

which rests on mere doctrine against the cold "professor" of Christianity . . . The organic yet distinct relationship between . . . saving faith in its essence and developed assurance, was critical for the Puritans from a pastoral perspective . . .'. In Part Three, 'Comparison of English Puritanism and the Dutch Second Reformation', Thomas Goodwin and Owen, and Goodwin and Comrie are compared, Goodwin being revealed as the one in whom, above all, English and Dutch teaching on assurance was synthesized. In his 'Conclusion' Dr. Beeke rehearses the difference of emphasis between English and Dutch Calvinism – for example, the English Puritans emphasised the marks of grace, the Dutch of the New Reformation the steps of grace – and laments the fact that today's Church is 'for the most part, scarcely aware that it is crippled with a comparative absence of strong, full assurance'. There follows a helpful appendix on 'The Dutch Second Reformation'.

This detailed, clearly organised work reads well (though sometimes the small words let the author down – as in the sentence just quoted; and he is too fond of italics and of the adjective, 'renowned'). The notes are a mine of information, and whole courses of lectures could be developed out of some of them. Where necessary Dr. Beeke offers grounds for dissenting from such older scholars as William Cunningham and John McLeod, and from such of his contemporaries as W. Niesel and R. T. Kendall. There are occasional slips, as when in the Bibliography my former esteemed colleague Lawrence Proctor is rebaptised; and the omission of the late Robert Paul's magisterial work on the Westminster Assembly is surprising.

Close analysis of the author's case cannot be entered upon here, though it is possible to endorse his main argument. Three general remarks may, however, be made. First, Dr. Beeke writes, 'Perkins knew that his hearers would be led to fundamental questions such as these: "Am I one of the elect . . . How may I be sure that I possess true faith . . .?"'. One wonders how many ministers of today face a barrage of such questions. Ought we to be worried if they do not? For the Puritans, 'God's absolute promises in election and covenant are solid pillars for increasing weak faith'. If they are right, is it not disturbing that predestination – even as good news – is conspicuous by its absence from many statements and affirmations of faith published by Reformed churches over the past thirty years?

Secondly, there is a welcome recovery of the doctrine of the Trinity in current systematic theology. An intensely practical and pastoral concern for assurance as here discussed – and trinitarian references abound – would 'warm up'

trinitarian discussion and act as a safeguard against the Trinity's becoming simply a system-atician's presupposition, or a counter to be played. These writings also implicitly question the wedge which is sometimes driven between the so-called 'academic' and the so-called 'practical' in theological education. At the same time, when Dr. Beeke throws down the gauntlet thus: 'saving faith is essential to the true study of Christian theology. When theology is properly undertaken, even its scientific aspect cannot be divorced from faith', one hesitates over the word 'study'. However it may be with theological construction, I, for one, wish theology to be studied and criticised by believers and unbelievers alike. Accordingly, we must take care that the terms 'true' and 'properly' are not used in such a way as to legitimate a patronising, falsely proud new gnosticism in the academy along the lines, 'Lack of comprehension, or of assent, is only what you would expect from the uninitiated/unsaved/unsound'!

Thirdly, we are informed that Dr. Beeke is 'pastor of a very large congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan'. There is reassurance (save the pun!) in the fact that while some in comparable positions have, willingly or not, come more and more to resemble directors of corporations, Dr. Beeke continues to exalt the vocation of director of souls.

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Rethinking Genesis

D. A. Garrett

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SUMMARY

The author rejects the documentary hypothesis, but finds literary sources within Genesis, and proposes in particular that Genesis conforms to a pattern of prologue-threat-resolution found in the Atrahasis epic, and which he calls the 'ancestor epic'. The reviewer thinks the author has not demonstrated sufficient literary parallels to be convincing, and further that he is speculative in his reconstruction of sources underlying Genesis.

