

## Reviews of Books

---

*Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic; Leicester: IVP Apollos, 2007. xxviii + 1239 pages, £29.99, ISBN: 978-1-84474-196-0

---

Many years ago, when I was an undergraduate, I was able to attend a question and answer session featuring Don Carson. I am sure there were many useful and instructive discussions, but only one of the questions and answers still remains in my mind over fifteen years later. Carson was asked how far Christians should take the apostles' model of OT interpretation as a basis for their own. His reply was swift and to the point, 'About as far as you are an apostle.' Which is to say, not at all.

The ongoing debates concerning the New Testament's use of the Old encompass both the nature of the hermeneutics employed by the NT authors, and the appropriation of those hermeneutics by contemporary interpreters. There are those who continue to insist that the NT authors were always and only doing good grammatical-historical exegesis when they used the OT texts, while at the other end of the spectrum some scholars find evidence for all kinds of interpretative techniques in the NT use of the OT, and conclude that modern exegetes should adopt a similar range of methods in their own interpretation. The middle ground espoused by Carson all those years ago, has more recently been represented by the likes of Richard Longenecker (*Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999]), whose view is that evangelical commitment is only to the apostolic faith, and not to their exegetical practice.

Until now, these debates have necessarily focused on a limited number of examples in the absence of any systematic examination of the instances where NT writers quote or allude to the OT. This new *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, edited

by Carson together with Greg Beale, and featuring an impressive array of contributors, unashamedly refuses to enter directly into the debates, but instead offers a much-needed survey of the data. Tantalising hints of the discussion that lies behind the book appear in the introduction, where Carson and Beale explain that contributors were encouraged to employ 'an eclectic grammatical-historical literary method' (xxvii). The editors acknowledge the scholarly consensus that the NT authors adopted contemporary Jewish practices and presuppositions in their interpretations, but raise the question of why, given that this was the case, the Jewish and Christian interpreters arrived at such different conclusions. Could it be that 'exegetical techniques and hermeneutical assumptions do not determine very much after all' (xxv)? Fascinating though it would be to read more of the editors' answers to such questions, that is not the purpose of this book, and as they themselves point out, these issues have all been discussed elsewhere. Their goal in this volume was to produce a commentary on the NT's use of the OT and as such, the majority of the book is rightly given over to discussion of the texts themselves. This makes it both an invaluable new resource for the Christian exegete of either Testament and a source of important evidence in further debates concerning apostolic hermeneutics.

The Commentary is in fact a collection of commentaries by a number of different authors, covering every book of NT. The authors have sought to identify all OT quotations and 'probable' allusions in the NT text (xxiii). Six questions govern the treatment of these: the NT context; the OT context; the use of the OT source in second temple Judaism; any pertinent textual issues; the nature of connection between OT and its NT use; and finally the theological purpose of the quotation or allusion. It bears all the hallmarks of a scientific enterprise: observation and collection of data by a consistent method.

An extremely valuable index allows the reader to search by OT text (or indeed across the wide range of extra-biblical literature also used in the book). The Song of Songs provides an interesting test case for the Commentary, in the light of the all-too frequent claim that it is not quoted or alluded to at all in the NT. Of a promising 14 passages referenced in the index, one is an error (the text on p. 868 refers to Daniel 2:16-18, not Song 2:16-18) and a number refer to different instances of the same refrain in the Song. Ten distinct NT passages

are thus linked in some way to texts in the Song. In precisely half of these the references to the Song are used simply as general background evidence for the OT context of the quoted passage, or are referred to in relevant rabbinic arguments. Only five direct allusions to the Song, then, are listed in the whole of the NT. These five are a thought-provoking collection: Song 2:1 in Luke 12:27 (note that the commenters on the parallel synoptic passages do not mention this allusion); Song 2:7 and *passim* in Luke 23:28; Song 2:16 and *passim* in 1 Cor. 7:4; Song 5:7 in Luke 6:29; and Song 8:2a in John 14:3. Some of these allusions are stronger than others (as the different commentators recognise). It is particularly striking that three of the five allusions are found in the commentary on Luke by David Pao and Eckhard Schnabel. It is possible that this indicates a stronger link between Luke's Gospel and the Song than has previously been noted. Could it be, however, that it simply results from a greater familiarity with the Song on the part of Pao and Schnabel, or a greater sensitivity to allusion? Perhaps this enterprise is not quite so scientific as at first it appears.

The list of allusions to the Song is certainly an indication of the level of original, creative and insightful work contained throughout this volume. Yet it is striking that some of the more obvious allusions in the NT to the Song are ignored. For example, Craig Blomberg does not mention an allusion to Song 3:6-11 in Matthew 2:11, despite this being the only OT passage that mentions all three elements of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Greg Beale and Sean McDonough refer to other OT versions of the possession formula in their comments on Revelation 21:3, but not to its use in the Song (2:16, 6:3, 7:10); none of the commenters on the synoptic gospels see that the lesson of the fig tree (Matt 24:32-33; Mark 13:28-29; Luke 21:29-30) is an allusion to Song 2:8-13.

