

Book Reviews

1,2, AND 3 JOHN New International Biblical Commentary **Thomas F. Johnson**

Hendrickson, Peabody, Massachusetts 1993 208pp. No price

ISBN 0 943575 75 3

The New International Biblical Commentary series is written from the conviction that 'the Bible belongs to the people and not merely to the academy', and aims to encourage and strengthen lay Bible study. In this volume there are 22 pages of introduction including 6 pages of footnotes. 1 John is divided into 14 sections, each with a phrase by phrase commentary, followed by additional notes containing more detailed information. 2 John is dealt with in 4 sections and 3 John in 6 sections. A bibliography, subject index and scripture index complete the book. The print is clear and attractively set out. Greek words are transliterated into English. Coverage is even, and difficult issues receive careful consideration. The commentary is based on the 1984 American edition of the New International Version, and changes from the American editions of 1973 and 1978 are noted.

Johnson's work reflects 19 years' study of the Johannine literature and while it does not break any new ground it is an admirably succinct summary of current scholarly opinion. He accepts the traditional dating, around AD 90-100. The author of the letter is probably not the writer of the Gospel of John. The crisis that underlies the letters is a church split, where the issues appear to have been doctrinal, ethical, spiritual and political. The claims of the (Gnostically inclined) secessionists are identifiable by the phrase 'if anyone says'. 'From the beginning' refers uniformly to the beginning of the Christian movement. '*Hilasmos*' is interpreted in terms of expiation rather than propitiation. The reference to children, young men and fathers in 1 John 2:12ff. is 'a stylistic device that sets forth several truths about the spiritual victory of the whole Johannine fellowship'. The 'anointing', 1 John 2:20,29, refers to their reception of the Holy Spirit. Johnson navigates the reader successfully through the difficulties of 1 John 3:19-22, but there is no mention of the 'severe' interpretation espoused by Calvin and, more recently, Grayston. There should be no break in 1 John 4:16. 'The chosen lady' of 2 John is a congregation.

Like many first editions it needs one or two corrections. I felt that the additional notes on 1 John section 10 were confusing. However these criticisms are negligible beside the excellence of its introduction to the structure, setting and significance of 1,2, and 3 John. The lucidity of the commentary will appeal to students and pastors as well as lay people. I particularly liked the straightforward way in which textual variants were explained.

For readers without access to the other major commentaries and related theological literature the copious allusions to Brown, Smalley, Marshall, *etc.*, may be a source of frustration, but for those with access to a good library these will provide a springboard of further study and a way in to the riches of Johannine thought.

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IAN MACNAIR

SOCIAL-SCIENCE COMMENTARY ON THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh**

Fortress, Minneapolis 1992 Pp. viii + 422. \$20.00pb. ISBN 0 8006 2862 5

The use of the social sciences in New Testament studies has led to a deeper awareness of the social world in which Christianity developed. Numerous works have already been produced which have explicated the methods used and applied these methods to isolated texts. With the publication of this volume we have the comprehensive application of the methods of the first three gospels. Malina and Rohrbaugh have long been involved with the use of the social sciences in biblical studies and are well qualified to present their findings here.

The format of the commentary is straightforward. Each of the Synoptic Gospels is investigated independently. The New Revised Standard Version text of each *pericope* is followed by 'Textual Notes' which explain salient points of the *pericope* and give insight into the cultural traits encoded in the language of the text. The book begins with a general introduction which serves as an orientation to the commentary as a whole. Malina and Rohrbaugh emphasize the social distance between modern Western industrial culture and the first century Mediterranean agrarian world. The unwritten assumptions of the text are brought to the attention of the twentieth century reader who might not otherwise notice them. The use of social-scientific models is also underscored. Such models in generalizations and abstraction and are thus applied broadly to the subject.

These models are the basis for the 'Reading Scenarios' interspersed throughout the book. These are the most important aspect of the commentary. They draw upon anthropological studies to reveal the social system embedded in the gospel texts. Sixty-five topics, dealing with issues like 'challenge/riposte', 'honour/shame,' 'patronage system,' and 'three-zone personality,' are investigated in these scenarios. While these topics have been investigated more fully elsewhere (*i.e.*, Bruce J. Malina, *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology; Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation* (John Knox, Atlanta, 1986); Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Social World of Luke Acts: Models of Interpretation* (Hendrickson Peabody, 1991), these 'reading scenarios' provide easily accessible and brief summaries of important concepts in the study of the social world of the New Testament. Unfortunately, these 'scenarios' lack links with a bibliography which would allow the interested reader to pursue a particular topic more fully. A representative, although by no means comprehensive, bibliography is provided in the book, but is not integrated with the text of the commentary.

Some of the reading scenarios are repeated almost *verbatim* in the commentary on each of these three Synoptic Gospels. This seems unnecessary. The ample cross-referencing provided in the book would allow the reader to find the reading scenarios at parallel passages and have allowed space for the inclusion of more information. As well, the reader may be tempted not to read all of the 'scenarios' which seem parallel, thus missing the slight nuances which occur in each.

The volume is well supplied with maps, genealogical charts, drawings, and photographs which supplement the text. Often they appear with lengthy captions which add to the overall impressions of the ancient world acquired through the commentary. It is unfortunate that these are not indexed and are rarely cross-referenced. For example, a helpful note on coins in Palestine which includes photographs, found in the commentary at Mark 6:30-44 (p.218), is not mentioned at relevant places elsewhere, particularly in the commentaries on Matthew and Luke.

