Union of the United Church of Canada (1925):

We believe that God, on the sole ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, pardons those who by faith receive Him as their Saviour and Lord, accepts them as righteous, and bestows upon them the adoption as sons, with a right to all the privileges therein implied, including a conscious assurance of their sonship.⁶

The sixth and last is entitled 'Of Sonship in Christ' and is included in the XXIV Articles of the Presbyterian Synod of England (1890):

We believe that those who receive Christ by faith are united to Him, so that they are partakers in His life, and receive His fulness; and that they are adopted into the family of God, are made heirs with Christ, and have His Spirit abiding in them, the witness to their sonship, and the earnest of their inheritance.⁷

Over these two millennia very little has been written exclusively on the theme of adoption.⁸ There are, of course, many exegeses of the relevant biblical passages,⁹ but few writers have realised the import of the

to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.'

⁴ R.S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God*, 5th edit. (Edinburgh, 1869), p. 194; cf. T.J. Crawford, *The Fatherhood of God Considered in its General and Special Aspects and Particularly in Relation to the Atonement*, 2nd edit. (Edinburgh and London, 1867), pp. 443-50; H. Martin, 'Candlish's Cunningham Lectures', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 14 (1865), p. 724.

⁵ Schaff, *Creeds*, vol. III, p. 924.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 936.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 918.

⁸ The New Testament, it seems, speaks of a filial relationship to God brought about by other means than adoption and this is reflected, for example, in Article XI of a 'Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith' (1902) prepared by a committee of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America entitled 'Of the New Birth and the New Life' (*ibid.*, pp. 919-24).

⁹ For example Silverio Zedda has given us a comprehensive history of the

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several texts mentioning adoption (*huiiothesia*) for an understanding both of Paul's theology and of biblical and systematic theology in general. Consequently, in perusing the literature one is not only staggered by the lack of attention adoption has received, but also by the silence about this inattention! As a matter of fact adoption has rarely been thoroughly considered as a doctrine in its own right. Of late, however, there have been important New Testament studies of the theme of adoption and of sonship in general as found in both the Pauline and Johannine corpora. This interest in adoption and its cognate themes has yet to show itself in the fields of biblical and systematic theology.¹⁰

In making these assertions we realise that it could be argued that a scarcity of literature on any one particular theme does not of itself constitute a neglect. It is conceivable that a doctrine of secondary importance, having received attention commensurate with its status in Scripture, only appears to have been neglected. A first glance at the lexicographical data would seem to suggest this is the most likely solution. First of all, only Paul uses the term *huiiothesia*. Secondly, he does so on only five occasions (Galatians 4:5; Romans 8:15, 23, 9:4, Ephesians 1:5). Thirdly, of these texts Ephesians 1:5 is by many considered to be the work of a pupil of Paul, rather than of the apostle himself, while some textual witnesses omit the word in Romans 8:23. Fourthly, there is no corresponding use of *huiiothesia* in the LXX or in other Jewish sources.¹¹ Fifthly, it is only one of the terms that Paul uses to denote a filial relationship between believers and their God.¹² Sixthly, the translation of *huiiothesia* as 'adoption' is itself a matter of debate.

Consequently, it is our task in pleading for the recognition of the doctrine's importance to prove from Scripture its weight. Only then can a conclusive deduction be made whether in fact adoption has suffered

exegesis of Gal. 4:6, *L'Adozione a Figli di Dio e lo Spirito Santo, Storia dell'Interpretazione e Teologia Mistica di Gal. 4:6* (Rome, 1952).

¹⁰ For such NT studies see J.M. Scott, *Adoption as the Sons of God. An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of Huiiothesia in the Pauline Corpus* (Tübingen, 1992); A. Mawhinney, 'Huiiothesia in the Pauline Epistles: Its background, use and implications' (Ph.D thesis, Baylor University, Waco, TX, 1983); M. Vellanickal, *The Divine Sonship of Christians in the Johannine Writings* (*Analecta Biblica* 72; Rome, 1977); B. Byrne, *Sons of God – Seed of Abraham. A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background* (*Analecta Biblica* 83; Rome, 1979).

¹¹ See Scott, *Adoption*, p. 175.

¹² Vellanickal, *Divine Sonship*, p. 69. Vellanickal lists five terms used by Paul, including *huiiothesia*. The other four terms are as follows: (i) *huiioi tou theou* (Rom. 8:14, 19, 9:26, 2 Cor. 6:18, Gal. 3:26, 4:6f). (ii) *tekna tou theou* (Rom. 8:16-17, 21, 9:8, Phil. 2:15). (iii) *tekna epangelias* (Rom. 9:8, Gal. 4:28). (iv) *thugateres* (2 Cor. 6:18).

neglect. In actuality, such is the evidence for the doctrine's importance that it cannot all be included in the arguments that follow. A full-scale defence would include both the metaphorical and the doctrinal reasons. In this two-part study, we have confined our discussion to a consideration of adoption's importance as both a biblical and a theological metaphor. We hope to set out the doctrinal reasons at some later date.

The Adoption Metaphor in Biblical Usage: Its Unique Importance

The case for the uniqueness of adoption centres around that fact that *only* Paul in the whole of the Scriptures has used the term *huiiothesia*. Far from being an argument in favour of the doctrine's minimal importance, this is actually indicative of the metaphor's significance, as will gradually become clear. In the meantime it appears plausible to argue that Paul's sole usage of *huiiothesia* does not of itself prove the metaphor of adoption to be unique. This is especially so when it is realised that not all concur that *huiiothesia* should be translated as 'adoption'. Some favour a more general translation suggestive only of a filial status as opposed to a translation more particularly denotative of the process through which sonship is received. If this line of reasoning is correct then the probability of *huiiothesia* possessing unparalleled significance is substantially reduced.

For instance, the New International Version translates *huiiothesia* as 'adoption' on only three occasions (Rom. 8:23, 9:4, Eph. 1:4-5), whereas the more 'formal-equivalent' translations tend to give the translation 'adoption' in each case. According to James Hester, 'it must be argued that in both Galatians 4:5 and Romans 8:15 *huiiothesia* should be translated "adoption". "Sonship", the other possible translation, does not convey the total idea behind the word. In Paul's teaching the Christian's sonship is dependent on his adoption. Only Jesus is God's son by natural right. Every other man is His son by adoption. Therefore, "adoption" is the idea which best fits in each context.'¹³ Hester thus restricts the necessity of an 'adoption' translation to just Galatians 4:5 and Romans 8:15. Others such as Byrne argue that *huiiothesia* could mean both the act of adoption and the ensuing filial status. He argues that *huiotes*, later found in Christian authors, was not available to carry the meaning of sonship and so *huiiothesia* may have carried the ideas of both adoption and sonship.¹⁴

Die Bibel nach der Übersetzung Martin Luthers is seemingly ambiguous on this matter. In the verses where *huiiothesia* occurs the new

¹³ J. Hester, *Paul's Concept of the Inheritance. A Contribution to the Understanding of Heilsgeschichte* (SJT Occasional Papers 14: Edinburgh, 1968), p. 61.

¹⁴ Byrne, *Sons of God - Seed of Abraham*, p. 80.

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Luther translation always uses a word possessing the stem *Kind* (child). So in Galatians 4:5, Romans 8:23 and 9:4 we find the term *Kindschaft*, while in Romans 8:15 we find *kindlichen Geist* and in Ephesians 1:5 merely the status *Kinder*. The problem is that *Kindschaft* is an ambiguous term.¹⁵ While *Kindschaft* can certainly mean 'adoption' it is not compelled to carry that translation. Whereas adoption refers purely to the process of entrance into sonship, *Kindschaft* can refer to both the process and the subsequent status. Thus these alternative translations, namely 'sonship' in English and *Kindschaft* in German, are more general terms. Were these better translations, then *huiiothesia* would lose much of its perceived uniqueness and would become considered merely another general term used, in this instance, by Paul to convey the idea of family membership; such a perception would not necessarily tell us anything specific about the nature of entrance into sonship.

Yet, even assuming the validity of these alternative translations, a viable claim for the unparalleled significance of *huiiothesia* could still be made. Such a claim would then be dependent on the contexts in which *huiiothesia* is found. The less likely the translation 'adoption' in any given text, the more dependent this translation would be on compelling contextual arguments for a rendering such as 'sonship by adoption'. In other words, even if *huiiothesia* meant 'sonship' rather than 'adoption', there could still be instances where, in a given context, the most appropriate translation of *huiiothesia* would be 'sonship by adoption'.

A Semantic Uniqueness

The rationale behind this assertion is derived from James Scott's convincing case for an 'adoption as son' translation of *huiiothesia*.¹⁶ He argues that the use of *huiiothesia* in the Hellenistic period must be seen against the background of the forms of adoption practised in Graeco-Roman institutions. By the time of the New Testament era the influence of these institutions still lingered, as did the semantic field of *huiiothesia* which, by then, had evolved into six word-groups – *eispoiein*; *ekpoiein*; *tithesthai*; *poieisthai*; *huiiopoieisthai* and *huiiothetein*.

Having systematically investigated each of these word groups, Scott makes five assertions. (i) *huiiothesia* is one of the most common terms for adoption in Hellenistic Greek. While it is rare in non-Christian literary sources, it is very frequently found in the Greek inscriptions. (ii)

¹⁵ See J. Grimm and W. Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1873) vol. V, p. 771. It is a pity that other German terms of greater precision (such as *die Annahme* and its verbal form *annehem*, *an Kindes statt annehmen* to adopt could not have been used, as in *Die heiligen Schrift des Alten und des Neuen Testaments*, Zürich, 1993, where the translation *die Annahme* is consistently used in all five texts.

¹⁶ Scott, *Adoption as Son of God*, p. 55. For the whole of the argument see pp. 13f.

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Paul's religious application of *huiiothesia* is unparalleled when compared with the theological usage of some of the other terms. For example, *poieisthai* is used by Plutarch to refer to 'adopted' truth as truth derived second-hand; *ekpoiein* refers to a moral transformation effected by divine punishment; *huiopoieisthai* refers to divine adoption; *eispoiein* refers to fraudulent adoption levelled at Alexander the Great and Solon who claimed to be the adopted sons of Ammon-Zeus and of Fortune. (iii) Most of the word-groups (except *huiopoieisthai*) were also used of Roman adoptions as well, but not of Roman adoptions *alone*. (iv) Yet the fact that most of these Greek terms were used for Roman *adoptio* at all is evidence that they are terms of adoption. (v) There exists synonymy between the various terms used, thus confirming that the most faithful translation of *huiiothesia* must be 'adoption as son' and not 'fostering' for instance.

Establishing that *huiiothesia* means 'adoption' is of no small significance as there is no other filial term in either Pauline or biblical usage which has the same connotations as adoption. Thus Paul's usage is most distinctive, as can be seen from a comparison with the relational terminology used by John.¹⁷

There are three reasons why we ought to investigate the Pauline / Johannine diversity: first, the major place which the Pauline and Johannine literatures occupy in the New Testament. As Stuhlmacher observes, 'The Pauline epistles and John's Gospel belong without doubt to the main writings of the New Testament';¹⁸ secondly, the fact that 'In the Johannine writings, both in the gospel and also in the epistles, the perception of the Christian's sonship [*Gotteskindschaft*] and the fatherhood of God has become completely central';¹⁹ thirdly, the frequent tendency for reflections on the relational or filial terminology of Scripture to conflate the varying terminologies of the Pauline and Johannine corpora. Assuming the substantiation of Paul's unique usage of *huiiothesia*, we need to examine how the meaning of his terminology varies from that of the Johannine – *tekna theou* and *gennethenai ek tou theou*.

Yet, before we outline the contrasting perspectives of the two authors, several comparisons can be made. In the first place, both Paul and John

¹⁷ W. Twisselmann's work ('Die Gotteskindschaft der Christen nach dem Neuen Testament', *Beiträge zur Förderung Christlicher Theologie*, 41, 1939) is significant in that it highlights the concept of sonship in the Synoptics, Paul, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter and John, concluding with a helpful comparison, summary and assessment. The same can be said in relation to the Fatherhood of God of W. Marchel's *Abba Vater! Die Vaterbotschaft des Neuen Testaments* (Düsseldorf, 1963).

¹⁸ P. Stuhlmacher, *Wie treibt man Biblische Theologie?* (*Biblich-Theologische Studien* 24; Neukirchen – Vluyn, 1995), p. 40.

¹⁹ Twisselmann, 'Die Gotteskindschaft', p. 77 (my translation).

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use the term 'children of God' (*tekna theou*). While Paul uses it twice (Rom. 8:16, Phil. 2:15), John uses it in John 1:12 and 1 John 3:1, 2, as well as 'children of God' (*ta tekna tou theou*) in John 11:52, 1 John 3:10, 5:2. It is most obvious, therefore, that one of the main ways in which both writers perceived the gospel was in terms of a filial relationship. Secondly, both John and Paul used the terminology metaphorically. Vellanickal points out that in total John uses *tekna* on fifteen occasions, of which seven are metaphorical (that is, when physical descent is not in view) and are followed by a genitive of a noun such as *theou* (John 1:12, 11:52, 1 John 3:1, 2, 10), *Abraam* (John 8:39) and *diabolou* ('devil', 'slanderer', 1 John 3:10).²⁰ As for Paul, we have already noted his fondness for the metaphorical usage of filial terminology. Thirdly, whatever the differences of meaning behind their filial terminology, both authors speak of the same paternal God,²¹ the same gospel and the same Christians who constitute God's unique family.²² To claim, therefore, that the Pauline and Johannine usages of filial terminology must be understood separately should not be regarded as forfeiting the unity of the Scriptures.

A Comparative Uniqueness

All the same, it is only when we come to the contrasts that the uniqueness of adoption really comes to the fore. John, it must be stressed, does not use the term *huiiothesia*. With the exception of 'Father', the most common relational term that he uses is *tekna*. Etymologically, the nearest he comes to the use of *huiiothesia* is in his use of *huios*, but this term he reserves for Christ himself (Rev. 21:7). Vellanickal writes: 'Unlike John, Paul uses both *huioi* and *tekna* to express the divine sonship of man, while John reserves the term *huios* for Jesus;²³ and again:

²⁰ Vellanickal, *Divine Sonship*, pp. 91-2. 1 John 5:2 is an eighth instance of Johannine metaphorical usage with the genitive of the noun.

²¹ We are not overlooking the maternal aspects of God's love. Rather we are seeking to deal specifically with the biblical terminology at hand. Hence, for instance, we have omitted interaction with Jürgen Moltmann's portrayal of the Holy Spirit as 'the Mother of life', a teaching which Moltmann regards as suggested by John's portrayal of the Spirit's role in the new birth. Enough to say that any 'de-patriarchalization of the picture of God' must be commensurate with the terminology of Scripture when legitimately expounded (J. Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life, A Universal Affirmation*, London, 1992, pp. 157-60).

²² Neither are we overlooking the concept of 'kingdom' in John's theology. However, the relationship between paternity (as well as maternity in Moltmann's case) and filialism in regard to the concept of kingdom is beyond the scope of this current investigation.

²³ Vellanickal, *Divine Sonship*, p. 69.

