

Root has written a very helpful, thoughtful book to address a problem that is certainly not going away but little understood. Root himself is a child of divorce and the book is written with a personal tone, filled with his own stories and reflections from others who come from divorced homes. Root is to be commended for his use of the work of Giddens, Heidegger and Barth, all of whom he employs lightly and clearly. Furthermore, his fundamental thesis – that divorce is an ontological issue – is convincing.

Less positively, Root does not leave enough room to see ontology as being fundamentally constituted not in relation to others but primarily in relation to God. He seems to see this issue in his use of Barth when he says that, in Barth's thought, 'we must look no further than Jesus Christ for our understanding of what it means to be human' (162 n.1). We are to exist – that is, to have our ontology founded – in relation to humans but most importantly in relation to God. Yet Root consistently argues that ontology is based on the child's relation to biological parents. Furthermore, he might be too emphatic in defining divorce as an ontological issue. Divorce is not simply psychological or social, but has psychological and social affects. The question, then, is how psychology relates to ontology. Of course, Root is seeking to get to the source of the problem at hand, but more nuance as to what ontology is and how it relates to these other areas would have been helpful.

These criticisms aside, however, Root has written a fine book. Even if the main thesis fails to convince, the book is worthwhile as it approaches the issues clearly, raises appropriate and thoughtful questions, and gives guidance to the church.

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Abingdon Pillars of Theology

Eberhard Busch

Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008; viii + 95pp. \$13.00,
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RÉSUMÉ

Eberhard Busch, spécialiste renommé de Karl Barth, présente ici la vie et l'œuvre du théologien de Bâle et fournit aux lecteurs des repères qui les aideront à mieux situer l'apport de Barth au sein d'un large paysage théologique, ainsi qu'à trouver leur chemin dans son œuvre majeure, *Die kirchliche Dogmatik*. Il en dégage les principaux axes sans lesquels les lecteurs de Barth risquent de se perdre, en évitant de les entraîner sur les pentes glissantes de la littérature secondaire.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In dem vorliegenden Band stellt uns der hoch geschätzte Barth-Schüler Eberhard Busch das Leben, das Umfeld und

das Werk von Karl Barth vor. Er versorgt den geneigten Leser mit einer Landkarte, die ihm hilft, Barths Beitrag in der weiten Landschaft theologischer Debatte genauer auszumachen und insbesondere seinen Weg durch Barths *opus magnum*, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, zu finden. Dabei weist der Autor auf wichtige Wegzeichen hin, ohne die der Leser von Karl Barth leicht vom Kurs abkommen kann, und steuert ihn somit sicher an den gefährlichen Klippen der Sekundärliteratur vorbei.

SUMMARY

In this volume, the highly-esteemed Barth scholar Eberhard Busch introduces us to the life, location and work of Karl Barth, providing readers with a map which will assist them to locate Barth's contribution more accurately within a wider landscape of theological conversation and, more particularly, to navigate their way into Barth's magnum opus, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*. He highlights key markers apart from which Barth's readers easily wander off course, steering them clear of the slippery climbs of the secondary literature.

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Those who help us read and understand the great theologians of the Church are themselves a great gift to the Church. In this volume, the doyen of contemporary Barth scholarship, Eberhard Busch, with striking clarity and warmth, and with unequalled familiarity (at least in print) with his subject, introduces neophytes and those long-familiar with Karl Barth to the Reformed theologian's life, location and work.

Busch, professor emeritus for systematic theology at the Georg-August-Universität in Göttingen, provides readers with a map which, if followed carefully, will assist them to locate Barth's contribution more accurately within a wider landscape of theological conversation and, more particularly, to navigate their way into Barth's magnum opus, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*. He highlights key markers apart from which Barth's readers easily wander off course, and steers readers clear of the slippery climbs of the secondary literature. Busch is an outstanding guide.

The book begins with an entrée into Barth's early period as an assistant pastor in Geneva from 1909 to 1911, a period in which he was fundamentally shaped by the theological liberalism associated with Schleiermacher. It is followed by his ministry at Safenwil and his move by 1916 into the strange new world of the Bible in which he discovered the Godness of God, the grace of revelation which 'hits us' like an 'arrow from the other side of the shore' (5). In chapter two, 'The Rise of the Confessing Church', Busch traces the way that Barth pressed his theological knowledge into the service of the church, championing the reality that the one binding Word of God is Jesus Christ. Here, Busch introduces readers to the Barmen Declaration, noting that 'wherever the church *looses* herself from any bond which is to God's Word *and at the same time* to worldly power,

wherever she listens *solely* to God's Word, she will not cease to speak out politically, but she will do so from a *different* position' (12). In chapter three, Busch lays out the ecclesial, political and historical context in which Barth penned his thirteen-volume *Church Dogmatics*, attending to the part that reason, natural theology, freedom and Church played in Barth's thought, and sketching Barth's involvement, after the Second World War, in ecumenical efforts, in post-Vatican II discussions as well as discussions with American theologians from 1962 onwards.

