



Reformation
REVIVAL
JOURNAL

THEOLOGY:
WHY BOTHER?

A Quarterly for Church Leadership

VOLUME 11 · NUMBER 1 · WINTER 2002

BOOK REVIEWS



*SAVING MILLY: LOVE, POLITICS, AND
PARKINSON'S DISEASE*

Morton Kondracke

New York: Public Affairs (2001)

288 pages, cloth, \$25.00

When editor and friend Stephen Board recently shared a lunch appointment with me to discuss business he suggested I read his copy of Morton Kondracke's new book, *Saving Milly*. With a personal interest in Parkinson's Disease, which has taken its awful toll on my wife's elderly father, and a long-standing appreciation for Mort Kondracke as a journalist and political pundit, I happily took Steve's offer. I had seen Morton Kondracke discuss his book on a recent *Booknotes* television interview with Brian Lamb on C-Span. (For those who do not watch *Booknotes*, there are few television shows I value more highly!) For this reason I had some idea of what Kondracke attempted to do in this deeply moving personal account of his long battle for Millie, his wife.

Morton Kondracke is a lapsed, liberal Presbyterian. Millicent Martinez, his wife, is a non-practicing Roman Catholic who appears to have long ago abandoned the idea that there was a merciful, personal providence at work in her own life. Kondracke's frank account of love, marriage, family, politics, and suffering are profoundly moving. He pulls no punches. His style is never whiney and his questions are profound and deeply felt.

Kondracke recounts his early life with Milly before he narrates the developments since she was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1987. He tells how they struggled with one another, argued constantly, and continually sought power in their mar-

riage relationship, all the time finding ways to resolve their problems and stay together. In one moving confession, following several pages of such accounts, Kondracke notes:

There was never a possibility that we would get divorced. We were committed to each other, bonded, almost welded. Neither of us was ever unfaithful to the other, or even seriously tempted. We had similar tastes in color, style, and furniture. We were almost telepathic with each other, automatically knowing what the other thought or felt about things. Even though our politics diverged—I stopped being a liberal over foreign policy issues in the late 1970s—we had the same basic values. We mutually adored our children. I respected all her strengths, and she clearly found some in me (61).

This type of candor and compelling honesty fills page after page, making this a real life love story of how two people found one another in the crucible of great trial and personal pain. We read of the failure of Freudian psychoanalysis in Mort's life, of the family's struggles with church attendance, and even of Mort's alcoholism. In a life where Washington and its alluring power beckoned day in and day out, it is not terribly surprising to see the stress this whole scene had on a marriage and family. Though I see little value in "hanging out one's dirty laundry" in a self-oriented therapeutic age like our own, it is refreshing when an author admits his very real trials. If Kondracke does anything well it is surely this—he admits his deeply flawed humanity. I found this all endearing and hopeful. At one point Kondracke tells where the real changes in his life began. He was moved from being a careerist to a loving caregiver. "Much as I stopped living mainly for my own advancement when Milly was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, I less consciously immersed myself in a cause, a movement, when we signed on with the Parkinson's Action Network" (182). Even though Kondracke admits his continued struggles with God, the Christian reader observes the flowering of real purpose here, a real purpose for living wrapped in a strange and dark cloud of benevolent providence.

Milly's illness led her and Mort to become actively involved in the world of "disease politics." Their campaign to find a cure for this dreaded illness would involve them in some of the more interesting contemporary politics of our time. Included in this journey is a sad personal encounter with President and Mrs. Clinton (174-180). Kondracke pulls no punches. He believes the Clintons to be heartless, self-centered egotists who really care most about themselves and ultimately how others perceive them.

Quietly, but powerfully, the kingdom of God advances in the hearts and lives of people. This movement is almost always unnoticed on the pages of our newspapers. It is never the stuff of the evening news. But it is God moving, working, saving and changing broken lives. This is true even in the places of human power like Washington, D. C. Interestingly, more than one evangelical Christian appears in the narrative of Morton Kondracke's life. One Episcopalian, Fred Barnes, is quite prominent. Barnes is Kondracke's co-host of the weekly program, *The Beltway Boys*. More recently the two have appeared on the daily evening news hour on the Fox News Network. Kondracke explains how Barnes, and others, prayed with him and for Milly over several years. He recounts how Barnes and others came to be with Mort and Milly in her experimental surgeries and how they shared their trial as loving human friends. Mort tells how these Christians stood by him, listened to his trials and offered a deeply human touch. No judgmental response here, just Christian love and grace. It is very moving stuff.

Mort Kondracke further tells how he sought to cope with the unfolding of Milly's trial by turning to what he calls Christian stoicism; i.e., "do the best you can playing the hand you are dealt, and ask God's help every single step of the way" (145). He adds,

I call my stoicism Christian partly because I grew up a Protestant and feel comfortable in that tradition. I do not consider Christianity by any means the exclusive path to God, but it is the one I am familiar with. And it has become an increasingly

important part of my life, beginning when I quit drinking and joined Alcoholics Anonymous, one of the main principles of which is to yield one's will to that of a Higher Power (146).