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we have to exclude from *tekna theou* a meaning that is equal to *huios theou*. The very Johannine usage of the terms favours this exclusion. The Evangelist, who, on the one hand, speaks of the divine sonship both with regard to Christ and with regard to men, on the other hand, carefully makes a clear distinction between them. The exclusive use of *huios* for Christ and *tekna* for men is expressive of this distinction.²⁴

Our task is to focus on these main strands of divergence in the Johannine and Pauline literature. Whereas Paul made use of the idea of adoption into the family of God resulting in a new status accompanied by freedom from slavery, John deliberately used *tekna* because of its root meaning. *Tekna* comes from the root *tiktein* – to beget, engender, procreate, give birth to. The *tekna* 'receive Christ and believe in his name' (John 1:12) because God has caused them to be born again, whereas Jesus, the *huios*, has 'a natural and essential relationship with the Father. He is *eis ton kolpon tou patros* (in the bosom of the Father) and, according to a strongly attested reading of the same verse, can even be called *monogenes theos* (only begotten God) because he partakes of the being and nature of God (John 1:18).'²⁵

The emphasis then is upon origin, the resultant translation being 'child' with implications of family likeness. *Teknon* / *tekna* refers therefore to birth into the family, but without reference to gender.²⁶ Furthermore, with the exception of Revelation 12:4-5 (where *teknon* refers to Christ), all the references are plural, denoting descendants or posterity, an understanding derived from the Hebrew equivalent *benê* denoting 'peoples' or 'tribes'. What is important here is that in the Hebrew usage *benê* is joined to the name of the progenitor. For instance, *benê yisra'el* (Gen. 42:5, 45:21, 46:5, Ex. 1:1) and *benê yehûdâ* (Gen. 46:12, 1 Chron. 2:3, 10; 4:1 *etc.*) for the Israelites.

Therefore, when John uses *tekna* with *theos*, it is with this etymological background in mind. The idea that the *tekna* are the offspring of the progenitor is present throughout (*cf.* Matt. 3:9, Luke 3:8, John 8:39). Accompanying this metaphorical notion of birth, however, is the idea of similarity of nature. As Vellanickal puts it:

teknon is used with a noun in the genitive to show that somebody bears a perfect likeness or a similarity of nature to some other person, to whom for the same reason some relation of paternity is attributed. In this expression is implied the derivation of a person's nature, and following therefrom, his character and belongings, though sometimes the one and sometimes the other element is prominent.²⁷

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

²⁵ T.A. Smail, *The Forgotten Father* (London, 1980), p. 143.

²⁶ See Vellanickal, *Divine Sonship*, p. 90; J. Murray, *The Collected Writings*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1977), p. 226; Smail, *The Forgotten Father*, p. 143 (see also pp. 62-4).

²⁷ Vellanickal, *Divine Sonship*, p. 91.

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Thus we can see that the soteriological idea of *huiothesia* is significantly different from that of *tekna tou theou* in the Johannine writings. The latter involves the idea of birth into the family/kingdom, with its closely connected concept of family likeness, while the former involves the idea of adoption into the family and focuses more on the status and freedom of an adopted son or daughter within the family.

While endeavouring to establish the differences between the Johannine and Pauline usages of filial terminology, our aim is not to absolutise them, but to show that they reflect differing emphases. For example, although John majors on the idea of birth and family likeness, we must not rule out the fact that involved in his concept is the notion of status. Having been born into the family one receives the status of child. This comes out most clearly in 1 John 3:1 where John makes a rare and uncharacteristic reference to the status of the children: 'Behold what manner of love the father has bestowed on us that we should be called the children of God [*tekna theou*], and we are!' Thus while John and Paul employed substantially different metaphors, their soteriological implications vary more in degree than kind.

This distinction between the Johannine (birth and nature) and Pauline (status and freedom) perspectives can be seen at three levels. First of all, John's emphasis on birth and likeness of nature appears in the distinction between *tekna theou* and *huios theou* (Son of God). The former refers to our sonship, while the latter to Christ's. This is verified by the fact that *monogenes* (only begotten/only born) is used by John only of Christ, and points to his unique relationship to the Father – the generation of the *huios theou*. Christians, conversely, in becoming children of God had to be born into God's family (John 1:12-13). Yet Jesus was, and remains, the only begotten son of God. Thus John wants to draw a distinction between the way that God is father to his *monogenes* and the way that he is father to his *tekna*. The difference is between Christ's natural sonship and ours which is dependent upon regeneration. Conversely, Paul wants to identify Christ's sonship with ours, for it is through participation in Christ's sonship that we are adopted. Sonship, *huiothesia*-style, is only realised through union with Jesus Christ. Thus Paul is keen, while not forgetting the distinctions between Christ's sonship and ours, to draw the parallels that can be drawn. John, on the other hand, desires to make distinctions between the sonships to highlight the uniqueness of Christ's natural sonship. Arguably, this becomes clear in John 20:17 where Jesus commissions Mary Magdalene: 'but go to my brothers (*tous adelphous mou*) and say to them "I am ascending to my Father (*ton patera mou*), and your Father (*patera humon*); and to my God (*theon mou*) and your God (*theon humon*)"'.' This text provides us with an inbuilt paradox. On the one hand, Christ and Christian believers are brought together by virtue of having the same father, and yet the distinction between Christ's sonship and ours is made clear by the *ton patera mou/patera humon*

dichotomy. The title *ho pater* is the link in the context between the two forms of sonship.²⁸

Secondly, John draws a distinction between *tekna tou theou* and *tekna tou diabolou* (1 John 3:10). Whose child one is is made manifest by the doing of justice. Only in 1 John 3:8-10 and John 8:44 does John speak of a father/son relationship with the devil and in both cases the imagery conveys likeness of character. Whereas in 1 John 3:8-10 the emphasis was on the doing (or not doing) of justice – the implication being that those doing justice are *tekna tou theou* because God himself acts justly – so in John 8:39 the ‘children of Abraham’ are said to be those who do the works of Abraham. That is, they portray their likeness to Abraham. Furthermore, parallel to the *tekna tou theou/diabolou* dichotomy are the phrases *einai ek tou theou/diabolou* (to be from God/the devil) used by John in these passages (John 8:41-7 and 1 John 3:1-10),²⁹ hence furthering the distinction between those who are of the world and those who are of the devil.³⁰ Vellanickal outlines this distinction:

It is the devil who gave the first impulse to human sinning or who sins from the very beginning (cf. Jn. 8:44, 1 Jn. 3:8b) and who always gives fresh impulse to it (cf. Jn. 13:2). So directly or indirectly all human sins may be described as the work of the devil, to destroy which the Son of God appeared (cf. 1 Jn. 3:5, 8 cd). Thus the devil becomes the father of those who commit sin, by determining their nature of sinning, expressed in the phrase *einai ek tou diabolou* (cf. 1 Jn. 3:8, 12; Jn 8:44). In the same way God becomes the father of the believers, by determining their nature, their

²⁸ The meaning of John 20:17 has been historically disputed. For instance, in the short-lived Candlish/Crawford debate of the 1860s Candlish insisted that it taught the identification of Christ with his brothers (*Fatherhood of God*, pp. 117f). In his reply Crawford argued that Candlish went against most of the distinguished commentators of church history, including Augustine who perceived Christ’s view of sonship in John 20:17 as ‘Mine by nature, yours by grace’ (Crawford, *The Fatherhood of God*, pp. 281f.). Crawford argued that the omission of ‘our Father’ is most decisive: ‘It then appears that our Lord in His address to Mary Magdalene is *so far from identifying His own sonship with that of his disciples, that He most significantly and emphatically discriminates them from one another*’ (p. 283). Of late Smail has argued that in John 20:17 there is to be seen both Christ’s identification of himself as the Son with the sons and also his distinguishing himself from them (*The Forgotten Father*, p. 142).

²⁹ John uses *einai ek tou theou* on 13 occasions, while outside the Johannine writings it is used only in Acts 5:39.

³⁰ Again *einai ek tou theou* is never used of Christ. Instead John uses *einai para tou theou* exclusively of Christ (John 6:46, 7:29, 9:16, 33). *Ek tou theou* is used of Christ when speaking of his coming into the world or his temporal generation.

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manner of thinking and acting expressed in the phrase *einai ek tou theou* (cf. Jn 8:47, 1 Jn.3:10, 4:4, 6; 5:19; 3 Jn.11).³¹

Thirdly, these indications of the Johannine idea of birth and nature become clarified when we examine his usage of *gennethenai ek theou*. In the LXX this verb *gennaō* refers more to a mother's giving birth than to a father's begetting (*gennaō* translates *yalad* and is used 228 times in a maternal context but only 22 times in a paternal context!). The use of *gennaō* in the NT may refer to the beginning or the end of the pregnancy (Matt. 1:20 and Luke 1:35 respectively). However *tikto* normally refers to the giving birth while *gennaō* includes the act of conception.³² Of 99 uses of *gennethenai* in the NT 28 are found in the Johannine writings. Vellanickal is of the opinion that the use of *gennethenai* does not make a clear distinction between conception (which is active, aorist and refers to the male involvement) and giving birth (which is passive, perfect and refers to the female involvement); but rather 'what really matters for John is the idea of an origin from God through generation. He deliberately does not envisage the different moments of conception and birth.'³³ Thus, the fundamental difference between John's usage of *tekna theou* and *gennethenai ek tou theou* and Paul's use of *huiothesia* constantly remains in view. Paul, in contrast to John, focuses on redemption from bondage to sonship by adoption (through union with Christ) resulting in freedom for the grown-up sons and daughters of God.

It is important that the uniqueness of adoption be stressed because the doctrine has, as we comment yet again, so often suffered from a conflation with the Johannine doctrine of regeneration. The problem has been not just a question of the relationship between adoption and regeneration, but of the greater question lurking behind it, namely the relation of biblical theology to systematic theology.³⁴ Wherever the answer lies it must take into account both the uniqueness of the adoption metaphor on the one hand, and the oneness of the gospel on the other. Given the need for a more precise and thoroughgoing apprehension of adoption, the temporary isolation of the doctrine for the purposes of intensified study is warranted. However, the doctrine must not be left in isolation from other soteriological doctrines, or the unity of both the Scriptures and its message would be violated.³⁵ One thing is certain, that

³¹ Vellanickal, *Divine Sonship*, p. 97.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³⁴ See B.S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (London, 1992), p. 89. Childs rightly recommends fruitful co-operation between biblical and systematic theology as the way forward. Were that to happen we would hope that the importance of adoption in redemption history would be realised, with all the implications such a discovery might have for the status of adoption in systematic theology.

³⁵ The unity of the Scriptures is itself a subject of some considerable

these are not easy problems to solve, and were the solutions at our disposal we could present them here. What we can do is to illustrate how the unity of the gospel has been portrayed at the expense of the uniqueness of the Pauline metaphor.

An Overlooked Uniqueness

We illustrate the case by a selective investigation of the writings of the Reformed tradition. All the examples are taken from the Reformed tradition in order to show that even in that wing of the professing church which has, in the post-Reformation era, said more than any other about the doctrine a lack of clarity persists.³⁶ If we turn, in the first place, to Calvin we find the doctrine peppered throughout his writings – the *Institutes*, the catechisms and the commentaries – and although he never devoted a chapter of the *Institutes* to the doctrine, it can be traced through its multifarious contexts. Calvin, for whom adoption was so central, perceived the connection between adoption and the Fatherhood of God, predestination, covenant, the person and work of Christ, union with Christ, redemption, pneumatology, the Christian life, eschatology and the sacraments. The breadth of Calvin's doctrine is due to the closeness with which he followed the contours of Paul's thought and theology, and captured so many of its nuances.³⁷

In spite of this, it is questionable whether Calvin, for all his faithfulness to Paul, really grasped that *huiiothesia* was an unparalleled Pauline usage (in which case, it is the fact that he followed Paul's thought so closely which often hides this failure from view); or whether he had grasped the uniqueness of adoption to Paul but had omitted to work out a clear way in which to connect the doctrines of adoption and regeneration without blurring the distinctiveness of either doctrine.³⁸ The

substance. Childs writes: 'The Christian church... remains existentially committed to an inquiry into [the Bible's] inner unity because of its confession of the one gospel of Jesus Christ which it proclaims to the world' (*ibid.*, p. 8).

³⁶ Outside the Reformed tradition there was a nineteenth-century debate over adoption between the Roman Catholic theologians Matthias Joseph Scheeben and Theodore Granderaath. See E.H. Palmer, *Scheeben's Doctrine of Divine Adoption* (Academisch Proefschrift; Kampen, 1953).

³⁷ For a justification of this assertion see B.A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude, The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Edinburgh, 1993), and R. Zachmann, *Assurance of Faith, Conscience in the Theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin* (Minneapolis, 1993).

³⁸ There is a third option. Irrespective of the differences between the Pauline and Johannine corpora, perhaps Calvin was reflecting untied ends in Paul's own epistles. Note, for instance, Paul's use of *tekna tou theou* (Rom. 8:16-17 and 9:8) in the context of adoption (see below).

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following quotations from Calvin's commentary on John's Gospel illustrate the ambiguity:

The enlightening of our minds by the Holy Spirit belongs to our renewal. So faith flows from its source, regeneration. But since by this same faith we receive Christ, who sanctifies us by His Spirit, it is called the beginning of our adoption.

When the Lord breathes faith into us He regenerates us in a hidden and secret way that is unknown to us. But when faith has been given, we grasp with a lively awareness not only the grace of adoption but also newness of life and other gifts of the Holy Spirit.³⁹

Common to both these quotations is the problem how regeneration can be understood in the light of adoption and *vice versa*. To read into the Johannine writings the adoption metaphor meant either that Calvin had not understood the uniqueness of the Pauline metaphor, or that he was conflating the Johannine metaphor of the new birth with the Pauline metaphor of adoption, or that he was providing both the exegesis and an attempted systematisation in one breath or movement.

Furthermore, when we glance at the *Institutes* 3:3:10 we find Calvin observing that 'the children of God (are) freed through regeneration from the bondage of sin'. This statement illustrates the problem. At face value it relates wholly to regeneration. However, two of its concepts, namely bondage and freedom, are more akin to what Paul writes of adoption (Gal. 3-4; Rom. 8). This ambiguity is reflected in Gerrish's analysis of Calvin's thought. Having claimed that Calvin defines the gospel as the good news of adoption, shortly afterwards he writes that "The theme of adoption, the new birth, the transition from "children of wrath" to "children of grace", takes us to the heart of the Reformer's protest against the prevailing gospel of the day."⁴⁰

Secondly, we turn to the Puritans and there we find the further development of this ambiguity. In the biblical references belatedly added to the Westminster Confession, of twentyone for the chapter on 'Adoption' only nine come from Paul, another four from the OT, and eight from the other NT books of which one is John 1:12. (It may be claimed without exaggeration that a perusal of post-Reformation reflections on adoption leads us to believe that John 1:12 is the closest

³⁹ *The Gospel According to St. John 1-10*, transl. T.H.L. Parker (Edinburgh, 1959), p.19.

