
A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

In the Study

UNRESERVED welcome must be accorded to that recent venture of the S.C.M. Press, the Old Testament Library. It was high time that the massive results of recent Old Testament scholarship were made available to us, and a series that promises such works as von Rad's Genesis, Noth's Exodus, Weiser's Psalms, and Eichrodt's "Theology" can scarcely be too highly praised. The capture and presentation of a work[1] originally published in 1959 in the United States has given significant content to the inaugural ceremony.

Clearly the writing of a History of Israel is an enormously complex task. How are we to evaluate the sources available to us? How do we set about the task of reconstructing Israel's origins? Where does Israel's history properly begin? How do we proceed where objective controls fail? It is the merit of Professor Bright's attempt that he sees the problems clearly and does not shirk an articulated effort at grappling with them. His scholarship is vast, his documentation beyond criticism, his style appealing. An introductory survey of the Near East from the neolithic age to the second millenium B.C. serves as prologue to the examination of the world of Israel's origins. So the stage is set for the telling of the real story, from the patriarchs to the Maccabees. And always the historical reconstruction is set against the widest cultural background and worked out in its interrelationship with Israel's religious faith. Probably this work will serve in this country as the standard survey of its theme for many years to come.

In so far as this is so, it becomes doubly important that it should be used in conjunction with the equivalent study of Martin Noth. In general, it is the period prior to the rupture of the Solomonic kingdom that demands such comparative study; for it is here that most of the continuing problems and uncertainties are concentrated. John Bright is of the school of Albright and Wright, conservative in his estimate of the biblical traditions, optimistic in his assessment of the possibilities of writing history before the Settlement. Noth stands in the line of Gunkel and Alt, and starting with other presuppositions arrives necessarily at substantially different results. The wise student will be slow to give his vote, and even slower in surrendering independence of judgment.

[1] *A History of Israel, by J. Bright* (S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 40s.). 1960.

If Bright seems more convincing, this may partly be because his verdicts are more congenial and his presentation more pleasing.

Certainly no one would claim that the last word has yet been spoken. Professor Bright is himself receptive heir to the work of Alt on the patriarchal age and the work of Noth on the amphictyonic roots of Israel; while in terms of his own particular approach he is open to many criticisms of detail. His treatment of the covenantal coalition of the twelve tribes at the time of the conquest will leave hesitation in more than one mind, and his discussion of the internal intrigues prior to the accession of Solomon does not, I think, do justice to the religio-political issues involved. But the last word must be one of fervent appreciation for a noteworthy "History" which also sheds a flood of light on Israel's emerging faith. This is a book to buy. It is cheap at its price.

Words are curious things. If we are confronted with a study of the Christian concept of "reparation,"[2] we may feel tolerably sure that we know the sort of ground that it will cover. But our confidence will certainly be misplaced. We find that we are committed to bring within purview the multifarious activities whereby the Church and her individual members share in the divine redemptive purpose, acknowledge the divine claim upon them and make response to it. We learn that we are involved in problems of soteriology especially in so far as they concern the humanity of our Lord. We are pressed towards deepened apprehension of Cross and Resurrection, of the meaning of dying daily and living the new life of love. Suffering and sacrifice, worship and prayer, sacrament and sanctification, all clamour for our attention. In the end, there will scarcely be one important aspect of the theological corpus that will not suffer scrutiny and demand interpretation.

Certainly this approach is fruitful; and provided that the reader keeps ever in his mind the three emphases of Scripture—the love of God, the redemptive work of Christ, the Church as the Body of the Lord—he will not finally lose his way. Nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid the impression that this book has a basic incoherence which frequent summary and connecting paragraphs may cover but not destroy. Perhaps most is gained if the search for unification is abandoned and the volume is treated as a collection of essays in Christian faith and life written from a broadly defined perspective. As such it may be commended. The author stands within the Anglo-Catholic stream of thought and piety. The discerning reader will therefore be alert for a certain narrowness in understanding of medievalism, a certain woodenness in inter-

[2] *A Living Sacrifice*, by E. L. Kendall (S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 21s.). 1960.

pretation of eucharistic sacrifice, and a certain blindness to the eschatological dimension of the faith.

Perhaps too much current theological writing moves in too "religious" a context, and proves itself less open than the New Testament. At least it is clear that the cataclysmic events of this century have given particular relevance to the Pauline assessment of the governing authorities and of the Christian attitude and action vis-a-vis the State in the opening verses of the thirteenth chapter of Romans, and have imparted peculiar urgency to the problem of their interpretation. From the exegetical labours of Dibelius have stemmed a theological structure, finding fullest presentation at the hands of Barth and Cullmann, closely associating earthly rulers with the spirit world, claiming cosmic and supernal dimensions for Christ's accomplished victory and present lordship, and arguing a specifically christological evaluation of the State. Against this understanding objections, linguistic, exegetical, historical, and dogmatic, may be and have been advanced; but the discussion is very near an impasse and demands some new attack on the whole relationship of governing authorities and spiritual powers, if any decisive progress is now to be recorded.