However, such minor critiques should be noted in the light of the overall worth of a book well researched and presented.

The social-scientific interpretation of the New Testament is not without its detractors. There are those who suggest that modern anthropological study of peasant culture has little to tell us about the first century Mediterranean world. Malina and Rohrbaugh do not enter into dialogue with such detractors in the commentary. Rather, they assume a basic sympathy with the approach. However, both have prolific publishing careers and have shown themselves capable of defending their approach in other writings.

This is by no means meant to be the sole commentary to which one refers when studying a particular Synoptic text. It deliberately lacks the usual discussion of textual problems, linguistic information, redactional activity and so forth. It is a supplement to these more traditional discussions and should be used as such. Put to this use it will provide insight into the text which cannot but help the exegete to understand and explain the meaning of the text in its original context. Anyone seriously interested in understanding the Synoptic Gospel texts should give this work pride of place among his or her preferred commentaries on Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The publisher is to be commended for producing a reasonably priced volume which makes it accessible to the student, minister, and layperson, and not just university libraries.

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RICHARD ASCOUGH

WHAT IS THE BIBLE? John Barton

Triangle (S.P.C.K.), London 1991 169pp. £4.99

ISBN 0 281 04528 3

John Barton is Oriel and Laing Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture in the University of Oxford. In this little book he has sought to provide 'some sound advice on how to read the Bible intelligently'. His hope is to persuade others 'to try the Bible for themselves, instead of waiting to be told what to believe about it'. He does not want 'to legislate about what others are allowed to find there'. How does he succeed in these aims? Well, it is hardly a recommendation to find the front cover decorated with a cartoon showing God seated on a cloud reading a Bible and thinking, with obvious disapproval, 'I've been misquoted'. Is this really what he means by not wanting to legislate? Unfortunately this is followed by what seemed to your reviewer to be a fairly consistent and subtle effort to cut the Bible down to size. It looks as if the author had continuously before him a provoking image of 'fundamentalism', and that this systematically put him off track. The Bible, to him, is not 'a book written by the hand of God, which dropped from heaven'(whoever said it was?). 'It is a compendium of human responses to God's input into the human situation'- a description which is equally true of Einstein's 'Relativity' and Planck's Quantum Theory! So the reader must regard it as essentially man-made and corrigible. He supports this conclusion with arguments some of which Calvin would surely label 'cavilling'. Inconsistently, the New Testament commends to us Peter's 'satisfaction' at God's vengeful 'striking down' of Ananias and Sapphira; unacceptably, if we wish to keep the Ten Commandments 'we shall need to have slavery' back (and presumably replace our tractors with the ox and the ass?). This sort of talk is clearly designed to make the other side look ridiculous; it is throwing dust in the reader's eyes. What is plain in this book is that Professor Barton is seek-

ing to precondition the reader to approach the Bible with his own (undisclosed) presuppositions. That the key to understanding, even in history and theology, is *the scientific method* (in the broadest sense of that term) is a prominent one. Accordingly, the findings of the sciences must be regulative of our understanding of the Bible. To give two examples: he speaks of the *legends* of Elijah and Elisha in 2 Kings 1 and 2, and of Sennacherib's defeat in 2 Kings 19. They must be such, for his presuppositions are surely what every reasonable man in our culture would be bound to accept. After all, miracles don't happen, do they? God doesn't direct the lightning, does He? Angels don't intervene in human history, and so on. Lightning strikes in accordance with scientific law, we now know. It can hardly have been pure chance that the king's 'captains and their fifties' caught it, or didn't three times!—so the story must be mere legend. What do we reply to this? That it is superficial thinking. Let me give an analogy to illustrate this contention. My arm moves undeniably in accordance with known physiological principles; but that does not make it nonsense to say that *it moves at the instance of my will*. The discharge of lightning also is undeniably in accordance with known physical principles; but *neither does that make it nonsense to attribute it to the Divine will*. There is doubtless an intractable philosophical problem here; but most would agree that it is not solved by relegating the concept of will (or for that matter, angels) to the category of the legendary. Yet this is what in effect Professor Barton is doing (but without acknowledging it to his unsuspecting readers or perhaps even realizing it himself).

The prevalence of far-reaching but hidden presuppositions renders this book unacceptably one-sided. If only Professor Barton could have brought himself to be clear about them (and acknowledged that others were possible, and rationally defensible) his book might have had greater value. He writes further:

The fact that that ground rules for effective biblical criticism are . . . dependent *only on good reasoning*, means that for practical purposes the religious commitment of critics is *entirely irrelevant to evaluating their work* (my italics).

I find this statement quite extraordinary for a professed Christian, for not only does it ignore the question of basic presuppositions (things unavoidable in any process of creaturely thought); it also ignores the place of faith and of the Holy Spirit. The meaning of the biblical text can be satisfactorily unravelled without either, apparently. Presumably even the truth about Jesus can be discovered by 'sound reasoning'? No wonder the author has to confess that 'biblical criticism has so far been remarkably unsuccessful in causing churches to modify any of their agreed doctrines'. The humble believer has an inborn instinct that many of its conclusions are what Paul calls 'foolishness'. My assessment therefore is this: if the reader is prepared in advance to surrender to the conviction that the key to understanding the Bible is the scientific method (in the broadest sense of that term), then this book may satisfy him. But if he believes that God also communicates with men in other ways not susceptible to scientific scrutiny, then it will not. And I believe that most serious enquirers will fall into this latter category. There are more things in heaven and earth than the liberal mind dreams of.