At least some omissions may fairly be put down to constraints of space, and there is certainly no suggestion that the commentators have been neglectful, nor wilfully blind. Rather, users of the commentary should be aware of the enormity of the task undertaken by its authors in producing the first volume of this kind, and thus should be prepared for it to exhibit some idiosyncrasies, gaps, and errors.

More significantly, however, the unpredictable nature of the

allusions that are discussed in the commentary is an indication of the inevitable subjectivity of this kind of exercise. Whilst the criteria for quotations are relatively easy to determine, the criteria for allusions are much more complex. Robert Alter, in *The Pleasures of Reading* (Norton, 1996), lists various categories of literary allusion and makes the point that in our modern western culture, with such a vast canon of literature and no tradition of memorisation, we are much less likely to discern intended allusions than we are to spot unintended ones. In view of this, one could wish that the authors of the Commentary had sometimes cast their nets wider. But this is perhaps an unfair criticism for a book already more than 1200 pages in length!

Each quotation or allusion is discussed, often in considerable detail, in an attempt to understand the NT author's intention in using the earlier text. Due attention is given not only to the OT and NT contexts, but also to the interpretative traditions associated with the OT texts in the intertestamental period, on the assumption that the NT authors and their readers are likely to have been familiar with some or all of these. In some cases, a fuller treatment of these interpretative traditions would have been valuable (for example, Moisés Silva commenting on Gal 3:11-12 notes the use of Hab 2:4 in 1QpHab VIII, 1-3, but fails to mention the significant interpretative tradition associated with the other text cited by Paul in those verses, Lev 18:5). As one would expect, the commentators discern a variety of hermeneutical methods in the NT use of the OT texts. It will be hard to argue, in the face of the vast quantity of evidence now available through this commentary, that every instance can be explained in purely grammatical-historical terms. For instance, Rikk E. Watts shows that the author of Hebrews employs a variety of rabbinic techniques including *gezerah shavah* (bringing two disparate texts together on the basis of shared vocabulary), *hāraz* (pearl-stringing of a number of texts), and *qal wahomer* (inference from minor to major) (923). By contrast Beale and McDonough identify John's use of the OT in the book of Revelation under the more common Christian categories of promise-fulfilment, analogy, inversion or irony, and adoption of imagery. Interestingly, they also discern wider literary influence from the OT on John's work, suggesting that he 'sometimes uses segments of OT Scripture as a literary prototype on which to pattern his creative compositions' (1086). These can be

considered as 'interpretive expansions of an OT prototype' (1087). Such creative expansions can hardly be viewed as the usual outcome of grammatical-historical exegesis! It would be fascinating to have more detailed analysis of the ways in which these kinds of OT influences are used in Revelation, but sadly this commentary is one of the most cramped (perhaps because of the sheer number of OT allusions and quotations to be found) and thus, least useful, in the whole volume.

This commentary is surely an invaluable contribution to the study of the use of the OT in the NT, but it is not the last word. It is however, an excellent starting point for any discussion of individual texts or of general principles and the authors and editors are to be thanked for their vision and hard work in putting this much-needed volume together.

R. S. CLARKE

Highland Theological College, Dingwall.

---

*Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God*, Timothy Ward. Nottingham: IVP, 2009. 186 pages, £9.99, ISBN: 978-1-84474-207-3

---

This relatively short book makes a careful and valuable contribution to the evangelical doctrine of Scripture. Even if you do not agree with everything you find here or are left thinking that you would not have put it quite like that, you should find *Words of Life* stimulating. I was left wanting more. The book is significant reading for anyone interested in the doctrine of Scripture, which is, of course, in some ways foundational to all theology. Timothy Ward has two groups in mind to whom his distinctive approach may particularly appeal. First, the work may appropriately restrain some of those who are tempted to be over-zealous defenders of the Bible and encourage amongst evangelicals a more nuanced and profound appreciation of the nature and purpose of the Scriptures. Second, those with some sympathy for a traditional conservative doctrine of the Bible who are inclined to dismiss inerrancy or call for the revision or rejection of other aspects

of the doctrine of Scripture may find reassurance here that the Bible's own view of the Bible is able to take account of their legitimate concerns.

Revd Dr Timothy Ward is the Vicar of Holy Trinity, Hinckley in Leicestershire. He trained at Oak Hill Theological College, writes as a self-conscious evangelical and describes himself as a Calvinist. His PhD on the doctrine of Scripture was supervised by Kevin Vanhoozer whom he acknowledges as a continuing academic influence (9). Vanhoozer seems to have contributed a foreword to the American IVP Academic edition.

Ward's project is to understand, defend and apply the classic Christian confession that the Bible is the Word of God. He contends that this view of the Bible is equivalent to the evangelical Reformation doctrine of Scripture associated with the slogan of the likes of B. B. Warfield that 'what the Bible says, God says'. Ward is particularly concerned to show that this conservative reception of the Bible need not lead to bibliolatry (the worship of a book) nor to the replacement of Christ with the Bible. Thus, Ward describes his task as '*attempting to describe the nature of the relationship between God and Scripture*' (13, emphasis original).

