

Book Reviews

COMMON WORSHIP CONSIDERED:

A liturgical journey examined

Peter Toon

Denton: Edgeways, 2003 160pp £16.80hb ISBN 0-907839-78-9

Peter Toon is a distinguished student of church history who, during his ministry in England and the USA, has written extensively on that and other subjects. He would not, I think, claim that liturgy is his primary field of study, but he has certainly devoted exceptional energy to the cause of defending the historic *Book of Common Prayer*, both in England and the USA, as a contemporary vehicle of worship. In the present volume he examines the latest English alternative to it, *Common Worship*.

The title 'Common Worship' is borrowed from the Church of South India which as one of its measures to show that it was not a take-over by Anglicans, called its liturgy *The Book of Common Worship*, avoiding the phrase 'Common Prayer'. The new 'Common Worship', however, is not a book, but a series of books—a series which is not yet completed and has no announced end. The unrestrained loquacity of the present Liturgical Commission may go on announcing further volumes as long as their paymasters permit them to. In this sense also their favourite conception of a 'liturgical journey' fits the case.

One of the merits of the present work is that it does not simply examine the main volume of 'Common Worship' but some of the other volumes as well namely 'Initiation Services' and 'Pastoral Services'. The Baptism service is repeated in the main volume, and the author notes that the two texts do not altogether agree.

Among the shrewd points he makes are that 'Common Worship' is more a resource book for local worship-directors than an actual liturgy, so 'Common' in its title comes to have Congregationalist sense; and that the 'common shape' to which the Commission appeals could also be used to construct a service for the worship of Krishna or Baal.

The chapter on 'Bible and Doctrine' is important. The author not only shows how much less close to the Bible is the new alternative than the BCP, and how ready it is to omit basic doctrinal texts to which the Church of England is committed but also how questionable some of its own doctrinal formulations are.

The chapter on ‘Thou and You’ is thought-provoking (and the author has examined the subject further in a small book *Neither Archaic nor Obsolete*, jointly written with Louis Tarsitano and published by the same press). For a time, modern liturgies and modern translations of the Bible continued addressing God as ‘thou’, while using ‘you’ for a man. Latterly, they have extended ‘you’ to God, arguing that the Bible, in the original languages, makes no such distinction, and that in sixteenth century English ‘thou’ was simply the ordinary singular form. This reasoning is so generally accepted that it is at first surprising to see it challenged, but the author presents some serious arguments. Even if the Bible does not use different pronouns for God and man, it does use different pronouns for the singular and the plural so the meaning is made less distinct (in human contexts also) by using the plural pronoun in all cases. Moreover, it is evidently not the case that in sixteenth-century English ‘thou’ is used of God simply as being the singular pronoun since the evidence of the Catechism and the Ordinal shows both ‘thou’ and ‘you’, being used when addressing a man, but only ‘thou’ when addressing God.

ROGER BECKWITH
Oxford

**WHERE IS BOASTING? EARLY JEWISH SOTERIOLOGY AND
PAUL’S RESPONSE IN ROMANS 1–5** Simon J. Gathercole
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002 311pp £22.99pb ISBN0-8028-3991-6

The counter-attack against the ‘New Perspective on Paul’ seems at last to be getting under way—and about time too! E. P. Sanders’s book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, which launched the ‘New Perspective’ movement, was published as long ago as 1977, and though the Pauline part of it was at first critically received by New Testament scholars, and the Jewish part by Jewish scholars, its thesis has since become fairly generally accepted, at least in the English-speaking world. Why this should be, is less easy to say. Perhaps younger scholars felt less committed to the established opinions, and Sanders’s apparent expertise in both fields was bound to be impressive; also, his claim to narrow the gap between Christianity and Judaism would naturally attract sympathy.

Sanders’s thesis is that the Judaism of the apostolic period was what he calls ‘covenantal nomism’. It was a religion of grace, which placed the circumcised

within God's covenant, where the function of obedience to the Law was simply to keep one within it. Sanders's subsequent writings have sought to bolster his thesis, and certain distinguished New Testament scholars, notably James Dunn and Tom Wright, have become advocates of it.