A page later he adds, "My spiritual pilgrimage commenced out of a combination of professional failure, personal trauma, and the lessons of AA" (147). And then, "The spiritual pilgrimage continues, however, partly because I cannot answer Milly's agonized, unanswerable questions—'Why did God do this to me?' and, 'Why is God punishing me?'" (148).

Barnes gave Kondracke C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* and invited him to join a men's fellowship that he calls "my church." This group, led by Jerry Leachman, a one time Alabama Crimson Tide linebacker, has had a wonderful effect upon Morton over the years. Leachman, whom Mort calls "a freelance apostle" (we would call him an itinerant teacher/evangelist) has had a quiet and powerful impact upon numerous people and has done it by preaching the gospel and by living out a deeply real Christianity that includes acts of compassion in many parts of the world. This model prompts Kondracke to write:

Not all of the members of our group are born-again, including me. Unlike Jerry and Fred, I have difficulty accepting the divinity of Jesus. I do not have a "personal relationship" with him. But I know that an ideal for humanity lies in Jesus' message and example of live, self-sacrifice, and total commitment. . . . I know in my heart that, in spite of all the wrongs committed in Christ's name over the centuries, Jesus himself is a leader whose message I believe in. It's a failure on my part that I cannot yet make a full commitment of my life and soul (150-51).

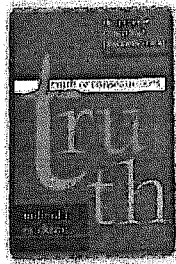
Rarely have I read the personal memoir of a living person and been so consistently prompted by the Holy Spirit to pray for the author. Since reading this book in September of 2001 I have prayed that God would open Morton Kondracke's eyes and flood his soul with the light of Christ, saving him com-

pletely. And rarely have I been so moved to get involved in the lives of unbelievers, demonstrating the love of Christ in both word and deed. If Morton Kondracke does come to faith it will be because God used some faithful, loving and serious Christians to be the instruments of his peace to a deeply flawed, but admirably honest, human being.

This is a simple but moving book, at times raw in its revelation of the sinful heart. As I read it I couldn't help but think of all the reasons Christians have given me for the breakup of their marriages. I do know things happen that can irretrievably destroy a marriage. I also know that God forgives broken and hurt people and that people who go through divorce find joy, even in another marriage. But I also know many people quit too soon, losing hope when arguments and trials divide them. Then I think of Morton and Milly Kondracke, dealing with chronic debilitating illness and lovingly guarding their vows in a context of faithfulness and love. I am grateful for their story, grateful I was moved so deeply. If you have any dealing with Parkinson's Disease, read it. If you want to see how God invades the everyday living of Washington, D. C., insiders read the book.

I keep praying for Morton Kondracke every time I see him on television. I also thank God for Fred Barnes and Jerry Leachman. I pray for those I personally know who quietly advance the kingdom in the citadels of human power. In fact, just this week a Washington insider informed me that another well-known television pundit had recently committed his life to Christ out of the devastation and brokenness of his own failed life. I quietly rejoiced and realized again that the kingdom of Christ is not advanced by might, nor by power, but by God's gentle, quiet, sovereign Spirit.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG



**TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES: THE PROMISE
& PERILS OF POSTMODERNISM**

Millard J. Erickson
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity (2001)
335 pages, paper, \$16.99

Most know the word. Few can define it. Almost all use it improperly. Before modernism was even given a proper burial postmodernism became the rage in the humanities. Now the church is talking about it with few solid guides to help us apply it to the theological enterprise itself. Millard Erickson's newest book seeks to provide a solution and does so admirably.

What is modernism? What is postmodernism? What are the intellectual roots of postmodernism? Who are the prominent exponents? How do postmodernists critique modernity? What might post-postmodernism look like? Is it already here in less than thirty years? Why or why not? Erickson, one of the most important evangelical theologians of our time, answers these kinds of questions clearly and wisely. Erickson is neither dismissive nor uncritical in his approach. He does not engage in rhetorical overkill or thoughtless jeremiad. His opening paragraph immediately informs the reader what he will attempt to do:

Postmodernism is both a popular and an intellectual movement, a sociological characteristic of much contemporary Western society and a sophisticated way of thinking. It is particularly the latter sense of postmodernism I am investigating here (13).