⁴⁰ Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, pp. 89-90. Similarly this ambiguity is reflected in Garret Wilterdink's *Tyrant or Father. A Study of Calvin's Doctrine of God* (Bristol, IN, 1985), vol.1, pp.37, 39. On the one hand Wilterdink writes, 'Related to our adoption, yet distinct from it, is our rebirth or regeneration as children of God' (p. 39). However, he has already drawn our attention to the fact that in his commentary on 1 John 4 'where the emphasis falls on abiding in God, Calvin interprets consistently in terms of adoption' (p. 37).

rival to Galatians 4:4-5 as the *locus classicus* of adoption.) This is not an exceptional case, but seems to be prevalent in Puritan treatments of adoption. In William Ames we have one such example. He lists 27 points under the heading of adoption.⁴¹ Of these 27 points, eight have no cross references, six are supported solely by Pauline references and eleven in total have reference to the Pauline corpus: eight refer to the Johannine writings while four are solely reliant upon John. Of the other fifteen three are exclusively supported by references to Hebrews and Revelation. Thus, over half the points which Ames makes are supported by texts written by authors who did not employ the adoption metaphor. Less than a quarter of the points are supported solely by Pauline references.⁴²

Thirdly, by the nineteenth century the terminological conflation of the Johannine and Pauline texts had become well established. It can be observed in McLeod Campbell's *Nature of the Atonement* but it was only with Candlish's lectures on the fatherhood of God that the issue arose for discussion. Of special relevance is Candlish's fifth lecture – 'The Manner of Entrance into the Relation: Adoption as Connected with Regeneration and Justification'⁴³ – in which he certainly showed some awareness of the distinctiveness of both the Johannine corpus and its substance. He noted that 'John does not say much of the manner of our entering into that relation [of sonship]; but what he does say appears to me to make it turn very much on regeneration',⁴⁴ *i.e.* the metaphor of new birth.⁴⁵ So far, so good.

Yet his exposition goes somewhat awry when he endeavours to prove that adoption had been excessively segregated from regeneration. To make amends he over-compensated by inserting adoption into the Johannine

⁴¹ W. Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. from 3rd Latin edition of 1629, ed. J.D. Eusden (Boston, Philadelphia, 1968), pp. 164-7.

⁴² This opens up the whole question of Puritan exegesis. It would seem that their use of the *analogia fidei* had the capacity to lead them to conflate themes, which inevitably eroded the distinctive emphases of the various authors of Scripture.

⁴³ Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God*, pp. 135f.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-8.

⁴⁵ For instance, in 1 John 3:1 there is an emphasis on regeneration the exegesis of which, he writes, is determined by the term 'born of God' (2:29). John used *tekna theou* (as opposed to *huios patros*), which 'suggests something more than the legal and relational filiation; it points to communication of nature' (Candlish, *A Commentary on 1 John*, 3rd edit., Edinburgh, 1877, p. 228). This understanding of 1 John 3:1 cannot be taken for granted. Due in all probability to John's unusual reference to the status of the children of God, many have read into this text the doctrine of adoption. To give but one example here: a sermon of the renowned nineteenth-century Scottish preacher Robert Murray McCheyne, *A Basket of Fragments* (rp., Lochcarron, 1979), pp. 40-43.

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writings.⁴⁶ Consequently, because regeneration is often metaphorically expressed by John in terms of new birth, Candlish succeeded in marring the clarity of both metaphors:

The act of adoption... confers sonship of new, *de novo*, on those who are originally nothing more than creatures and subjects. It assumes a *newborn* capacity of receiving sonship. But it does not assume, it constitutes, the sonship itself. It is a pure and simple act of the free grace of God.⁴⁷

To try to solve what Candlish perceived to be the one problem, he brought to light another. This difficulty, although most obvious, has been quite happily accepted since time immemorial. The unresolved enigma concerns the question how the two metaphors of adoption and new birth are to be connected to one another without robbing either of their clarity and, therefore, their usefulness. In effect what Candlish did was to make one double-sided metaphor out of the two earthly analogies. Believers are both born and adopted into the family of God while as the sons and daughters or children of God they have both family status and the family's characteristics. It sounds convenient. The two metaphors appear to dovetail together wonderfully, but they do not. A glance at the conflation quickly reveals that it is implausible. In fact, confusion reigns and becomes immediately apparent when we ask how someone can be both born and adopted (and that as a grown-up!) into the same family in one single unified movement. That is the problem that lies at the heart of the issue, and that is why we make this appeal for the distinctive treatment of both metaphors.

The Johannine and Pauline metaphors are best treated separately for the simple reason that as vehicles of discovery they are not compatible. The same is certainly true for all metaphors that are used by the varying biblical authors, however similar they may appear. That is not to say that the truths lying beyond the metaphors are in conflict. They are not. They convey but differing perspectives on the same gospel. Therein lies both the unity and the richness of the gospel. It cannot be encapsulated by one or two metaphors or even more. The unity of the Scriptures hinges not on the compatibility of the gospel's metaphorical expressions, but on the gospel itself. Hence Twisselmann, having surveyed the various notions of *Kindschaft* in the New Testament, can do nothing else – and indeed nothing less! – than return in climax rather than anti-climax to a reductionist statement:

It is history come to pass. God sent his Son in order that all mankind through the Holy Spirit with faith in him could have the forgiveness of sins and also become sons. That is the unique message of the whole New Testament and the only possible declaration (*Erklärung*) of Christianity.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God*, p. 151.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 146 (italics inserted).

⁴⁸ Twisselmann, 'Die Gotteskindschaft', p. 105 (my translation).

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Thus while we agree with Candlish's assessment that adoption has been under the shadow of justification for too long, we beg to differ from Candlish in seeking to bring regeneration as metaphorically expressed in the new birth into closer affinity to adoption.

Conclusion

To lay claim to the uniqueness of the adoption metaphor is one thing, but to solve the problems associated with the untangling of the Johannine and Pauline terminology is quite another. The question hinges upon the relation of biblical theology to systematic theology. While a satisfactory solution is awaited we can but suggest two ways forward. First, the major question is why Paul uses *tekna* four times in the context of passages that contain three uses of *huiiothesia* (Rom. 8:16-17, 21, 9:8).⁴⁹ In concluding we may tender several moot suggestions: (i) Perhaps Paul was conscious of the gender-specific nature of the term *huiiothesia*, and so used the genderless designation *tekna* (children). This would certainly square with what we find in Paul's use of the quotation in 2 Corinthians 6:18: *kai esomai humin eis patera kai humeis esesthe moi eis huiou kai thugateras*.⁵⁰ (ii) As we know, in Romans 8, Paul was building upon what he had taught in Galatians 4, and so he still regarded the *huiiothesia* as referring to grown-up sons (and daughters). It may well be therefore that he used *tekna* four times in Romans 8-9 to hint at the fact that although the church of the New Testament consists of mature sons and daughters of God, they never reach the stage where they become independent of the Father. He never grows old, although he is the 'Ancient of days'. He never becomes ill and frail, and ultimately dependent upon us; and, ultimately, he never dies.⁵¹ He is for ever existing. There is a sense then in which even as mature sons and daughters of God of the New Testament era we will always remain *tekna*, ever dependent upon *Abba ho pater!*

⁴⁹ J.B. Lightfoot notes that 'In St. Paul the expressions, "Son of God", "children of God", mostly convey the idea of *liberty*, as in [Gal.] iv.6,7, Rom. viii, 14 sq. (see however Phil. ii:15), in St. John of *guilelessness and love e.g.* I Joh iii. 1, 2, 10. In accordance with this distinction St. Paul uses *huoii* as well as *tekna*, St John *tekna* only.' *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London, 1892), p. 149.

⁵⁰ Scott, *Adoption as the Sons of God*, ch. 4.

⁵¹ As Thomas Erskine of Linlathen (for whom the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God was a central theological theme) observed, 'A man ceases to be a Father when he dies himself, or when all his children are dead,' *The Works of the Rev. John Gambold, A.M., with an Introductory Essay by Thomas Erskine, Esq., Advocate* (Glasgow, 1822), p. vii. It is this point which Erskine made of the human sphere which we wish here to apply to the divine.

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This anomaly must surely serve as the starting point for any discussion of the relationship between adoption and regeneration. If the problem can be understood within the corpus Paulinum then much ground would have been made. Only then can attempts be tentatively made to compare and contrast the Pauline understanding of adoption and regeneration with John's understanding of regeneration.

Secondly, in relation to Johannine theology we have another way forward. To proceed from the place where we have reached in this article we must return to John 1:12-13: 'But as many as received (*elabon*) him, to them he gave the authority (*exousian*) to become children of God (*tekna theou*), even to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' While John Murray wrongly includes these verses among his list of 'The most important passages in the New Testament bearing upon adoption',⁵² in what follows he paradoxically highlights the uniqueness of adoption: 'it is quite apparent that adoption is quite distinct from regeneration. We may never think of sonship as being constituted apart from the act of adoption.'⁵³ The value of Murray's work, however, lies in distinguishing John 1:13, which speaks of regeneration in terms of birth, from John 1:12, which uses the term *elabon*, understood by Murray to reflect 'the bestowment of a right'.⁵⁴ This evokes a number of questions such as the meaning of *elabon*. Is the term an equivalent of being adopted (particularly if seen in the light of the children's status mentioned in 1 John 3:1)? If so, what does John mean by the term and how does his understanding relate to what he writes of regeneration in the next verse? We therefore suggest that any interested in these and other related issues begin here.

⁵² *Collected Writings*, vol. 2, p. 226.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

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The New Moses: A Matthean Typology

Dale C. Allison, Jr

Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1994; 396pp., \$25; ISBN 0 8006 2699 0

Allison opens his study with a response to the 'new criticism' on the interpretation of texts. He defends the interpreter's attempt to find an author's intent behind a work, and thereby lays the groundwork for his chosen approach to Matthew – the historical-critical method, with an emphasis on redaction criticism. Through this approach, he hopes to find texts which influenced the First Evangelist's presentation of Jesus resembling Moses.

Allison divides his study into two parts. Part I comprises twenty-six studies on Jewish and Christian figures who are at times endowed with a Moses typology. The reader may be surprised to find such characters as David, Jeremiah and the Suffering Servant included among those who more readily resemble the law-giver, such as Joshua and Elijah. Allison's examination of ten Christian figures naturally commences with Jesus, with passages in John and Acts highlighted among others. After Christ, he finds numerous Christians donning the mantle of Moses – from Peter and Paul to Gregory Thaumaturgus, Benedict of Nursia and even Constantine. This survey into Judaism and Christianity leaves the reader impressed with the vitality of Moses typologies, and hence clearly demonstrates that Moses comparisons were alive and well during Matthew's time. One of Allison's conclusions which has special significance for what follows is the dissimilarity between the Jewish and Christian texts: 'the Jewish typologies tend to be more subtle, less explicit than those in the Christian tradition'.

In Part II, Allison weighs the evidence in several passages in search of a new Moses motif in the First Gospel. Although some passages are found wanting, as in the miracles of chh. 8-9, the missionary discourse in ch. 10 and the woes of ch. 23, Allison discovers seven other texts where a Moses typology is definitely present. They are as follows: the infancy narrative (particularly 2:1-12); the temptation narrative; the opening to the Sermon on the Mount; Jesus' relationship to the Law as a new lawgiver (5:17-48); the great thanksgiving (11:25-30); the transfiguration; and the Gospel's conclusion. Perhaps the greatest surprise here is that Allison argues forcefully for a Moses typology in the temptation narrative when, in his and W.D. Davies' recent ICC Matthew commentary, the issue is hardly discussed.

Allison ends his study with seven appendices dedicated to tempering or rebutting other assessments of Matthew's Moses typology. This section is among the most fascinating of the book, for not only does he comment on influential works by the likes of W.D. Davies, J.D. Kingsbury and

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T.L. Donaldson, but also articulates a cogent method which is not always recognized. For instance, he points out that two (or more) Christologies can exist side by side in a text, without one being subordinated to or cancelling out the other. This issue raises its head in the transfiguration narrative, where Jesus is identified as the Son of God and a new Moses. Allison also rejects the assumption that unless a typology is explicit (as with Jonah in Matthew 12:40), it is either insignificant or nonexistent. He correctly emphasizes that the First Evangelist and his readers were so steeped in Judaism that explicitness was unnecessary.

Allison's *The New Moses* is an elegantly written work by an able scholar. His arguments are careful, cogent and, to this reviewer, generally convincing. The extensive bibliography and indexes (on names, subjects and passages) make this work a valuable resource. The most manifest contribution of his study is to place the new Moses motif within a historical perspective. The consistent comparisons through the centuries of Jewish and Christian heroes to Moses are impressive, and this trend buttresses Allison's argument concerning Matthew.

There are, however, a few shortcomings. With regard to Matthew 28:16-20, Allison asserts that a Moses motif exists in the themes of keeping 'all that I have commanded you' and of commissioning with 'I am with you', but nearly every Jewish text that he discusses concerns all that God has commanded and the presence which God has promised. Hence, the Moses-Jesus motif seems to be secondary and a God-Jesus one primary. Other shortcomings of a more minor nature include some twenty misspellings. Yes these points must be considered in their proper perspective, for the excellence of Allison's research is what stands out. This work is highly recommended for those seeking to understand the Christology of the First Gospel.

N.N. Hingle, University of Aberdeen

New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, No.2: Theological Foundations

Edited by James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans

Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1994; 215pp., \$18.95; ISBN 0 88344 953 6

Twenty years ago the first volume in a series of studies entitled *Mission Trends* appeared. Those books (eventually numbering five volumes) provided an immensely valuable resource for students of mission, pulling together key statements on the Christian mission from conciliar, evangelical, Roman Catholic and Orthodox sources, and dealing with a whole range of pressing missiological issues. In their introduction to this book, the editors indicate that the 'New Directions' series is designed to continue the pattern of the earlier *Mission Trends* by making available

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significant recent missiological literature 'in an accessible and relatively economical form'.

The first volume focussed on 'Basic Statements', including evangelical declarations at Lausanne and Pattaya, an Orthodox statement on mission made in Bucharest, key passages from the Second Vatican Council and various recent documents on mission from the World Council of Churches. This present book, as the subtitle suggests, is concerned with the theology of mission. The extracts included discuss the nature of mission, historical developments in the understanding of mission within the various traditions mentioned above, and missionary praxis. Toward the end of the volume there is an interesting chapter on missiology as a discipline.

There is much that is of great value here: Orlando Costas on mission in the Americas, Lesslie Newbigin on the 'Logic of Mission', a very fine treatment of 'The Exclusiveness of Jesus Christ' by George Brunk, and a moving chapter by the late David Bosch on 'The Vulnerability of Mission', which provides a poignant reminder of the extent of the loss suffered by the whole Christian community through this author's tragic death.