But the crucial question about his thesis is its truth. Does it give a true account either of early Judaism or of the teaching of Paul? Writers are now coming forward who are ready to deny this, and are equipped to prove what they say. The author of this book is one such writer. He makes a careful examination of Jewish literature from the period before A.D. 70, and establishes that justification by obedience to the Law is frequently taught there. He also establishes that in Romans 1–5 this concept of justification is denied. In addition, he draws attention to the neglect of the final judgement in Sanders's account of Judaism, and of sin and predestination in his account of Paul.

When the large symposium being published at Tübingen is also complete (*Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. Carson, O'Brien and Seifrid), the case against Sanders's thesis looks like being formidable indeed.

ROGER BECKWITH
Oxford

JOEL AND OBADIAH

John Barton

Louisville: WJK Press, 2001 188pp £25hb ISBN 0-664-21966-7

The WJK Old Testament Library has certainly developed into a critically important tool for students of the Old Testament. Like each volume in the series, this one contains a wealth of interesting and important information on the state of critical views on dating, authorship, the identity of text, and so on. Considering the brevity of both books, one may be surprised at just how much scholarly interest has been generated, some of which goes back to Luther and Calvin. It hardly needs saying that some will not want to agree with the major conclusions concerning authorship and dating, though one may at times admire the ingenuity of the arguments.

What is perhaps of greater concern to those who seek the revelation of God in his word is the view taken of 'prophetic xenophobia'. The oracles of many

prophets are mentioned in these pages, and those that speak of destruction as coming upon Israel's enemies are generally viewed with distaste, though excuses are sometimes made. Barton seems to take for granted the common view that God, being a God of love, should be understood in a way that causes us to distance ourselves from all such utterances. This is, of course, a failure to grasp the doctrine of the holiness of God, which is a major fault of much critical opinion. God is viewed very much from a human perspective, no matter how seriously certain Old Testament understandings of the nature of God are taken. Scholars understand God as having and seeking human levels of behaviour, and so he is judged accordingly. Prophets are then themselves judged on these levels, thus removing from them their peculiar role as divine instruments in revealing the holy will.

The result of this approach is that the final work is seen as saying more about the prophet than about the God that prophet serves and reveals. Thus the value of Barton's work is limited; it will be of immense help to those who need to interact with critical opinion, but will add little to an evangelical understanding of these two prophets. The discussion on 'the day of the Lord' in Joel is helpful, but since he argues for authorship by Joel and 'Deutero-Joel' this is again limited in value.

EDWARD MALCOLM
Reading

PAUL AND JESUS: THE TRUE STORY

London: SPCK, 2002 195pp £12.99pb

David Wenham

ISBN 0-28105480-0

The limited amount of obvious overlap that there is between the gospels and the epistles often raised questions in people's minds. Is Paul aware of the gospel record? Are his readers aware of it? Is Paul's teaching the same as Jesus'? Which came first? Dr. David Wenham addressed these teasing questions in 1994 in his book *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* and here he returns to them popularizing his earlier conclusions.

His conclusions are remarkably reassuring. Although detailed parallels with the gospel record are few, being largely confined to 1 Corinthians 7:11 and 12, there are summaries of Christ's life and work in Romans 1, Galatians 4 and

Philippians 2, and probable or possible reflections of the contents of the gospels in a multitude of places throughout Paul's epistles—not only the contents of Luke but also of Matthew and Mark and to a limited extent, John—thus showing the influence that it had on Paul's thinking. Even if not everything in the gospels is reflected, the occasional nature of the epistles and the local problems with which they had to deal, could account for this. It does not mean that other parts of the gospel record had not been communicated to Paul's readers in the course of their earlier evangelization and instruction.

Dr. Wenham is fully satisfied with the evidence that Luke and Acts are the work of a companion of Paul, the beloved physician Luke, and are historically reliable. He therefore goes through the epistles in historical order concentrating especially, on those he considers to be the earliest (Gal. 1 and 2, Thess. and 1 Cor.) and not only drawing out their links with the gospels but relating them to the life of Paul as recorded in Acts. Here, of course, he tackles another long-standing critical problem as it has sometimes been expressed: how is the historical Paul of the (genuine) epistles related to the legendary Paul of Acts? Recent study has done much to restore the credibility of Acts after a period of rampant scepticism and Dr. Wenham's approach has much in common with that most favoured by conservative scholars since Paley published his *Horae Paulinae* in 1790 concentrating on the undesigned coincidences between Acts and the Epistles. The coincidences are very persuasive.