The remainder of the book (23–83) is given to summarising Barth's *Dogmatics*. Beginning with an explanation of Barth's understanding of the graced nature of theology, of the fact that divine speech 'is not and can never be a presupposition that falls into our hands' (26), Busch attends to Barth on a range of topics: religion, faith, knowledge, the trinity, divine freedom, the relationship between Israel and Church in the one covenant of grace – the reconciliation which is 'so essential that the covenant would risk falling "in the void" ... were it not fulfilled' (43) in Jesus Christ – God's calling and bringing of creation into correspondence with his covenant, God's triumph in the creation of faithful servants in their own free decision (what Barth in CD II/2 calls the 'autonomy of the creature'), the relationship between Gospel and Law, prayer, the sin which is nothing, real and misunderstood, the relationship between sanctification and justification, theodicy, and Christian community in relation to Christ, the world and the vocation 'to be God's witness within her own times' (76). Busch concludes by outlining how Barth understands Christ's resurrection and its relationship to 'historical facts' (80), to history itself as past, present and future are bound together in Christ, and to Christian hope. Each chapter concludes with a set of questions for further reflection.

A junior cousin to Busch's earlier book *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology* (Eerdmans, 2004), significantly briefer than Bromiley's *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*, and more lightweight than Hunsinger's *How to Read Karl Barth*, Busch's *Barth* is a genuine introduction which impressively fulfils the brief of the 'Abingdon Pillars of Theology' series of which it is a part: it will assist college and seminary students to 'grasp the basic and necessary facts, influence, and significance of major theologians'.

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Hermeneutics: An Introduction

Anthony C. Thiselton

Grand Rapids and Cambridge U.K.: Eerdmans, 2009; xi + 409 pp., pb.; \$30, £20; ISBN 978-0-8028-6410-9

SUMMARY

Thiselton's succinct textbook is a well-written, balanced survey of the history of hermeneutics from biblical times to the present, one that engages particularly with the challenges of post-modern issues in hermeneutics. While the focus is much broader, much of the discussion directly applies to biblical hermeneutics. The final chapters address issues of particular concern to evangelical theology. In short, this is a masterful combination of philosophical hermeneutics, historical developments and contemporary issues and approaches.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Thiseltons konzentriertes Lehrbuch stellt einen gut geschriebenen, ausgewogenen Überblick über die Geschichte der Hermeneutik von biblischen Zeiten bis in die Gegenwart dar. Die Studie setzt sich besonders mit den Herausforderungen postmoderner Themen auf dem Gebiet der Hermeneutik auseinander. Während die Zielsetzung breiter gefächert ist, kann die Diskussion größtenteils unmittelbar auf biblische Hermeneutik angewandt werden. Die letzten Kapitel sprechen Themen an, die für die evangelikale Theologie von besonderem Interesse sind. Kurzum: Es handelt sich um eine meisterhafte Verbindung von philosophischer Hermeneutik, historischen Entwicklungen und zeitgenössischen Themen und Methoden.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce manuel bien écrit présente un survol équilibré de l'histoire de l'herméneutique depuis les temps bibliques jusqu'à la période actuelle, et réserve un traitement particulier aux questions herméneutiques qui se posent dans le contexte post-moderne. Tout en couvrant un champ d'étude beaucoup plus large, il a, par bien des points abordés, des applications directes pour l'herméneutique biblique. Les derniers chapitres traitent de questions importantes pour la théologie évangélique. En bref, on a là un ouvrage qui combine de façon magistrale la réflexion en herméneutique philosophique, l'exposé historique et la discussion de problèmes et d'approches contemporains.

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Anthony Thiselton, professor emeritus of Christian Theology at the University of Nottingham, England, has been one of the most important and prolific European authors on hermeneutics in the past thirty years. Many have benefited from his detailed studies *The two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer and Wittgenstein* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (London: HarperCollins, 1992) and *Thiselton on Hermeneutics: The*