RÉSUMÉ

D. A. Garrett rejette l'hypothèse documentaire classique, mais il croit retrouver les sources littéraires de la Genèse à l'aide de la critique des formes. Il

pense que Gn 1–11, et, par extension, toute la Genèse, sont construits selon la structure prologue-menace-dénouement, que l'on trouve dans l'épopée d'Atrahasis, et qui serait caractéristique d'un genre qu'il nomme 'l'épopée des ancêtres'. T. D. Alexander estime que Garrett ne fait pas état de parallèles littéraires assez nombreux pour convaincre, et que sa reconstruction des sources qui auraient été utilisées pour composer la Genèse reste très conjecturale.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Autor lehnt die Urkundenhypothese ab, erkennt aber literarische Quellen in dem Buch Genesis. Er vertritt vor allem die These, daß das Buch Genesis einem Prolog-Verhängnis-Auflösung Muster entspricht, wie es im Atrahasis-Epos vorkommt, welches vom ihm als das 'Ur-Epos' bezeichnet wird. Der Rezensent ist der Meinung, der Autor habe zu wenig literarische Quellen angeführt um überzeugend zu sein und darüberhinaus beruhe seine Rekonstruktion der Quellen des Buches Genesis auf Spekulationen.

For over a century Old Testament biblical scholarship has been dominated by the Documentary Hypothesis developed by K. H. Graf, A. Kuenen and J. Wellhausen. The last two decades, however, have witnessed such an erosion of the theory's foundations that, for many, the entire structure has already collapsed. While some scholars struggle to bolster its crumbling edifice, others are already proposing what should stand in its place. It is against this background that Garrett postulates a new theory regarding the origins of the book of Genesis.

His study falls into three main parts. In Part 1 he focuses firstly on the Documentary Hypothesis, then on the associated methodologies of form-criticism and historical-criticism, and finally on the issue of Mosaic authorship and historical reliability. His evaluation of the Documentary Hypothesis is brief, and, echoing other recent writers, he concludes that it 'must be abandoned' as 'methodologically unsound' (p. 32). Next Garrett considers contemporary form-critical and tradition-historical approaches which seek to recover the earliest oral and literary stages by which the text of Genesis developed. While highly critical of contemporary studies, he is convinced that used properly form-criticism may help uncover the sources behind Genesis. Finally, Garrett challenges the current trend to view most of the Pentateuch as deriving from the middle of the first millennium BC by arguing that 'it is possible to speak meaningfully of Genesis as a work that goes back to Moses himself' (p. 86). While his case is supported with sound arguments, it is unlikely

to convince those who do not share his evangelical presuppositions.

In Part 2 Garrett develops his own theory on how Genesis came into being. At the heart of his approach is the idea that one can isolate within the present text of Genesis a number of literary sources. Initially, he focuses on the genealogies and concludes that these witness to a set of *toledoth* sources. He then proceeds to develop further the proposal of I. M. Kikawada and A. Quinn (*Before Abraham Was: A Provocative Challenge of the Documentary Hypothesis* [Nashville: Abingdon] 1985) that chapters 1–11 of Genesis resemble the structure found in the ancient Mesopotamian cosmological myth of Atrahasis (that is, a prologue, followed by three major stories of threat, and, finally, a resolution). Garrett not only accepts that Genesis 1–11 conforms to this pattern, but argues that the whole of Genesis reflects the same structure, a form which he designates 'ancestor epic'. Furthermore, he argues that the same pattern explains the origin of a number of other passages in Genesis (i.e., the Ancestor Epic of Jacob [Prologue: 25:21–34; First Threat 27:1–28:22; Second Threat 29:1–31:55; Third Threat 32:1–33:20; Resolution 35:1–22b]; the Wife-as-sister Epic [12:10–20; 20:1–18; 26:1, 7–17]; The Lot Epic [13:1–18; 14:1–24; 18:1–19:38]; the Hagar Epic [16:1–16; 21:1–21]). In addition to these sources, Garrett proposes that one can isolate in Genesis several Negotiation Tales (e.g., 23:1–20; 24:1–67; 34:1–31), an Abraham Source (12:1–9; 15:1–21; 17:1–27; 22:1–19), which he most remarkably designates 'the Gospel of Abraham', and a Migration Epic of Joseph (37:3–50:21).

