

ences are good evidence for the God of theism. Swinburne's principle of credulity was (rightly) the key focus in the discussion.

Chapter 8 treats us to a critique of Anselm's so called 'second ontological argument'. It is, according to Davies, a fallacy. Then a generic form of the cosmological argument like that given by Copleston is explained and is said to beg the question because only a theist would assent to the principle of sufficient reason. This, of course, does not make the argument useless if there are atheists who are inclined to believe the P of SR. The moral argument has some use but is really inconclusive but the Kalaam cosmological argument has real potential as a good theistic proof.

Chapter 9 is a very interesting discussion of two philosophers who believe that the proofs for and against God are inconclusive but that faith in God is rational on other grounds. I found myself much more sympathetic to Pascal's infamous wager and James' will to believe than I was before reading the book. When one is forced to choose for God or not (fence-sitting is not an option) and when the evidence seems equally balanced one may be justified in turning to theism out of prudence (Pascal) or choice (James). One would hope that such 'faith' could mature beyond this beginning.

Davis concludes that the issue of the existence of God is a very important one. He argues that although no *one* theistic proof has anything as theologically robust as the God of theism as its conclusion when combined they do point towards such a God (*if* one can argue that the prime mover is the grand designer and the source of morality etc.) Overall this is a well written book. It is clearly explained and level headed in its judgements. It appreciates the use of theistic proofs whilst being aware of their limitations. This is a good introduction to the classical proofs. There is no groundbreaking work here but then the book is not intended to be ground breaking.

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EuroJTh (1998) 7:2, 129-130

0960-2720

***The Doctrine of Revelation:
A Narrative Interpretation***
Gabriel Fackre

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University
Press, 1997, £14.95, 230pp., pb,
ISBN 0-7486-0880-X

RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce livre, l'auteur nous invite à développer une doctrine de la révélation qui tienne compte des différents stades de la méta-narration biblique. Dieu est révélé dans la création et, en dépit de l'infirmité épistémologique qui résulte de la chute, l'alliance avec Noé montre que la révélation de Dieu est encore perceptible dans la création. Fackre essaie de montrer qu'Israël est encore une source de révélation mais que le point focal doit être Jésus-Christ. La fiabilité de l'Écriture est un point d'importance capitale, car c'est dans l'Écriture que nous trouvons la méta-narration. Enfin, l'auteur aborde la question du rôle de l'Esprit qui consiste à faire comprendre la révélation à l'Église et à l'individu. Nous avons là un ouvrage important de théologie constructive.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Buch will eine Offenbarungslehre bieten, die den verschiedenen Stadien der biblischen Meta-Geschichte Rechnung trägt. Gott wird trotz der die Erkenntnis verkrümmenden Auswirkung des Sündenfalls nach wie vor in der Schöpfung wahrgenommen, wie es bereits in der Urgeschichte durch den engen Zusammenhang von Gottesoffenbarung und Schöpfungswirklichkeit im noachitischen Bund verdeutlicht wird. Der Autor betont eine bleibende Bedeutung Israels als Offenbarungsträger, das Erkenntnisziel liegt für ihn jedoch bei Jesus Christus. Die Vertrauenswürdigkeit der Schrift ist daher weichenstellend, denn nur dort findet sich die Meta-Geschichte. Im Schlussteil wird die Rolle des Geistes für die Kirche und zur Erleuchtung bei einzelnen beschrieben.

Inspired by some insights from Post-Liberal theology Fackre aims to outline a doctrine of revelation that is constructed in the light of the grand narrative of creation, fall and redemption. He feels that theology has often gone astray by making one chapter in the creation-redemption story central when constructing a doctrine of revelation. Fackre wants to listen to the voices of representatives

from the Christian community past and present in order to glean insights for his reformed contribution to the church catholic.

A theology of revelation must begin with the trinitarian God who reveals himself. The inner knowledge within the trinity is the foundation for our knowledge of God.

Fackre then breaks down the big story as follows:

First we must talk of 'general revelation'. Initially we are invited to consider creation. It was the divine intention that humanity know God truly (though finitely). The serpent led humans to reject knowledge of God for knowledge *as* God in an act of epistemological idolatry. The fall thus impacts our ability to discern God's revelation in nature. The covenant of preservation with Noah (the representative of all humanity) reinforces this by guaranteeing God's perseverance with nature and, according to Fackre, a continuing enlightenment through nature—the 'scandal of universality'. Truth must be honoured wherever it is found. Two errors can be made here. One can ignore this chapter in an account of revelation or make it the capstone. Tillich, Ruether, Tracey, Cobb and Hick exemplify some insights from the Noachian covenant but also distortions that result from extracting it from its place in the meta-narrative.

Fackre then moves on to consider the special revelation in Israel, Christ and scripture. We are told that anti-semitism and the emergence of the modern state of Israel lead us away from a classic supersessionism towards seeing Israel's chapter as a permanent one which runs alongside all the other chapters in the narrative. Israel continues as a light to the nations. I was very disappointed with this section. Supersessionism in *some* form seems to be the view of the NT authors yet it is dismissed out of hand. Although in practice it tends to underplay this section in the meta-narrative it need not and Fackre himself notes that supersessionism does not have to be anti-semitic. If, as I think, the NT is supersessionist in some form then we do not read this chapter aright by trying to perpetuate it unmodified. Perhaps it is Fackre who has failed to take plot *development* seriously enough.

Jesus Christ is rightly identified as the central character in the narrative of revelation—that to which the other chapters point. Fackre enters into a detailed dialogue with Barth and argues that he has some fundamental insights but erred in believing that only Christ could be *identified* as revelation. I am in total agreement with him here.

The oft neglected evangelical contribution is made by Carl Henry. The inspiration of scripture, though strictly speaking not a separate chapter in the narrative, is critical because scripture is the source of the narrative. Henry's insight is that one cannot separate the encounter with the word in Jesus from the trustworthiness of the bible and that words are important in revelation. Ultimately Fackre cannot support Henry's insistence on verbal inerrancy because he feels that it collapses the epistemic difference between the 'now' and the 'not yet'. This, in my view, need not be so. To claim that what is revealed is 'without error' is quite compatible with the claim that much has not been revealed which the new age will bring to light and that what has been revealed has not been *exhaustively* revealed as well as with the realisation that biblical interpreters are not inerrant.

Fackre then moves onto to consider 'revelation as reception' but in the light of what follows he ought to have called it 'revelation received'. He rightly argues that revelation proper ceased with the NT but that the Spirit still plays a key role in illuminating that revelation. Rahner reminds us of the importance of the role of the church tradition in interpretation but he fails to draw a clear enough distinction between Christ and the church. It is here that Fackre's warnings about collapsing the epistemological gap between the 'now' and 'not yet' finds a happier home. Fackre does not allow us to lose sight of the Spirit's role in illuminating the individual believer and in an excellent final chapter argues that although revelation in its fullness awaits the new age the church can still have an *assurance* of things hoped for whilst in this present age.

In conclusion I would say that this is an eloquently written text with a major key insight in its claim that Christian doctrine ought to be articulated in the light of the whole story if it is to be rightly balanced. It is a work of constructive theology and I hope that it plays a role in the Spirit's illuminating work in the body of Christ.

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