

Foundations

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



Psalm 11:3

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ISSUES IN SOCIAL ETHICS

Rev Peter Milsom, BD

Early last month (30 Sep - 2 Oct), representatives from the constituent member-churches of the BEC met in NORTH-AMPTON to consider five papers dealing with fundamental issues in the sphere of Social Ethics.

The papers were distributed to conference members three months beforehand in order to ensure the maximum preparation for, and benefit from, the Study-Conference. In this article, the Rev PETER MILSOM, BD, Pastor of the Deeside Evangelical Church in N.E.Wales, has summarized PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE the message of these five Conference papers. We hope the article will stimulate further discussion of these important subjects.

IN THE first paper, Dr Oliver Barclay undertook a 'Survey of Current Positions'. He explored and assessed what evangelicals are actually thinking, saying and proposing in this whole field. He noted the difficulty evangelicals have experienced in rightly applying Old Testament law, which applied to a theocratic society, in a modern pluralistic society. Also, much of the New Testament material is concerned with personal ethics, and wider applications to society must be inferred from them. Historically evangelicals have recently been more concerned to recover a positive attitude to real theology, and are only now recovering a concern for applied theology, including social ethics. As we go further in the application of the truths of God we do so without the benefit of a long recent evangelical tradition. The result is that there is a great variety of thought and no evangelical consensus has yet emerged.

He approached the survey in terms of various theological themes or emphases that have been used as key tools for approaching social ethics. He dealt more fully with two alternatives.

A. 'The Kingdom of God': Many authors see the doctrine

of the Kingdom of God as giving a basis for social ethics. They argue that, "All creation fell under sin, but all of it has come again under the redeeming work of Christ. Christ is Lord of all, society as well as the church, and summons his disciples to Kingdom service in all life's callings. Society no less than church is embraced in Christ's kingly rule." Apart from the fact that the idea of redeeming society is a serious misuse of biblical terms, Dr Barclay highlights two major difficulties with this approach:

1. The Kingdom is a relevant and acceptable motive for Christians, and their duties and the Church's duties can be set out under this head; but most of these writers do not acknowledge that by definition non-Christians are not in the Kingdom. They try to extend the concept to the whole of society in a totally unconvincing way.

2. The use of the Kingdom idea also has a major practical difficulty. No-one can tell us with confidence what sort of social policy it requires in a mixed community. This is basically because nowhere in the New Testament is the Kingdom idea made the 'way in' to social ethics in a mixed society. It appeals exclusively to those who are citizens of the Kingdom.

Thus Dr Barclay concluded, "The Kingdom theme has biblically much to say about personal ethics and the Church but, I submit, virtually nothing to say about social ethics in a mixed society. So by definition it should be ruled irrelevant to our particular interest, but it is constantly dragged in in a loose way, and applied to the whole of society when this vital step in the argument is so far as I can tell invalid. The most the Kingdom approach can do is to call God's people to set an example of what society should be (which includes serving the rest of society)."

B. 'Creation Ethics': This approach starts from the fact that the first commands, given to men before the Fall, have not been rescinded. The Fall has led to the addition of certain other creation/providential ordinances (eg. the state) and these between them provide a structure of ethics (including social ethics) which is not superseded by grace. Dr Barclay argued, "The special relevance of the Creation Ethics approach for our purposes is in three things. Firstly, a creation based law is for all men, not only for

believers, so pagan nations are reproved for some moral faults. Secondly, a creation based ethics with its structures and laws gives us a practical policy. Thirdly, we can argue for it from experience because it works."

After dealing more briefly with approaches from Two Kingdoms, Common Grace, Incarnation, Marxist Analysis, Dooyeweerdian Philosophy, Natural Law, the Church as Prophet, and the Jubilee, Dr Barclay noted, "A vast amount of evangelical social action has depended on no thought out theological system. It has been the immediate response of Christians to the need they see around them. This is biblical. It is an expression of trying to 'do good to all men and especially to those who are of the household of faith' (Gal.6.10). Many local churches are also deeply involved - at least in informal ways - in such service. They accept the call to love and serve their neighbour and they do so with no fanfare of trumpets. It would be a great pity if this does not continue and grow in evangelical circles, but it does not need sophisticated justification."

In the second paper Pastor John Appleby gave a '**Critical Study of Contextualization Theology**', in which he asked the question, "Is there one theology for the World Church or differing theologies for each cultural situation?"

A simple definition of contextualization is that it "has to do with the manner of presenting the gospel message within any given culture". In their attempts to relate the Christian message to particular cultures some have been willing to change almost everything and destroy the distinctive and unique character of the gospel, whilst others have resisted even the slightest allowance for cultural peculiarities in either Scripture or the contemporary situation. In evaluating this issue Mr Appleby outlined the following principles:

1. The presupposition with which we begin is that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God, the only rule of faith and practice for all time.

2. Knowing God and actually doing the will of God on earth are inextricably tangled. Spirituality without radical discipleship is cheap grace not the costly biblical

sort.

3. The inadequacy of syncretism as an expression of contextualizing. The most that other faiths can do for the Christian is to rebuke him by whatever their various limited virtues may be if he fails to be even more virtuous than they.

4. The argument that the gospel can be contextualized in any religious culture by the expedient of regarding the New Testament as the fulfilment of that religion, rather than of the Old Testament is in total contradiction with the claim of the New Testament itself regarding its relationship with the Old Testament.

5. The theory of a 'hidden' Christ working in hinduism, and other religions, making them a suitable vestibule for Christianity involves a serious confusion between the concept of God as Creator, and God as the Redeemer and Saviour.

6. There is no evidence that any form of contextualization has succeeded in rooting the gospel in other cultures. There is much more evidence that the vital heart of the gospel has been lost in the process, and has died in consequence.

7. But if evangelicalism professes to preserve true biblical doctrine, it seems nevertheless to fall short in the contextualization of that doctrine:

(a) By not submitting to the teaching of Scripture as the regulative principle by which the doing of any religious action should be governed.

(b) By not understanding that the manner in which you proclaim a message can do serious harm to the content of that message.

(c) By not grasping the fact that the gospel must be contextualized in working practices of daily life as well as in preaching methods if it is to be a biblical contextualization.

8. All the understandings of contextualization (liberal and evangelical) surveyed have more or less explicitly, an undertone of universalism.

9. All the understandings of contextualization surveyed seem very unlike what we see in the early New Testament churches. Yet there were social inequalities then, oppressors and oppressed, wealthy and poor, and a gospel

fighting for its life in different cultures!

Mr Appleby suggested that the word 'contextualization' should be replaced by 'disciplined transposition'. In the mission of the Church - the ongoing transposition of the life and truth of God into the souls of men through evangelism - believers are under two obligations: to be intelligible and faithful. (Matt.28.20) This involves: a) our accurate understanding of what is to be taught, and b) our ensuring that our hearers also reach that understanding and no other.

In the third paper Rev Hywel Jones dealt with '**Hermeneutical Principles**'. He addressed himself to two questions, "How do we distinguish between the Bible's permanent principles and its instructions for a passing situation?" and "Is inductionism valid when applied to ethics?"

He dealt with the second question first and more briefly. Inductionism is one way of thinking about ethical questions which is being favoured today, even by Christians. Its essence is to select principles and considerations borrowed from general ethics to lead into (in duco) statements in the Bible which are then read in their light. The validity of this approach is determined by one's view of the status of Scripture, as that bears on these matters and what it says. The infallibility/inerrancy distinction with its consequences for authority raises its head even here. Taking for granted that Scripture has much to say on these matters, our approach must be in principle deductive, for what Scripture says on this, as on every matter which it speaks, God says.

The main part of the paper then considered hermeneutics. Whilst all would accept that there are some features of the Bible's contents which are non-permanent and others which are abidingly authoritative and relevant, the big question is, however, on what basis is such a distinction made, and what principles govern the categorizing of the various features of the Bible? Mr Jones dealt with the relationship between the two Testaments of Holy Scripture, and what Berkouwer calls the 'time-relatedness' of

Scripture, or a particular manifestation of that characteristic, namely the presence of cultural elements in Scripture.

By way of summary he submitted the following propositions:

1. The Old and New Testaments are equally given by God and partake of the same realities of revelation and inspiration.

2. In the main the Old Testament by the purpose of the God who gave it only predicts and prefigures the salvation which is given subsequent to it.

3. In the main the New Testament contains the revelation of that salvation in the coming of the Lord and the outpouring of His Spirit. It brings together the promises, types and shadows of the Old by joining them in Christ, and so brings some to their intended fulfilment in Him and so to an end; others it lifts through His revelation to a higher level of value and significance. The New Testament tells us what these things are and is the final arbiter of the Old Testament revelation because it is the peak of God's revelation this side of the veil.

4. In determining the New Testament use of the Old we are seeking the whole Word of God.

In the fourth paper Dr David Lyon dealt with '**Christian Social Action: A partnership with verbal testimony**'. He addressed himself to the question, "How are good words and good works, both belonging to the Church's biblical mandate, to be rightly related?"

Having traced the background to the current debate Dr Lyons took Jesus' sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4) as his starting point and guiding thread. The gospel was preached to the poor and certain individuals subsequently found release and healing from Jesus' ministry. Moreover the message which was proclaimed required an acceptance accompanied by the conquest of pride. Thus Jesus had regard both to the spiritual and physical condition of his hearers.

Dr Lyons made it clear that "there is a vital Scriptural connection between evangelism and social action. The two are distinct, but inseparable. They do not have to be

equated in any way in order that the importance of each be demonstrated. To do evangelism is not to do social action, but it is to imply the need for it. This relates to the message and to its hoped-for results. To do social action is not to do evangelism, because evangelism is essentially the verbal proclamation of the good news. People are not 'saved' or 'redeemed' or 'brought into the kingdom' by social action, but by evangelism. However, those who are saved, redeemed, and thus brought into the kingdom of grace must show evidence of the fact, which will include social action."

He then proceeded to deal specifically with the relationship between social action and evangelism. Social action has no catch-all biblical rationale, such as 'kingdom', 'creation', or 'liberation', but neither is it unimportant where one begins. The whole biblical drama relates to social action and, as in any other sphere of biblical interpretation, Scripture must be compared with Scripture, and specific circumstances must also be borne in mind. He then attempted to elaborate on how social action may be related to the whole biblical drama, and to demonstrate why concentration on any one aspect is likely to lead to imbalance.

The Creation yields the ultimate basis for social action. God created persons social creatures, political creatures, to work, to marry, to have families, to worship, to teach and learn. God gave us ways for doing and being these things, laws, commands, directives, instructions, norms. But never is it suggested that people thereby find true freedom, which is why evangelism must be related to social action even in relation to creation norms.

The Fall shows the limitations upon social action in a God-rejecting world. Not only is the human energy of a Christian minority very restricted, but sin continues to make compromise necessary. Christians should share God's displeasure with the ravages of man's sin on human life, and the appropriate response is 'biblical social action'.

Redemption provides the agents and patterns for Christian social action. For the time being saved sinners - the church - are to work as exiles to bring God's kingdom wel-

fare to the cities in which they are found. Evangelicals have in recent years been rather more inclined to defend the gospel than to practise it. The goal of Christian mission and evangelism in particular is not merely to see faith and hope awoken, but to see more and more people doing God's will.

The Hope of the Final Age - the kingdom of Christ's glory - gives the dynamic and active rationale, linking the others together. Is not one of the greatest motivations to social action that Jesus is coming back as the cosmic Christ to restore all things? (2 Peter 3.11-13)

In the fifth, and final, paper Rev Alan Gibson dealt with '**Christian Social Action: Its nurture in the local church**'. He asked the question, "What should be the role of the local church in nurturing social action as well as worship and evangelism?"

He began by submitting the thesis that it is the role of the local church to co-ordinate the functions of worship, edification, evangelism and social action, and to nurture individual Christian involvement in these realms. He showed that it was true of the church at Jerusalem that "the growing church's deep awareness of the presence of God among them was matched by its keen awareness of the needs of God's world around them."

