

such as those concerning what we mean when we talk about "fallen humanity". And, with some of the writers above in mind, one cannot help feeling that there remains room for a decent theological study of the doctrine of Jesus' sinlessness. That these questions remain is a compliment to Weinandy's efforts. His lucid presentation of an orthodox position (or, perhaps, a minor variant upon it) is well worth the attention of anyone interested in the doctrine of the person and work of Christ.

PETER GROVES

**LANGUAGE, THEOLOGY, AND THE BIBLE: ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF JAMES BARR.** Edited by Samuel E. Balentine and John Barton. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994. £45.00.

*A pot pourri* of essays, written and collected for the occasion of a seventieth birthday, is a gift with attendant problems. Not only are the contributors in danger of appearing to 'stop the clock', in that their choice of papers, with a backwards look, fails to give attention to any new studies which their celebrant may still be producing; but also, the selection of the contributions places constraints on how we perceive the full range of already published works, thus limiting rather than enhancing their appeal.

This particular collection is in fact a commendable achievement. Twenty-four international figures have engaged with the two most dominant themes in Professor James Barr's writings thus far — his linguistic and textual studies, and his critical theological works, as each theme relates to our reading of the Bible. The wide range of Barr's contributions in both these areas is fully explored — six essays on language and the Bible, with the remaining papers on theology and the Bible. Thus in this case, the selection of papers stands the test: the diversity of choice gives James Barr due recognition.

If the book has a failing, it is the unavoidable one of having to draw a line when Barr's literary output is still continuing apace. For his most recent books, on the creation stories (*The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*, 1992) and on natural theology (*Biblical Faith and Natural Theology*, 1993), are perhaps his most interesting and provocative to date; and they can hardly be his last word on the subject. So, although inevitable, it is disappointing that, other than a few pages in a chapter by John Barton, these more recent contributions to the contemporary debate have been given little attention.

Over the last thirty years of writing, Professor Barr's attempts to liberate the Bible from a particular linguistic and theological stranglehold have not left him free of critics. The demise of the Biblical Theology Movement and the undermining of the intellectual foundations of fundamentalism were largely attributable to his earlier works. Against this backcloth, the most important two chapters in the whole collection are probably those by the editors, for each offers

constructive evaluations of Barr's more contentious publications.

Professor Samuel Balentine assesses Barr's engagement with the linguistic debate by concentrating on three of his earlier books *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961), *Biblical Words for Time* (1962), and *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (1968). His conclusion is that Barr's greatest contribution has been to show how critical exegesis derives from the impact of the text upon the presuppositions of the reader, and not the reverse, as is more commonly practised. Balentine highlights Barr's concern with the 'factuality of the text' — not, in its independence, as an antagonist to theology, but rather as a partner, in the expectations that this will offer fruitful interaction (p. 14). This is an admirably clear and concise introduction to the textual studies in Barr's work.

Professor Barton's assessment of Barr as biblical critic and theologian is similarly full of new insights. His essay concentrates on Barr's later seminal publications — *Fundamentalism* (1978), *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* (1983) *Escaping from Fundamentalism* (1984) as well as his *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (1993). Just as Balentine noted, that Barr's lasting contribution was his emphasis on the independent status of the text, Barton's conclusion is the corollary of this. Barr's significance is his insistence on the independent status of theology, interacting with, but essentially different from, the study of the Bible. This gives biblical study a 'critical objectivity', and so leads to fresh insights about

"...the *givenness* of linguistic structures, of the wording of texts, of the realities to which biblical writers were responding...; together with the right, indeed the obligation, for human beings to study all these phenomena with a critical eye, unconstrained by the deliverances of authorities, whether ecclesiastical, academic, or traditional." (pp. 24–5).

These two editorial chapters, as well as the earlier pages of biographical introduction, tracing the international appeal of Barr's work, undoubtedly form the essence of the book. What then of the remaining twenty-two papers? Obviously one would expect a variety which appeals to different tastes. (On this account, it might have been helpful to have included a brief abstract at the end of each paper, so that one could focus attention more quickly on one's preferences.) A number of essays catch the eye.

Among the first six more linguistic essays, the most notable include 'Translation and Emendation' by Professor Bertil Albrektson (Uppsala) and 'Could Isaiah understand the *Ha'arets* Newspaper?' from Professor Edward Ullendorff (London). Among the remaining essays with a more overt theological agenda, noteworthy are those by Professor James Mays (Virginia), who proposes that psalmody does indeed have a theological centre, and that this is 'the kingship of God'; Dr. Ernest Nicholson (Oxford) who uses examples from ancient Greek

historiography to assess whether Genesis-Kings might be understood as story or history; Professor Douglas Knight (Vanderbilt), who takes up sociological theories of both structural-functional and social-conflict types to assess the basis of Israel's religion and morality during the four critical periods of her history; and Professor Hans Barstad (Oslo), who suggests, somewhat laconically, that now is the time to abandon Duhm's myth of a collection of servant songs in Isaiah 40–55.

Amongst the last eight essays, still theological in scope, but less exegetical in their focus, is one striking contribution, entitled 'Luis de León and the Song of Songs', written by Jane Barr. (Where were the other women?) The subject choice of Luis de León, who was a Latinist, Hebraist, student of the Vulgate, biblical translator and lover of Spain, brings together several of the Barrs' mutual interests. But not only the subject matter, but also the clarity and wide-ranging discussion gives this essay an interesting and scholarly tone: here we see an engagement with those methodological issues which both the Barrs share.

But this book highlights not so much the contributors as the one to whom the contributions were made. And this circle of scholarship has enabled us to perceive Barr's positive impact on many different areas relating to biblical study. Collectively, these essays have thus achieved their purpose. And yet, there is still more to be said: James Barr's influence on theological and biblical study is still very much in the making.

SUSAN GILLINGHAM

**PAUL, AN INTRODUCTION TO HIS THOUGHT [Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series], by C.K. Barrett. *Geoffrey Chapman*, 1994, xii + 180pp., ppbk £9.99**

It is always a delight to read a book by such a master as C.K. Barrett. This is no exception, for it is full of pithy, penetrating comments which show both the breadth born of experience and the alert and questing originality which enriched that experience. Paul is described as one of the most hated men in the ancient world (p. 1), or in his own words as a 'freak' apostle (p. 126). Professor Barrett does not feel the need to follow current trends about authorship: although he bases his main exposition of Pauline theology on six letters, he does not rule out the authenticity of 'deutero-Paulines'. He is not afraid either of unusual questions (why is there no mention of a presider at the Corinthian eucharist, nor of a collector of funds for the poor? Was there no systematically ordered ministry?), nor of rocking the conventional boat (as with a suggestion that *episcopoi* in Phil 1.1 are financial officers, p. 123, or the suggestion that the connection between the Christian supper and the annual Passover meal was made by Paul himself, p. 129).

The book duly opens with a biographical chapter on Paul and his