

Editorial

The future of theology

Keywords: Millennium, theology, church

As we enter the third millennium, Christians may well feel fed up. Fed up with hype. Fed up with being told constantly that this is now the third millennium. Or fed up with the fact that very few find themselves reflecting on the fact that this millennium dates back to the birth of Christ. Yet as we move through and past this significant date, it is worth taking stock for a moment to see where we are. In terms of the church, there is good news and bad news. Growth appears in some places, decline in others. And the same applies to the world of academic theology. Within the UK, student numbers are growing, and so are the opportunities for teaching. Yet at the same time this brings increasing pressures for staff and students, whether or not they are evangelical.

Over the past fifty years the theological scene has changed dramatically. Although many universities may still teach the liberalism of the sixties, the debates have moved on. Modernism has given rise to post-modernism. Liberalism has given rise to post-liberalism. Redaction criticism is out, reader-response theories rule.

Christian theology is giving way to religious studies. All these trends and more are affecting the way people are being taught theology, and the way that they are studying it. Challenges for the Christian church and the Christian student therefore change similarly, and in order to engage in the academy as evangelicals we need to have an awareness of what is happening. We can either ignore it and leave the academy to the liberals, or we can inform ourselves and pray for those engaging at this level. And we must never pretend that what goes on in the ivory towers will never affect our churches. The trickle down effect may be long and slow, but it does happen.

So this issue of *Evangel* offers an insight into four disciplines of theology, giving broad-brush strokes to paint a picture; a picture which is at times exciting, and also at times a cause for concern. As we pray for the renewing of our minds, let us use them to the full and engage with the issues of the day, perhaps the issues of the new millennium.

Systematic Theology at the Turn of the Millennium

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Keywords: Bartianism, revelation, Trinitarianism, Liberalism, Postliberalism, Radicalism, Global theology

A colleague of mine teased me recently concerning my special interest in systematic theology. 'What is systematic theology supposed to be about?' he enquired. 'I can understand OT and NT studies, and biblical theology makes some sort of sense. Ethics, pastoral theology, historical theology, philosophy of religion and apologetics — all of these I can form some understanding of. But what is systematic theology if it is not any of these?' It was a bit of a jibe, but in fact there was more truth in it than he probably realized. Systematic theology has historically covered and included many avenues of research, including all of the above. Yet

practitioners may struggle to define it because of the very fact that it does cover all these and more. Personally I find it the most exciting and interesting because it claims to bring all of the above together — reflecting on the fruits of biblical studies, growing out of an understanding of biblical theology, systematic theology articulates the great doctrines of the Bible and dogmas of the church as they relate to the world in which we live and witness.

So, for example, theology attempts to make sense of the doctrine of God in the midst of twentieth century suffering. Anthropology relates the biblical theology

gleaned from Genesis and elsewhere to the insights and criticisms, of, for example, Freudian psychoanalysis. Similarly, systematians may explore how biblical statements on atonement can be brought together into a complete and coherent doctrine, and so brought to bear on contemporary understanding of penal theory, for example. Thus one of the great strengths of systematic theology is that it aims to bring so much disparate material together. Some of the great 'systematic theologies' are great, not just in their creativity and artistry, but also in their length, because of this very fact! An accompanying weakness is the danger of attempting too much, of parcelling doctrine and the great truths of scripture into manageable systems into which God and his word cannot hope to fit. Yet even the question of whether this is something that should be attempted falls into the realms of systematic theology.

The history of a discipline

The great fathers of theology worked without the division and specialization that we see in the academic world today. Justin, Tertullian, Origen and others developed their theological thinking in the testing times of the early church, rather than in the rarefied environment of the academy. Nevertheless, systematic theology as reflection on the meaning of the traditions was part and parcel of their work. As they attempted to explain the faith in their day, to wrestle with heresies, and attempted to clarify the doctrines that the church held to, they were involved in the business of systematic theology. This is indeed reflected in today's systematic theology in the fact that the majority of scholars continue to turn to the patristic scholars. Mining what they wrote is today not merely a historical exercise. Rather, theologians from the earliest centuries are expounded and explained in order to use their thinking for our contemporary debates. The likes of Origen, Athanasius and Augustine instinctively wrote systematic theology that brought together the best of all the intellectual worlds in which they worked.

