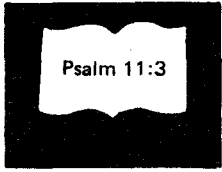


Foundations

**A Theological Journal
published by the
British Evangelical
Council**

**If the foundations
be destroyed, what
can the righteous do?**



Psalm 11:3

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THEOLOGICAL JOURNALS 1979 -A SELECTIVE REVIEWDr Eryl Davies

In the view of some political observers, Ayatollah Khomeini's triumphant return to Iran after fourteen years' exile and his impact upon the international scene marked 1979 as the year of the Ayatollah. 'The Times' observed that most of the history made in '79 occurred within the sphere of Islam. But we must not forget Mrs Thatcher's historical election victory which made her the first woman prime minister in Britain. Within Christendom itself 1979 was the year of the peripatetic pope. His traditionalist approach to Roman dogma became very apparent before the end of '79. Just before Christmas, for example, the Pope suspended the renowned Catholic theologian Hans Küng. This represented a remarkable change of attitude on the part of the Vatican for his immediate predecessor had written to congratulate Küng on his book, 'On becoming a Christian'.

The tensions, excitement, problems and trends both of contemporary history and theology are not always reflected, and grappled with, in theological journals and 1979 was no exception. Some journals still appear somewhat remote and irrelevant. Let us, however, strike a more positive approach.

In '*THEOLOGICAL NEWS*' (Dec '78 - Jan '79 , a useful and informative quarterly news-sheet providing worldwide coverage of developments among Evangelicals), Professor Klaus Bockmühl wrote an interesting editorial entitled 'Why theology?' He observed with regret the estrangement and cleavage between many believers and theology, between doctrine and life. All too often theology is regarded as a purely theoretical and remote activity irrelevant to the everyday life of the Christian.

The estrangement, he adds, is evidenced in the polarization in evangelicalism between evangelism and teaching, then between Church and theology. This division "causes inestimable damage to the Church", for example, by weakening preaching and surrendering itself "to the reign of subjectivism." The same issue also refers to a searching article by Dr Harry Boer on 'Reprobation in the Canons of Dort' which appeared in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod's '*THEOLOGICAL FORUM*'. Dr Boer argues that the Canons fail to provide biblical support for the teaching on reprobation and four representatives from the Presbyterian Reformed traditions reflect on his paper.

We find Professor Bockmühl writing again, but this time in '*CHRISTIANITY TODAY*', under the general title of 'Bringing Theology back down to earth' (20th April, p54). He refers to a series of articles by West German theologians entitled 'What is the Matter with German Theology?' which appeared in the influential Protestant monthly '*EVANGELISCHE KOMMENTARE*' and which created a stir in that country. The New Testament scholar in Tübingen, Pieter Stulmacher, expressed his unhappiness with the results of the whole de-mythologization debate and called for a "post-critical exegesis of Scripture". The article from the pen of Zurich's leading theologian, Gerhard Ebeling, was equally surprising. Describing a great deal of contemporary theology as "unproductive productivity" in which the essence of theology has evaporated into either abstractionism or the journalistic craze for the latest ideological fashion, he observed that efforts to reform the study of theology have been to no avail. He complains that theology, lacking a sense of direction, tends to become subject to alien interests. Ebeling's position is clear. No one can be a theologian who does not exercise faith in his personal life. "To put it bluntly", he says, "the doctrine of God has its touchstone in prayer, Christology in worship and pneumatology

in the actual existence of the church." Theology needs to be re-orientated in its work of relating doctrine to life - not in an exclusively social or Marxist sense, for, he warns, there is "no promise for an overall social betterment but rather the commission to contain the effects of sin as much as possible." This reminder, even from a liberal theologian, merits our consideration.

In a later issue (29th June), Harold Kuhn analyses a term popular among secular theologians, namely, "doing theology", and he rightly states that the term indicates a basic existential methodology involving a deep aversion to "academic theology" and an affinity for open-ended and unstructured forms of theology. Kuhn warns that "this view that Christian theology is something 'done' rather than something derived from biblical revelation carries with it implications of the gravest sort for historic Christianity" (p56). It represents the relativizing and humanization of theology, besides robbing Christianity of its uniqueness. Deeper still, it involves the abandoning of reason in favour of an irrational type of group privatism.

Three articles on psychology caught my attention in 'C T' also. One article, 'Is Psychotherapy Unbiblical?' argued that a caring Christian community and a biblically based counselling are not always enough. While "miracles of healing have their place and confrontation with biblical principles is essential, there is also a place for therapy that occurs within a caring relationship and has as its goal the enhancement of the patient's capacity to give and receive love" (p29, 19th January).

Warning us that 'Psychology is not a Panacea but ...' another writer urges us to broaden our concepts of psychology and its role in the church. "Psychology is not a panacea, but this science of human behaviour does have practical value far

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greater than many Christians have recognized. There is a challenge now before Christian professionals and nonpsychologists to work together to build a biblically based psychology that can have a broader influence on the lives of Christians and on local churches" (p25, 16th November).

I found another article - "Abandoning the Psyche to Secular Treatment" (29th June) - most challenging and relevant. Here Professor Ronald Koteskey illustrates historically the effectiveness of moral treatment in mental illness some 150 years ago and the involvement of Christians in this development and treatment. Some hospitals had recovery rates of 80 and 90 per cent higher than at previous or subsequent times. Moral treatment did all this without tranquilizers, antidepressants, shock treatment, psycho surgery, psychoanalysis, etc. Kindness, patience, attention to needs, opportunities for expression of creativity, trust and the maintenance of self-respect were very effective. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the use of moral treatment declined with disastrous results and recovery discharge rates went down sharply in the wake of the new medical approach. Why was the moral treatment abandoned? One reason, suggests Koteskey, was the success of medicine in the nineteenth century leading to its adoption as the model for psychiatric treatment and research. Another reason was that the early moral therapists thought it unnecessary to develop theoretical conceptualizations of their principles. Why not return to the use of moral treatment? Possibly the fear of being labelled "unscientific" deters some from seriously proposing moral treatment. Furthermore the concept of 'moral' conflicts with the amoral approach of modern secular psychology and psychiatry. In conclusion the writer urges Christians to be more involved in this whole area of human need and to develop once again as Christians the methods of moral treatment.

There is a growing concern amongst some evangelicals

for theological creativity. Geoffrey Bromley of Fuller College, Pasadena gives expression to this vexed question in '*THEMELIOS*' (September). He appreciates that it is not to be endorsed or pursued without reservations and that too high hopes of creativity must not be entertained. In Bromley's view, for example, biblical studies provide ample scope for creativity where much linguistic and background work still needs to be done. The same he feels is true of historical studies where sacrosanct evaluations need to be reappraised. Dogmatic theology also opens up a vast area for original thinking, but it has the "delicate responsibility" (p7) of being both loyal in content and contemporary in expression. The reviewer feels that the biblical content of some attempts at creativity suffers at the expense of contemporaneity. Hermeneutics also provides scope for creativity especially in relation to ethics. Here there are two basic questions of application. One concerns the permanent validity of biblical injunctions given in different situations and at different times. The second concerns the relation between the core of biblical doctrines, injunctions and commands and the cultural medium in which they were expressed. Bromley suggests what some of us already feel, that this field of application is one where the need is most urgent at this juncture in Evangelical history.

The reviewer found the January '79 issue of '*Themelios*' stimulating and informative with its historical survey and biblical view of universalism as well as an additional article on the issue at stake in this debate and some reflections by Bruce Nicholls on contemporary trends towards universalism in the Asian context. In view of its contemporary application this latter article especially deserves a wide reading. An article - 'Preaching in Worship' - by Dr R.T.Kendall in the April issue was another highlight. With his usual directness he argues for the centrality of preaching in worship. He concludes with the following

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challenge: "If indeed the churches of Great Britain would come before God with weeping; if indeed the services of divine worship in this country would make preaching central; if indeed the ministers of the Gospel would preach the Word under the anointing of the Spirit, this nation would be healed" (p92).

The claim that "the discipline of hermeneutics is emerging as the new dominant movement in both American and European theology" was made by Walter Kaiser in 'C.T.' (5th October). No longer are we discussing simply the traditional questions as to what is literal or figurative or normative, etc. Now the norm is for "the text to interpret us and become itself a new event as we read or hear it." This new orientation has its roots in the existentialism of Heidegger whose thought was popularised and extended by Hans-Georg Gadamer in 1960. His main premise was that the meaning of a text was not the same as the author's meaning. No one, according to Gadamer, could claim to know the precise meaning of a text since the number of possible meanings are endless. This 'New Hermeneutics' (so described by James Robinson in 1964) claims that each text has a plethora of meanings which exist without any norms for deciding which are right and wrong. The text itself is free from the author once he has written it and is ready to be shaped by our act of understanding it (p31). We cannot, of course, agree with this approach, but we need to be aware of it especially as Kaiser calls the evangelical community "to a whole new hermeneutical reformation" (p33).

Bernard Ramm wrote on the same subject in 'ETERNITY' (November). Under the title "Who can best interpret the Bible? Why the experts have been challenged." He speaks of a "ferment in hermeneutics" and pinpoints four main challenges to the traditional historical-grammatical-critical method (HGC) of interpretation. The first challenge was initiated by Barth and up-dated by

Brevard Childs of Yale who argues that the interpreter must go beyond the HGC method and give the text a theological interpretation. Challenge two came from Kierkegaard who demanded that an existential dimension be added. Bultmann used this position in a radical way but Gadamer, as we have already seen, has recently given a new impetus for a more existential un-Bultmanlike interpretation. The third challenge is a psychological protest led by Morton Kelsey and Walter Wink, who are critical of theological giants like Barth, Brunner, Bultmann and Tillich. For these theologians, theology was more of an academic exercise. Kelsey, for instance, argues that the interpreter must "put himself in the act" and find that meaning of the text which is "meaning for me". The final challenge comes from the literary experts who regard the HGC method as being too restricted to cover the manifold task of biblical interpretation.

1979 was also an important milestone for two well-known theological publications. Whereas the '*CHURCHMAN*' is now a hundred years old, with the January-March '79 issue the '*EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY*' entered upon its second half-century under the editorship of Professor F.F. Bruce. We wish both publications well. Articles in the '*Evangelical Quarterly*' during '79 included 'God and Mammon', 'Midrash and "Magnet" words in the New Testament', 'Baptism and Communion in contemporary thought and proposal', 'The transfiguration of Jesus: the Gospel in microcosm', 'Redactional Trajectories in the Crucifixion Narrative', 'Women and Church Leadership', 'The Hymnic Structure of Colossians 1: 15-20', 'On Discontinuity' and 'Hymnody in Lancashire'. The article on 'The Jewish Understanding of the Old Testament as the Word of God' was refreshingly conservative. "For Jesus", concluded David Kibble, "what was written in the O.T. Scriptures was God's Word: no more, no less ... It therefore follows that Christians ... must accept the Old Testament as the Word of

God as did Jesus and the Jews of his day" (p154). This article was spoilt by a concluding footnote that spoke of the need of the O.T. Scriptures becoming the Word of God for us "in the sense that Barth expounds in his 'Dogmatics'". I wonder whether the writer appreciates the contradiction between his position as outlined in the article and that of Barth? In the same issue we are treated to an enjoyable article on 'Calvin, Charismatics and Miracles' by Peter Jensen of Australia, whose conclusion is that Calvin would have seen in the charismatic movement "a new and erroneous version of the Christian life, assaulting the 'mind at rest' with false promises and ultimately robbing it of all that is worth possessing in the Christian Gospel" (p144).