Readers of this *Bulletin* may be particularly interested in the assessment of recent changes in evangelical missiology offered by a Nigerian contributor, Efiog Utuk. Citing statements from Wheaton in 1966 to Lausanne in 1974, Utuk argues that evangelical views on the nature and practice of missions have increasingly converged with positions long taken for granted within the ecumenical movement. The problem with this chapter (and this may be said to be a weakness in the book as a whole), is that it discusses evangelical missiology in relation to a Congress which, while undoubtedly hugely significant, occurred twenty years ago. It is certainly arguable that the evangelical movement has become more diverse, more fragmented, more difficult to define than was the case in 1974, and it is not at all clear that the consensus achieved at Lausanne would be possible now. Making Lausanne the cut-off point for the discussion of evangelical approaches to mission involves ignoring the recent emergence of activist missionary movements which operate on the assumption that evangelism is the central, if not the exclusive, task of Christian mission. People involved in such initiatives tend to have rather shallow theological foundations, which may explain the absence of DAWN from the index of this book. Nonetheless, the fact remains that such movements have considerable influence on the many young people who offer themselves for service cross-culturally. Ignoring such groups can only perpetuate a situation in which their need for serious theological reflection goes unmet and, at the same time, scholars who are involved in the academic study of mission remain inoculated from the challenge of activists who insist on asking the nagging question of William Carey, 'What is to *be done*?'

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A final comment. I have no doubt that this new series will become an indispensable resource for the study and teaching of mission and I warmly commend the current volume to colleagues. However, at a time when one of the most important 'new directions' in mission concerns the globalization of Christianity and the shift of the centre of missionary expansion from the West to the South, it is curious that eleven of the fourteen contributors to this book are Europeans or Americans. It is to be hoped that future volumes in the series will redress this imbalance.

David Smith, Northumbria Bible College

Home is Where the Hurt is. Domestic Violence and the Church's Response

Rosie Nixon

Grove Books, Bramcote, Nottingham, 1994; 24pp., £1.95; ISBN 1 85174 269 6

Rosie Nixon makes no bones about the fact that domestic abuse is as likely to happen in Christian families as elsewhere, and cites graphic descriptions of some women's lives. She points to the fact that much of the blame can be laid on the teaching of the church, but that it is only enlightened church leaders and members who will take this fact on board. We are given a brief history of how domestic violence has been condoned down the centuries from the Council of Toledo in A.D. 400 (which declared 'A husband is bound to chastise his wife moderately, unless he be a cleric in which case he may chastise her harder') to present times. She then looks at contemporary approaches and the causes for abuse, reproducing the diagram from the Domestic Abuse Intervention project in Duluth, Minnesota, which shows the power and control that a man can use to abuse a woman and then the opposite where there is non-violence and equality between a couple. She shows that more people are becoming aware of the need to help men, but that, despite the fact that this is quite advanced in the United States and Canada, Britain is lagging behind. She feels that the church in Britain, empowered by the Holy Spirit, could be doing far more to help men who acknowledge their problem and want to change. Finally she gives us a list of twelve points garnered from overseas churches which I feel should be in the hands of every church worker whether clergy or laity. This little booklet for me has been one of the most definitive works I have found on domestic abuse.

Janet L. Watson, Glasgow Bible College

New Face of the Church in Latin America: Between Tradition and Change

Edited by Guillermo Cook

Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1994; xiv + 289pp., £14.99; ISBN 0 88344 937 4

My experience in Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s was of evangelical churches growing like wildfire. Consequently, it has been fascinating to read *New Face of the Church in Latin America*, which quotes more than once that 'In Brazil on any given Sunday, more Christians attend (Protestant) worship than attend worship at Roman Catholic churches.' The book celebrates 500 years of Christianity in Latin America and consists of an assortment of articles reprinted from journals or books, papers given at conferences and a very few chapters written specially, all of 1992-3 vintage. Twenty contributors from some ten nations, men and women, Catholic and Protestant (ecumenical, evangelical and pentecostal), present a mosaic of the 'largest Christian continent', where the evangelical churches have grown unbelievably this century.

At first I found the book rather disconcerting. The articles are grouped into five parts: 1492-1992: Change and Continuity; the Dynamics of Change; Popular Religion; Tradition and Change; Area Studies: the Future of the Latin American Church. Yet because each one has been written for a different context and from a different background, I constantly felt the need to change gear as I moved to a new chapter, and get myself into a fresh way of thinking. Yet what I perceived initially as a weakness is really the book's strength. When a Catholic writing of the Base Ecclesial Communities in Brazil asks what they can learn from Pentecostals, when a Baptist appreciates the Nicaraguan Evangelicals' unusual participation in national politics along with Catholics, when Catholic and Protestant each expose their grief at instances of the unjust suffering of the oppressed and the experiences of suffering with them, one can really begin to feel one's way into the diverse Christian life of Latin America.

Perhaps the chapter that moved me most was the one by a Quicha pastor, saddened at the way in which 'European' Christians (*i.e.* non-Andean Peruvians) failed to appreciate that Andean culture can sometimes express the Good News more biblically than the 'European'. And then liberationists, mourning the collapse of Marxism, ask not what will happen to liberation theology, but what will happen to the lives of the poor. An Evangelical deplors the fact that Protestants, 'the people of the Book', sometimes do not know the Bible and are losing sight of it. This is not a collection of learned theses; its contributors write from the heart.

This book is not bed-time reading, though a few chapters are more easily digested. Each chapter begins with a brief summary and closes with the notes to which references have been made. There is a very

comprehensive bibliography, but no index. There is much here that churches in the Old World can learn. Its final chapter throws out the hope that the Latin American church with its new face may take the lead in world mission in the next century – and the salutary reminder that the realisation of such a dream depends on its maintaining its openness to the Holy Spirit through the Bible.

Cliff Barnard, Northumbria Bible College

An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics

Walter C. Kaiser and Moisés Silva

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1994; 298pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 310 53090 3

This attractively produced volume is the latest in a stream of volumes dealing with the principles of biblical interpretation at various levels of accessibility. Its distinctiveness, so the authors claim, lies first in that it is intended to be accessible and useful to both those who have been theologically trained and those who have not; and secondly in that the co-authors are not presenting a single 'party line' but write with quite different perspectives within the boundaries of evangelical convictions on the authority of the Bible.

Both authors are well known as highly competent interpreters of the biblical text, yet they do not generally intimidate the fledgling student with technicalities. On the contrary, they provide a very clear, accessible introduction to interpretative matters, encouraging engagement with the biblical text throughout by means of helpful examples. Particularly helpful for beginning students is the general treatment of the various genres of biblical literature. (The specific encouragement from Silva to treat the New Testament letters as real *letters* that should be read through, rather than a few verses at a time, should be well taken by many Evangelicals.) While the voluminous secondary literature is not extensively discussed, there is a helpful guide to further reading for those who want to pursue their studies further.

The difficulty of the task of writing for both a trained and an untrained readership is sometimes evident. Several chapters are hard work, requiring the reader to become familiar with technical terms (*e.g.* 'metonymy', 'synecdoche', 'zeugma') or with philosophical discussion, while others are almost homiletic in their style. Whatever the difficulties, however, it is surely healthy that the positive results of biblical scholarship are integrated into the teaching of the church so that no distinction between scholars and 'ordinary Christians' is allowed; scholars and Christians with other callings must minister to and learn from each other. It is good to see discussions of the devotional use and the practical application (with particular reference to differing cultures) of Scripture following the more academic discussion of genres.

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A useful historical perspective is given by Kaiser's history of interpretation, running from the 'pesher' interpretation of the Qumran separatists through to the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher. Silva then takes up the story with a discussion of twentieth-century trends. Both of these essays, though clearly written, are more demanding and supply more detailed documentation for the sake of students. The different perspectives of the two authors do not interfere with the main thrust of the book. It does not have the disjointed feel one might fear. The main differences between them become evident only in the later chapters where, for example, Kaiser argues that the 'meaning' of a biblical text be associated with the author's intention as expressed in what he wrote, while Silva is prepared to see meaning in the text *beyond* that grasped by the human author on the basis that the omniscient God is the ultimate author. Silva also argues a case for distinctively 'Calvinistic hermeneutics', which briefly involves him in disagreement with Kaiser over apostolic exegesis.

This book is a very useful and dependable introduction to a vital subject about which every Christian should have some understanding.

Alistair Wilson, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin

God's People in God's Land: Family, Land and Property in the Old Testament

Christopher J.H. Wright

Paternoster, Carlisle, 1990; xx+284pp., £11.99; ISBN 0 85364 396 2

Old Testament ethics is an area in which little had been written when Wright began his research. Thus it is a pleasure to welcome this contribution to the field. Wright's earlier *Living as the People of God* represented a popularisation of his 1977 Cambridge Ph.D thesis. This now is the substance of that thesis, revised and updated. The work makes a distinctive contribution and touches upon themes which have become even more significant in the intervening thirteen years.

In the first part, Wright establishes the importance of the land inheritance theme as integral to the Exodus, Sinai, Wilderness and Conquest themes of the Old Testament and as part of the earliest traditions of Israel, as demonstrated especially by its presence in the Pentateuch and in the early poetry of the Bible. The concepts of kinship in the 'father's house' and in the more extended family are treated as integral elements to Israel's faith. Although aware of Gottwald's emphasis on these building blocks of Israelite society, Wright is wise in not rendering these distinctions as rigidly as Gottwald supposed, especially given recent critiques of his assumptions by Lemche and others. The archaeological evidence collected by Stager in his 1985 *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* article would

supplement Wright's case, demonstrating that the Old Testament portrayal of the family as that unit headed by the eldest male was not merely an ideal, but at least an occasional reality. Wright relates his discussion of the family to its inheritance in the form of the land, something preserved from generation to generation. Although divinely owned, it was not liable to permanent transfer away from the family to which it was originally given. The stability of this arrangement was exemplified by both the land, which served as the permanent burial ground for the family, and by the leader of each family who exercised military, judicial and didactic functions in the community. Wright's applications of these conclusions to the New Testament leads him to argue that the 'fellowship' of Christians forms their inheritance instead of the land. Thus the sharing of needs and of abundance, as well as the love and unity of Christians, provide evidence of their claim to possess a share in the inheritance of the people of God.

In his second part, Wright examines the ways in which the property owners keep their land. He argues that each family held the land as an inalienable gift from Yahweh. Even if the land was sold or lent, it reverted back to the original owner on the year of Jubilee. This custom, practised twice a century, exhibited concern for the welfare of the family rather than an individual. This was because the one who lent the land would probably no longer be alive by the time of the year of Jubilee. However, the heir in the family would receive back the land. Land was protected by law from theft (*e.g.* moving the boundary marker) and from legal but greedy snatching of it (*e.g.* the tenth commandment). Slaves, labourers and animals were to be well treated on the land. The stoning of the goring ox and its owner had its origins in divine ownership of the land. The seven-year cycle of return of the land (Deuteronomy 15:1-2) is best understood as a return of the usufruct of the land to the original owners, rather than as a return of the ownership of the land itself.

Wright allows for a family cultus in Israel in which food offerings and teraphim could be involved without the worshipping of dead ancestors. He suggests that, as long as no other deities than Yahweh were involved, such veneration was not incompatible with biblical faith. This view, if accepted, would help to explain the widespread attestation of food offerings and other objects in all excavated tombs of ancient Israel and Judah. However, its ramifications for cross-cultural missions are not addressed by Wright.

Wright argues that women were not treated as property by husbands. Instead, he finds the relevant laws to define the ownership as one of sexuality on the part of the husband. Capital punishment for adultery was because it was an offence against God and his relationship with his community. This was not exacted for matters of sexual assault which demanded compensation in the law, just as in other property rights. Wright observes examples of co-authority exerted by both husband and

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wife in matters concerning their children, as in Deuteronomy 21:18ff. and 22:15ff. Like wives, children could not be treated merely as property. Even in the case of Deuteronomy 21:18-21, where a rebellious child could be put to death, this was allowed only after a trial by the elders. After cataloguing various limitations on how slave owners could treat their slaves, Wright studies the six-year release of Exodus 21:1-6 and Deuteronomy 15: 12-18 and compares it with the release on the fiftieth year in Leviticus 25:39-43. He argues that the 'Hebrew slave' in the Exodus and Deuteronomy texts refers to the social class of 'Hebrew' *i.e.* those who are landless and sell themselves into servitude as labourers. On the other hand, the slaves in Deuteronomy 15:12-18 are property owners who receive their freedom and that of their land after the fiftieth year.

As a contribution to an important field of study, this work will serve the interest of all those concerned about the ethical implications of the Old Testament.

Richard Hess, Roehampton Institute of Higher Education

The Bible and Counselling: An Introduction to the Relationship between the Bible and Christian Counselling

Roger Hurding

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1992; 244pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 340 51742 5

Many come into counselling by virtue of their professional role in life. A sizeable proportion of these are guided by mainly humanistic attitudes and ideals sometimes moulded by one or other of the schools of psychology. A few wish for a more biblical and Christian approach and sincerely desire to see those counselled helped along a Christian paradigm to find fulfilment eventually in the all-satisfying and providing Christ, the living Son of the living and loving God. This book will help such. It is a book for the serious counsellor who feels called by God to serve the church in this particular way. It is principally for Christian counsellors who practise within a Christian community.

Roger Hurding's treatment of the subject reflects his own professional background as a doctor and psychotherapist, and is enriched by his own experience of life and its problems – sometimes with ill health, handicap and setbacks. He uses abundant references to other writings – psychological (washing over many heads, I fear), religious and scriptural (the latter being most helpful and pertinent) – to substantiate his conclusions. His sections on questions for discussion and personal reflection underline the importance of sharing one's experiences and being willing to learn to develop one's own techniques, both in the arena of open discussion and individual study. There is an excellent section of

notes on the individual chapters and a good balanced bibliography giving a wider scope of the subject.

This is not a text-book or even a handbook. It is designed to stimulate a wider appreciation of biblical principles, the while attempting to marry proven psychological techniques with scriptural teaching, all of which Hurding does very well. It is an excellent book. Do not expect a breakdown of the human situations which come the way of the counsellor or even guidance as to how to face individual problems. Much of the substance of this book is background illumination and preparation for the Christian engaged in this type of service. It fills a valuable corner in the counsellor's armamentarium and is to be strongly recommended.

William W. Baird, Paisley

What is an Evangelical?

D.M. Lloyd-Jones

Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1992; 91pp., £1.50; ISBN 0 85151 626 2

This book contains three addresses given by Dr Lloyd-Jones to an International Fellowship of Evangelical Students conference in 1971. It was originally published in 1989 as part of a longer collection entitled *Knowing the Times*. In characteristic style, Dr Lloyd-Jones offers a clear and succinct analysis of the problems created by theological trends with Evangelicalism. Despite the fact that these addresses were given over twenty years ago, the analysis is prophetically appropriate to our own day. He says that the word 'Evangelical' needs to be defined and clarified so that its meaning remains the same. He notes the significant changes which have taken place in some churches and Christian bodies such that they no longer hold to the truths which they once did. He does make it clear, however, that he is not interested in division or separation for their own sake, but rather in highlighting the essential truths of the Christian faith. He notes that those who are extreme separatists are almost as bad as those who are interested in ecumenism to the detriment of evangelical truth.