Systematic theology began to draw out its own path during and after the Reformation period, as specific academic debates demanded exacting arguments. Nevertheless, the development of the university gradually saw the development of systematics as a separate discipline, as one proper line of theological enquiry amongst a number. The state of play today is radically removed from the state of theology during the patristic, medieval, reformation, and even Victorian ages. The modern university, and thus following in line the modern theological college, has set up systematics as one specialization which, unfortunately, can become all too separate from the other theological disciplines. Hence my colleague's question — why systematic theology? In

particular, this question is made even stronger when many see a systematics which rarely interacts with Scripture, which can lead into unhelpful lines of enquiry, and which at times can seem plainly anti-gospel.

Within systematics, various specialist fields and sub-disciplines have grown up. There are therefore those who specialize in the doctrine of creation, in anthropology, soteriology, hamatology, eschatology, doxology and many more. The end result is that for many systematics has become obscure, divided amongst itself, and lacking any real coherent arguments. For evangelicals, the history of engagement with modern theological thought has necessarily meant that the strength and efforts have been put into biblical studies, and thus the evangelical experts in systematics who are teaching at modern secular universities are far and few between.

Systematic theology today

Of course, systematics varies according to denomination, geographical positioning, and historical location. Three recent attempts by Protestant theologians may illustrate this. The recently completed work of Wolfhart Pannenberg varies greatly in approach and results from the systematic theology presented by the conservative evangelical Wayne Grudem, as they both do from the offering by the more open evangelical Stanley Grenz. Grudem's¹ is very much a system, with appropriate biblical texts, diagrams, and illustrations from hymns of the church to explore how doctrine is set in its context. Thus he has delivered what is in fact a textbook of belief for the uninitiated. There is clear progression, comprehensive arguments to defend each point, applications to Christian life, and a clear 'system'. Pannenberg² has provided much more of an exploration of the world of theological ideas, one that struggles with the interaction between the word and the world. He expertly covers all the major bases, and deals with many modern concerns (up to a point), yet here we would not find a text that we could recommend to the new Christian! Perhaps Grenz³ offers something which stands between the two, placing theological reflection firmly within the community of God. Theologically Grenz would stand between the conservative evangelicalism of Grudem and the mainline Protestantism of Pannenberg. Similar examples could be drawn from Roman Catholicism. Works of writers as diverse as Kung,⁴ Rahner,⁵ and Jüngel⁶ continue to have influence on the field of systematic theology, yet vary widely in their approach and conclusions.

This essay can hope only to provide a picture that is something of a snapshot, and something which is personally biased to an experience of systematic theology

which is largely filtered through the UK. I can hope only to identify a number of trends, and whilst this essay will look from a clearly evangelical perspective, discussions beyond this context will be described.

Barthianism

Without a doubt, systematic theology continues to be heavily influenced by the work of Karl Barth. In some sense, this is surprising. For liberal theologians he was, at one time, something of a laughable figure, who had tried to re-establish orthodoxy whilst ignoring the issues presented by the liberals and inventing a whole new language game for Barthians to inhabit (which, unfortunately, no one else could understand). Similarly, evangelicals carried a strong distrust of Barth due to his stance on Scripture and his supposed universalism.⁷ However, the centenary of his birth marked renewed interest in and publications of his theology. Theologians from a wide spectrum began to re-evaluate Barth's work, and appropriate many of his insights for their own work. One early example of this was the collection of essays by Nigel Biggar, *Reckoning with Barth*, where a spectrum of scholars brought back on to the table some of the key themes of Barth's theology. There have now been numerous appraisals of various parts of Barth's theology. For example, in the neglected field of Barthian ethics, both Nigel Biggar and John Webster have provided major works.⁸ At the introductory level, a number of texts have even just recently attempted to introduce a new generation of students to Barth and his thought. Critical interaction with Barth has influenced a wide sphere of systematicians working within the UK. Barth's influence on the work of the Torrances continues, and on leading systematicians such as Colin Gunton. Perhaps one of the most recent works on understanding Barth comes from a scholar with affinities to post-liberalism, George Hunsinger. His *How to Read Karl Barth* has had wide use and circulation as it attempts to get the reader into Barth's world.⁹ Similarly, the work of Bruce McCormack has established itself as a classic interpretation.¹⁰ Such re-appropriation has taken place even within evangelicalism, and while some may hold that this then calls into question the evangelical credentials of such theologians, it is fair to say that this work is never mere blind acceptance. The recent work of Trevor Hart is a good example of this, as he probes Barth's theology in various essays, and looks for hints of Barthianism in the work of P.T. Forsyth.¹¹