At present it is a popular pastime for some to collate and discuss Calvin's teaching on the spiritual gifts and what might have been his attitude towards the contemporary charismatic movement. Paul Elbert attempts the former in the '*JOURNAL OF THE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY*' (September, p235). The article is thorough, daringly critical in parts and up-to-date in its many references to contemporary writings. Calvin's position concerning the cessation of the visible gifts was based, writes Elbert in conclusion, "on observation and was made within a highly polemical setting of antagonism regarding the miraculous. I think that Calvin did not understand why there was not a total apostolic recapture. Yet he was modest enough to realise that it was difficult to make up his mind about gifts and offices with which he had no personal familiarity" (p255).

The '*CALVIN THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL*' also contains some useful material with articles on the 'Uniqueness of reformed theology', 'The basic structure of Pauline ethics', 'The redemptive focus of the kingdom of God', and 'Wish, work or hope in marriage'. The November issue is worth buying for the excellent Calvin bibliography 1979, spanning 25 pages!

The '*EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY*', published by the World Evangelical Fellowship, is trying to grapple more and more with contemporary theological problems. A brief glance at its contents for '79 illustrates the point - 'Believing in the Incarnation Today', 'Questions concerning the future of African Christianity', 'The theology of liberation in S.America', 'Evangelism in a Latin American context' and 'A selected bibliography for Christian Muslim workers', 'Ethics and Society' etc. Its book reviews and articles from such widely diverse backgrounds make this journal provocative and interesting. By comparison, the '*REFORMED THEOLOGICAL REVIEW*' from Australia appears somewhat tame and dusty although some of the subjects covered are important like 'Prophecy of the New Covenant in the Argument of Hebrews', 'Imitatio Christi in the New Testament' and 'Paul's Conception of the law of Christ and its relation to the law of Moses'.

One would like to spread the net more widely and include in this review other important journals such as the Scottish Journal of Theology, etc but pressure of space dictates otherwise. However, I cannot resist the temptation to refer to a publication that, probably, most of our readers are unacquainted with, namely, the '*SCIENCE DIGEST SPECIAL*' (Winter, '79). In a prominent article entitled 'Educators against Darwin', Larry Hatfield describes Christian scientists in N.America who "utterly reject evolution" as "one of our fastest growing controversial minorities". They prefer to call themselves 'scientific creationists' and their ranks, including engineers, physicists, biochemists, biologists, entomologists and physiologists, are swelling in numbers. One of their goals is to have scientific creationism taught in U.S. public schools and/or have evolution dropped from the syllabus. They are enjoying success, too, in some areas like Dallas, Texas, Columbus, Ohio etc. Let the last word be with Edward Blick,

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Professor of aero-space and nuclear engineering at the University of Oklahoma, one of the leading members of the Institute for Creation Research in N.America, who declared, "Evolution is a scientific fairy-tale just as the flat-earth theory was in the twelfth century ... Evolution requires a faith that is incomprehensible! Biblical Creation is the only sensible alternative" (p96).

THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Peter Misselbrook, MA, Bristol

Any theology of the Bible - thus any Biblical Theology - must begin with the question of what the Bible is. To state that the Bible is the inerrant word of God is quite right, and this is the presupposition of our study, but this only asserts something about the origin of the Bible and the extent of its trustworthiness, it does not answer the question of what this word from God is and what it has to do with us.

It is our contention that the Bible tells a story, a true story to be sure, but a story nevertheless; it is the story of redemption. Though the Bible tells one story, its unity does not consist in the sameness of all its parts - the book of Leviticus is very different from the Gospel of John. The unity of Scripture is to be found not in its unchanging doctrine but in the directed coherence of its story; each part is built upon what has gone before and each part points beyond itself towards what will come after, demanding the subsequent chapters for its completion.

Any Biblical Theology, if it is to be a Biblical theology, has to do justice to the nature of Scripture as the revelation of the redemptive

work of God. It must deal adequately both with the unity of the Bible story and the diversity of its parts.

Here, we ought perhaps to make one or two comments on the Biblical Theology of Geerhardus Vos. Vos considers that Biblical Theology differs from Systematic Theology in that its organising principle is historical rather than logical:

Whereas Systematic Theology takes the Bible as a completed whole and endeavours to exhibit its total teaching in an orderly, systematic form, Biblical Theology deals with the material from the historical standpoint, seeking to exhibit the organic growth or development of the truths of Special Revelation from the primitive pre-redemptive Special Revelation given in Eden to the close of the New Testament canon. (*Biblical Theology* [1975 reprint], pp.v-vi)

For Vos, Biblical Theology is the same as the history of Special Revelation. Biblical Theology is therefore

... the study of the actual self-disclosures of God in time and space which lie back of even the first committal to writing of any Biblical document, and which for a long time continued to run alongside of the inscripturation of the revealed material ...
Biblical Theology is that branch of Exegetical Theology which deals with the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible. (*Ibid.*, p.5)

It seems to us that Vos has not done justice to the nature of Scripture. Vos views the Scriptures not as the revelation of the redemptive work of God but as the record of God's progressive unveiling of truth regarding Himself and man's relationship with Him. In consequence, Vos does not really provide us with a theology of the Bible but, by his own confession, only a theology of

"the actual self-disclosures of God in time and space which lie back of even the first committal to writing of any Biblical document." The source material for the construction of his Biblical Theology is not the entire Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments but only the verbal or doctrinal self-revelations of God to which the Scriptures bear witness. Those parts of Scripture which record no self-disclosures of God of this sort, such as the purely narrative material, many of the Psalms, and the greater part of the Wisdom literature, are not considered by Vos to be important to a Biblical Theology (see the index of Scripture references at the back of Vos's book).

Against Vos, we would argue that a Biblical Theology must reflect the character of Scripture as the story of redemption. The source material for a Biblical Theology is not simply the doctrinal self-revelations of God within the Scriptural documents but is the entire Bible. We would suggest that the measure of a Biblical Theology is precisely its ability to handle the whole compass of the varied Biblical testimonies without it becoming a disunified bag of bits.

An Outline of the Bible Story

The Bible story begins with an account of how God made the entire created order and placed man in the midst of the earth to rule over it to the glory of God. Here man had fellowship with God and enjoyed God's blessings. This was the condition for which he was created; it was life.

But in Genesis 3 we read of Adam's rebellion against God and his consequent loss of life - life in the earth and life before God. Man now lives - or more properly dies - in a world under God's curse.

From Genesis 4 to the end of the New Testament we have the story of the redeeming work of God. God's purpose is to restore the broken relationship

between man and Himself and consequently to lift creation's curse. His purpose is to restore the world (man and creation) to the state for which it was created (this does not, of course, imply that the last state is identical in every respect with the first).

In constructing a Biblical Theology - or even an Old Testament theology - it is vital that we grasp the breadth of the Biblical view of redemption. Just as man's sin affects not only his relationship with God but also all his creatorial relationships, so redemption is not merely a mending of man's relationship with God but involves a liberation of the creation from its bondage under God's curse, the institution of the Kingdom of Redemption. The Old Testament (and indeed the whole Bible), cannot rightly be understood until we grasp the creation wide scope of both sin and redemption.

Man's rebellion continues until the whole earth is overrun with wickedness and violence. God therefore determines to destroy both man and his world. But in the midst of a world under God's wrath, God saves one man from destruction, Noah, and with that man he saves his family and the animal creation. The old world is destroyed under judgment, but from this saved remnant there is to spring a new world; thus Genesis 9:1-7 repeats God's words to Adam in Genesis 1:28-30 (with certain significant differences). But this remnant of the old world cannot be the source of a new, there needs to be a more radical renewal or regeneration. The history of man's rebellion repeats itself in Noah's drunkenness, Ham's shamelessness, and finally the concerted rebellion of arrogant men at Babel. Once again God's judgment falls upon man.

The story of Noah supplies us with a clear picture of the nature of the redemptive work of God. (This we would argue against Vos who views the Noah covenant as a non-redemptive "nature covenant".)

Although the created world is to be destroyed under God's judgment, it does not accord with God's purpose simply to remove redeemed man from the place of destruction and take him up to heaven. God's purpose is still to give man life in the earth and before Him: He will establish His Kingdom. Thus the created order is redeemed along with man (just as it had been cursed along with man), and redeemed man is made the underlord of the new creation to rule over it to the glory of God.

The redemptive story of Genesis 4-11 ends in failure; not the failure of God's purposes but the failure of man. This new world is but the remnant of the old and goes the way of the old. Thus its history ends in judgment and scattering. The story of Noah thus points beyond itself to a greater and more perfect redemption.

The story of God's redeeming work continues with the story of Israel (beginning when Abraham is chosen from among the scattered nations under judgment). The story which begins with the Exodus from Egypt and which ends with Israel's peaceful possession of the land of Canaan is clearly the story of Israel's redemption. The redemption of the people of God consists in God bringing His people out of bondage to false gods and out of subjection to a Godless society and into a land where they are established as a redeemed society, free to serve Him. This redemption is completed only when God raises up His anointed king as a champion of His people. Under David the last enemies of the people of God are defeated and God's dwelling is established in the midst of His people at Jerusalem. Here God's kingdom is seen in the earth as God dwells with His people and they serve Him.

But this story also ends in failure, particularly the failure of the Israelite kings. The failure of Israel once more points us beyond Israel. As

the prophets bear witness, the story of Israel points beyond itself to the greater and final redemption which God will yet accomplish in the last days. God will establish His kingdom.

With the New Testament the Bible story reaches its conclusion. In Christ the work of redemption is completed and perfected: sin is defeated, God's Kingdom is established, creation is restored.

The Kingdom is made visible in the life of the Son of God. Under His hand creation is freed from curse and the relationship between it and man is miraculously restored: He feeds the multitudes when they lack food - they eat without labour and sweat; He heals their diseases and even raises the dead. His miracles are therefore an intrusion of the final kingdom of redemption, an anticipation of the day when sin and curse will be no more, when creation is regenerated and the body is raised from death.

But the redeeming work of God, by which man and creation are restored to their proper relationship before God, is effected primarily through Christ's death and resurrection, and it is to be seen in all its glory only at Christ's return. In His death, this world, a world lying under wrath and curse, is brought to judgment. His resurrection is the beginning or firstfruits not merely of the new humanity but of a new creation (Gal.6:14-15, and compare 1 Cor.15:20 with Rom.8:19-23). The new creation, and thus the life of God's people, is at present hidden with Christ in God, but it will be made manifest at the last day (Col.3:1-3). Then this world will be brought under final judgment and will be destroyed in fire, to be succeeded by the new heavens and a new earth (2 Peter 3:10-13). The new earth is to be the inheritance of the people of God, here they will reign with Christ for ever (Matt-5:5, 2 Tim.2:12, Rev.5:10,11:15). God will dwell with His people in the earth and they will serve Him there (Rev.21-22, especially

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21:1-4, 22:3-5).

Jesus is the second Adam. The consequences of Adam's sin are undone through Christ's work (Rom.5:12ff). In His death He atones for the sins of men and satisfies God's justice by bearing their curse. In His resurrection He undoes the consequences of Adam's rebellion, overcoming death and becoming the firstfruits of the new creation which lives before the face of God (Rom.6:10).

Jesus is the Messiah. It is through His mighty act as champion of His people that the Kingdom of God is established. Christ gains the victory over every last enemy of the people of God. He rules over the nations until all are subject to Him. Through His agency all the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God (1 Cor.15:25-28, Rev.11:15).