He developed this by considering the function of a local church. As a visible expression, in one place at one point in time, of the invisible reality of Christ's body, the local church represents a social reality of its own. It is made up of people who are in the flesh and in the world. It is located within a particular social context by God's providence in order to work and witness for him.

Two areas of discussion arise in the matter of the local church and social action. Firstly, has the local church a function which can be called social, and secondly, is this to be expressed in terms of political action? Mr Gibson concluded from the ministry of Christ that the sheer need of those around us justifies an affirmative answer to the first question. The second area, however, is far more problematic, and needs to be approached with care

lest the church appears to confuse its role in and message to society.

He then proceeded to deal with the functions of the individual Christian. His thesis was, "not that the local church should have no social influence, but that the burden of Christian leadership in secular affairs falls overwhelmingly on individual Christians. There are today understandably urgent calls for Christian influence to secure the proper ordering of society, the just and proper exercise of power and protection of the weak from the abuses of the strong. These, however, are best met not by churches acting as churches, but by the involvement of Christian men and women acting as private citizens according to their gifts and opportunities. It is, therefore, the role of the local church to nurture them for this task as an essential aspect of their personal witness. The local church exists primarily for the worship and glory of God. It is in seeking to help individuals to worship God by a consistent and intelligent Christian presence in society that the local church serves its members best, but the first aim is vertical and it is the consequences which are horizontal."

Mr Gibson suggested that "one of our failures has been that churches have not clearly identified the role they should be fulfilling in relation to society around, and in relation to the individual members who represent Christ and his Church within that society. The role is identified as 'nurturing'. Its root means nourishing with food, but it means much more than that. It also means provoking and promoting, training and correcting, encouraging and directing. Only when local churches see this goal clearly will they begin to work consciously towards it". The paper closed with a challenge to Church officers, preachers, and members to work out these principles in their local churches.

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TOWARD A CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SABBATH

Peter Misselbrook, MA,BD

In our last issue, we included an article by this author on 'The Importance of Biblical Theology' in which he argued that the Bible tells the ONE story of redemption. A biblical theology then has to do justice to the nature of Scripture as the revelation of the redemptive work of God and must deal adequately both with the unity of the Bible story and the diversity of its parts.

As an example of his approach to biblical theology, Mr Misselbrook, who is Warden of the Aged Pilgrims' Home in Camberwell, London, here turns his attention to the Sabbath, arguing that it is not a static, unchanging institution but a dynamic and redemptive theme. Not all will agree with his argument but it behoves us to grapple biblically with this important subject.

Correspondence will be welcomed on this subject.

THE QUESTION OF the Christian's relationship to the sabbath commandments of the Old Testament is no easy one. Theoretically at least, it would seem that any answer to the question must lie somewhere between two extremes. On the one hand, one could argue that the sabbath legislation of the Old Testament, as part of the law of God, is unchanging. The Christian should therefore obey the Old Testament sabbath laws in every minutest detail. On the other hand, one could argue that Christ does away with all of these Old Testament laws and commandments. The sabbath legislation of the Old Testament therefore makes no demands upon the life of the Christian.

I would hazard a guess that most of us would advocate an interpretation of the sabbath which lies somewhere between these two extremes. Few Christians would argue that the detailed sabbath legislation of the Old Testament is minutely binding upon the Christian. Unlike the Seventh

Day Adventists we would not wish to insist upon seventh day rest and worship. Moreover, few of us would advocate the detailed observance of the laws regarding the land sabbath and the year of jubilee. On the other hand, I suspect that most of us would be just as unhappy with the proposition that the sabbath was simply part of the Old Testament economy, having no application to the life of the New Testament Christian. Was not the sabbath given to man at creation? Is not sabbath observance one of the Ten Commandments?

But immediately we opt for a position somewhere between the two extremes outlined above we are faced with a problem. How can we consistently maintain that certain parts of the sabbath legislation are abrogated, other parts are kept unchanged, and still other parts (such as the day) suffer a transformation? How are we to define biblically and unambiguously the extent to which the Old Testament sabbath legislation is binding upon the Christian? This is the problem which has beset Christian views of the sabbath and which has left them open to the charge of inconsistency and arbitrariness.

It is the conviction of this writer that the problem is entirely one of our own making. We have viewed the sabbath as if it were something entirely static. We have assumed that the sabbath must necessarily be always the same, the creation sabbath identical in every respect with the Israelite weekly sabbath. We have then been faced with the impossible question of whether or not the Christian is to obey this sabbath.

In what follows we shall argue that the sabbath is not a static and unchanging institution but a dynamic and redemptive theme. Creation sabbath is not identical with the Israelite weekly sabbath, and neither is identical with the Christian 'Lord's Day'. Nevertheless, the three are bound together within the dynamic redemptive work of God.

The Creation Sabbath

The creation sabbath recorded for us in Genesis 2.2-3 comes at the climax of the creation narrative of Genesis one. In the first six days of creation we have the record of the progressive creation of the universe, culminating

in the creation of man in the image of God. On the sixth day man is instituted as lord over creation. It was for man that creation was made, and he was made for creation that under his hand all things might glorify the Creator.

With the creation of man on the sixth day God's creative work is complete. "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work." (Gen.2.2) After six days of creative work there follows the seventh in which God enjoys his completed work and creation enjoys its perfection before God. This is God's day of contemplative rest, his sabbath.

But God does not rest for a limited period before resuming his creative activity. Having finished his creation he rests for ever. The seventh day is therefore not simply another day of limited duration within the sequence but rather it encompasses (what promises to be) the everlasting future of the perfect creation. John Murray expresses the point thus:

The seventh day referred to here is unquestionably the seventh day in sequence with the six days of creative activity, the seventh day in the sphere of God's action, not the seventh day in our weekly cycle. In the realm of God's activity in creating the heavens and the earth there were six days of creative action and one day of rest. There is the strongest presumption in favour of the interpretation that the seventh day is not one that terminated at a certain point in history, but that the whole period of time subsequent to the end of the sixth day is the sabbath rest alluded to in Genesis 2.2.

(Principles of Conduct, p.30)

This much may then be granted; in six days God created the heavens and the earth, the seventh day is his everlasting sabbath rest.

In Genesis 2.3 we read, "And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done." God did not bless and hallow the seventh day for himself; this action is an act of God towards creation - towards man and the rest of the created earth. It is for man's sake that this day is

blessed and made holy. This much may readily be granted, but the crucial question remains, which day is it that God blesses? Does God bless and hallow the recurring seventh day of man's week, or does he bless the eternal seventh day of his own creative work?

John Murray argues back from the sabbath legislation given to Moses that the day which God hallowed was the seventh day of man's weekly cycle: "God blessed and sanctified the seventh day of our week precisely because he sanctified the seventh day in the realm of his own creative activity." (ibid.p.31) We do not think that this is the best interpretation, and that for three reasons.

Firstly, this would require the term 'seventh day' to bear two different meanings in Genesis 2.2-3 where no transition of meaning is demanded by the text. Having entered into his rest on the seventh day (God's seventh day), God hallows the seventh day. He hallows the seventh day because in it (that is, in God's everlasting seventh day) he rests from his creative work. It would be unnatural, without the most compelling of reasons, to interpret these seventh days to be days of totally different kinds. The phrase "because in it" demands that the seventh day which God hallows should be one and the same as the seventh day in which he rests.

Secondly, if Genesis 2.2-3 is interpreted as the institution of man's weekly sabbath cycle then what is the nature of the distinction between the sabbath and the rest of man's week? In Genesis 2 man has not yet fallen into sin and he is thus not yet subject to the curse of arduous and sweated labour. His days are spent in the careless enjoyment of the creation in fellowship with the Creator. What is different about the sabbath? Those who adopt this view can only answer that man's observance of the sabbath consists in his turning aside from all things earthly, things which have to do with everyday created life, in order to devote himself undividedly to the worship of God. But if this is so then the weekly sabbath is essential to man so long as he remains part of the creation: it is essential to him even in his resurrected body in the renewed creation! This view of the sabbath can only be

retained by abandoning the biblical view of salvation in favour of the Greek which sees redemption in terms of a flight from the earthly and the material to the divine.

Thirdly, the rest which God gives to his people is elsewhere spoken of as God's rest (see Ps.95.11; Heb.4.3ff). The connection of these passages with the creation sabbath may not be immediately obvious, but this we hope to demonstrate more fully below. Our point here is simply that the analogy of Scripture welcomes the view that in Genesis 2:2-3 man is called to enter into God's seventh day everlasting rest.

So then, after the six days of creative work God enters upon a seventh and everlasting day of rest. This rest is a contemplative enjoyment of a perfect creation which reflects God's own glory. God hallows and blesses his everlasting seventh day rest, and by this act calls upon man, and with man creation, to enter into the rest of God. Man, as created on the sixth day, is immediately called to share in the eternal rest of God. In his active rule over creation he day by day enjoys God's sabbath rest. It is not in man's separation from worldly pursuits that he enjoys rest and fellowship with God. Rather, in the everyday pursuit of his creatorial office, in the midst of creation, with creation, and at the head of creation man enters into the rest of God.

This then is the primary meaning of the sabbath: it is man's entrance into the rest of God as he enjoys the perfected creation.

This picture of man's entrance into God's rest, his enjoyment before God of the perfect creation, is radically altered by man's sin and God's curse. No longer does man possess rest in the earth. Far from entering into contemplative enjoyment of creation man finds creation to be at war against him as a cursed earth mediates God's wrath. It is into this context that God gives to Israel a new sabbath institution.

The Israelite Sabbath

Exodus 20.8-11 is the first detailed record of the weekly sabbath legislation which God gives to his redeemed people. Deuteronomy 5.12-15 repeats the commandment within

the context of a review of the law.

Perhaps the first thing that we notice about these two passages is that they correspond practically word for word up until the point where they give the reason for the command to keep the sabbath. Exodus makes the creation sabbath of God the basis for weekly sabbath observance among his people. Deuteronomy, on the other hand, roots sabbath observance in the redemption from Egypt. Here we observe something of the complex relationship between the creation sabbath and the Israelite sabbath - a relationship involving both continuity and discontinuity. This new sabbath law once more summons man to enter into the rest of God, the rest which he was to enjoy at creation. But the summons is no longer addressed to man as man, but to man as redeemed man.

To understand the role of the sabbath in Israel we have first to tackle the question, "What is redemption?" It is our contention that redemption is basically re-creation. It is that process by which God restores man to the state which he enjoyed at the first but which was lost through man's sin. It is therefore a process which is to end in sabbath, when redeemed man enters into God's rest in the enjoyment of the newly perfected creation.

In the Old Testament the primary act of redemption is God's deliverance of his people from the Egyptian bondage and his gift to them of the land of Canaan. In this redemptive movement Canaan functions typically as the renewed creation or Eden restored (see Deut.26.5-9). The goal of this redemptive movement is that God's people should enter into his rest as they possess the land at peace from every oppressor (Ps.95.11).

But the movement from Egypt to Canaan was not the final and perfect redemption, neither was Canaan the final inheritance of the people of God. The land proved to be much as any other, it yielded its plenty only with reluctance, and man still ate his bread in the sweat of his brow.

It is into this situation - the situation of a people redeemed and yet still waiting the perfection and consummation of redemption - that God gives the sabbath laws to Israel. For six days man is occupied in arduous labour,

and thus he is caused to remember that he still lives in a fallen world, a world under curse. But on the seventh day redeemed man puts away his labour and eats without sweat on his brow.

The sabbath day is therefore a ceremonial anticipation of the day of redemption's consummation. The cycle of man's week reflect in miniature the redemptive work of God. While God yet works for man's redemption, man must yet live under curse and strive for life within a fallen world. But the six days are followed by the seventh and so redeemed man is reminded that the day of redemption is coming. In celebrating the sabbath he knows his interest in that day.

The seventh year land sabbath and the year of jubilee are extensions of the same principle. For one whole year in seven Israel was to eat the fruit of the land without sweat or labour and thus ceremonially anticipate the complete removal of curse and the perfection of redemption in the renewal of creation. The theme of paradise restored is prominent in the account of these institutions in Leviticus 25. "The jubilee marked a two-year holiday in which covenant man celebrated the foretaste of the great sabbath of the new creation" (Rushdoony, The Institutes of Biblical Law, p.141).

