

In the Study

IT is nearly fifty years since the appearance of Buchanan Gray's *Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*; and that fact alone would have gone far towards ensuring a welcome for its successor. But the welcome was made more certain and unqualified by the entrusting of the task to the capable hands of the Professor of Old Testament Studies at Durham. G. W. Anderson was an obvious choice. The result has amply justified the selection.¹

Inevitably the scope of the work is restricted. The concern is with nature and composition, structure and content. It tends to involve pedestrian presentation from the author and a hard and tiring march for the reader. Occasionally the exposition rises to real heights; but it is significant that the best chapters (on Pentateuch and Former Prophets) are precisely those dealing with sections of the Old Testament front where recent and exciting advances have been registered. For the rest, we must apply ourselves to this book as a necessary discipline. Old Testament theology may hold far more interest and claim more immediate relevance. But without this kind of "critical" foundation it careers crazily to an unproductive end.

Against the background that Professor Anderson provides we may usefully examine the most recent attempt to present a theology of the Old Testament.² We are offered four sections, dealing with the person of the living God, the universe and creation, the relationship between God and Israel, and the historical redemptive purpose of the Lord. It is a nice point for discussion as to whether, in the light of Israel's historical self-understanding, section two should really precede section three. But however we may question the ordering of the material, the general approach and perspective must command wholehearted assent. This is church theology, which treats the Old Testament as revelation, as Christian scripture.

The whole is interestingly written and attractively produced. The indexes are adequate. The Hebrew is transliterated. The references to scholarly works are properly kept in quantitative subordination to the text, and are chosen with rare discrimination. Beyond all

¹ *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*, by G. W. Anderson. Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 12/6, 1959.

² *A Christian Theology of the Old Testament*, by G. A. F. Knight. S.C.M. Press, Ltd. 30/-, 1959.

this, the great strength of the book is revealed in its semantic preoccupation. An impressive philological equipment is constantly and soberly employed. The result is the laying of durable foundations, making possible illuminating exegesis and interpretation.

But the significant heart of this study is to be found in a brief chapter of sixteen pages which delineates the five "moments" in the experience of the people of God that give unity to the Old Testament story. Birth, marriage, death, resurrection, final restoration—therein is to be discerned both the pattern of Israel's life and the progression of historical revelation. Israel, God's corporate Son, was given life at the Exodus, was wedded to her Creator at Sinai, died in 587, rose again in the return from exile, and looks towards the consummation. This is the prophetic interpretation. This is the Old Testament's understanding.

I suspect that here we stand on the brink of recognition of something of tremendous importance. Surely, from the Christian perspective, the writing of a sectional theology, whether of the Old Testament or of the New, is a task that can never *in principle*, be really satisfactorily discharged. Because the whole is Scripture, it is a theology of the Bible that is demanded. Certainly this is to require of one man a wide range of competence. But the venture is not impossible, and there is a rich prize to be won.

Already the signposts are being erected. The five "moments" of Israel's history are repeated in the life of the Christ and in the life of the Church of the New Testament; for each and all are "son" of God. But thus to think Old Testament and New Testament together does not mean a flight from the temporality of history or a blurring of necessary distinction. The categories of "promise" and "fulfilment" must be adjudged inadequate. For the Old Testament is more than promise; it has its own intrinsic revelatory significance. Certainly the Christ event is Scripture's controlling centre, and a measure of typological interpretation is inevitable. But the eccentricities of Vischer should warn us against an application of the christological criterion which cuts itself loose from the historical pattern of sonship. The better way is the one that G. A. F. Knight has implicitly pointed. If he has provided us with our best Anglo-Saxon *Theology of the Old Testament*, yet this other less deliberate contribution may prove to be more important still. The road ahead may remain in shadows. But I think that the lights will begin to shine as scholarship proceeds to working out the implications of a recognition that the Pentateuch is to the Old Testament what the Gospels are to the New, and to building upon the studies of Dodd, Jirku, and Von Rad by relating the kerygmatic proclamations of the Old and New covenants.

Meanwhile the specialists continue their indispensable work; and in the New Testament field the "Black" commentaries continue

to appear with praiseworthy regularity. The latest volume³ maintains the standard of its predecessors and continues their theological preoccupation. Since this series is, in many respects, most readily comparable with the "Moffatt" commentaries, it may be valid to assess the present study in relation to Hugh Michael's earlier work. Though both scholars wrote from Toronto, this is about all they have in common. Professor Beare provides a much longer introduction and a much shorter exposition. He disagrees about place of origin, favouring Rome rather than Ephesus. He disagrees about the extent of interpolation, arguing for almost all chapter three and half chapter four.

Clearly the strength of this commentary resides in its author's illuminating translation and broadly theological interest. The lengthy appendix on kenotic christology from the pen of Dr. Fairweather is of weight and importance. On the other hand, the defects are bound up with the comparatively restricted space allowed to exposition. We miss the careful consideration of other views and interpretations that was so valuable a feature of Hugh Michael's study. It must be allowed that Professor Beare could not get a quart into a pint pot. But this is so good a commentary that it is doubly unfortunate when restrictions of space impart an impression of unjustified dogmatism to parts of the exposition. As a contribution it stands beside the more significant of its predecessors; but it does not supersede them.

