

## REVIEWS

### **Christology: A Global Introduction**

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

Baker Academic, 2003, 300 pp., £16.50; ISBN 0 8010 2621 0

### **Christology in Cultural Perspective: Marking out the Horizons**

Colin Greene

Paternoster Press, 2003, xiv+434 pp., £19.50; ISBN 1 84227 015 X

A well-known evangelical speaker recently challenged a conference session to think of half a dozen books written about Jesus in the last decade. While older material on the person and work of Christ came readily to mind, it was difficult to meet the mental challenge. It is part of the irony of Christian dogmatics that, for all the centrality and importance of Jesus Christ to our faith and salvation, he has received scant attention in the theological literature.

New books on christology, therefore, are welcome, and these two volumes serve as useful introductions to the current status of christological reflection, as well as pointers to future discussion. Both also cover similar ground, and a short review of this kind cannot do justice to the wealth of material discussed in each work. Only Greene's book contains a (25-page) bibliography, but Kärkkäinen's work is no less erudite.

Kärkkäinen is professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, and his self-confessed purpose is to publish a textbook which will introduce students to christology in its contextualised forms. His approach is in four parts: to look at Christ in the Bible, Christ in history, Christ in the contemporary western christologies, and Christ in contemporary contextualised christologies.

The first two parts give a summary of biblical evidence, early christological disputes and the history of christology up to the liberal quest for the historical Jesus. While the New Testament material is thoroughly covered, the development of christology is sketchy in comparison. In particular, the dogmatics of the Reformation period

receive little attention – Calvin’s name, for example, is mentioned only once.

One gets the impression that Kärkkäinen is in a hurry to move to contemporary approaches to christology, and this is the strength of his work. The third part deals with the work of those who have shaped much modern thinking – chapters dealing with Barth’s dialectical christology, Tillich’s existentialist christology, Moltmann’s messianic christology, for example (there are studies of ten theologians, ranging from Barth to John Hick), give serious attention to the nuancing of christology in the writings of formative thinkers.

A further ten chapters in the concluding part of the book look at attempts to contextualise christology in areas such as process thought, feminist thought, postmodern thought, Latin American, African and Asian thought. Kärkkäinen’s conclusion is that future thinking will have to nuance further the relation between christology and other religions, and between christology and contextual theologies.

Kärkkäinen’s work is introductory, and will open up discussion on many areas of christological reflection for both experts and non-experts alike. As the sub-title indicates, it is ‘an ecumenical, international and contextual perspective’, showing where liberal, postmodern, political and other influences have taken christology. The book, however, begs one important question: in what sense is Christ the only way to the Father (John 14:6)? While the trajectories of current thought are well articulated in this book, they need to be subjected to the critique that their validity depends on whether or not they compromise the uniqueness of Christ.

In many ways, Greene’s book covers similar territory, although as Head of Theology and Public Policy for the British and Foreign Bible Society, his aim is not to produce an introductory textbook but to relate christology to developments in modern cultural theory. That involves him in starting where Kärkkäinen begins: with an overview of New Testament teaching on Jesus. However, unlike Kärkkäinen, Greene wants to view Jesus in relation to the culture of his day. His engagement with modern theologians is present from the beginning as he studies the implications for modern culture of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

This takes Greene into a discussion of Christ and modernity, and the four paradigms of religion in the modern world, progress in history, transcendentalism and liberation. The remaining chapters deal with the postmodern deconstruction of these paradigms, and the implications for culture of postmodernity’s ‘incredulity toward metanarratives and the end of history’ (p. 282).

Greene sees in the christologies of Barth and Moltmann, notwithstanding the weaknesses of their approaches, a recovery of the centrality of Christ to modern culture. Combining the best of Barth's Scripture-focussed christological metaphysic from above, and of Moltmann's cosmic soteriology grounded in a new christology from below, Greene moves towards a socio-political paradigm which has Christ at the centre as the real ground of human freedom. It is a long route to a simple conclusion: that genuine christology seeks to make the message of Christ relevant to a contemporary worldview.

Neither Greene nor Kärkkäinen offer an easy read. The aim of each is different: Kärkkäinen's to give a diachronic view of the development of christology, Greene's to view christology in the light of changing cultural paradigms. Together they remind us, however, of the centrality of the christological task, and the importance of its contextualisation. As a reader, I preferred Kärkkäinen; but I will leave the last word with Greene: 'Christianity stands or falls by the adequacy or otherwise of its Christology' (p. 96).

*Iain D. Campbell, Free Church of Scotland, Back, Isle of Lewis*

## **Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity**

Larry W. Hurtado

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003; 746pp., £39.95; ISBN 0 8028 6070 2

Professor Hurtado (New College, Edinburgh) has produced a major monograph that is to become a reference work of anyone working on the theme of how the early Christians worshipped Jesus. The title is telling: first, it shows that almost one hundred years after the then very influential book of Bousset, entitled *Kyrios Christos*, here is a fresh summary of what scholars hold about the views of the early Christians concerning Jesus' lordship and messiahship; second, devotion is discussed as an inclusive term, referring both to what Christians believed about Jesus and what grew out of their beliefs, i.e. their worshipping practices; third, the scope of the study is 'earliest' Christianity, implying already in the title one of the main theses of the book, that devotion to Jesus began in the first two decades after Jesus' death and resurrection (though the treatment of the subject covers the years ca. 30-170 C.E.).

The work is aimed at two types of readership: mainly to scholars, teachers and students of the NT, but also to an interested lay readership. For the sake of the latter, words of the biblical languages are

transliterated, and the details of the secondary literature are provided in footnotes (often taking up even one third of the page). The book is clearly structured, the main ideas are presented in a logical flow of the arguments (even numbered, when needed). The chapters end with helpful summaries.

The chapters provide a historical analysis of the evidence, with the aim of supporting Hurtado's main three theses: 1. 'Jesus was treated as a recipient of religious devotion' already between ca. 30-50 C.E. (p. 2), in other words, 'devotion to Jesus was not a late development'; 2. 'devotion to Jesus was exhibited in an unparalleled intensity and diversity of expression, for which we have no true analogy in the religious environment of the time' (p. 2); 3. 'Jewish monotheism had a powerful role in shaping Christ-devotion, particularly in the Christian groups that we know about in the New Testament' (p. 29). These theses are highly controversial in today's scholarship – we might say that they go against the main stream of critical ('liberal') scholarship and the author is to be praised for being courageous enough to offer his view on these themes that are so significant for Christians' self-understanding today. The author engages with critical scholars in a critical way, making use of the results of the history-of-religions school when he can agree with them, but also disagreeing with other critical scholars when he is not convinced by their arguments (e.g. by the work of Maurice Casey, entitled, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*). Professor Hurtado works on an exegetical basis that has to be listened to by more critical scholars as well; for example, he advances his arguments on Paul by a primary reference to the 'seven undisputed Pauline epistles' (see e.g. p. 98). As regards the Gospels, he works with the Q hypothesis, but with his own thorough criticism and modification of it (pp. 218 ff.). However, he can show that even on grounds that are acceptable to more critical scholars, his theses can be argued and maintained exegetically. More traditional scholars will agree with most of his results, not being disturbed by the carefully formulated more 'critical' methods employed by the author.

To conclude, some of the titles and subtitles of the chapters should awaken the appetite of many future readers to learn from this scholarly book on Christian belief and worship of Jesus (following with the author the reconstructed historical sequence of the events and of the sources): 'Jewish Monotheism'; 'Christological Language and Themes in Paul'; 'Judean Jewish Christianity'; 'Q and the Early Devotion to Jesus'; 'The Synoptic Renditions of Jesus'; 'Crises and Christology in Johannine Christianity'; 'Other Early Jesus Books'; 'The Second Century'. The

book concludes with a bibliography (48 pp.) and detailed indexes of modern authors, of subjects, and of ancient sources (44 pp.).

*Peter Balla, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest, Hungary*

### **Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls**

R. S. Hess and M. D. Carroll R. (eds)

Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003; 192 pp., £14.50; ISBN 0 8010 2611 3

This volume of essays arose out of a conference hosted by the Denver Institute for Contextualised Biblical Studies of Denver Seminary in 1991 and the papers at times retain some of the characteristics of oral communication.

There are four parts. Parts one to three address the Messiah in the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls respectively. More surprisingly, the fourth part is entitled 'The Messiah in Latin American Theology'.

Part one opens with a substantial essay by D. I. Block which argues that, although the concept of Messiah is associated to some extent with that of prophet and priest, the dominant messianic expectation is of a royal Davidic figure. There follow briefer responses from J. D. Hays and M. D. Carroll R, which are both critical and appreciative.

The lead article in part two is by C. A. Evans, who points out that messianism is a specific issue in only a small number of the scrolls from Qumran, but this forms part of a presupposed eschatology. Although he believes that the scrolls do testify to two messianic figures, one royal and one priestly, Evans does not consider the broad messianic expectation of the Qumran sectarians to have been particularly distinctive within Judaism. However, the awaited messiah was an important figure in all their eschatological hopes. R. S. Hess's response is not really a response to Evans' paper but rather a supplementary study dealing with some related issues.

The main paper on the NT is from C. L. Blomberg, who argues that a good case can be made that the Greek term *christos* ('Christ') should retain its Jewish significance ('Messiah') whenever it is used with reference to Jesus. In his response, Blomberg's colleague W. W. Klein disagrees with Blomberg's methodology, arguing that since later writings clearly (in his opinion) do use *christos* as a 'last name', Blomberg is obliged to show that this does not happen in the NT. Klein believes that he has not done so. Blomberg's views are probably not quite as novel as Klein suggests (similar views have been expressed with respect to Paul's

use of *christos* by N. T. Wright) but the paper does take the previous work somewhat further into discussion of the other NT literature.

