

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

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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*

Collected Works and New Essays of Anthony Thiselton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). Well informed, succinct and lucid as in his previous studies, Thiselton offers with the present volume an excellent textbook on hermeneutics for students and general readers.

The first two chapters address introductory issues. 'The aims and scope of hermeneutics' discusses definitions of hermeneutics, the differences between philosophical hermeneutics and more traditional philosophical thought and their relation to explanation and understanding, as well as the relationship between preliminary and provisional understanding and the hermeneutical circle. Chapter Two, 'Hermeneutics in the contexts of philosophy, biblical studies, literary theory and the social self', covers further differences from more philosophical thought (community and tradition; wisdom or knowledge?); approaches in traditional biblical studies (the rootedness of texts located in time and place); the impact of literary theory on hermeneutics and biblical interpretation; the new criticism, the impact of literary theory; reader-response theories; and interest, social sciences, critical theory, historical reason and theology as wider dimensions of hermeneutics.

Chapter Three uses the parables of Jesus as an example of hermeneutical methods. Chapters 4-12 offer a broad historical survey of hermeneutics: 4: 'A legacy of perennial questions from the ancient world: Judaism and the ancient Greeks'; 5: 'New Testament and second century'. Discussion includes the Old Testament as a frame of reference or pre-understanding (Paul and the Gospels); Hebrews, 1 Peter and Revelation: the Old Testament as pre-understanding; the question of allegorical interpretation or typology in the New Testament; Paul's references to the Old Testament in Hebrew or the LXX, Old Testament quotations in the Gospels, 1 Peter, and Hebrews; and finally, second century interpretation and hermeneutics; 6: From the third to the thirteenth century; 7: Reform, the Enlightenment and the rise of biblical criticism; 8: Schleiermacher and Dilthey; 9. Rudolf Bultmann and demythologising the New Testament; 10: Some mid-twentieth-century approaches: Barth, the new hermeneutic, structuralism, post-structuralism and Barr's semantics; 11: Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics: the second turning point and 12: the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur.

Three further chapters address a selection of contemporary approaches against the backdrop of these historical developments. Chapter 13 studies the hermeneutics of liberation theologies and postcolonial hermeneutics. Thiselton examines definition, origins, development and biblical themes, G. Gutierrez and the birth of liberation theology, the second stage with the 'base communities' and J. P. Miranda in the 1970s, the continuation of the second stage with J. L. Segundo, J. S. Croatto, L. Boff and others, and postcolonial hermeneutics as the third stage from the 1980s to the present. Chapter 14 covers feminist and womanist hermeneutics while chapter 15 is devoted to reader-response and reception theories.

These chapters provide a helpful supplement to more traditionally oriented recent volumes on biblical interpretation such as A. du Toit (ed.), *Focus on the Message: New Testament Hermeneutics, Exegesis and Methods, Guide to the New Testament* (Pretoria: Protea, 2009).

Chapter 16 addresses postmodernism and hermeneutics. Thiselton sets out by asking whether postmodernity is compatible with Christian faith, and then surveys European postmodernism (Derrida, the later Barts, Lyotard and Baudrillard, Foucault) and American postmodernism (Richard Rorty, the later Stanley Fish).

A final, brief chapter discusses divine agency and the authority of Scripture ('how divine agency in the inspiration of the Bible relates to human reading and interpretation', 349), politeness theory as an advance in linguistics and pragmatics that might become influential for hermeneutics (politeness theory 'emphasises the situational background of language but observes especially that language and its contexts often pose either a threat or a face-saving device to the speaker', 352), Brevard Childs and the 'canonical approach', fuller meaning, typology and allegorical interpretation and an all too brief survey of Catholic biblical scholarship (less than one page; the important document 'The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church' of 1993, cf. http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/PBC_Interp.htm, is briefly assessed).

Thiselton's book, modestly termed an 'Introduction', makes an excellent textbook for undergraduate and postgraduate students. It is suitable for use in class room discussions. One of its merits is the fine combination of philosophical hermeneutics, historical developments and contemporary issues and approaches that is wanting in many other works on hermeneutics. It is to be welcomed that Thiselton addresses a number of the hermeneutical issues related to the Church and Christian faith. A further chapter might have addressed what has been termed 'theological interpretation'; for definitions and a survey see K. J. Vanhoozer (ed.), *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SPCK; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

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