

ation to them. Mercy Amba Oduyoye's essay is a moving account of her attempt to come to terms with her childlessness in an African culture and church which has no word from the Lord for such people. She issues a challenge to develop a theology of childlessness.

In Part Three Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza maintains that historical Jesus research is neither objective nor neutral with regard to justice and gender issues. She argues for a reconstructive methodology, which *presupposes* the historical and theological participation of women and shifts the burden of proof to those who wish to deny it. There is a danger in this essay that Schüssler Fiorenza, in her zeal to resist Christian anti-Judaism, locates Christian exclusivism in the biblical writers rather than in Jesus when there are good grounds for thinking Jesus was *himself* the source of such exclusivism. She is in danger of allowing a modern political agenda to distort the data. Kwok Pui-lan writes that the identification of women with nature is not something to be simplistically rejected or celebrated, as it is complex and ambiguous varying hugely depending on race. White feminists are accused of abstracting and generalising the notions of 'women' and 'nature'. We need instead to begin with the bodies of oppressed women and seek hope within their spiritual traditions to mend creation. This essay *was* interesting but its weakness was that it totally by-passed the issue of truth. Plurality passes over into pluralism and pragmatism. Beverly Harrison is one of the old guard and she looks back at the work of her generation of feminist thea(o)logians and considers the dangers she sees infiltrating into the work of modern feminist's riding on the back of a sense of the loss of truth.

In Part Four Sharon Ringe provides an orthodox exegetical study of the Spirit in John's farewell discourse: the Spirit is the replacement for Jesus and the eschatological presence of God with his people into the future. There is a final hermeneutical reflection, which is a contrived attempt to link to the liberation theology theme, but its loose connection to the text makes it fall rather flat which is a shame after an otherwise good essay. Jürgen Moltmann claims that two eschatologies have dominated political and ethical decision making over the past 150 years: the conservative syndrome which calls for a strong state to hold back the collapse of society, and the progressive syndrome which sees improvement everywhere and urges society forward in its present direction. Christians

need to resist both models by anticipating the *eschaton* in the present. The biblical Sabbath highlights the need for social and environmental justice but Christian ethics needs principles not rules as it faces an ever-changing future. Joan Martin writes concerning black womanist eschatology and Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz writes of her attempts to do *mujerista* liberation theology. Her essay is of interest in that she starts by helpfully emphasising the importance of the prophetic eschatology of the Bible with its social critique. She maintains that theology needs to privilege the perspective of the oppressed and so she moves on to consider how *mujerista* theologians have encouraged Latinas to tell their own stories and thus to subvert the dominant stories in society. What I felt to be disappointing here is that there was no attempt at all to link the Latinas' stories to the biblical story. There was a sense that the hermeneutical priority lay with the way people see their lives without any attempt to link this to scripture. In what sense is this theology then let alone *Christian* theology? I am not suggesting that letting people tell their stories is not important—far from it. Rather, I would like to see how this task is brought into dialogue with the biblical story.

In spite of some major reservations about the theology expressed in parts of this text I would recommend it to those with interest in the issues it raises. Evangelicals certainly have much to learn from the Liberation theologians' emphasis on liberating *action*. It was this genuine commitment to people, which was perhaps the most enduring impression left on me by this book. On top of that the painting on the front cover is absolutely superb.

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Hated Without a Cause? A Survey of Anti-Semitism

Graham Keith

Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997, xii + 301 pp., £17.99, pb., ISBN 0-85364-783-6

