

of all thought being caught in history, such that he viewed Kirchengeschichte als 'Mischmasch von Irrtum und Gewalt' (359) but history itself is not per se a fall but is full of the demonic, chaotic and unpredictable, from which poetic myths are inspired and the heavens filled. Importantly, 'Das Dämonische vertritt nicht das Göttliche im patheistischen Naturkonzept, sondern es zeigt die Ambivalenz und Widersprüchlichkeit des Göttlichen..' (367) Against Blumenberg and W. Muschg, it is not a Goethean pantheism here in which God is good and evil spirit, order and disorder, earthquake/wind fire and 'still, small voice', but that God is ultimately unpredictable: 'Neomo(sic) contra Deum nisi Deus ipse'(ibid.)

One thing that is annoying about this book is its lack of an index. I wanted to see whether he was aware of Nicholas Boyle's work and his view of the 'Leibnizian' Goethe. Eventually I found that he is not aware of it, nor of much of non-German scholarship. Goethe's nonconfessional theology was more than just a philosophy of Nature. One might want to call it a fundamental theology, in the sense that 'seine Theologie ist sein Werk als Ganzes' with the principles of the Farbenlehre worked out in *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*.

Mark Elliott,
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SUMMARY

This review will attempt to give some flavour of what has been achieved so far in print by the first three volumes of the Scripture and Hermeneutic series, under the general oversight of Craig Bartholomew of the University of Gloucestershire and Colin Greene of the Bible Society. There is no doubting the spiritual energy, intellectual engagement and Christian conviction at the core of this project.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Rezension versucht einen Geschmack von dem zu vermitteln, was bisher in den ersten drei Bänden der Reihe Scripture and Hermeneutics geleistet wurde, die unter der allgemeinen Verantwortung von Craig Bartholomew von der University of Gloucestershire und von Colin Greene von der Bible Society steht. Die geistliche Energie, die intellektuelle Auseinandersetzung sowie die christliche Überzeugung im Herzen des Projekts sind unbezweifelbar.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette recension tente de donner une idée de la contribution apportée par les trois premiers volumes de la série *Scripture and Hermeneutics*, dirigée par Craig Bartholomew, de l'université de Gloucestershire, et par Colin Greene, de la Société Biblique. On ne peut douter de l'énergie spirituelle, de l'implication intellectuelle et de la conviction chrétienne qui sont à l'œuvre dans ce projet.

* * * *

The title of the first volume, *Renewing Biblical Interpretation* is fairly self-explanatory.

In trying to reintroduce typology as critically valid, Neil Macdonald's intriguing point is that events are bigger than author's intentions. The truth of Genesis 3 goes further than its meaning. He takes the example of someone referring to Jones as the one who is sweeping leaves when it is in fact Smith: it is not a very big mistake to make when they look so much the same. Using Barth's insistence that the Son of God assumed humanity (not an individual hypostasised man), 'Adam' is understood as common humanity who gets redefined as Christ. But can we actually claim that what the Hebrew prophets saw was 'Adam'? (In Macdonald's rejection of *kenosis*, I fear Thomasius' view of the Incarnation is somewhat misrepresented.) As early as Irenaeus it was clear that this act of redefinition was not an event 'thousands of years later' but of something latent behind the external 'OT' form. But what about other examples of biblical typology, where it is harder to think of the Hebrew bible figure as 'really' Christ (or some other New Testament referent)? Is it not better to see it as an example of seeing darkly, as in the case of , say, Zerubbabel? Mary Hesse's response is disappointing and seems to come down to two points: 1 the bible taken neat is sometimes plain wrong and univocity can be a

bit limiting 2. Barth's Christology sounds unorthodox to her and she thinks that an *assumptus homo* Christology would be more orthodox! It seems a shame to have a less than theologically informed respondent here.

Stephen Wright deals helpfully with the question of the bible's imperfection by arguing that the biblical text is the necessary mediation, a *poiema* for the Word to speak in and through. 'straightforward logos is refracted by location in *poiema* – with all its complexities and ambiguities in its character as a work of literature.' What makes Scripture different is, of course, its message. Here an apologetic strategy of not presupposing the bible's status is used.