Lloyd-Jones lays out four guiding principles in his attempt to answer the question of the title: 1. The preservation of the gospel; 2. Learning from history; 3. Maintaining negatives; 4. No subtractions or additions. He spends many pages dealing with the general characteristics of an Evangelical. Many of these are expected: subservience to Scripture; emphasis on the new birth; concern for evangelism, and so on. But he also goes into more controversial areas, contending, for example, that an Evangelical must be distrustful of reason, philosophy and scholarship, especially as these have been used in modern theology. This is a most helpful section and needs to be heard loudly and clearly in theological colleges today, where Enlightenment principles and values (rather than

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biblical ones) are often in control. In the closing lecture, he highlights a number of truths which he regards as fundamental, and others which he regards as secondary. The former includes the doctrines of Scripture, justification by faith and the atonement (penal and substitutionary). In the latter category he includes the differences between Christians on such doctrines as election, the last things and baptism.

This must surely be one of the most useful books ever to come from Lloyd-Jones. The word 'Evangelical' has become so elastic today as to defy definition at all. How good it is to be called back to the basics. This is not to say that the present reviewer accepts all that the author puts forward. For example, the statement that an Evangelical is someone who does not believe in a state church does not easily persuade someone who values Knox and the Covenanters! Nevertheless, this is a challenging book and one which should be read by everyone who would lay claim to the name 'Evangelical'. One suspects that fewer (if they were honest) would lay claim to the title afterwards....

A.T.B. McGowan, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin

Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734-1984

Kenneth Hylson Smith

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1988; 424pp., £16.95; ISBN 0 567 29161 8

This is a scholarly, extremely well-documented yet easily readable account of the progress of Anglican Evangelicalism in the post-Wesley era almost to the present day. It can justifiably be regarded both as a textbook to introduce the student new to this particular aspect of church history and, on account of an abundance of footnotes together with its bibliography and indices, as a helpful guide for those who wish to research more deeply into the period. Or it may be treated simply as an informative and fascinatingly interesting book for those who want to know what goes on in the evangelical world, especially in the Church of England.

So many facets of Evangelicalism are examined that it is quite impossible to give any adequate account of the book in a short review. Hylson Smith pursues a track very well-worn by readers of G.R. Balleine's classic published in 1908, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England*, which hitherto has been a 'must' for evangelical ordinands, but the assessments which this more modern account offers have all the benefits of an abundance of recent research. It provides us, moreover, with a further seventy years of evangelical history. The epilogue predicting 'the other side of 1984' clearly needs revision in the light of what has actually happened in this last decade.

Hylson Smith retells the story of the continuous struggle over nearly three centuries of Evangelicalism – reborn through Wesley's revival and initially to be found in a few scattered parishes, albeit experiencing quite

remarkable ministries – to expand into the wider Anglican church. Despite almost as many setbacks as advances, it has become one of the most powerful forces affecting the course of the present-day Church of England. We see divine providence at work, when Evangelicalism manages to break out of the parishes and gain access to the episcopal bench, very much because of Palmerston's ignorance of ecclesiastical affairs, which forced him to rely on the advice of Lord Shaftesbury!

We witness the birth of the great evangelical societies influencing the church at home and abroad for over a century and a half, among them the Church Pastoral Aid Society and the Church Missionary Society. We learn that Shaftesbury the social reformer was a high Tory afraid of power falling into the hands of the working classes. We discover that J.C. Ryle, the darling of so many modern conservative Evangelicals, was both unsympathetic towards the Keswick Movement and regarded as a neo-Evangelical in his day. We witness the struggle between Evangelicalism and ritualism in the last century and liberalism in this. The contributions of John Stott and J.I. Packer are evaluated, especially for the parts they played in the post-War controversies, over *Honest to God*, *The Myth of God Incarnate*, and fundamentalism. Prayer book revision, the charismatic movement and the revolution in church music are given due consideration.

Hylson Smith commands our attention as he bears us through the years, mixing anecdotes with statistics, mini-biographies with theological adjudication. He surely is a worthy successor to Balleine, not only in assessing familiarly trodden ground, but in filling the gap left by the absence of any similar work covering the progress of Anglican Evangelicalism during the greater part of the twentieth century.

Peter Cook, St Andrew's Church, Cheadle Hulme

W.M.L. de Wette: Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism. An Intellectual Biography

John W. Rogerson

JSOT Press, Sheffield, 1992; 313pp., £35; ISBN 1 87075 330 X

Most people have probably not heard of Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette. Of Dutch ancestry, de Wette was born in 1780 in the small village of Ulla (on the road between Erfurt and Weimar), the son of a Lutheran pastor. Rogerson aims to present his life and work with particular reference to his theological development. The book, which is meticulously researched and written in a simple and engaging style, traces de Wette's career from his student days in Jena through chairs in Heidelberg, Berlin and Basel.

De Wette was, according to Rogerson, 'a full and rounded human being', with keen interest not only in theology but in music, art, politics

and literature. In fact, important sources for the book are two of de Wette's semi-autobiographical novels. His marriage to Eberhardine Boye in 1805 lasted only ten months, when Eberhardine died in childbirth, a tragedy from which de Wette never really recovered. Another low point in his life was his dismissal from the University of Berlin on political grounds. One of his students assassinated a suspected Russian agent and traitor and was subsequently executed. De Wette wrote a letter of sympathy to the student's mother which came to the attention of the police.

Although not without human interest Rogerson's book is primarily an intellectual biography. It is full of discussions of the major influences on de Wette's thought, including Kant, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Jacobi and especially the philosopher Fries. Also, there is a full and often fascinating description of de Wette's major works, which included translations of the Old Testament, commentaries on the Psalms and the whole New Testament and numerous theological works. Other points of interest include the theological curriculum that de Wette instituted in Basel, which treated in four successive years exegetical, historical, systematic and practical theology. De Wette struggled with what is described as the contradiction between rationalism and orthodoxy, scepticism and conservatism. In this way the author regards him as the 'Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism'. Although de Wette is today overshadowed by Wellhausen, Strauss and Schleiermacher, in many ways his work anticipated discussions that are still with us. These include the relationship between theology and philosophy, the relation of biblical criticism to Christian belief, the problem of religious pluralism, and the application of literary theory to biblical interpretation.

Rogerson aptly sums up the value of pondering de Wette's life as follows: 'Although I cannot accept many of his views, I have been challenged by his honesty, moved by his personal tragedies and greatly enlightened by his works'. The book is recommended for those interested in understanding the roots and current state of modern biblical criticism.

Brian S. Rosner, University of Aberdeen

Friendship and Finances in Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians

Ben Witherington, III

Trinity Press International, Valley Forge, PA, 1994; 180pp., £11.50; ISBN 1 56338 102 8

This volume by a prolific scholar (with a flair for arresting titles) is included in a series entitled 'The New Testament in Context', and is a further reminder of the need to be aware of the historical nature of the biblical documents. There are several excellent commentaries on Philippians already, so why another? Witherington describes the work as

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a 'socio-rhetorical' commentary which seeks to bridge the gap between traditional grammatico-historical exegesis and the newer sociological and literary techniques by taking account of the well-documented methods of rhetoric which were valued so highly in the ancient world. It is probably as a useful introduction to the discipline of rhetorical criticism along with an example of how the discipline works in practice that this book will find its niche.

Witherington provides a twenty-nine page introduction dealing primarily with the educational background of Paul which led to his exposure to Graeco-Roman rhetoric, followed by a discussion of the various types of rhetoric (forensic, deliberative and epideictic) and the component parts of a letter formed using rhetorical techniques (*exordium, narratio, etc*). For those unfamiliar with the technical terms of rhetoric, Witherington provides clear and concise definitions. The explanation of rhetoric as the art of persuasion is illuminating for an appreciation of Paul's approach, as he generally seeks to persuade rather than command. There is also some brief discussion of the more typical introductory matters of authorship, provenance, date.

The main body of the commentary is divided according to the rhetorical elements and, although issues raised in other commentaries are discussed, there is a particular focus on the rhetorical purpose of particular sections of the letter and on the way in which themes are introduced and then taken up at later stages of the letter. This means that this commentary will not duplicate typical exegetical commentaries but will instead augment them. Ministers may find that it has the added attraction of being a fraction of the length of some recent exegetical commentaries, while retaining a commitment to solid exegesis.

As is typical of Witherington, there is frequent interaction with up-to-date secondary literature combined with independent judgement. Students and ministers will no doubt find that they are exposed to these newer approaches to the New Testament whether through lectures or commentaries. They may not find all resources as clear and helpful as this one.

Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin

The Art of Biblical History (Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, Vol 5)

V. Philips Long

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1994; 247pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 310 43180 8

This is the latest addition to the series edited by Moisés Silva of Westminster Theological Seminary in which volumes (according to the blurb on the back cover) 'discuss the impact of a specific academic

discipline on the interpretation of the Bible'. This one comes from the pen of the Associate Professor of Old Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary.

The book is written with style. From the Introduction to the Epilogue the prose is clear and engaging, even when Long has to deal with the complexities of contemporary academic debate. Long certainly shows himself to be well acquainted with much of the vast amount of secondary literature which faces any student venturing into the field of hermeneutics. The title of his book deliberately alludes to the work of Robert Alter and indicates Long's conviction that the newer literary approaches to the biblical text have much to offer the interpreter of Scripture. Yet neither literary criticism nor any other approach to Scripture is accepted wholesale or uncritically, as the review of contemporary scholarship in chapter four demonstrates. Instead, Long guides the readers through the maze of literature, alerting them to any problems of methodology but also appropriating the more positive results so that the end result is a nuanced approach to history.

Long's fundamental thesis is that to treat the Bible as a history book is simplistic and does not do justice to the nature of the Bible. This is not, however, to say that the Bible is uninterested in history. The way forward is to understand the Bible in terms of being true because it is God's Word, 'true' being understood to mean that what the biblical texts claim to teach or to do corresponds, in fact, to reality. This allows us to integrate a proper understanding of the various genres of Scripture into our interpretative method. Thus we will not require that a parable is an account of an historical event since Scripture never makes that claim for itself and indeed indicates by the form of the text itself that such an approach is to misread the parable. The discussions of genre criticism and of biblical poetics are particularly useful.

Long argues that the Bible does not contain 'bare facts' but that the accounts of actual events (he is careful to point out that the historicity of the events is vital) are interpretations which are so powerful because of the literary artistry of the authors. Thus literary techniques such as simplification, selectivity and suggestive detail can co-exist with responsible reporting of history.

The final chapter is an extended worked-example of the principles previously discussed based on the account of the rise of Saul found in 1 Samuel, and it is followed by an Epilogue which briefly maps out the flow of the book and offers encouragement to pursue matters further. Long provides a helpful list of books for further reading ranging from the introductory to the taxing. There are also helpful indices of modern authors and works, Scripture passages and subjects.

Long has supplied students with an admirable resource for studying the historical aspect of Scripture. Neither defensive nor inflammatory, it

displays both evangelical conviction and a sophisticated appreciation of the best insights of contemporary scholarship. It deserves widespread use.

Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin

Poles Part: The Gospel in Creative Tension

D.S. Russell

St Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1990; 171pp., £6.50; ISBN 0 7152 0646 X

The author of this book is well known to biblical scholars for his valuable studies of apocalyptic literature and inter-testamental Judaism. Baptists are familiar with David Russell both as Principal of Rawdon Baptist College and General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. However, while this volume reflects the author's careful scholarship and his denominational convictions, it is shaped above all by yet another of Russell's lifelong concerns – his commitment to ecumenical dialogue and the quest for Christian unity.

In ten chapters the book discusses pairs of 'polar opposites' which, Russell argues, are in reality 'complementary and not contradictory'. A sample of headings will suggest the author's concerns: 'Scripture and Tradition', 'Creeds and Credibility', 'The Church and the Churches', 'Male and Female'. The discussions are generally informative and stimulating and succeed in showing lines of convergence in areas of belief and practice previously characterised by controversy and division. Here and there one notices irritating mistakes; for example, a quotation from the Council of Trent is followed by the statement that the 'scene was being set for the conflict that eventually emerged at the time of the Reformation'. However, Russell's writing is clear and helpful and he offers the reader some memorable quotations, of Barth, for instance, asking 'Who dares, who can, preach, knowing what preaching is?', and of Kierkegaard claiming, 'To be a professor of theology is to have crucified Christ'!

Although *Poles Part* contains helpful and illuminating passages it has two weaknesses. First, the attempt to cover such a range of big issues in a slim volume involves a serious risk of offering generalizations which paper over cracks. In the chapter on 'Male and Female', for example, Russell bravely deals with the issue of homosexuality. Yet the discussion is so limited that it results in little more than an expression of 'personal opinion'. The author also claims that 'lesbianism has to do with "politics" every bit as much as with sex' since many women are simply expressing their protest against a male-dominated society. Well maybe, but the appalling violence they have suffered at the hands of men may have something to do with it as well.

Second, while valuable as a treatment of areas of tension within Western theology, these discussions seem somehow dated. Russell's

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chapters address issues which have historically divided the churches of the West at a time when the really exciting developments are occurring in a missiological context as new and younger churches question the entire Western approach to theology. The only reference I found in this book to Third World theology mistakenly credited Kosuke Koyama with developing 'buffalo theology'. The Western churches will surely need to become far more familiar with the contextualized theologies emerging from the South if they are to benefit from the creative tensions which matter today.

David Smith, Northumbria Bible College

God Delivers: Isaiah Simply Explained

Derek Thomas

Evangelical Press, Darlington, 1991; 415pp., £8.95; ISBN 0 85234 290 X

The Message of Job

David Atkinson

IVP, Leicester, 1991; 188pp., £6.50; ISBN 0 85110 956 X

Biblical students are used to the concept of literary genre. It is hermeneutically important and its importance has grown under the influence both of form and of literary criticism. What though of the concept of literary genre as applied to post-biblical Christian literature? Without doubt one of the most important and certainly the most long-lasting is the commentary. It can be traced back as far as the expository sermons of John Chrysostom, and a visit to any Christian bookshop today will show that it is still going strong. It is not, however, an unvarying literary type. We all recognise that commentaries are not all of the same kind. Some are exegetical and others are expository, some give attention to critical and others to theological issues, while still others are homiletical or devotional. The most recent tendency is for simple, clear explanation of the biblical text, usually taking fairly large sections (a chapter or more) at a time, with plenty of contemporary illustration and application.

The 'Bible Speaks Today' series, to which David Atkinson's book on Job belongs, is a front-runner of this type of volume. The publisher's blurb on the back cover describes this particular volume as a 'compelling exposition', and the reviewer would concur with this judgement. What gives it this quality? There are a number of factors.

For one thing, the Book of Job itself is compelling, at least for the person who is prepared to settle down to read it through with serious intent. It deals with a very deep and yet far from uncommon problem, the agony that comes to a godly man because of suffering that makes him question, not God's existence, but his goodness and justice. Then, from

its beginning, David Atkinson's book constantly keeps the needs of pastoral counselling in mind. The book is intended to help those involved in this demanding ministry, and this gives it special interest.

It is full of stimulating insights. Job's wife is usually dismissed rather summarily by commentators, but this volume deals with her in an unusually sympathetic way. The author also comments helpfully, not only on the similarity of the three friends, but also on their differences, which are not often appreciated so fully. Of the references to mining in Job 28, he says, 'Perhaps there is more than a hint here that even the darkness of Job's life may yet yield its treasures.' There are a number of well-chosen quotations from modern literature, and a useful closing section drawing together the main values of the Book of Job.