There is a page of Notes, and four Appendices (The Hebrew Bible, The Catholic Bible, The Chronological Order of the New and Old Testaments, and Reading the Old Testament by Genre).

**NON-CANONICAL WRITINGS AND NEW TESTAMENT
INTERPRETATION Craig A. Evans**

Hendrickson, Peabody, Massachusetts 1992 304 pp. \$19.95

ISBN 0 943575 95 8

Here at last is the book which New Testament scholars and researchers have been waiting for. In a brief, but clear manner, Professor Evans gives an index of all the major non-canonical writings of interest to students of the Bible, with a brief explanation of their contents and a reasonably full bibliography for each work.

Rather than attempt a purely alphabetical listing, Dr. Evans divides his material thematically, beginning with the Old Testament Apocrypha. From there he progresses logically to the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, ancient versions of the Old Testament, Philo, Josephus, the Targums and Rabbinic Literature. In each of these chapters he begins by giving a handy reference index to the writings covered, and then proceeds to a more detailed treatment. Where necessary, he fills the reader in on current scholarly controversies, without taking sides himself.

Later chapters deal with New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the early Church Fathers, Gnosticism and assorted other writings. A final chapter gives some examples of New Testament exegesis, and shows how it has been influenced by the discovery of some of this literature. On the whole, Dr. Evans is careful to avoid the mistake of suggesting that the New Testament was invariably a recipient of external influences; in not a few cases, particularly when we come to look at some of the later texts, the borrowing (if there was any) was probably the other way round.

An extremely valuable additional feature are the extended appendices. These cover different canons of Scripture which include the Apocrypha, and give a complete list of all the parallels which can be found between the New Testament and these works. There are also appendices dealing with Jesus and rabbinic parables, Jewish miracle stories, and other messianic figures of the time.

This book is not 'original' in the strict sense of that term, but it puts together, in one handy volume, information which up to now has been extremely difficult to find. For this reason alone it is extremely useful, and will prove of the greatest benefit to scholars.

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GERALD BRAY

**THE ORTHODOX CORRUPTION OF SCRIPTURE The Effect of
Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New
Testament Bart D. Ehrman**

Oxford University Press, Oxford 1993 314 pp. £35 (cloth)

ISBN 0 19 508078 5

How reliable is our knowledge of the autograph text of the New Testament? Critical scholars are now by and large convinced that Nestlé-Aland's 26th Edition is as close to the original as we are ever likely to come, and regard it as in all essentials the same as it was.

In this study, Dr. Ehrman sets out to question that assumption, along with several others connected with Christian origins. He takes up a fairly radical version of

the thesis of the late Professor Walter Baur, to the effect that early Christianity was a series of competing theological factions, and argues that 'orthodoxy' was not established until the fourth century—after the emergence of Christianity as a legal religion! Before that time there had supposedly been a long struggle among various competing Christian groups, each of which had its own understanding of Christ. Some were 'adoptionists' denying that Jesus was God. Others were 'docetists', denying that Jesus was a man. Still others were what, Dr. Ehrman calls 'separationists', claiming that at some point God and man separated, and the human Jesus was left to die on the cross alone.

Alongside all these were those who avoided such extremes. They became the nucleus of what was to become 'orthodoxy', even though a number of their views would be discarded in the process. This group included virtually everyone of whom we now have direct knowledge, from the Apostle Paul down through Ignatius, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen to the great doctors of the fourth-century Church, who sanitized and adapted them to the purposes of the 'orthodoxy' as they understood it. This group busied itself with the copying of 'canonical' Scripture, most of it of apostolic provenance. In the process of debate with other Christians, the original text was modified in order to alter or remove passages which embarrassed the 'orthodox' group in their struggle. By studying extant textual variants, we can often recapture this process, though there are probably some textual emendations which will for ever escape detection.

What can be said about a thesis like this? First of all, Dr. Ehrman's rather uncritical adoption of the Bauer thesis gives occasion for pause. He is aware of the numerous criticisms which Bauer has been subjected to, and even cites some very powerful works of deconstruction, which have rendered it almost valueless. But he does not engage with these critics at any serious level, and contents himself with the assertion that Bauer, slightly modified, represents the consensus of modern scholarship. This argument, which is heard with ever increasing frequency among scholars of a 'liberal' persuasion, is disturbing. It suggests that they are disinclined to review the evidence, and prefer to accept highly debatable conclusions without argument, pleading that they are the majority opinion. This is not genuinely critical scholarship, and it makes Dr. Ehrman's whole thesis suspect.

Another difficulty is that Dr. Ehrman presents his case in a way which is calculated to prejudice his readers in favour of his argument. This can be seen from the title of the book. Why does he use the word 'corruption', with its pejorative overtones, when 'emendation' would have said the same thing in a more neutral way? The intention is clearly polemical, and the same tone recurs throughout the book. For example, we are told on the very first page that there were Christians in the early Church who believed in as many as three hundred and sixty five gods! Who on earth were they? No Christian has ever believed in more than one God—monotheism is the essence of Christianity! There may have been a few Gnostics who held such beliefs, and combined them with Christian themes of one kind or another, but that is not at all the same thing. It stretches the imagination beyond breaking point to suppose that a polytheist could ever have worn the label 'Christian' with any degree of acceptance. Dr. Ehrman's assessment of pre-Constantinian Christianity is way off course, and this fact must weigh heavily in any assessment of his work.