Ward wants to be faithful to the best of the tradition but not simply to repeat the work of previous generations. He seeks to give a fresh articulation to classic Christian and evangelical doctrines that is oriented to the needs and objections of today. Ward says he has primarily drawn on the work of Calvin, Turretin, Warfield and Bavinck (20). Bavinck's is particularly commended as 'one of the most spiritually vital doctrines of Scripture I know of, while still being thought through with sharpness and care' (53). Along the way, brief historical sketches are provided, drawing especially on the early church, the Reformers and their successors. Whilst Ward repudiates the caricature of the post-Reformation scholastics corrupting the work of the Reformers, he does think that some later evangelical defences of the Bible have lacked depth or precision and have been superficial or unattractive.

In particular, Ward wants his doctrinal account of the traditional attributes of Scripture (chapter 4) to be shaped by the Bible itself (chapter 2) and located theologically (chapter 3). Commending what might be called a biblical-theology approach over an exclusively or

prematurely dogmatic one, he argues that our doctrine of the Bible needs to be attentive to the content and shape of the Bible itself. Ward also urges a conscious and explicit attempt to integrate the doctrine of Scripture theologically with the doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, creation and salvation, thus relating the doctrine of Scripture to the great central themes of the Christian faith. He thereby aims to show that the doctrine of the Bible is central to faith, life and relationship to Christ, not a dispensable preface or appendix to Christianity but 'part of the heartbeat of theology itself rather than 'a kind of theological throat-clearing' (18).

In his biblical outline in chapter 2, the fundamental question Ward addresses is 'what, according to the Bible, is in fact going on when God speaks?' (22). In the Bible God creates by speaking and God's speaking is central to his work of redemption as he establishes his covenant by making promises. To encounter God's Word is to encounter God in communicative action.

The theological account of the Bible in chapter 3 is structured along Trinitarian lines. For Ward, the Bible is above all the Father's covenant book which presents to us God himself as promise-keeping. It is through the written Word that the Incarnate Word continues to act and present himself so that he may be known. The Bible is our means of encountering Christ rather than a potential rival to him. The covenant fulfilled in Christ calls us to faith and to covenant faithfulness. The Spirit inspired, preserves and illumines the written Word. Whilst Ward defends the plenary verbal inspiration of Scripture, he argues that it is better to focus on the inspiration of its speech acts (which form its basic communicative units) rather than on its words in isolation. 'The Spirit acts to minister the meaning of the words of Scripture, not to manipulate or modify it' (96).

Ward's description of the nature and purpose of the Bible draws on the speech act theory of language and communication pioneered by the secular philosophers J. L. Austin and John R. Searle, especially as developed in an ethical direction by theologian Nicholas Wolterstorff. Speech act theory seeks to analyse the way speakers use words to do things, not only stating propositions but acting, creating relationships, warning, promising, commanding and so on, and considers the effects that utterances have. Ward argues persuasively that this description of how words work reflects the Bible's own view

of words as means by which persons act and do things in the world, and is especially appropriate to God's powerfully efficacious Word, by which he creates and saves and relates to his people.

Ward's doctrinal description of the Bible in chapter 4 defends its necessity, sufficiency, clarity and authority. Ward's account of these traditional attributes of Scripture is careful and circumscribed, drawing on the previous biblical and theological groundwork and also spelling out what these affirmations do *not* mean. The Bible is necessary because the covenant-making, promising God wants us to trust, love and obey him. Scripture is sufficient as the means God uses to establish this relationship and is clear as the basis on which we may respond to him in covenant faithfulness. The authority of the Bible is shorthand for 'the authority of God as he speaks through Scripture' (130). Since the Bible is the Word of God, like God himself it is entirely trustworthy and infallible and inerrant in all that it affirms. However, Ward argues that inerrancy 'ought not to occupy a central place in our doctrine of Scripture' since it only focuses on the propositional statements of the Bible (137). Inerrancy must take its natural and proper place within an account of the Bible as 'the means of God's revelatory and redemptive action towards us' (138).

Throughout, Ward has attempted to present the Scriptures as dynamic and life-giving and a final chapter discusses the Bible and the Christian life, applying the doctrine of Scripture to the use of the Bible by the Christian community and the individual. He relates preaching to the Spirit's work in the Bible, the preacher and the church. Ward argues that individual believers' private reading of Scripture is 'derivative of, and dependant on, the corporate reading and proclamation of Scripture in the Christian assembly' (173).

In his treatment of *sola scriptura*, Ward endorses Keith Mathison's formulation that 'our final authority is Scripture alone, but not a Scripture that is alone' (148-9). Scripture is the only infallible and supreme authority, but not the only authority or all that is needed: '*Sola scriptura* means "Scripture supreme"' (153). Ward rejects an 'Anabaptist' approach of the-Bible-only, '*solo scriptura*', which exalts individuals' interpretations of Scripture over the consensus of the church down the years. He defends the coherence of holding a high view of the role and authority of the visible church alongside a firm commitment to *sola scriptura*.