Interaction with Barth's theology, massive as it is, inevitably raises numerous questions. Perhaps the three of greatest interest to evangelicals are the following, and all three of these have now once again come into the main stage of theological debate. Firstly, how

does Barth understand the theological method? In the post-modern situation, is there actually something to be said for a Barthian approach that relies totally and utterly on God's revelation, dismissing anything that tries to pass as natural theology and pretends that human beings can contribute anything to their salvation? For an evangelicalism that is often charged with being tied to a modernist and rationalist philosophy, this is an important question. Are the apologetic strategies of much of twentieth century evangelicalism actually tied to an Aristotelian philosophy that is not taught in Scripture? Whilst many would wish to retain something of the benefits of traditional apologetics, many evangelicals would endorse the Barthian insistence that revelation, saving knowledge of God himself, can come only from above. Secondly, what does it mean to say that Scripture is God's word? For evangelicals this has traditionally been one of the sticking points of Barth's theology. He seems almost to invent a new category of historical writing for Scripture that is beyond normal history, not subject to normal historical enquiry, and therefore the question of its infallibility almost becomes a non-question. Certainly this seems to be the case for the accounts of the resurrection. Does Barth leave us with a Scripture that contains errors, or have we totally misunderstood his approach?¹² Whatever systematicians conclude at this point, it raises the fundamental question of how we understand Scripture and how we relate this to our doctrine of God.¹³ Thirdly, will all be saved in the end? As eschatology has once again become a main concern of systematics,¹⁴ as we re-examine Barth's doctrine of election together with his denial of universalism, how can we hold together the universal and the particular in Barth? Will all be saved, or was Barth in fact having his cake and eating it?¹⁵

Trinitarianism

Perhaps linked to this new interest in Barthianism is a fierce commitment to orthodox Trinitarianism. Fuelled by works such as those by John Zizoulas, David Brown, Catherine LaCugna, and many others, the use of the word 'Trinity' in the title of a theological work has become almost as common as the word 'post-modern'. Perhaps the work of Colin Gunton must take most credit within the UK for this move, with works such as *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*¹⁶ and *The One, the Three, and The Many*¹⁷ inspiring many others to look more deeply at the relationship between God and the world as illuminated by the Trinity. It is a joy to say that today, for many theological students, it is no longer frowned upon to believe in a Trinitarian God-head. Whilst there may still be much debate about the detail of this doctrine, and how it then applies to various other

doctrines, such a move is a welcome sign. Thus the Trinity is now used as a starting point to investigate issues of theology as diverse as revelation, worship, spirituality, and creation. For example, in doxology the recent work by Christopher Cocksworth provides a great mix of systematic and biblical studies.¹⁸ Colin Gunton takes his Trinitarian theology further with a very helpful exploration of the doctrine of creation.¹⁹ Bruce Marshall relates this issue to concerns raised later in this article, namely truth in a postmodern world.²⁰ Miroslav Volf extends this into ecclesiology.²¹ And Alan Torrance relates Trinitarian thought and anthropology together.²²

The opportunities for a fully Trinitarian theology are enormous. If systematics is concerned with the relationship between the God who has revealed himself, and the world he has created, then what better way forward than attempting to make clear the distinctives of the Christian God as against the many misunderstandings of it in a contemporary world. This then not only has apologetic advantage, but relates to human life and how to live and worship in the presence of a community of persons.