The complex of sabbath laws focusses the attention of the people of God upon a redemption promised. In Canaan this redemption is possessed in earnest, but the sabbath ceremonies prevent faith from degenerating into a complacent satisfaction with the present state of the redeemed; they focus faith upon the future perfection of God's redemptive work. Unlike the ungodly who glory in the work of their own hands, God's people, in celebrating sabbath confess that their work lies under curse and that their hope lies only in God's work of recreation. In their celebration of redemption which is the sabbath, God's people know already something of the joy of the age to come.

The Sabbath and the Work of Christ

With the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the age to come has broken into our own. Jesus' miracles are signs of the kingdom (Matt.12.28), in which the final doing away of

curse and regeneration of creation have appeared before time.

The theme of sabbath fulfilment found in the ministry of Jesus is focussed especially in his death and resurrection. Through the incarnation the Son of God enters into a fallen world and takes upon himself a fallen humanity. In Jesus' death a world under curse is brought to judgment. In his resurrection Christ is the beginning of the new creation. Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of the resurrection of the Christian for Christ is the firstfruits of the new humanity (1 Cor.15.20). But the regeneration of the Christian is the earnest of a greater and final regeneration (Matt.19.28), it is the firstfruits of creation (Jas.1.18). Therefore, in Christ's death and resurrection this world is brought to judgment and the new creation, though not yet manifest, is brought into being.

These themes are brought together by Paul at the close of his Epistle to the Galatians. Writing against those who glory in circumcision Paul says, "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation." (Gal.6.14-15). The Christian is one who is in Christ, he has died with him and has been raised with him; he is already a creature of the age to come (2 Cor.5.17).

But what has all this to do with the vexed question of the relationship between Old Testament sabbath and Christian Lord's Day?

Christians have worshipped on the first day of the week from the earliest days of the Christian church. The risen Christ met with his disciples on that day (Matt.28.9; Luke 24.15-31,36; John 20.19,29). The first day of the week thus became the primary day of Christian worship (Acts 20.7; 1 Cor.16.2), on which Christians commemorated and celebrated the resurrection of their Lord. The vital question is therefore not whether we can justify the change in the day of worship from the seventh to the first day of the week, but whether the Christian Lord's Day (Rev.1.10) has any connection with the Old Testament sabbath.

We believe that there is a very strong link between Old Testament sabbath and Christian Lord's Day, but the link is not one of identity but of continuity within the progress of redemption. On the sabbath Israel remembered the past redemptive work of God and anticipated the future perfection of God's redemption when creation would be freed from curse. The focus was on a future perfect work, and this was reflected in the structure of the week in which the sabbath comes at the end. The Christian also looks back to a past redemptive work of God as he commemorates and celebrates the death and resurrection of Christ. But this past work was not provisional and typical but was a perfect work in which the new creation has already come into being. This also is reflected in the structure of the Christian week, in which the Lord's Day comes at the beginning - the week is lived in the light of the already existent new creation. But, like the Old Testament saint, the Christian also looks for the consummation of redemption. In this way the Lord's Day, like the Old Testament sabbath, is a day of anticipation. It is a day in which (as far as is practically possible) we live the life of the age to come. We should be found in the company of God's people, the community of the age to come. We lay aside our labour so that on this day, like the Old Testament saint on his sabbath, we eat without sweat and enjoy creation without curse, all in communion with our God.

The Everlasting Sabbath

To complete our picture of the biblical doctrine of the sabbath we must say something about the eternal (or more accurately everlasting) sabbath which is the future hope of the people of God. Most of what need be said has been said in passing above, but now we draw these threads together.

In the consummation of redemption God will not only put away the sin of man but will also redeem creation from curse (Rom. 8.18-23). After the destruction of this sin-torn world in fire there will be a new creation, new heavens and a new earth (2 Peter 3.3-13). The resurrection body therefore finds its home in the new creation (note the connection in Romans 8), and it is here that God's dwelling

is with men (Rev.21.1-3). Then redeemed man will enter into the eternal sabbath rest of God (Heb.4), as he dwells before him in the perfected creation.

This then is what we understand to be the structure of the biblical teaching on the sabbath. At creation, God called upon man to enter into his everlasting sabbath rest. This, man would have done as he enjoyed the perfect creation before God. But with man's sin, creation is placed under curse and man knows no rest with God. Redemption shall be perfected when redeemed man enters at last into God's sabbath rest in the new creation. The sabbath laws of the Old Testament were ceremonial anticipations of that final sabbath rest. The Lord's Day for Christians focusses the sabbath rest in the redemptive work of Christ, and declares that the new creation has already sprung into life in him. But, standing beside the Old Testament saint, we also anticipate the consummation of redemption in our observance of sabbath; this we do in our weekly celebration of redemption on the day which has been set apart by Christ's resurrection.

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JEHOVAH-JESUS: TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING OF OUR INFIRMITIES

Rev Derek Thomas, BSc,MDiv

Misunderstandings of Calvinism are legion; the interplay of divine sovereignty with our human condition

is complex and liable to defective interpretations. The revelation of God in his involvement with the reality of human suffering should, however, be given careful treatment; it is the source of inexpressible comfort in the midst of sorrow, gloom, and despair. Yet, the doctrine

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of impassibility, that God (in His sovereignty) is incapable of, and exempt from, suffering, has received very little attention, even from the most capable of theologians. Even when the subject has been alluded to, reticence that the immutability of the Divine Being should be questioned has overshadowed the discussion, yielding conclusions that God is insusceptible to injury, emotionally unmoved by the cosmic tragedy of sin and its effects; God cannot change; He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

On the other hand, inadequate and anthropomorphic discussions of God in our own day, from philosophical notions of God in the process of becoming, to Arminian views of God in dethronement, have little by way of commendation, even if they do provide a more passible view of God.

The impassibility of God is raised, not so much in connection with the doctrine of God, considered in abstraction, but with the Christological axioms of Chalcedon, and its implications for the doctrine of God. Does the formulation of 'true God' united with 'true man' imply that the former cannot suffer, whilst the latter does in an excruciating manner? This is of no mean importance; the kerygmatic proclamation of the early Church finds its genesis in the axiom: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor.5.19).¹

Our own preaching is at risk, being removed from the purity of the earliest kerygma, if we consider either Chalcedon, or its implications, as unworthy of close scrutiny and adherence. We need to know how close the Lord is to our predicament; does He understand our pain? Does He feel our grief? Is He capable of knowing the emotional depths of our despair? It has to do with the relevancy of our theology and preaching in an age of violence. We need to know how far we can apply the doctrine of God to our human sensibilities: grief needs that support and a doctrine of transcendence, with no emotion, pain, or irritation seems to offer no relief, but casts us further into the loneliness and hopelessness of despair.

Related to this general theme of impassibility is the doctrine of theopaschitism, or, the suffering of God in the atonement. It is crudely stated in Sabellianism,

Patripassionism and Monarchianism. Theopaschitism, however, has a respectable history, and, if we are not incorrect in our analysis, has certain elements of biblical truth in it.² But, there exist boundaries that we dare not transgress; these are limits set by Christian symbols which forbid infringement.

The background to the Chalcedon Confession is a matter of enormous importance, foundational to the via negative approach of this Christological symbol. In contrast to Arianism, the Son is declared to be homoousios with the Father. Jesus is not a semi-God; a created religious man. He is the pre-existent Lord; there was not a time when He was not, for He could say: "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. 8.58). Furthermore, He was not of mere similar substance (homoiousios), but the same substance (homoousios).

Over against Docetism (and Anabaptism) it affirms the reality of our Lord's human nature - "homoousios with us as to his manhood". He was not an apparition, some ghostly manifestation. In Docetism, Christ becomes timeless and symbolical; His humanity is stripped of its reality and crassness - it becomes a symbolical association. "It robs the message of its whole point, namely, that God is present here in an individual man, and that he has ranged himself alongside us under the pressures of history."³ Chalcedon further counters Apollinarian teaching by declaring that the Logos took the fullness of humanity. For in this teaching the Logos merely took the place of (that is, did not assume) the human spirit. The union is that of the Logos permeating the human principle and at bottom there is but one nature; Christ was more divine than human; His humanity was incomplete. Nestorianism, also, is countered by a reference to the Theotokos: "begotten of the Father before ages as to his Godhead, and in the last days, the same, for us and our salvation, of Mary the Virgin Theotokos as to his manhood" Nestorianism, accused of dividing Christ into two persons, refused to call the Virgin "Theotokos", "Mother of God", whilst further denials of this position (and Eutychianism) are embodied in the statements: "without division and separation", together with the denial of two persona, by adding: "without confusion, without change" respectively.

Finally, the preservation of each nature in its entirety combat any Monophysitic, or, Monothylitic strains (with respect to substance and will). Christ is to be fully human and fully divine. His humanity must not be stripped of anything fundamental to its definitive quality. Neither must his divinity be veiled by any diminutive qualification so as to render obsolete his full possession of all the attributes of deity. They must be held together, in our thinking, preaching, and praying, in hypostatic union, without transgressing the boundaries that the Church has established at such great cost.

Here, too, we have to ask the important question, which Chalcedon forces upon us, as to the communication between the two natures. Two fundamental principles have to be remembered in our theological thinking: firstly, that an act in either nature is an act in, and of, the one person. Secondly, that the intercommunication of attributes, from the one nature to the other, is a perilous notion (witness the Lutheran controversy concerning the ubiquity of the Lord's physical body in the Supper). It is primarily with this second axiom that we are concerned in this paper.

Chalcedon has given us invaluable theological service. Theological indifference in the cause of piety is simply a misunderstanding of true worship which is in spirit and in truth. Indifference to the symbol because of a notion of irrelevance only displays a shameful lack of acquaintance with the unavoidable, logical consequences of the statements: "I and my Father are one" (Jn.10.30), together with the apostolic excitement over "that which ... our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life" (1 Jn.1.1) Disparagement due to cultural distance, the dissimilarity between Greek thought and ours (both as to modes of expression and to thinking modalities themselves) is often a veiled attack on the guidelines themselves. For they have warned: No Christology may deny the unity of the person; No Christology may deny the reality and perfection of the human and divine natures; and, No Christology may compound, or confound, the two natures. These form co-ordinate truths of equal importance. We cross them at our peril, denying fundamental truths of Scripture, and dishonouring the Lord who died for our sins.

Concerning the uni-personality of Christ, it became the custom of theological parlance to deny the personality (the distinct personal subsistence, or, seat of self-consciousness) of the human nature of Christ. It was, and is, anhypostatic, or impersonal. Current psychological conceptions reject the possibility of human existence without personality. Cyril of Alexandria, in contrast to Nestorian objections to Theotokos, insisted that there was no man Jesus existing independently of the Divine Logos; there was no human hypostasis or persona; the person was the Divine Son.⁴ In more recent theological discussion, anhypostasia has received critical attention, the main objections being along the line of a soteriological consideration: What Christ did not take, He could not redeem. Donald Baillie quotes H.R. MacKintosh (who wrote at the turn of this century) when he says: "If we are not to trust our intuitive perception that the Christ we read of in the Gospels is an individual man, it is hard to say what perception could be trusted."⁵ What they mean is clear: humanness involves personality; Christ is human and therefore has a personality which is human.

The objection to this lies at one of the Chalcedonian boundaries: the uni-personality of Christ. If Christ is a man (having a personal self-consciousness, a human personality), then either he has two persons (human and divine), or else he is merely tabernacling in a fully human subsistence - an Apollinarian heresy condemned by the church. The New Testament is careful, on the other hand, to speak about Jesus - in its incarnational and theological pronouncements - as a man. It is true that he was made flesh (Jn.1.14); that he was found in fashion as a man (Phil.2.7); and, that he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom.8.1-4), but these are guarded theological expressions. They evidence some measure of trepidation at the level of the fully human self-consciousness of Jesus, though affirming with tenacity and conviction the "vere homo" according to his human nature.