Christ fulfils the Scriptures, for in Him the story of redemption reaches its predestined conclusion.

The Christian and the Christian Church are also part of the Bible story. In Christ's death and resurrection the life of the new creation has already begun, and in the Church (the company of the redeemed), it is already visible in the midst of the world. The church consists of those who are "in Christ", who have died to the old world and who already live the life of the new creation (Rom.6, Gal.6:14-15, 2 Cor.5:17). The church is a foretaste of the kingdom, and the extension of the church is part of the coming of the kingdom. Here are a people who live before God in the earth and who, as far as it is possible in this age, live the life of the age to come. In their relationships one with another they manifest something of the new humanity, and in their relationships with, and service in the earth they manifest something of the new creation.

Christians must view themselves (both individually and corporately) within the redemptive historical

context of the Bible story. We live in the light of our past (not our private history and experience but the Bible story of our past from Adam to Christ) and we live towards our future (again, not some private destiny but the goal of the Bible story). This is certainly very evident of the focal point of Scriptural redemption - our relationship with the redemptive work of Christ. The Christian lives in the light of his past - his death with Christ and resurrection with Him to new life, and he lives towards his future - looking for the return of Christ and already living (albeit imperfectly) the life of the age to come. But this peculiar relationship between the Christian and the Bible story (that is his story) is true of every part. Every passage speaks to him as one *"on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come"* (1 Cor.10:11). We are children of Abraham (Rom.4:16-18) and Israel's story is our story, their promises our promises and their inheritance our inheritance (Eph.2:11-14). This must be the starting point in establishing the regulative or normative function of Scripture.

To summarise: the Bible is the revelation of the redemptive work of God. The Scriptures form a unity because they tell one story of God's redemption, a redemption which is centred in the work of Christ. All of the Old Testament thus points to Christ and cries out for His coming.

God's dealings with Noah and with Israel are anticipations of the final and perfect redemption, a redemption which was won for us by Christ's death and resurrection and which will be made manifest at His return. Noah's new world and the Israelite theocracy are "intrusions" or "types" of the final Kingdom.

The Church, though very different from Israel, is also an anticipation of the final Kingdom of God.

The task of Biblical Theology is to understand the Bible theologically by understanding each part or

theme according to its place within the ongoing drama of the redemptive work of God.

Why Bother with Biblical Theology?

In concluding this article I wish to suggest several reasons why we should give ourselves to the study of Biblical Theology.

1. Our belief in the inerrancy of Scripture counts for nothing unless we are students of the Scriptures, subject to the Word of God and being transformed by it. The first motive for the study of Biblical Theology is that it is no more nor less than the study of the Bible and its message.
2. Biblical Theology displays the unity of Scripture as the revelation of the unified redemptive work of God, a story which begins with the tale of a garden, ends with a city of gold, and which is centred in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Biblical theology is therefore the best answer to liberal views of Scripture which fragment the Bible and destroy the unity of its redemptive message.
3. Biblical Theology respects the diversity which exists within the overall unity of Scripture. It is not embarrassed by the very real differences between Exodus and Ecclesiastes, the Book of Job and the Gospel of John. It recognises that each part of the Biblical literature has its own peculiar place within the redemptive revelation. Each book of the Bible is thus viewed within its own historical and redemptive context and is not treated as a piece of timeless doctrine. But, precisely because each part is viewed in its (Biblical) context it is not isolated from the rest of Scripture.
4. Biblical Theology enables us to view Bible themes from a Biblical perspective. Many Bible themes, such as those of the Sabbath, the promise of the land, the tithe, etc., have been misunder-

stood and misinterpreted by the Christian Church because they have been fitted into a system of timeless doctrine instead of being viewed according to their place within the developing redemptive work of God.

5. Biblical Theology presents us with a consistent, controlled, and above all Biblical method of interpreting the Scriptures. While displaying the unity of the Scriptures and the focus of all the Bible (Old and New Testaments) in Christ, it enables us to avoid the arbitrary spiritualising which so often passes for an evangelical understanding of the Old Testament. Biblical Theology is the only answer to the contemporary misuse of Scripture by both Evangelical and Liberal: it lets the Bible speak for itself.

6. Biblical Theology displays the full breadth of the purposes of God. It is a fine antidote to the emaciated gospel preaching of our age. Here we see that the purpose of God is nothing less than the recreation or regeneration of man in every aspect of his being and relationships: reconciliation with God and also the transformation of man's life in society and in the earth, the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

7. Finally, Biblical Theology displays the Bible as a message to be preached, and makes preaching of any part of the Bible a possibility and a joy. The Bible is not a book of abstract doctrine but the revelation of the redemptive work of God in which we are intimately and presently involved. The application of the Biblical message is therefore not left to the artifice, ingenuity and whim of the preacher, but springs directly from the relationship between the redemptive story and those who need to be, or who are being redeemed.

(The writer has promised to submit a further article on 'THE SABBATH' for the next issue as an example of his approach to Biblical theology - Ed)

REDACTION CRITICISM AND THE EVANGELICAL DRIFTRev Brian Edwards, BD, Surbiton

1.

Redaction criticism is really as old as Higher Criticism and has reference to the various editors who compiled Scripture and arranged the material to suit their theme. For example, Bultmann believed the second-century church invented and altered stories in order to portray their concept of Christ. For an Old Testament critic it might be post-exilic priests tampering with old stories of the origins of primitive tribes to produce a glorious history of Israel. But men like Bultmann and Wellhausen were really just Form Critics; that is, they were chiefly concerned with the way the sources used to compile the Bible were moulded by the life and thought of the Church. Redaction Criticism begins by assuming the result of Form Criticism and building upon it. Professor Norman Perrin maintains in his introductory book *"What is Redaction Criticism?"* (1969) that the first serious redaction critic, R.H. Lightfoot and Wilhelm Wrede before him, finally robbed the Gospels of the need to be taken as serious history, (history is consistently used in this article with the meaning of relating events as they factually were). Wrede concluded that Mark, for example, can only be read as history by reading all kinds of things into the text: "The Gospel of Mark belongs to the history of Christian dogma." During his Bampton lectures in 1934, Lightfoot shocked the world of N.T. Scholarship by declaring: "For all the inestimable value of the Gospels, they yield us little more than a whisper of his (Jesus) voice; we trace in them but the outskirts of his ways." After the Second World War, Bornkamm, Conzelmann and Marxsen pressed Redaction Criticism into the forefront of the critical disciplines. It was, in fact, Marxsen who, in 1956, coined the word *Redaktionsgeschichte*.

A glance at some of the conclusions of redaction

criticism may prove helpful at this point. Marxsen looked for the esoteric in Mark. Thus the narrative of John Baptist in the wilderness has nothing to do with desert places of sand and rock, but refers to the fact that the Baptist fulfils the wilderness of O.T. prophecy: "The Baptist would be the one who came 'in the desert' even if his whole life had never been anywhere near a desert." Conzelmann claimed that Luke could no longer be seen as the historian but as a "self-conscious theologian"; Luke was in no way motivated by a desire for historical accuracy, but entirely by his theological concept of the role of Jerusalem in the history of salvation. Perrin offers an example of redaction criticism at work from the narratives of Caesarea Philippi. On Mark 8:34-37 he concludes, "This section is made up of four sayings which very likely originally circulated separately in the tradition and then were gradually brought together because of their similarity of content and because of the common catchword 'life'." The last two expressions "must have originally been separate sayings because they make quite different points; v.36 that riches are of no avail at death and v.37 that life is the highest good (Bultmann)". In this narrative Peter is used as a picture of the church thinking of Christ as divine-man who therefore could not suffer; Christ had to dispel this erroneous view. In Matthew Peter is honoured and commissioned. This gives an idea of redaction criticism in the hands of liberal critics.

However, in the hands of a conservative critic, redaction criticism has an apparently more positive use. The Gospel writers are seen as redactors or editors who arranged their material to suit their particular purpose. It is not suggested that they either invented or fabricated their material, but they did not quote verbatim or give every exact detail of the history. We are not therefore to listen for the ipsissima vox of Jesus or to expect detailed accuracy in Gospel chronology or sequence. Nevertheless, for those who have a high view of

the inspiration of Scripture, the Holy Spirit influenced the redactors so that He makes "An impression on the Church which wholly corresponds to what Jesus said" or "An accurate and trustworthy impression of the Lord's teachings". The first quotation comes from Abraham Kuyper and the second from N.B. Stonehouse. So far we may all be in agreement that this view is not out of line with John Murray, Warfield, Berkhof and Hodge. In fact it is easy to illustrate that we all use redaction criticism to a degree in our understanding of Scripture. Matthew and Luke differ from each other in the precise order of the last two temptations of Christ; our usual answer is that since neither claims to present an exact order, each is free to close with the temptation best suited to his theme - Matthew presenting Him as King and Luke as man. If that is redaction criticism, and it is, then the Puritans were using it in the 17th Century and it has never been seen to contradict the full doctrine of inspiration. A little more radical is the fact that in the parable of the sower Matthew, Mark and Luke each use a different Greek word to refer to those who hear and understand. Matthew uses "understand" Mark has "accept" and Luke uses "hold fast"! We insist that these three words adequately express all that Christ's original Aramaic statement conveyed. This in no way touches verbal inerrancy for it is the Holy Spirit controlling the redactors to convey exactly what our Lord actually conveyed at the time. In this sense it is the ipsissima vox of Jesus.

Robin Nixon writing on the authority of the New Testament in *"New Testament Interpretation"* (Paternoster p.339) reminds us that "The problem of the inspiration of the evangelists as creative editors of their material is not substantially different from the problem of the writers of the Epistles as interpreters of the Christ event."

2. The attraction and danger of Redaction Criticism

According to Hendriksen in his commentary on Luke's Gospel (Banner 1978) "Today Redaction Criticism is riding high". At this point we must move with caution and try to understand where the danger areas lie. Perhaps this can best be done by two illustrations.

a) In April 1978 Bruce Chilton, a lecturer in Biblical Studies at Sheffield, wrote an article in *Themelios* in which he concerned himself with redaction criticism under the title: "An evangelical and critical approach to the sayings of Jesus". Following the basic philosophy of redaction criticism, Chilton distinguishes between historical objectivity and the purpose of the redactor: "Before we can assess the historicity of the Gospels, we must confer with the texts in order to determine the purpose for which they were written". That is the first concession. He continues later: "The Gospels, then, are historically grounded considerations of the significance of Jesus in the mind of faith". That is the second concession, which has a Bultmannian ring about it. Chilton then takes Mark 9:1 and subjects it, and the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke, to a minute dissection showing the many Aramaean and Jewish influences that determined the way each redactor interpreted the saying of Jesus. The exegetical conclusion is that Jesus is not referring to the disciples at all but to Moses and Elijah! The method reveals a brilliant scholarship quite beyond the reach of those of us who have to preach and teach a congregation through the week. We may find ourselves more than a little suspicious of a method of hermeneutics that, by its nature, is locked within the academic preserves of the university professor. It is reminiscent of the days when the preacher had to consult the latest views from Tübingen or Oxford

before he knew how to present next Sunday's text! The foundation of Dr Chilton's approach is revealed in his claim that: "None of the documents which make up the New Testament would pass as 'history' in the modern sense; Edward Gibbon and Leopold von Ranke were not about at the time to write it". We will have to return to this point shortly but it must be carefully noted for it is the bedrock for evangelicals who are so attracted to redaction criticism. A few years ago such statements would never have been allowed to go unchallenged in evangelical circles.

b) The second illustration is drawn from an article that appeared in the *Evangelical Quarterly* for April/June 1977. It was written by Prof David Hawkin (Newfoundland) and entitled: "The Symbolism and Structure of the Marcan Redaction". In this article Prof. Hawkin stressed the importance of what he calls the "esoteric symbolism" of Mark's Gospel. In other words, Mark used a special secret symbolism with which he knew the initiated would be familiar. Our task is to uncover this esotericism in order to properly understand the book. The argument is that modern man has lost the ability to grasp symbolism; this is "poignantly demonstrated by the inability of the average man to capture the ethos of poets like Milton and John Donne ...". Prof. Hawkins quotes with approval the answers of Joachim Jeremias to the question why Mark omitted the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper: "(Mark) consciously omitted the account of the Lord's Supper because he did not want to reveal the sacred formula to the general public". Without putting too fine a point to our response we are left wondering whether Prof. Hawkin would agree that the Holy Spirit who carefully guarded the secret through Mark, slipped up with Matthew, Luke, John and Paul! We do not want to deny that the Scriptures contain a certain element of esoteric material but there is a very real danger when redaction criticism gets into the hands of an unwary evangelical. Professor

Hawkin reveals a total acceptance of the conclusions of Wilhelm Wrede (*Messianic Secret in the Gospels* 1901).