When we come to the textual variants themselves, we find little that is new. Most of the instances which Dr. Ehrman cites are well-known, and have been deleted from modern critical editions of the New Testament. There are a few

exceptions, for example, the phrase 'Son of God' in Mk. 1:1, but even if we allow, with Dr. Ehrman, that these were later interpolations, it is hard to see what real difference it all makes. No doubt scribes were tempted to delete (or add) words which would make the text's meaning clearer, and they may well have been embarrassed by such things as references to Joseph as Jesus' 'father'. Probably they did sometimes change the text in the interest of 'orthodoxy'. But what does all this prove? It certainly does not demonstrate that there was a systematic attempt to counter the influence of competing Christologies. For a start, the emendations are erratic, and some of them may have been accidental. It is dangerous to assume that Luke (the author who seems to have suffered most from this kind of treatment) had no doctrine of the atonement, so that references to it must be interpolations. Too much is uncertain here, and it would be highly dangerous to draw conclusions with no evidence other than literary analysis of the surrounding verses to go on.

The careful reader of Dr. Ehrman's thesis soon begins to notice that almost everything he says is headed about with qualifications. He has made a case based on probabilities, which lead to possibilities, which lead to conjectures—which are then taken as a plausible reconstruction of events. This is the exact opposite of the way in which serious scholarship normally proceeds, and leaves us in the end with nothing more than a house of cards. Dr. Ehrman has invented a Church which never existed, and then produced evidence to back his theories up. Some of the scholarly detail may well be valid, but it is encased within a framework which is intrinsically improbable. This book needs to be dissected and rewritten by someone with a more sympathetic understanding of early Christianity, who can put the data quoted here in a wider context. That way, what is of value in his work can be rescued, and make a real contribution to our understanding of the development of the New Testament text.

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THE CHURCH IN WESTERN EUROPE FROM THE TENTH TO THE EARLY ELEVENTH CENTURY Gerd Tellenbach, trans. T. Reuter
Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993 403 pp. No price

ISBN 0 521 43711 3

This volume is a most worthy addition to the Cambridge Medieval Textbooks series. First published in German in 1988 by the Emeritus Professor of History of the University of Freiburg in Breisgau, it is the work of a specialist in the field whose first book was published as long ago as 1928, and whose erudition is impressive. Here is historical writing of a very high order, combining breadth of vision and knowledge with meticulous scholarship in particulars, and yet expressed most lucidly. The translator has served both author and reader extremely well.

Nevertheless, this is not a book for the general reader, or the fainthearted. But for any with some knowledge of the period, or a strong desire to obtain it, this is a superb guide to a little-known area of church history, written by a historian whose deep faith in God and love for his church enables him to penetrate to the very heart of early mediaeval Christianity.

The core of the book is—almost inevitably—the revolution or so-called 'reformation'—associated, above all, with Pope Gregory VII, which set the tone for the western mediaeval church and, in some respects, the post-mediaeval church. Among its greatest achievements were the placing of the church firmly under the

leadership of the bishop of Rome and the establishment of clerical celibacy. It also repudiated the sin of simony (defined by Tellenbach as 'giving and taking of money or presents for the gifts of the spirit') and fought long and hard against the practice of 'lay investiture' to spiritual office.

One of the great merits of Tellenbach's treatment of all this is the care and attention he gives to 'The beginnings of the revolution' (the title of a chapter which occupies fifty pages). Another is the sensitivity with which he discusses these matters, taking into full account and carefully evaluating the opinions of other scholars (and not flinching from overturning them where necessary) and effectively making his own contributions to the debates.

If this is the central part of the book, it is flanked by two equally important, interesting and indeed intriguing sections. The first, consisting of the opening four chapters, focuses on the period c. 900–1050, and sets the scene for the whole period c. 900–1125. It begins with a chapter on the environment of western Christendom—geographical and religious—which contains an all too brief account of the remarkable missionary work among the pagan peoples who had beleaguered western Europe for so long. It continues with a chapter entitled 'The church and its manifestations on earth' which examines the nature of the church and its institutions, and another with one which scrutinizes 'The material existence of the churches and clergy', showing the ways in which the financial needs of the church were met. It concludes with a further chapter which focuses on religious life and thought, including Christian monasticism. Inevitably, the discussions of these matters have to be rather general in nature, but sufficient illustrations are given to convey something of the specifics.

One personal regret of this reviewer is that here—and elsewhere—so little is said about the heretical groups to which attention is briefly drawn.

The concluding part of the book consists of two chapters. One, entitled 'Continuing conflicts', deals with later developments stemming from the Gregorian Revolution, including the celebrated 'Investiture Contest'. The final chapter returns to the theme of the church's structure, with special reference to the position of the pope. It contains careful consideration of the papal claims to a unique spiritual status and the means at the pope's disposal to implement these claims.

It is difficult to overstate the value of this work. As a piece of mature scholarship, revealing profound knowledge allied with sympathetic yet discerning understanding of its subject, and expressed with considerable literary grace, it is likely to stand as an indispensable textbook on its subject for a very long time.

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HAROLD ROWDON

THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN ORTHODOX AND REFORMED CHURCHES ed. Thomas F. Torrance Volume 2
Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1993 232 pp. No price

ISBN 0 7073 0436 9

The papers in this second volume of Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue (the first was published by the same press in 1985) are those which were given at the consultations held at Leuenberg (Switzerland) in 1988 and at Minsk in 1990. A concluding session was subsequently held at Kappel (Switzerland) in 1992, after which the papers were edited for this volume.