It is to Leontius of Byzantium and John of Damascus that we owe another solution to this entire problem. It is that of enhypostasia, or, impersonality. That is, Christ is personal only in the Logos, not apart from the Logos. The

incarnation did not adopt a human person; rather, it is always the person of the human nature of the Son of God: the person of the God-man. Paradox abounds, but of necessity, for we deal with the ultimate of paradoxes: God Incarnate!; the Creator made flesh! The Ego is that of the Son of God - not the human nature alone; not the divine nature alone, but the human and the divine existing "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation." It is this person who is born. It is this person who lives. It is this person who dies. The humanness of Jesus is always the humanity of God! It is into the human face of God that Thomas confessed: "My Lord, and my God" (Jn.20.28). Hence the church's confession and obligation is always surrounded by the saying: "Feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20.28 Authorised Version).

It has been necessary to develop this concept of the enhypostatic union of the two natures, in order to underline the uni-personality of our Lord. In considering the suffering of Christ, having credal status: "suffered under Pontius Pilate" (Latin: Passus - though a later tradition), some difficult concepts arise. Paul speaks of those who have "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor.2.8)⁶, that which in Old Testament fundamental structures was Jehovah, to whom all praise and worship was given: "the Lord our God is one Lord". It is Jehovah Jesus, God incarnate, the kyrios tes doxes, who was crucified. The church was conscious of her theological tradition, for we have evidence of the term kyrios being substituted for YHWH in the Septuagint, and this gave precedent for what is, according to Oscar Cullmann and others, the earliest Christian confession: "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor.12.3). Thus there are texts from the Old Testament which referred to Yahweh, now applied unequivocally to Christ. Paul refers salvation to the Lord, having allusion to Joel 2.32, and now to Jesus (Rom 10.13). Creation is ascribed to Jesus, by quoting Psalm 102.25-27 the writer to the Hebrews correlates the Lord of the Psalmist with Christ himself (Heb.1.10; cf Jude 14f; Rev.17.14;19.16; Phil.2.9-11).⁷ Jesus knew that he must suffer (pathein) and be rejected (Mk.8.31), and be condemned to death (Mk.10.33); be killed (Mk.8.31); be

mocked, scourged, and spat upon (Mk.10.34). And in combined action of abandonment to the cross, the Scriptures capture it all in the phrase: "they crucified him" (Lk.23.33). The troubled heart (Jn.12.27), of that dark moment of redemptive history, was all in anticipation of that time when the earth shook, and the rocks were split, and bodies of the saints were raised (Matt.27.52f). The mystery of that dereliction is not least expressed in the confession of the bewildered centurion: "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt.27.54).

In the apostolic preaching, Peter speaks of this "Jesus whom ye have crucified" (Acts 4.10). However, it is in Pauline theology that the paradox is acute. Jesus is described as the one who, being in the form of God, died the death of the cross (Phil.2.5-11). It is the pre-existent, now incarnate, Lord who dies. He did not count his equality with God a thing to be grasped at, or held on to greedily (taking the harpagmos as a res rapta), but humbled himself, and in so doing, veiling his glory, he was in the form of a servant.⁸

Perhaps it is Johannine Christology which, after all, expresses this thought with peculiar force. The modern versions have seen the problem and excised the difficulty by way of a "smoother" translation. The King James reading of 1 Jn.3.16 abounds with the problem we are considering: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."

The reluctance of the Scriptures to speak of the involvement of God, personally, in the atonement is reflected to some degree in the church's later handling of Christology, mainly for fear of its implications, and a lack of confidence in handling the notion of pathos in God.⁹ Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Melito and others speak mildly concerning the "suffering of God", "the blood of God", and such terms.¹⁰ It is mild and careful in comparison to Modalistic Monarchianism.¹¹ According to Hippolytus, Noetus taught that if Christ is God, he is surely the Father, or else not God; therefore if Christ suffered, then God suffered.

The Father and the son so-called are one and the

same. ... One was He who appeared and underwent birth from a Virgin and dwelt as a man among men He also suffered, being nailed to the tree, and gave up His spirit to Himself, and died and did not die. ¹²

Tertullian, a vigorous enemy of Patripassionism, sees a solution in that God's feelings are qualitatively different from our own. God is apatheia. It is in Alexandria that impassibility becomes fully mature. Clement insists that God is free from anything emotional, whilst Origen speaks of God as "wholly impassible", emotional language in the Bible being totally ascribed to allegorization. ¹³

The anathema appended to the Nicene Creed warns against "those who say that the Son of God is subject to alteration (treptos) or change (alloiotos)" in connection with the homousios to patri dogma. Gregory of Naziansus poses the solution: "passible in His flesh; impassible in His Godhead." ¹⁴ Calvin insists, in connection with Acts 20:28: "Surely God does not have blood, does not suffer, cannot be touched with hands." ¹⁵ It is clear that history does not help a great deal in this case. We are driven back to the boundaries of Chalcedon. They prove their inestimable wealth in this.

Mention ought also to be made concerning Stephen Charnock's Discourses on the Existence and Attributes of God.¹⁶ He uses the via negativa hermeneutic in discussing the attributes of God. God's perfection, therefore, is due to His lack of limitations, together with His being in a state of perfection as to positive qualities (via eminentiae). ¹⁷ After having described God as unchangeable in His essence, knowledge, will, purpose and place (p.319-30), he goes on to give six reasons for God's immutability (p.331-6). Following a brief discussion of the intransferability of this attribute, he opines an anti-kenotic notion that the divine nature of Christ remained immutable during the incarnation. However, he can say:

His blood while it was pouring out of his veins was "blood of God". ¹⁸

Gerald Wondra, in an article called "The Pathos of God" objects vehemently that Charnock is governed by a neo-Platonic definition of God:

To say that an impassible divine nature was present in Christ during his suffering would, to the writer of the Hebrews, sound like sheer nonsense.¹⁹

He says this because Charnock is forced into a separation of the two natures. This Nestorian tendency is always present, involving the attribute of impassibility in the divine, but not in the human. Charnock, in turn, has done this, of course, by a consideration of the doctrine of God proper, but what do we really make of a passage like Hosea 11.7-9? "My people are bent on turning away from me; so they are appointed to the yoke, and none shall remove it. How can I give you up, O Ephraim! How can I hand you over, O Israel! My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger, I will not again destroy Ephraim;" We are at the most difficult of boundaries: the repentance of God; the suffering of God; the pleading of God; but, anthropomorphic language as it may be, to say it is a mere condescension to the human mode of expression would be to eviscerate the dynamic of Biblical language. Is there not a sense in which emotion, at least controlled emotion (note it is "worldly passions" that are condemned, cf Titus 2.13), is part of the Imago Dei, and therefore properly in God?

There seem to be several motives governing this Christological problem, mainly due to predilections about the doctrine of God proper. In favour of impassibility is the general notion of divine transcendence. Anthropomorphisms no longer threaten the transcendent One. However, this loses all its force when we consider Barth, or Brunner, who, being guided by the totaliter alter doctrine, deny any such notion of impassibility. Yet another reason (pro-impassibility) is along Augustine's notion of Pathos as "a movement of the mind contrary to reason."²⁰ Perfection of blessedness demands impassibility on that account.

Another argument (linked with the first) is the sheer dread of anthropomorphisms.

Repentance is not properly in God. He is a pure Spirit, and is not capable of those passions which are signs of weakness and ignorance ... No proper grief can be imagined to be in God: as repentance is inconsistent with infallible foresight, so is grief no less inconsistent with undefiled blessedness. ²¹

On the other hand, is the love of God real if it is emotionless? Is it possible for agape to mean one thing in a marriage setting (Eph.5.28), and another in God's love for the world (Jn.3.16)? Johannine Christology declares the wondrous truth that the pre-existent, pre-incarnate Logos was with (or towards: pros not sun) God (Jn.1.1,2). Is this not a divine movement of the Son towards the Father? John is giving expression not only to ontology and pre-existence, but to mutual, non-static love between the Father and the Son. This mutual enjoyment of the Divine presence must be emotional in some sense of the word. It sees its zenith and most poignant expression in the cry of dereliction from the cross, when the intimacy of Divine communion was withdrawn, and in utter self-abandonment to the Father's wrath the Son was heard to cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt.27.46). This Divine separation, when "the Judge is judged" (Barth ²²), cannot be of mere cerebral, impassible expression.

What we have seen so far is the Nestorian tendency in much Christological writing, even in the Reformed tradition, ascribing passibility to the human nature alone, and in effect denying Chalcedon's boundary of the uni-personality of Christ. The doctrine of God proper, by reason of our trinitarianism, needs careful thought in the light of the cross, remembering that the cross is not, and cannot be loved, for it is the place of the divine abandonment of Jehovah-Jesus.

Two other concerns seem to surface in this century to combat impassibility. Firstly, the suffering of the world suggests the suffering of God (Moltmann). Secondly, the cross points backwards to pre-existence, revealing God's eternal nature. According to Barth, the experience of the passion of Christ reveals "the final depth of the being

of God".²³

In 1926, J.K.Mozley posed six questions - questions which do not seem to have been fully answered as yet?²⁴ We list them here for our convenience:

1. What do we imply by the term God (as personal)?
2. What is God's relationship to the world (transcendence and immanence)?
3. What is the relation of God to time?
4. Is feeling in God related at all to our feeling?
5. Would the fact of God's impassibility better secure the highest values which man desires of the universe?
6. What is the relation of the cross to eternity?

Some of these questions are more important than others; the answer to each is dependent upon the axiom: through God alone can God be known. The doctrine of God can only be known by revelation - the revelation of the divine name. It requires personal revelation through time. It is "a vertical message from above" (Barth).²⁵ To the question of "how?" concerning the two natures, Brunner gives a reminder that the New Testament gives no answer.

It was enough (for the apostles) to know that He is both true God and also true Man, not only from the physical but from the mental and spiritual point of view, in no way absolute, unlimited, all-knowing, all-mighty, but a weak man, who suffers, is hungry, one who has tasted the depths of human anguish and despair; in brief, a human being, whom it is only natural to regard as a mere human being.²⁶

And thus there is no need to speak of human nature suffering in abstraction from the divine, for "the human element, in the deepest sense of the word constitutes the material for this sacrifice; therefore it must be suffered in a truly human way. But this can only be achieved by God Himself; therefore the person who thus acts, the person in whom the human nature truly suffers, must be the divine person." ²⁷ Brunner is cautious, forbidding any notion of divine suffering per se. It is still the anguish of the Person. If God does not in any sense share my sufferings as I seek to bear them with courage and fortitude; if God

is wholly and totally impassible, having no empathy with us, except via the human nature of Christ, then does not the cross, precious as it is, lose some of its profoundest meaning? He, who was made a little lower than the angels for a little while, knew suffering - that of death - by the grace of God, in order that He might taste death for every man (Heb.2.9).

As this affects the doctrine of God, it is being raised in all quarters today. Thus, the Roman Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner, can say: "The death of Jesus is a statement of God about himself."²⁸ Is there a sense of identity in the suffering of God and of Jesus? Who is God: the one who lets Jesus die, or, at the same time, the Jesus who dies? So much of our thinking is tri-theistic at this point. There is God the Father; there is God the Son who is involved in the Incarnation and self-abnegation - but there is only one God (Deut.6.4). It is for this reason that Moltmann can say:

God is not greater than he is in this humiliation.
God is not more glorious than he is in this self-surrender. God is not more powerful than he is in this helplessness. God is not more divine than he is in this humanity.²⁹

Surely there is an awesome problem here. Trinitarianism must constantly maintain the absconditus nature of the Divine Being. Even during the incarnation God is veiled. He is in heaven as well as upon earth. There is an extra to the Incarnation, but not such that we are left with kenosis or tritheism. Scripture makes a distinction between the Father and the Son. It is the Son who is made flesh (Jn.1.14), who takes the very nature of a servant (Phil. 2.7), who appears in a body (1 Tim.3.16f). There is one God; one ousia; one hypostasis; but three individual subsistences: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Divine essence is generically, and numerically, one. Can we really avoid (that is, logically) a trinitarian concept of the Incarnation? The human nature of Christ relates to the Godhead in two ways: to the divine nature of Christ, as well as to the divine nature in general (for they cannot be separated). Is it not bound up with such statements as "God the Mighty Maker died"?³⁰ The homoousios demands some such

notion. Anything less than this is Docetism. And yet, who can understand this? Omniscient and ignorant; infinite and finite; God and less than God; Creator and the man of sorrows - all of this in the one Person. It is quintessentially paradoxical, and the church's only hope. This, in part at least, is the pitfall (and the motive at the same time!) of kenotic Christology, for "the theistic concept of God according to which God cannot die, and the hope for salvation, according to which man is to be immortal, made it impossible to regard Jesus as really being God and at the same time as being forsaken by God."³¹

Passibility, the suffering of God, needs careful definition. O.C.Quick has distinguished three kinds: external, internal, and sensational.³² "External" passibility refers to the relations of a being towards that which is beyond or outside itself. It is the capacity to be influenced from outside. In the creation, God voluntarily limited Himself so as to allow free agency and even rebellion in man. God is absolutely, or ultimately, impassible, though he becomes relatively passible by His own voluntary act of creation.