Perhaps the greatest attraction in Redaction Criticism from the evangelical point of view is that it avoids completely the problem of harmonizing the apparent contradictions of the Gospels. When Dr Chilton describes the Gospels as "historical patterns highlighted with theological colouration" he may be quite right if he means that the history of Scripture has a theological end always in view; but he is quite wrong if this description is a way of avoiding an admission that all factual statements of Scripture are factually without error. It becomes all too easy for Prof. Hawkin to conclude: "Whether the two feeding miracles (the four and five thousand) constitute a doublet is debated but the question is irrelevant to the redaction as such". It may be comfortable at last for evangelicals to really side-step the problems of apparent discrepancies and this is the attraction and great danger of redaction criticism.

In two excellent articles by Moises Silva in the *Westminster Theological Journal* (Fall 1977 and Spring 1978) Ned B. Stonehouse is seen as a forerunner to the evangelical use of Redaction Criticism. Prof. Stonehouse succeeded Gresham Machen as Professor of N.T. at Westminster, a post which he held until his death in 1962. Dr Silva described what he calls a "considerable evolution in Stonehouse's thought". Stonehouse moved from the position that the Gospel writers do not report everything verbatim to the position that they are often quite unconcerned with accurate recording of chronological data and finally that they actually took liberties with Jesus' very words. Whether Stonehouse crossed a Rubicon or merely paddled off the evangelical shore we must decide.

3. A critique of Redaction Criticism

There are four points at which we should challenge

26.

the drift of redaction criticism.

a) A challenge to its hermeneutics

The hermeneutics of Prof. Hawkin is really quite retrograde and takes us back to the old spiritualising of an evangelicalism that many of us had hoped was a thing of the past. Here is an example of his redaction heremeneutics in search of the esoteric meaning: "The feeding narratives symbolize the offering of salvation *'to the Jews first, but also to the Greek'* (Romans 1:16). The idea that the feeding of the five thousand represents Christ's communication to the Gentiles is not new: it dates from the time of Augustine. A careful examination of both stories adds considerable weight to the theory. The scene of the feeding of the five thousand is placed in the framework of the Galilean ministry - the feeding of the four thousand in the framework of travel (cf. Mark 7:24). Jesus gives the five thousand five loaves (corresponding to the five books of the Law) and to the four thousand seven (probably a number connected with Gentiles - cf. the seven deacons in Acts 6:3). In the former story twelve baskets of scraps are collected (12 tribes of Israel) and in the latter seven (again). Also significant, perhaps, are the words for 'basket'. In the scene of the five thousand kophinos is used (Mark 6:43), indicating the size of basket commonly used by Jews, and in that of the four thousand the word sphuris, a more ordinary and common basket". If this is so, Scripture is no longer a plain man's guide and we are flirting with gnosticism. The theory that we must be looking for the redactor's hidden meaning must be proved not assumed, and the above example does nothing to prove the case, it merely assumes it.

b) A Challenge to its methodology:

Redaction criticism builds upon form criticism. There can be no denying this fact. Lightfoot went to Germany to study form criticism for the very

purpose of being better equipped to work on redaction criticism. Therefore the evangelical redaction critic is working within a framework the principles of which have been laid down by a Scholarship that rejects the full inspiration of Scripture. The futile efforts of Alfred Cave who, a century ago, tried to arrive at evangelical conclusions from Wellhausen hypotheses should, at least, be a warning here. The method of turning an hypothesis into an assumption simply by repeating the hypothesis often enough must be strongly rejected by evangelicals. Consider Perrin's comments on the last two expressions of Mark 8:36-37. "They must have originally been separate sayings because they make quite different points ..." Such an absurd conclusion would never be seriously tolerated in the analysis of any piece of literature other than the Bible. Of the six or seven redaction tests, much is made of the "dissimilarity" test; that is, that material may be ascribed to Jesus only if it can be seen to be distinctive of Him. The assumption is that if the Jewish or Christian or pagan communities are unlikely to have made such an utterance then it is possible that it is a genuine statement of Christ. Similarly we are boldly informed that the early church "saw no reason to distinguish between words originally spoken by the historical Jesus bar Joseph from Nazareth and words ascribed to him in the tradition of the Church" (Perrin p.73); another totally untested assumption that violates all the available evidence; but an answer to this must wait until the section on historiography. In his foreword to Perrin's book, Prof. Dan D. Via of the University of Virginia admits that before redaction criticism the Gospels were "uncomplicated documents" telling "a rather straightforward story", now "the synoptics are understood to be enormously intricate products containing subtle and ingenious literary patterns and highly developed theological interpretations." But this conclusion is arrived at only by building a theory upon an

hypothesis using the result as an assumption and then treating it as the assured results of modern scholarship. Evangelicals ought to be more wary of this sort of method for it is not new. Even John Robinson, in another context, warned his academic world against "the tyranny of unexamined assumptions". (*Redating the N.T.* p.345).

c) A challenge to its fundamental theology

Whilst this is not the place to work it out in detail we must restate the traditional evangelical view that the writers of Scripture saw their words as God-given and inerrant. B.B.Warfield's article as long ago as 1893 "*The Real Problem of Inspiration*" has really not been superseded and, (as someone recently commented) it has not yet been answered. The redaction critic with a high view of Scripture will argue that this is not the issue; but it is. It is observable that evangelical scholars today are not averse to dismissing the editorial value of some parts of Scripture. In his recent contribution to the perennial debate about the date of Exodus and Conquest, J.J. Bimson suggests that part of Exodus 1:11 "in its present form may be late" and he speaks of a "late period when Exodus 1 was either compiled or revised" (*Redating the Exodus and Conquest* - University of Sheffield 1978). Elsewhere he argues that although the stories in Numbers "have a basic historical core ... the historicity of the narratives in Numbers 20 following should perhaps be held with certain reservations ... The events of periods subsequent to the Israelites' migration may have influenced the present form of the narratives, but the evidence does not justify dogmatism". This is typical of Dr. Bimson's inductive approach and there is an ever increasing tendency among evangelicals to take this line. We must insist on God's Word written as being truth without error and must require a plain commitment on the part of

evangelicals employing redaction criticism that they still believe in Biblical inerrancy as that term is traditionally understood.

d) A challenge to its historiography

According to Bruce Chilton "None of the documents which make up the N.T. ... would pass as 'history' in the modern sense; Edward Gibbon and Leopold von Ranke were not about at the time to write it". That is really the foundational plank of redaction criticism; it stands or falls there. In the same way we find Moises Silva asserting: "the Gospel writers do not handle history the way we normally expect a modern writer to handle it ... the evangelists evince a theological intent which has had at least some effect on the shaping of the historical material". It is not the last part of this quotation that we would question, but the first.

These evangelical brethren are merely adopting those unexamined assumptions of the critics. Perrin, for example, assures us that though by 'historical' we mean factual: "the ancient world simply did not think in this way." Interestingly the only evidence Perrin offers in support of this claim is that the N.T. writers held a different world view in that they actually believed in demons, angels, miracles etc.! This approach that the Gospel writers did not set out to write history as we know it, is being so generally adopted by evangelicals that we must not let it pass without a challenge at a number of points.

First there is the fallacy of unbiased history Pliny and Josephus were both writing history at the time the evangelists were writing their Gospels. Now the issue is not whether Gibbon and von Ranke were more accurate than Pliny and Josephus; to make this the ultimate test would bring us to the conclusion that Einstein was more of a scientist than Newton. The real issue is whether Gibbon,

von Ranke, Pliny and Josephus were all historians claiming to portray things as they really are. Each of them was influenced, more or less, by his political philosophy or his purpose in writing but the point we wish to establish is that they all intended their facts to be taken seriously. Pliny attempted sound scientific history and he was the founder of the modern encyclopaedia; his *Natural History* was still influential into the 17th Century. Josephus set out to write a history of the Jews and expected it to be taken as factual history. Both have since been shown to be frequently in error, and both were motivated by their own philosophy - but both set out to present the facts. Gibbon also had a purpose in writing, he wanted to vindicate intellectual freedom and his critical treatment, at times to the point of ridicule, of revelation and the supernatural hardly mark him as an unbiased historian. Even von Ranke, the father of objective history, reveals his strong bias against radical movements. Similarly both are considered to be factually in error in places by modern historians. All historians have a bias, since all history is interpretive; but bias and factual reporting need not conflict. That there were many religious myths and stories in the first century no-one can deny; the N.T. writers were well aware of their existence and warned against them (see for example 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:4; Titus 1:14 and 2 Peter 1:16). No-one could seriously compare the N.T. with Greek or Roman mythology. It is written in a totally different genre. The point is this: the first century was well aware of historiography as we know it and as modern historians practice it.

Second there are the conclusions of Sir William Ramsey. When Ramsey set out to subject the Gospels, and in particular Luke and Acts to the critical examination of the archaeologist he began with the strong bias of the Tübingen philosophy that:

"the Acts of the Apostles was written during the second half of the second century by an author who wished to influence the minds of people in his own time by a highly wrought and imaginative description of the early church", (*The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*); he expected to find Luke hopelessly inaccurate at every point. Half a century later he could conclude: "You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment" (*ibid*). The very point that impressed Ramsay was that Luke was an historian equal to any in the modern day; it is not surprising that liberal critics overlook Ramsay because of the embarrassment of his conclusions, but evangelicals ought never to forget him.

Thirdly we should remember the lesson of pseudepigraphal writing. In addition to the various and spurious letters of Peter, Paul, James and so on, the early church within the first two or three centuries of its life had some forty different 'Gospels' or lives of Christ to consider. A cursory reading of just a sample of these reveals the widespread fabrication of the stories, the ridiculous and often blasphemous character of those stories and the obvious inaccuracies. These forgeries were quickly detected by the church and Tertullian even tells of a deacon in Asia Minor who was flogged when he admitted writing the *Acts of Paul*. The early church leaders recognised that "Gall ought not to be mixed with honey". They were not looking merely for religious stories else they could have had them in abundance, they were looking for historical accuracy and apostolic authenticity.