RÉSUMÉ

Graham Keith nous propose une étude très accessible des relations entre chrétiens et Juifs au fil de l'histoire. Le but de ce livre est de montrer comment et pourquoi l'Eglise a

fait de nombreuses erreurs et de plaider en faveur d'une attitude authentiquement chrétienne à l'égard du peuple juif. Cette approche, à l'image de celle de Saint Paul en Romains 11.28, maintient en équilibre deux idées : d'une part le rejet de tout antisémitisme, considéré comme un refus de reconnaître l'élection d'Israël ; et d'autre part la réaffirmation de l'importance de l'évangélisation parmi les Juifs. C'est un livre important pour ceux qui sont concernés par les relations entre Juifs et chrétiens.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Graham Keith hat einen gut lesbaren historischen Überblick über christlich-jüdische Beziehungen vorgelegt. Die Hauptaufgabe des Buches besteht darin, zu zeigen, wie und warum die Kirche viele ihrer Fehler in diesem Bereich gemacht hat. Keith argumentiert, daß eine authentisch christliche Position zum jüdischen Volk die Balance finden muß, die Paulus in Röm. 11,28 ausdrückt: einerseits ist Antisemitismus insgesamt unangemessen und bedeutet eine Ablehnung der Wahrheit der Erwählung Israels, andererseits können Christen nicht von der Angemessenheit und Wichtigkeit von Evangelisation unter Juden absehen. Dies ist ein wichtiger Text für diejenigen, die sich mit christlich-jüdischen Beziehungen beschäftigen.

It is often said that the Church has played a major role historically in the persecutions of the Jews. Graham Keith sets out to chart attitudes towards the Jews from before the times of the New Testament to the Modern World. He begins by distinguishing between anti-Semitism (the hatred of people *because they are Jews*) and anti-Judaism (opposition to the Jewish *religion*). The latter can be a stance taken by Jews themselves. Chapter One examines pre-Christian anti-Semitism. Jewish separatism played its role in generating hostility for political and economic reasons (rather than merely racial ones). That such separatism was rooted in Jewish religion led to attacks on Jewish faith as well as Jewish people. Chapters Two and Three consider the claim that the New Testament is itself anti-Semitic (in particular that it accuses the Jews of deicide, that the Jews have no hope of future blessing as a people and that having killed Jesus they are the symbol *par excellence* of evil). Keith argues that, when read in its contexts (literary, social and historical), the charge is false. The New Testament takes its place as a first century

intra-Jewish polemic. It has an anti-Judaistic stance in that it maintains that Jewish hopes, institutions, rituals and festivals are fulfilled in Messiah Jesus and that a *non-Christian form of Judaism* is inappropriate but it is not anti-Semitic. Keith laments the way that *misinterpretations* of the New Testament have led to horrendous acts of anti-Semitic behaviour and rhetoric but he refuses to accept that the New Testament would condone such actions and speech. Chapter Four argues that on biblical-theological grounds Christians ought to avoid the two extremes of either seeing the Jews through rose-tinted glasses or demonising them. The Bible (Old and New Testament) maintains a delicate balance of recognising the sins of Israel whilst valuing and offering hope to her. This is a balance, which the church has found hard to keep.

Chapter Five sketches the changing attitudes of the early church towards the Jews and Jewish-Christians. There was an early start to the shift from anti-Judaism to anti-Semitism. A church eager to define itself felt the need to do so in such a way that was to have long-term consequences for the Jews. The charge of deicide was introduced and Christianity was consciously de-Judaized. The historical sufferings of the Jews were seen as a deserved and *permanent* punishment from God. Their trials were a testimony to the world of their sin just as the church's success was a testimony to its truth.

Chapter Six traces the hardening of attitudes in the Middle Ages whilst Chapter Seven follows Luther's shift from initial open attitudes towards the Jews to later embittered attacks. Chapters Eight to Eleven follow the story from the post-Lutheran Protestantism, through the French Revolution to modern European and Islamic forms of anti-Semitism. Keith sees modern Islamic fundamentalism as the most serious contemporary breeding ground of anti-Semitism. His discussion here was informative although it lacked balance in its failure to take the plight of the Palestinians as seriously as it could (and should) have.