"Internal" passibility refers to relations within a conscious being, or personality. It is here that we come across those whims and fancies that are contrary to reason and judgement, but part of our fickle and fallen nature.³³ God is the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change (James 1.17). Finally, Quick distinguishes a third type of passibility, to which he gives the name: "sensational". It is intermediate between "internal" and "external", being liable to pleasure, pain, "and more especially, those (sensations) of pain, which are caused within a conscious being by the action of some other being upon it."³⁴ It is part of that victorious activity whereby He ultimately subdues all things unto Himself. Thus, in the creation, God was manifest as "externally" passible, but in the God-man, there is no external relation between God and man. That which has come into being in Him is Life, and the Life is the light of men (cf Jn.1.3). Here John is asserting that in Jesus Christ someone was born into the world who was in a new relation to the eternal Word; it was not through Him, but actually in Him (en auto) in hypostatic union.

Nevertheless, the humanity (or manhood) of Jesus is the self-expression of Godhead within the world; it is the humanity of God - undergoing the curse for us (Gal.3.13; 4.4), and revealing further passibility in that He became a man of like passions, yet without sin (Heb.4.15). How far can we go? When the apostle speaks of God having "delivered up" (papadidomai, Rom.8.32; cf Rom.1.18ff where it means to cast out, kill, give up, or abandon) His own Son, there is the language of the curse used. There is a God-forsakenness in Christ, that we might have life. But, clearly, we shudder when we read of an act whereby "the first Person casts out and annihilates the second."³⁵ Moltmann wants to see in the cross, where there is a "giving Himself for me" (Gal.2.20), a deep separatedness in the act of being forsaken; a unity in their surrender: The Father's deliverance and the Son's acceptance. It is not death of, but death in God.³⁶

In a chapter entitled: "The way of the Son of God into the far country", Karl Barth speaks of "flesh" as being in a state of perishing before God. This is the state of Christ for us. He takes the place of Israel's sufferings. "His history must be a history of suffering".

In Him God has entered in, breaking into that circulus vitiosus of the human plight, making His own not only guilt of man but also his rejection and condemnation, giving Himself to bear the divinely righteous consequences of human sin, not merely affirming the divine sentence on man, but allowing it to be fulfilled on Himself. He, the electing, eternal God, willed Himself to be rejected and therefore perishing man³⁷

And more explicitly, he says:

It is God Himself who takes the place of the former sufferers and allows the bitterness of suffering to fall upon Himself.³⁸

Barth insists that "God Himself" is in Christ (2 Cor. 5.19). He is God: Jesus is Jehovah. He is the depository and self-revelation of this "God Himself" The motive is an anti-kenotic one.³⁹ The paradox cannot be avoided, how-

ever hard we try, and so "the Almighty exists and acts and speaks here in the form of One who is weak and impotent, the eternal as One who is temporal and perishing, the Most High in the deepest humility."⁴⁰

Forseeing the charge of blasphemy that is ever close at hand at this point, Barth goes on to say that God does not alter Himself, but rather denies "the immutability of His being, His divine nature, to be in discontinuity with Himself, to be against Himself, to set Himself in self-contradiction."⁴¹ Barth can live with this since his theological system is governed by the notion of paradox. It is dialectic. But, it would be better to contemplate Quick's definition, allowing for "sensational" passions. There would be no need to speak of a denial of immutability (which means an annihilation of God, the Second Person); the Deus absconditus is still retained.

In an attempt to reconcile these statements, Barth brings in the dialectical hermeneutic once more and says:


God gives Himself, but does not give Himself away ... He does not cease to be God. He does not come into conflict with Himself ... He acts as Lord over this contradiction even as He subjects Himself to it. He frees the creature in becoming the creature. He overcomes the flesh in becoming flesh. He reconciles the world with Himself as He is in Christ.⁴²

How do we do justice to the death of one "in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily"? (Col.2.9). At stake here is the preaching of the church ... "Feed the church of God" (Acts 20.28), and at its very heart lies mystery. We can speak too clearly about some things, and in our attempt to be clear miss the very heart of the matter. There is no Trinitarian incarnation; God cannot deny Himself (2 Tim.2.13), but we dare not retreat to impassibility but ever cling to the ultimate boundary of the New Testament kerygma, that the Lord of glory was crucified (1 Cor. 2.7,8; cf 2 Cor.5.19), and this indissoluble "mystery" (1Tim.3.16): the giving of Himself for me. In an age of violence and murder, injustice and cruelty, it is the church's most poignant sanctuary.

FOOTNOTES

1. See G.C.Berkouwer, The Work of Christ (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) p.264
2. c.f. Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God (London: SCM Press, 1974). "To take up the theology of the Cross today is to go beyond the limits of the doctrine of salvation and to inquire into the revolution needed in the concept of God. Who is God in the cross of the Christ who is abandoned by God?" p.4
3. Helmut Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978), Vol 2, translated by G.W.Bromiley, p.283
4. See the discussion in D.M.Baillie, God was in Christ (New York: Charles Scribners & Sons, 1948), p.85f
5. Ibid. p.86
6. ton kupion tes doxes estauposan
7. See I.H.Marshall, New Testament Christology (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976) pp 97-110
8. We cannot handle all the exegetical difficulties of this text at this point; it is the thought of Calvin and John Owen that is mainly expressed.
9. See J.K.Mozley, The Impassibility of God (Cambridge: University Press, 1926).
10. Ibid. p.7
11. There are two forms of Monarchianism: Adoptionist, Dynamic Monarchianism, where the person of Jesus is thought to be a man, divinely energised by the Holy Spirit to become the Son of God (so, Theodotus of Byzantium, Paul of Samosata, the Ebionites); it is this which is condemned in 1 Jn.5.6. And, again, Modalistic Monarchianism (or Patripassionism, or Sabellianism), as represented by Noetus, Praxeas and Sabellius in Rome, arising in the second and third centuries. They speak of God appearing in different forms and modes and at different times, maintaining the divinity of the Son, and the unity of God at the same time.

12. Noetus; quoted by Mozley, op.cit.p.29
13. Ibid. p.29
14. Ibid. p.87
15. The Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960) Vol 1, p.484 (11/xiv/2). Is there a Nestorian tendency here?
16. (New York: Wilber B. Ketcham, 1846), Vol 1
17. Ibid. p.300f
18. Ibid. p.340
19. The Reformed Review, Vol 18, No.2 (Dec 1964), pp 28-35. Wondra is exaggerated in his denunciation, but we think Berkhof is right when he calls the methodology improper for Dogmatics. Its starting point is man-centered, and not theocentric, not being based on the Divine self-disclosure. See, Systematic Theology (London: Banner of Truth, 1971) p.52f
20. Mozely, op.cit. p.104
21. Charnock, op.cit.,p.338. Anthropomorphisms show what God would be like were He capable of emotions, he claims.
22. Or, as Moltmann puts it: "The Cross is not, and cannot be loved." Ibid.p.1
23. Church Dogmatics, II/1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961) p.588
24. Op.cit.,p.178
25. cf. Emil Brunner, The Mediator (Philadelphia: Westminster Press) p.21
26. Ibid. p.345
27. Ibid. p.502
28. Theological Investigations IV (Darton: Longman & Todd, 1966) p.113
29. Op.cit. p.205

30. This, Charles Hodge allows; see Systematic Theology (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960), Vol II p.393
31. Moltmann, op.cit. p.227
32. Doctrines of the Creed (London: Nisbet & Co.Ltd.,1945) pp.184-7
33. It is that to which Paul and Barnabas refer at Lystra, in that God is not like Zeus or Hermes, who, being whimsical, are no gods at all (Acts 14.15). This is the Scriptural warrant of the Westminster Confession's statement that God is "without parts or passions", (II/I). We can readily assent to this, given the context of Acts 14, and taking Quick's distinction as to "internal" passions; cf Kenneth J.Woolcombe, "The Pain of God", The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol 20 (1967) pp.129-148. The Old Testament is full of references to God's involvement in human life; the pain felt by the Spirit (Is.63.10); the empathy with His people's afflictions (Is.63.9), etc. The New Testament, too, speaks of the inner mercies of God (Lk.1.78). It is the predeliction of the story of Jonah; the compassion of the Father in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk.15). It is that, most vividly expressed, to which the Hebrew  refers, of a woman's yearning for the fruit of her womb (Is.13.18), and the love of God for His people (Ex.33.19; Deut. 13.18 etc). See F.Brown, S.R.Driver and C.A.Briggs, A Hebrew & English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1975) p.933
34. Op.cit. p.185
35. Op.cit. p.241, cf 2 Cor.5.21; Gal.3.13. Moltmann is not guilty of Patripassionism. He coins instead the word Patri-compassionism (p.276), for he insists that "the suffering and dying of the Son, forsaken by the Father, is a different kind of suffering from the suffering of the Father in the death of the Son" p.243
36. cf. Kazoah Kitamori, The Theology of the Pain of God (Richmond: John Knox Press,1965). This is politicised, revolutionary theology - an altogether illegitimate hermeneutical procedure.

37. Vol IV, Part 1, "The Doctrine of Reconciliation" (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961) p.175
38. Ibid.
39. Barth says: "God is always God even in His humiliation. The divine being does not suffer any change, any diminution, any transformation into something else, let alone any cessation. The deity of Christ is one unaltered, because unalterable, deity of God. Any subtraction or weakening of it would at once throw doubt upon the atonement made by Him." Ibid. pp.179-80
40. Ibid. p.176
41. Ibid. p.184
42. Ibid. p.185

SOME RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

Rev Stephen Dray MA BD

THE LAST ten years or so has seen, both in liberal and conservative circles, a renewed interest in the Old Testament and its message. The purpose of this article is to draw

attention to some of the most significant volumes that have appeared in this period, especially works which may be described as general or introductory in character. We begin with the consideration of a major contribution to the study of the Old Testament text.

Mr Dray, who is Pastor of a Baptist Church in Brockley, London, has agreed to write regularly for this Journal on Old Testament publications.

THE TEXT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT by ERNST WURTHWEIN SCM Press.
244pp £8.50

The student searching for a basic but comprehensive introduction to the subject of the Old Testament Text, (comparable, eg, to B.M.Metzger's excellent volume on the New Testament entitled 'The Text of the New Testament', OUP 2nd Edition, 1968 has been for a long time severely handicapped. Previously only Wurthwein's second German edition, translated by Peter Ackroyd in 1957 and published by Blackwell, Oxford, has seriously met this need, but it has itself been out of print for a long time. SCM Press (and the new translator Erroll F. Rhodes) are, therefore, to be highly commended for the production of this new second English Edition based on the fourth German edition of 1978 which was itself produced as a supplementary volume to the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. The book is divided, broadly, into two halves; the first dealing with Old Testament text and criticism, the second providing an extensive set of plates and commentary illustrating directly the more generalised account of the earlier part of the work. In the first part of the book four major areas are thoroughly covered: a) The transmission of the Text in the original Hebrew; b) The primary versions; c) other versions; d) Textual criticism. All the various manuscripts and versions are keyed into BH (especially BH3 and BH5) providing a valuable introduction to the bewildering symbols of BH. The many modern discoveries which have been made, especially at Qumran, are integrated into this new volume.