One of Ward's points is that the Bible should not be treated as an exhaustive text book, and at 186 pages, this relatively slim volume is not that either. He admits that he has only proposed an outline and says that to criticise him for dealing 'too sketchily with one issue or another is probably to look for more than I have intended to offer' (180). Having said that, there are lots of interesting and useful things along the way, such as a brief response to Barth's criticisms of the evangelical view of Scripture, or mention of canonicity, dynamic equivalence translations, deconstructionism and more. The footnotes provide a number of useful pointers to other works, such as John Wenham's *Christ and the Bible*, in which Wenham shows that Jesus himself held to an evangelical view of the Bible.

Some readers familiar with Ward's work may wish to know that earlier versions of some parts of this book have been previously published in Ward's *Word and Supplement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); David Peterson, ed., *The Word Became Flesh* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003); Lynn Quigley (ed.) *Reformed Theology in Contemporary Perspective* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2006); and David F. Wright (ed.) *Spirit of Truth and Power* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2001).

MARC LLOYD  
Eastbourne

---

*Signs of God's Promise: Thomas Cranmer's Sacramental Theology and the Book of Common Prayer*, Gordon P. Jeanes. London: T & T Clark, 2008. xiv + 305 pages, £24.99, ISBN 978-0-567-03189-1

---

The sacraments are central to Anglican worship and life, and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer is central to Anglican sacramentology. This tome by Gordon Jeanes, which began as a study of baptism in Anglican theology and liturgy, is motivated by the lack of consensus that surrounds Anglicanism's liturgical father on the sacraments and intends to arrive at a sure understanding of its maturation and impact on the sacramental rites of the *Book of Common Prayer*. *Signs of God's Promise* is not for novices or those possessing anything less than

considerable familiarity with Cranmer's corpus and the literature of Reformation England. Jeanes assumes his readers have substantial knowledge of the materials he discusses, rarely introducing them or explaining their significance. Rare too are the instances in which Jeanes signposts his arguments.

The author begins with an overview of pre-Reformation English sacramental practice and experience. He draws from the *Sarum Manual, A Declaracion of the Seremonies a nexid to the Sacrament of Baptyme* attributed to Thomas Gibson, the *Rationale of Ceremonial* and anecdotal reflections. The next two chapters look at the sacramental controversies during the Reformation, the influence of Lutheran and Reformed theologies on the English debates and track Cranmer's responses and shifts. Jeanes is often dependent upon existing studies, such as Diarmaid MacCulloch's magisterial *Thomas Cranmer* (Yale University Press, 1998). His treatment, while establishing the relevant sources, is not detailed as those studies.

The heart of the book is found in chapters 4 and 5: chapter 4 considers Cranmer's mature sacramental theology, chapter 5, the sacramental rites of the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books. After concluding in chapter 3 that there were signs of a definitive alteration in Cranmer's sacramental theology noticed around the 1548 House of Lords debate, Jeanes turns in chapter 4 to Cranmer's two works, *Defence* and *Answer*, in order to explore this change more fully. He exposites the key ideas in these texts and notes along the way various influential/contrasting figures such as the Strasbourg reformer Martin Bucer, Ulrich Zwingli's successor in Zurich, Heinrich Bullinger, and the Italian Peter Martyr Vermigli. Using Brian Gerrish's typology of Reformation sacramentology, Jeanes contends Cranmer advocated 'symbolic instrumentalism' though his theology was more akin to 'symbolic parallelism'. As to the Prayer Books, Jeanes finds that the baptismal rite was derived from the Lutheran Albertine Saxony *Kirchenordnung* of 1540. Jeanes uncovers a number of influences upon Cranmer's Eucharist rite, particularly Bucer and the Eastern liturgies of epiclesis. Cranmer always prioritised the work of the Spirit upon the believer over the consecration of the elements. The sacraments are signs of God's promises and therefore intended to provoke the participants' faith.

Jeanes's study ends like it began, a commentary on sacramental

experience and administration. This time, however, he concentrates solely on baptism as set forth in the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books. Jeanes once again observes how Cranmer's service is designed to solicit the people's response of faith.

It is difficult to know how to interact with this book. As mentioned above, it is fairly inaccessible and not argumentatively clear. It is not best categorised as an historical study, for, though Jeanes is attentive to historical influences and sources, he does not give readers much insight into the times and circumstances of these. Nor is the book conceptual; while aware of the issues, Jeanes is a bit brisk when it comes to theological and philosophical analysis. The work is perhaps best understood as a documentary study. The author is most often concerned with establishing the sources and simply highlighting their contents. Much of the synthesis and understanding are left to the reader.

*Signs of God's Promise* is thus a resource that can be consulted with benefit by those interested in which texts are important for an understanding Cranmer's sacramentology. Jeanes has provided readers with an authoritative outline of the key documents. After directing our attention to those key sources, he constructs the documentary development of Cranmer's thought and liturgies. But, as most of the energy is directed toward mere documentation, the burden falls on readers of gaining a substantial grasp of their theological, liturgical and historical significance.

JAMES R. A. MERRICK

King's College, University of Aberdeen

---

*The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*, Paul L. Gavrilyuk. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. xii + 210 pages, £23.00, ISBN: 0-19-9297-11-8

---

This stimulating volume explores several Christological controversies in order to defend the patristic consensus on divine impassibility against its contemporary detractors. More specifically, Gavrilyuk aims to show that what he calls the 'Theory of Theology's Fall into Hellenistic Philosophy' in relation to divine impassibility is mistaken.