ROGER BECKWITH
Oxford

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON POST-VATICAN II ROMAN CATHOLICISM Leonardo de Chirico
Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003 337pp. £39.00pb ISBN: 3-03910-145-5

Relations between Evangelical Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church have never been easy, but in recent years both sides have shown a much greater interest in each other than has been the case for a very long time. As the two most vital forms of Christianity today, it is probably inevitable that this should be so. In some parts of the world, Evangelicals and Roman Catholics compete with each other, but in other places they seem to be able to join hands in co-operation, particularly in social and political action.

Leonardo De Chirico, who is an Italian Evangelical, has put together a comprehensive survey of Evangelical–Catholic relations since the landmark Vatican II council (1962-5). He ranges very widely, treating both the most conservative (Herbert Carson) and the least (Donald Bloesch) with equal degrees of sympathy and understanding. He is able to find something positive to say about everyone he deals with, but at the same time he is by no means uncritical of them. Fundamentally, he criticises Evangelicals for failing to appreciate that Roman Catholicism is a religious system which stands or falls as a whole. All too often, Evangelical Protestants concentrate on the most visible differences, like Mariology, failing to appreciate that such things are merely epiphenomena, which cannot be properly understood or evaluated without reference to the whole of Catholic teaching.

In general, Dr. De Chirico is sceptical of recent attempts to find common ground between Catholics and Evangelicals, largely because both sides have concentrated on isolated doctrine or details and ignored the systematic whole. He therefore holds out little hope for dialogue attempts like ‘Evangelicals and Catholics Together’, though he is perfectly willing to admit the sincerity and good will of those involved. The result is an informative survey of an all-too-often neglected aspect of modern church life. As he is an Evangelical himself, we are not surprised to discover that Dr. De Chirico tends to come down on that side in polemical discussions, but he is by no means uncritical of Evangelicals or unaware of the great achievements of modern Catholicism.

This book deserves to be widely read and circulated, for it makes a genuine and fresh contribution to current ecumenical affairs. Dr. De Chirico does nothing to court popularity, but the depth of his analysis is such that it will have to command respect even among those who are deeply committed to the reunion of the churches. Instead of holding out hope for that, Dr. De Chirico prefers to say that dialogue is valuable as far as it goes, but it does not go all that far. In fact, it looks very much as if we have gone as far as we are likely to go. The atmosphere of ecumenical dialogue is much pleasanter now than it has ever been, and that has to be a good thing, but on matters of real substance we are as far apart as ever and likely to stay that way for the foreseeable future.

GERALD BRAY
Cambridge

THEODORET OF CYRUS ERANISTES**Fathers of the Church Vol. 106****G. H. Ettlinger, trans.****Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2003 279pp £32.50hb****ISBN: 9-780813-201061**

Theodoret of Cyrus is one of the less well-known fathers of the early church. He lived from about 393 to 466 and belonged to the Antiochene school of theology, which spawned Nestorianism and was deeply opposed to the countervailing tendencies emanating from Alexandria. Having originally been a supporter of Nestorius himself, Theodoret moved to a more moderate position, and in the *Eranistes*, composed about 447, he proposed a christology which clearly anticipates the decisions reached four years later at Chalcedon. The work is written in the form of a series of fictitious dialogues, with Theodoret taking the part of Orthodox and his Apollinarian opponent being given the name 'Eranistes', which might be interpreted as 'dilettante' or something which suggests a multifarious, but basically unformed, theological system.

Eranistes reflects the polemical spirit of its time, and we are obliged when reading it to remember that for Theodoret, the issues at stake were matters of life and death. Either Jesus Christ was God in human flesh, and therefore the Saviour of the world, or else he was something less than that—in this case, almost a docetic manifestation of the divine, with an imperfect grasp of humanity (and therefore unable to take our place on the cross). Theodoret argues his case with great brilliance, and with careful attention to the witness of Scripture and of his predecessors in the church. Occasionally he quotes Apollinarian sources by mistake, not realising that they were circulating under the name of Athanasius, who (despite his close affinity with Apollinarius) was always considered to have been fully Orthodox.