While Garrett offers some interesting insights, his attempt to isolate the sources underlying the present text of Genesis is unlikely to win much support for several reasons. Firstly, Garrett's thesis rests substantially on the assumption that there existed in the ancient world distinctive literary forms which were used in the construction of the sources underlying Genesis. The most important of these he calls 'ancestor epic'. Yet apart from the various examples which he isolates in the book of Genesis, he offers only one extra-biblical example, the Atrahasis Epic. To substantiate his theory Garrett must demonstrate from extra-biblical literature that the ancestor epic was indeed a widely used form in the ancient world. His argument for the existence of such a form on the basis of examples drawn from the text of Genesis proves nothing; it is circular. The same basic criticism is applicable to his suggestion that the Joseph Story resembles Virgil's *Aeneid* in that both are 'migration epics'. Garrett's assertion that the Joseph story and the *Aeneid* 'belong to a common literary category' (p. 178) is highly questionable and must be viewed with consider-

able scepticism. Finally, Garrett is unable to identify any literary form of the 2nd millennium BC which resembles his 'Gospel of Abraham'; rather he is forced to adopt a designation which first appears almost 2,000 years after the time of Abraham.

Secondly, reservations must be expressed about the way in which Garrett manipulates the Genesis material. For example, he proposes that the three wife/sister incidents once constituted an independent 'ancestor epic'. To substantiate this claim he presupposes that the original epic was broken up with only some parts being incorporated into Genesis. Similarly, the narratives involving Hagar are classified as 'ancestor epic' despite the fact that this material consists of only two elements and not three. To account for this discrepancy Garrett suggests that 'the early narrators simply told it as a binary structure on the basis of the information they had' (p. 143). While one cannot dismiss completely these explanations regarding the wife/sister and Hagar pericopes, one senses that at these points Garrett is guilty of making the evidence fit the theory rather than making the theory fit the evidence.

Thirdly, Garrett is much too optimistic in believing that he can recover with reasonable certainty the sources underlying the book of Genesis; nowhere does he acknowledge adequately the difficulties of recovering the sources underlying an ancient text. If we are to learn anything from the present demise of the Documentary Hypothesis, it is that we lack the knowledge to reconstruct the process by which the present text of Genesis took shape. Those familiar with the complexities of the relationship between the Synoptic Gospels will appreciate how difficult it is to determine the process by which Matthew or Mark or Luke developed. If problems arise where there are three documents to compare, how much more difficult must the task be when one is dealing with a single text.

In the third part of his study Garrett deals firstly with the origin of Genesis 1 and its relationship to chapters 2–11. He concludes that 1:1–2:3 was revealed directly to Moses who subsequently used it as the prologue to the book of Genesis which he produced using the sources outlined above. Next he explores the idea that the sources underlying Genesis were preserved by the Levites 'who were regarded as clerics by the people prior to the exodus' (p. 232). Finally, based on the observation that 'a theme of alienation pervades the entire text of Genesis' (p. 233) he defends the idea of Mosaic authorship by arguing that the most likely setting for the composition of the book was the exodus period.

Garrett's conclusions will appeal strongly to those who believe that the Pentateuchal material

derives from Moses. Unfortunately, his approach is methodologically unsound because he fails to give sufficient attention to the text of Genesis as it now stands. Garrett depends too much on structures derived from other ancient near eastern documents. As a result he manipulates various parts of the text of Genesis in order to make them conform to a particular structure (e.g. his treatment of the Abraham cycle, 11:27–25:11). While Garrett has clearly attempted to approach the source analysis of Genesis afresh, his proposals should be treated with the greatest caution.

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God, Language, and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics

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SUMMARY

The book is a study of language in relation to biblical doctrine. It contains an introduction to linguistics and a discussion of the development of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The most substantial part of the book describes the biblical languages at the level of sounds, words, sentences, paragraphs and larger units. The writing is clear, vigorous and learned.

RÉSUMÉ

M. Silva propose, en fait, une 'introduction à la linguistique générale appliquée à la Bible, avec des prolégomènes théologiques'. Son ouvrage étudie aussi l'évolution de l'hébreu, de l'araméen, et du grec. La partie principale décrit les langues bibliques du point de vue des sons, des mots, des phrases, des paragraphes et des unités linguistiques supérieures. Cet ouvrage admirable est écrit avec science, vigueur et clarté.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch untersucht Sprache in Bezug auf biblische Lehre. Es enthält eine Einführung in die Linguistik und bespricht die Entwicklung der hebräischen, aramäischen und griechischen Sprachen. Der Hauptteil des Buches beschreibt die Sprachen der Bibel auf der Ebene von Lauten, Worten, Sätzen,