In the final section, G. A. Alfaro Gonzalez engages with the writings of the Spanish theologian, Jon Sobrino, who has been based in Latin America for many years. Alfaro commends Sobrino's narrative approach to christology but also raises serious concerns about Sobrino's approach. K. Jobes' response largely confirms Alfaro's views, while also raising questions about the notion of the gospel directed to a specific socio-economic group.

Several papers are quite demanding and there is extensive documentation provided so it is not for the faint-hearted, although most of the essays would prove easier if the footnotes were skipped. Competent students and ministers may appreciate a recent survey of both issues and literature. All in all, this is a careful evangelical study of an important topic for the serious theology reader.

*Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological College, Dingwall*

## **Post-Modern Theologies. The Challenge of Religious Diversity**

Terrence W. Tilley

Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1995; 182pp., \$18.95; ISBN 1 57075 005 X

It would be interesting to know if there is any reader of *SBET* who cannot sympathise with this book's opening: 'Manifestos appear with disheartening regularity, announcing that our era is postmodern, postchristian, postreligious, postcolonial, post-industrial, postideological, postmoral, postanalytical, postliteral, postnarrative, postauthorial, postpersonal, poststructuralist, post-liberal, *etc.*... The signpost marking our age is the "post" sign. A paradox stamps each post-age... denying and affirming the past.' (The writer has evidently not yet heard of 'postevangelical'.)

In this way Terrence Tilley, Professor in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Dayton, begins an unusual book. Unusual because it is mainly a collection of co-authored essays reviewing the works of names both big and small, carrying, he believes, the postmodern sign outside their door. Tilley has written three of the ten papers and has inserted helpful prologues and epilogues in various places around the book. It is strongly North American in flavour. It could have been called a Primer in North American Postmodern Theology. It also strays into study of religion and critical studies. The names pursued include well-

known ones (e.g. Ray Griffin, T. J. J. Altizer, Mark C. Taylor, Edith Wyschogrod, Gustavo Gutiérrez), but also lesser-known ones, at least this side of the Atlantic. The method adopted is for Tilley to write three key chapters himself and to co-author and edit rigorously the others. There is a noticeably more mature content and attractively readable style to the three which are exclusively his (though he valorizes the word 'valorize').

Tilley identifies at least four broad types of postmodern theology ranging from the very radical (which is almost post-theology writing!) through process theology to the much more constructive and identifiably Christian 'Theology of Communal Praxis'. We get a measure of the range by noting that liberation theology is almost traditional by comparison with some of the others. A number of the writers analysed leave an impression of deep pessimism and aridness. It is noticeable that where Tilley is not the co-author, such writers get away with fewer rebukes. It is very fortunate that Tilley's work is present, for only when reading his essays does a sense of humanity and warmth come through strongly, along with a keen shrewdness in questioning otherwise unchallenged theories.

Perhaps more could be made of the fundamentally self-contradictory nature of some of the theologies examined. A good example is the paper on Sharon Welch, who repeatedly anathematizes theologies and undercurrents of power. For her, any claims even of moral purpose amount to an oppressive power. But later on we catch her, in a quotation, saying with approval that 'risks are taken... for *victory* later on' (italics mine). Even she cannot totally abandon the language of domination.

The book is an unusual type of survey, highly educative and serious. We just do not know yet whether evangelical Christian leaders should be reading it as a serious act of futurology or whether we are looking at idiosyncratic quirks. At any rate, it is worth reading for Tilley's own wise and very balanced summaries and critiques.

*Roy Kearsley, South Wales Baptist College, Cardiff*

## **This World Is Not My Home: The origins and development of dispensationalism**

Michael Williams

Mentor, Fearn, 2003, 240pp., £10.99; ISBN 1 85792 874 1

In the 1940s, Lewis Sperry Chafer complained that, if only his critics would examine more carefully his so-called 'dispensationalist' positions,

they would find his conclusions not only biblically sound, but also representative of theological ideas shared by careful Bible expositors throughout history.<sup>1</sup> It turns out that Chafer's claim was a bluff, a bluff that is fully exposed and called by Michael Williams' astute book.

Part historical-sociological examination and part theological analysis, Williams' work evaluates significant tenets of two men whose influence may arguably account the most for the widespread popularity of early dispensationalism: C. I. Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer. Consistently, Williams presents their ideas fairly, and then insightfully refutes them, often warning the reader of dangerous potential implications. Williams is too polite and too professional to lambast classical dispensationalism as 'the fruit of baneful prejudice... pernicious heresy that entails the most serious doctrinal and practical consequences', the way Scottish Reformed theologian, John Murray, did in 1937.<sup>2</sup> Still, Williams' critique is no less withering.

If there is a flaw in Williams' analysis, it may be in that he takes dispensationalism too seriously as a 'theological system'. The subjects of his investigation may bear the larger part of responsibility for even this, however. As Williams' study suggests, dispensationalism started out as more of a piecemeal splicing of various populist strands within American and British evangelicalism. It appealed to, catered to, influenced and also simply reflected these populist impulses. The 'theology' of the Scofield Reference Bible was not the product of scholarly erudition; rather, it was a populist tool, intended for laypeople to provide them a quick, easy, readily understandable means of responding to biblical questions, critical problems and theological difficulties. Striving to make the Bible accessible for devotional edification and homiletical application, 'dispensationalist' thought often was reductionist, facile and idiosyncratic, as Williams points out. But it was not until 'dispensationalism' met with the disapproval of academicians that its adherents displayed such audacity as to describe their ideas as a 'system of theology' rivaling that of the Westminster Confession. Williams un.masks such claims accurately as mere pretension. It is nevertheless questionable what effect

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, 'Dispensational Distinctions Challenged', *BibSac* 100 (1943), pp. 337-45; 'Review of Prophecy and the Church', *BibSac* 102 (1945), pp. 373-5. To be precise, it was actually his brother, Rollin Thomas Chafer, who originally staked out this claim; cf. Rollin Thomas Chafer, "'Modern' Dispensationalism', *BibSac* 93 (1936), pp. 129-30.

<sup>2</sup> "The 'Kingdom of Heaven' and the 'Kingdom of God'", *Presbyterian Guardian* 3 (9 January 1937), p. 141.



this unmasking will have on what remains to this day a largely populist movement, chastened and more self-critical, but still coveting the respect of the theological guild.

One should also take into account the fact that Williams' treatise is directed toward a target that has moved. In fact it has been moving steadily since the time period within the scope of his investigation. Several times Williams acknowledges that contemporary dispensationalists have already conceded and corrected flaws under critique in the ideology of Scofield and Chafer. While it would be a mistake to dismiss Williams' study as merely beating a dead horse, the question as to what is the specific bearing of Williams' findings is a legitimate one, never explicitly answered by the book.

Clearly, Williams' book will be helpful to those already convinced of dispensationalism's errors and curious about how it managed to become so popular. And it provides some solid material to such persons seeking ammo to fire against it. The book could also engage classical dispensationalists still convinced of the Scofield-Chafer ideology in serious dialogue, provided they are better up to the challenge than their forebears.

Of course, as Williams points out, traditional dispensationalists are Baconian in their hermeneutic, Common Sense Realist in their epistemology; but this means that they are likely today to feel no more beholden to Scofield's and Chafer's ideas (or threatened by critiques of them) than they would to the handling of a specific verse by their favorite Bible commentator. For this reason, the focus on Scofield and Chafer, while defensible, does limit the benefit of Williams' work. Nevertheless, where the insidious errors of Scofield-Chafer persist, which is surprisingly many places within contemporary evangelicalism, Williams' analysis provides a much-needed corrective.

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## **What Does It Mean to Be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons of Salvation**

John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (ed.)

Baker Academic Press, Grand Rapids, 2002; 203pp., £17.50; ISBN 0 8010 2353 X

Regent College, Vancouver, quite regularly hosts a Fall Conference, whose proceedings then find their way into print. This is not the first

such volume that John Stackhouse has edited, and he has again applied the helpful device of getting two respondents to comment on the collection. It is made up of three parts. Rick Watts, Bruce Hindmarsh and Henri Blocher contribute to biblical and historical perspectives on salvation and (Blocher) atonement. Then Vincent Bacote, Cherith Fee Nordling and Amy Sherman are given the task of 'Expanding Particular Zones' so that we understand the impact and dimensions of salvation on and for society, humanity and city. Loren Wilkinson contributes an essay to the same section, proposing a theological approach to modern paganism. In the final section, John Webster, now at Aberdeen University, and Jonathan Wilson of Westmont, California, offer their responses.

What does it mean to broaden horizons? It is to broaden them beyond the vision of the salvation of individual souls. In responding to John Webster's response, the editor assures us that it is not only in North America that the broader dimension needs to be spelled out. Webster's response is actually quite cool and, in part, characteristically Barthian (at risk of unhelpful labelling). But it also calls for a more explicit and developed trinitarianism than these essays provide, and here he is joined by his fellow-respondent, who provides a more substantial response than his own. Perhaps they are asking more of the volume than it was ever designed to provide. As conference organisers know, conference contributions, taken altogether, are often a blend of the ideal and the possible, but even ideally, it is not clear that trinitarianism must be focal in *exactly* the way that the respondents require.