Whether 'Eranistes' represents a particular individual, or is a composite of several people, including Cyril of Alexandria and Eutyches, it is clear that Theodoret has understood the essence of their position and demonstrated its inherent flaws. That he was unable to provide a totally convincing alternative need not surprise us, though what is remarkable about him is how close he comes to the final formula adopted by the Chalcedonian fathers. This is all the more remarkable in that it is generally believed today that Chalcedon is a modified form of the Alexandrian, and not of the Nestorian, position.

Fr. Ettliger, an American Jesuit, published the first truly critical edition of the Greek text in 1975, and now we have the translation based on it. This will replace the only other version available in English, which was made in the late nineteenth century and can be found in the Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. As a translation, it stands out for its use of contemporary English, especially in the dialogue portions of the original text, and for its accuracy—something which the earlier version was unable to achieve, owing to the faulty Greek edition on which it was based. This is an important addition to the growing number of English translations of Patristic texts, and it will surely be the standard version for many years to come.

GERALD BRAY
Cambridge

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

A survey of recent studies and some new proposals

Gerd Lüdemann

London: T & T Clark, 2003 218pp. £19.99pb ISBN: 0-567-08810-3

The study of early Christianity is a subject which never fails to attract a wide range of interested participants and spectators. The wildest theories are regularly put forward, only to be shot down by conservative reactions on the one side and by other theories (which are sometimes even more bizarre) on the other. Keeping track of developments in this field, not to mention sorting out the wheat from the chaff, is an almost impossible task, as professor Lüdemann readily admits. Nevertheless, he has taken it upon himself to provide his readers with a handy guide to what he regards as the most significant recent scholarship in this area. He bestows praise where he believes it to be due, but he does not spare his criticisms, especially when he finds potentially useful work which has been vitiated by the intrusion of irrelevant theological or ideological concerns which do nothing but distort the course of pure research.

Professor Lüdemann, it is fair to say, belongs to the school of Walter Bauer, whose radical theories about the relationship between heresy and 'orthodoxy' in the first two Christian centuries he takes as an established given for all subsequent research. Of course he sees that Bauer did not cover everything, and that in many secondary ways his work needs to be amplified and updated,

but that he was basically on the right track, Lüdemann never doubts. This inevitably puts him at odds with a large portion of Anglo-American scholarship, which takes a much more sceptical view of Bauer and generally comes up with conclusions which for Lüdemann are simply too conservative to be taken seriously. Thus, even a scholar like W. H. C. Frend, who would certainly not be regarded as particularly conservative in the English-speaking world, comes off as altogether too heavily influenced by traditionalist ways of thinking which fail to take modern German scholarship seriously enough.

On the other hand, Professor Lüdemann is convinced that primitive Christianity (an ideologically-biassed term which he prefers to the more neutral 'early Christianity' for reasons which seem somewhat tendentious to this reviewer) is heavily indebted to contemporary Judaism—to the point, in fact, where the two streams of religious thought virtually merge. This permits him to give a surprisingly high rating to the work of Larry Hurtado, one of only two Evangelicals to merit any serious discussion. The other is F. F. Bruce, whom Lüdemann dismisses as hopelessly naive when it comes to reading the New Testament with a critical eye. Unfortunately, his own bias leads Professor Lüdemann to ignore the work of other Anglo-American scholars whose conservative approach(es) disagree with his own. In particular, there is no mention at all of Bishop Tom Wright's mammoth Jesus project, or of Tyndale House's multi-volume series on the *Acts of the Apostles*.

A chapter which may surprise some readers is the one on feminism, in which he takes Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza to task in a way which might land him with a lawsuit in the United States. This is not to say that he is wrong; on the contrary, his assessment of feminism as a distorting ideology which does immense harm—and correspondingly little good—to the study of Christian origins seems irrefutable. But it will not win him any friends in the politically correct world of modern America, and many readers will be taken aback by the force with which he expresses his views. Other chapters deal with sociology and biblical studies, and there is a lengthy appendix critiquing the work of Gerd Theissen, who evidently spoiled a promising career by turning to religious belief himself.

