

pressures, reclaiming religious prerogatives in a manner reflected in the household codes of the deutero-Pauline writings. Then developments in Gnosticism and reactions to them are shown to claim equality only for the minority of women who remained virgins. The triumph of a hierarchical and monarchical institution is contrasted with the teaching of the Gospels according to Mark and John which emphasises the unavoidable nature of disciples' suffering and persecution.

Finally, Professor Schüssler Fiorenza points to twin Biblical images which have structured female consciousness: the Eden image which sees woman as home-maker and the Exodus image which encourages woman to leave the confines of patriarchal society.

The thesis is carefully and cogently argued. The book should be read by everyone interested in the NT or in feminism in Western society.

MARGARET PAMMENT

LUKE AND THE LAW by S.G. Wilson. **Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 50.** Cambridge University Press, 1983. pp. x and 142. Hb. £15.00

We give a warm welcome to the fiftieth volume in the series of monographs which was initiated by the Society for New Testament Studies in 1965. Professor Wilson of Carleton University, Ottawa, has already contributed an important volume to the series on *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* and is the author of a study on *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles*. In his latest work he presents his research into a further aspect of Lucan studies. His concern is with Luke's view of the law. It is thus a redactional study which is presented, and the author argues that in these days of uncertainty about the precise solution to the synoptic problem it is possible to compare both individual periscopes and their overall effects in the Gospels in a profitable manner without presupposing any particular theory of synoptic relationships.

The author plunges straight into his subject without any introduction by examining the legal terminology used by Luke. He draws attention to Luke's use of the term *ethos*, 'custom', as a synonym for the law, and draws comparative material from Josephus in particular to suggest that Luke intends the law to be seen as a cultural entity, as well as a religious one, so that, while it is proper for the Jews to follow it, it is not necessarily appropriate for the Gentiles.

A second chapter examines carefully all the relevant material in the Gospel. Luke has a positive attitude to the Jewish observance of the law and notes how Jesus condemned non-observance of it. In

various incidents where Jesus might be thought to challenge the law Wilson argues that he does not abrogate it but rather supplements it with his own teaching. Luke shows little interest in the practicalities of the law, a fact which suggests that it was not of great concern for his readers. Wilson finds some ambiguities in the teaching of Luke, especially in Lk. 16:16—18 where, he suggests, the inability of commentators to agree on how to interpret the passage, indicates that Luke was not trying to offer a consistent view of the law. Finally, he draws attention to Luke's omission of some of the legal discussions in Mk. and argues that Mk. 7:1—23 is omitted simply because it was not in Luke's version of Mk.—a view which I do not find very convincing. In the light of this evidence Wilson sums up by rejecting the views of Conzelmann and Jervell, both of whom argue that Luke presents Jesus as conforming to the law. Luke's attitude is ambiguous. The commands of the law are affirmed, but in some cases it is implicitly called into question, and opposing views can even be juxtaposed. The Gospel is not necessarily consistent with Acts, since in the former the saving function of the law is still present. It is likely that Luke was writing after AD 70 for Gentile Christians who were not interested in legal issues that arose in the life of Jesus and were far removed from discussions with Rabbinic Judaism.

In Acts the law on its own is inadequate to save; salvation is by faith. Yet Luke is not critical of Jewish Christians who continue to observe it. Stephen is

presented as upholding the law despite Jewish criticisms of him. Paul too keeps the law, although in Wilson's view Luke presents a thoroughly implausible picture of him historically in order to achieve this point. But what about Peter? He is presented as breaking with some aspects of the law in Acts 10–11. But this produces tensions with Acts 15 if the usual interpretation of the apostolic decree as laying some legal, cultic regulations on Gentiles is accepted. This point leads into a detailed discussion of the decree. Having argued that the wording of the Greek text is not as cut and dried as is usually supposed, Wilson presents a strong case against the view that the decree reflects the prohibitions in Lev. 17–18, and argues that there is more to be said for the view that it is directed against pagan cultic practices. He draws attention to the problems of giving a satisfactory interpretation of *pniktos*, and suggests that the word is perhaps not original in the text. If so, this opens up the possibility, suggested with some hesitation, that originally for Luke the decree was ethical in character. It contained a set of ecclesiastical provisions possessing apostolic authority. Thus, to summarise, there is no conflict for Jews between being Christian believers and continuing to keep the law, but the position for Gentiles is less clear; they do not need to be circumcised or keep the law in full, but the requirements laid on them bear some relation to the teaching of Moses although their authority is derived from the apostles rather than from him.