While his earlier book, *Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism* sorted out various theologians and their critique of the modern/postmodern situation this new work tackles, as noted above, postmodernism "as a way of thinking." It strikes me as sound that this is the right way to go about the task if one is to avoid numer-

ous pitfalls on both sides of the road; e. g. giving too much credit to the enterprise or not giving enough credit. The major intellectual voices of postmodern thinking are each examined carefully and yet succinctly; e.g., Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, and Stanley Fish. A positive evaluation of postmodernism and then a negative one follow this. Perhaps the best part of the work comes in the final chapters where Erickson moves the reader beyond postmodernity to assess the nature of truth itself and the Christian story as metanarrative, another word that has slipped into our vocabulary almost uncritically in recent days. Erickson is surely right to see the kingdom of God as the ultimate answer to postmodern thought and to posit the kingdom as revealed in community is a wise strategy.

Ministers, serious lay readers and students should read this impressive book. Millard Erickson is a first-rate scholar, a clear orthodox thinker without being dull, and a fine writer. Of all the works on this subject by evangelical thinkers, and the number is growing monthly, this might well be the best! It would make a great discussion book for a group of leaders.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG

POWERS, WEAKNESS, AND THE TABERNACLING OF GOD

Marva J. Dawn
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2001)
176 pages, paper, \$14.00

Marva J. Dawn is an author/educator whom regular readers of this quarterly should know well by now. I have commended every previous book she has written at some point, either in print or in public address. This one is no exception. In fact, it might be her best yet. Marva Dawn is surely one of the brightest and most engaging theological/liturgical thinkers of our time. And she almost never disappoints when she writes something new.

Marva Dawn is a student of the writing of the late French Reformed theologian/sociologist Jacques Ellul. She masterful-

ly has used Ellul's thought to prophetically challenge the church in our time in several previous books and she does it again in *Powers*. Simply put she argues cogently that we have embraced far too much of the world's definition of success and power. The answer, in the very best evangelical sense, is a clear return to the cross, both its weakness and its offense. In the process she never loses sight of real pastors and church leaders and thus she escapes mere polemics. She provides a "better way" for us to go as those who must think clearly and lead the people of God.

What does it mean to be a faithful church? Does the Bible or contemporary secular culture determine your answer? Popular "success" models of church management abound and courses are continually promoted for ministers who want to make it in our time. The apostle Paul learned from the teaching of Jesus "That my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9a). As a result Paul said he "would boast all the more gladly of my weakness, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9b). Dawn wants leaders to rethink the goals and mission of their churches in light of this radical principle. She believes God's "hidden" way to weakness lies not in our strength and wisdom but in our human weakness making us entirely dependent upon Christ alone. As a result she argues, for example, that "effectiveness does not matter" (132-134). I wonder how this would go in most of our modern ecclesiastical institutions? Quoting Ellul again, Dawn summarizes the functions of Christians as three:

You are the salt of the earth.
You are the light of the world.
I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves (125).

Dawn writes toward the end of the book, "Please don't let this book end when you finish reading" (162). She then goes on to provide questions for reflection and communal conversation (165-167) which could be used very practically to stir serious discussion among believers. Indeed, the book would

be best used in groups where it could be read and carefully unpacked by the people of God in true fellowship. I strongly urge you to use it this way. I am already doing it myself with obvious profit.

Eugene Peterson, a true pastoral role model for many of us, writes of *Powers*, "This is the kind of writing and teaching that can save the church from being duped by the 'deceitful tongue' of slick contemporaneity—if we will only listen." I couldn't agree more. Combining careful biblical work with serious theological reflection, and in a readable and simple style, is rare. Dawn once again accomplishes this and thereby serves the church as a humble, faithful servant of the Word

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG



REGARDING KARL BARTH: TOWARD A READING OF HIS THEOLOGY

Trevor Hart

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press
(2001)

196 pages, paper, \$19.99

Whether some evangelicals like it or not, and some surely do not, Karl Barth was the most prominent Christian thinker of the twentieth century. His *magnum opus*, the multi-volume *Church Dogmatics* (available in English translation, thanks to the indefatigable work of two scholars, Geoffrey Bromiley and T. F. Torrance), is a rich mine of biblical, Christ-centered thought.

Trevor Hart, professor of divinity at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, provides this new overview of Barth's thought at a time when Barth studies are thankfully on the increase. He guides us through the theology of Barth by dialogue with other theologians, namely Brunner, Küng, Lindbeck, Moltmann, and McFague. Hart's approach is to show how Barth speaks even more powerfully to the rise of the postmodern condition.

Hart surveys the usual topics such as Scripture and revela-

tion (Barth's views are not what you were often incorrectly taught in college or seminary), the Trinity, natural theology (in particular his struggle with Emil Brunner), pluralism, justification by faith, ethics (another distinctive Barthian contribution), and the nature and problems of religious language in particular. In the last case Hart deals with the ability of theology to speak of the love of God. This chapter alone is worth the book!