That aside, the collection is a mixed bag. It is usually an invidious business to compare essayist with essayist in a multi-author collection, but in this case, I am bound to say that there is a difference in quality between the contributions of the three Regent Faculty members and Henri Blocher, on the one hand, and the less established scholars, on the other. This means that, on the whole, the first part is stronger than the second. On the other hand, with the colossal amount that is being written about everything these days, some of us get weary of words (our own as much as others') and welcome all evidence and reminders of action, with which we are provided in the second part. So we should not remain in a comparative spirit. If we take to heart what is written in this volume, or those things written in it with which we agree, we shall have plenty to get on with.

*Stephen N. Williams, Union Theological College, Belfast.*

## Sufficient Saving Grace. John Wesley's Evangelical Arminianism

Herbert Boyd McGonigle

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 2001; 350pp., £19.99; ISBN 1 84227 045 1

The author is Principal of the Nazarene College in Manchester and the book has its genesis in his doctoral research. The specialist will therefore rejoice in the thoroughness of treatment and the closely-reasoned argument, while the general reader (like the reviewer) may at times find the going rather heavy.

In the Introduction Dr McGonigle defines the theological terms which will occur frequently, distinguishing between the evangelical Arminianism of Wesley and the eighteenth-century Arminianism which was 'latitudinarian and often rationalistic'. There is a survey of earlier writing on Wesley's soteriology and a firm refutation of the idea that he was really a crypto-Calvinist.

McGonigle devotes two chapters to answering the question: 'What was this Arminianism that John Wesley espoused so fervently?' He surveys the political and religious situation in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, with the 'theological innovations' of Jacobus Arminius, whose views are explained in considerable detail. After his death the Remonstrants set out their 'Five Points' in opposition to those of Calvinism. The development of Remonstrant theology in England is the subject of the next chapter, though Dr McGonigle sees English Arminianism as a home-grown product rather than a Dutch import. Here we meet Archbishop William Laud, the formidable representative of high Anglican Arminianism and the 'powerfully and influentially Calvinistic' John Owen, with Richard Baxter following his own *via media*. Towards the end of the seventeenth century 'the Church of England was steadily moving in an anti-Calvinist direction'. An important factor was the rise of the 'holy living' theologians, the best-known being Jeremy Taylor.

Enter John Wesley, June 1703. In the Epworth rectory Samuel and Susanna 'seldom agreed on anything' but theologically both were convinced anti-Calvinists. Samuel was no mean scholar and from him John inherited his love of the Early Church Fathers and the Anglican divines. Dr McGonigle gives a fascinating analysis of Wesley's reading between 1725 and 1735 (691 books!) and how it shaped his theological understanding. Jeremy Taylor and William Law had considerable impact, as did Thomas Bennet, who saw no disharmony between the teaching of Arminius and the Anglican Article XVII (Of Predestination and Election). By 1735, when he sailed for Georgia, 'John Wesley was theologically a

convinced Anglican, deeply committed to a pattern of personal devotion nourished by his Church's structured means of grace and already persuaded that the tenets of Calvinism were inimical to this scheme of salvation.'

After Georgia came Aldersgate Street and the strangely-warmed heart. At Whitefield's invitation, Bristol became the scene of Wesley's early open-air preaching, and the scene also of the famous 'Bristol Dispute' precipitated by the preaching and publication of his sermon on *Free Grace*. Dr McGonigle expertly analyses this sermon, with its 'stark portrayal' of reprobation, the 'Achilles heel' of Calvinism. John Wesley had emerged as 'dogmatically anti-Calvinist'. Whitefield entered the lists on the other side, provoking a riposte from the redoubtable Susanna herself. The pamphleteering continued with Wesley's *Dialogue between a Predestinarian and his Friend* (1741) and this period also saw the beginning of his teaching on 'Christian perfection'. His views on predestination and perfection he would have to 'define and defend' for the rest of his life. In some limited respects he felt that he had approached 'the very edge of Calvinism' but for the most part was engaged in a 'war of theological attrition'.

Dr McGonigle sees the war in three phases. Phase One was the Bristol Dispute, beginning in 1739. Phase Two took place in the 1750s while Phase Three, the 'Minutes Dispute', began in 1770. It is not possible in this review to follow all the arguments and counter-arguments, involving the questions of foreknowledge, perseverance, the extent of the atonement, the danger of antinomianism. McGonigle devotes a complete chapter to Wesley's teaching on holiness, a subject which had occupied him from the beginning of his ministry, though his 'definitive apologetic' came in 1766 with *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Was the constant use of the term 'perfection' unfortunate? Was Wesley's definition of sin unsatisfactory? All these matters are handled with a sure touch, sympathetic but not uncritical.

The final major dispute stemmed from the *Minutes* of the 1770 Conference whose 'loosely-worded propositions' seemed to teach justification by works. Wesley's incautious statements arose from his conviction that Calvinism led to antinomianism. The subsequent battle involved Lady Huntington, John Fletcher, Augustus Toplady, Richard and Rowland Hill. (Has anyone ever considered a thesis on eighteenth-century theological vituperation?) In 1776 Wesley published a sermon on Romans 8:29, 30: *On Predestination*, setting forth his mature views on the *ordo salutis*, very much an Arminian understanding. Shortly afterwards he founded the *Arminian Magazine*. Volume I contained the

statement: 'The doctrine of predestination, as maintained by the rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought utterly to be abhorred.'

McGonigle skilfully draws the threads together in his final chapter entitled 'Calvinism – the Antidote to Methodism'. He sees Wesley's objections as philosophical, theological, biblical and pastoral. 'His antagonism to Calvinism, far from abating, seemed rather to intensify in the latter years of his ministry.' It was his distinctive teaching on prevenient grace which enabled him to maintain his course between the extremes of high Calvinism and Pelagianism.

This book is erudite, the fruit of painstaking and detailed research. The reader who works hard will not only have a thorough grounding in the theology of John Wesley but a comprehensive introduction to men and movements in the eighteenth-century church. And the reader who is looking for a straightforward (and non-polemical) critique from the Calvinistic side could do worse than study the relevant chapters in Iain Murray's recent book on Wesley, published by Banner of Truth.

*Robert Thompson, Belfast*

## **The Gospel in the World. Vol. 1. Studies in Baptist History and Thought**

David Bebbington (ed.)

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 2002, xi+361pp., £24.99; ISBN 1 84227 118 0

*The Gospel in the World* is a diverse collection of conference papers from the first International Conference on Baptist studies, held at Regent's Park College, Oxford, in August 1997. Some of the leading Baptist historians from around the globe offer perspectives on four centuries of Baptist history and thought.

The major portions of the book focus upon historical developments in Britain and America. Topics examined here include religious tolerance, the communion controversy, the development of the international Baptist community, Baptists and early pentecostalism, Andrew Fuller's theology and the Gaelic hymn-writer Peter Grant.

John Coffey argues that there was considerable diversity in Baptist views towards religious toleration in England and America. He comments on the period 1612 to 1721 but his analysis encourages caution about specifying any definite consensus among Baptists on this issue. It was interesting to learn that the radical separationist view (church as a voluntary association of believers separate from the world and the state)

was the minority view. In contrast many Baptists were firm believers in God's intolerance towards sin creating communities of discipline and supporting a society which punished sin 'against nature.' It is illuminating to learn that a far greater proportion of Baptists have been firm upholders of the Christian nation position and we can see this in the United States in the views of Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell. This article informs us on the diversity of Baptist positions on an issue that refuses to go away, most recently in the recent discussions on the European Constitution.

Donald Meek provides a distinctive article in the collection which looks at how Christianity was contextualized in the culture of the Scottish Highlands through the hymn writing of Peter Grant (1783-1867). These hymns gave Christians familiar with the Psalter an opportunity to focus their sung worship directly upon Christ. Some hymns reject the ceilidh-house culture of the highlands because it represents the way of death, yet paradoxically the composer was deeply indebted to traditional metres and tunes. It seems that Grant was following the principle later espoused by William Booth: 'Why should the devil have all the best tunes?'

A significant proportion of the book covers the expansion of Baptist life in Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union, Australia and Papua New Guinea. The book moves beyond the development of the church in particular countries and seeks to record some lessons gained from missionary presence. The nonconformist conscience of the Baptist Missionary Society is illustrated in the account of the late nineteenth-century campaign against colonial authority in Jamaica after 439 were killed and 1000 homes destroyed. Further missionary focus is offered on Timothy Richard of China and T. R. Glover and his book *The Jesus of History*.

The book concludes with two important essays on the future of Baptist life that pay special attention to the United States. Bill Leonard argues that the Southern Baptist Convention is in the midst of 'significant transition, fragmentation, restructuring, redefinition and schism'. He challenges Baptists to identify the non-negotiables which define the nature of Baptist belief, practice and overall identity. In doing so he comments on the diversity of views among Baptists. 'Which Baptist identity – out of the multitudes – should be retained, renewed and passed on?... Baptists in the South and elsewhere might ask again: who is a Baptist and who is not and does anyone really care?' In contrast, Nancy Ammeram underlines those aspects of Baptist identity which provide

optimism for a cultural fit and flexible responses to the challenge of cultural change in the 21st century.

The breadth of subjects covered is so diverse that those who consult this book may do so selectively according to interest. As a collection it represents well a wide range of Baptist concerns but it is not obvious to the reader why he should want to invest time reading this particular collection as a whole. However, within one volume it pulls together an impressive snapshot of the international Baptist family, as well as in-depth articles on matters central to Baptist identity. The level is certainly academic but the introductions guide the non-specialist reader into most subjects without difficulty. The footnotes are comprehensive and accessible, and overall it would serve a pastor or academic well as a reference tool to increase general awareness or consult as specific questions arise.