Postliberalism

Two forces on systematic theology have begun to form a significant movement within the discipline. On the one hand, an increasing dissatisfaction with traditional liberalism has led many to be more drawn to an orthodox faith with historic content.²³ On the other hand, the forces of post-modernity have made theologians re-consider the foundations and authority for their beliefs. Post-liberalism, perhaps associated most famously with the works of George Lindbeck and Hans Frei, seeks to move beyond liberalism, whilst taking into account the dramatic criticisms of critical theory. Thus Lindbeck's theology appears on the surface extremely orthodox and traditional, yet the system on which it is based appeals neither to experience nor to particular justifications for the reason for this or that revelation, but rather to the authority of the community. Post-liberalism originally became a strong force within the United States,²⁴ yet has recently developed geographically and philosophically. Alister McGrath is one main voice who has begun to interact with it²⁵ within the UK evangelical world. In another direction, post-liberalism has developed itself into a form known as radical orthodoxy, with the likes of Graham Ward and John Milbank becoming leading figures.²⁶ A helpful recent reader in post-liberal theology is provided by John Webster and George Schner.²⁷ From an evangelical point of view, there are two initial responses to this movement. The first is to welcome a move away from a Schleiermachian liberalism, and the desire to examine the tradition carefully

and understand the content of orthodoxy. On the other hand, a key question which faces most versions of post-liberalism is why this story and not another story. For example, in his positive yet critical assessment of the theological ethics of Stanley Hauerwas, Samuel Wells wrestles with this question as one of the crucial difficulties in this theological approach.²⁸

Radicalism

Given the positive trend towards orthodox thought within systematic theology, there is no denying that in various circles radical thought continues which is outside the bounds of traditional orthodoxy. So, for example, the a-theology of Don Cupitt and Mark C. Taylor continues to be produced.²⁹ The Sea of Faith movement in the UK continues to attract attention, albeit small. Radical liberationist theology is also still present, covering radical forms of feminism, womanist theology, Latin-American theology, etc. Perhaps between these two stalls of radicalism and post-liberalism there remain a number of significant liberal voices, maintaining a commitment to theism without swallowing the complete post-liberal agenda.³⁰

Pluralism

Of course, one agenda that continues to shape all of theology is the fact of religious pluralism. For many this also then turns into a pluralist ideology. The traditional names associated with religious pluralism still have some force in the classroom — Knitter, Race, and Hick. However, some more recent players are offering more detailed reflection on the issues involved. One Christian theologian who has undertaken a huge project to present a theology of religions, as they relate to various aspects of systematic theology, is Keith Ward. The Oxford professor of theology is composing a projected five volume series, so far issuing works including *Religion and Revelation* and *Religion and Creation*.³¹ The final series will offer many insights into world religions, written from a confessional Christian perspective. Creation, revelation, anthropology — all these and more will be covered in almost a unique way. What is fascinating is that Ward is keen to avoid any simplistic or reductionist pluralism, maintaining a foot firmly placed within the Christian theological world. It is possible that more of this will take place as Christian theology begins to take more notice of the world around it during the third millennium.

Of course, the evangelical reaction to this pressing question has come in a number of different forms, ranging from the acceptance of the inclusivist to the

hard-line restrictivist position.³² The challenge will continue, and as more work is done on the issue, systematicians will have to be acutely aware of the many areas of theology on which this touches.

Global theology

In this connection, albeit slowly, systematic theology is beginning to draw more insights from theologians around the world. This has partly been a political issue concerned with which authors get published by the publishing houses. Within evangelicalism, a number of projects aim to help, equip, and promote non-western authors. For example, the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies supports scholars from the two-thirds world. David Smith, co-director of the Whitefield Institute, is involved in a project with an evangelical publisher to see more non-western theological texts published for the market of the developing world. Of course, many non-evangelical theologians are also promoting theology from the two-thirds world, although it is not a surprise that the theology taught by western Universities is by and large western theology. Although this may vary in colleges that are concerned with cross-cultural work, religious dialogue, and other similar ventures, it can only be hoped that systematic theology in the third millennium will begin to reflect its theology in its practice. That is, if the gospel is really for all nations, Jew and Gentile alike, then the teaching of this gospel must also reflect that fact.

Using the text

If postmodernism has been an over-used word, then in close connection must go the world of hermeneutics. The ever-expanding world of hermeneutical theory has cut into systematic theology (even if it happened thirty years later than most other humanities disciplines). There are of course difficulties presented by many of the accompanying issues. For example, the danger of non-realist language is used to full extent by the non-realist theologians mentioned above such as Cupitt. That is, because we can never access the reality that lies beyond language, we can never know whether there really is a God there or not. For Cupitt, it is therefore not worth trying to find out whether there is or not, and the religious life can be concerned only with living a good life within the community of which we are a part.