Langmead Casserley wrote scathingly some years ago about "that sort of theology which seems to be little more than a by-product of Greek grammar, and whose exercises consist of a series of excursions into the realms of philology." Plainly Dr. Morrison[3] is alert to such strictures, has evaluated and come to terms with them. He would avoid our menacing impasse by leading us through a fresh exegesis of the debated Scripture which seeks to determine what exactly it is that the apostle is seeking to *communicate* to the Roman church. This involves thorough examination of the Graeco-Roman conception of the state in the cosmos, in the recognition that first century Roman Christians would share this prevailing understanding. It demands also an enunciation of the uniquely Christian apprehension of God, in the recognition that the faith of the early Church called forth crucial and inevitable shifts of perspective. The result is a notable delineation of Christian freedom, Christian-submission, and Christian responsibility, in relation to civil authority.

This is a monograph that opens up issues of boundless significance. On the one hand we have the theological position that bids fair to draw a line dividing God, creation, and the state from Christ, redemption, and the Church. On the other, there is the understanding that seems perilously near to obliterating all dis-

[3] *The Powers that Be,* by Clinton D. Morrison (S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 9s. 6d.). 1960.

tinctions and merging nature, cosmos, and humanity into an undifferentiated structure of redemptive christology. Is there perchance a more biblical way? Are we summoned in the end both to comprehend creation in terms of Christ and yet to maintain the differentia between creation and redemption, cosmos and church, and hold fast the distinction between the realm of Christ's lordship and the *locus* of his victory, until the eschatological consummation? If so, there are implications for christology, soteriology, ethics, and mission which will keep the theologians busy for a long time to come!

One theologian at least has for decades been working in this general field; and at last there is available to us in translation his magnificent study in the doctrine of man as centre of creation.[4] Barth is the despair of the reviewer; for no short summary ever does him justice, and all brief comment exposes him to fresh misinterpretation on the part of those unfamiliar with the ground-plan of his work and the place of every part within the whole. Let it therefore be at once emphasised that while the familiar rejection of natural theology is maintained there is never in question any sweeping dismissal of scientific and philosophical work in the field of anthropology. What is important is our recognition that these disciplines and enquiries concern the phenomena of human existence, and take as object of study something that is in the end an abstraction. If we seek the real man, our starting-point must be located in another direction.

So we look to Jesus Christ; we take our stand upon his humanity; we understand ourselves as seen and found in him. Anthropology rests upon christology. Yet there is no identity between them. The distinction between Jesus and mankind must strictly be observed; for He is divine and He is sinless. Exposition must then proceed by way of an analogy that preserves both similarity and dissimilarity, and in terms of an understanding of the relationship between our humanity and the Lord's in terms of participation. The result is an interpretation of human existence that is worked out in three directions, that apprehends man as God's covenant-partner set in interpersonal relationships, as soul and body in unity and distinction, as appointed to life within the limitation of finite time.

Jesus is *for* man. He is the One for the Many. Herein is to be found the truth about the *imago dei*, which is the secret of the Being of God. We have life with God precisely because, yet only because, Jesus is *for* us in life and in death. And what is

[4] *Church Dogmatics* (Vol. 3, Part 2), by Karl Barth (T. & T. Clark, 55s.). 1960.

actuality for the incarnate Lord is destiny and hope for all men, after their fashion and with necessary qualification. It means that the essence of human existence is "being in encounter," man *with* his neighbour. We are created not solitary or individual but man-and-woman, as the biblical story so powerfully tells. Here is the content of the *imago dei*, the basic pattern of all human living.

But Jesus is also complete man. He is the divine Son, whose manhood contains the Holy Spirit without measure; and in the gracious creative and redemptive purpose of God, man also is given "Spirit," set in living relationship with God, granted participation in the true humanity of Christ, and thus constituted soul-body, in unity, order, and distinction. He is a corporeal being, structured in a creaturely unity that has both centre and circumference, both soul and body, without separation but without confusion. Primacy and priority lies with the soul. But this is never to be understood as phantom, any more than the body can be understood as corpse. By the soul man governs himself. By the body he serves himself. And in their ordered unity, he lies open to "Spirit" and to God.

Finally, Jesus is Lord of time. He is the Lord who is and was and is to come, whose time is the fulfilment of all time, who makes all mankind his contemporary. Clearly this cannot be said of creaturely and sinful man. Nevertheless, in Christ there is the guarantee to us that our time is real, that it is the form of existence willed by God, that it is given to us by Him. Our time is comprehended in terms of past, present, and future. There is beginning and ending. Yet both are bounded by God and given meaning in Christ. If, on the one hand, my baptism assures me that in my very temporality I yet come from Jesus Christ, his birth, his baptism, his crucifixion, his resurrection, on the other hand I may know that the Lord of death who awaits me there is the gracious God who is *for* man. It is sin that makes death a "death sentence." But Jesus has suffered the judgment of death for us. Therefore the ending of our time is not an evil thing, and the ultimate word is not rejection.