Fourthly there is the declared aim of the N.T. writers. We are warned today not to press Luke 1: 1-4 too closely; but it is quite clear that Theophilus was meant to! Luke set out to give the truth and whilst it is readily acknowledged, and

always has been by the main stream of evangelicism, that "an orderly account" means "with meaningful order" rather than necessarily "with exact chronological sequence" it cannot be allowed that under this umbrella Luke felt free to ignore chronology altogether, still less to subject the details of the narrative to anything other than an honest and factual report. Paul (1 Corinthians 15), Peter (2 Peter 1:16-18) and John (1 John 1:1-3) all declare their interest in accuracy obviously in the face of some who were already distorting the truth. In fact our Lord Himself pledged the disciples the aid of the Holy Spirit to ensure that they recorded accurately all that He had said to them (John 14:26).

Conclusion

We have not been arguing against redaction criticism in all its aspects. Of course it is healthy to observe the differing emphases and particular interests of each Gospel writer and, as we have already noted, we all use an element of redaction criticism sooner or later in expository preaching. What we have tried to do, however, is to sound a note of caution and to test some of the assumptions of modern evangelical redaction criticism. It is all too easy to dodge problems with the broad statement that the first century held different views of historical reporting than those of today but no-one has yet shown this to be true and until they do we must maintain that the assumption is false. We must not allow inerrancy to take on a new meaning nor must we allow our brethren to make large concessions to Bultmannism unchallenged. In a recent review of the latest book by the Catholic theologian Hans Küng, E.L.Mascall accused Küng of "a docile and uncritical acceptance of the established positions in the realm of Biblical criticism, at the very time when those positions are at long last beginning to be seriously questioned" (*Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol 31 No 2); perhaps we are seeing

something of this uncritical acceptance in the conservative camp. Are some evangelicals just being unwary or are they deliberately trying to bridge a gulf to the other side at a time when that side is making some progress to ours? We must say plainly to evangelicals who are enthusiastically set on the redaction course: if you must go forward, please proceed with caution, it is a dangerous road.

REMARKS ON THE FUNDAMENTAL PERSPECTIVE OF
JAMES BARR'S THEOLOGY

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James Barr's published work spans a period of 30 years to this point. His article on the Pelagian controversy, published in 1949, was the first of a series of important articles and books on a wide range of subjects. As well as his major books, Barr has published material of a very specialised nature, dictionary articles and reflections of a more general nature on the nature of biblical authority and interpretation.

In this comment, we shall therefore limit ourselves to a description of one aspect of Barr's work, concerning the nature of the Scripture.⁽¹⁾

Much of Barr's work reveals a continuing search for an adequate statement of the relations between the nature of the biblical materials and their interpretation, between the status we accord the Scriptures and how we interpret the text. It can be considered as an attempt to approach the Scriptures apart from dogmas concerning the status of the Bible which invariably foster methods of interpretation which impose preconceived meanings

on the text. Barr has therefore sought to criticise certain accepted views of the nature of the biblical materials and the methods of interpretation that these seem to imply. Thus he has developed a critical attitude toward the linguistic practices commonly accepted in recent biblical theology, to the neo-orthodox view of Scripture in which the categories of revelation and history play a prominent part and also to fundamentalism, in which a traditional view of the Bible leads to various inconsistencies in interpretation.

Barr's aim is therefore a positive one, even though we may differ with him as to the material results of his work. To use his own words, it is to "encourage the Scripture to speak freely". Formally all Christian interpretation must seek a freedom in interpretation from pre-conceived ideas in order that the Scripture may speak for itself. However materially there is a great deal of difference as to how this free-speaking of the Scripture is to be attained and whether in many cases the results of interpretation do in fact state the real meaning of the Word of God.

Barr's fundamental approach to the question is seen in this quotation from his Inaugural Lecture given at Oxford in 1977:

"It is in the interest of theology that it should allow and encourage the Scripture to speak freely to the church and to theology. It must be able to say something other than what current theological and interpretive fashion would have it say. But it cannot do this if theology controls the presuppositions with which it may be approached. It is thus in the interests of theology itself that the meaning of Scripture should be allowed an adequate measure of independence; and that must mean that the discipline of biblical study also should be recognised to

have a fitting independence." (2)

One could hardly wish for a clearer statement regarding exegetical method by a biblical scholar. Whether the aim stated in this passage is realisable in practical terms is, of course, another question. For the present it is sufficient to define the perspective, which is quite lucid. These remarks apply to the relation of biblical studies and theology in general. The distinction which Barr sees between the two lies in that the one gives a purely descriptive statement of the evidence, whereas the other involves the theologian in a statement of personal confessed faith, either individual or ecclesial.(3) Biblical studies then involve assertions about human relations, which, even should they provide material for theological affirmation in the proper sense of the word, do not themselves transcend the descriptive by venturing into the domain of faith-statements oriented to the divine. Biblical studies in the academic sense are therefore largely descriptive and no common methodology covers all aspects of this study, to say nothing of such a methodology including also the properly theological, which is on a different level.(4)

The separation of the biblical-descriptive and the theological-normative which we have considered may be seen as a refusal on the part of Barr to make a conjunction of the divine and human elements of Scripture an integral factor in the understanding of Scripture. Scripture must be examined as a human document quite apart from an immediate consideration of its divine origin or the revelation it may contain or witness to. The risk of considering Scripture in terms of a Christological analogy is that of falsifying the truly human character of the Scripture.(5) Thus in establishing the analogy between the two natures of Christ and the divine and human with respect to Scripture the temptation is to under-emphasize the human character of the Scripture by holding it in

tension with the divine. The danger is that in spite of assertions to the contrary, there takes place an implicit transfer of the hypostatic union of Christ to the Bible.

These comments illustrate that for Barr the Scripture is not to be evaluated as is traditionally the case in terms of a God to man revelational model by analogy with the incarnation in which the divine and human are united in the revelation of the Son of God. If we wish the Bible to speak freely, its status and interpretation are not to be approached in the context of considerations of the uniting of the divine and human elements in Scripture.

The Critique of the Christological Analogy

The criticism of views of the status of the Bible which seek an understanding of the nature of Scripture by means of an analogy with the person of Christ is a strand which runs through Barr's work. It applies first of all to the Christological analogy as it was used in neo-orthodoxy, but also to fundamentalist approaches to Scripture. As the first is the more important in the development of Barr's own theology, we shall limit ourselves to Barr's critique of the Christological analogy in neo-orthodoxy.

Barr gives the following autobiographical indication:

"... there is in my work a very decided striving for reappraisal of the work of Karl Barth. This has a sort of biographical explanation through the great influence of Barth on my earlier theological formation. Though I still feel that it is Barth's God whom I seek to worship, the intellectual framework of Barth's theology has in my consciousness to a very great extent collapsed in ruins ... Barth's theology forms for me one of the chief areas in

which I hope to find lines of thought. Sometimes it has afforded me suggestions for fresh construction, sometimes it has made clear for me a point to which we must go back if certain dilemmas of modern discussion are to be overcome."(6)

This relatedness to Karl Barth and the desire to find new directions from within his thought, is clear above all in the substantial review which Barr wrote on J.K.S.Reid's *The Authority of Scripture*.(7)

Barr notes at the outset the centrality of the Christological analogy for the understanding of Scripture and compares statements by Reid and Barth to this effect.(8) Reid affirms that the imperfection of the Bible is located in the human and not the divine element, in the recording and not in the revelation itself.(9) "It is men in their finitude, and more exactly in their sinfulness, that introduce perversion into God's self-disclosure, or rather into the record they make of it". Reid has clearly learned in Barth's school - the drawing together of finitude and sinfulness, and the contrast of self-disclosure and Scripture as record of revelation are fairly typical, to say nothing of the structure of this thought which tends to contrast the divine and human.(10)

What then does Barr think about all this? Firstly he recognises the central significance of the analogy "which more than any other single factor has assisted the revival of biblical authority in the Church." It has been a powerful weapon against fundamentalism with its inerrancy-mentality and liberalism which saw little in Scripture beyond human religiosity. However, Barr thinks the last word has not been said yet. What lacks in Reid's work is a criticism of the Theology of the Word; Barr wonders whether with Barth's formulation we have really reached a terminus, or if "a new period of restatement must now begin."(11) He suggests

that "considerable modification" must be introduced because of an "important inadequacy" in the Theology of the Word. The point at issue concerns the role of the human response "behind" the Scripture.(12) How are we to understand what the Word of God in human form is?

Barr does not think that theologies which insist on Scripture as witness and speak of its "pointing away from itself" do justice to the human form of the text. For we must, says Barr, take into consideration the facts of the formation of the Bible. In respect to the relation of the word in its God → man and its man → God aspect Barr says that the second is at least as important, if not more constitutive of Scripture than the first. For in the making of the Scripture-tradition the Word/Act of God and the human response are entwined together, having worked on one another in the tradition. "The moulding of the tradition is a continual response to the divine Act or Word".(13) This amounts to saying that as there is interaction of both elements within the tradition their relation must be seen in terms of the process of tradition. It is not so much a case of revelation and response, the one being divine and the other human, but both the divine and the human element exist within the context of a human historical unfolding of tradition in Israel and the Church.

The difference between Barr and Barth opens out at this point. Barr puts it very precisely. In Barth's structure the prophetic/apostolic response "is a response of further transmission of the Word to Man, not a response of answer to God from Man." What Barr envisages is that even if there be divine revelation, this Act/Word takes its place in the tradition as an element of the developing human response of man to God. So although Barr does not want to deny the function of the Bible as witness to God's revelation, we cannot consider this unilaterally. "Scripture is answer as well as address". Referring to one of

Barth's images Barr says with some wit: "The finger of John the Baptist should be given a rest; he is simply not an adequate analogue for the whole range of biblical statement".

How are we to consider this suggestion of Barr's in relation to the thought of Barth? It seems possible that this can be seen as the radicalisation of one of the aspects which entered into the finely balanced dialectic of revelation and Scripture in Barth. In Barth the negative distinction between human and divine and the emphasis on the limitation of the Word, existed nevertheless with a positive aim - that of pointing beyond to the ultimate unity of the Word in the actuality of revelation. Even should Barth affirm the total character of the humanity of Scripture as witness, to the point of declaring it to be "everywhere a human word" (14) in the overall structure the human could function only as preliminary to the divine, rather than something of value for itself. So for Barr, this humanity remains neglected as being only a moment in the movement from God to man, which remains dominant. On the other hand Barr would like to see something really positive in the human aspect for itself, and in the wake of recent developments in the field of OT studies, suggests a radicalisation of the human aspect indicated by Barth. Thus the Scripture is seen as a tradition process which entwines the divine Act and the response as man's answer to God. If one regrets a slight lack of focus in the exposition of these ideas and the absence of a more explicit development, the rectification is to be expected in subsequent developments.

As far as the traditional way of speaking of the "elements" of Scripture goes, Barr reckons it to have broken down. For if we make the act of revelation the divine aspect and the recording the human function, then it is clear that the divine act is simply depicted in a human story. The divine

act itself is not a part of the Bible. Or, alternatively, if we speak of the divine and human as mingled in Scripture the "two elements" fall from view. Therefore it is better to affirm, says Barr, that "there is in fact only one 'element', the human", in Scripture.

Thus Barr comments "... it needs to be said emphatically - the human character is the bearer of revelation, the human word is the word that has authority." (15) This is another way of insisting on the Scripture as the product of the community of the people of God bearing witness and responding to God's leading in its traditions.