*Alasdair Macleod, Bushey Baptist Church, Oxhey, Watford*

### **The Earthly Career of Jesus, the Christ: A Life in Chronological, Geographical and Social Context**

Robert D. Culver

Mentor Books, 2002; 272pp., £ 9.85; ISBN 1 85792 798 2

In his quest to describe the earthly life of Jesus, the author divides the book into four main sections, based on four stages in Jesus' life as seen in John 16:28: (i) I came forth from the Father, (ii) I have come into the world, (iii) I am leaving the world, and (iv) I am going to the Father. Culver believes that this fourfold structure is the underlying thrust of all the four gospels.

His purpose is to so examine the evidence of the gospels so as to 'obtain a substantial, interpreted summary of our Lord's career, seen in chronological and geographical context'.

There are thirteen chapters in all, beginning with the Old Testament expectations for a Messiah and the actual birth of Christ. This makes up the first part (two chapters). A large chunk of the book (six chapters) lies in the second main part. It deals with Jesus' earthly activities – his ministry, his teachings and his miracles along with the training of the twelve disciples. The content of the third part (four chapters) is confined to the last week of Jesus' life on earth, ending with the crucifixion. The final part (one chapter) describes the resurrection manifestations and the ascension. While credit must be given to Culver for attempting to arrange gospel data into a chronologically continuous portrayal of Jesus' life,

there are perhaps more excursions than necessary (fourteen in all – sometimes as many as five occurring consecutively). These tend to break the continuous narrative approach that is just what in fact the book seeks to establish. One possible reason for the abundance of these distracting excursions may be the author's aim to include 'every incident, every parable (or group of parables), and every sermon and miracle...'

The scriptural references in the margins next to the events that are being described are helpful. This aids looking up the events in question. However, when the author quotes biblical verses, the Authorised Version is used which seems rather out of place in a book published in 2002.

Although the book does not deal with controversial scholarly issues that a discussion on the historical Jesus would surely unearth, Culver exhibits his awareness of current scholarship about which he appears a bit sceptical. Further, his criticism of doctrinal traditions associated with particular biblical texts is rather uncalled for and at times spoils the reverential atmosphere that he tries to create.

The entire book is written primarily from a devotional perspective and is hence helpful as an aid for reflection and devotion. At the same time Culver takes care constantly to provide the modern Arabic names for ancient biblical places. He also makes mention of the present-day churches, monasteries and chapels built on several sacred sites. This contemporary information coupled with detailed tables, maps and diagrams makes the book interesting to lay readers and students of the Bible alike.

*Mark Jason, University of Aberdeen*

## **Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography of the Man and His Ministry**

Kingsley G. Rendell

Christian Focus Publications, Fearn, 2003; 192pp., £7.99; ISBN 1 85792 262 X

Kingsley Rendell's 'new biography' of Samuel Rutherford (1600-61) is a welcome addition to the corpus of literature that helps us better to understand this early-modern figure who described himself as a 'man of extremes'. The book is succinct and quite easy to read (though the use of footnotes rather than inimical endnotes would make it even more so!). Nevertheless, it gives a good introduction to Rutherford and his theology. Perhaps its greatest contribution, however, is its sketch of the historical context in which Rutherford lived and wrote. These aspects of the book –



its brevity and simplicity together with its emphasis on the historical context – make it a good starting point for those who are as yet unfamiliar with this towering Second-Reformation minister and theologian. For those who wish to wade more deeply into Rutherford's life and work, this book will probably only whet your appetite for what remains the definitive biography on Rutherford, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (1997), written by John Coffey.

Rendell subdivides his biography into seven chapters. The first six each discuss a different aspect of Rutherford's life and work, while the seventh provides 'an estimate' of his 'life and character' as a whole (p. 129). The book begins with a survey of the historical context (or 'mêlée') into which Rutherford was born in 1600. Rendell reminds his readers that the Reformed Church of Scotland was established, not by an overnight work of Reformation, but as the result of a long and arduous struggle from 1560 to 1689. When seen in this context, the life and work of Rutherford form 'an indispensable link' (p. 9) between the first and final stages in the process of Reformation. Rendell's treatment of the scandal occurring in 1625, involving allegations of fornication, and triggering Rutherford's resignation from the 'Town College' in Edinburgh, is ultimately inconclusive, and, thus, rather unsatisfactory.

After this beginning, Rendell moves to a discussion of Rutherford's ministry in Anwoth and his exile in Aberdeen (1627-1638) in chapters two and three. Once again he is careful to set Rutherford's ministry in context. He then examines Rutherford as a preacher and pastor and gives several helpful and practical illustrations from which ministers today could benefit. For instance, he mentions Rutherford's tendency to use imagery and word-pictures in his preaching to help his parishioners understand and remember main ideas: 'Pride, lust, laziness and security are the meikle water... the saints are the short legged horse, and down they go' (p. 33). Rendell also helpfully emphasises Rutherford's Christ-centeredness in both his preaching and in his letters from Aberdeen: 'To preach Christ was in his [Rutherford's] own words "the apple of my delights"' (p. 34).

In chapters four and five, Rendell treats Rutherford 'The Reformer' and 'The Apologist'. Here he discusses the beginning of Rutherford's tenure as professor in St Andrews and his work at the Westminster Assembly, and surveys his theological, ecclesiological and epistolary writings. As is to be expected, almost half of his literary survey is devoted to Rutherford's two best-known works, *Lex Rex* (1644) and the *Letters*

(1664, 1891). And true to form, Rendell anchors all of this in an examination of the historical context.

Perhaps the historical highlight of the book, however, is Rendell's treatment of Rutherford 'The Protester' in chapter six. This chapter is a well-researched and contextualised look at the remaining years of Rutherford's life after the Assembly and his role in the Protester-Resolutioner controversy within the church. It portrays Rutherford as a coherent but narrow-minded man who was more concerned to be consistent theologically than he was about the unity of the body of Christ. In this, though, as Rendell demonstrates in chapter seven, Rutherford is a child of his times. We must be careful to understand him and judge him in the light of his own day, rather than by looking at him through twenty-first-century goggles. And Rendell's biography does a good job at just this point.

*Guy Richard, New College, Edinburgh*

### **Islam in Context: Past, Present, and Future**

Peter G. Riddell & Peter Cotterell

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids MI, 2003, 231pp., £13.50; ISBN 0 8010 2627 X

Islam is seldom out of the news these days. It claims 1.2 billion adherents worldwide – about a fifth of the earth's population. It presents great challenges both to Western culture and society and to the church and its gospel. Some grasp of Islam is therefore essential for an understanding of the global context in which we live and work. This book aims to fulfil that need.

The authors are both senior staff from the Centre for Islamic Studies at London Bible College. In their introduction they state three aims of the book: first, to help readers understand Islam, second, to present an understanding of the ongoing interaction between the Islamic world with the rest of the world, and third, to identify a way forward in resolving current tensions and conflict. Their hope is that the book will attract a wide readership among Christians, Jews and Muslims and among people with both more and less commitment to their respective religion.

Much of the book follows a chronological ordering of the development of Islam from its beginnings in sixth and seventh century Arabia. This treatment is a reasonably in-depth overview but makes use of many original historical sources. There are also chapters on basic beliefs and practices and on the development of the Qur'an. It is well

written and would make a readable introduction to the subject for a minister or lay person. It will also benefit those already with some knowledge of Islam.

Included is a look at areas of conflict between the Qur'an and the Bible, such as the crucifixion of Christ which the Qur'an appears to deny, the Qur'anic denial of the Trinity, and assertion that Jesus foretold Muhammad's coming, and the Qur'an's claim that Jews and Christians have falsified their own Scriptures. On this latter point the question is raised as to whether this means that Jews and Christians have corrupted scriptural texts or simply misinterpreted the Scriptures. While this is left an open question in this section, somehow by the conclusion to the book on p. 213, without saying how, the Qur'an is said to accuse Jews and Christians of either allowing Scripture to become corrupt or of knowingly corrupting them in favour of their respective theologies. A fuller and better treatment of this question is found in Chawkat Moucarray, *Faith to Faith: Christianity and Islam in Dialogue* (Leicester, 2001), pp.

44-53, which is actually recommended by the authors and which, although inconclusive, veers in the direction of the Qur'an accusing Jews and Christians of misinterpreting rather than corrupting Scripture. This matter is of considerable importance in Christian dialogue with Muslims.

Part 3 of the book is entitled, 'Looking Around', and seeks to analyse the contemporary situation, in particular conflict between the Muslim world and the West. It examines the radical Islamist world-view, tracing its historical origins and background all the way back to parts of the Qur'an, which commend violence in the cause of establishing Islam. It then looks at the moderate Muslim world-view, which looks to more peaceful and tolerant parts of the Qur'an for its theological roots. In this section the authors quote from some rare voices of Muslim self-criticism. In between these two views are the traditionalist masses of the Muslim world, and the authors quote evidence that seems to indicate that these masses are moving in the direction of the Islamists. They also state that modern areas of conflict such as Iraq and Palestine are merely manifestations of the radical Islamists' antipathy towards the West rather than its causes. While this may be true, it should also be taken into account that, for example, failure to find a fair resolution for the Palestinian problem may create fertile environments for the recruitment of radicals.

The conclusion is that Islam is at a crossroads and needs to develop a new hermeneutic for dealing with Qur'anic passages that condone and commend violence, which makes a distinction between *meaning* for the

original hearers and *significance* for today, in order to allow the Islamic world to co-exist peacefully with the rest of the world.

