

refers more to the most recent journals, books and approaches and who offers some interesting suggestions on the structure of the gospel. Morris is more strictly exegetical seeking to elucidate Matthew's meaning; Blomberg reflects more (though necessarily briefly) on questions of application.

The commentaries agree on many things, not all of them obvious: e.g. they both trace the 'exception' clause in 5:32, 19:9, back to Jesus and argue that Jesus allowed divorce and remarriage in exceptional cases (contra W. Heth and G. Wenham *Jesus and Divorce*, R. F. Collins, *Divorce in the New Testament*, and others). They diverge on other points: e.g. Morris entertains the view that 'on this rock' (16:18) could be a reference to Jesus' teaching and Blomberg prefers to take it as a reference to Peter; Morris takes 16:28 to refer to Jesus' death and resurrection and Blomberg to the transfiguration.

Both commentaries are well-written, and both are to be warmly recommended—with Morris having the edge for those wanting more detail, and Blomberg for those wanting a somewhat more accessible, modern approach and more up-to-date bibliography. With France and Carson already available, English-speaking readers now have a remarkable range of middle-level evangelical commentaries on Matthew. With the massive three volume International Critical Commentary of W. D. Davies and D. Allison almost complete and Don Hagner's Word commentary expected shortly, students of Matthew will soon be very well served indeed.

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### ***Guardians of Creation: Nature in Theology and the Christian Life***

**L. Osborn**

Leicester: Apollos, 1993, 172 pp., £9.95, paperback, ISBN 0 85110 951 9

### **RÉSUMÉ**

*L'auteur s'efforce de bâtir une éthique de l'environnement sur un fondement théologique. Dans la première moitié du livre, il aborde les sujets de la montée de l'écologie et de la spiritualité verte, et il présente des critiques de l'attitude chrétienne et les réponses qui peuvent y être données. L'auteur édifie lui-même une théologie trinitaire de la création en réponse à ces*

*critiques. C'est un ouvrage stimulant, qui apporte une contribution précieuse au sujet, mais il souffre d'un manque de clarté quant au rôle de Christ dans la création, et l'hébreu du premier chapitre de la Genèse y est mal compris.*

### **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Der Verfasser erarbeitet eine Umweltethik auf theologischer Grundlage. Im ersten Teil des Buches behandelt er das Aufkommen des Umweltbewusstseins, die Öko-Spiritualität und die an verschiedenen christlichen Positionen geübte Kritik. Anschließend antwortet er auf diese Kritik. Der Verfasser entwickelt selbst eine trinitäre Schöpfungstheologie. Seine Argumentation ist nachdenkenswert, die Rolle Christi bei der Schöpfung bleibt jedoch unklar und der hebräische Text in Genesis I wurde mißverstanden.*

In this book Dr. Lawrence Osborn, who has degrees in both science and theology, seeks to develop a Christian environmental ethic grounded in a theological understanding of the environment as a dimension of God's good creation. It begins with a brief survey of the rise of environmentalism and of the issues which lead to talk of a present environmental crisis. He then outlines the case that some environmentalists make against Christianity as being responsible for the attitudes and beliefs that have precipitated the crisis. This leads to a chapter on non-Christian forms of 'green' spirituality, which is a very useful guide to this area. After this comes a survey of some Christian responses to the environmental crisis. These are helpfully classified into three groups: those that are negative reactions to green spirituality; those which try to reconstruct Christian theology into what is claimed to be a more environmentally friendly form; those which re-examine traditional Christian beliefs in the light of the Bible in order to find resources to address the present crisis. There is a disappointing weakness in the critique of the views surveyed under the first two categories. The reason for this might be its necessary brevity, but more could have been said without expanding the chapter very much. Another way of dealing with this weakness would have been to point the reader to a few books or articles where a fuller critique can be found. In fact, the book could do with a short annotated bibliography rather than just the list of works cited.