'Performance preaching may have the unintended consequence of familiarising oneself with the Word as Other or rather with the usual and expected effect of preaching. It may be wiser to keep a distance by careful historical (and theological?) sensitivity to how different from us the Scriptures are. To see the Bible as a creation (divine and human) is to hint at a degree of divine inspiration in other works of literature also, without in any way undermining the Bible's uniqueness. To consider it as great literature which will repay the same kind of self-opening attention as other great works is not to belittle it, but to open it up to readers beyond the ranks of those who already believe. The transition from literary encounter to worship will be a natural one which cannot be imposed from outside' (Wright, 264)

Also positive is Trevor Hart's essay on Imagination. Kant's aesthetic is viewed as mediating reason and the senses. The self becomes more rounded through encounter. Schleiermacher was aware of the need to strike a balance between the grammatical sense of a text – what it meant in its public context (the canonical sense?) and its technical sense, what it might say to a reader here and now. But as Wolterstorff writes in his response, good exegetes need to ask: what is the illocutionary force of any locution, which does not mean 'what did the author mean to say?' but rather 'what did the text perform?' This of course requires the reader to bring herself into the interpretation, but of course understanding the historical 'other' (through his life and times, ideologies and *Sitz im Leben*) may take us part of the way. All in all this is the most successful of the 'conversations'.

Chris Seitz, in an essay that is less about interpretation and more about the nature of Scripture and the tragedy of Anglican biblical interpretation, seems in favour of pre-critical exegesis and largely in sympathy with the position of Brevard Childs. Yet what is actually lost to the cause of Christian faith by regarding Daniel as belonging to the Hasmonean period? Where in the gospels does Jesus affirm that it was written in pre-exilic times? Was Pusey really justified in his rearguard action against the German critical 'epidemic'? What is so wrong in a progressive understanding of Revelation? Is that not

what typology is all about? Seitz is fond of quoting the saying of Jesus: 'If they do not believe Moses and the prophets...' However this needs careful exegesis! My question: Why was there no response to this paper?

Another attempt at showing the deficiencies of historical-critical method is given by Colin Greene, which is more than a little diffuse, and reads as though by someone who is very new to Lessing and Pannenberg, rather than someone at home with their thinking. I am not convinced that Eta Linneman had the best of the argument with Rainer Riesner and others.

In his response, John Riches suggests that engaging with historical criticism might lead to a more mature form of faith and that history of interpretation should be engaged in for the *Sinnpotential* of texts. It is only through scholarship that the bible is set free (say of the Jewish background which gives 'righteousness' the nuance of 'power') The task of biblical scholarship is thus 'to assist in the discernment of legitimate diversity', presumably of which *Sinne* are in fact 'possible'. Against this hopelessly naïve historicist optimism, one hopes for a response to the response – maybe that is to come in future volumes.

II The importance and value of speech-act theory is the main theme of the second volume. One studies the bible in the light of linguistic and literary turns. The title *After Pentecost* denotes something of a Christian response to the necessary but insufficient analysis of Steiner's *After Babel*. Bartholomew helpfully gives the example of Jacob Milgrom's refusal to countenance the use of anything like metaphor in legal texts of the bible. This approach seems helpful because it brings us to the nitty-gritty of the texts and their exegesis as well as matters such as the concept of revelation and the message of the bible. Bartholomew is trying to warn us of the danger of idolatry of the signifier, which he thinks that canonical approach may help deliver us from. But also, with John Milbank, he is aware of the need to see the need for a stop to the chain of *semiosis*, an infinite regress of meaning: original metaphor implies either a primal personification of metaphor ('paganism') or else a primal response to nature as a personal address ('monotheism')' (*The Word Made Strange*, 106, quoted p 162). Yet, in my opinion this means too much an attention to God as origin and not enough to the newness of God in creation and in eschatology. As Ricoeur argues (*The Rule of Metaphor*, p 295ff) the traffic is not all one way: metaphor does not just take us up to God but is about God allowing us to see the things of this world in him (cf. Jüngel's treatment of the parables). A cultural issue is the difference between Anglo-American 'analytical' approaches and Continental. Language is not subservient to some extra-linguistic Reason even if the *verbum* may be subordinate to the *res* (the covenant between word and world as noted by Steiner – see p 155f – who also reminds us of a lack of reverence in many 'bible as literature' approaches). Too much deconstruction can lead to a 'Gnostic' separation of sense and meaning.

Tony Thiselton thinks that we must as biblical exegetes move beyond explanation to understanding and beyond significance to application. And in a nicely crafted paragraph which undeservedly draws criticism from his respondent (William Oldhausen) for doing just that, Thiselton fuses bible and Tillich: 'If God is more than an existent object within the world, such poetic creative hymnic forms as 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the earth is full of his glory (Is 6:3) transcends representational, referential, single meaning. In Tillich's use of the term, we enter the realm of double-edged symbol, which opens up both reality and our own selfhood' (Thiselton, 110)