There is little doubt that this is an important book which, with a few reservations (eg especially Wurthwein's discussion of the history of the canon) can be thoroughly recommended to serious Old Testament students.

By far the majority of recent general volumes have however been occupied with the theology of the Old Testament and we draw attention to the following:

1. **THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT** by G.Oehler (translated by G.E.Day). Published by Klock and Klock 595pp
2. **PROMISE AND DELIVERANCE** by S.G.De Graff (translated by H.E.Runner), in 3 volumes; by Padeia Press:
 1. From Creation to the Conquest of Canaan 423pp
 2. The Failure of Israel's Theocracy 456pp
 3. Christ's Ministry and Death 453pp

3. **THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT** by G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Ed's), translated by J.T. Willis, G.W. Bromiley and D.E. Green. Published by Eerdmans. The three volumes currently available are:
 1. Abh - Baddhadh 479 pp
 2. Bdl - Galah 488 pp
 3. Gillulim - Haras 463 pp
4. **OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY IN OUTLINE** by W. Zimmerli (translated by D.E. Green) Published by T & T Clarke 258 pp
5. **OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY: A FRESH APPROACH** by R.E. Clements Published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott 214 pp
6. **INTRODUCTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS SCRIPTURE** by B.S. Childs. Published by SCM Press 688 pp

For a considerable number of years Oehler's work (originally published posthumously in 1873) constituted one of the major introductions to Old Testament Theology before the increase in literary criticism, in particular at the end of the last century which led to a drying up of such material under the influence of its fragmentary and destructive methodology. However, though the work is old, Klock and Klock are to be commended for making it freely available again.

Oehler argued that the study of the theology of the Old Testament was a distinct theological discipline (separable, in particular from dogmatics and the history of religion). Its source material is the Old Testament as a whole, especially as interpreted within the framework of a historico - genetic (we might say, redemptive - historical) approach. This led him to certain important conclusions: (i) It is canonical study i.e. (and contra G.Vos cf P. Misselbrook; 'Biblical Theology' Foundations No.4). The whole of the Old Testament is included within its scope. Note, therefore, the section on wisdom literature (p 537-581) virtually ignored by Vos. (ii) It is historical and progressive - the unfolding plan of salvation of one God. In particular it is epochal, marked by certain self-generating divisions (Oehler has two: Mosaicism and Prophetism. While these might be queried his sub-divisions accord well with most recent studies on the subject). (iii) It is in-

complete, but self-consistent i.e. it stands in its wholeness as the promise does to realisation and yet it can be studied within its own framework and in Biblical exegesis has priority over the New Testament.

These emphases are gradually re-emerging in Old Testament theology and their appearance already in Oehler is the value of this work.

Oehler was sometimes inclined to presuppositions which reflect the critical orthodoxy of his day, and it is a pity that he did not spend more time in looking at the historical narratives. Nevertheless, these mature reflections of a formidable Old Testament scholar of the last century are to be commended to all serious students of the message of the Old Testament. It is of particular value (especially to the preacher) because of the succinct, clearly divided and well-indexed character of the work.

Perhaps under the advent of Biblical literalism, certainly as a consequence of inadequate scholarship, Old Testament theology also was ignored in conservative circles during the early years of this century. (There were one or two prominent exceptions). In the 1930s however, a revival in Biblical Christianity in Holland led to its re-emergence. During this period De Graff, an influential leader in the reformed churches of the Netherlands, produced in 1936 his most influential work 'Verbondsgeschiedenis'. It is this work which we are here considering in the translation by E.H.Runner.

Originally produced as outlines to help Sunday School teachers tell the stories of the Bible, each chapter (based on a varying length of Biblical narrative) includes: (i) a general historico-theological introduction; (ii) a 'main thought'; (iii) an expanded 'story form' account of the passage in question. De Graff's simplicity (which is never simplistic) is impressive, for which the translator also deserves credit. There is much of immense value, not only to the Sunday School teacher, and many passages of Scripture take on a new and thrilling light as De Graff expounds them to us. His opening essay including comments on how to teach children is especially stimulating - would that our Sunday School teachers took it to heart!

However, a brief resume of the author's methodology is in order, for herein, in particular, the strengths and the weaknesses of the work are especially apparent. De Graff very properly regards Old Testament history as a dynamic unified story of God's dealings in redeeming creation (not just man!). The Bible, therefore, is the account of the unfolding of God's covenant of redemption. Consequently the Old Testament cannot be studied in a fragmented, or individualistic way. In all this De Graff is substantially right, whatever one's view of the covenant of redemption. Moreover, his emphasis upon cosmic redemption is timely and his view of Scripture usually excludes allegorical interpretation, although the canvas is sometimes a little flat and the sense of progress observed by excessive typology.

A further feature of De Graff's methodology is his christological emphasis or "dimension". For him "the entire Scripture is God's revelation of himself as the redeemer. The redemption in the mediator is revealed to us in every story". If this meant no more than that the Scripture is "Salvational" and finds its fulfilment in Christ this would be a correct emphasis, however, De Graff means more - every story has to have a direct reference to Christ. The effect of this is: (i) Excessive and uncontrolled typology is required to justify his assertion: (ii) the Old Testament becomes an illustration of New Testament truths rather than a part of that redemptive history which reaches its fulness of revelation in the New Testament. (iii) New Testament interprets Old Testament rather than the Old Testament finding its full significance in the New Testament; (iv) We are often introduced less to the message of the passage in question (certainly not its main emphasis) but rather an interpretation forced upon the section by De Graff's systematic theology and methodological framework. So, e.g., Genesis 3 is entitled "The Covenant of God's Grace" when, clearly the fall is its most prominent feature.

Notwithstanding these weaknesses (which have been mostly remedied by later conservative Biblical theology) De Graff's work used discriminatingly should prove a great help to the preacher, Sunday School teacher etc. and, perhaps, find a place in family worship. It is undoubtedly

the best survey of Biblical history currently available.

We turn next to two contributions of German theology of a more modern and critical character.

Serious Bible students have for some years had the not inconsiderable benefit of Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. The work here reviewed, **THE THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT** is the Old Testament counterpart which was begun in Germany in 1974 and promises eventually to extend to 12 volumes. At present the three mentioned above have been translated into English and the fourth may well be available before this review is published. There can be no doubt that, when complete, the **TDOT** will constitute the major reference work on Old Testament words and concepts.

As with the **TDNT** the structure of the work is lexical, although in fact it constitutes a consideration of the major theological ideas of the Old Testament, together with other major subjects. Methodologically, this approach is somewhat odd (cf J.Barr's criticism of **TDNT** in 'The Semantics of Biblical Language') and a topical structure might have been preferred. Nevertheless, the work is a source of information and provides an essential tool for the Old Testament student with its studies of etymology and semantic usage of the major words in the Old Testament. The bibliography and cross-references should also prove valuable.

The contributions are mainly from North Europe, very few being represented from USA and UK. This is a pity as the work does tend, therefore, to reflect the distinctively German theological outlook (with its emphasis on literary criticism). Moreover, the recommended further reading has not been adequately extended to include English articles which would limit its usefulness as a tool for research. Inevitably, the work has imbibed the literary critical method in particular (reference to J.E.D.P., textual glosses, etc. abound), there is too ready a willingness to interpret Israelite religion indiscriminately in the light of ANE parallels and an almost complete failure to take seriously the canonical context. These volumes are highly recommended but the work must be used with

restraint.

The work by Zimmerli emerges from a basically similar school of thought but represents the wrestlings of Old Testament theologians in Germany, (and elsewhere) with the question of the unity and message of the Old Testament faced with the diversity of Old Testament material (a problem made acute by the modern methods of Biblical criticism which are presupposed). Zimmerli finds that a "coherent whole" is obtainable because of the sameness of the God known as Jehovah who reveals himself throughout the Old Testament material. This method, close to Barthianism in places, is the escape route by which Zimmerli is able to speak of a unified message in the Old Testament.

From the perspective afforded by this methodology, Zimmerli proceeds formally to divide the material into five major sections covering respectively; Yahweh; His gifts; His commandment; Life before God and, finally, Crisis and Hope. Within these sections material is dealt with from a literary, critical perspective which reads in places rather more like a history of Israelite religion than a theology. Nevertheless, much of the detailed material is extremely valuable, the quintessence of modern study being well summarised within its pages. The small print sections of exegesis are especially helpful and full of detail and thought-provoking material. Section III, Yahweh's commandment, was particularly helpful to the reviewer.

In sum the volume is an amalgamation of good but brief material, interspersed and constantly weakened by the insistence of Biblical criticism - a feature which obscures the structure of the Old Testament material as well as impoverishing its message.

A radically different answer to the problem of Old Testament unity which Zimmerli wrestles with is that being pioneered in certain circles in the English-speaking theological world of which the two volumes under consideration here probably represent the most important contributions. The demand for a message to declare on the basis of the Old Testament material has become so insistent with Childs and Clements that they have sought a resolution by

emphasising the canonical character and structure of the Old Testament. The Old Testament as we find it, as the (traditionally) authorised message of the Jewish and Christian communities becomes, therefore, the starting point, both for introduction (Childs) and theology (Clements).

Childs begins his work with some weighty polemics against much modern Old Testament study. He argues that all too often a methodology (literary, traditio-historical, redactional etc) has been employed on the Old Testament in such a way that, while providing immensely useful insights into the Old Testament, the fact has been forgotten that the object of study is the present canonical shape of the material. Consequently, little attention has been given to the structure of the whole, rather the text has been viewed not in its final canonical context but from an imposed framework which assumes the determining force of every Biblical text to be its original setting/meaning. For Childs, this problem goes back to the false dichotomy (his opinion!) between conservative and radical criticism. The former, he argues, has emphasised the canon at the expense of criticism, the latter the reverse. Neither, says Childs, is correct - critical study is to be conducted but the framework for the ultimate meaning is the canonical structure. In other words, the different and disparate elements of the Old Testament tradition were combined together within an interpretative framework which has often radically changed its original meaning - but it is the final interpretation which has provided the normative meaning. Other methods of interpretation are, therefore, relativised and sometimes the canonical structure deliberately obscures those features which other methods major upon. This approach obviously has implications for text criticism since it is the completed canonical text (dated C1 AD by Childs) that we are concerned to reconstruct. Evidence for earlier (pre-canonical) texts is of secondary importance.

The opening 108 pages of Childs book are concerned with the exposition of the above methodology, the remainder of the 688 pages deal with each of the Old Testament books in turn and provide an "Introduction" in the light of this approach. Each is divided into (usually) three sections:

a) Historical - critical problems; b) Canonical shape;
c) Theological and Hermeneutical implications. It is noticeable that on his methodology a) is almost unnecessary and often bears little relation to what follows. Moreover, with emphasis lying upon Biblical theology he provides many real and beneficial insights into the books in the second two sections.

Like Zimmerli, Childs' book reflects the bareness felt in Old Testament study and the need for a message in a discipline submerged under the weight of its critical methodologies which have left it without a voice. God can now be heard speaking with a normative message through the final canonical form. In fact, however, the authority rests in tradition which fixed the final form. Moreover, it ought to be asked whether a text or a book which is based upon historical fiction and/or a re-interpretation of the original (pre-canonical) meaning and context can provide a word from God. Is there not a sleight of hand here, for how can a confident message be proclaimed on the basis of a literary deception?

Childs will give us many valuable insights into the word of God which we do well to receive insofar as they are consistent with a conservative and biblical methodology. However, and herein lies a real danger, the gulf between the conservative and liberal remains the same as before even if, by a clever approach, the two arrive at a similar message. One rests on the eternal word, the sure and steadfast word of an eternal God revealed in the history of Old Testament Scripture, and the other upon a frozen canonical process which is a compilation (and distortion) of mythical elements of religious tradition. Consequently, we simply cannot have our cake and eat it as Childs wishes.