The commentary on Isaiah by Derek Thomas is in the Welwyn Commentary Series. It will be useful to consider the stated aims of the book and to ask how far they have been fulfilled. The author says, 'I have tried ... to keep three boundaries in mind: firstly, the need to sustain an interest in the *whole* of Isaiah, and not just its well-known parts; secondly, to be helpful by way of illustrating the text of Isaiah, thus providing a few windows to let in light; and thirdly, to keep to the publisher's request that the result be of moderate length, contained in one volume.' The third has been fulfilled but what about the other two?

Isaiah is a large book and it would have been valuable to give an overview of it, showing how its somewhat diverse material forms a well-patterned unity. Derek Thomas does, however, refer often to earlier and later chapters, and this helps us to see how the book is bound together thematically. The brief introduction does not deal with issues of criticism. The unity of the Book of Isaiah can, in fact, be much better supported than is often recognised. The author would therefore have done his readers a service by addressing the arguments of critics against that unity, as this could have been a means of demonstrating its wholeness and integrity.

There are plenty of good illustrations, many taken from the writer's own experience. His interpretative stance is amillennial. He relates the eschatology of the book very much to the gospel era, and he also uses the word 'church' of the people of God within Israel in Old Testament days. Nevertheless, he sets his face against excessive spiritualisation.

Both volumes are based on the NIV text and it is worth noting that each author prepared for writing his volume by preaching on the Old Testament book beforehand. It is not surprising therefore that a strength of each volume is its contemporary application. Both are well written and useful, but David Atkinson's book is particularly to be commended for its value to the pastoral counsellor.

Geoffrey W. Grogan, Glasgow

John Wesley and the Anglican Evangelicals of the Eighteenth Century

A. Brown-Lawson

Pentland Press, Durham, 1994; 410pp., n.p.; ISBN 1 85821 095 X

This work is a study of the often turbulent relationship that existed between John Wesley and various leading Anglican Evangelicals. The work focuses primarily upon the so-called Calvinistic controversies over election and justification, but also includes material on the problem of ordinations and on Wesley's distinctive views of perfection. The book falls into two parts, the first dealing with the historical dimensions of the topic, the second with the theological issues at stake. There is plenty of interesting material here, not least in the extensive quotations from primary sources which Dr. Brown-Lawson provides.

The book is an enjoyable read, and highly informative, and so the criticisms which it is necessary to make should be seen against this background. The primary problem is the clear pro-Wesley tone of the work. This pervades the whole book, but is especially evident in the treatment of Whitefield and the first Calvinistic controversy. It is significant that the author is dependent upon Tyerman's Wesleyan life of Whitefield for many of his comments on the latter and, while Dallimore's book on Whitefield is scarcely more objective than Tyerman, he could have been used to redress some of the imbalance.

The author also has a clear lack of sympathy with the Calvinist position, but many of his comments in this area seem to imply that he does not actually understand how Calvinist theology works or how Calvinists of the eighteenth, or any other, century thought. We are told that Calvin's system was one great logical deduction from a single premise, the sovereignty of God. Then, we are told that 'the Calvinistic system will be seen to be the result of stark and relentless logic, allowing no exceptions to any finding'. This sets the tone for the treatment of Calvinism which follows. The reader is left in no doubt that Calvinism is logic gone mad, while Wesley's view represents judicious biblical theology. Many readers will also be surprised by the claim that 'it is doubtful whether [Jonathan] Edwards or Whitefield ever fully understood the tenets they so stoutly defended'. While one may not agree with Edwards, it is difficult when reading him not to concede that he does have a very profound grasp of what is at stake in many of the issues with which he deals, especially those areas often regarded as Calvinist distinctives.

What is needed here is a greater separation of historical exposition from doctrinal criticism. No-one can seriously doubt either the sincerity of both Whitefield and Wesley in their beliefs or their commitment to evangelism; though this commitment arose from radically opposed views

of election. Both cannot have been right, but each deserves to be taken seriously and not dismissed on the basis of individual scholars' doctrinal presuppositions of whatever shade. The reader of this book is left with the impression of Whitefield as a hopelessly confused theological half-wit, and of Wesley as a great theologian, neither of which portrays, I would argue, a wholly accurate picture.

The book ends on a positive note, recounting the irenic conversation between Wesley and Simeon. The author then states that, as both Calvinists and Arminians agree on the sovereignty of God, some way through the impasse might be found here. However, this could only come about if Calvinists reformulate their understanding of predestination to coincide with Arminian notions of foreknowledge – but surely it was just that which was the problem in the first place?

In a day when Evangelicals, both Calvinist and Arminian, are united by their opposition to much more fundamental errors, the Wesleyan-Calvinist conflicts of the eighteenth century can seem somewhat irrelevant to contemporary church-life, a luxury we can scarce afford; and yet, as Brown-Lawson's book does make clear, what was at stake in these struggles was nothing less than the character of God and of his dealings with us. While I am not in sympathy with the book's methodology or its portrait of Calvinism, it serves as a timely reminder that evangelical theology has historically been concerned with more than adherence to a bare Trinitarianism and equivocal lip-service to the principle of 'Scripture alone'.

Carl R. Trueman, University of Nottingham

Right with God: Justification in the Bible and the World

Edited by D.A. Carson

Paternoster Press, Carlisle and Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1992; 309pp., £14.99; ISBN 0 85364 516 7

This volume is the fruit of a consultation of evangelical leaders from around the world held at Tyndale House, Cambridge in November 1988. In his introduction, D.A. Carson intones the theme of the book and its importance: 'Both for his glory and our good, the most important thing we can pursue is being rightly related to God.'

Edmund P. Clowney's admirable survey ranges widely, but not superficially, over the broad biblical foundation for Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. He explores in the Old Testament the justice of God and his promises, the covenant relationship and its basis in the blood of the covenant, God's righteousness as promise to be received by faith, and the response of covenant devotion, before considering the New Testament revelation of God's saving grace in Christ.

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Brian Wintle, by a careful marshalling of texts and patient exegesis, describes Paul's view of justification over against Jewish thinking concerning righteousness and the law, the Gentiles and the cross. Despite being slightly dated by the production delay, P.T. O'Brien's excellent survey charts the 'new insights' and 'genuine advances' in the understanding of this theme made in the previous two decades. He guides the reader skilfully through discussions of Käsemann's endeavour to open up new perspectives, the centrality of justification in Paul, E.P. Sanders' claim that Paul's difference with Judaism was not over 'grace' but simply 'salvation-history', and the debate over 'justification by faith, judgement according to works'.

Four other biblically-focussed essays deal competently with the theme of righteousness in Matthew; central, controlling themes in Luke-Acts and their bearing on justification; the use of the *dikaio*-word group in the Gospel of John; and James 2: 14-26 in relation to the rest of the letter and to Paul. Two essays relate justification to Christian practice. Russell Shedd explores the vital, biblical relationship between justification and sanctification, and Guillermo W. Mendez brings a challenging, Third-World perspective on the relevance of the doctrine to a biblical discussion of social justice. Klaas Runia traces thinking on the subject in Roman Catholic circles and in recent bilateral ecumenical talks. Despite acknowledging some genuine advances, Runia remains cautious. 'There remain deep-seated differences. They are not related to the starting-point of salvation in grace, but to the *application* of this grace in the concrete lives of believers. At this point there is still a wide and deep gap, in spite of all theological *rapprochement*.'

The final three essays, by Sunand Sumithra, Chris Marantika and Masao Uenuma, examine the relevance of justification by faith to the presentation of the gospel in Hindu, Islamic and Buddhist contexts respectively. They serve as a timely reminder that the gospel, at the heart of which lies this doctrine, is for the world and must be made known faithfully and sensitively in all the world. This volume will inform, warm, stimulate and challenge.

Eryl Rowlands, Northumbria Bible College, Berwick upon Tweed

Narratives of a Vulnerable God: Christ, Theology, and Scripture

William C. Placher

Westminster / John Knox Press, Louisville, KY, 1994;
188pp., \$14.99; ISBN 0 664 25534 5

While the world defies power, the gospel depicts a God vulnerable in love. Placher's study sketches the potential and problematic arising from this counter-cultural concept of Deity. He argues (following Frei) that the identity of God is reliably communicated by the shape of the biblical

narratives. The Gospel stories of Jesus show God as defined by a love unendingly willing to risk and bear suffering. Such love is weak in terms of conventional power, for it cannot coerce, but strong and reliable precisely in its limitless capacity to risk a vulnerability in relationship which conventional 'power' cannot admit.

There are repercussions for philosophical theology. Placher shapes (via Boethius, Barth and John's Gospel) an interpretation of divine eternity which permits God's freely loving engagement with the world while preserving God's constancy. The self-revelation in Jesus Christ of a vulnerable God allows us to know God as triune, not in the form of a hierarchy of power, but as a community of equals co-inhering in mutual love, so that the sending of the Son and Spirit is divine self-outpouring in vulnerable love.

Turning to biblical interpretation, Placher finds virtue, and correspondence with a vulnerable God, in the diversity of the Gospel narratives: readers are not coerced by the imposition of a single 'master-narrative'. It is in wrestling with the ambiguities of the texts that readers best find the relation between text and world. The challenge to such interconnection is actively issued by the narrative strategies employed: in this regard, Placher offers an interesting analysis of the diverse endings of the Gospels.

Tenable relationship between the text and contemporary reality may not easily be achieved. The difficulty of claiming to identify from patriarchal texts a God who is supremely in solidarity with the oppressed is sensitively treated, and the danger of promoting suffering and victimage acknowledged. While accepting biblical authority, Placher is at pains to give a nuanced, suitably non-exclusive account of the relation of the Christian revelation to other faiths.

Christian practice is Placher's passionate concern. Our Christian 'birthright' – 'God weak in power but strong in love' (Boff) – is to be made incarnate in solidarity with the vulnerable and outsiders of our societies, and in tackling injustice. The organisation of Christian community, the practice of the eucharist, and theological work within the academy and society must all reflect the God vulnerable in love.

Placher's style is lively, and much of the book would be accessible to the lay reader, despite some lapses into unexplained technical terminology. He indicates with some panache the extensive and various horizons of his theme. Suggestive and stimulating as the result is, however, this is too ambitious a project for so slim a volume. It may be felt to suffer not only from the sketchiness which the author acknowledges and permits in order to tour the horizons, but also from some disproportion in the level of treatment of issues. In particular, and fundamentally, the initial exegesis on which the proposal stands might profitably have been more rigorous: motifs portraying God's power in

other than vulnerable mode may not be as easily removed to the periphery of attention as we might like.

Denise Francis, University of Glasgow

The Biblical Flood: A Case Study of the Church's Response to Extrabiblical Evidence

Davis A. Young

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, and Paternoster, Carlisle, 1995; 327pp., \$19.99; ISBN 0 85364 678 3

A book about the flood, written by a professor of geology at Calvin College, is bound to have the ingredients of an interesting study. And so it does. Perplexed by the reluctance of Christians to take information from science seriously, and experiencing frequent comments that Christians 'must' hold a literalistic view of the flood, Young calls us to re-examine our doctrine of general revelation. In a seven-point epilogue, he rests his case with the assertion that the church 'desperately needs to develop an attitude and a hermeneutic that eagerly embrace the discoveries that are made in God's world'.

The book is as much a history of the flood in religious and scientific thought, as it is an exploration of the issues which it raises. We are treated to a comprehensive overview of the subject in biblical and extrabiblical texts, other ancient flood-legends, and in the thought and writings of Christians and scientists down the ages. This includes summaries of theories of the flood, and of recent ideas in commentators and other biblical writers. There is also a useful and interesting appendix on the search for Noah's ark (entitled 'arkeology'!), concluding that 'no one has provided compelling evidence for the existence of Noah's ark anywhere'.

One central issue which is not squarely faced is the question of the literary *genre* of the flood narrative. And that – along with the rest of the information in the book – opens all sorts of doors on issues of Scripture. But Young has given us a detailed and readable account, and made a good case for the position which he holds, as a scientist and a Christian. A localised flood in Mesopotamia is the only conclusion which he believes does justice both to Scripture and to the other evidence; no-one has produced any credible evidence for a world-wide flood.

Young's criticism, that Christian apologetics often uses ideas and information which are outdated or discredited, needs to be heard. So too does his assertion that if we are to witness effectively to the scientific community and a society with a scientific world-view, then we must take science seriously. I was reminded, when reading this, of Ian Barbour's lament that so few preachers ever tackle scientific issues from the pulpit. Perhaps it is time that we did. Maybe, after all, the old model of training ministers by arts then divinity (M.A., B.D.) is not the best one for today's world.

REVIEWS

Young has provided us with a very useful resource book with many footnotes to other material (publishers please note, however, that a bibliography is essential! I detest looking through pages of footnotes to find a reference). This is a fascinating and well-argued account, and does much to reconcile the sometimes entrenched views of scientists and Christians.

Review Editor

The Darwin Legend: Are Reports of his Deathbed Conversion True?

James Moore

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1994; 158pp., £6.99; ISBN 0 340 64243 2

From one of the co-authors of the definitive biography of Charles Darwin, there now comes a short account of an evangelical *cause célèbre*, the story of his last-minute conversion back to the Christianity which he had abandoned some years earlier. James Moore, an historian of science (and religion) at the Open University, presents an intriguing piece of detective work, concluding that although the story is not wholly a piece of pious fiction, yet neither is it factual.

Apart from being an invaluable account of this particular story, the book draws on Moore's extensive knowledge and research on Darwin, and is equally useful as a brief introduction to his life and the controversy he spawned. The worlds of Victorian science and religion are vividly portrayed, giving the reader an overview of Darwin's religious pilgrimage, his public and private image, the support as well as opposition which his ideas received from the church, and why he delayed publishing *The Origin of the Species* for so long.

So how did this 'deathbed conversion' story originate and circulate? I will not spoil the reader's enjoyment by giving the answer, except to say that it involves the evangelical revivals of Moody and Sankey (whom Moore compares to Gilbert and Sullivan!), and well-intentioned individuals whose imagination and zeal for the Lord exceeded common sense. It is a 'good read', marvellously well-documented (12 pages of notes, 18 pages of bibliography, and extensive appendices documenting every known source of the legend), and a salutary lesson for zealous preachers and evangelists of every generation.

Review Editor

Literary Forms in the New Testament

James L. Bailey and Lyle D. Vander Broek

SPCK, London, 1992; 219pp., £12.99; ISBN 0 281 04629 8

Two Professors of New Testament in Dubuque, Iowa, have collaborated to produce a helpful and readable introduction to NT literary forms. This succinct yet comprehensive survey treats thirty-one forms under three main headings: the Pauline tradition, the Gospel and Acts, and other NT writings.

The author's 'rather inclusive' working definition for literary form is a 'structure[d], conventional form'. They consider longer literary forms, frequently thought of as genres (*e.g.* letter, gospel and apocalypse), as well as shorter rhetorical structures (*e.g.* chiasmus, diatribe, midrash, parable and topos). A solid understanding of historical, literary, and rhetorical analysis undergirds the authors' definition and discussion of each form. They give multiple examples of each form considered in an attempt to explain how it functions in its given literary context. They also discuss important interpretative implications for each literary form. For the most part, technical language is avoided, and whatever jargon is used is adequately explained.