Dr. Beare is quick to emphasize the great importance of the epistle to the Philippians in the history of Christian spirituality; and in so doing he brings us very close to the pastoral concern. The ministerial task is more than one of teaching and exposition. It is not only a St. Paul who must bear on his heart the care of the churches. But pastoral theology is not "today an established and coherent discipline. We are given the wisdom of experience from the pragmatic standpoint. We acquire our dubious smatterings of psychological wisdom. But fundamental and unifying theory is almost wholly lacking. This is a lacuna that desperately needs filling.

In general the best work in this field is American rather than British, and it is Seward Hiltner who has lately given to us a noteworthy seminal study.⁴ It is pioneering rather than definitive, but it enhances Dr. Hiltner's already considerable reputation. It seeks to establish pastoral theology as "a formal branch of theology resulting from study of Christian shepherding," to delimit its field and plot its guiding lines. Thus its essential concern is to examine

³ *The Epistle to the Philippians*, by F. W. Beare. A. & C. Black. 16/-, 1959.

⁴ *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, by Seward Hiltner. Abingdon Press. 32/-, 1958.

the functioning of minister and church from the shepherding perspective and draw the appropriate theological conclusions. But it does not and cannot stop there. The amorphous nature of prevailing conceptions forbids it. If the chosen land is truly and adequately to be delimited, the contours of neighbouring territory must at least be sketched. So the main exposition of the working out of the shepherding perspective is followed by minor discussions of "organizing" and "communicating." Undeniably the coverage is extensive. Perhaps the range exceeds the grasp.

Dr. Hiltner argues forcibly for the examination of shepherding under the three aspects of healing, sustaining, and guiding; and it is at this point that one of the outstanding features of this book is revealed. For discussion and advance proceed by way of constant reference to the case histories of a 19th century Presbyterian pastor, Ichabod Spencer. This unique and uninhibited record provides the factual material that makes exposition and interpretation live. It reminds us that theory is valid only as it is relevant to the practical situation. It reminds us also of the determinative influence of theology upon action. The reader who finds the characteristically American approach of this work difficult will feel at home with Ichabod Spencer. If he perseveres and masters the message of this stimulating if provisional study, he may be encouraged and equipped to emulate in his day the Brooklyn pastor! And he may learn the difference between pastoral theology and pastoral psychology.

Many of the problems and situations with which the pastor has to deal lie in the realm of sex and marriage. Fortunately debate has begun to move beyond both sentimentalized assertion of conventional teaching and defiant proclamation of intimate mechanics. We have become aware of profounder levels. We have commenced to talk theology—and to apply it. In this advance Derrick Sherwin Bailey has occupied a key position. His careful examination of the tradition in which we stand now gives us an indispensable foundation upon which to build.⁵ He reviews at length the teachings of the patristic age, of the mediaeval western church, of the Reformers, of the 17th century Anglican divines. All is clearly and fairly stated; but the report is more than a factual one. We learn not only what was believed, but why; we begin to *understand* the past. It is this kind of discerning study that makes sober reassessment possible. To such provisional elucidation and restatement of a deeply Christian theology of sex the final chapter is devoted.

But any satisfactory theological reconstruction must be firmly founded upon a double base. On the one hand, full account must be taken of the Christian tradition and in particular its biblical basis. This is Dr. Bailey's strength. Not only has he mastered the

⁵ *The Man-Woman Relation in Christian Thought*, by D. Sherwin Bailey. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd. 30/-, 1959.

historical development in all its complex progression, but he has also listened attentively to the voices of the biblical theologians. He understands the importance of the early chapters of Genesis and the Song of Songs. He knows the profundity of the Barthian exposition of the *imago dei*. He has sat at the feet of Martin Buber. He has learned a sympathetic interpretation of St. Paul that refuses any longer to cast him for the rôle of villain of the piece. Yet even all this is not in itself sufficient. For, on the other hand, a completely honest attitude must be adopted towards the relevant knowledge increasingly available from other sources—whether cultural, anthropological, or psychological.

It is just at this point that Dr. Bailey's work is usefully supplemented by a book from the pen of an American writer.⁶ Professor Cole covers much of the same ground and, to that extent, may be used as comparative surveyor. But he tends to proceed by way of a close examination of the thinking of representative figures, and naturally gives considerable attention to interpretations of sex offered by the psychoanalysts. From time to time he seems to give unnecessary expression to an adolescent wish to shock the "Victorian" reader; and his own attempt at reconstruction, sane and illuminating as it clearly is, lacks something of the profundity implicit in the approach of Sherwin Bailey. Nevertheless, the challenge he offers is not to be evaded. Again and again he punctures conventional Christian theory by reference to probable or certain biological, sociological, or anthropological fact. It is a cogent demonstration of the inescapable need for ceaseless conversation between the scientist and the theologian if real progress is to be recorded. Many will find themselves unable to follow Dr. Bailey in his volte-face on the question of the subordination of woman to man. Many more will balk at Professor Cole's defence of a possible future supersession of monogamy. But all who undergo the discipline of thinking together these two informative volumes will find their horizons broadened and their understanding enriched.

