

on the way to becoming the church triumphant. We are God's salvation army of occupation in the world. The mission of local parishes is to reorder their cultural life in anticipation of the coming new world order.

In the concluding essay entitled "Christ and his Church: The Implications of Christology for the Mission of the Church Today," George L. Carey argues that at the heart of the church is the living Christ, and that the way we experience him will guide our mission. Faith in Christ, first of all, challenges privatized forms of Christianity; and, second, it makes members a Christlike people. It calls people to discipleship, radical obedience, and faithfulness. The most important implication of Christology for the church today is to become Christlike and to put Christ at the center of all its activities. The perception of the church as a bureaucracy, institutionalized morality, social agency, or a school of liberal humanism, must be challenged and changed.

The overall approach of the volume is that of systematic theology and its objective is an apologetical response to the radical feminist hermeneutics of the Bible. The stand taken here is especially significant in light of the challenges that Anglican clergy and theologians have faced during the last decade.

Since the pivotal statement of the volume is "biblical Christology," it seems paradoxical that the Bible is not the primary source of the material; it is only referred to sporadically. The stress is on the Anglican traditional conservative position. The only exception is the essay of Wright, who takes a biblical-theological approach. More biblical treatment would be helpful, especially in light of the fact that feminist theologians point to the Bible to strengthen their position. The traditional church position on Christology is certainly important, but it is the NT in particular that defines true Christology and sets the standard for the church's beliefs and teachings.

In conclusion, despite the critique expressed above, the volume proves to be informative and inspiring. Even though I occasionally find it hard to follow the thematic flow of some of the essays, the book is helpful to those who seek some encouragement and direction with regard to the conservative position on biblical Christology.

Andrews University

RANKO STEFANOVIC

Barr, James. *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999. xvii, 715 pp. Hardcover, \$ 48.00.

Fortress Press seems to have undertaken the task of publishing important OT and biblical theologies. After the monumental works of Childs (1993) and Brueggemann (1997), now James Barr's comprehensive analysis of biblical theology has appeared at the same time as Anderson's *Contours of Old Testament Theology*. In thirty-five highly perceptive chapters, Barr surveys twentieth-century works on biblical theology and draws the reader into the conceptual questions, both theological and philosophical, that everyone who is seriously engaged in the task of biblical theology needs to face. Barr's comprehensive knowledge of the scholarly literature as well as his sharp insights make this book a *tour de force*.

Barr begins by delineating the contested notion of biblical theology (chap.

1). After a brief historical survey of the origins of modern OT theology (chap. 2), he describes five main types of theologies, exemplified by Köhler, Eichrodt, Vriezen, von Rad, and Childs, and discusses them critically in a second round (chap. 3). In a transitional chapter Barr demonstrates that thematic and topical studies usually not designated as biblical theology nevertheless may belong to this genre and indeed are important for it (chap. 4).

Chapters 5-18 are an extensive elaboration on the concept that biblical theology is a contested notion. Barr compares and contrasts it with doctrinal theology (chap. 5), nontheological study of the Bible (chap. 6), evolutionary ideas (chap. 7), history of religion (chap. 8), philosophical and natural theologies (chap. 10), and historical theology, which he uses to offer an analogy to biblical theology (chap. 13). In chapter 9 Barr explains that size "has nothing particular to do with the establishment of a study as 'theological'" (141). In chapter 11 he observes the different ways in which OT theology has been related with the NT. He concludes that the two are intrinsically separate fields and urges scholars to undertake an OT theology on the terms of the OT itself. In chapter 12 Barr provides reasons why the question whether biblical theology is an objective discipline and thus descriptive (K. Stendahl), or whether it is a faith-committed discipline with implications for the present day (B. Childs) is only an apparent conflict. Barr then surveys and evaluates the different oppositions to biblical theology (chaps. 14 and 15) and identifies "Christianizing" of the OT as a fading problem (chap. 16). He tries to assess the relationship between OT theology and postbiblical Judaism (chap. 17), and the Jewish interest in and contributions to biblical theology (chap. 18).

In the second half of *The Concept of Biblical Theology*, Barr centers his discussion more around recent contributions to (mainly) OT theology. He briefly reviews OT theologies of the 1970s, including those of W. Zimmerli, C. Westermann, G. Fohrer, S. Terrien, and H. H. Schmid (chap. 19) and assesses the achievement of OT theology up to that time (chap. 20). Then in chapter 21 he reintroduces the concept of story as "an essential linkage between biblical narrative and theology" (354; cf. his *Old and New in Interpretation* [1966]). Barr assesses the work of H. Gese (chap. 22), theologies based on a canonical approach (chaps. 23-25), including especially that of Childs (chap. 24), and OT theologies of the 1990s by the Germans O. Kaiser, A. H. J. Gunneweg, and H.-D. Preuss (chap. 26). In chapter 28 he deals with the approach of M. Oeming, which he evaluates very favorably. Then he covers F. Mildenerger (chap. 29), H. Räisänen (chap. 30), W. Brueggemann (chap. 31), and D. Brown, whose thinking is for Barr "an ideal example of a type of theology with which I would be very happy for my own work to be associated" (xvi; cp. 586)—(chap. 34).

This second half contains an extensive effort to establish a place for natural theology within biblical theology (chap. 27). There is a chapter on the place of the Apocrypha and other noncanonical books, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, in biblical theology (chap. 32), and Barr briefly comments on the possibilities of a Christian OT theology and a panbiblical theology (chap. 33). In a final three-page chapter he identifies some major conclusions.

The book appears to be well edited. I detected only one typo on p. 133, line 7 from the bottom: "whiat" instead of "what." There are thirty-one pages of

bibliography, of which three and a half (more than 10%!) cover works by Barr. There are almost sixty pages of endnotes, plus exhaustive indices of names and concepts.