Hart articulates Barth's views with care and respect. His style is very readable, making the book useful for virtually all serious readers, whether they have a background in twentieth century theology or not.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG



INTRODUCING THE NEW TESTAMENT: ITS LITERATURE AND THEOLOGY

Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2001)

614 pages, cloth, \$35.00

This is a beautifully illustrated guide to the New Testament, that should prove useful for serious Bible students, as well as readers who are fairly new to the Christian canon. The authors are specialists who have all authored numerous books in the field over several decades. They represent differing Protestant traditions but this has little or nothing to do with how they present their material in this new volume.

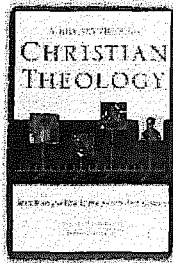
So many modern New Testament introductions give large amounts of attention to historical-critical matters. Here the authors go right to the background, content and theology of the New Testament itself. The opening section addresses the literary angle of the New Testament in a helpful and engaging way. "The literary character of the NT thus demands that we pay attention to ancient forms of literature that might help us to account for the shape of the documents in the NT" (5).

This effort is undertaken in a respectful and careful way. What follows is a look at the historical angle on the New Testament and then how the New Testament became the Christian Scriptures along with what this means for modern readers. This most helpful opening chapter is followed by a second titled: "The World of the New Testament." Included is a look at the many worlds of the New Testament, environmental conditions, and institutional contexts. By page 53 the authors have gone directly to the nature of the gospels and then treat each of the four gospels in canonical order. The last chapter (25) deals with the formation of the New Testament canon as Christian Scripture. What lies between these few early chapters and the conclusion is a clear, helpful, and practical overview for the modern reader.

Useful illustrations and graphics abound throughout. A number of maps add to the value of the work and gray-scale boxes of text often address important questions as they arise within the survey of the New Testament itself. A wonderful example is the brief, but very helpful, discussion of "Greek Philosophical Schools" that appears on page 259. The reader is much better able to understand Acts 17 because of this type of material. A very helpful index of names and subjects is also included, making the book ideal for pastors and church readers to benefit without having to read the entire book right through.

This work provides both beginning and college/seminary students a clear, concise, and reverent tour through the writings of the New Testament. It employs critical scholarship in a generally satisfactory way while it retains a high view of the theological importance of the text itself. Evangelicals have too often treated the New Testament as devotional literature without first understanding its historical and religious significance. This volume goes a long way in correcting this tendency and for this reason I recommend it to church leaders who are looking for a good resource for the study and teaching of the New Testament.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG



A JOURNEY THROUGH CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

William P. Anderson and Richard L. Diesslin
Minneapolis: Fortress (2000)
228 pages, paper, \$29.00

This is a cleverly designed and wonderfully useful book. It is actually an introduction to theology that feels more like a joyful journey through important historic texts than an academic book. That, in itself, is a rare accomplishment.

William P. Anderson, a professor of the history of religious thought (emeritus) at the University of Dayton, partners with Richard L. Diesslin, a cartoonist and illustrator, to lead the reader through complex material in a simple manner, without becoming simplistic in the process. Thirty-four chapters ranging from four to ten pages make up the book. A preface defines some of the most basic terms of theology; e.g., Christology, ecclesiology, faith and reason, religious experience, etc. Part one looks at the early church, part two the Middle Ages, part three the Reformation, part four the modern period and part five the contemporary period. The important names are all here—Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Arius, Athanasius, Anselm, Peter Abelard, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Kant, Schleiermacher, Barth, Bultmann, Tillich and Niebuhr. Each section contains an overview of a thought developed, the central person in the development, and usually something from the writing of the central character. As an example we have a short reading from Luther's works on *Christian Liberty* and *the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* and from Calvin's *Institutes and On the Necessity of Reforming the Church*. Though the selections are brief they allow students who are coming to this for the first time to get a flavor of the thought and move on without getting overly bogged down at one point. The end result is exactly what the authors desire, a quick survey that keeps the reader engaged and learning on every page.

Though evangelicals will not be as interested in feminist

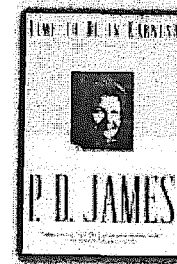
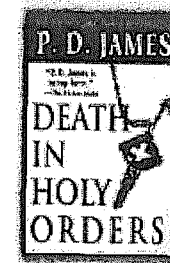
theologians like Mary Daly and Rosemary Radford Ruether, their voices have impacted the church at large thus they are worth hearing even if for no other reason than to understand why you reject them as in consistent with historic biblical Christian thought. The same could be said for the sections on black liberation theology and liberation theology, neither of which has any real force in evangelical theological circles.