The claim made by the authors is that at last, a consensus has been reached between Eastern and Western theologians which is capable of healing the divisions of centuries and of bringing unity to a divided Christendom. This is a great claim to make, and if it is true, it represents a unique breakthrough in ecumenical relations.

There are four papers from the first consultation, of which two may be described as 'introductory' to the theme as a whole. These are the contributions of Tityu Koev, a Bulgarian Orthodox theologian, and Lukas Vischer. The first is a basic and clear restatement of the traditional Orthodox position, giving a detailed analysis of Trinitarian vocabulary and outlining how Orthodoxy has generally withstood it. There is no particular hostility to the Western position, but no concession to it either. Vischer's paper is somewhat different, dealing as it does with the question of sanctification in Basil the Great's treatise *De Spiritu Sancto*. Again the treatment is clear and straightforward. Vischer points out that the real difference between Basil and Calvin is not so much in the understanding of the Holy Spirit as in the different assessment of the capabilities of fallen man, and he suggests that this theme must figure in future Orthodox-Reformed dialogue.

Much more demanding are the papers by Professor Torrance and his former pupil, George Dragas. These probably should have been printed after the other two, rather than before them, since it is likely that not a few readers will find them too much to deal with and abandon the entire volume! Professor Torrance's paper gives an extremely detailed and technical study of both Athanasius and Didymus the Blind, pointing out that they both identified the divine monarchy with the Trinity of God, and not just with the Father. Distinctions within the Godhead can therefore only be at the personal, not at the substantial level. Fr. Dragas goes on to demonstrate how Athanasius applied his doctrine of the Son's consubstantiality with the Father to his doctrine of the Spirit. It seems that Athanasius believed that the Spirit derived his consubstantiality from the Son in the same way that the Son derived his from the Father, though any hint of ontological subordination must of course be excluded.

The second part of the volume contains the papers from Minsk. The first of these is a Working Paper, compiled by Professor Torrance and Fr. Dragas, setting forth their joint conclusions on the Trinity. This Paper is a distillation of their earlier contributions, and for the non-specialist reader might serve as a useful introduction to them. The link between consubstantiality and the circuminsession (*perichoresis*) of the Persons of the Trinity is clearly set out, as is the proposed formula for reconciling the differences between East and West over the double procession of the Holy Spirit. The key phrase is:

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but because of the unity of the Godhead in which each Person is perfectly and wholly God, he proceeds from the Father through the Son for the Spirit belongs to and is inseparable from the Being of the Father and the Son. He receives from the Son and through him is given to us (p. 114).

From a Western point of view, the important words are 'He receives from the Son', since this implies that the Holy Spirit is the messenger of the Son as well as of the Father, and avoids any suggestion that somehow it might be the Son who has received from the Spirit—a view which has often been expressed in Orthodox theology. In that way it may be said to meet a genuine Western concern with the Eastern doctrine. What remains unclear is why this should depend on 'the unity of

the Godhead in which each Person is perfectly and wholly God'. On that basis, we might ask, for example, whether the Son is begotten of the Spirit as well as of the Father, since his generation could hardly have occurred without the presence of the Spirit! There is something here which has not been fully thought through.

The remaining papers can be subdivided neatly into two categories. The first is an examination of the Biblical and Patristic evidence for the Trinity, first from the Orthodox perspective (Professor Voulgaris) and then from the Reformed (Professor C. B. Kaiser). Professor Voulgaris goes into a lengthy attempt to demonstrate evidence for the Trinity in the Old Testament, which Professor Kaiser wisely avoids, but apart from that, the two papers tie together neatly. Both men believe that the Bible offers sufficient evidence for the traditional doctrine, as developed by the Fathers of the Church, and draw their conclusions accordingly.

The second pair of papers concerns the place of the Trinity in worship. The Orthodox side is presented by Archbishop Simon of Ryazan and Kasimov, and the Reformed by Bruce Rigdon. Dr. Rigdon clearly has the harder time of it, and in fact says little about Reformed *worship* as such. Nevertheless, he manages to conclude, as of course Archbishop Simon does, that the Trinity is central to the worshipping life of the Church.

The volume concludes with the agreed statement prepared at Minsk and a short reflection on this which was agreed two years later at Kappel. In essence, these reflect the position taken in the original Working Paper presented by Professor Torrance to the Minsk consultation.

That these Orthodox and Reformed theologians reached a high level of agreement cannot be doubted. In their interpretation of Athanasius, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen they speak with one voice, and demonstrate that it is perfectly possible for Western and Eastern theologians to concur on the great issues raised here. What may be doubted however, is whether this represents an ecumenical breakthrough. After all, nobody has ever questioned whether East and West agree in their acceptance of Athanasius and the Cappadocians; it is what later generations made of this inheritance which is at issue. The observer cannot help but notice that the name of Augustine nowhere appears in any of the discussions, though it was he, more than anyone else who shaped the classical Western doctrine of the Trinity. Similarly, we hear nothing of Photius or of Gregory Palamas and the Hesychast tradition, which did so much to determine the spiritual character of modern Orthodoxy.

It is hard to escape the feeling that agreement has been reached by exploring more deeply things on which both sides were already agreed in principle, not by examining real differences. This is not to say that the dialogue has not served a useful purpose—it is important to be reminded that we do share a common inheritance which is deep and spiritually satisfying. But neither is it to claim that differences over the double procession of the Holy Spirit have been resolved; in one sense, they have hardly been discussed! This volume is an important contribution to an ongoing debate, but not the final answer to an ancient problem. It is stimulating reading for those who are theologically agile, and should provoke further discussion in due course. Those who participated in the dialogue process are to be congratulated for their efforts, and their insights will doubtless be helpful to the ongoing process of ecumenical discussion.