Bearing in mind the above minor criticisms, I would recommend this book.

*Duncan Peters, Asian Outreach, Govanhill Free Church, Glasgow*

### **Covenant Theology. Contemporary Approaches**

Mark J. Cartledge and David Mills (eds)

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 2001; 128pp., £14.99; ISBN 1 84227 007 9

This book consists of four Chaplaincy Lectures delivered at the University of Liverpool between 1997 and 2000, together with four responses addressing each lecture and written for this publication. Both lecturers and respondents are well-known names in their respective fields. The lectures cover different aspects of Covenant Theology, beginning with the Old Testament, going on to the New Testament, then systematic theology and concluding with pastoral and ethical issues. One of the goals is to demonstrate the interconnected nature of theological study across these sub-disciplines.

The first lecture, 'The Covenant with All Living Creatures', is by Stephen R. L. Clark, Professor of Philosophy at Liverpool University. Drawing on a number of Old Testament texts, Clark seeks to apply covenantal thinking to the treatment of animals. Among other things, he argues that animals have value in themselves, as God's creation, not just on account of their usefulness to the human race. Although he makes a number of important points about the use and misuse of animals, Clark never really sets out a clearly argued interpretation of biblical covenant theology which justifies his position. In his response, John Goldingay rightly highlights the dangers, as well of the benefits, of reading the Old Testament in the light of a new question which the interpreter brings to the text. It is an exercise, he says, which creates both windows of new understanding and mirrors reflecting the interpreter's own outlook. He then considers number of OT passages which reflect a different attitude to animals from that espoused by Clark.

In the second lecture James D. G. Dunn of Durham University considers 'Judaism and Christianity: One Covenant or Two?' He begins by noting that how one answers this question has profound implications for how Christians are to view the Old Testament and also for one's attitude to Judaism. If a second (Christian) covenant *replaces* the first, are centuries of Jewish life and thought to be written off? Dunn then

traces the history of the biblical covenants from the covenant with Abraham through to the New Covenant, emphasising the elements of continuity between these covenants. His conclusion is that there is one covenant, with old and new being viewed as two interpretations of the first covenant, the promise to Abraham. 'The new covenant ... is not a rejection of the old so much as a more effective implementation of the old.' (p. 54). Mark Bonnington's response concentrates on covenantal material in Jeremiah and Paul and concludes that the answer to the question 'One covenant or two?' is 'Both'.

The third lecture, by Gary Badcock who teaches theology in London, Ontario, is entitled 'The God of the Covenant' and considers some of the ways in which the doctrine of God has been formulated in different strands of Covenant Theology within the Reformed tradition. In sketching the main elements of the seventeenth century 'Scholastic' theology of the covenant, Badcock seeks to demonstrate that these theologians' concept of covenant depends largely on their understanding of the nature of God, especially his immutability. He then argues, controversially, that a connection may be traced between this view and the 'existential' covenant theology of Karl Barth, in which the covenant depends entirely on the free decision of God. Among his conclusions Badcock pleads for theological modesty, a recognition of the limited character of speech and concepts in treatments of the doctrine of God. Trevor Hart's response marshalls various objections to covenant theology, some of them familiar from the writings of James Torrance, concentrating on contractual language and issues of grace and merit.

The final paper turns to the field of ethics, as Robin Gill of the University of Kent considers 'Health Care and Covenant: Withholding and Withdrawing Treatment'. Gill begins by examining the discussions of withdrawing nutrition and hydration from patients, which have been produced by the Lambeth Conference of Bishops and by the Medical Ethics Committee of the British Medical Association. This serves to highlight a number of the complex issues involved in withholding or withdrawing 'treatment' (not least how the latter is to be defined). Gill goes on to sketch out how a covenant understanding of the relationship between doctor and patient may help to resolve some of these problems. Drawing on the work of William May and Joseph Allen, among others, Gill draws a sharp distinction between contract and covenant, and argues that elements of both need to be present in medical relationships. His treatment of covenant theology is rather brief and serves to raise issues rather than resolve them definitively. The response by Margaret Whipp, theologian and physician, sees 'covenant' functioning mainly in terms of

the attitude of the doctor, particularly in a commitment to care, rather than as a source of specific guidance for decisions.

The papers in this collection are stimulating and thought-provoking, although some are more closely related to the theme of 'covenant' than others. For those who already have a general understanding of covenant theology they are worth reading critically.

*David McKay, Reformed Theological College, Belfast*

## **Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The 'Lutheran' Paul and His Critics**

Stephen Westerholm

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2004; 488 pp., £24.99; ISBN 0 8028 4809 5

This substantial volume is a thoroughly reworked and significantly expanded version of the author's 1988 book, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*. Its primary purpose is to examine the various exegetical issues which lie at the heart of the debate concerning 'the New Perspective on Paul'. One of the most striking features of Westerholm's book is the delightfully light touch with which he discusses decidedly weighty issues. Wit and humour are evident throughout, yet these welcome characteristics do not lead to a frivolous book.

Westerholm divides his book into three parts. In part one, he considers the views of several key historical figures (Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley) on a variety of relevant theological issues, such as the Fall, redemption, the Mosaic law, etc. This historical section is largely new and serves to locate the discussion of the rather complex modern debate in historical context. Given that Luther, in particular, is frequently cited in the modern debate, it is very useful to have a summary of his position which depends heavily on citations of his own words.

The second part of the book is a very useful survey of recent contributions to the modern debate. It is composed of nine chapters. Eight of them analyse the thought of significant authors, grouped according to broad similarity of perspective. The ninth chapter gathers together numerous quotations from authors who broadly stand against a 'Lutheran' reading of Paul, arranged under several headings, with the intention of allowing them to explain their positions in their own words. While it must be admitted that even direct quotations may sometimes misrepresent an author's views when taken out of context, and while the gathering of quotations might be taken to suggest more common agreement than some of the authors might wish, Westerholm's concern

that the scholars' own voices be heard is both commendable and beneficial to the reader.

The third and final part of the book is Westerholm's own contribution to the debate. Westerholm's conviction that terminology has been used with too little precision is reflected in the fact that he devotes three initial chapters (amounting to almost one hundred pages) to defining 'righteousness', 'law' and 'grace'. He then proceeds to trace Paul's thought concerning 'justification by faith' through Paul's letters (including the letters which modern scholarship frequently neglects as 'deutero-Pauline'). Finally, there is a chapter devoted to 'the law' in God's plan. As is fitting for a book which contains a reference to Luther in the title, Westerholm offers nine theses which, in essence, contend that although the law of Moses was a gift from God, it was unable to achieve life for those dead in sin – something only the death of Jesus the Messiah could achieve. Christians now fulfil the law as a grateful response and by the work of Holy Spirit. This is the most demanding section of the book. It is full of close textual analysis of Paul's letters and, although those without Greek should be able to follow a considerable amount of the discussion, the frequent citation of untranslated Greek will make for hard reading. Interaction with scholarship is also substantial and detailed. Westerholm concludes that, although 'New Perspective' scholarship has provided some important insights (particularly into Judaism), the 'Lutheran' position has a truer grasp of Paul's theology.

Although there have been several recent responses to the New Perspective, this is now the book I would recommend to serious readers who want a clear and well-rounded introduction written from a cautious, sane and helpfully critical perspective.

*Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological College, Dingwall*

## **The Making of the New Spirituality**

James A. Herrick

IVP, Downers Grove, Illinois, 2003; 331pp., £15.99; ISBN 0 8308 2398 0

In this substantial volume, James Herrick, Professor of Communication at Hope College, Holland, Michigan, sets out to trace the influences which have led to what he calls the 'New Religious Synthesis', which is threatening to replace the 'Revealed Word' tradition of Christianity in the West. He begins by pointing out the growing influence of this 'new spirituality' through the mass media, literature, popular science and

religion. He then summarises the traditional Christian worldview and contrasts it with this new way of thinking which is not confined to those who are self-consciously New Age.

In the second chapter he traces some late medieval movements which he sees as contributing to the growth of this 'new spirituality' in the modern era. He briefly describes the origins and beliefs of neo-gnostic sects, such as the Free Spirits, Cathars, Bogomiles and Albigensians, the pantheistic and magical Hermeticists, the influence of Jewish kabbalah, the rise of neo-platonism and magical science, and European mysticism. The final strand which contributed to the rise of the 'new spirituality' in the modern period was, he says, the rise of medieval humanism and the (unintended) influence of the Reformation in encouraging private study and interpretation of Scripture. This led on to critical approaches to Scripture and the autonomy of the individual.

There follows a series of chapters tracing the development of each of these influences up to the twentieth century, when the New Religious Synthesis took shape. He begins with biblical criticism, tracing it from an almost forgotten but influential eighteenth-century English author, Thomas Woolston, who poured scorn on the Bible as history, to the more famous Reimarus, Lessing and Strauss and others in the nineteenth century. He then jumps to late twentieth-century figures such as Bishop John Spong and Michael Drosnin, author of *The Bible Code*. What is common to all these is the dismissal of the Bible as history, thus attacking the Christian revelation of a personal God who acts in history and opening the way for subjective readings of Scripture and a man-made theology.

A brief chapter traces the deification of human reason following Voltaire. Then the influence of those who see science as providing the answer to all human problems is traced, from Comte and Paine through Ingersoll to Carl Sagan, author of the extremely popular *Cosmos*. The development of evolutionary theory following Darwin is then studied to show how the Huxleys and others, such as Teilhard de Chardin, advocated a form of spiritual evolution guided by man. He seems to believe that such mystical scientists have had more influence on popular thinking than the materialist scientists who discount the spiritual realm altogether.