The book ends with a marvelous section of three study questions to go with each of the thirty-four chapters. These are very well thought-out questions that allow readers to interact with the text and one another if the book is used in a group setting. Diesslin's cartoons are humorous and often genuinely helpful. This is a good book for groups in the church interested in getting an overview of Christian thought. It could be used in a thirteen-week class if the group were genuinely interested in getting a theological overview of historic Christian thought.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG

DEATH IN HOLY ORDERS

P. D. James
New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2001
411 pages, cloth,
\$25.00



TIME TO BE IN EARNEST

P. D. James
New York and Toronto, Alfred A. Knopf, 2000
269 pages, cloth, \$25.00

It has been easy over the years for people to categorize P. D. James as a "mystery writer." This is because she has chosen the British detective fiction model as her medium. Gradually, however, readers and critics came to realize that

here is a writer who is something more than another Agatha Christie or Dorothy L. Sayers, even at their best. While her plots and characters share a great deal with both of these "greats," there is something more, a great deal more to her books. There is *gravitas* here. This is not the self-conscious seriousness of someone trying to be "literary," nor the zeal of a would-be messenger, because James is a consummate storyteller. What we have in P. D. James is the kind of profound insight into the human condition that is characteristic of great writers of every place and period, whether Homer or Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky or Faulkner.

This is obvious in her latest book, *Death in Holy Orders*. Within a self-contained society and in the face of murder, James presents the reader with characters that are so believable as to evoke admiration or detestation, pity or disgust, sympathy or revulsion. She does this by showing us, not just actions, but also the heart: the heart in its confusions, conflicts, contradictions—the heart in its human capacity for evil and virtue. James does this in a real world where power and politics, faith and religious institutions, fear and greed, love and hope, sex and charity, vanity and humility vie with each other in the daily affairs of living and making a living.

One of the recurring themes in P. D. James' work is the search for faith in a post-Christian society. *Death in Holy Orders* sets this quest in a theological college belonging to the Church of England. The reader may or may not be surprised to find that true faith is as rare at St. Anselm's as in other parts of English society. Religion for most of the people inhabiting James' created world (as with most people in the modern West) is "a structure for moral striving rather than a final repository of revealed truth" (144). The success and failure of all such moral striving is a dominant theme in this as well as other books by P. D. James. That such themes are conveyed in glorious English prose ("Dalgliesh came to St. Anselm's for the last time on a perfect day in mid-April in which sky, sea and the quickening earth conspired in a soft compliance of settled beauty" [405].) make *Death in Holy Orders* an entertaining and thought-provoking read.

Equally entertaining and thought provoking is the author's memoir, *Time to Be in Earnest*, consisting of her diary entries of 1997-98, her seventy-seventh and seventy-eighth years. Here her readers may at last see something more personal of this wonderful woman who has kept them eagerly awaiting her next book for nearly forty years. Artists' personal lives are frequently a disappointment when compared with their art. This is not the case with P. D. James. Not that hers has been a glamorous or exciting life. Compared with the late Katherine Graham, James' life is rather pedestrian. But since the life of the mind has infinite capacities, we find this plain, middle-class wife, mother, and grandmother to be an amazing and entertaining character. Nothing that is human is strange to her. Nothing is too commonplace for her observation and comment. Little escapes the novelist's eye or her wry and sometimes wicked humor. Hers is a world viewed from the standpoint of an English common sense more common to her generation than to those following it. In this viewpoint there is little room for stupidity, sentimentality, or fads. It is an intensely *moral* viewpoint.

It is this moral vision and its foundations that come to the fore in these pages. This is a moral vision borne of a distinctively Christian and Anglican tradition. James' love for *The Book of Common Prayer* and the King James Version of the Bible are the most obvious manifestations of this tradition. She is a regular churchgoer and has served on various committees within her communion.

What is lacking however is a distinctively Christian and personal *faith* in the biblical sense of the term. She finds it difficult to believe cardinal Christian doctrines and gives little evidence of a personal knowledge of the Christ of those doctrines. As such (and along with such notables as the late philosopher-novelist, Iris Murdoch [232]) James is heir to that scheme of things described by A. N. Wilson in his recent book, *God's Funeral*. This is Christian morality without the foundation of Christian theology. While such morality may survive for one or perhaps two generations, without the foundation of personal faith in the God revealed in Jesus Christ, it

is finally bound to founder. Britain at the beginning of the twenty-first century is a Britain without faith and moral foundations. Having imperiously jettisoned the one, it did not notice that the other was indissolubly joined to it. And then the reckoning comes. The complaints and surprise that James expresses over the moral decline in her country are directly related to this loss of the faith and faith on the part of large numbers of clergy and laity within the Anglican Communion. We are amazed at her amazement.

Nevertheless, we find her to be engaging, scintillating, entertaining, in a word, likable (even lovable). P. D. James is a human being rich in many of God's best gifts to human beings. To read her with appreciation is to become richer and more human.