At the very end of the book, Professor Lüdemann sets out his own criteria for 'scientific' study of the data, and these reveal the strengths and weaknesses of

his approach quite clearly. On the positive side, he is determined to cut away any form of pious pleading, whether in defence of traditional orthodoxy or in support of some modern dogma which is trying to usurp its place. But in the process, his fatal flaw is also revealed—he discounts anything which might be regarded as ‘theological’, ‘supernatural’ or even just ‘religious’. When discussing the rise of early Christianity however, it is necessary to take these factors into consideration, because that is what Christianity is all about. On Lüdemann’s assumptions, no professing Christian (or other religious believer) is truly competent to embark on this kind of study—a nonsense which will never command widespread support, if only because Christians are bound to take a serious interest in the origins of their faith and to examine them sympathetically.

The book must therefore be seen, not as a comprehensive survey of the field, but rather as a one-eyed vision which is sharp, as far as it goes—but does not go nearly far enough.

GERALD BRAY
Cambridge

THE WESTMINSTER HANDBOOK TO ORIGEN

John Anthony McGuckin (editor)

**Louisville/London: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2004 xix, 228pp pb
ISBN 0-664-22472-5**

This is a collection of seventy-nine essays by thirty-five scholars on various aspects of the thought and influence of the church father Origen, preceded by a twenty-three-page biography and a twenty-page annotated bibliography of his extant works.

The biography is a valuable contribution to scholarship in its own right even if it did not form part of a larger work. The biography contains a good elucidation and consideration of a host of facts about Origen and his work. In places the biography is thought provoking, penetrating and offers new ways at looking on its subject.

Other than a few penetrating insights, the annotated bibliography is

unremarkable and not without its shortcomings in its lists of English and French translations of Origen's works. There are four such translations, all published in or about 2002, which are missing from the lists. The translations are probably so recent that they may not have become available until after the bibliography part of this 2004 book had been prepared, but I think that they should have been noticed and included by the final editorial stage.

The seventy-nine essays are alphabetically arranged by topic, such as 'Heracleon', 'Heresy', 'Hexapla', 'Holy Spirit' and 'Image-Making', and contain Origen's thoughts and comments on several topics. Although scholarly in subject-matter on a very precise topic and field of study, the wording and expression are easily understandable by persons with a non-specialist education. The articles do not confine Origen in isolation but often refer to history and events which put his works into perspective. The essays display a masterful grasp and assimilation of the huge corpus of Origen's extant writings. Occasionally, parallels are drawn to other ancient sources, but not (in my opinion) frequently enough. Despite the highly academic nature of the articles and their writers, the text is seldom, if ever, encumbered by Greek words that are not explained or translated to help the reader who is not conversant with the nuances of that language.

A reviewer looking for flaws could find fault with some of the essays. For instance, some articles discuss material that would be more appropriate in others, and the sentences in some essays are so long that the reader easily loses the sense and are often made cumbersome by lengthy insertions in parentheses. However, this book was designed—and indeed could not otherwise have been a highly academic one and thus drawbacks of some sort would have been unavoidably included. In fact, the criticism that some material is in the wrong essay is muted by the provision of many 'see also' references to related essays.

Because of the rarefied subject of the book, the fact that only highly qualified scholars were competent to write it, its being aimed at readers interested in a narrow field, and interest in it being found only among such persons, this book is a very technical and academic one, appropriate only for readers with some prior knowledge of the field rather than for the novice or casual reader.

DAVID W. T. BRATTSTON
Nova Scotia

THE FUTURES OF EVANGELICALISM Issues and prospects
Craig Bartholomew, Robin Parry and Andrew West, editors
Leicester: IVP, 348pp £12.99pb ISBN: 9-780851-113999

Conservative Evangelicalism, in its many different manifestations, is currently the most dynamic form of Christianity on the face of the earth, but behind the superficial success which it trumpets to the world there lurks a creeping malaise which, if it is not addressed, may soon burst this bubble and return the Evangelical movement to the fringe status which it enjoyed in the English-speaking world in the first part of the twentieth century. That, in a nutshell, is the presupposition undergirding this collection of essays, which seek to chronicle the rise of the current wave of Evangelicalism (including its charismatic wing) and analyse its persistent weaknesses.