At a later date Barr sums up his reservations about the Christological analogy in these terms:

"There is ... no good reason why the relationship between God and man in the person of Christ should be supposed to hold good also for the relationship of divine and human in the Bible; even if one accepts in the fullest way a formula like the Chalcedonian ... there is no reason why it should be applicable also to the Bible ..." (16)

The Christological Analogy and Interpretation

This criticism of the status of the Scripture articulated in the context of a revelational analogy with the person of Christ has its correlate in the field of interpretation.

Once again it is necessary to relate Barr's criticism to Karl Barth's reflections on exegetical method. According to Barth, exegetical method must be adapted to the subject-matter in view. Exegesis must take into account the reality beyond the text in order to constitute a proper means to understanding. Scripture being considered a human witness to revelation, interpretation must seek to go beyond this humanity to see God's revelation. (17) This is at the heart

of Barth's well-known remarks concerning historical criticism and interpretation in his Preface to *Romans*.(18) An historical approach to the human text of Scripture is in itself not sufficient. We cannot forget that the Bible is witness; a true historical understanding cannot ignore this. The Bible does not speak of itself, but of God's revelation. Interpretation, if it is to achieve its goal, must seek not only the human and historic, but in order to understand these, must see them as witness pointing beyond to the divine revelation.

It may not be necessary to belabour the point here, as it should be fairly clear that this orientation fits hand in glove with what Barth says of the Christological analogy in the context of his Theology of the Word. Exegesis must take into account the structure of appropriation and participation which characterises incarnation and inscripturation. Just as humanity is taken up into the revelation of Christ in the Word made flesh and human words are taken into service in the biblical witness, so also interpretation cannot ignore that the text, if a human Word, belongs with revelation. So it has to look beyond the text itself, to the act of revelation.

In this respect Barth speaks of "open exegesis". A true understanding of the human Scriptures is one that leaves the interpreter free to be grasped by the subject matter of the Bible in the event of revelation which is God's affair, not ours. Thus "... the exegesis of the Bible should be ... left open on all sides, not for the sake of free thought as Liberalism would demand, but for the sake of a free Bible." (19)

This approach has caught the attention of Barr, the exegete. In his review of Reid's book, he refers to the above passage and adds - "Do we not need more guidance what this means, and how the working minister may put it into practice?" (20) That this question has continued to preoccupy Barr

is seen in another such affirmation some fifteen years on:

"My own position is in every respect in favour of a greater and freer use of the Bible by the church, and I believe that many of the troubles of modern Christianity are self-inflicted burdens which would be much lightened if the message of the Bible were more highly regarded." (21)

Barr's concern as stated here has obvious Barthian undertones. However, if Barr has taken this basic concern for an "open" Bible and its "free" use from him, this is by no means an indication that his way of achieving this freedom will necessarily coincide. In Barth's case this freedom is concerned with a recognition of the three-fold structure of the Word of God. The relation of the divine and human in Christ applied to Scripture, with the necessary modifications, gives the essential structure which exegesis must bear in mind. For exegesis does not exist for itself, but in seeking an understanding of the subject-matter of the text must envisage proclamation and the freedom of the event of God. It is a preparation for being grasped by the subject-matter of the text which lies beyond the human aspects of the text.

The problem with the double-nature approach, complains Barr, is that it leads to a dualism in exegesis, one line working with the human in a scientific fashion and the other making a "theological" approach to the divine Word. For Barr the dualism of the approaches is based on a now defunct understanding of the nature of Scripture. In his restatement the freedom of exegesis will be no longer, as with Barth, the freedom of the Subject related to a construal of the text in terms of the divine and human. It will rather be an openness based on the interpretation of Scripture on a totally human level, uncumbered by the

interjection of theological authority. (22)

Barr's approach to exegetical questions here is in correlation with his criticism of the structure of the Christological analogy. Just as this inhibits our discernment of the true humanity of Scripture by the contact with the divine, so in the realm of interpretation considerations of theological normativity connected with the divine aspect will inhibit true freedom in exegesis. This is a consequence of the tension between an ontological approach and a functional one in theological methodology. Exegesis is not concerned primarily with questions of theological normativity but with an account of human relations.(23) It is concerned with the dynamics of history and ontological questions should not impede it in this pursuit. This is not to say it will never be concerned with this sort of question, but such considerations are not its aim. It seeks above all the opening of the meaning of a human text in freedom from considerations of authority.

These considerations provide the necessary background for understanding Barr's critique of the linguistic methods used in Kittel's *TONT* and in much recent biblical theology, given in the *Semantics of Biblical Language* and *Biblical Words for Time*. The distinctiveness of the individual texts is lost in the context of biblical concepts which have normative value and are supposed to yield a key to the revelational character of Scripture. In this same respect Barr criticises the attempt made by some theologians, such as G.E.Wright, to see in the revelation-historical character of God's mighty acts spoken of in Scripture, the essential unitive theme of the Bible.(26) It also serves to indicate one aspect of Barr's distaste for fundamentalist theology which supposes the Scriptures to be revealed on their own witness and seeks to defend traditional views of Scripture by means of an appeal to the

inerrancy of the Bible.(27)

A Critical Approach to the Human Scriptures?

Having now criticised the influence of the Christological analogy as a model for describing the status of Scripture and a guide to its interpretation, what has Barr to offer in the way of reconstruction?

Barr would doubtless be of one mind with Marcus Barth who remarks that the analogy cannot solve the problem of Scripture's authority and affirms that it is "but another yoke fabricated by those who want to impose the Bible on its readers." (28) Barr seems to regard the analogy as an authoritarian structure which prevents us seeing the true humanity of the Bible and the real issues of interpretation which lie on the human historical plane. Thus Barr seeks a reconstruction of the doctrine of Scripture which will account fully for the human character of the text and allow us liberty in interpretation. His proposition is stated once again in his review of Reid's book. This suggestion has been developed in detail in Barr's later works such as *Old and New in Interpretation* and *The Bible in the Modern World*.

Barr's own contribution to the debate on the Christological analogy is not only the emphasis on the human aspect of the Bible text. It is a little more adventurous than this, and quite original, in its way. Leading on from his assertion that there is only one element in the Bible, the human, Barr seeks to formulate the consequences of this for the doctrine of Scripture. His suggestion is as follows: "the true analogy for the Scripture as Word of God is not the unity of God and Man in the Incarnation; it is the relation of the Spirit of God to the People of God." (29)

These propositions can be understood in the context of the modification of Barth's analysis of the threefold form of the Word of God. Once the

analogy between Christ and Scripture is removed from this structure, the third form of revelation, not Scripture, becomes the mediacy where the Word is actualised. No longer is mediacy sought on the level of Scripture as a divine-human analogue to revelation in Christ, but in the form of the continuing people of God in relation to the Spirit. This shift is already prepared for in Barth's own work, where Scripture and proclamation are two aspects of the same genus. Scripture is a church-document, written proclamation, which present day preaching continues. Jeremiah and Paul are at the beginning and the modern preacher nearer the end of one and the same series. (30) If there is also dissimilarity, related to the constitutive significance of Scripture, the continuities are very profound.

Thus for Barr Scripture can be considered as an aspect of a tradition forming process which develops historically. Rather than analogy between the writings of the OT and NT and the nature of Christ, there is a relation of continuity in the life of the people of God through contact with the Spirit of God.

The question Barr wishes to answer by replacing the Christological analogy with a Pneumatological one, is as to whether anything "rational can be said about the status of the Bible in the church." (31) The alternative lies between continuing to claim a special status for the Bible without acceptable explanation, and seeking to account for Scripture in a way that makes sense in the world framework in which we live. (32)

In Barr's description of the status of Scripture in the context of the analogy between the Spirit and people of God, the "special" theological categories of the former theologies are translated from a revelational context, to acquire new meaning in that of an immanent historical process expressed in the development of a human tradition. The traditional language is generally maintained,

with a different sense. Three illustrations of the nature of Barr's proposals can be given, from the two major books referred to above.

1. The Tradition Process

The tradition of Israel which is crystallised in the OT is multiplex in character; its diversity must be recognised. We cannot reduce it to a single formative element such as the acts of God or direct verbal revelation of divine truths. These are elements which function in the tradition rather than generating it. Thus progressive human tradition replaces progressive divine revelation; the character of the OT narratives is that of an on-going story rather than what we would strictly call history.

2. The Tradition and Revelation

The previous models of revelation accepted in theology often conceive of knowledge of God as the result of a divine act or inspired words conveying truth about Him. Such views can't fit in with the approach to Scripture as a cumulative human tradition formed in contact with the Spirit. Thus revelation is no longer conceived of as preceding the formation of the Scriptures. Revelation rather follows on from the tradition in the sense that Scripture which is formed "by a human action which is a reflex of contact with God"(34) is adopted by God as His word for future generations. (35) Thus tradition which is generated on the understanding that God is known and present with His people provides a framework for understanding in new situations. What is the mode of this divine presence in which tradition is formed? Barr admits: I do not see how we can think in the present day other than seeing the mode of God's presence then as not different from how God continues to make himself known.(36) The mode of formation of the tradition is "in the Spirit". God is 'with' His people. But Barr seems "at a loss" as to what this really could mean, beyond affirming that the Spirit accompanies human thought and action. (37) Thus

the tradition can be described in an historical way without pleading of divine interventions at any points of difficulty. This "appeals to" Barr.

3. The Scripture Tradition as Classic Model

If the Scripture is the crystallisation of a human tradition how can its function be described in the Church? Barr proposes that the Bible may be considered as giving a model or paradigm of how faith may be related to the God of Israel who is the Father of Jesus Christ. It does not therefore provide a revelation of what faith should be, but a classic human expression of what faith might be.

"The relation of the biblical writers and traditionalists to God through the Spirit is thus not basically other than that of the Church today in its listening to God. There is however a difference in the stage ... the biblical men had a pioneering role in the formulation of our classic model, and this may make it fitting for them to be called 'inspired' in a special sense." (38)

Since Scripture is a human document, if we are to speak of inspiration this must be in a human sense in a way "purified from all suggestion of inerrancy and infallibility, and from all teaching that identifies the production of the Bible with the revelation of God." (39) A Scripture "inspired but fallible" including errors, theological and other, might describe the way God uses sinfulness to conquer sin. (40) To speak of Scripture as classic model would seem to mean that we seek in reading Scripture to gain understanding of how the Spirit dynamically led the people of God to express their faith in response to the total situation of their time; this can be paradigmatic for the leading of the Church by the Spirit in the situation which is ours. Because these situations, then and now, are human

ones, this understanding in relation to faith is aided by the proper use of historical analysis in exegesis. The Bible is therefore not a norm which can be applied to present situations as the rule of faith and practice. It is a model which illumines us as we face present situations and make our own decisions.

Conclusion

We are now in a position to see where Barr's rejection of the Christological analogy leads him. Many questions might be asked about the reality of the knowledge of God and salvation to be had in this scheme and as to the adequation of human faith to its divine object. Do we know anything real about God, and how are we sure that our human expressions of faith are not merely figments of our imaginations? Again it might be asked whether there is not a problem with the human fallibility Barr is willing to accord to the biblical texts on the basis of the almost infallible capacity Barr seems to accord present human reason to judge this fallibility. Barr does not tackle the foundation on which truth is to be discerned. He seems simply to validate modern thought as being adequate to judge truth historically.