THOMAS N. SMITH
Charleston, West Virginia



THE HOLY SPIRIT: WORKS AND GIFTS

Donald G. Bloesch
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press
(2000)
400 pages, cloth, \$26.99

A fresh and invigorated interest in pneumatology and spirituality has captured the collective attention of theologians during the last number of years. In this volume, the fifth of his *Christian Foundations* series, Donald G. Bloesch adds his voice to this burgeoning chorus of modern pneumatology. An irenic but piercingly prophetic theological temperament has permeated Bloesch's work throughout his distinguished career and is nowhere more visible than in this current series. His ecumenical-evangelical character manifests itself as he carefully draws upon both the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions for their rich contributions to spirituality and pneumatology. More pointedly, in this volume, Bloesch enters into a sympathetic but cautious dialogue between the Pentecostal movement and Reformed theology.

Those not familiar with Bloesch's work should be aware that he operates within a dialogical framework. He first interacts with holy Scripture, then with church tradition, and in the end with contemporary theology. This mode of theological inquiry introduces the reader to the richness and great diversity of pneumatological thought. It also allows the reader to clearly locate Bloesch's theological position amidst this aforementioned medley.

The reader will notice by simply looking at the index of names that his foremost influences in this volume include the Apostle Paul, St. Augustine, John Calvin, Martin Luther, Peter T. Forsyth, and Karl Barth. He opens this work with a prolegomena of sorts, which builds upon the Word and Spirit dialectic that he has most recently and clearly delineated in the inaugural volume of this series.¹ He labels his approach as revelational-pneumatic in contradistinction to both cognitive/rational and experiential/existential typologies. Bloesch explains:

A revelational-pneumatic theology will make a respected place for propositions, yet it will see the essence of faith not in propositional declarations but in a personal relationship between the giver and receiver of divine revelation. . . . There can never be an identity between human statements of faith and divine revelation, but there can be a correspondence through the illumination of the Spirit.²

In one of the more rousing sections of the book, Bloesch gives a comprehensive and thorough critique of evangelical rationalism [a movement he has always withstood].³ Throughout his career Bloesch has been unyieldingly stable in his criticism of philosophically and ideologically tainted theology and this surely carries over into his pneumatology. As such he distances himself from theologians such as Clark Pinnock whom he sees as offering a "natural theology" of the Spirit by beginning not with the specific revelation in Christ but with a theology of creation.⁴

Bloesch dialogues at length with the biblical witness in order to lay a scriptural foundation concerning the person

and work of the Holy Spirit. As well he provides a thorough investigation of various perspectives within church tradition. In chapter four he goes to great lengths to show his admiration for the mystical traditions within Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. He appreciates the mystics' realization of the New Testament call to "perfection and the hope of real progress in the Christian life through the working of the Holy Spirit."⁵ Bloesch obviously finds much to agree with in both Luther and Calvin (including their sacramental view of the relation between the "thing" and the "thing signified" and the role of the Spirit therein) and surely appreciates the Anabaptist call to holiness. He also finds much to agree with in post-Reformation movements such as Puritanism and the Holiness movement (a result of his Pietistic heritage) while remaining stringently critical of various dimensions such as radical Pietism or the Holiness tendency towards religious enthusiasm. He thoroughly critiques newer threats to the biblical faith such as Mormonism and the New Age movement. However critical, he remains courteous to certain aspects of movements such as Seventh Day Adventism and even more so dispensationalism.

In one of the most stimulating sections Bloesch devotes the whole of chapter eight to what he labels, together with ecumenism, as "the most important spiritual movement of the twentieth century."⁶ Pentecostalism has rarely seen as cordial a dialogue partner as it has with Donald Bloesch in this volume. Bloesch's insights into this movement are both profound and well informed. Pentecostalism is more commonly given myopic and harsh treatments from evangelicals (usually by way of right-winged conservatives). His dialogue is congenial and erudite while highly critical of various aspects. His treatment of the phenomenon of glossolalia is careful yet fair-minded. His criticisms of the movement⁷ show keen insight, as they are the same made by self-critical pentecostals,⁸ while his appreciation of pentecostal contributions to evangelical theology is a welcomed emphasis.

Bloesch also displays his ecumenical/catholic quality as he reviews a variety of recent developments in pneumatologi-

cal thought stretching from Karl Barth to the Eastern Orthodox theologian Paul Evdokimov. This part proves very beneficial in that it allows the reader to situate Bloesch among a conglomerate of theologians and their convictions. Due to Bloesch's desire to build bridges with Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, one might wonder about the lack of discussion with the Metropolitan John Zizioulas or Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.⁹

As Bloesch discusses the emphases in his own pneumatology he builds upon the foundation of his Word and Spirit dialectic and certain paradoxical relationships found therein [Grace and Freedom, Revelation and the written Word, water and Spirit baptism]. He develops his doctrine of the Trinity¹⁰ with direct reference to that of Karl Barth, Thomas Torrance, and John Thompson. As critics have besieged Barth's modalistic tendencies, so too is Bloesch subject to this same barrage. Bloesch's suspicions with regard to the "social Trinity" will definitely provoke critics such as Stanley Grenz, in whose "theology of community" the social Trinity plays a pivotal role.