Barr writes in a fresh and largely easy-to-follow style, obviously due to the book's origin in his lectures and teaching (xiii). In line with his suspicion toward canonical approaches, particularly the one advocated by Childs, he engages in repeated and polemical criticism of this particular scholar. This is irritating, creating an atmosphere in which the reader expects to encounter the name of Childs in another animadversion at any moment (see, e.g., 153-154, 234, and 401-438 *passim*). Such a tone is unnecessarily hostile and only distracts from Barr's argumentation. It sometimes leaves the reader wondering whether Barr has fallen into the same attitude of judgmental "absoluteness" that he accuses Childs of having (403).

Barr's contribution is his thoughtful refinement of the contours of biblical theology in relation to similar disciplines that are sometimes introduced in or even considered to be biblical theology, such as doctrinal theology, history of religion, or philosophy and natural theology. Some of his main ideas for doing biblical theology spring forth from these contrasts. For example, Barr suggests that the history of religion approach, prominent again through the work of Albrecht, which he finds highly stimulating (120-123, 605), should be "accorded full recognition and importance by biblical theology" (138). Another major suggestion is to incorporate natural theology, which he views quite positively (in reaction to Barth and Childs?), into biblical theology (168-170, 207, 468-496; cf. his 1991 Gifford lectures, published in *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* [1993]).

Barr is to be commended for his outstanding survey of the scholarly contributions to biblical theology, notably for his endeavors to bring late twentieth-century European scholarship to the forefront, especially the work of German OT scholars such as Albrecht, Gunneweg, Kaiser, Mildenerger, Oeming, Preuss, and Rendtorff. Due to the variety of these analyses, some parts of *The Concept of Biblical Theology* after chapter 20 give the impression that Barr's work is a conglomerate of individual surveys, criticisms, and ideas rather than an enfolding presentation of the state of art in biblical theology.

Barr's critical analysis is brilliant. The book is worth the money to find out how he assesses the approaches of his colleagues. However, his critical probing is not balanced by an equally weighted portion of constructive proposals. After all, the critical analysis of the approaches of others to biblical theology leads to a refined understanding of the issues in this field and should prepare well for a thoughtful formulation of one's own theological framework and approach. To be fair, Barr does not intend to present his own biblical theology. He clearly emphasizes right from the outset that his work "is a discussion of the whole idea of biblical theology, its possibilities and its prospects" (xiii). Nevertheless, the wording of the title leaves a reader wondering why, after such a remarkable exploration of the work of others, Barr does not clearly outline his own concept of biblical theology, or at least describe more explicitly the methodology he would use to engage in biblical theology. The reader is not necessarily satisfied by his assertion that "there is no such thing as a 'right' methodology" (59) or "the one appropriate method" (61) for carrying out the task of biblical theology.

To be sure, Barr sketches some fruitful avenues. For example, he suggests

that "separate 'theologies' of individual books, or groups of books, should be produced" (53, cp. 144), as well as "smaller" studies on more closely defined topics rather than an all-encompassing biblical theology (54). For Barr, then, biblical theology should pursue a theme or topic throughout the OT and NT, or it should confine itself to an exhaustive theological analysis of a limited text corpus, even "individual passages when seen properly in context" (145). Here I would like to side with Barr. The range of themes, motifs, and concepts in the biblical books, as well as various theologies of individual books or groups of writings, should be incorporated into biblical theology. To add to Barr's suggestion, after these multi-oriented theological endeavors have been accomplished, it may be possible to undertake the next level of biblical theology: to analyze relationships between them and consider the possibility of theological unity at a higher hierarchical level. Barr may feel uncomfortable with this, of course, as he criticizes previous efforts to arrive at comprehensive biblical theologies.

In conclusion, *The Concept of Biblical Theology* is a book to which everyone who is seriously engaged in this field should give careful attention. It mines the riches of a seasoned scholar's splendid analyses of his peers, and it draws the reader into intense reflection on the theological and philosophical contours of biblical theology. It can be hoped that in the future we will see Barr's own comprehensive OT or biblical theology, which will certainly be eagerly awaited by the scholarly community.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

MARTIN PRÖBSTLE

Brueggemann, Walter. *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1997. 736 pp. Hardcover, \$48.00.

In this weighty volume Walter Brueggemann not only presents his approach to the genre of OT studies, but also his assessment of the past, present, and future of the field. He defends the need for a new work by asserting that critical theological exposition is currently in a state of disarray. He then proposes that the resultant theological unsettlement provides a "multilayered pluralistic" atmosphere that is begging for a "new and fresh" theology of the OT. Brueggemann's goal is to avoid the temptation to "reductionism" of past OT theologies by focusing on process in the community presenting the text rather than on substantive or thematic matters. The book's subtitle provides three indicators of how Brueggemann intends to accomplish this mission. First, rather than making history or ontology his starting point, he investigates Israel's reflection on Yahweh by analyzing its "Testimony" and counter testimony in a court setting. Second, recognizing that testimony can be confusing, Brueggemann analyzes the resultant competing and conflicting "Disputes." Third, in spite of the competing disputes in the testimony, Brueggemann analyzes Israel's testimony, which takes a firm stand in "Advocating" that her truth is better than all other competing concepts of truth.

Because Israel's testimony is so crucial, Brueggemann takes seriously the OT text in its final form. He points out that Historical Criticism's emphasis on layers and sources detracts from the text, which is the only source of Israel's testimony. To Brueggemann the order in which Israel gave her testimony is so critical that he normally rejects critical attempts to reorder the text. He proposes that Israel's