Nevertheless, systematicians have turned their attention to such epistemological issues, and continue to try to make headway. Consideration of hermeneutical issues need not be a negative. At a very basic level, awareness of the 'two-horizons' of the text and the reader has highlighted the importance of

careful biblical studies. At a more developed level, any attempt to speak into the present climate of the humanities must be able to offer an answer to the critical questions presented by postmodernity (and hence the development of post-liberalism above).³³ Of course evangelicals still have some hesitancy over the idea of hermeneutics, for there are areas of our doctrine of Scripture which *could* be challenged by it. What now do evangelicals, who have accepted some of the milder forms of hermeneutical theory, say about the sufficiency and perspicuity of Scripture? These are indeed important questions that need to be addressed.³⁴

More recently theologians have signalled the important contribution that this can make to a re-connection of the various theological sub-disciplines. An example *par excellence* of this is the work of Francis Watson, who in his two volume work calls for a bringing back together of biblical studies and systematic theology.³⁵ Neither party can any longer pretend that they are entirely separate from the other. Whilst this may have been a major concern of the evangelical world for a number of years, it is hopeful that this concept is now being argued for thoroughly within the realms of the academy.

On another level within evangelicalism, a growing interest in biblical theology has encouraged systematicians to be more properly grounded in the Scriptures, whilst also encouraging biblical studies scholars to keep an eye open for the 'so what?' questions that follow their work. Although perhaps more applied in its approach, a recent volume applying biblical theology to the world of the pastor is extremely helpful.³⁶

Who is God?

Questions and issues remain for systematic theology, both for those working within evangelicalism, and those outside. Feminist theology still forces traditionalists to reassess their assumptions. Scriptural authority remains a key issues for many students of theology, and what we mean by revelation, together with its relationship to experience.³⁷ In connection with this, religious experience, and so then the whole field of religious studies, opens up continuing avenues of research and thought.³⁸

Yet perhaps the most basic question to theology remains near the top of the agenda, and reminds us what it is all about. It brings us back to the issue of the Trinity. Who is God? What sort of God is this God in whom we believe? Divine providence, immutability, impassability, how to construe and understand theodicy, all of these come into this question. Cultural and theological shifts have caused evangelicals to consider the question once more, with the likes of Clark

Pinnock and others challenging the traditional doctrine of God with their view of openness theology.³⁹

However, it is probably fair to say that not only within the evangelical world, but in the wider theological scene, the most pressing question that faces us is who is the God in whom we believe. Don Carson has signalled this as a pressing issue for the church a number of times. From a different perspective, this is one of the main concerns of the New Testament theologian N.T. Wright. In his five volume project on New Testament Origins and the Question of God, he refuses to write God with a capital, preferring instead god so as not to prejudice what his readers have decided.⁴⁰ That is, culture as a whole has a concept of god, or gods, but this may in fact be very different from the God Yahweh revealed through the Scriptures. And from yet another angle, the concern of theologians with the Trinity indicates a renewed desire to understand the God of the Scriptures as he reveals himself, rather than as we construct him.

For Christian life, discipleship, and ministry, this must surely be a hopeful sign. The challenge is that such research in the theological realm does indeed follow the lines drawn out by Scripture, and avoids the extremes and excesses, in various directions, that have reared their heads throughout the history of Christian thought. With the advent of the new millennium, systematic theology faces these challenges and opportunities. Yet these are not merely matters of academic interest. Some of these developments are good, some are bad (and I have only had the space here to give a few indications). Some answers are wrong, others are right. And the church must continue to pray for and support those working in the academy, especially in a field where in actual fact evangelicals are few and far between.

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Footnotes

1 Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1994).

2 Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology Vols I & II* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991, 96).

3 Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994).

4 It is a major achievement when books such as *Does God Exist?* (London: SCM, 1978) sell in secular and non-theological bookshops!

5 See the essays collected in the various *Theological Investigations* volumes.

6 For an assessment of his theology, see John Web-

ster, *Eberhard Jüngel: An Introduction to his Theology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986).