Nonetheless, Bloesch offers the church a pneumatology that is both profoundly biblical and solidly evangelical. His ecumenical and irenic spirit is a cherished quality in the storm of theological controversy in which the post-modern church finds itself. However, in his catholicity he remains steadfastly prophetic in his call for not only a healthy and revived theology of Word and Spirit but also for spiritual renewal in the whole of evangelicalism.¹¹ His dialogue with pentecostalism in this regard is of utmost importance. The *Christian Foundations* series in its entirety¹² will assuredly provide a trustworthy biblical and theological guide for educated lay people, pastors, students, and professional theologians. His dogmatics read not only as theological texts but also as pastoral exhortations to the body of Christ. It is in this capacity that Donald Bloesch serves Christ and his church while remaining true to the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.

Author

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Notes

1. Donald G. Bloesch, "A Theology of Word and Spirit: Authority and Method in Theology," *Christian Foundations 1* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1992).
2. Donald G. Bloesch, "The Holy Spirit: Works and Gifts," *Christian Foundations 5* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2000), 24.
3. "Holy Spirit: Works and Gifts," 34-47.
4. "Holy Spirit: Works and Gifts," 25.
5. "Holy Spirit: Works and Gifts," 97.
6. "Holy Spirit: Works and Gifts," 179.
7. "Holy Spirit: Works and Gifts," 197-204.
8. I think here of Dr. Garry E. Milley (Master's College and Seminary, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada), Gordon D. Fee (Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) and this author to name a few.
9. Bloesch does dialogue with Yves Congar (Roman Catholic) and Paul Evdokimov (Eastern Orthodox) at length. While Congar is regarded by most to be a fair representative of Roman Catholicism, Evdokimov is a questionable dialogue partner in that his theology (and especially his pneumatology) is to the left of traditional Greek Orthodox thought. Zizioulas, given his treatment of the Holy Spirit in his *Being as Communion*, would have been a fascinating conversation partner in this regard as well as a better representative of Greek Orthodox pneumatology. The question of the lack of dialogue with Zizioulas and Ratzinger may be due to the fact that Bloesch regards them as not having as comprehensive pneumatologies as the two theologians mentioned above. One hopes to see dialogue between Bloesch, Ratzinger, and Zizioulas in his upcoming volume on ecclesiology.
10. He builds here upon the ground he has already laid in, Donald G. Bloesch, "God the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love," *Christian Foundations 3* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1996), 166-204.
11. The last chapter of the book is titled, "The Highway of Holiness," and is representative of his deep desire for renewal in the church.
12. Two volumes are awaiting publication which will bring the total to seven. One is a volume on ecclesiology and the other deals with eschatology.

INTRODUCING THE OLD TESTAMENT

John Drane
Minneapolis: Fortress (2000)
366 pages, cloth,
\$26.00

*INTRODUCING THE NEW TESTAMENT*

John Drane
Minneapolis: Fortress (2001)
480 pages, cloth, \$29.00

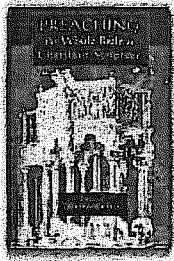
John Drane teaches practical theology at the University of Aberdeen and is an adjunct professor at Fuller Theological Seminary. His two volumes of biblical introduction have long been admired for their clarity and overall usefulness. These two volumes, originally published in 1986-87, have been completely revised and updated in two new Fortress Press editions. These volumes, designed for general readers, are accessible, readable and widely respected for their sound scholarship.

Drane not only surveys the biblical material in the Old Testament volume but includes twelve chapters of additional articles which contain wide ranging material on subjects such as the ark of the covenant, the form of the covenant, Elijah and the religion of Baal, the book of Daniel and the Maccabean crisis, etc. In the New Testament volume he does the same, including articles on subjects such as redaction criticism, form criticism, the "communism of the early church," the historical-critical method and "faith" and "works" in Paul and James. These pieces are generally of much value.

Drane writes with profundity and yet retains an eye for simplicity. He grasps big chunks of thought, presents them in an interesting and very balanced manner, and treats issues of scholarship with a very even hand. These volumes should

serve another ten years or more with great value. It is hoped that serious readers of the Bible will use these volumes. I keep them nearby and find them a resource I can use with profit again and again.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG



**PREACHING THE WHOLE BIBLE AS
CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE**

Graeme Goldsworthy,
Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans (2000)
272 pages, paper, \$20.00

An Australian Sunday school teacher decided she needed to spice-up her class a bit, so one Sunday morning she stood before her five-year-old pupils and asked, "Who can tell me what is gray and furry and lives in a gum tree?" Bewildered by this new pedagogical technique and sensing that a clever trap was being set before them, the students kept silent and stared blankly at the teacher. Finally, after the teacher repeated the question a couple more times and prodded the students to respond, little Suzie hesitantly raised her hand. "I know it's Jesus," said Suzie, "but it sounds like a koala!"