The proposed purpose of *Literary Forms in the New Testament* is to fill a void in published materials by providing 'a reference tool for those engaged in biblical interpretation'. In the mind of this reviewer, the project has largely been a success. The authors show considerable skill in handling both the biblical texts and the secondary sources. On the whole, each literary form is clearly presented and adequately explained. The comprehensive nature and the exegetical emphasis of this work is particularly beneficial for the beginning student, the busy pastor, and the interested lay person. This work is also of value for teachers, especially for classroom purposes.

Yet this book is not without weaknesses. First, it tends to be too repetitive in its treatment of the forms of argumentation, midrash, and topoi. Even though these forms are treated under different headings, less rehashing would have been welcomed. Another drawback is that Acts is discussed alongside the Gospel and is therefore not treated as carefully as it might have been. The General Epistles are also glided over too quickly. These flaws are basically aesthetic and do not detract greatly from the work.

However, in our view some of the authors' working presuppositions and gross generalizations do serve as a liability. For example, it is simply assumed that the Pastorals, James, 1 and 2 Peter and Jude are pseudonymous. It is also argued that the household codes found in the Pastorals are inferior to those in Ephesians, Colossians and 1 Peter, because 'they appear to accept uncritically the Hellenistic worldview'. Another suggestion given without support is that 1 Peter 1:2-4:11 is a

baptismal sermon. Certainly the authors were hindered by space limitations, but some of the views they espouse require additional explanation.

Even though I beg to differ at certain points, I still highly recommend this book for its intended purpose: a reference tool of the literary forms present in the NT. This work is an important collection of information which will enhance one's knowledge of literary forms and will be of assistance in the interpretative task. Given the introductory nature of the book there is of course limited documentation. However, the authors do give suggestions for further reading at the conclusion of each short section. In addition, the reader is aided by an index of Scripture references. Fortunately, the absence of subject and author index is of little consequence given the layout of the text.

Todd D. Still, University of Glasgow

Renaissance and Reformation and the Rise of Science

Harold P. Nebelsick

T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1992; xxi+320pp., £14.95; ISBN 0 567 09604 1

This book is the third volume of a trilogy, following *Theology and Science in Mutual Modification* and *Circles of God: Theology and Science from the Greeks to Copernicus*. It examines the interaction of key concepts between theology and science since classical times. Nebelsick died on Easter Sunday 1989 with the work unfinished, and it was subsequently prepared for publication by Paul Matheny and Mary Nebelsick. The thrust of Nebelsick's argument is stated in the 'Introduction' where we read that, despite the ambivalence of the church towards science, science 'arose on the basis of the very message which the church proclaimed, the faith it propagated and the doctrines it taught'.

There are three main chapters. The first is 'The Christian Critique of Aristotle' – whose spell on thought had to be broken for the establishment of experimental science. It examines in detail how Aristotelian thought began to crack under the investigation of men like Philoponos, Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, Ockham and Buridan. Central to the 'disenchantment' with Aristotle lay the Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, which 'entailed the unity of all creation'.

The second chapter considers 'The Renaissance Mind'. Nebelsick sees the Renaissance as a positive factor in the rise of modern science but concludes the section with this paragraph: 'Before that (sc. the rise of modern science) could happen, however, it was necessary that its wild, uncontrollable and uncontrolled flights of imagination be tamed and brought back to earth. Its insights needed to be threshed and winnowed by the teachings of the Christian faith as understood and propagated during

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the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.' This comment highlights Nebelsick's thesis that the Reformation had a positive and creative contribution to make in the establishment and development of modern science. He is concerned to show the positive bond between science and theology, over against those who would, following the Enlightenment, seek to drive a wedge between the two.

In an age when our culture often assumes the divorce of science and faith this book is a valuable contribution to setting the record straight. All of reality is God's reality and there is no fundamental dichotomy between the realm of science and that of faith. Nebelsick helps us to clarify some of the tangled connections between theology and natural science. The work of Nebelsick is much appreciated by Professor Thomas F. Torrance who is presumably the author of the Epilogue, which is a personal appreciation of the life and work of Nebelsick. It is rather irritating that nowhere is there any clear indication of who is its author. Other minor irritations are the poor quality of proof-reading which have allowed some glaring errors to creep in – including two prominent ones in the Preface!

John C. Sharp, East Kilbride

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

Donald Carson

IVP, Leicester, 1992; 230pp., £8.95; ISBN 0 85110 976 4

Perhaps the most intriguing point to be made about this book is its title: it addresses the reader where perhaps the itch is most obvious, namely, the need for 'spiritual reformation'. And there's the rub: it is a book on prayer! There is little doubt that were the main emphasis of the title on prayer it would warrant less our immediate attention. Such is the state of (spiritual) affairs! Yet this is a book on prayer, and an extremely readable and stimulating one at that, for here Carson is at his pastoral best in weaving together the theological and pastoral in a series of sermons first delivered in their entirety in Australia in 1990. His aim is brief and to the point: 'to work through several of Paul's prayers in such a way that we hear God speak to us today, and to find strength and direction to improve our praying, both for God's glory and for our good.'

The content is straightforward: there is a warm introduction to the whole subject of personal prayer in which the author abstains from giving rules and regulations, opting rather for ideas which encourage the individual to conform to that which is common in prayer as well as allow the peculiarities of the individual to come through in his or her prayer life. There then follows a series of chapters which deal with the following subjects: 'A Passion for People' (1 Thes. 3:9-13); 'The Content of a Challenging Prayer' (Col. 1:9-14); 'Overcoming the Hurdles' (Phil. 1:9-

11); 'Praying to the Sovereign God' (Eph. 1:15-23); 'Praying for Power' (Eph. 3:14-21); 'Prayer for Ministry' (Rom. 15:14-33). At the end of each chapter is a helpful set of questions for personal or group reflection and discussion.

Lest the reader think this is simply another book on prayer, it should be stressed that the genius of this book lies in its ability to scratch several itches at the one time. Most minimally, it will provide the jaded preacher with several excellent sermon outlines. At best, it serves a double challenge. On the one hand it challenges the reader on the personal level of practice: in what kind of praying is one engaged? Carson suggests several avenues of development given that prayer is a personal activity which reflects our own space-time contingencies. However, there is also a theological challenge: the reader is confronted with the much deeper theological issues that underlie the art of proper and meaningful spiritual exercise. Paul serves to reveal the necessity of adequate knowledge if one is to pray with power, precision and passion. Spiritual reformation is the result of sustained and informed reflection on the character of God, as revealed through Scripture, and in this case, through the prayers of Paul.

This, then, is not only a stimulating and helpful book on the subject of prayer and on the deeper realities underlying apostolic and contemporary prayer but also a must for preachers who are perhaps on the look-out for sermon and home-group ideas.

Graham McFarlane, London Bible College

Limits of Interpretation

Umberto Eco

Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990; 304pp., £12.99; ISBN 0 253 20869 6

Umberto Eco enjoys a celebrated career. Since his first novel (*The Name of the Rose*) landed on popular bookstore shelves back in 1986, and subsequently was turned into a motion picture, he has enjoyed a renown beyond the limited circles of academia, where he first gained his respect, and where he still makes his living. One now can see his name under lists of fiction and on newspaper editorial pages, just as much as one can see it on lecture circuits, on editorial advisory boards, and, of course, on numerous scholarly publications, whether journals or his own books. But with his *Limits of Interpretation* (1990), we are reminded again of Eco's stock-in-trade, for here we have a collection of essays which, though they possess all the verve and imagination of his more public works, show that he is, at heart, a semiotician whose motivating concerns are, for all their innovative descriptions, theoretical.

The fifteen essays that make up this collection were first published from 1977 to 1989, though the majority are from the latter half of the 1980's. They are, then, virtually all from a period following his earlier

books (*A Theory of Semiotics, The Role of the Reader, and Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*). This fact, as Eco himself points out, is not insignificant, for since the previous works 'elaborated upon the Piercean idea of *unlimited semiosis*', these essays all attempt to 'make clear that the notion of unlimited semiosis does not lead to the conclusion that interpretation has no criteria'. Fully aware of the flourishing theories in certain contemporary philosophical circles and literary criticism whereby interpretations can have free rein, and thus no reign, Eco, with these essays, hopes to draw the limits of any interpretive strategy, and show that not 'every act of interpretation can have a happy ending'. A text *does* impose limits. Though he will acknowledge that the limits are often difficult to define, and are more slippery than perhaps we desire, Eco suggests in this, his later thinking, that any reader must give as much deference to the constraints of a text as to its free play.

Texts, then, are naturally what we get in the working out of these interpretive curbs. Whether steering us through Aristotle, Augustine, Pliny the Younger, Aquinas, Bacon, Pirandello, Joyce, Borges, or C.S. Pierce himself, Eco always seems to delight in the reading and in the semiotic negotiating of a text. He is never short of diagrams, of syllogisms, of those formulaic and algebraic descriptions typical to philosophers of language, of analogies and metaphors, of intertextual connections and references, and of that blend of high-minded rigour with easy levity which makes the majority of his explorations more readable than most in his field. *His* texts, then, as they deal with *other* texts, shed a colourful light on how we might approach *any* text, whether they be within his purview or outside it.

But Eco's own texts are explorations; they are not definitive conclusions. As he has moved from his earlier recognition of a text as 'a playground for implementing unlimited semiosis', where the rights of the interpreter tended to supersede the rights of the written words, he has come to a more compromising position, where interpreter and text meet more at a half-way point. The extreme at either side of this point, he says in the first essay when comparing Christian symbolism with (post) modern symbolism, is 'a form of "fundamentalism"': on one side, 'every text speaks of the rational and univocal discourse of God', while on the other, 'every text speaks of the irrational and ambiguous discourse of Hermes'. Eco himself seems caught between these two 'fundamental' paradigms. A continual refrain that appears throughout these essays is summed up later in the chapter on Joyce, and in turn sums up Eco's middle position well: 'It is impossible to say what is the best interpretation of a text, but it is possible to say which ones are wrong.' No interpretation can claim ultimate authority. But it is possible to judge a reading incorrect because there is an 'internal textual coherence' which controls the reading and can be contravened. This internal coherence is what most (though not all) of these essays are seeking to explore in one

way or another – ‘rules of connection’ made by grammar, logic, semiosis, pragmatics, cultural history, or an interlocking web of all of these together. One will have to look hard to find common strands in the web that spell out these ‘rules of connection’, these ‘limitations’, neatly. But in each essay on its own, one can get a partial, if only suggestive, glimpse.

One area in which Eco cannot be accused in any way of being merely suggestive or compromising is his acknowledgement of the difficulty facing all modern readers, of confronting today’s hermeneutical circle, ever-accelerating and ever-widening in its spin by the ever-deepening questioning of language’s ability to hold firm our systems of belief. Where we seek in our texts the ‘rational and univocal discourse of God’ we find more and more the ‘irrational and ambiguous discourse of Hermes’. As a semiotician, Eco offers no immediate answers to what is, essentially, a theological problem. And concerned chiefly with ‘signification systems and processes’, his academic work tends to lack the philosophical reach which the (post) modern hermeneutical problem opens up. But Eco, for all his theorizing, is not limited to abstract semiotics alone. He is a creative text-maker as well. And just as his novels are empowered by his immense learning and seasoned scholarship, so these essays are invigorated by his inventive and imaginative insights, which, within their own limits, help us to understand, and to negotiate creatively through, this challenging and all-embracing circle of interpretation.

Andrew W. Hass, University of Glasgow

A Theological Introduction to the New Testament

Eduard Schweizer

SPCK, London, 1991; 191pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 281 04602 6

The author, a distinguished New Testament scholar, here offers a critical introduction to the New Testament which attempts to bridge the gap between the established genres of ‘Introduction’ and ‘Theology’. The format is essentially that of a standard introduction, but the focus is on the theological value of the New Testament books rather than the usual introductory issues of author, place, date *etc.*, which are dealt with only summarily.

The individual writings of the New Testament are examined in chronological sequence, instead of the order as given in the canon. Schweizer deals in turn with the letters of Paul, the letters of Paul’s disciples (Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians and the Pastorals), the General Epistles, the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, the literature of the Johannine circle and Revelation. Issues relating to the preliterary period and the formation of first written documents are dealt with in the opening section. In an ‘afterword’, the author looks at the formation of the canon,

and very briefly discusses the issue of the authority of the canon for today.

By adopting a chronological approach to the New Testament, Schweizer aims at the presentation of an 'historical process'. In describing this process, however, he resists the notion of a single, coherent development, but speaks rather of 'new beginnings, alternative solutions, and corrections as well, which from the outside seem to be accidental'.

While we welcome the author's focus on individual books in his approach to the theology of the New Testament, as opposed to the traditional 'loci' method of presentation (now out of favour anyway), he makes very little attempt to show how the various *theologies* found within the New Testament might be viewed as integrative. This deficiency is particularly glaring in his treatment of Paul. We might at least have expected an introductory piece on the major theological impulses behind Paul's writings, before being launched into the epistles themselves, or even, having emerged from them, a concluding discussion of 'coherence and contingency' (to borrow J.C. Beker's well-worn phrase) in Paul's letters, but all we are given is a couple of short paragraphs on the Apostle's 'Faith in Jesus'.

Essentially, this book is a survey or guidebook. It adds little to scholarly exchange on any of the issues it discusses. In my view, it is too wide-ranging in its scope, too brief in its treatment of the matters addressed, and at too many points not up-to-date enough, to be of much value for college- or university-level study of the New Testament. There is no general bibliography, and except in the endnotes, which are hardly extensive (and which rely heavily, as one might expect, on German literature), there are no recommendations for further reading.

Nevertheless, it does offer the reader, whether pastor or student, a concise overview of the New Testament from a critical perspective, with emphasis on the content of each book. Schweizer is good at identifying the key issues and explaining them succinctly, though most Evangelicals would want to disagree with many of his conclusions. While very readable, the work best serves those with some prior knowledge of critical study of the New Testament. The closing chapter on the canon and its meaning for today raises important questions which need to be addressed, and provides a useful discussion starter.

Edward Adams, King's College, London

Calvin's Preaching

T.H.L. Parker

Westminster / John Knox Press, Louisville, KY, and T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1992; xi+202pp., £16.95; ISBN 0 567 09605 X

To many Calvin is known only as the theologian of the *Institutes*, to a smaller number as a biblical commentator, to fewer still as a preacher. For decades English readers have been introduced to Calvin's preaching by Dr Parker's *The Oracles of God* (1947). Now the highly-regarded doyen of British Calvin scholars, he has incorporated the fruit of extended research and mature reflection, not least in editing the sermons on Isaiah 30-41 for the *Supplementa Calviniana*, in a book that immediately becomes the best guide to Calvin's preaching in any language. No serious student of Calvin or the Genevan reform will be able to do without *Calvin's Preaching*.

The twenty pages of bibliographies – of manuscripts, editions and translations – show that English translations, especially in the 1570s and 1580s, heavily outweighed versions into other languages. The appendices present first, translations of earlier catalogues of the sermons, including the one kept from 1557 by Denis Raguénier, whose achievement it was from 1549 to 1560/1 to transcribe Calvin's sermons in shorthand as he preached them; secondly, a mass of chronological information dating precisely several series of sermons; and thirdly, an argued case for believing that, as in his lectures, Calvin preached direct from the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Testaments, notwithstanding apparent evidence to the contrary.