But before this Vanhoozer has spelled out how the communicative act mediates between the word and the deed, although I am not sure it is good scholarship to try to harness Goethe by saying 'Goethe roots our thinking about speech acts in theology – Trinitarian theology, to be exact.' 'The question that need to be asked is whether the incarnation alone exhausts the divine speech, or whether Scripture itself maybe legitimately considered a divine speech act of sorts' (5) We move to the concept of covenant (which is nowhere sufficiently unpacked for this reviewer's liking) 'Language has a "design plan" that is inherently covenantal' (10) and 'The paradigm for a Christian view of communication is the triune God in communicative action'. And if we believe in actions we have to believe in (authorial) intentions. Speech acts have other agendas than transmitting information, that one does something (illocution) or achieves something (effect – perlocution). Promising is the paradigmatic speech act of an illocutionary sort. *But surely there needs to be someone promised to, so that such illocutions are also perlocutions – Wirkung.* Thiselton had earlier pointed out that there is a network of relationality, to which covenantal promises tap in. 'Whereas Thiselton pays special attention to covenantal promising, I tend to see all communicative action in covenantal terms' (Vanhoozer, 18) The biblical author has some normative stance towards his words which affect their meaning but also stand to be ignored, refuted, misunderstood. We can share a Habermasian confidence in the ability that to a certain extent we mean what we say. Communicative action means asking for the salt to be passed rather than *strategically* reaching out for it. So that communicative action depends on understanding. As he then says (in trying to unite Habermas with Austin with help from Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning*), 'The real question is whether perlocutionary acts are essentially strategic rather than communicative' (28) Perlocutions should not happen and cannot really be itself without illocution. 'The danger lies in thinking about communication, and interpretation, in terms of effects produced on communicants.' It is this which Thiselton has touched on in his view of Paul as eschewing rhetoric for logic. Of course 'some illocutionary acts may be associated with texts rather than sentences' since forms of literature (genres) 'function like metaphors—they are

models, indispensable cognitive instruments for saying and seeing things that perhaps could not be seen or said in other ways' (34f); a generic illocution ('thrust?'). Thus the canon as a whole is where God's illocutionary act is to be located. 'On my view, Barth is partly right and partly wrong: He is wrong if he means to deny that God performs illocutionary acts in Scripture. He is right if one incorporates the reader's reception of the message into one's definition of 'communicative act' – The Spirit is the energy that enables the Word to complete its mission' (38) There seems to be an avoidance of the freedom of the recipient and the whole question of Providence, both general and special.

For Vanhoozer, it is not a 'perlocutionary' matter of the bible's discourse creating another world as Stan Grenz thinks. 'Moreover, it is the peculiar role of narratives to *display* a world. This is an illocutionary, not a perlocutionary act. The Spirit does indeed perform perlocutionary acts; no disagreement here. Yet the Spirit does so only on the basis of the concrete textual illocutions (the content) of Scripture. The Spirit's creating a world, then, is not a new illocutionary act, but rather the perlocutionary act of enabling readers to appropriate the illocutionary acts already inscribed in the biblical text, especially the narrative act of 'displaying a world' (42). And perlocutionary spiritual formation without necessarily understanding it is to be avoided. So that 'the Spirit speaks in and through Scripture precisely by rendering its illocutions at the sentential, generic and canonic levels perlocutionarily efficacious': in other words, analogously with the mode of origin of Son and Spirit, it is a case of illocutioque but not of *perlocutioque*. By far the strongest essay in the collection so far.

In his introduction Bartholomew strongly hinted that the Wolterstorff-Hesse interaction was the heartbeat of the book. Wolterstorff reminds us of the hermeneutical tradition of philosophy and its insistence that we are all throwing ourselves ahead of ourselves (77), although our anticipations are pre-judgments are shaped by tradition. 'The interpreting self is always an anticipating self whose anticipations are formed by tradition.' There is an ontology of sense or ideality which language expresses. Derrida hates to be hoist by his own petard when people would give 'performance interpretations' of his text. But authorial-discourse interpretation (what they actually said) is the norm of our everyday discourse, not authorial-intention interpretation (what they intended to say), however: this is a middle way. God indeed speaks through and as his deputies speak: and what unites Scripture is that it is God's book... 'the fact that the human authors of Scripture express various false beliefs does not prevent God from nonetheless infallibly speaking by way of what they say' (85). Enlightenment hermeneutics was about throwing off dogmatic or rule of faith – seen supremely in Dilthey as a myth. One can try to avoid prejudice at level one (academy) but not at level two (church). But, as Hesse points out in the response, where metaphor is

part of the literal (stage one) understanding of the text, is that not already spilling over into theology. Rather than moving from stage 1 to stage 2 it might be better to speak of a dialectic between the two in our arriving at the final(or provisionally final) account of the meaning of a biblical text. (Hesse in her response mentions an interesting-looking paper by Fergus Kerr given at the consultation but not published here.)