Those who earnestly desire to preach Christ are faced with a similar challenge. On the one hand, there is the danger of so drastically flattening out the biblical text in an attempt to preach Christ that every sermon ends up saying basically the same things, usually some platitudinous remarks about Jesus dying for our sins. The result is that the congregation finds the preaching boring and predictable. On the other hand, faced with a multitude of texts that do not deal directly with the gospel events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, many preachers contend that we must let the Old Testament, or any part of Scripture, speak to us from within itself without any attempt to connect it to the gospel. Here the flow of biblical revelation is lost, and we are left with an atomistic reading of

the text. Usually little thought is given to the nature of the link between us and the people and events of the Bible. Edmund Clowney perceptively critiques this kind of preaching:

Preaching . . . which again and again equates Abraham with us, Moses' struggle and ours, Peter's denial and our unfaithfulness; which proceeds only illustratively, does not bring the Word of God and does not permit the church to see the glory of the work of God; it only preaches man, the sinful, the sought, the redeemed, the pious man, but not Jesus Christ (3).

The danger of reducing the Bible to a book of moral examples is perhaps most apparent in Old Testament preaching, but it is no less present in the preaching of the New Testament. In expounding Romans, for example, we must be diligent to connect the moral imperatives of chapter 12 with the gospel foundation that precedes it. The book is, after all, a letter that was meant to be read and heard in its unity.

For all who believe that the Scriptures are preeminently about Christ, Graeme Goldsworthy has offered a treasure trove of insights and instruction on how to preach Christ from every part of the Bible. Goldsworthy writes with the conviction that since Jesus claims to be the subject of all Scripture, the overall structure of biblical revelation can find its coherence only in the person and work of Christ. The author insightfully remarks, "It is no accident that the Christian Church has come to understand the Bible to be the word of God, while at the same time acknowledging that this title also belongs to Jesus" (21).

Evangelical preachers, therefore, unashamedly confess that we have an agenda. We even boldly assert that our agenda is bolstered by Jesus himself. We aim to do what Jesus did on the Emmaus road. Week after week, our goal is to serve as the Holy Spirit's instruments in opening the eyes of God's people to the truths about Christ in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27). Perhaps Goldsworthy's most provocative statement is in chapter nine, which by itself is worth the price of the book. Here he asks, "Can I preach a Christian sermon without mention-

ing Jesus?" His answer is brilliant: "Why would you even want to try to preach a Christian sermon without mentioning Jesus? Is there anywhere else we can look in order to see God? To see true humanity? To see the meaning of anything in creation?" (115). The careful reader of this book will soon discover that Goldsworthy's answer is anything but simplistic. When Paul determined to know nothing among his hearers but Christ and him crucified, he did not fall into the trap of predictability. Likewise, though every sermon we preach should predictably expound something of the glories of Christ, "there are inexhaustible riches in Christ, and the implication of these for our Christian existence are endless. . . . There is [never a] need for a preacher to be boring and repetitive" (115).

In order to interpret the whole Bible as Christian Scripture, both the preacher and the congregation will need to have a solid grasp of biblical theology. Here Goldsworthy is invaluable. He first surveys the basic questions we ask about preaching and the Bible: "What Is the Bible?" "What Is Biblical Theology?" "What Is Preaching?" "Was Jesus a Biblical Theologian?" "What Kind of Unity Does the Bible Have?" "How Does the Gospel Function in the Bible?" "What Is the Structure of Biblical Revelation?" These chapters are targeted for theologically trained pastors, but they are not encumbered by technical language. The author skillfully suggests ways in which biblical theology can be taught in the congregation. He has written another book, *According to Plan* (available in the United Kingdom), which is designed as a course in biblical theology for the serious layperson.

Finally, the author devotes nine chapters to the practical application of biblical theology to preaching. Each genre of Scripture is surveyed with the goal in view of preaching Christ from that portion of the Bible. Practical suggestions for planning sermons and series of sermons are given in each chapter. The preacher is thus encouraged to dig deeply into all the Scriptures with the confidence that every part of the Bible is richly infused with teaching that promises to reveal to the reader "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the

face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). Of course the scope of the book is so broad that one wishes for more practical application than the author is able to include. I found myself devising schemes to travel to Australia in order to sit under the professor's teaching! But what the book lacks in terms of practical application and technique might be worked-out in a ministerial fraternal or discussion group. Every pastor who reads this book will be challenged and helped. Most importantly, those pastors who prayerfully commit themselves to preaching the *whole* Bible as *Christian* Scripture will find that the people of God under their care are seeing afresh the glory of Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

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