In the concluding chapter Wilson draws seven conclusions: (1) The Jewish law is the *ethos* of the Jews, and God makes no distinction between Jewish and Gentile piety in accepting both groups for salvation through grace and faith. (2) Hence it is natural enough for Jews to continue to keep the law. The Gentiles do not need to do so, yet in some way they are committed to Mosaic principles. (3) Luke's emphasis on Paul as a law-abiding Jew suggests that he was replying to Jewish-Christian attacks on him. (4) The Gospel and Acts are not wholly consistent with each other and the

Gospel is not internally consistent. This suggests an interval between their composition. (5) Luke also notes the 'prophetic' function of the law, but does not fully integrate it into his understanding. (6) Luke reflects conditions after AD 70 and is not fully informed on some Jewish matters. Although he appears favourably disposed to Judaism, the Jews themselves are hostile to the church, and the Jewish mission appears to be at an end. (7) It is unlikely that Luke's audience contained Jewish Christians. It was Gentile, and there is nothing to help us locate it more precisely.

Wilson's conclusions bear some similarity to those in his earlier book on the Gentiles in Acts where he argued that Luke was less of a precise historian and theologian and more of a pastor. His criticisms of Conzelmann and Jervell are well-taken, and his understanding of the law as the *ethos* of the Jews is helpful and convincing. He rightly notes the complexity of Luke's teaching. But may this complexity not stem in some measure from the fact that Luke was concerned to report a developing situation in the teaching of Jesus and the life of the church rather than from schematisation or a reflection of the situation in his own time? Surely the picture of Jesus as an observer of the law and yet giving teaching which implicitly goes beyond it and even abrogates it in certain particulars is not an inconsistent one, but chimes in with the picture in the other Gospels. I am not persuaded by Wilson's rather too easy dismissal of R. Banks' position on the Gospels. As regards Acts, the ethical interpretation of the decree is not persuasive; to regard a prohibition of murder as a sort of imposition on Gentile Christians is most unlikely, and a reference to some aspect of Jewish food laws is still to my mind more plausible. What Luke has done is to picture a church wrestling with the problems of the law, a church in which Jewish Christians still observe the law although the views voiced by Peter suggest that this was a temporary stage. Unfortunately from our point of view—and here Wilson is right—Luke has not discussed in any detail the continuing situation for Jewish

Christians and their problems.

Although Wilson's discussion is thus not wholly persuasive, he has rendered a most useful service with this study of Luke and the law. He has provided a detailed study of all the relevant materials and he has opened up in a profitable way some

problems that are all too easily passed over and offered some valuable evidence that may contribute to their solution. This book well maintains both the standards of the distinguished series in which it appears and the author's own reputation as a Lucan scholar.

I. HOWARD MARSHALL

SCIENCE AND RELIGION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, edited by Tess Cosslett. *Cambridge English Prose Texts*. Cambridge University Press, 1984. Pp. vi + 249. £22.50 H/c (\$39.50). £7.95 P/c (\$14.95)

How did Noah manage with the dinosaurs? Answer: baby dinosaurs. Or so I once read in a handbook of Fundamentalism. It shows well enough how religious believers have been affected by the scientists. Some would say that science is irrelevant to religion, and it is true that for any worthwhile theology God is not a scientific explanation but the reason why there are such things. Yet some religious positions have clearly crumbled in the wake of scientific findings. And there is much 'similarity between reasoning used in science and arguments used in defence of religious belief. Induction and the criterion of simplicity have recently preoccupied philosophers of religion, as have scientific arguments for the world having had a beginning. The relationship between science and religion is still a live issue.

This book is an introduction to its career among nineteenth century Protestant or unbelieving intellectuals. It contains a good selection of extracts from Paley, Chambers, Miller, Darwin, Goodwin, Huxley, Tyndall and Temple. The extracts taken together are a good indication of how the Victorian debate continued, and they come with useful

introductions and notes. There is also a guide to further reading and a clear and informed introductory essay. One virtue of the book is the way in which the editor brings out the degree and seriousness of the scientific opposition to scientists whose views were thought to be a threat to Christianity. She indicates, for example, how in 1860 Wilberforce was not 'a Bible-thumping Fundamentalist totally opposed to scientific methods of investigation'. She can also, for instance, note how the 'catastrophists', who in the light of geology spoke of several creations, were 'eminent and productive scientists whose theories were in line with the available facts'. I do not know what all this proves from the viewpoint of theology or philosophy. But it is well to draw the point out if only to anticipate and deflect some of the things sometimes said about the silliness of Victorian natural theologians.

All in all, then, a worthwhile collection and a good way into its subject matter. It ought to prove a very helpful text-book for courses in nineteenth century theology, but the general reader should also get a lot out of it.

BRIAN DAVIES O.P.