In essence, the authors inhabit an Evangelical universe which sprang to life in the years after 1945 and which was guided through its formative growth stages by John Stott and Jim Packer, ably supported by a host of less well-known figures. The golden age of this movement was the 1970s, to which more than one contributor looks back with a certain nostalgia, as a time when it still seemed as though the younger generation, nurtured by Stott and Packer, was about to enter the promised land of academic respectability and ecclesiastical influence. Thirty years later, we look back on those days and wonder where it all went wrong. Instead of academic respectability, we have a huge charismatic subculture which spurns the written word almost entirely and which no-one would suggest was in any way 'intellectual'. Instead of ecclesiastical influence, we have a handful of former Evangelicals who occupy high office in the church, where their lacklustre performance is an embarrassment to the remaining faithful, who can only console themselves by agreeing that the people in question have gone off the rails and so nothing better can be expected from them.

Is there something inherent in the nature of evangelicalism which makes this kind of outcome almost inevitable? Could another way have been found, and is it now too late to take a different road? These are the questions which the authors of these essays try to answer in their different ways. Interestingly enough, it is not an evangelical writer but Harry Blamires, pupil of C. S. Lewis and author of the classic (but sadly neglected) book *The Christian Mind*

(SPCK, 1963), who provides the most serious intellectual ballast to this collection—not by contributing to it himself, but by being quoted on more than one occasion as a significant reference point for what the authors are trying to get at. What they lament is the disappearance of a Christian mind in our contemporary culture, and the seeming inability of Evangelicalism to renew it. This is not really all that surprising, of course, because ‘Evangelicalism’ is a loose association of different types of Protestant Christianity, which lacks a sufficiently cohesive core to be able to provide the kind of renewal which these authors want to see.

The heart of Evangelical faith is expressed in its theology, and here we find a smorgasbord of options which cannot be harmonised into a single, coherent whole. Even if we lay aside differences of a sacramental or ecclesiological nature, which have dogged us since the sixteenth century, there are enough other fault lines which, if exposed, would soon decimate what is thought to be the Evangelical world at the present time. The most important are the so-called ‘Calvinist/Arminian’ divide on the one hand and the ‘charismatic/non-charismatic’ one on the other. Most academically-minded Evangelicals tend to work on the assumption that Evangelicalism is basically pro-Calvinist (but not extremely so) and non-charismatic (but open to the moving of the Holy Spirit). That definition would seem to cover most of the contributors to this collection of essays (the Arminian Howard Marshall being the most obvious exception), and it could be said to represent the publisher’s vision of Evangelical orthodoxy as well. What they do not tell us, however—and what they may be loth to admit (though they cannot be ignorant of)—is the fact that by taking this line they are defining themselves as an elite group in a culture which is essentially democratic. Professors McGrath, Marshall and Vanhoozer can say what they like, but the next 10,000 Evangelicals in the United Kingdom will be produced not by them, but by things like the Alpha course and Spring Harvest. Ideally, as some of the contributors to this book realise, Evangelicals should concentrate on producing a clearly articulated theology, linked to a world view which is capable of applying that theology to every area of life.

One immediately thinks of the Dutch Calvinist school, best known through the writings of the late Herman Dooyeweerd, though this model is too ideological and sectarian for the English-speaking world to be able to adopt wholesale. Nevertheless, clearer definition is needed, and that will bring about new forms

of division, which most Evangelicals want to avoid if at all possible. We may disagree deeply with Professor Marshall (for example) on the universality of the atonement—hardly a peripheral matter—but who would want to see him drummed out of the Evangelical fellowship on that account?

In the end, the network of personal relationships, fortified by the conviction that, although believing hearts are capable of producing bad theology they should not be judged by it, prevents the Evangelical world from developing the kind of foundations which it will need if it is to continue to represent the most biblically orthodox form of Christianity in the new millennium. Will it rise to this task? Perhaps, but it will take more than a symposium to set us on the right road.

GERALD BRAY
Cambridge

READING THE LINES: A FRESH LOOK AT THE HEBREW BIBLE

Pamela Tamarkin Reis

Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002 227pp n.p. hb ISBN 1-56563-696-1

This is an entertaining book. It is written in a whimsical style by a partly self-taught American Jewess, who heartily dislikes the divisive documentary hypotheses about the books of the Old Testament. She asks herself whether these narratives cannot make sense as they stand, if interpreted in an unconventional way. The eleven chapters of this book, many of them reprinted from scholarly journals, set out her new interpretations of eleven biblical narratives, from Genesis 2 to 1 Kings 13. They are all readable, though opinions will differ whether they are convincing. Some of them are at least possible.

ROGER BECKWITH
Oxford