All this is Barth at his most provocative and profound. Those who are strangers to the discipline of dogmatic theology should wrestle with this volume which constitutes one of the great expositions of our age. The concluding study of Man in his Time is a masterpiece of biblical exegesis and theological discernment. It magnificently proclaims to us that God has time for us in Jesus Christ, and that therein we are brought into indissoluble relationship to God's eternity. It also and incidentally contains a few more of Barth's scattered reflections on the inadequacy of infant

baptism. To come to terms with such massive presentation is to recover a liberating sense of the immensity of the Gospel, to find intellect quickened and preaching deepened and enriched. It is also to be left with questions that are truly fruitful.

Two of these seem to me to be of particular importance. How far is Barth right in his estimate of sin? He finds it impossible to treat it as of ultimate seriousness, is convinced that it must be adjudged as ontological impossibility. This is an obvious corollary of his christological centre and perspective. If the first and last word is grace and redemption, then what man ever chooses is what God has ever denied and destroyed. The case seems irrefutable. Perhaps it is. Without doubt this is far closer to the Gospel than much traditional preoccupation with man the sinner. If debate is to continue here, it must be carried on at the proper place of controversy—in terms of the adequacy and correctness of this particular unfolding of christology. Here Clinton Morrison is supremely relevant.

The other point of questioning concerns the significance attributed to death. How far must we say that the death of each human being is decisive for his destiny? If we reject all ideas of purgatory, we bind the decision about eternal existence to our bounded finite time, and thereby give to our earthly pilgrimage an importance and an urgency that is thoroughly biblical. Nevertheless, our death derives its significance from its relationship to the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus on the one hand, and the Parousia and the Resurrection of the Body on the other. Here there are many delicate problems which careful reading and re-reading of this powerful discussion may help to solve.

Though Britain has no Karl Barth she possesses thinkers capable of making important contributions in many theological fields. The Principal of Didsbury College is one of the significant Methodist scholars of our time. In "The Meaning of Sin" he provided a study in that controversial area which for sanity, sense, and balance, will not easily be surpassed. Now we are given an introduction to pastoral theology[5] which exemplifies the same qualities and must rightly claim a wide audience. An initial discussion of theology, pastoral office, and cure of souls in the contemporary situation, leads on to an exposition on the one hand of the pastoral relevance of doctrine and on the other of the doctrinal illumination of pastoral need. To this central and suggestive treatment is added a concluding section on the function of church, minister, and theologian in the pastoral field. The doctrines of the

[5] *Theology and the Cure of Souls*, by F. Greeves (Epworth Press, 22s. 6d.). 1960.

Trinity, of salvation, of the Church, are worked out in pastoral application, whilst the pastoral ministrations of listening to the troubled, caring for the sinful, and sympathising with the suffering, are tied back to doctrinal centres of creation, sin, law, judgment, providence, prayer, death, and resurrection.

This is an ambitious project. It produces by the way a mass of discerning comment that should give us furiously to think. What if some portion of our current ministerial frustration is due to the fact that evangelistic zeal is not balanced by that pastoral concern which makes far bigger demands. What if the Christian who claims no interest in theology is really the bad joke that Mr. Greeves implies. What if it is really true that the contemporary Church is better known for its faith than for its love. If we add to this last conclusion the considered verdict of Dr. Kathleen Bliss that while the Church of Christ is beginning to learn again how to love, of a concern for truth there is as yet little trace, then surely we are brought very near to the secret heart of our present malaise.

Nevertheless, the reader who pauses most frequently to scrutinize particular gems of wisdom will wish most to beware of a failure to come to terms with the writer's primary thesis. Theology and the cure of souls are inseparable, must be thought into each other, must interact and intertwine. This is profoundly true. This is why we desperately need a contemporary Pastoral Theology. Principal Greeves provides us with an "Introduction," quarries some of the material, writes substantial preliminary notes. For all this we are debtors; and it would be ungrateful and unfair to fault him for failing to offer more than he promises. Yet even within his own chosen terms of reference there is, I think, a suspicious methodological assumption that could prove fatal. There are half a dozen pages concerned with the whole Church and the pastoral task. They touch briefly on matters of crucial significance for his theme. Yet they have the character almost of a footnote to the real text. I wonder whether the very reverse is not the reality of the whole matter, whether this slight discussion in amplified form should not provide a starting point only, but also a governing centre to which all exposition again and again returns.

N. CLARK