He outlines the theory in five points:

(1) divine impassibility is an attribute of God in Greek and Hellenistic philosophy; (2) divine impassibility was adopted by the early Fathers uncritically from the philosophers; (3) divine impassibility does not leave room for any sound account of divine emotions and divine involvement in history, as attested in the Bible; (4) divine impassibility is incompatible with the revelation of the suffering God in Jesus Christ; (5) the latter fact was recognized by a minority group of theologians who affirmed that God is passible, going against the majority opinion (5, 176).

In chapter one, he tackles points 1 and 2 by arguing that they misrepresent both the Greek philosophers and the Scriptures. The Epicureans, Stoics, and Middle Platonists held to diverse and conflicting accounts of the divine nature, whilst the Bible contains material that points in the direction of divine impassibility as well as texts that ascribe emotions to God by virtue of anthropopathism. In chapter two, he addresses points 2 and 3, demonstrating that in patristic thought impassibility serves to distance the Creator God from the all too passible gods of pagan mythology, that it is an apophatic qualifier safeguarding God's divinity and transcendence, and that it is consistent with certain carefully nuanced, emotionally coloured characteristics such as love, mercy, compassion, and even anger. Underlying each of these is the biblical Creator-creature distinction.

The heart of the book is chapters three to six, where Gavriilyuk refutes points 4 to 5 of the Fall Thesis by examining various Christological controversies: Docetism in the second century, Patripassianism in the third, Arianism in the fourth, and Nestorianism in the fifth. He plausibly argues that at the heart of each of the controversies was the issue of the impassibility of God, and his relation to the passible world of creatures. Against the first three errors, the fathers maintained that in the incarnation the Word participated fully in the human experiences of birth, suffering and death; the Father did not become incarnate, nor did he suffer; and the Word who became incarnate was coequal with God, and not a passible inferior to the impassible High God. However, a full conceptual analysis of how the impassible God was able to suffer in the flesh awaited Cyril's of Alexandria's response to the Nestorian controversy.

Following Theodore of Mopsuestia, and in order to protect divine impassibility, Nestorius argued that in the incarnate Christ there were

two subjects: one in the form of God, who was impassible, and one in the form of a slave, who was passible. The Creator-creature distinction must govern the relationship of Christ's divine and human natures. Against this, Cyril maintained the unity of the incarnate Word: the one in the form of God remained the same one as he humbled himself to take on the form of a slave. The impassible Word emptied himself when he took on flesh, and in his flesh (and his rational soul) he suffered. Nevertheless, he remained fully divine, and in his divine nature remained impassible throughout the incarnation: the bare Word could not suffer, yet as a man he did. The presence of the Word meant that unlike all other human suffering, his was always freely chosen, and it was never overwhelming: Christ endured suffering out of compassion for the human race and conquered it. His suffering was never less than human, but it was never merely human. The incarnate Word suffered impassibly.

Throughout, Gavriilyuk's arguments are careful and nuanced, and he commands an impressive range of primary texts and secondary scholarship. Nevertheless, the elegance of his prose, and the clarity of his exposition mean that the argument is never hard to follow.

For a full dogmatic account of the issue of God's (im)passibility, more engagement with the biblical text would be required, particularly given the importance of Scriptural interpretation for the Fathers themselves. Gavriilyuk does outline Cyril's use of his favourite text, Philippians 2:5-11 and shows its relevance for the issue at hand, but he does not offer a full evaluation of whether the text can sustain the weight of demonstrating divine impassibility in the incarnation.

In chapter one, as we have seen, he argues that the Scriptures contain anti-anthropomorphic and anti-anthropopathic tendencies alongside descriptions of God's emotions. To do this, he lists 'an imposing number of biblical passages that present conflicting views about divine (im)passibility and (im)mutability' (38), rightly arguing that these texts must be interpreted canonically, as a coherent whole. In a fascinating argument, he demonstrates how the LXX has a tendency towards anti-anthropopathic and anti-anthropomorphic translations of some (though not all) of the key Hebrew texts that predicate emotions and actions of God such as grief and repentance. He then examines the contribution of Philo, a pre-Christian Jewish exegete who argued for divine impassibility, and for whom 'there are

two principal positions laid down with respect to the great cause of all things: one that God is not as a man [Num. 23:19; cf. Hos. 11:9]; the other that God is as a man [Deut. 8:5]' (43, quoting *Quod deus sit immutabilis* 53). Thus, he claims to demonstrate that there is a tendency away from anthropomorphism and anthropopathism *within* pre-Christian Judaism, and that this tendency in the fathers is therefore not solely due to Hellenistic influence.

However, although this reviewer is persuaded that the Scriptures teach divine impassibility, Gavriyuk fails to sustain his case fully. In order to do so, he would have needed not simply to list 'conflicting' texts, and assert their canonical coherence, but also to have exegeted at least some of them, and demonstrated that an impassibilist integration provides the most coherent account of the data. In dealing with the LXX, he also would need to address the possibilities that in their anti-anthropopathic tendencies, the translators were motivated by an alien philosophical framework brought to the Scriptures rather than by Scripture itself, and that the fathers, who worked from the LXX rather than the Hebrew original, were not misled into a doctrine of divine impassibility by the translation they were using, and that if they had had access to the text we now have, they would have been theopaschites.