If all this appears remote from the immediate pastoral situation, further reflection will prompt a wiser conclusion. Sex, truly understood, is no departmentalized concern, for sexuality reaches to humanity's depths. It is Karth Barth who speaks of the double human duty to live "as man *or* woman" and "as man *and* woman," to affirm both sexual integrity and sexual interdependence. This is the level at which thought must begin. It should bear fruit in humility, and carry with it the faltering realization that it is the mystery of personal existence that confronts us. To accept the responsibility of offering counsel in the context of love and marriage involves more than the willingness to enunciate a few sound Chris-

⁶ *Sex in Christianity and Psychoanalysis*, by W. G. Cole. Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 21/-, 1936.

tian generalizations and remedy an ignorance of practical realities. Rather does it involve the attempt, in fear and trembling, to illumine a dawning experience, relate it to its depths, make explicit its significance, and point towards its fulfilment.

To ask who is sufficient for these things is a sign of maturity. Fortunately an increasing volume of wise exposition is becoming available to us. Probably no wide agreement can be recorded as to the most helpful manual for marriage guidance; and this is scarcely surprising. But to any who have thus far sought in vain I would commend the recent translation of a book by a continental physician.⁷ Of its kind it is surely one of the best and most reliable discussions available to us. In brief compass it adequately covers the necessary field, and comment is always frank, judicious, and discerning. But the great strength of the book resides in the profound and unifying vision and understanding of Christian marriage that informs its every page. Its importance lies not in any startling originality but in its penetrating grasp of the essence of marital union and intra-personal living. The reader who is alert to the restricted sense in which the word "sexuality" is employed will best appreciate the enormous importance of the distinction drawn between the erotic and the sexual. And one minister at least, after sitting at Dr. Bovet's feet, felt with even keener urgency than before the desperate need for a revision of the marriage service.

Marriage and music may go together. I fancy, however, that the association of church music with theology will sound strangely in many ears. But this fact is only one of many reasons why a book which attempts *their* marriage should be widely read and pondered.⁸ It is to be hoped that the unmusical minister will not at once conclude either that it is outside his proper range of concern or that it is beyond his comprehension. True he may make little of consecutive fifths and diatonic melody; but he may learn much even if the rare technicalities elude him. Furthermore, if he has any conception of the influence of hymnody in piety and worship, he will be alert to the necessity of informing his judgment and clarifying his criteria.

Those familiar with Dr. Routley's earlier writings on this general theme will gain most from the present study through being able to draw on a larger context of thought and assumption. Yet those who begin here will find the general lines of argument clear. The discussion of biblical insights, of law and grace, of the dangers of pride and greed, of the need for restraint and cheerful service, is more relevant to the matter in hand than might at first appear.

⁷ *A Handbook to Marriage and Marriage Guidance*, by Theodor Bovet. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd. 12/6, 1958.

⁸ *Church Music and Theology*, by Erik Routley. S.C.M. Press, Ltd. 8/6, 1959.

But the treatment is too slight to carry full conviction; important ideas are insufficiently worked out and related; even a certain incoherence of presentation is evidenced. Confidence falters, and revives only when the chapters on "beauty" and "romanticism" are reached. So far as definitions of beauty are concerned, St. Thomas is of more immediate and positive help than Scripture; but the biblical silence is itself significant. Dr. Routley's rendering of a familiar verse from the Psalms as "Worship the Lord with decent ornaments" is perhaps not quite defensible; but if it finally disposes of "the beauty of holiness" we may forgive his exuberance. As for romanticism—the arranged confrontation of the Old Testament with C. S. Lewis is illuminating, and the excursus on Johann Sebastian Bach is cogent and in place. Moreover, the reminder that eschatology is the substitute for romanticism that Christian doctrine offers and demands is both crucial and profound.

This intriguing study draws to its close with some expected comments on organs, organ-playing, and bad music. And if much of this is now familiar, it is still gratefully to be received as from one unusually proficient and discerning. But the great point of this book lies at its heart. It is the elucidation of the real connection between theology and church music by reference to the conjunction of Christ with the Church which is His body. Because the pattern of the Church is the pattern of the Christ, therefore all matters of her life and behaviour must be similarly conformed. It means that church music must be correlative to the life, death and resurrection of the Lord.

This is not mere verbiage. It is the enunciation of a principle of cardinal importance and governing significance. Those who have been trying to make this emphasis in season and out of season will be thankful for the weight of Dr. Routley's authority. To work out all the implications of this truth would be to enter and explore large territories. But certain things are immediately plain. There is laid upon us the duty, in the music of hymnody, of shunning the pretentious, the sentimental, the facile, the complacent. Here also the Cross and Resurrection are desperately and urgently normative. The Gospel brings both its Yes and its No to the standards and aspirations of fallen humanity. Church music must express the proper tensions of the faith, must never bypass the Cross. We must pray, if belatedly, that the compilers of the new Baptist Hymnal had amongst the members of its Tunes committee not only the musically competent, but also the theologically aware—and that these last were prepared to fight.

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