The rise of pantheism in the West, following Spinoza, is traced right up to its influence on some modern physicists. The rebirth of ancient Gnosticism is explored in some detail, including its influence on Joseph Smith, the nineteenth-century founder of the currently fast-growing Mormon sect, on Carl Jung, the extremely influential twentieth-century psychoanalyst, and on the latest popular science fiction. The importance



of modern shamanism is explored, mentioning the influence of Swedenborg and others and the current popularity of authors such as Gary Zukav, a frequent guest on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

In the penultimate chapter Herrick surveys some of the literature of mysticism to show its influence in the emergence of the prevailing pluralism, one aspect of which is that mystical spiritual experience is seen as the unifying factor in world religions. I believe he could have given more consideration to the influence of Eastern mysticism. Finally he summarises the weaknesses of the New Religious Synthesis and points the way to a return to the Revealed Word tradition of orthodox Christianity. This section is very brief and could have been expanded to give more practical guidance.

The writing is clear and the scholarship impressive. There are numerous endnotes and a full index. While the range of subjects covered is vast and often the connections between the various movements studied are not clearly delineated, I found his argument stimulating and enlightening. I recommend this book as a guide to understanding the development of the present view of spirituality in the West and as a stimulus to further thinking about communicating the gospel in this environment.

*Donald M. MacDonald, Free Church College, Edinburgh*

### **Engaging Augustine on Romans. Self, Context, and Theology in Interpretation**

Daniel Patte and Eugene TeSelle (eds)

Trinity Press International, Harrisburg, 2002; xiii+290pp; £25; ISBN 1 56338 407 8

This important work is part of a projected multi-volume series, *Romans through History and Cultures* (eds Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte), which aims to explore 'the past and present impact of Romans upon theology, and upon cultural, political, social and ecclesial life, and gender relations'. The fruit of successful collaboration between a number of New Testament and patristic scholars, the collection of essays in this volume represents a major contribution to the study of Augustine's methods of biblical exegesis. Study of and comment on the Bible were central in Augustine's life and work. His understanding of Scripture, however, was never static and throughout his ministry he maintained a refreshing readiness (clearly reflected in these essays) to change interpretation of particular biblical texts, as his grasp of Scripture continued to deepen and

expand. As one contributor, Simon Gathercole, states, 'Many of us claim to be open to change our positions, but with the Bishop of Hippo we can actually see it in print.' Augustine's scholarly humility is calculated to 'inspire similar exegetical and theological repentance'.

The dedication of this work to Krister Stendahl, who provides an (unrepentant!) Last Word, reflects the importance of his contribution to studies on Paul and Augustine. In his influential *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, Stendahl holds the Augustine of the *Confessions* responsible for initiating the whole history of the Western introspective conscience ('a Western development and a Western plague') to which Luther was to seek an answer. Paul was not concerned with issues of personal salvation but with the possibility of Gentile inclusion in the Messianic community. It was Augustine's misreading of Paul that set subsequent western interpretation of Paul on a wrong course. John Riches, in a very illuminating essay, argues for the recognition of much more common ground between Paul and Augustine than Stendahl and others would allow, and his case (which cannot be set out here) deserves careful reflection. Riches recognizes Lutheran interpretations of Paul (with their emphasis on forensic aspects of Paul's thought) as 'the most fruitful interpretations of Paul in the West'. Their very success, however, has militated against an appreciation of the inner dynamic of Paul's thought (the interplay of the forensic and the dualistic) by neglecting interpretations of other elements in Paul's texts, particularly liberation from bondage to the powers and participation in Christ. Riches calls for the developing of a new conversation between these two kinds of readings with a view to recapturing 'something of the inner dynamic of Paul's texts'.

Each of the other essays sheds important light on the particular topic under discussion. Eugene TeSelle provides an Introduction in which he surveys patristic interpretation of the Bible, with special reference to Augustine, and a later chapter exploring the Augustinian trajectory of interpretation of Romans 7 both in Augustine himself and through later ages. Thomas Martin establishes Augustine's interest in formal hermeneutical issues by calling attention both to his ground-breaking hermeneutical manual, the *De doctrina christiana*, and the 'hermeneutical asides' scattered through Augustine's works on John, the Psalms and Genesis. By examining Augustine's exegetical practice in some later works in which Romans occupies a prominent place, in light of these 'asides', Martin confirms the general consistency of Augustine's practice with his own hermeneutical principles. Paula Fredriksen explores Augustine's use of a literal interpretation of Scripture to establish his

distinctive teaching on the status of Israel, the Jews and Judaism within the context of his evolving theology of history. Simon Gathercole illuminates Augustine's capacity for interpretative change by examining his 'conversion' regarding the identity of the Gentiles who have the law written on their hearts in Romans 2:13-16. Peter Gorday considers the debate between Augustine and Jerome on the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the first century church.

In a concluding essay, Daniel Patte presents Augustine as a model for the practice of 'scriptural criticism', an approach to biblical interpretation worked out by himself and Grenholm, and to which each of the authors in the volume makes a contribution. The term represents an 'integrated, tri-polar' approach to scriptural interpretation which recognizes that in any interpretation of a biblical passage, three things are being simultaneously interpreted: the biblical text, the readers' relational/contextual life and the readers' heteronomous/religious experience (hence the book's sub-title). It is an approach which enables readers to assess critically the different possible interpretative choices before them. In that connection, Patte commends Augustine as 'an excellent reading companion for all of us', not least because he is completely upfront about the hermeneutical and contextual frames of his interpretation. To enter into dialogue with such an exegete is not necessarily to adopt his particular interpretation, but it is to find ourselves in a much better position to assess the value of our own.

This scholarly work is an eminently worthy addition to the growing body of works in English on Augustinian hermeneutics. Fresh insights abound. Fine bibliographies at the end of each chapter and useful indices enhance its value. Pauline scholars and historians of biblical interpretation will gain most from these essays, but all with an interest in Romans and/or in Augustine's use of Scripture, cannot fail to benefit from its careful perusal. This reviewer's appetite has been whetted for further volumes in a most promising series.

*Angus Morrison, St Columba's Old Parish Church, Stornoway*

## **Mapping Postmodernism**

Robert C. Greer

InterVarsity Press, Downer's Grove, Illinois, 2003; 286 pp., £12.99; ISBN 0 8308 2733 1

Robert Greer sets out in this book a basic introduction to the concept of postmodernism, and how he believes the church needs to respond to this

phenomenon. It is not a book designed for those already steeped in academic philosophy; nor, at the other end of the spectrum will it be of much help to those without at least a university education! As Greer himself says (p. 3), 'I was not asked to write a book for children or in uneducated language.' Just as well. The 'educated language' of philosophical debate threatens, in almost every chapter, to deaden the effect of Greer's work, but in fairness to the author he strives, successfully I think, to hack a way through the jungle of philosophy-speak and unpack for his readers both the essence of the subject-matter and his vision of where we go should from here.

The need for a book such as this is identified in the author's prologue where he claims to have found it remarkable how much sheer ignorance there is about the concepts of modernism and postmodernism in the church. (Guilty!) On p. 3 he writes, 'The confusion is compounded when this hybrid modernism is perceived as being synonymous with *liberalism* – another mistake.' (Guilty again!) 'Modernism' is identified as the culture of 'radical doubt' inspired by Descartes' maxim: *cogito ergo sum* – 'I think therefore I am' – and the post-Enlightenment obsession with scientifically proven objective truth. It is this maxim, more than anything else, which is the 'spine' from which all the other 'ribs' in the book take their identity as being more or less in agreement with it.

After introductory chapters on what Greer sees as 'the dark side of absolute truth' and an urgent 'ecumenical imperative', (in other words two reasons why postmodernism needs to be taken seriously) he goes on to introduce the reader to the four main groupings within postmodernism, namely: foundational realism, post-foundational realism, post-foundational antirealism and post-foundational middle-distance realism. A helpful appendix (which should be read before starting the book) defines some of these terms and an indispensable glossary covers everything else and more. Greer helpfully uses bold text each time an item from the glossary appears in the text of the book for the first time. This effectively means that it must be read with at least three bookmarks permanently in place: one for the text, one for the copious notes, and one for the glossary.

The book comes from an American rather than British perspective, and this is particularly apparent in Greer's characterisation of liberals and conservatives respectively. I found myself not really recognising most of his descriptions of what conservatives, for example, supposedly believe, but if I have one genuine criticism of the book it is that it has trouble finishing. After the four schools of postmodernism have been discussed Greer returns to his opening subject in a chapter entitled 'Absolute Truth

Re-visited', which has the 'feel' of a conclusion about it. But then two other chapters follow, before a somewhat unnecessary epilogue which adds nothing to the book but re-hashes questions Greer has already addressed in the main body of the work. That aside, this is a worthwhile introduction to a complex philosophical subject. In other words *Mapping Postmodernism* does exactly what it says on the tin.

*Andrew W. F. Coghill, Lochs Crossbost Parish Church, Isle of Lewis*

## **Alister E. McGrath & Evangelical Theology: A Dynamic Engagement**

Sung Wook Chung (ed.)

Paternoster, Carlisle, 2003; 364pp., £14.99; ISBN 1 84227 202 0

This book, a collection of essays in honour of Alister McGrath's fiftieth birthday, is effectively a festschrift, although this is a somewhat unusual occurrence when the scholar in question is still at the height of his academic career. Presumably it must be seen as a celebration of what he has achieved to date, with the prospect of more to come. Professor McGrath has been Principal of Wycliffe Hall in Oxford, an Anglican College, for some years and has recently been appointed Director of the Oxford Centre for Evangelism and Apologetics.