Nevertheless, within the confines of a study that is primarily historical rather than exegetical and doctrinal, Gavriyuk succeeds admirably in defending the fathers from the charge that their God was held captive by alien philosophical constraints, and in showing the importance of Cyril's affirmation that the Word suffered impassibly in the flesh he had assumed.

MATTHEW W. MASON  
Tunbridge Wells

---

*Reforming or Conforming? Post-Conservative Evangelicals and the Emerging Church*, Gary L. W. Johnson and Ronald N. Gleason, eds. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008. 300 pages, \$20.00, ISBN: 978-1-4335-0118-0 (ISBN-10 1-4335-0118-X)

---

This book is a collection of twelve essays, plus an introduction by

Gary Johnson and a foreword by David F. Wells. It offers a critique of various strands within the Emerging Church Movement (hereafter, and often in the book ECM), with considerable depth and precision. The essays range from the general – for example Phil Johnson in chapter 9, who provides a general critique of the diversity of ECM in terms of postmodernism, doctrinal indifference and self defence, or the final chapter of the book by Gary Gilley, which summarises many of the doctrines held, and not held, by those within the emerging church – to the specific, for example Paul Kjoss Helseth's chapter 5, dealing with Right Reason at Old Princeton.

There is much to be commended about this book. A good index is always appreciated, and all the chapters are well referenced and thought provoking, and one finds evidence of genuine engagement with the primary texts of the ECM. Principally, this means Brian McLaren, and his theology is the subject of a number of chapters – Guy Prentiss Waters deals with the relationship between McLaren and N. T. Wright, particularly on kingdom (chapter 8), and Gary Gilbert considers his approach to the Doctrine of Hell, particularly McLaren's argument that Jesus' use of hell was rhetorical (chapter 11). There is also a consciousness of the diversity of the ECM, and the book engages with other thinkers such as John Franke (chapter 3), Rob Bell and Doug Pagitt.

The ECM is a diverse movement, and once or twice this book suffers from the breadth of subject matter which could be discussed here. Modernism (chapters 5 and 6 by Helseth and Jeffrey C. Waddington respectively deal with modernism and its interaction with Old Princeton and Cornelius Van Til) and Postmodernism are dealt with successfully, and there is good engagement with the New Perspective on Paul (NPP). However, a number of authors critique the seeker-sensitive/megachurch/consumer church movement without clear referencing, and the attempt in chapter 7 (Ronald Gleason) to link the Federal Vision with NPP, and to argue that both are part of the problem with the ECM lacks the backing of much of the argument in its engagement with 'primary sources'. That is not to say that these critiques are not valid, and it may well be that the critique of the seeker-sensitive movement is so widely attested as to need no further evidence, but these brief sections are not as strong as the rest of the book.

As a further minor criticism, whilst Wells' foreword and Johnson's introduction are both stimulating and thought-provoking, neither gives a clear sense of what the ECM is as a whole. Perhaps an introduction summarising the various chapters in the book would have been helpful here, or one of the more general essays on the ECM (such as Johnson's chapter 9) might have begun this collection.

There is also much here that transcends the immediate conversation. Paul Helm's critique of Franke (chapter 3) develops into a helpful analysis of how to 'do' theology, and John Bolt's argument that metaphysics are essential to good theology (after the example of Augustine, Aquinas and Turretin) in chapter 2 provides a challenge to all who would call their theological method biblical. Also, for those wishing to understand the issues presented by modernity and postmodernity (or liquid modernity, as R. Scott Clark argues in chapter 4), this is a helpful book, and in engaging with the stance of those within ECM, many of the authors here provide clear and coherent statements of orthodox doctrine.

Overall then, this is an excellent and stimulating set of essays, which I would recommend to anyone who has an interest in the subject, and it is a clear demonstration of the intellectual health of Reformed Theology. It is not where one would start; the much referenced book by Don Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005) would be a better place to begin, but it is an excellent place to continue the conversation.

REV. JAMES T. HUGHES  
Cheshire

---

*Minority Report: Unpopular thoughts on everything from Ancient Christianity to Zen Calvinism*, Carl R. Trueman. Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2008. 221 pages, £12.99, ISBN: 978-1-84550-317-8

---

This volume is the second compilation of essays, lectures and e-zine articles from Carl Trueman, Professor of Historical Theology and Church history at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. The notes on the back cover promise reflections on contemporary

issues with plenty of laughs along the way, and in that respect the volume does not disappoint.

Trueman deals with a variety of subjects in the volume, as the subtitle suggests. These cover ground that is overtly theological (such as his review of *Is the Reformation Over?* by Noll and Nostrom), alongside observations taken from *American Idol*, the growth of the internet, or from the latest events in the circus of US evangelicalism. Whether critiquing western society's obsession with youth, or bringing the insights of patristic history to bear on the public fall of Ted Haggard, in each case Trueman employs his own theological depth and sharp powers of analysis in order to make reflections that stimulate, challenge, and even frustrate. As he does so, Trueman is not afraid to be himself, frequently peppering his thoughts with self-deprecating remarks about his musical tastes (Bob Dylan, Led Zeppelin, The Who, among others), or sharing his painful experiences of shopping for a present for his wife.