Dr. Osborn's own approach to developing a theologically based Christian environmental ethic falls into the third of his categories, and makes up the second half of the book. There is a lot that is very good here, especially the insistence on



developing a truly trinitarian understanding of creation. It begins with a study of relevant biblical passages. This section could be strengthened by making more use of the implications of Job 38–42 (dismissed in one short sentence) and the O.T. visions of a new heaven and a new earth (e.g. in Isa. 65 and 66). It is also possible to present a stronger defence of Gen. 1:26–28 against the criticism of it by environmentalists than that which Osborn gives. Surprisingly, there is no discussion of the favourite text of Christian anti-environmentalists, 2 Peter 3:10.

I am not at all convinced by the definition of the role of the Father in creation in terms of the giving of a promise to creation (pp. 85, 133ff). This seems to rest on a semantic sleight of hand. It is true that some (not all) of the commands in Gen. 1 are expressed by jussive forms in Hebrew (translated as 'let . . .'). This is taken to mean that the Father gives the creation 'permission to be'. This 'permission' is then mysteriously transformed into a promise of 'a future with God'. However, the jussive is the normal form used for third-person commands in Hebrew and the context of Gen. 1 makes it clear that that is the force of the jussives here. The statement that Gen. 1:26–28 does not impose any ontological distinction between the human and non-human (p. 136) is at least questionable. Clearly, like the non-human creation, humans are also ontologically creatures, with all that that implies. However, it does seem possible that being in the image of God implies an ontological distinction of another kind.

There are some points where I would like clarification. For example, what is meant by the statement that 'through Christ, creation is enabled to resist entropy and, hence, disorder' (p. 121)? Does this simply mean that the consummation of God's purpose for the universe will come about before its 'heat death' (which is billions of years off anyway), or is Dr. Osborn saying that God is working against the Second Law of Thermodynamics, a Law which he brought into being and sustains?

These criticisms and comments are not meant to detract from the book; rather they indicate its thought-provoking nature, which makes it valuable reading on this important topic.

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## **Garden of Eden**

James Barr

SCM, London, 1992, 146 pp., £9.95, pb, ISBN 334 00531 0

### **RÉSUMÉ**

*L'auteur essaie de montrer que les idées de résurrection et d'immortalité ne sont pas opposées l'une à l'autre dans la pensée biblique. Les chapitres deux et trois de la Genèse n'enseigneraient pas la doctrine de la chute de l'homme, mais la perte de la chance d'obtenir l'immortalité. La pensée biblique sur la vie et la mort serait plus proche de la pensée grecque qu'on ne le pense parfois. L'auteur de la recension met en question la façon dont les parallèles extra-bibliques sont utilisés pour comprendre la pensée 'hébraïque' et pour expliquer le sens du texte biblique.*

### **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Hier wird behauptet, die Vorstellungen von Auferstehung und Unsterblichkeit stünden im biblischen Denken in keinem Gegensatz zueinander. Genesis 2–3 unterstütze nicht die Lehre des Sündenfalls, sondern zeige eine verlorengegangene Chance der Unsterblichkeit auf. Biblisches Denken über Leben und Tod sei dem griechischen Denken näher als manchmal angenommen wird. Der Rezensent stellt die Methodik in Frage, wobei außerbiblische Parallelbeispiele herangezogen werden, um das 'hebräische' Denken zu erleuchten und die Bedeutung des biblischen Textes zu erklären.*

The book is based on the Read-Tuckwell lectures, given in the University of Bristol on the subject of Human Immortality. Professor Barr uses the opportunity to reassess the ideas of immortality and resurrection as they have been understood in Christian theology. The book has some of the marks of its origins as lectures, with asides and digressions, and some of the author's impatience with views he regards as untenable. But it is always interesting, often engaging, and reveals a little more of the author's own piety than some of his other works.

The main thesis of the book is that the ideas of immortality and resurrection are not in opposition to each other. Certain strands in Christian theology have tended to overstress resurrection, in the belief that immortality (especially 'immortality of the soul') is Greek and therefore unbiblical. This position has been informed in recent decades by the postulate of so-called 'totality thinking' in the Old Testament (i.e.