After a foreword by J. I. Packer, the book is divided into two sections. Part one is entitled 'The Theology of Alister E. McGrath' and part two is entitled, 'Dynamics and Vitality of Evangelical Theology'. The essays in part one are concerned to summarise and engage directly with McGrath's own position, while the essays in part two are of a more general nature. The writers who have contributed represent a range of perspectives, ranging from Clark Pinnock to Gerald Bray. Nor have the authors been chosen because they are uncritical followers of McGrath's theological viewpoint. Indeed, there is some fairly serious criticism.

There are four essays in part one and the first is by Graham Tomlin on McGrath's understanding of the atonement. Tomlin, Vice-Principal at Wycliffe Hall, is very positive and respectful concerning the theological ability of his colleague (and former teacher) but he also points out McGrath's failure to choose between various theories of atonement and, in particular, regrets his refusal to make penal substitution the controlling motif for his understanding of atonement. In the next chapter, Gerald Bray revisits McGrath's *Iustitia Dei* and effectively asks for it to be rewritten! Others, of course, are much more complimentary. In the third chapter, on McGrath's work in the area of scientific theology, John

Roche says that McGrath has 'read everything of relevance in the history of science, in contemporary science, in the history of philosophy and in the history of the philosophy of science, in historical and in current theology, in the history of science and religion, and also in the current field' (p. 34). The fourth essay in part one is by Dennis Okholm, dealing with McGrath's views on postliberalism. He is pleased that in McGrath there is no outright rejection of postliberalism but rather a cautious raising of concerns. This, argues Okholm, makes McGrath a suitable dialogue partner alongside postliberals such as Lindbeck.

Part two of the book does not have the same coherence as part one and the essays are of mixed quality. These range from the rather pedestrian, such as the one contributed by the editor of the volume, Sung Wook Chung, on Karl Barth, to the quite challenging, such as the essay by William Abraham on 'Revelation and Natural Theology'. Others are quite controversial, for example, Clark Pinnock's argument that open theism is within the camp of evangelical theology. By far the most interesting and stimulating contribution, however, is by John Frame. In an essay entitled 'Machen's Warring Children' Frame outlines twenty-two separate controversies that have engulfed evangelicalism since the time of J. Gresham Machen. He also manages to take a position on most of these. Watch out for his comments on the justification controversy at Westminster Seminary! The volume is worth the purchase price for this essay alone.

There is not space in a short review to refer to all of the essays in this substantial volume but the book as a whole is certainly worth reading. The volume concludes with 'An Appreciation and Response' from McGrath himself.

*A. T. B. McGowan, Highland Theological College, Dingwall*

## **Mission After Christendom**

David Smith

Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 2003, 140pp, £12.95; ISBN 0 232 52483 1

David Smith is well known in Scotland, having been variously a Ph.D. student in Aberdeen, Principal of Northumbria Bible College, and now lecturer in Mission and World Christianity at the International Christian College in Glasgow. Along the way, he has served as a pastor in Cambridge, a missionary in West Africa, and co-director of the Whitefield Institute in Oxford.

Some years ago he wrote *Crying in the Wilderness*. It was an impassioned plea about the state of our western churches and our refusal to engage with the challenging realities. Above all, it was an appeal not to hanker after golden ages but to grasp present realities. I remember reviewing it, reflecting that it was moving and powerful – but a bit long on analysis, and relatively short on help with what to do next. I was eagerly awaiting the next book.

This is it. It does not disappoint. It is full of helpful pointers, though you have to face the hard facts first. In three major chapters, Smith surveys the challenges of secularisation, pluralisation and globalisation. As he does he introduces us both to periods of history and current world scenes which turn out to have encountered our kind of world before. It turns out we are not alone, nor indeed unique; and there are ways to move forward again. But we will not be able to move forward until we have fully faced the facts.

Some of Smith's most telling analysis of our situation comes from fifteenth and eighteenth century art. Learning to appreciate the likes of Hieronymus Bosch, Hans Holbein and William Blake is an art in itself, yet their critiques of their cultures prove compelling for ours. Smith sets them alongside Stanley Spencer and Georges Rouault to provide us with analytical tools and to point us to significant streams of hope.

These challenging chapters are interwoven with biblical models which show God and his people have been here before. We sit with Israel between the exile and return, not forgetting that the same land has recently been ravaged by war and riven by tension. We struggle alongside Peter in the house of Cornelius to make sense of our world. We join the earliest Christians in confessing Jesus as Lord in the cauldron of the Rome of Revelation. In order to engage in mission after Christendom we are invited to rejoin the churches that existed before Christendom. Here indeed is help. 'The Christians we encounter in this period have a deep awareness of the radical nature of conversion and the moral demands of Christian discipleship. In the second century, Justin Martyr speaks of a desperate struggle to get free from a world controlled by demons, a culture in which people are addicted to wealth and pleasure, and describes the new life in Christ in terms of a complete transformation' (p. 124).

In his concluding chapter, Smith says he has searched for 'the new frontiers of mission today and, in the light of the discovery of these, to consider the mental, structural and theological changes that will be needed if the church is to obey Christ in relevant and faithful witness in this new context' (p. 116). He presses us to distinguish now between mission, 'the abiding obligation and mark of the church of Christ at all times in

all places', and the specific institutions we call missions. Only then will we be free to explore contemporary and appropriate models of mission, just as the Chinese, South American and Pacific rim churches have done. Above all, Smith appeals to us to recover the priority of discipleship, 'to turn contemporary processes of thought and ways of living towards the Saviour' (p. 130). It is a timely and profound appeal in a world where the cross, the crescent and the golden arches vie for attention.

*Mike Parker, General Secretary, Evangelical Alliance Scotland*

## **The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel**

James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken

Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 2002; 240pp., £12.99; ISBN 1 58134 299 3

In the judgement of the writers of this volume, (both too well known to require introduction) contemporary Evangelicalism is in a parlous condition. 'We live in an age of weak theology and casual Christian conduct. Our knowledge is insufficient, our worship is irreverent, and our lives are immoral.'

The gravamen of their charge against contemporary Evangelicalism, however, is its worldliness, behind which 'there lurks a pervasive mindlessness, an unwillingness to think very seriously about anything, but especially Christian doctrine. Evangelicalism has become a religion of feeling rather than of thinking.' The remedy for this situation is, in their view, a recovery of the doctrines of grace.

In order to establish that claim (and there is a frank avowal in the preface that 'this is a polemical book [arguing] for a theological position – Calvinism as set over against Arminianism') there follows a 'historical, and practical presentation of the doctrines of grace'.

Chapter 1, 'Why Evangelicalism Needs Calvinism', is in part a résumé of a previous volume, *Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace?*, in order to contextualise the ensuing discussion.

Chapter 2, 'What Calvinism Does in History', looks at Calvinism in its most notable historical manifestations: Calvin in Geneva; the Puritans in Britain and America, and Kuyper in Holland.

The core of the book, chapters 3 to 7, is devoted to an exposition of the five points of Calvinism. This material is, no doubt, familiar to most readers of the Bulletin. Nevertheless, these chapters provide an excellent introduction for anyone starting to consider these issues seriously for the



first time. In this section the biblical basis of the doctrines is fully set out; some of the most eminent Reformed theologians are aptly cited, and most of the common misunderstandings and objections are convincingly answered.

Chapter 8, 'The True Calvinist', is, says Ryken in the preface, 'in some ways the most important chapter in the book'. This is so because the authors are only too alert to the fact that many of the 'Truly Reformed' have 'a bad reputation, and sadly, perhaps some of it deserved'. In this chapter, therefore, under the headings of, 'A God Centered Mind', 'A Penitent Spirit', 'A Grateful Heart', 'A Submissive Will', 'A Holy Life' and 'A Glorious Purpose', there is a description of the genuine Calvinistic lifestyle.

The final chapter deals with the outworking of the doctrines of grace in ministries of care, compassion and outreach, as well as their application to the wider world of politics, science and the arts. Under the title of 'Have Mercy', there is a description of some of the work done by Ryken's church, Tenth Presbyterian in Philadelphia, which is breathtaking in its scope!

The authors' thesis is encapsulated in their comments on Titus 2:11-12.

Back in chapter 1 we identified worldliness as a fundamental failing of the evangelical church. Here we discover that what teaches us to say "No" to worldliness is the doctrines of God's sovereign saving grace.... Hence the church's great need to recover the doctrines of grace, that not only preserve the grace of the gospel but also teach us the art of gracious living.

This is a book we have no hesitation in warmly commending.

*John Scoales, Edinburgh*

## **John Knox**

Rosalind K. Marshall

Birlinn Limited, Edinburgh, 2000; 244 pp., £9.99; ISBN 1 84158 091 0

Rosalind K. Marshall ends her biography of John Knox by relating the tradition that Elizabeth Welsh, daughter of Knox and wife of the fiery preacher John Welsh, who was always ready to breathe out condemnations of James VI's ecclesiastical policies and consequently spent sixteen years in exile in France, once visited James to request permission for her husband to come home. When the king learned her

father's name, he is said to have replied, 'Knox and Welsh! The devil never made such a match as that!' She responded, 'It's right likely, Sire, for we never asked his advice.' Marshall points out that, authentic or not, the story indicates that the Reformer's daughter inherited his wit and courage, and then adds that 'the incident is a useful corrective for those who think of Knox only as a caricature of bigotry'.