Trueman rather humorously admits that the book is 'without a theme and with no obvious market' (7). However, if there are any themes binding the elements of the book together then these arise, unsurprisingly, from the theological concerns and convictions of the author. Thus several recurring themes not only give the volume its closest stab at cohesion, but also, coming as they do from someone who operates self-consciously within the reformed tradition, serve as the book's real potential benefit to readers in the UK. These include Trueman's call to engage in Historical Theology and Church History, and his love for the Psalms and his conviction about their place in Christian worship. However, perhaps the most commonly recurring theme is his critique of what he himself calls the 'mere Christianity' of evangelicalism (128). Trueman argues that this tendency towards doctrinal minimalism has left evangelicalism unable to muster the theological nuance needed to protect the gospel – the core doctrines of the faith only making sense and being adequately protected where embedded in a more elaborate doctrinal framework. Therefore, although he is himself glad to self-identify as an evangelical, Trueman fears that 'evangelicalism is vulnerable of becoming more adequate as a psychological attitude than a true confession of belief in God' (130). What's more, postmodern evangelicalism's continuing commitment to this minimising task leaves them '[l]ike pouting teenagers in pre-

torn designer jeans and Che Guevara tee-shirts' who 'look angry and radical but are really as culturally conformist and conservative as a tall latte from Starbucks' (19). In making these criticisms Trueman is clear to state that he is not arguing that salvation depends on 'the individual's possession of an elaborate doctrinal system,' but rather that 'a Christianity which lacks this doctrinal elaboration, is an insufficient basis either for building a church or for guaranteeing the long-term stability of the tradition of the church, i.e. the transmission from generation to generation and from place to place of the faith once for all delivered to the saints' (20-21). An illustration of this is the way Trueman sees the parachurch minimalism of evangelicalism as having played a significant role in the way ecumenical dialogue between Evangelicals and Catholics has proceeded, arguing that apparent agreement on the doctrine of justification 'is indicative of how evangelicalism as a coalition movement has moved from its historic Protestant roots to something less well-defined in terms of doctrine' (89-94). The alternative to the parachurch minimalism of contemporary evangelicalism is a more theologically rich, historically-informed, ecclesiastical vision of the Christian life.

No doubt Trueman's reflections will not be to everyone's taste. In fact, given the range of subjects, it is inevitable that everyone will find something with which to disagree. Some readers will be frustrated by the way in which some thoughts are only partially developed, wishing for a more careful (and less polemical) formulation of his views. In his defence, this probably stems from what Trueman says in the introduction is the point of the volume – to provoke thought and discussion (7). However, this leads to perhaps the only 'serious' criticism to be made of the book, which consists in whether or not the original material which makes up *Minority Report* requires, or indeed benefits from, being published in this format. Whereas one certainly overlooks and possibly even expects blog posts and e-zine articles to contain partial arguments, snapshots, impressions, throwaway comments, and biting humour, the same kind of material can have an effect that was never intended when collected as a book. Consequently, read as a book, with article following article, the humour and the critical remarks can unfortunately begin to sound more grumpy than charming, an effect that would probably not have been felt in the original format. This is not so much a critique of the

material itself, but a question about whether this format can be justified as wise, especially in an evangelical marketplace where ‘of the publishing of many books there is (seemingly) no end.’ The thoughtful reader, armed with an awareness of this, will nevertheless benefit from Trueman’s provocation and insights.

PETE JACKSON  
Sheffield

---

*John Calvin and His Passion for the Majesty of God*, John Piper. Nottingham: IVP, 2009. 59 pages, £4.99, ISBN: 978-1-84474-356-8

---

For the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Calvin’s birth, John Piper has produced a short book using Calvin’s life and ministry to proclaim the need for a vision of the glory and majesty of God. Those familiar with Piper will find what they expect. Following Calvin, and more particularly, Jonathan Edwards, Piper’s books always extol the glory of God, and the importance of finding our joy in that glory.

This is not a biography, nor a theological history. Piper is scrupulously honest about his aim in writing: ‘The unhidden and unashamed aim in this book is to fan the flame of your passion for the centrality and supremacy of God’ (12). Piper uses vignettes from Calvin’s life, drawing no more than the broadest outline of a biography, and a useful survey of his writings and secondary literature, to draw out this theme of the majesty of God – Calvin’s vision of it, and the contemporary church’s need of it. Piper suggests this drive for the glory of God as the reason for Reformation underlying the specific theological issues – justification, the Lord’s Supper, Mariolatry and others. In 1539, responding to a letter from Cardinal Sadolet, Calvin ‘saw in Sadolet’s letter the same thing [Lesslie] Newbigin sees in self-saturated evangelicalism’ (16) that is, an anthropocentric faith. So Piper sums up Calvin’s life and work: ‘zeal to illustrate the glory of God ... *he recovered and embodied a passion for the absolute reality and majesty of God*’ (16).