The volume by Clements is markedly similar, except that it takes theology as a whole and not introduction as its starting point. Whereas, therefore, Childs affords us a theology of each book, Clements seeks to assemble his message from the whole, the central section of his book being occupied with such a purpose. This itself, reflects Clements' major concern, that the major themes of the Old Testament be given more attention in Biblical Theology

since they provide the backbone to the unity of the Old Testament writings. This volume clearly complements Childs and it is particularly good to see discussion of the God of Israel, The People of God (including Election and the Covenant); Law and Promise. As with Clements' work generally there is much here of value. Like Childs he emphasises that the actual canonical shape of the Old Testament Scripture must be taken seriously as the controlling feature. The introductory chapters marked "The Problem of Old Testament Theology"; "Dimensions of Faith in the Old Testament" together with the final chapter "The Old Testament and the Study of Theology" discuss this, providing a detailed and illuminating study of the position of these two scholars. It is particularly interesting to observe the problems their methodology creates for them since they are unable to hold a conservative view of the Old Testament documents. Here, then, is a volume well worth reading by the student of Old Testament theology.

A final over view of these various volumes concerned with Biblical Theology would probably be helpful. Oehler provides us with the base upon which all subsequent conservative Biblical theology must surely build. The constant dialogue between exegesis and the redemptive-historical framework is a necessary base for a sound Biblical theology and this volume points the way ahead very clearly. However, Oehler tended to emphasise the cultic and dogmatic features of Old Testament religion at the expense of the historical narrative. It is to the credit, therefore, of De Graff that he shows that the story form narratives of the Old Testament share in this Biblical theological framework. Sadly, his inadequate formulation of the christological dimension (in itself a necessary emphasis) has in places prejudiced his understanding of certain passages. Of the other volumes Childs reminds us that each book has a distinct message as a theological work and the historical framework must not obscure this feature. Childs' book together with the TDOT, Zimmerli and Clements are each valuable in their own way but each are severely affected by their critical standpoint (especially Zimmerli and TDOT). As source books, however, each is helpful - the German volumes for exegetical data, Childs and Clements for theological structure.

Finally, the other volume:

SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT by I.L.Jensen. Published by
Moody Press 488 pp

This volume written from a conservative (and noticeably Pre-millennial) perspective is an attempt to bring Biblical theology into personal Bible study so that the panorama of God's redemption is seen in every part of the Old Testament. It is the reviewer's opinion that the author, who is Professor of the Bible at Bryan College, Dayton, Tennessee, succeeds remarkably well.

Following a general introduction (p 15-63) each book in the Old Testament is then individually covered. 119 charts and 25 maps are provided to illuminate the material. Each book is usually discussed under the following headings: Preparation for Study; Background; Survey; Prominent Subjects and Applications. The volume is not so much a comprehensive guide as a guided motivation to personal Bible study and research of the message of the Scripture. Questions are raised rather than answers given and the student is regularly drawn back from this introductory material to make his own assessment of the Biblical material.

The reviewer highly recommends this volume, having already distributed several copies (and obtained one for the church library). He is convinced that properly used this book would be of far more benefit to many in our congregations than most of the Bible study notes currently available and might well install in our people an enthusiasm for the personal study of the Old Testament. We can always iron out the pre-millennialism in our preaching, if required! Finally, it is not without value to preachers who come fresh to some new section of God's Word in helping them to the overall structure of the individual books of the Bible.

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BOOK REVIEWS

WHAT NEXT? G.A.F.Knight. The Saint Andrew Press,
Edinburgh. pp.128 £2.75

This skilfully told story of an eventful and industrious career will not disappoint readers who expect that the autobiography of an author will provide some clues to the development of the thinking reflected in his published works. As the narrative progresses it becomes increasingly clear that Dr Knight's Commentaries on the Prophets, his reply to Klausner's From Jesus to Paul no less than his magnum opus A Christian Theology of the Old Testament, to mention no other volumes from his pen, were all considerably influenced by his experience while working among the Jews or on their behalf. Some visitation of Jewish homes in Glasgow as a divinity student was followed by an intimate acquaintance with their religious beliefs and exacerbated sense of injustice, during the five years of ruthless Nazi propaganda and antisemitic activity, prior to World War II, when Knight was Director of the century-old Scottish Mission to Jews at Budapest. At that disturbing time Jews who were aware that he lectured extensively to Hungarian-speaking Christians with a view to promote good relations between them and their Jewish neighbours, were ready to listen sympathetically when he spoke to themselves of God's covenant love to Israel, revealed in the Book of Exodus, Hosea and so-called Deutero-Isaiah.

In the first two post-war decades Knight held successively teaching posts in Old Testament at Knox Presbyterian College, New Zealand, and McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, with a brief interlude between when he lectured on Old Testament at St Mary's College, St Andrews, Scotland as a member of the Semitics Staff of the University. Then in 1965 his appointment as founding Principal of the Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji, brought him a welcome opportunity of acting on his belief that in the case of many non-European cultures the Gospel can be more intelligibly communicated through the door of Semitic thought

forms than that of European cultural expression.

On his retiral and recent return to his native land, at an age when most men are glad to be free from official duties, Knight undauntedly accepted the General Editorship of the new series entitled the International Theological Commentary and undertook to contribute three volumes and translate five.

So far as the book discloses the theological opinions of the author, his position is seen to be more independent and conservative than that of some of his contemporaries in the field of Old Testament scholarship. He affirms that any theology which fails to take account of God's activity through the covenant he himself made with Israel has gone astray, and therefore he deprecates that Christian theologians are at present entertaining the idea of some sort of unity with Hinduism and Buddhism.

But mention may be made of two points that remain unclear. (1) How does his assertion that there "were not two natures in Christ", on page 37, relate to his anti-unitarian statements in the book? (2) What implications for the evangelization of the Jews in general does he see in the account given on pages 59-60 of the conversion of some at Budapest?

Principal W.J.Cameron, Edinburgh.

THE DISSENTERS

M.R.Watts Oxford U.P. 1978

562 pp £15.00

In the preface to his book, M.R.Watts says: "This book constitutes the first volume of what will be, when completed, the first substantial history of English and Welsh Dissent to appear for more than sixty years". In this first volume, the author shows that if the Puritans were "the hotter sort of Protestants", the Dissenters were the hotter sort of Puritans. He traces their origins back to the first English Anabaptists and Separatists of the sixteenth century, before dealing more extensively with the formation of the Baptist, Independent, Quaker and Presbyterian denominations in the seventeenth century; he concludes with an analysis of the period of decreasing influence 1689-1735 followed by the "revival" of Dissent, 1730-1791 during the Evangelical Awakening. He has therefore set himself a sub-

stantial task. The book is well written and interesting. It is a valuable contribution to the history of the Dissenters. 49.

stantial task, especially as he has included the history of Welsh dissent as well. It is the measure of his achievement that not only is the book one of painstaking and judicious scholarship, but that it also sustains the reader's interest throughout. Its content is impressive; its style elegant and easy.

From the very beginning, Mr Watts shows both his willingness and his competence to deal with bones of contention as he argues, on circumstantial and geographical ground, for some connection between the English General Baptists and the continental Anabaptists. He also attempts to interpret events of significance. Sometimes he does so with a real sense of assurance, as, for example, in his analysis of the reasons for the decline of Dissent after 1689. But, at other times, he seems less certain of himself: this is particularly noticeable in his section on the phenomena and experiences of the Evangelical Awakening where he speaks of "the revivalists" "producing" convulsions and trances and "playing on" their audiences' fears of death and hell. He seems, at this point, to confuse the techniques of revival with the experience of revival.

Obviously, in a work covering such a long period, about which the literature has been extensive, the author has been forced to restrict himself. He has, therefore, concentrated his attention upon the general history of the Dissenting Churches. There is very little, for instance, about Puritan preaching or piety, an area crying out for further research. Also, he has little to say about the doctrinal developments and disputes of the period, although he does comment on the cleavage between the Wesleys and Whitefield. It would have been helpful also if some reference had been made to the revival of 1727 in Bethelsdorf in addition to the remark that "in 1727 Zinzendorf asserted his authority over the community". And one looks in vain for a section on the hymnology of Charles Wesley and William Williams. But it is obvious that some at least of these omissions were due to the inevitability of historical selection.

It is, therefore, to his credit, that Mr Watts has been able to survey a very large field in such a masterly

fashion. There are many touches of detail to whet the appetite of future researchers. For example, Richard Davis, the fiery Welsh preacher with "a good voice and a thundering way of preaching" who ministered so powerfully in Northamptonshire at the turn of the eighteenth century, is mentioned several times. His evangelistic labours and their effects would repay further study. The book is full of such "leads"; in fact it opens out the whole period in a most stimulating way.

The author's interest in the social implications of Dissent is obvious at a glance. There are thirteen valuable tables scattered throughout the book, dealing with the numerical strength of the Dissenters at various periods, the incidence of Dissenting congregations in urban and rural areas, and the occupations of male Dissenters according to the Dissenting registers. The book itself describes the position of women, the relief of the poor, the payment of ministers, and the social structure of Dissent. There is also a valuable critique of Max Weber's theory that there was a connection between "the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism". As Watts puts it: "When success came to Dissenting traders and craftsmen, it was not because they had been conditioned by their religion to make profits, but because they applied their minds and hands to the tasks which they and their Separatist forbears had always pursued".

Here, then, is a work of meticulous and comprehensive scholarship. It is not only interesting; it is also, on occasions, surprising. How many realise, for instance, that when John Smyth reconstituted his church in Amsterdam in 1609, he baptised first himself, then Thomas Helwys, and the rest of the company by the pouring of water over the face and not by immersion? And what do we make of John Berridge's remark that "Matrimony has quite maimed poor Charles (Wesley), and might have spoiled John (Wesley) and George (Whitefield) if a wise master had not graciously sent them a brace of ferrets"?

"The Dissenters" should become the standard text book on the subject for many years to come. The second volume will be eagerly anticipated. If Mr Watts deals with nineteenth century Dissent - an era of considerable interest - and

with the sharp decline of this present century, with the same accuracy and fairness as he has shown in this first volume, then our understanding of the entire period will indeed be greatly enriched.

Rev Andrew Davies MA
Chessington, Surrey

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH

Geoffrey W. Bromiley T & T Clark, 1979 253 pp £3.60

The author and publisher are to be congratulated on providing us with this readable and useful introduction to Barth's theology as expressed in the twelve-part volumes of his 'Church Dogmatics'. The material is collated and summarised accurately and directly.

There are four main sections: (1) The doctrine of the Word of God, pp. 3-53; (2) The doctrine of God, pp. 57-106; (3) The doctrine of creation, pp. 107-172; (4) The doctrine of Reconciliation, pp. 173-243. There is also a brief Conclusion and then Indexes of Scripture references and Proper names. In his conclusion, Professor Bromiley acknowledges that the 'Dogmatics' suffers from obvious defects such as verbosity, overstatement, imprecision, lack of inner arrangement and a patchiness in the use of supporting Biblical and historical materials yet he also and rightly points to such positive features as the freshness and vigour of expression, fertile thinking and skill in interweaving various doctrines.

To justify the need for this type of straight-forward introduction to Barth, the author suggests the following reasons. First of all, to read the 'Dogmatics' and other writings of Barth would, for reasons of time and energy, be impracticable for most people. Secondly, Barth's theological method makes it difficult to understand individual passages. He does not systematise neatly and consecutively because of his conviction that God, and not doctrines, is the subject of theology. This means that all the doctrines are inter-related in his theology. For example, to understand Barth's teaching on Justification, it is inadequate merely to read the appropriate section in IV,1 because he

also refers to it in II,2 under the heading of the divine command and he has more to say on it in IV,2. In these cross-references there are sometimes important modifications of previous statements. This type of introduction then to Barth's theology can be invaluable to those seeking to understand and evaluate his theology. Thirdly, Bromiley describes secondary works on Barth as frequently deficient and unreliable either because they are too technical or reveal a superficial acquaintance with, and misunderstanding of, the actual text. Secondary works on Barth must be read cautiously.