Two other chapters are especially worthy of attention in this strong set of essays. First, Stephen I Wright's interaction with Stephen Prickett who has observed that in the C20 miracle has been turned into parable and parable into universal truths. The Romantics were nearer to seeing in the 'prophetic as poetic' nature of biblical discourse, 'a metaphorical quality in language which allows it to speak of a reality outside its own system, to give voice to new disclosures, and to transcend historical distance in order to break into the hermeneutical circle of the past' (236) Or, 'The possibility of 'disconfirmation' invites a bolder suggestion: that we be ready to see in the Bible a language that not only subverts conventional usage, but also aims at replacing it.' (234) Second, for Neil B. MacDonald, meaning did not dislodge from that of the story to a historical referent during the Enlightenment as Hans Frei claimed. The meaning is the stories themselves. What did change was a faith seeking understanding moving to a foundationalist epistemology where evidence has to be presented under the influence of John Locke (here MacDonald follows Wolterstorff, such that 'the belief that the biblical stories referred to and described actual historical occurrences changed from being a basic belief to being a *non-basic* belief'. (326) The world of the bible was not like the present world and to be true the former had to be justified on the latter's terms. Both of these are strong papers, but neither receives a response or interrogation which is a weakness of much of Vol II.

III Many of us owe much to Oliver O'Donovan and it seems fitting that one whole volume (*A Royal Priesthood?*) of this project should be dedicated to an interaction with his work. Craig Bartholomew with that skilful knack he has for summarising, says of O'Donovan's understanding of Resurrection and Moral Order: 'the creation order is real and holds for all, but in a fallen world it cannot be grasped outside of Christ' (22), how God condescends to somehow include even violence (e.g. as described in Joshua) within his revelation and concludes: 'I take it that he would be happy to describe the overarching theme of the bible as the kingdom of God' Bartholomew goes on to insist that it is to O'Donovan's credit, in contrast with S Hauerwas that the whole of the bible, OT included needs to be instilled into our (political) theology, mentioning 'his assertion of the need for an *architectonic hermeneutic*, or one that does justice to the shape of the edifice of Scripture as a whole. Motifs such as that of exodus or shalom must not be arbitrarily abstracted from the building of scripture, but must be

read in the context of the narrative structure of Scripture as a whole.' (37) In the response in the special *Studies in Christian Ethics* volume O'Donovan had made it clear that 'thought cannot live *sola narratione*. Narrative thought can authorise, but cannot supply, a deliberative discourse' (Response, 94) and shows more affection for the historico-critical method and its desire to get to what was the *animus* of the writing of texts as distinct from the strictly canonical approach advocated by Walter Moberly in the spirit of Brevard Childs. O'Donovan thus responds: 'We shall not understand Deuteronomy without understanding why it is all put in Moses' mouth.' (65) It will be impossible to be absolutely sure of just what was going on and thus what was meant, but we can get some idea. The other issue with Moberly is that the latter thinks we can re-read the OT as if we were not thinking about Christ: O'Donovan admits he is not all that interested in the Pentateuch since the NT draws the centre of gravity of the OT towards its end: Jeremiah seems the central figure.

It is perhaps fitting that in this volume most of the best moments come when the orchestra and its other soloists quieten down and allow the pianist to respond in this concerto. O'Donovan dates the anti-Christian enlightenment pretty late (around the time of French and American revolutions and their state/church separation), and questions what Chris Rowland means by 'counter-cultural'. Perhaps O'Donovan has to be re-read for his condensed style to yield meaning, but to show the Augustinian connection of *ius* to *iustitia* and *iustificatio* and question Tom Wright on his home ground as to whether there really was much of an Emperor cult in Pauline times while teasing the NT scholar for trying to make every theme a 'narrative' – some of this shows the genius in service of the gospel at its best. The best essay which draws the longest response from O'Donovan is that by Jonathan Chaplin whose detailed familiarity with the former's work is apparent. He pinpoints O'Donovan's preference for early modern Christian political liberalism – subsequently corrupted and 'democratised' by the later Enlightenment, neo-Thomists included, and counters that God works through more institutions than merely that of political government and that when he does so he is not always necessarily judging in a strongly interventionist sense. This leads to O'Donovan describing the difference between 'justice' (pre-fall) and 'judgement' (presupposing the fall) and coming over cynical about the worth of 'separation of powers' and the usefulness of Leviticus 25. What remains is an original and refreshing evaluation of the foundations of Western political systems. 'The ideas and ideals of Christendom were thought through by monks and bishops, counsellors and advisors. They proposed an ideal for the behaviour of government, and they gave reasons for it...I have never argued (pace Kreider) that a tendency to coercion was not "endemic", merely that it was not logically implied by the concept of a Christian state.' (343) O'Donovan is

just the right polymath theologian to draw out the best from his sparring-partners.

This series will require the next four volumes (the fourth is due in November 2003) before it can be properly evaluated. But what is already valuable and exciting is the sense of how, without repeating themselves, the participants seem to be moving on and

deepening their understanding of this area and there is much wisdom and stimulus for thought as a result – for those prepared to make the effort to engage!

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