7 For an intelligent evangelical approach to Barth see Berkouwer's work, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth* (London: Paternoster Press, 1956).

8 Nigel Biggar, *The Hastening That Waits: Karl Barth's Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), and John Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).

9 Oxford: OUP, 1991.

10 *Karl Barth's Critically Realist Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 1997).

11 *Regarding Karl Barth* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999).

12 Mark Smith argues that interpreters of Barth have misunderstood his use of the category of 'witness', and hence misunderstood Barth's hermeneutical approach (Mark D. Smith, 'Testimony to Revelation: Karl Barth's Strategy of Bible Interpretation' in *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* (Unpublished Sheffield Thesis 1997). An example of one evangelical who is happy to use some of the thinking of Barth when it comes to hermeneutics, without endorsing a traditional Barthian approach to Scripture, is Kevin Vanhoozer in *Is There a Meaning in this Text?* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998), especially the closing chapters.

13 This vital issue is to be addressed by a variety of evangelical scholars in a forthcoming collection of essays on the doctrine of God and the doctrine of Scripture.

14 This is not a recent phenomenon, but has developed over the last half of the twentieth century, with the work of theologians such as Pannenberg and Moltmann. See an assessment of this writing by Stephen N. Williams, 'Thirty Years of Hope: A generation of Writing on Eschatology', in Brower and Elliott (Eds.), *The Reader Must Understand* (Leicester: Apollos, 1997), 243–262.

15 For two differing perspectives on this, see John Colwell, *Actuality and Provisionality: Eternity and Election in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1989), who argues that Barth is consistent in denying the charge of being a universalist, and Berkouwer, op. cit., who sees this as a weakness of his theology.

16 Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997, 2nd edition.

17 Cambridge: CUP, 1993.

18 *Holy, Holy, Holy: Worshipping the Trinitarian God* (London: DLT, 1997).

19 *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

20 *Trinity and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

21 *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

22 *Persons In Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996).

23 I use the term 'orthodox' here to describe Trinitarian and incarnational theologies, rather than Orthodox ecclesiology.

24 See the debate between evangelicals and post-liberals in Phillips and Okholm, *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals and Liberals in Conversation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1996).

25 *The Genesis of Doctrine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), and chapter 3 in *A Passion for Truth* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996).

26 Perhaps the most insurmountable work in this connection, to which many others make reference, is Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

27 *Theology After Liberalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

28 *Transforming Fate into Destiny* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998).

29 It seems that Don Cupitt is able to produce a book almost twice a year. In recent volumes the theology, if one can call it that, has become almost poetic in its approach.

30 Ian Markham, in *Truth the Reality and God* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998) argues that morality is impossible without belief in an objective God. Gareth Jones, in *Critical Theology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), presents strong cases for some of the traditional liberal positions.

31 Oxford: OUP, 1994; Oxford: OUP, 1996.

32 See the analysis given by John Sanders in *No Other Name* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

33 A recent attempt at doing this is from Sue Patterson, *Realist Christian Theology in a Postmodern Age* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), which also engages with post-liberalism. A helpful reader in the relationship between theology and postmodernism is found in Graham

Ward, Ed., *The Postmodern God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

34 See the essays in Roger Lundin, Ed., *Disciplining Hermeneutics: Interpretation in Christian Perspective* (Leicester: Apollos, 1997), and Lundin, Walhout and Thiselton, Eds., *The Promise of Hermeneutics* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999).

35 *Text, Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), and *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997).

36 *Interpreting God's Plan: Biblical Theology and the Pastor* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997).

37 If I were writing an essay concerning the key challenges for systematic theology at the turn of the new millennium from an evangelical point of view, this would of course be at the top of the list. Unfortunately, in the wider academic scene the doctrine of Scripture, although having received attention from some scholars in the past years (Gabriel Fackre, *The Doctrine of Revelation* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997], Colin Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995], and Richard Swinburne, *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992]), is still under-scrutinized.

38 Thus see the extremely helpful article by Chris Partridge in this volume.

39 See Clark Pinnock and others, *The Openness of God* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 199*); for a critique, see the forthcoming collection of essays, C Sinkinson and T Gray, *Constructing Theology: A Critical Assessment of the Theology of Clark Pinnock* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000).

40 N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), xiv-xv.