The thirteen chapters cover everything from form – 'determined by the movement of the text' – and style – personal, homely, diffuse, accommodated to the limitations of the congregation – to exegesis and application, the sermon's transmission, survival and recovery (a story remarkable in several respects), and first and foremost what Calvin believed about preaching. Departing from the order of material in *the Oracles of God*, Parker of set purpose begins with 'The Theological Impulsion' that drove Calvin to devote so much time and energy to preaching. In his view, these early chapters carry their own self-evident message for today; any minister who can read them 'without a blush of shame and a prayer for time for amendment of life must be either above praise or beyond hope'.

This is a first-class book, ranking with the author's *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries* in the fresh illumination it casts on a comparatively neglected yet quite central part of Calvin's Genevan ministry, and opening up numerous avenues for further investigation.

D.F. Wright, New College, University of Edinburgh

The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church

Edited by J.L. Houlden

SCM, London, 1995; 163pp., £9.95; ISBN 0 334 02589 3

Professor Howard Marshall reviewed the original edition of this document, which was published by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, in volume 13 of *SBET*. As a footnote, the editor noted the publication of this new edition, which also contains responses to the document. Having recently participated in a seminar discussing the document, at which one of the respondents was present, and now having a copy of the new edition, I offer the following comments in addition to Professor Marshall's original review in the light of that. These will mainly concern the responses themselves, rather than the content of the document, which Professor Marshall ably dealt with.

The SCM edition has a brief introduction by Leslie Houlden. It does not, unfortunately, contain the Pope's address from the original edition. However, that address has much in common with Cardinal Ratzinger's preface, which is printed in both editions (who copied whom?!), so although the text is omitted, its sentiments are not.

The main value of the new edition lies in the seven essays responding to the document, printed after the text itself. These present a wide range of opinions, from the positive and welcoming to the critical verging on hostile, and from a number of perspectives: European, American, Catholic, Anglican and Robert Carroll of Glasgow (who defies categories!). I will have to be selective in commenting on them.

Peter Hebblethwaite's response comes first in the list (the book is dedicated to his memory). He discusses the question of the Bible in the Church, since the Pontifical document is unashamedly a Church document. Incidentally, I find the title of the SCM edition misleading at this point. The Pontifical Commission may well want to talk about 'the Church', but the later edition, presumably designed for a wider readership, should make it clear in the title or by a sub-title, that 'the Church' refers to the Roman Catholic Church only. Hebblethwaite's contribution is a brief description of the contents of the Commission's text.

Leslie Houlden, providing 'an Anglican reaction', describes the document as 'splendid', but has two critical comments to add: he is suspicious of the power of the magisterium to control meaning, and finds the document bland in areas where Church doctrine might turn out to be based on erroneous exegesis. This, says Houlden, is a time-bomb, a nettle in the undergrowth waiting to be grasped. In fact, this latter point is made by several of the respondents, who see tensions between the Commission's 'pontificating', and their statements about the importance of the laity and of minorities in interpreting the Bible. In fact, statements such as this from the Commission have no official or doctrinal status, and although this document is published to coincide with the centenary of

Providentissimus Deus, yet with what is tantamount to a papal *imprimatur* (at least, in its original edition), it is likely to carry much more weight than it officially has.

The most pungent and incisive response comes from Robert Carroll, who detects 'cracks in the soul of theology'. He compares the document to the wily Jacob, dressing up as his brother in order to deceive: things are not as they seem! The writers of the document, Carroll thinks, have not taken the insights of the Enlightenment seriously. He is particularly scathing about the document's statements about power and service, and suspicious of such statements coming from a Church with such a poor record of practising service, and such a good (bad?) one of exercising power.

One advantage of this edition is that the names of the members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission are printed, thus giving us an insight into who drafted the text. They are all clerical, all male, and almost all European. Although three American responses are included, would that this document had broken the mould by allowing other voices to speak, especially when the document itself speaks so eloquently about women, and the laity, and the marginalised, and their importance in interpreting and teaching the Scriptures! The only place where dissent is recorded in the Commission is over the last paragraph on 'the feminist approach' (eleven in favour, four against, four abstentions). This is regarded by Houlden as 'a nice sign of life', but by Carroll as the Vatican's unease with statements about 'power as service'. But was there dissent because the text is too radical, or not radical enough?¹

There is a common thread in many of the responses: it pertains to the question of *who* interprets the Scriptures. Is it the domain of the Church, or its councils? Ultimately, who decides? Carroll is critical of the way in which the small preserve of the (male) Pontifical Biblical Institute controls interpretation for others, especially in the area of feminist interpretation. What right has it to so do? Perhaps this points up a problem faced by many churches with regard to their practice. The Church of Scotland, after all, retains the right to 'frame and adopt its subordinate standards, to declare the sense in which it understands its Confession of Faith, to modify the forms of expression therein, or to formulate the doctrinal statements, and to define the relation thereto of its office-bearers and members, but always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith contained in the said

¹ The disputed paragraph states that 'Feminist exegesis often raises questions of power within the church, questions which, as is obvious, are matters of discussion and even of confrontation. In this area, feminist exegesis can be useful to the church only to the degree that it does not fall into the very traps it denounces and that it does not lose sight of the evangelical teaching concerning power as service, a teaching addressed by Jesus to all disciples, men and women.'

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Confession, of which agreement the Church shall be sole judge'. What is meant by 'the Church' in this statement from the Declaratory Articles, what is the relationship between this and the Bible, and what is the place of the individual's interpretation guided by the Spirit? These are questions with which every church has to grapple.

This is just a selection of the reactions. The responses contain some repetition, as is the nature of the case with such collections. The document has already produced a lot of reaction, and it is likely to continue to do so for a long time to come, apparently embracing critical methods as wholeheartedly as it seems to do. I did wonder about the choice of respondents. It seems, from Leslie Houlden's preface, that it was a case of using the only ones available! Three were specially commissioned, however: John Muddiman, with experience of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue, Kenneth Stevenson who gives a liturgist's response, and Robert Carroll, mentioned above. This may not be a comprehensive set of responses (as Houlden recognises), but it is a broad selection of 'discussion starters'. I have found the document useful, not only for its insights into how Roman Catholic scholarship is moving, but also for raising many of the issues which every church has to face in scriptural interpretation.

Review Editor

Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries Calvin's New Testament Commentaries

T.H.L. Parker

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1993; 239pp., n.p. 257pp., n.p.;
ISBN 0 567 29242 8, 0 567 29241 X

In his introduction to the first of these books, the author highlights the difference between the two: '*Calvin's New Testament Commentaries* is concerned more with textual and technical matters and has less room for the substance of his exposition', while *Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries* 'is... intended as an introduction, to portray these Old Testament expositions and perhaps whet the reader's appetite to read some of them for himself'. The contrast between them need not be laboured, since the author makes such explicit reference to it, and *COTC*, in which Calvin has been 'quoted liberally... to bring (the reader) into direct contact with his writings', is, for the most part, more interesting for the general reader.

Dipping into Calvin's commentaries again has recalled to mind my first impressions – as a twenty-year-old preparing to lead a student Bible study – of Calvin as an extremely concise, readable and relevant commentator. Here I would heartily concur with Parker's comment: 'no man ever kept as faithfully and consistently to the point' (quoted from his very interesting chapter, 'Prolegomena to Exegesis', in *CNCT*).

Acquiring plenty of modern commentaries over the years, I have not read as much of Calvin as I might have. Since finishing these books, I must confess that I have not rushed to my shelves for his commentaries. Nevertheless, I think these volumes have exerted some influence on my present course of ministry. The sense of progression in the Old Testament Scriptures, brought out well in *COTC*, has led me to a series of studies giving an overview of God's ongoing purpose of salvation in the Old Testament history. One of Parker's comments in *CNTC* has sparked off a series on Romans: 'a commentary on Romans will lay a solid foundation for the understanding of the genuine meaning of the rest of the New Testament'. Calvin's own words concerning Romans are well worth pondering: 'if anyone acquires a true understanding of it, he will have doors open into all the most secret treasures of Scripture'.

One final point at which we can learn from Calvin, even if neither keen students of history nor avid readers of his commentaries: 'He continued throughout his career to study the Bible, to read the text as a student who wanted to learn its meaning, to read commentaries on the text with an open mind.' That is just the attitude we need today if our ministries are to be both faithful and fruitful.

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Hard Sayings of the Old Testament

Walter C. Kaiser Jr.

Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1991; 259pp., £7.99; ISBN
0 340 54617 4

Any book which encourages people to read and helps them to understand the Old Testament is to be warmly welcomed, and Walter Kaiser has again put us in his debt. He has taken seventy-three of the 'hard sayings' of the Old Testament and applied his formidable scholarship and extensive teaching and preaching experience to their elucidation. Here we will find concise and penetrating essays on many difficult passages. Readers hoping for help on such sayings and incidents as 'you will surely die' (Gen. 2:17); 'sacrifice your son as a burnt offering' (Gen. 22:2), Uzzah's touching the ark (2 Sam. 6), Elisha and the she-bears (2 Kings 2), Babylonian babies (Ps. 137), or Ezra's sending away of foreign wives (Ezra 10) will not be disappointed. Kaiser writes on these and many other matters with skill, erudition and pastoral insight.

How useful is this book? One point that Kaiser himself deals with in his foreword is that to some extent the selection is arbitrary. All readers will have their own selection of 'hard sayings' and will be surprised at some omissions. This is not a serious criticism and Kaiser himself has spoken of the possibility of further books on this issue. A more substantial question, at least for this reviewer, is whether this is the best

way to deal with these problems. A book like this, for all its merits, is in some danger of giving the idea that solving this or that difficulty is the way to do biblical theology. For example, chapter 38 which deals with Esther 8:11 and the king's edict permitting the Jews to destroy the opposition deals crisply with the issue but fails to examine the book as a whole and its place in the canon. Similarly, the famous crux in Isaiah 45:7 is competently handled but more is needed on the doctrines of creation and providence and the existence of evil. Evangelicals need to produce more biblical theology which will indeed pick up these problems en route but will integrate them more closely into a systematic treatment of canonical, literary, and hermeneutical issues.

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Prophets of the Lord

Mary Evans

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1992; 267pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 85364 483 7

A vast amount of scholarly study has been devoted to the prophetic literature as well as to individual prophets, and this sure-footed guide by Mary Evans is to be welcomed. She begins with an analysis of who the prophets were and their historical circumstances, and the non-writing prophets. Each of the prophetic books is then considered in detail, their message analysed, useful questions set and further reading recommended. This all adds up to a thorough and helpful book which will be of great use to students, ministers and others. What are the book's merits? It is written in a clear and non-technical style and gives a full treatment of the subject. It is concerned with the relevance of the prophets for today's living. This is particularly clearly seen in the studies of Amos and Isaiah 1-39. It moves easily and skilfully through a mass of often bewildering material and encourages the reader to think.

The book is certainly worth buying and would be helpful for reference. One or two points I am less happy with. In recent years there has been a lot of radical rethinking on prophecy by writers such as A.G. Auld and R.P. Carroll. This needs to be interacted with. It is a pity that Mary Evans has not taken the opportunity to do so. Similarly more needs to be said on the literary nature of prophecy. Why is so much of prophecy in poetry? What is there about this medium which makes it so suitable to be the 'Word of Yahweh'? The other great omission is a consideration of the role of Moses. If Moses is the archetypal prophet and 'man of God', some consideration of his place in the developing tradition would have given a longer perspective. Similarly, at the other end, some remarks on how New Testament prophecy relates to Old would have been welcome. Read the book, then, you will learn much, but also cast your net more widely.

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1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)

Donald J. Wiseman

IVP, Leicester, 1993; 318pp., £8.99; ISBN 0 85111 846 1

The books of Kings are still not especially well served with commentaries, so it is a particular pleasure to welcome this fine contribution to the Tyndale series. Professor Emeritus Wiseman draws from his vast and meticulous scholarship and no more knowledgeable and sure-footed guide could be imagined.

Following the normal format of the series there is a concise but thorough introduction. The sections on chronology and archaeology are particularly helpful and enlightening. There are also a number of illuminating additional notes on such subjects as 'High Places' and 'The Man of God'. The commentary proper, within the constraints of space, covers the ground fairly fully. I would mention the section on Solomon as particularly effective. I have not read such a lucid exposition of Solomon's building activities. Indeed the book is worth having for that alone. The Elijah / Elisha stories are also well covered, although more on miracle and judgement would have been welcome. As we would expect, the Assyrian background of the later monarchy is given magisterial treatment. The chapters on Hezekiah show a particularly effective use of archaeology to illuminate the text.

All in all this is a fine commentary. This reviewer, however, has two reservations. The first is that while this commentary will prove invaluable to the preacher (it was my regular companion in a recent series I preached on 1 and 2 Kings), there is insufficient attention to the thorny theological issues such as those already mentioned. In what sense is biblical history normative? How do we deal with the activities of Jehoshaphat and Ahaz in a way that is faithful to the ancient text and relevant to modern living? The other issue is that of literary genre. What kind of books are 1 and 2 Kings? How are narrative techniques used to create a world and how does the prophetic historian select his material? All these are issues relevant to the books' present impact. So buy the book and use it, but badger publishers to commission commentaries that also address preaching and literary issues.

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The Message of Deuteronomy: Not by Bread Alone (The Bible Speaks Today)

Raymond Brown

IVP, Leicester, 1993; 331pp., £8.99; ISBN 0 85110 979 9

Raymond Brown, formerly Principal of Spurgeon's College, has given us a most readable and thorough exposition of Deuteronomy and very

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worthily fulfilled the aim of the series 'to expound the biblical text with accuracy, to relate it to contemporary life and to be readable'. The author tells us in his preface that much of this material was first expounded at various meetings and conferences, and this strong homiletic note is one of the prominent and useful features of the book. The introduction deals with the value of the book, its dating and some of the leading theological ideas. The commentary proper takes covenant as the unifying theme of Deuteronomy and analyses the book as the covenant introduced, expounded, applied, confirmed and shared. The section called 'Expounding the Covenant' is a very useful analysis of the Decalogue and its relevance. The final section has a fine treatment of Moses which also sums up much of the thrust of the exposition.

In the absence of many good commentaries on Deuteronomy this book can certainly be recommended. Preachers, however, should not use this book and similar ones in this series to do their work for them. Brown has given us a series of fine sermons on Deuteronomy, but not always shown us how he arrives at his conclusions. For example, his comments on the date of the book will persuade few who are doubtful of Mosaic authorship. He may be right (this reviewer believes he is), but he does not sufficiently wrestle with the issues involved – *e.g.* the lack of mention of covenant in the eighth-century prophets. Also, some thorny issues need more attention. Questions of extermination of the Canaanites are not sufficiently addressed. How does this differ from 'ethnic cleansing'?

The book is a worthy contribution to the series, but we need commentaries on books like Deuteronomy which give us both academic rigour and homiletic passion.

Bob Fyall, St John's College, Durham