Although aware of the dangers in preparing this kind of introduction to Barth, the author feels that his life-long encounter with Barth and the necessities of detailed study have given the work some objectivity in the reliable exposition of Barth. If one looks for a critical appreciation of Barth's theology here one will be disappointed for apart from some questions and suggestions there is neither commendation nor condemnation. This is due to Professor Bromiley's conviction that "Barth's theology is worth studying, knowing and grasping whether or not the verdict goes for or against it" (p.xiv).

As an introduction to Barth's 'Dogmatics' this book is, in the reviewer's opinion, reliable, helpful and also stimulating. If you want to grapple with Barth's theology then buy and read this book.

Eryl Davies, Bangor.

CORRECTION We apologise for the typing error on p.60, line 7, of our last issue. 'MASSORETIC' text should have read 'MAJORITY' text.

CORRESPONDENCE

Permit us to present an alternative and critical assessment of W.N.Pickering's 'IDENTITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT' to that which appeared in the last edition of 'Foundations'.

Pickering argues that, right from the beginning (from the time of the autographs), the majority of the manuscripts were free from serious error. Only a few rogue manuscripts were produced (whether by deliberate corruption or by carelessness), so that these bad manuscripts always constituted a minority. At every point in the history of the church, the majority of manuscripts have been in broad agreement with one another, and this 'majority text' has been a very good representation of the autographs. The present 'majority text' is therefore the best representation of the original manuscripts. The ancient texts still extant survived only because they were bad copies, they were not used and hence (unlike the good manuscripts), did not wear out. The variations between these ancient manuscripts are symptoms of their inferior quality; they were not representative of the 'majority text' in their own day, and their contribution to the critical reconstruction of the original text of the New Testament is therefore minimal.

The alternative explanation (that favoured by the majority of contemporary scholars) can be summarised thus. During the first two centuries, careless copying was the norm rather than the exception. Hence a great number of errors were generated during this period. By the time that careful efforts were made to regulate and supervise the copying of the text, there were already a multiplicity of readings without any clear 'majority text'. The textual families developed not as the various descendants of one common ancestor but as local attempts to produce standard texts from the sea of variants.

From the fact that most of the variants were generated at an early date (see i above), this second theory reasons

that there was a period of multiformity before a period of local uniformity, and a period of local uniformity before a period of empire-wide uniformity. According to this theory, the variations between the extant ancient manuscripts (recognised by all), reflect the true situation at this early date and not an anomalous situation to be explained by the supposition that only bad manuscripts could have survived. The theory explains the present 'majority text' as the result of a process by which one form of text became the universally acknowledged standard of the Eastern Empire.

Here, then, we have two alternative (and very different) theories, each of which is consistent with the manuscript evidences outlined in i-iii above. Either theory could therefore be a correct explanation of this evidence. Pickering argues his case by an appeal to a theory of textual transmission. Given, he argues, the early recognition of the New Testament writings as Scripture, and the consequent reverence of the copyists for the text, it is not reasonable to suppose that the majority of manuscripts would have become corrupted. But such an argument, however reasonable it might seem and however much it might commend itself to those who love the Scriptures, is entirely conjectural: it is simply an argument as to how we might expect the New Testament manuscripts to have been copied if certain other conditions applied. On the other hand, those advocating the second theory outlined above might equally argue that their theory is the more reasonable. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that the extant ancient manuscripts are a fair representation of the state of the text at that date than to introduce the hypothesis that only bad manuscripts survive? Faced with these alternative theories, is there any objective way of choosing between them, or must we simply opt for whichever we happen to prefer?

There is one unambiguous way of settling the argument, and that is by appeal to the text used by the fathers of the early Christian Church. According to the theory of Pickering, the variations in the readings of the still extant ancient manuscripts are abnormal. From the

beginning, the normal transmission of good copies of the originals constituted the universally recognised majority text (see pp.106-107). The text used by the orthodox fathers of the Christian Church would therefore have been very little different from the present 'majority text'. According to the second theory, since the existing ancient manuscripts are a fair representation of the state of the text in the early centuries, we would expect to find a similar broad variety of readings in the writings of the Christian fathers (including, of course, those readings which later made up the current 'majority text'). Here, then, is a method of judging between the two theories. If the readings of the fathers show a small range of variations, similar to those within the current 'majority text', then Pickering's theory is to be preferred. But, if the readings from the fathers show a large range of variations, similar to those found within the ancient manuscripts still extant (papyri and uncials), then the second theory is to be preferred.

The patristic evidence is not, of course, without its problems. Nevertheless, the general character of the readings in the early fathers is also not in dispute. Pickering presents us with a catena of quotations which show that the Christian fathers display a wide variety of textual readings (pp.62-68). It is quite true that they do give readings agreeing with the current 'majority text', but they also present us with a wide variety of variants, in every way similar to those found in the extant ancient manuscripts. According to the theory of Pickering this should not be so: he argues that the autographs were still in existence at the beginning of the third century! (p.103) and that the correct text was therefore unambiguously well known among the orthodox during this period. The evidence from the writings of the fathers (the diversity of their readings) demonstrates that the correct text was certainly not unambiguously well known among the bishops and Christian leaders of the church in the second to fourth centuries. We may regret this, we may wish that it were otherwise, but the evidence will really not permit us to avoid this conclusion. In short, then, Pickering's theory simply will not stand up to the test of the evidence.

At this point we ought to make it very clear that the alternative theory which we have outlined above does not depend for its validity upon any of the conjectures of Hort - not on the Lucianite origin of the 'Syrian text', nor on the superiority of the Alexandrian text, nor on the late date of the Peshitta. The theory does not depend upon our ability to reconstruct the genealogical connections between the various manuscripts, neither is the theory embarrassed by the degree of disagreement between the ancient manuscripts - on the contrary, it fully acknowledges this diversity. It is precisely for this reason that detailed refutations of the textual theories of Westcott and Hort, such as that presented by Pickering, are neither arguments for the superiority of the Received Text, nor are they arguments against the alternative textual theory which we have outlined above.

Be sure that we write to you out of a genuine and loving concern. We see our churches divided by the issue of the various human translations of the Word of God..... May God enable us to contend for the truth in a spirit of love, but may He keep us from contentious defence of our personal prejudices and traditions for these can only lead to enmity and strife.

With sincere greetings in Christ,

Revs R.J.Sheehan, S.P.Dray and
Mr P.M.Misselbrook, London.

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CHURCH AND NATIONHOOD: a collection of papers

Edited by Lionel Holmes Published
by World Evangelical Fellowship
Theological Commission
pp.88 Paperback £1.00

This small volume is made up of nine papers given at Basel in September 1976 at a "consultation", together with a brief foreward, by the editor, and what is called "the

Basel Letter", which is the key to the papers which follow. In this letter we discover the *raison d'etre* for the consultation, and here too are set out the basic Gospel principles which recur throughout the papers.

All men bear the image of God and, even though marred by sin, that image is being restored in those who believe through the redemptive work of Christ. Men are transformed into new creatures by the grace of God, and this bears on the present as well as the future. The Church is God's new community, His new people. "Loyalty to this new community does not preclude loyalties to nationhood". Through His people God is working out His purposes for the world. We are to be salt that has savour, and light shining to God's glory in the world's darkness. We are more than conquerors now, and "we look forward to God's final triumph in history."

In the light of these principles we need to consider the diverse situations the people of God currently face: many are called to suffer as well as believe (Phil.1.29). How do we respond to hostility from authorities and governments? We are to be good citizens, seeking justice, and "the peace of the city" (Jer.29.7). We are to pray for those in authority. At the same time we must refuse "to grant to Caesar what is God's alone", even though this may lead to direct conflict with the state. We can only do this in the power which God gives, and by "living every day with eternity's realities in view" (Col.3.1-2).

Four-fifths of mankind live in situations of confrontation between Church and State: the papers are intended to provide guidance and encouragement to Christians in such situations. There is occasional overlapping and repetition, and the papers vary in quality somewhat, but these things are inevitable in a symposium of this kind. The brief notes on the contributors are most interesting, but they suggest a predominance of academics (five) and administrators (two) with one bishop and only one working pastor.

Despite this, the book is far from being academic in emphasis: the writers are very much in touch with present realities, and the papers are grounded in present day situations; they also cover a wide section of the world-

scene.

For several reasons this book deserves to be commended to British Evangelicals at this time:

1. It raises issues and asks questions which are all too often treated with disinterest and even brushed aside as "worldly" or "merely political". These are social and practical problems which Christians are having to face now in many places. We shall probably have to face them ourselves, and it may be sooner rather than later.

2. The situations described in other parts of the world today demand our attention and our concern; after all, it is members of the same body who are suffering. In many areas Christians are a suppressed and persecuted minority: in Pakistan, Malaya, some African states, and East Germany, to name but a few of those areas. We can become far too parochial in our outlook, and it is high time we knew what our brethren in such places are having to pay for being Christians. Some of the facts about the persecution of Asian Christians are highly disturbing. The execution of five hundred ministers in Korea (1950-53); the disappearance of the visible church in China during the Cultural Revolution (1966-69); the massacres in Cambodia (since 1975); and reports from Vietnam; these ought to shock us out of our sleepy complacency. (All these are referred to in Dr Bong Ro's paper, a most challenging and thought-provoking analysis of persecution under hostile governments).

3. We have present duties and responsibilities as Christians. We are to pray for rulers: how seriously do we take God's word in this matter? We are to live the Christian life faithfully, no matter what the circumstances.

We are to be faithful to the Lord even if persecuted to the point of death. There is a striking illustration of such faithfulness in the case of the Cambodian major who left wife and family in Britain, and returned to help the infant Cambodian church in face of certain death (p.58)

4. We need to be prepared for persecution: even trained, so that we know how best to deal with it when it comes. This

involves working out Biblical principles to help ourselves and other Evangelicals face such a situation. We need to formulate a theology which includes this whole matter. In doing so one principle must regulate our thinking: the vertical, spiritual relationship (i.e. with God) must never become subordinate to the horizontal relationship between men and men.

These matters may sound unimportant to some; even strange for Evangelicals to be concerned with. All the more necessary for us to read this book and to consider thoughtfully and prayerfully its lessons and warnings; then we should work out its implications in the Evangelical church life of Britain today.

Rev Gwilym Roberts BA BD, Wrexham

HANS KUNG - HIS WORK AND HIS WAY Edited by H.Haring &
K.J.Kuschel.
Collins 1979 252pp £1.50

This is a most useful book particularly for the person who wants a reliable and stimulating introduction to the Swiss Catholic theologian, Hans Kung. The aim of the book is to 'sketch a portrait of this theologian, to outline the basic characteristics both of his work and of the man himself and to indicate what has been constant and what has changed in his development' (p7). Through essays, an interview and comprehensive documentation the book admirably achieves its purpose.

There are four parts to the book. First of all, a chronological summary from his birth in 1928 at Lucerne up until 1978. This summary helpfully sets out on facing pages data about his life and work then key events in the history of the church and world at that time with reference to the basic elements in Kung's conflict with the official church.

The second section, consists of essays chosen in order to provide an introduction to his major writings. Subjects dealt with include Justification, the nature of the church, Christology and infallibility. In the third section nearly 60 pages are given over to a detailed interview with Kung in which he speaks in detail about his background, conflicts, motives, influences upon him (especially

Barth) and the future task of theology and the Roman Church.

The final section provides a complete bibliography of Kung's published works from 1955-1978 the list is almost endless!

This is a most readable and informative book, providing us with important background to the present turmoil within the Roman Church. Read it!

Eryl Davies

Contributors to this Journal enjoy reasonable liberty in reverent exposition of the Word of God and in the expression of their personal convictions within the context of the Doctrinal Basis of the B.E.C.

The views expressed, therefore, do not necessarily form definitive statements of B.E.C policy.

Those wishing for further information about the aims, activities and Doctrinal Basis of the B.E.C. are invited to contact its General Secretary (Rev Roland Lamb) at 21 Woodstock Road North, St.Albans, Herts AL1 4QB Telephone:
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