PARADIGM CHANGE IN THEOLOGY Edited by Hans Küng and David Tracy

T. & T. Clark Limited, Edinburgh 1989 487 pp. £19.95 hb.

ISBN 0 567 09494 4

This Symposium, we are told, was sponsored by Tübingen Institut für ökumenische Forschung, the Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion in the University of Chicago, and the international theological periodical 'Concilium'. It consists of seven Preparatory Papers dealing with the problems to be encountered and an historical analysis which sets the scene. In the Symposium paper which follows there are twenty two contributions.

The dominating thought is one expressed by Thomas S. Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, 1962, new edition 1970. Here a paradigm is defined as 'An entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community', and the question is, Is there a new paradigm in theology in this sense? Hans Küng concludes that there have been certain paradigmatic changes in theology in the course of Christian history. These may be classified as Alexandrian, Augustinian, Thomist, Reformed, and the Modern Outlook, and they represent 'turning points'. The first of these is illustrated in an illuminating paper by Charles Kannegiesser on Origen. Although Origen died as a result of torture while he was in prison in the Decian persecution, he was not considered to be a martyr and, in fact, his life of asceticism and devoted scholarship was a substitute for martyrdom. This idea of a new martyrdom was one of the roots of the ascetic and so of the monastic life. A good introduction to the Desert Fathers from this point of view can be found in 'The Hope of the Early Church' by Brian E. Daley, pages 69-80.

Origen laid the foundations of biblical exegesis by his careful study of the text of scripture. He interpreted the 'deposit of faith' in terms of Middle Platonism, the dominant culture of his time. His Christological speculations occupied the minds of theologians until and after the Council of Nicaea.

The ghost of Augustine walks everywhere in this book but there is not much reference to his theology. Much more is said about the paradigm change from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas. Stephan Pfürtner deals with Thomas and Luther. He admits that Luther's doctrine of justification 'affects the whole Christian understanding of God' (page 135). He adds (page 138) 'For Aquinas too it is an undisputed fact that theologically speaking the doctrine of God can in the real sense only follow from the revelation that has taken place in Christ.' (STI.1.2-3). But the rejoicing that there is no longer a Protestant/Catholic divide on the subject of justification is somewhat premature, as another recent symposium has shown. (*Right With God*, ed. D. A. Carson). Hans Küng, in his famous book *Justification* expresses what is essentially the Roman view: 'His verdict is the creative fact of the Almighty. In brief, God's *declaration* of justice is, as God's declaration of justice, at the same time and in the same act, a *making just*.' It is easy to see that the Reformation constituted a paradigm change (page 204).

The achievement of Thomas, as Pfürtner shows (page 139), was to show that the God who revealed Himself to Moses in Exodus 3:11 is 'He Who Is'. More than a thousand years of thinking in response to Divine revelation, resulted in the marriage of Greek philosophy and Hebrew religion. This was indeed paradigmatic in its results, for it established on a firm basis the doctrines of Creation and Providence and cleared the way for an effective doctrine of reconciliation. What

we miss, in this K ung/Tracy symposium, is the firm conviction that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

The paradigm shift in the modern world, from the Enlightenment, and the post-modern outlook which is beginning to emerge, is, of course, a matter of supreme importance. Jerald Brauer (page 205) writes of the massive presence of pluralism in the modern world, the new situation for Christianity in relation to other religions—partly the result of the re-birth of older national states—and the ever-growing challenge of secularism. J rgen Moltmann notes the change from the denominational to the ecumenical age of humanity as a whole, and the change from a dominance of mechanical processes to the ecological outlook of a world-wide community. Brian Gerrish writes of the alteration of theological emphasis from *Dogmatik* to *Glaubenslehre* (was it Spener who first used this word?). The dominance of Schleiermacher for such a long period with his concern for ‘religious experience’ led to a purely anthropocentric theology, and a situation from which theology was rescued by Karl Barth. Once again we notice a lack of conviction. If Christianity is indeed the truth of God revealed in Christ, it is our clear duty to condemn secularism as a deceptive illusion and to say that non-Christian religions are in error. As Karl Barth said,

The truth of the Christian religion is in fact enclosed in the one name of Jesus Christ, and in nothing else . . . the heathen, too, can in their own way teach and even live and represent as a church. Yet that does not mean that they are any the less heathen, poor and utterly lost. (CD I.2.343).

The paradigm change in the modern outlook means, says Stephen Toulmin, taking account of the historical point of view—movement and change instead of fixity. But the significant thing about the universe is that it yields its secrets to our minds. As Einstein said, the only inexplicable fact about the universe is that it is explicable. But the response of Biblical theology, says Schubert Ogden, should be to present the data of the Christian witness in the language and experience of contemporary men and women. Ogden is replying to Joseph Blank, who is arguing for a ‘paradigm shift’ in the New Testament itself. J rgen Moltmann reminds us of the difference between *Geschichte*, the record of past events, and *Historie*, the interpretation of those events. Christianity is a historical religion, rooted in the saving events which are recorded in the Scriptures; it is also a contemporary religion because it, and it alone, possesses the key to the understanding of, and the remedy for, the desperate ills of modern society.

I found this book fascinating, in spite of its defects, and I recommend it to serious students of systematic and philosophical theology.