I found the book to present a clear and balanced Christian perspective on a very sensitive issue. The theological stance is uncompromising on its biblical foundations. It refuses to take the line that non-Christian Judaism is an equally legitimate manifestation of Jewish religion as Messianic Judaism. This uncompromising stance is explained in a way that is sensitive (which is not to say that many Jews would not be offended at it) and the

book is honest about the plethora of Christian atrocities throughout history. Keith is not interested in justifying the behaviour of the Church—repentance is indeed in order. On the other hand he is concerned to help the reader understand how and why people took the anti-Semitic stance they did.

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Big Bang, Small Voice: Reconciling Genesis and Modern Science

P.G. Nelson

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£4.50, pb., ISBN 1-870325-13-3

RÉSUMÉ

Le livre Big Bang, Small Voice traite de la tension qui existe entre le récit biblique de la création et le récit de la science moderne. Ce livre comprend deux parties de tailles équivalentes. La première est descriptive ; elle propose un résumé de la pensée scientifique contemporaine concernant les origines et du récit biblique de la création jusqu'au déluge. La deuxième partie est une discussion dans laquelle les deux récits de la création—le récit scientifique contemporain et le récit biblique—sont comparés. Les chapitres d'introduction sont problématiques, car ils juxtaposent des éléments scientifiques sérieux et objectivement présentés à des idées marginales et extrémistes. La discussion de la deuxième partie du livre est également décevante car l'auteur n'aboutit qu'à très peu de conclusions solides.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Big Bang, Small Voice handelt von der Spannung zwischen dem biblischen Schöpfungsbericht und moderner Naturwissenschaft. Das Buch hat zwei mehr oder weniger gleichgewichtige Teile. Der deskriptive erste Teil fasst das gegenwärtige naturwissenschaftliche Denken über den Ursprung des Kosmos sowie den biblischen Schöpfungsbericht, inklusive der Noah-Geschichte bis zur Flut, zusammen. Der zweite Teil bringt eine Diskussion, die die beiden Berichte—den gegenwärtigen naturwissenschaftlichen und den biblischen—vergleicht. Die einleitenden Kapitel sind problematisch, da sie gut recherchierte und von Fachleuten begutachtete Naturwissenschaft neben Ideen stellen, die von Autoren mit

Extrempositionen stammen. Die Diskussion im zweiten Teil ist ebenfalls enttäuschend, da der Autor wenig klare Resultate erreicht.

Big Bang, Small Voice is about the tension that exists between the biblical account of creation and the account given by modern science. Dr Nelson is a lecturer in chemistry at the University of Hull, England, and a lay preacher. His aim is to do justice to both the scientific and biblical accounts of creation. The book avoids technical language and is accessible to the lay person. Due to its high biblical content it is likely to appeal mainly to Christian believers.

This book falls into two more or less equal parts. The first part is descriptive and gives a summary of contemporary scientific thinking on origins (ch. 2) and of the biblical account of creation up to and including Noah's Flood (chs. 3 to 5). The second part is a discussion in which the two accounts of creation—the contemporary scientific one and the biblical one—are compared. The author seeks to resolve the perceived tension by first assuming that the scientific account of origins is correct and exploring how far the biblical account can be reconciled with modern science without weakening the Bible's authority. Nelson then takes the opposite stance and examines how far the scientific account can be reconciled with a literal reading of the biblical account.

I found the introductory chapters problematic, in particular the chapter on the scientific account of origins. My concern is the paradoxical style used by the author. On the one hand Nelson seeks to present a case for the lay person and yet on the other hand the text contains a very wide range of scientific ideas. Particularly disturbing is the fact that these ideas are of very variable quality. Thus we find well researched, peer-reviewed science juxtaposed next to 'scientific' ideas which seem to have come from close to the lunatic fringe. Some of these ideas have never been accepted into mainstream science, and never will be, for they are poor science. Sadly, in the opinion of this reviewer, so much nonsense is given yet another airing. This juxtaposition of mainstream and marginal ideas is of course a potential problem for the intended readers of this book, for they will be, in the main, ill-equipped to make judgements about the quality of competing scientific ideas. It is surely the author's duty as a scientist to filter this information for his readers. To be fair, Nelson does indicate that some of the ideas reported are not widely accepted.