The same could be said of Marshall's book. It effectively sets aside common caricatures of Knox not only as a bigot but also as harsh, unfeeling and violent. It provides ample evidence for Marshall's description of him as 'a strong and vibrant personality', 'straightforward in many ways, complex in others, ... tactless and ... churlish, yet ... an admired pastor, a patient counsellor and an affectionate husband, father and friend' who 'shrank from violence' though 'his moral courage never failed' (p. 215). One meets here a sensitive, self-doubting man who, driven by his unfailing conviction that the Bible as the Word of God spoke authoritatively to every man, high or low, could vehemently denounce, face to face, anyone – even a monarch – who (as he judged) transgressed its laws.

While Marshall makes good use of both secondary and published primary sources, one is surprised to find no references to archival sources, and she uses a modern severe abridgement of Thomas McCrie's *The Life of John Knox* rather than the heavily documented two-volume work (2nd ed., Edinburgh, 1813), which remains, though rare, the most thorough biography of Knox.

Nonetheless, Marshall uses sound historical discernment, developed through writing other biographies – of Mary, Queen of Scots, Elizabeth I, Henrietta Maria, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Mary of Guise, Anne, Duchess of Hamilton, Mary I, and Elizabeth of Bohemia. Her understanding of the roles and perceptions of women in historic Scotland – she wrote *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980* – is particularly helpful to her analyses of Knox's stormy encounters with his queen. While it has been common to cite the confrontations, in which sometimes Mary burst into angry tears, as evidence of Knox's misogyny or insensitivity, Marshall, without being tendentious, demonstrates that Knox, though he developed a passionate hatred for Mary that precluded his giving her any benefit of the doubt, was simply fulfilling the biblical prophet's role. As he told Mary once, 'I am called, Madam, to a public function within the Kirk of God, and am appointed by God to rebuke the sins and vices of all' (p. 175) – without exceptions for rank or power.

The reader benefits from descriptions of Knox's most important writings ably set within their historical contexts. The evidence shows

that he was more than just the leading Reformer of a remote kingdom; he was, through his ministries in Frankfurt and Geneva, his friendships with leading continental Reformers including especially John Calvin, his chaplaincy for the Protestant boy King Edward VI, and his instrumentality in shaping early English Puritanism, a prominent international figure with whom even foreign monarchs had to reckon with care. He was also a tender, compassionate husband and father, patient and tireless through many years in his efforts to comfort and assure his fearful mother-in-law, Elisabeth Aske, of her forgiveness and Christ's unfailing love for her.

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### **Singing to the Lord**

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Bryntirion Press, Bridgend, 2003; 92pp., £4.50; ISBN 1 85049 194 1

This volume is a collection of four previously unpublished sermons preached by Dr Lloyd-Jones on Ephesians 5:18-20. Those familiar with the Doctor's writings will immediately feel at home with the style and presentation of this volume. As one would expect in the light of the verses being considered there is a great deal of material here on the subject of worship and praise in the life of the Christian. However, especially in the last chapter, numerous other matters are considered, and the section on chastisement in the life of the believer is most helpful.

Dr Lloyd-Jones briefly considers the exclusive psalmody position and draws the following conclusion:

If it is wrong to sing an extra-biblical hymn or psalm composed in praise of God, then extempore prayer is wrong, and any praise and worship and adoration and thanksgiving that someone may give under the inspiration of the Spirit in prayer is wrong. But that is a monstrous suggestion. It cannot be wrong. It is inspired by the Spirit (p. 22).

Whilst fully appreciating the point which the author is making, one is left a little uncertain about what exactly is meant by 'inspiration'. Some clarification is given in the following statement:

Our hymns are not scripture, but that does not mean they are not inspired. Of course they can be! And so many of these hymns are obviously

gloriously inspired by the Spirit of God, whose concern is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ (p. 22).

The present reviewer, although sympathetic to the author's position, would have liked a clearer statement concerning the uniqueness of the inspiration of Scripture, and especially the Book of Psalms. The tone could be, I felt, somewhat uncharitable towards our brethren who hold to a 'Psalms only' position:

But if you think that this is an instruction to people to have a drab, solemn, dull service, where nothing is sung but psalms, then you have misunderstood the apostle's words (p. 21).

Strong statements are found in several places. Concerning the tune of the well-known chorus, 'God is still on the throne' Dr Lloyd-Jones states: 'I would not hesitate to assert that it is blasphemous!' (p. 3). On the subject of various instruments in the worship of God the following comment is most striking:

There are musical instruments that are sensuous, that belong to the world. Saxaphones and instruments of that type have no place in Christian worship; their sound is primitive, lacking the thoughtfulness and wisdom that characterize Christian music (p. 38).

The comments made on congregational praise and particularly on the importance of all the people of God entering unitedly into worship are excellent:

You must sing together, not to show off your voice, not to display yourself and thereby cause irritation to everybody else who is round and about you. If you have a great and powerful voice, then moderate it when you are with others, otherwise you will be disturbing the harmony. You are always to be guided by the Spirit (p. 40).

Equally helpful are the reflections on the relationship between the Word of God and the singing of hymns. These words of St Augustine are quoted approvingly:

When it happens to me to be more moved by the singing than what is sung, I confess myself to have sinned criminally, and then I would rather not have heard the singing (p 36).

This volume, as with all the writings of Dr Lloyd-Jones, is a worthwhile read. At certain points in this book your heart will be warmed and your soul refreshed. At other points you may well be a little agitated! The sermons were preached some years ago and there is therefore no interaction here with the current trends and developments in the whole area of worship.

*Gareth Burke, Stranmillis Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Belfast*

## **The Theology of Reconciliation**

Colin E. Gunton (ed.)

T&T Clark, London, 2003; 177pp., £25; ISBN 0 5670 8889 8

This is a collection of nine essays on the theme of reconciliation, and is published as part of the Research Institute in Systematic Theology series. The starting-point of the collection is the observation that reconciliation is one of a few theological terms which are carried over into social and political life; apartheid in South Africa and unrest in Northern Ireland, for example, have both led to increasing use of the concept of reconciliation.

The various nuances and parameters of the concept of reconciliation were discussed at a conference in King's College London in 1999, and the papers have been gathered in this volume. The papers are of varying styles, quality and interest, but there is much here to stimulate. Professor Christoph Schwöbel locates the doctrine within a fourfold perspective of soteriology, christology, theology and pneumatology, and is particularly helpful in reminding us that reconciliation is a broader concept than justification, since it involves a complete lifestyle. Thus, while justification focuses on a change of status before God, reconciliation involves a change of relationship with him. No less important, in Schwöbel's view, is the non-mutuality of the doctrine: in the biblical presentation, God is the sole author of reconciliation. How ought this to impact on, for example, political realms which are at variance with one another? Does reconciliation not demand 'non-mutuality of the steps that can initiate reconciliation?' (p. 36).

Another thought-provoking study is on 'Reconciliation in Paul', by Douglas Campbell, in which he analyses Galatians 3:28. This he views as a summary of Paul's theology, and he analyses it in terms of its biblical and sociological context. Penetrating as many of its insights are, however, one must take issue with the translation of *pistis* as 'the faithful one' (i.e. Christ) on the grounds that the idea of 'faith' is 'essentially anthropocentric' (p. 46). In Paul's view, the faith by which

we lay hold on Christ is itself in the gift of grace (Eph. 2:8); the whole idea of believing, therefore, is essentially theocentric, and there are valid reasons for translating *pistis* as 'faith'. Similarly, Campbell's analysis hinges much on the translation of *baptizo* as 'immerse', a meaning which is difficult to justify. Nonetheless, Campbell's insistence on the eschatological dimension of reconciliation is to be welcomed.

So too is Douglas Farrow's treatment of 'Ascension and Atonement', in which Farrow explores the priestly and levitical roots of the concept of reconciliation. At one level Farrow is critiquing Barth for failing to do justice to the sacerdotal origins of reconciliation; at another he is demonstrating the indispensable and pivotal role of Jesus' ascension, which demonstrated that all necessary steps had been taken to secure peace for us with God. One of Farrow's concerns is to allow 'different authors to speak from a common set of assumptions' (p. 76), which is an important hermeneutical principle.

Murray Rae's paper on 'A Remnant People' raises important perspectives on the relation between reconciliation and the church. But it is haunted by the spectre of Barth's universalising tendencies, in which 'Jesus Christ becomes in the place of every man and woman their representative before God' (p. 94), and the church the remnant that bears witness to a reconciled humanity (p. 107). Despite the author's disclaimer ('I stop short of advocating universalism', p. 108), he still concedes too much to the Barthian view that all the trespasses of all men everywhere have been taken away. Perhaps there is a need to revisit the old doctrine of the extent of the atonement.

Robert Jenson's paper on 'Reconciliation in God' raises more questions than it answers, as it seeks to examine whether there are any mediating influences to be found within the ontological Trinity. Leaning far too heavily on speculation, Jenson speaks about the Spirit as the agent of reconciliation between Father and Son and the Father as reconciler of Son and Spirit. The paucity of biblical citation is perhaps one reason why Jenson takes us on such flights of fancy. The Bible's doctrine of reconciliation is grounded in the action of the Triune God vis-à-vis his relation to fallen humanity; there is no trace in Scripture of the Persons of the Godhead requiring to be reconciled to each other.

This is an eclectic collection of essays, containing useful and thought-provoking material. But those who would wish to ground their theology in the supreme authority of Scripture will probably have to look elsewhere for satisfactory material.

*Iain D. Campbell, Back, Isle of Lewis*

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