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EDGAR DOWSE

THE ENGLISH RELIGIOUS TRADITION AND THE GENIUS OF ANGLICANISM ed. Geoffrey Rowell

IKON, Wantage 1992 256 pp. No price

ISBN 1 871805 02 3

Recent years have seen a spate of books commemorating various centenaries—the publication of *Lux Mundi*, the death of Cardinal Newman, and so on. This volume commemorates a bi-centenary—the birth of John Keble in 1792, and although it

inevitably has a certain nineteenth-century, tractarian focus, it ranges over the entire history of the English Church.

Keble College, whose former Dean organized the project, was fortunate in being able to command a vast body of expertise as it sought to make great churchmen of the past come to life again. There are chapters on Anselm by no less an authority than Sir Richard Southern, on Julian of Norwich by Sr. Benedicta Ward, and on Thomas Cranmer by Sir Patrick Collinson. But how can one single them out, when the essay on Bede is by the scarcely less distinguished Dr. Patrick Wormald, the one of Richard Hooker by the former Archbishop of Dublin, and the one of the Wesleys by Dr. Gordon Wakefield?

Nor is it possible to forget Professor Anne Hudson on Wyclif, Elizabeth Clarke on George Herbert, Canon Allchin on Lancelot Andrewes, Professor Stephen Prickett on Keble himself, and Professor Adrian Hastings on William Temple. This is truly a galaxy of stars in the academic firmament, and the reader of this volume will not be disappointed by the insights and fresh approaches which he will find within it. Perhaps the simplest way to characterize these contributions is to say that they are reflections on their different subjects, drawing on the latest research and integrating it into a wider tapestry, which reaches out to encompass the whole history of the Church of England.

Reflections are by their nature intensely personal, and some readers will doubtless differ here and there with the assessments which are presented. That is inevitable, but what is so astonishing and so agreeable about this collection is that every piece is engaging and must be taken seriously, whether one agrees with the conclusions or not. That is a rare achievement in symposia, and Bishop Rowell is to be congratulated for a superb piece of work.

There is a concluding essay by Bishop Sykes of Ely, dealing with the 'genius' of Anglicanism, and a short sermon by the Bishop of Oxford, which he preached at Keble on 26 April 1992. The Bishop of Ely returns to his theme of Anglican theological points, and repeats some of the trenchant criticisms he has made elsewhere, though it is not altogether clear that he has found satisfactory answers to them. The Bishop of Oxford plays it safe, extolling Keble's virtues, while pointing out that they no longer mean much in the contemporary Church. However, he does manage to distil something of Keble's peculiar greatness, and indicate how his spirituality may still have a message for our generation.

This is an excellent book, which should be widely read by all those concerned to know something of Anglicanism, particularly (though by no means exclusively) its High Church tradition. Let us hope that it will set a standard for future works of this kind!

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GERALD BRAY

MEDITATING AS A CHRISTIAN Waiting upon God Peter Toon

Collins, London 1991 187 pp. £4.95 pb.

ISBN 0 00 599189 7

'I offer this book to all those who are seriously interested in the subject and practice of meditation', the author writes, 'in particular . . . authentic Christian meditation'. The result is a handbook of practical help in the spiritual life for those who are in real earnest about things and have a reasonable amount of time to spare. The author distinguishes clearly between the type of meditation practised in the

eastern religious traditions and that belonging to the Christian faith; one takes the form of an inner journey to find 'the centre of one's being'; the other seeks to concentrate the heart and mind on an objective revelation from God in the Scriptures through which it encounters Him. There is a profound difference, and the author rightly stresses it at the very outset.

He then goes on to discuss the practicalities of things for the life in which meditation is to play a significant part. My reaction was to feel that this tended to be a little like instructing an earnest enquirer on the technique of how to breathe properly—necessary no doubt for someone who wanted to be an opera singer, but perhaps a little beside the point for the more 'ordinary' type of person. He draws his material from widely different sources—Luther, the Puritans, Ignatius Loyola, Teresa of Avila, Bonhoeffer and so on. It is surprising how often their emphasis is similar, though couched in different terms; but I felt that there can be a danger here. A young Christian may become terminologically confused: is what Ignatius speaks about really the same as that about which George Muller does in such different terms? It may in addition be like trying to learn the piano by several different methods at once! Better to stick to one, surely. Also, to split up and systemize the experience of meditation and prayer into 'grades' (he quotes Teresa of Avila here) seems to me to run the danger of turning prayer into a subject to be studied, or a technical skill to be mastered, rather than a loving and filial relationship to be cultivated. No doubt to the mature the dangers would be much less.

There is much here to help in the *formative* (a useful word, as opposed to *informative*) reading of the Scriptures, and there is a splendid chapter on *Praying the Psalms*. This is a book that may well help many, especially those who need to introduce the element of discipline into their spiritual lives.

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DOUGLAS SPANNER

CALVARY'S HILL The Cross in *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Arthur Bennett

Avon Books, London 1993 124 pp. £5.95

ISBN 1 897960 05 0

This book is a commentary on John Bunyan's allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, although it draws on other works of Bunyan's including *The Holy War* and his autobiographical *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. It is not intended to be an introduction to Bunyan's works, nor should it be expected to serve that purpose, since it assumes that the reader is already familiar with the characters and events that appear in the allegory. Rather it seeks to illustrate that 'the subject of Calvary's Cross is prominent in the dual allegory as the fulcrum of it.' The treatment is 'not that of consequential events but of spiritual themes'. The eleven chapters could be read fairly quickly but this is not a book for hurried consumption. Its chapters are suitable for more contemplative meditations on the cross of Christ and its place in the Christian life, from the needy sinner's awakening to the hope of heaven. It would make a useful basis for Lenten meditations.