Such questions may be interesting and vital. However, in this conclusion a few words must be said as far as analogies are concerned. In Barr's presentation, it is a choice between a Christological analogy or a Pneumatological analogy. Barthianism lacks a doctrine of inspiration of Scripture; Barr supplies one but rejects the revelational context of the Theology of the Word. In both cases it is inevitable that a polarity ensue between the divine and the human. For Barthianism the lack of a doctrine of Scripture which is truly theopneustic results in the tangentiality of the acts of God's revelation. Nowhere does God seem to reveal Himself concretely in the world of phenomena. (41) Human knowledge

and history remain unreconstructed and secular. The same is all the more true of Barr's approach. The Spirit leads, but God does not reveal. Tradition is "inspired" but totally human; the activity of the Spirit is tacit. Thus in both cases there is no real union of the divine and human in Scripture. The two "elements" are separate and the presence of one seems to exclude the other.

This duality of the divine and human arises, in my opinion, since there is no idea of general revelation as covenantal either in Barthianism, nor in the thought of Barr. In Barth everything becomes governed in terms of a Christological reductionism; in Barr in terms of the primacy of present knowledge.

Neither can put us in touch with the Living God of Scripture. In Barth an all-sufficient Christ compensated in principle for an insufficient Bible. In Barr the humanly-sufficient tradition seeks adequation with the God in unity "out there" who has a history which is different from human history, the one God who is "a unity with a history".(42)

However, if neither analogy is adequate to solve the problem of the relation of the divine and the human in so far as Scripture is concerned there remains, it would seem, only one possible way to overcome the duality. This is in the combination of the two analogies, but not in the sense that Barth understands the one or Barr the other. The Spirit works in human affairs, but God also reveals Himself in our world. Thus the solution to the divine/human duality which plagues modern doctrine of Scripture is not in Word or in Spirit, but in Spirit and Word: in God creating man for communion in the Spirit and speaking His Word in the fellowship of the Spirit; in God renewing man through His Spirit and speaking to man the Word of salvation. In creation and re-creation the initiative is with God; it is in His Spirit that we are formed in the Glory-Image (43) receiving His

Word as the covenant truth of the Almighty. In Christ also we are renewed in the image of the Son who is the Lord of the Spirit by receiving the Word of the Gospel of salvation.

Reflection along these lines would bring us to an adequate formulation of the relation of the divine and human aspects of the Scriptures, which may also be found to be conformed with the witness of the Scriptures themselves.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."

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(1)

A detailed account of the Theology of Barr is given in the writer's doctrinal thesis to be published in the summer by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, entitled "*JAMES BARR AND THE BIBLE: CRITIQUE OF A NEW LIBERALISM*".

(2) *Does Biblical Study still belong to Theology*
Oxford 1977

(3) *ibid*, 7,8

(4) *ibid*, 4, cf.14,16

(5) The Christological analogy is the parallel drawn between the divine and human nature in the person of Christ and the similar elements discerned in Scripture.

(6) *Old and New in Interpretation*, London 1966,12

(7) *Scottish Journal of Theology* 11:86-93

(8) *ibid*, 86

(9) See J.K.S.Reid, *The Authority of Scripture*,
London 1957, 184f

(10) See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.2, 499ff.

(11) *SJT* art.cit, 87

(12) *ibid*, loc.cit, The use of the word "behind" is rather strange in this connection, but it is

perhaps indicative of Barr's appreciation of its subsidiary character in the Theology of the Word.

- (13) *ibid*, 88. The reference to tradition can be attributed to the influence of Von Rad's theology.
- (14) Barth, *op.cit*, 464
- (15) SJT, 90.
- (16) *The Bible in the Modern World*, London 1973, 22. (BMW)
- (17) Barth, *op.cit*, 466ff
- (18) See the remarks of J.M.Robinson, in *The New Hermeneutic*, J.M.Robinson and J.B.Cobb eds., New York 1964, 22ff.
- (19) Barth *op.cit*, I.1, 106. cf. Reid, *op.cit*, 199ff.
- (20) SJT, 93
- (21) BMW, 112
- (22) As is seen in Barr's lecture, notes 2-4
- (23) *ibid*, 8
- (24) Barr, 'Scripture, authority of' in IOB(S), 795
- (25) 'Reading the Bible as Literature' BJRL 56: 20.
- (26) See 'Revelation through history in the OT and in Modern Theology', *New Theology No.1* ed. M.E.Marty and D.G.Peerman, New York 1964, 60-74.
- (27) See my article 'Révélation et Inspiration: James Barr contre B.B.Warfield', *Hokhma* (Lausanne) 8: 39-64.
- (28) M.Barth, *Conversation with the Bible*, New York 1964, 170.
- (29) SJT, 89
- (30) Barth, *op.cit*, I.1, 101f.
- (31) BMW, 111
- (32) *ibid*, 109ff.
- (33) ONI, 20
- (34) *ibid*, 163
- (35) SJT, 91
- (36) BMW, 18

52.

- (37) *ibid*, 131
- (38) *ibid*, 132
- (39) SJT, 90f.
- (40) BMW, 179
- (41) This point has been developed in the works of J.Hamer, Langdon Oilkey, D.Tracy, C. van Til and G.Wingren where the theology of Barth is referred to.
- (42) BMW, 181
- (43) See on the function of the Spirit in creation the article of M.Kline, 'Creation in the Image of the Glory Spirit', *Westminster Theological Journal* 39: 254ff.

BOOK REVIEWS

'THE MAKING OF THE BIBLE'

William Barclay

The St. Andrew Press

£1.25 94 pages

William Barclay spent his brilliant literary life seeking to popularise the Bible. He was remarkably successful. But he was also sadly successful in achieving in the minds of many the exact opposite of what he had hoped to fulfil. Barclay always maintained the authority of Scripture as the Word of God but through a subtle erosion by inuendo, he in fact, left wide open doors of doubt concerning the accuracy and reliability of Scripture.

This book is the first in a proposed series of twenty-two under the title "Bible Guides" and edited by Barclay and F.F.Bruce. This volume is really concerned with the formation of the canon of Scripture. The introduction explains that the series, though written for non-theologically equipped readers who want to know what the Bible is about, is soundly based on all the generally accepted conclusions of modern Biblical research.

We are not surprised, therefore, to discover a total and uncritical acceptance of the critical theories of the compilation of the Pentateuch; the documentary hypothesis of the J.E.P.D. and H. sources are necessarily given a brief introduction as if they were proven facts and as if the scholars were totally agreed among themselves as to which source is responsible for what verses. According to Barclay, Deuteronomy emerged in 621 B.C. and we would not all agree with his assumption that the Pentateuch documents are full of different accounts of the same event. Daniel appeared about 165 B.C., which later places Dr. Barclay in some difficulty when he wishes to advance the quite proper view that after 450 B.C. no book could join the Old Testament canon. We are confronted with an absurd conclusion that at the time of the Jews/Samaritan rift (about 700 B.C.), the Scriptures must have consisted only of the law because that is all the Samaritans took with them. Surely there were quite strong natural reasons why the Samaritans did not want the detailed history of the Judges and early monarchy? The story of Nehemiah 8 to 10, we need not take 'absolutely literally', though why not is unstated. Similarly we may question whether Christ's references to 'law and prophets' is really evidence that in the first century the third division of the Jewish Scripture 'The writings' do not stand on the same level as the 'law and prophets', especially as later Barclay himself admits that in Luke 24:44 Christ included a reference to the Psalms which form part of the 'writings' and that Josephus claimed the 'writings' were fixed long before AD.70.

The second part of the book deals with the formation of the New Testament and once again it is sad to see such a ready acceptance of form criticism including its views of 'legends' and 'myths' which include the birth and infancy stories and baptism and temptation. It is little comfort to be told

that these words 'legends' and 'myths' do not necessarily preclude the historicity of these stories when, in fact, their use by form critics almost always means it does! It is frankly disappointing to find a scholar who is elsewhere so cautious liberally employing the phrase "we know" to refer to the hypothetical conjectures of source criticism. Barclay admits that the early church desperately needed an historical Christianity but will not commit himself to a belief that the Gospels are totally historical! On page 66 Barclay concludes from Paul's statements "*I speak in a human way*" and "*I have no command of the Lord*" that there were times: "when Paul made no claim to infallibility and made no claim that the Divine Voice spoke through him". This is no longer Barclay's *intuendo*, but Barclay's denial of infallibility.

Not all students of the Reformation would agree that the Reformers "were not in the least fundamentalists, if that word be taken to describe those who insist that every Word of Scripture is equally inspired, equally sacred and equally infallible."

Perhaps the point at which we must disagree strongly is in fact Barclay's conclusion. He rightly dismisses the Roman view of Scripture that it is made by the Church and its Councils but himself believes that they "became Scripture" because men found in them comfort and strength and a Saviour. This is surely as subjective as the view of Rome and not very different from it. On the contrary the reformed view of Scripture is that it is such because it comes from the prophets and apostles, has the authentication of Christ, and the authority of God stamped across it.

It goes without saying, because it is Barclayan, that the book is well written, carefully worded, full of valuable information and it breathes a high view of Scripture as the Word of God. There

is an excellent summary of the reasons why the Gospels were not written down for thirty years after the death of Christ, and an assurance on page 56 that we can be certain of the accuracy of the words and stories of Jesus. I would highly recommend it as an introduction to the difficult subject of the formation of the canon of the Old and New Testaments. But with Barclay we must be on our guard. It is neither easy nor enjoyable to criticise a man who has such a warm, devotional and high regard for the Bible. But pious erosion is very dangerous.

'THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT'

Dr. David Estrada &
Dr. William White

Thomas Nelson Incorporated 1978
\$5.95 144 pages - cloth

Papyrology, the scientific study of ancient papyrus scrolls, is not often headline news or of particular interest to the average Christian. It is even more unusual to discover a book that can present this highly academic and complex science in a way that is both intelligible and interesting for the layman. Dr. Estrada has achieved in this book what is so urgently needed in many areas of Biblical and related studies today. He has taken an important issue out of the jealously guarded preserves of the 'experts', has stripped it of the gabble of abstruse chatter and presents the subject in such a way that the 'layman' feels capable of making an intelligent and informed estimate upon it.

In the autumn of 1971 Father Jose O'Callaghan, an eminent Jesuit Papyrologist at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, was glancing through a catalogue of hundreds of unidentified papyrus fragments, many originating from the Qumram caves in the region of the Dead Sea. He read a discussion of some fragments discovered in Qumram cave 7 and

his eye was particularly attracted to fragment 5 (7Q5). Half the nineteen letters visible in this papyrus had been already certainly identified and O'Callaghan thought he could read part of the word 'Gennesaret'. This led him to the passage in Mark 6:52,53 and after meticulous checking he concluded that the papyrus fragment was part of an early copy of that portion of Mark's Gospel. What made the discovery all the more exciting was the fact that C.H.Roberts, a notable expert in dating papyrus scrolls and who, in 1935, had dated and published the John Rylands fragment of John 18 (known as P.52), had already reliably dated the contents of Qumram 7 between 50 B.C. and A.D. 50. If O'Callaghan has made a correct identification we now have almost indisputable evidence of a portion of Mark's Gospel in existence within 20 years of our Lord's death. O'Callaghan went on to discover further portions of the New Testament among the fragments of Qumram 7. Of course the world of scholarship is divided but at the time of publishing this book, Estrada could claim: "After five years, many suggestions, dozens of learned papers and a number of computer trials, no alternative identification has emerged." (p.41)

This book is not merely an excellent introduction to Papyrology, and Estrada makes that excitingly simple, there is also a discussion on the development of Biblical criticism and textual criticism, a survey of discoveries at Qumram and the history of the community there, and a sketch of the life and the work of O'Callaghan himself. Bruce Metzger once described O'Callaghan as "an accomplished papyrologist whose previous publications have been characterised by scholarly insight and balanced judgement". O'Callaghan is a careful papyrologist and, according to Estrada, "Does not approach his work with evangelical presuppositions and the hope of discovering an early date New Testament". There can be no serious

doubt upon this man's ability or genuine scientific approach to his subject.