The book is delightfully concise, read in about half an hour. There are some wonderful moments of reflection from Piper, for example

observing of Calvin's arrival in Geneva in 1536 because troop movements had blocked his intended road to Strasbourg, 'In retrospect, one has to marvel at the providence of God that he should so arrange armies to position his pastors where he wanted them' (31).

Though the book is certainly not a demanding read or in any way technical, it feels as though the issues addressed are aimed by Piper at the busy pastor, under pressure from within and without to marginalise preaching. 'How might he best show forth for all of Geneva and all of Europe and all of history the majesty of God? He answered with a life of continuous expository preaching' (49-50). He recounts the breathtaking statistics of Calvin's preaching: ten sermons a fortnight, not to mention expository lectures, New Testament on Sundays, Old during the week, 200 sermons on Deuteronomy, 353 on Isaiah. 'One of the clearest illustrations that this was a self-conscious choice on Calvin's part was the fact that on Easter Day of 1538, after preaching, he left the pulpit of St Peter's, banished by the city council. He returned in September of 1541 – over three years later – and picked up the exposition in the next verse' (48).

The one disappointment is perhaps the Appendix on the Servetus affair. It feels incongruous with a book of this nature, more detailed in its history, and certainly more defensive in its tone. It is as though someone else has set Piper's agenda in these pages. It is a weak exculpation of Calvin, that he was simply a product of his cultural milieu, particularly as, in a footnote on page 57, Piper reproduces a much stronger and more comprehensive defence from J. I. Packer. It also appears to display ignorance of the considerable scholarly debate, both historical and contemporary, over the role of civil and criminal judgements in the life of the church. I am not persuaded Calvin had in mind his role in the Servetus affair in his confession of his crimes and faults to the Genevan magistrates (58), or that Piper's conclusion is correct that 'in this execution, his hands are as stained with Servetus's blood as David's were with Uriah's' (57).

To the book as a whole though, this is a small caution, a postscript to a wholehearted recommendation.

NEIL JEFFERS  
Lowestoft

---

*Francis Schaeffer: An Authentic Life*, Colin Duriez. Nottingham: IVP, 2008. 256 pages, £12.99, ISBN: 1-184474-310-0

---

Francis Schaeffer probably did not realise it, but he had quite an impact on my upbringing. My dad was a fan, so Schaeffer's books and tapes featured heavily on our shelves; I was taken to see one of the films he made later on in his life; and we even visited the Swiss L'Abri on a family holiday. I read – and was helped by – some of his books while I was at university. But I knew very little about the man himself, so it was a pleasure to read Colin Duriez's biography.

Duriez traces Schaeffer's life from his early days in Pennsylvania, through the conversion experience which took place when he read through the whole Bible for himself at the age of 18 and found it provided real answers to the questions raised by the philosophers he was reading at the same time, to his early days as a pastor in the United States. He describes the Schaeffers' particular concern to reach children with the gospel, and also his remarkable interest in art, which provided him with such a window into the way cultures (particularly the 20<sup>th</sup> Century West) were thinking.

In 1947 the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions sent Francis and Edith Schaeffer to investigate the state of the church in Europe. In God's providence, it was this trip that led to them returning the following year – ultimately to Switzerland, where they founded L'Abri, and from where Schaeffer's ministry grew in impact around the world, through his lectures, tapes, books, and finally films.

This is a good book, about a man whom God used greatly for his glory. Initially I approached it with a degree of trepidation. I had previously read Duriez's book about C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien and found it pretty turgid (despite the extraordinarily interesting subject matters), but this was much easier-going.

Duriez spent time at L'Abri and knew Schaeffer well (he includes a transcript of a fascinating interview he conducted with him in 1980, just four years before Schaeffer's death). He gives an honest and humbling account of some of the hardships the Schaeffer family faced – particularly in the early days in Switzerland, when their evangelistic activity aroused considerable opposition from the Swiss authorities.

Duriez's obvious affection for his subject shines through. Admittedly this does mean that the book is relatively (although not completely) uncritical in tone. He avoids (bar a couple of footnotes) engaging with some of the damaging and widely-discounted claims that Schaeffer's own son, Franky, has made about his father. This seems odd. It cannot be easy intervening in a family dispute – but, as Duriez points out, this is the first biography of Schaeffer and therefore a good opportunity to put the record straight.

This is not the book to read to gain an introduction to Schaeffer's thinking. By his own admission, Duriez has focused on telling the story of his life instead. But there is more than enough here to whet the appetite and persuade the reader to dip into some of Schaeffer's own writings. That can only be a good thing, having been strengthened by his commitment to defend and proclaim the truth of Christianity; encouraged by his honesty in facing his own doubts; challenged by his determination to honour Christ's lordship over the whole of life; humbled by his interest in and love for lost individuals; driven back to prayer by his example of total dependence on God's provision; spurred on by his courage in speaking out on controversial subjects such as abortion and euthanasia; and moved by his cheerful and grateful confidence in God during his final years with cancer.

DAVID HORROCKS  
Wokingham