Bennett describes Christian as 'the best of Puritans, conscious of his sins, prepared in heart by divine grace until from the cross he begins to live the holy life that pleases God, and is finally received into heaven.' It is obvious that the author regrets the extent to which the 'motif of earnest animation' is missing from some contemporary expressions of Christianity, and like Bunyan himself, he is wary lest

The Pilgrim's Progress be read simply as 'a fanciful allegory'. Christian's awakening to his need, seen in his rags, his cry, his fear, his hope, and significantly his running, are essential preparations for the cross's effect. Christiana, Obstinate, Pliable and Worldly Wiseman all illustrate 'crossless remedies'. The need for Goodwill and his Gate as the way to the cross is confirmed. The meaning of the look, the faith, and the burden are explained in Christian's encounter with the cross itself. The doctrine of the Trinity is underlined by the three visitants. The garment symbol is clearly related to salvation theology, and the mark placed upon Christian's forehead refers to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The cross is seen as inextricably linked with grace, fellowship, spiritual warfare, victory over inward sin ('*The Pilgrim's Progress* . . . is an allegory as much concerned with sanctification as with justification and the cross as dealing with both'), understanding and overcoming the world (exemplified most obviously in Vanity Fair), and the hope of heaven, the Celestial City.

The style and language level of the book are in keeping with the Puritan heritage in which the author is so obviously at home. The size of print is a little larger than average, but for the older reader this may be an advantage.

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IAN MACNAIR

CHURCH MUSIC WORKSHOP Vol:3 No.2 Anonymous
Cokesbury, Nashville, Tennessee 1993 \$12.95

This is a 1993 twenty-four page journal of articles and music particularly devoted to the Methodist Churches of the Mid-West U.S.A. Included in the package is a forty-eight page folio of eleven sacred pieces of music together with a tape of all the pieces printed, played and sung as recommended. Many of the works are based upon hymn tunes of traditional evangelical style. None of them approaches the gospel pop. scene, in fact the entire package is conservative in presentation. The feature of a cassette is interesting as it gives a feel to the music before playing it oneself. In places the standard of the ladies' voices is rather poor but this could be a feature of the recording process. All the music is at the easy end of the performance scale, apart from one or two pieces carrying a proliferation of accidentals. It is difficult to recommend the medley of four 'Hymns of consolation' where three lines of text progress along together. The overall impression is one of 'titillation'—including handbells obligato—for general enjoyment. Perhaps this is how the American Methodists like their worship.

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GEOFFREY COOPER

INDEX OF REVIEWS

ANON., <i>Church Music Workshop</i> (G. G. J. Cooper)	94
BENNETT, <i>Calvary's Hill: The Cross in The Pilgrim's Progress</i> (I. Macnair)	93
BARTON, <i>What is the Bible?</i> (D. C. Spanner)	82
EHRMAN, <i>The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament</i> (G. L. Bray)	84
EVANS, <i>Non-Canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation</i> (G. L. Bray)	84
JOHNSON, <i>1, 2 and 3 John: New International Biblical Commentary</i> (I. Macnair)	80
KÜNG, TRACY, ed., <i>Paradigm Change in Theology</i> (E. Dowse)	90
MALINA, ROHRBAUGH, <i>Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels</i> (R. S. Ascough)	81
ROWELL, ed., <i>The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism</i> (G. L. Bray)	91
TELLENBACH, <i>The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Eleventh Century</i> (H. H. Rowdon)	86
TOON, <i>Meditating as a Christian</i> (D. C. Spanner)	92
TORRANCE, ed., <i>Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed Churches</i> (G. L. Bray)	87

Other Books Received

- Eagle** P. Hocken, *The Glory and the Shame: Reflections on the 20th Century outpouring of the Holy Spirit*, 1994, £7.99.
- Hendrickson** K. E. Corley, *Private Women Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition*, 1993, **No price**; J. J. Pilch, B. M. Malina, ed., *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning*, 1993, **No price**; P. Stuhlmacher, trans, S. Schatzmann, *Jesus of Nazareth: Christ of Faith*, 1993, **No price**.
- Highland** D. Baldwin, *Open Doors Open Minds*, 1993, £4.50; J. Gunstone, *Prayers for Every-Member Ministry*, 1994, £6.99.
- Idon** R. Adams, P. Wells, *For A Better World: A Social Action Guide for Christians*, 1994, £8.
- Monarch** P. Moon, *Hanging in There: Christian Survival Kit*, 1994, £3.99; J. Wright, *Designer Universe: Is Christianity Compatible with Modern Science?*, 1994, £7.99.
- Oxford, Clarendon Press** K. Zebiri, *Mahmud Shaltut and Islamic Modernism*, 1993, **No price**.
- Scripture Press Foundation** R. Dunn, *Don't Just Sit There Have Faith*, 1994, £4.99; S. Tippit, *Fit For Battle: The Character, Weapons and Strategies of the Spiritual Warrior*, 1994, £4.99; C. Colson, *Faith on the Line*, 1994, £3.99; L. Crabb, *Moving through your Problem toward finding God*, 1994, £5.99.
- The Bible Reading Fellowship** S. Brown, G. Reid, *Brushing up on Believing*, 1994, £4.99.