Although the fragment under discussion (7Q5) contains only 19 letters in five lines, this is perfectly within the limits that papyrologists are accustomed to work. Another fragment from the same cave (7Q2) contains part of just 22 letters, only 12 of which are certain letters, in five lines; nevertheless, this has been identified as part of the 'Apocryphal letter of Jeremiah' and no one questions this identification. The condition of (7Q5) is quite as good as many other fragments positively identified. It is not generally appreciated that the John Ryland's fragment (P52) consists of only 14 part lines some consisting of parts of two letters only. One of the features of Estrada's book is the excellently reproduced plates and illustrations which leave little for the reader to guess or imagine. Some of O'Callaghan's further identifications from Q7 are as convincing as his identification as 7Q5. Fragment 4 he identifies with 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1-3 and since this is a right-hand margin in the fragment, the identification is much easier to establish.

If the identification of these fragments from Qumram 7 with the New Testament Scriptures are proven and accepted, and if, as Estrada believes, there are quite likely to be more New Testaments awaiting discovery from Qumram to Pompeii, then we have evidence that the New Testament records were in written form well before the end of the first century. That means, as William White declared back in 1972, that "All contemporary Barthian and Bultmannian views of the New Testament's formation will come crashing down in one inglorious heap." Or, as a scholar put it more cynically in *Time Magazine*, "They can make a bonfire of 70 tons of indigestible German scholarship"!

'THE INDENTITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT'

Wilbur N. Pickering

Thomas Nelson Inc.

(\$7.95) 1977

(Obtainable from Mayflower Books, Southampton)

In 1851 at the age of 23 Fenton Hort wrote to a friend of "that vile Textus Receptus". This was long before he had sufficiently studied the Greek texts of the New Testament to be in a position to make such a devastating statement. Consequently, according to Pickering, "He deliberately set out to construct the theory that would vindicate his pre-conceived animosity for the Received Text." We appear to have lived under the tyranny of that pre-conceived animosity for the past seven decades.

Wilbur Pickering is a linguistic consultant with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Brazil and he must be warmly congratulated not only for his scholarly and painstaking research into the complex world of New Testament textual criticism, but particularly for his careful ability to bring the subject into the world of the reader who is not equipped to grapple with the intricacies of the subject. This book is an excellent introduction to textual criticism and for that reason alone is to be strongly recommended. But it is much more than this reason that leads us to claim this book to be essential reading for every minister and theological student. We are living in an age of translations and they are all largely based on the conclusions of Hort and his collaborator Brooke-Westcott. Unfortunately, today 'eclectic' generally does not mean the use of all available textual material, (and we have some 5,000 Greek texts of the New Testament ranging from whole Testaments to a few scraps), but a cursory use of the majority texts and a strong bias in favour of

those preferred by Westcott and Hort. This is what is meant by the liberal use of the phrase in modern translations: "Translated according to generally accepted standards of textual criticism".

Pickering fairly sets out the view of Westcott and Hort and then subjects it to a close critical examination. Hort claimed that there is no evidence of texts being altered on dogmatic grounds, but Pickering shows that there is abundant evidence of this and even Colwell in 1952 admitted: "The majority of the variant readings in the New Testament were created for theological or dogmatic reasons." Hort's "family trees" of texts, to explain the origin of text types, is shown to be a complete fabrication. Hort's Lucianic Recension, suggesting that the Syrian (Majority) Text was a deliberate 'cut-and-paste' job of Lucian in the fourth century, is shown to be a pure figment of Hort's imagination with no shred of historical evidence to support it.

Pickering also ably deals with the traditional Hort principle that the shorter reading is best. Professor A.C.Clark of Oxford has recently concluded: "The error to which classical Greek and Latin Scribes were most prone, was not interpolation but accidental omission". There is similar evidence against the dictum that "the harder reading is to be preferred". It is equally uncertain that the "oldest is best". It is not without significance that the oldest text 'so dear to Hort' came from Egypt to which not one original autograph of the New Testament Epistles was designated. In answer to the question whether the textual witnesses should be weighed (evaluated) or counted, Pickering wisely concludes "both"!

Perhaps the most enlightening and valuable chapter is that which deals with the history of the text. (chapter 5) It is an excellent summary of the care of the early church fathers in transmitting the text of the New Testament. Against some of our

present day alarmists who give the impression that the text behind the New Testament is hopelessly and irretrievably confused, Pickering reminds us that one hundred per cent of the manuscripts agree in 80% of the text and that in only 3% do less than 90% agree. 80% to 90% of extant manuscripts belong to the Massoretic Text and the remaining 10% to 20% do not belong to a single textual form. B and Aleph disagree with each other over 3,000 times in the Gospels alone and these are the two sacred texts of Hort's theory! In 1 Timothy 3:16 300 manuscripts read 'God', eight have an alternative reading of which only five have 'who', yet translators still offer 'who' as a viable alternative reading! (It is incredible that the translators of the New International Version opt for the word 'he' in this verse, preferring one very obscure miniscule fragment of the fourth or sixth century, 061, and one copy of Codex Bezae, D, which is renowned for its later editing against the 300 Greek manuscripts mentioned above! - (Reviewer). Pickering's analysis of the inaccuracies of the 'Five Old Uncials' of Hort's theory is devastating. But Pickering is not simply negative. He has positive and optimistic suggestions for the recovery of an accurate text of the New Testament.

In a recent review of this book John Wenham claimed "this is a shocking book" and admitted that Pickering had shaken him out of many years of complacent acceptance of the theories of Westcott and Hort. The present reviewer can do no better than conclude with the words of John Wenham himself "This is not an academic matter, for it affects the wording of the hundreds of millions of Scriptures which we are distributing across the globe. It is shocking to think that we may have been giving the world a bad text."

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'THE BOOK OF DANIEL'

by A.Lacoque

Published by S.P.C.K.

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This recent volume is undoubtedly a major contribution to the growing corpus of literature on the Book of Daniel. Although the introduction is thin (Lacoque promises another book to fill the gaps), the commentary on the text is extremely thorough and the separate sections of critical notes on textual and exegetical problems useful. The work is thoroughly furnished with footnotes and provides an excellent all-round example of the contemporary studies in the Book of Daniel being produced within the framework of liberal criticism. It will doubtless become one of the standard works on Daniel and sustain that position for some time to come.

The Thesis

'Daniel' is a work of two sections. Section 'A' corresponding to chapters 1-6, represents the re-working of the generally older 'folk-lore' material of A 'Daniel cycle' within a second century B.C. context and by means of a midrash on the Book of Genesis. The problems of the 'faithful' during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes are never far below the surface and Daniel 'A' seeks to answer them. So Lacoque tells us of chapter 4 "it is evident, however, that a reader in the second century B.C. would have no difficulty in distinguishing, beneath the features of Nebuchadnezzar, Epiphanes whom his adversaries called Antiochus Epimanes, the mad man" (p74). Of chapter 5 we read "it is possible to see Antiochus behind the Belshazzar of this chapter" (p92).

The second section of Daniel - 'B' (chapters 7-12), the mainly apocalyptic section, ties in with 'A' through a common *sitz im leben*. The material begins in chapter 7, which is the centre of the whole book of Daniel to Lacoque, in which older material is

again re-worked and the four kingdoms of chapter 2 (Assyria, Media, Persia and Greece) reappear. Of 7:23-24 we read "it is certainly Antiochus who is in question" (p153). Chapter 8 is seen as a parallel account to chapter 7. About this "everyone agrees" (p156). Chapter 9, based on a "liturgical fragment of seventh century origin" (p180) continues to speak in the same context, and the 'weeks' find their fulfilment in the events of the 160's B.C. Chapters 10-12 are a midrash on Isaiah in which chapter 10 is to be interpreted in the light of chapter 7 as also is chapter 11 which is "in an enigmatic form designed to establish the fiction of a prophecy ante eventum" (p214). Chapter 12 is an appendix to answer two questions: how much time before the end?; who will be the benefieries at the parousia?

CRITIQUE

There is very little that is new in the position advanced by Lacoque. Both his conclusions and his many assumptions are those of critical 'orthodoxy'. In addition to the late date of Daniel and the insistence upon an almost complete 'fulfilment' in the 2nd Century B.C. goes along his assertion that the book is full of historical inaccuracies. We read that chapter 6 "opens with an enormous historical error" (p106) to which Lacoque adds "we already know how little this embarrasses our Author". In the same chapter we learn that "the royal pretension to divinisation is anachronistic" (p112) and are reminded on several occasions of the lateness of the language especially evidenced in use of Persian loan-words. Such accusations by Lacoque can be multiplied almost without limit. However, the reviewer found that the majority of such alleged inaccuracies are dealt with in Young and Leopold (both written 30 years before the production of the present work) and answered satisfactorily.

This leads directly to a second major criticism of

Lacoque's work. Throughout the book, as so often with the work of liberal criticism, there is a blithe disregard for any of the productions of conservative scholarship. A consultation of the Bibliography (p253-256) in which 60 authors are mentioned reveals not one conservative. Similarly in the index of authors cited (p261-265) Leopold is ignored. Young is only mentioned in a footnote in which another person quotes Young, and Calvin has a footnote which he shares with several other Protestant reformers in which their view on a particular matter is cited. No others are mentioned (e.g. R.D.Wilson) so far as the reviewer can ascertain except J.G.Baldwin (again in a footnote). Do our liberal critics really expect us to take their 'scholarship' seriously if they never take any notice of our views or the defence of a position they ignore, merely asserting the 'assured' nature of their own?

Lacoque is not alone in apparently being actuated by an unwillingness to accept that (except for inspired guesswork - which, of course, sometimes goes wrong as in the case of Epiphanes death in chapter 11 verse 30) prophecy before the event can take place. Thus bolstered by a number of subjective arguments this appears to explain the characteristic attitude of the book. It is assumed (never proved) that the dating of a section of the text is to be made according to the accuracy of the portrayal of the events. Where it is accurate it must have been written after the event. A further feature is that throughout it is assumed that if a passage applies to a particular period then it must have been that period itself which gave birth to it. At no point is it conceded that there can be a difference between the original *sitz in leben* and the time to which it applies.

A consequence of this approach is that Lacoque has sometimes to force the material into an alien context. So, although he concedes that the Author is

incorrect if he considered that the four World Empires could be equivalent to Assyria - Media - Persia - Greece, since Media never had a separate existence after the Assyrian empire, yet he requires 'Daniel' to have thought so in order that all the events might refer to Antiochus. This rather than consider his own interpretation might be in error. The difficulties in establishing a parallel between chapters 7-8 are ignored with the statement "everyone agrees" to the parallel. In fact he means all his liberal critical colleagues are thus agreed. Similarly in chapter 9 he adopts a position (demolished earlier by E. J. Young) in which the 70 weeks have to be reduced to 62 to fit (see especially p195).

CONCLUSIONS

It is unlikely that conservative students will take much notice of a book which refuses to ever admit the existence of another viewpoint, much less deal with the arguments of that position. Perhaps, its main usefulness will be the encouragement it provides when it is witnessed how paper thin most of the assured results of liberal criticism in the Book of Daniel really are.

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