MJT 9/1 (1993) 142-162

# BOOK REVIEWS

*Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, by Peter Schafer. Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1981. Pp. 299. DM 298.00.

This volume is a synopsis of Hekhalot literature, i.e., esoteric originally handwritten materials (manuscripts) of Jewish mysticism (היכל means "heavenly palace"). The editor has made available in the original language seven manuscripts of this rabbinical literature, which are closely linked with, if not actually representing, Jewish Gnosticism.

Scholars reading the text of this volume will need the required skill to read consonants with unpointed vowels. This, of course, limits this publication to the specialist in most instances. The book will therefore have its place as a source reference in the specialist's library.

In the foreword, the editor promises that a concordance is in preparation, and that a translation, together with a literary-redaction critical analysis will also be published in due time, which should make this presently highly technical work accessible to a wider audience.

*Raymond O. Zorn*

*I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence*, by Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. Pp. 253, including indexes and appendices. $12.99.

This study of the Kroegers augments the growing list of studies of 1 Timothy 2:11-15, one of the most controversial texts in the on-going debate concerning the ordination of women. It is perhaps the first book-length treatment of the passage which focusses primarily upon the alleged cultural and religious context which may have given rise to the apostle Paul's prohibition against women exercising authority or teaching in the church. The argument offered by the Kroegers in this volume, however, has been offered by other authors, including the Kroegers themselves, in previous articles on the subject.

Writing for a general evangelical audience, the Kroegers are at pains to show that their case is based upon extensive research and observes the highest standards of historical scholarship. They acknowledge at the outset that "evangelical scholarship has not always been of a level of

excellence that earned the respect of nonevangelicals" (38). They offer their study, accordingly, as an attempt to redress this lack in previous evangelical scholarship and to demonstrate that the most careful and up-to-date scholarship supports the case for the ordination of women.

It does not take the reader long to ascertain the burden of the Kroegers' argument. They make it clear early on that they find the traditional opposition within evangelicalism to the ordination of women to be an injustice that needs to be corrected. They are convinced that the biblical teaching about women's equality in Christ (they appeal, as expected, to Gal. 3:28) and the instances in which women are described exercising the role of teaching, to constitute a compelling basis for the ordination of women. However, since 1 Timothy 2:11-15 has so often been used to prevent the ordination of women, they are anxious to show that the traditional reading of this text is not compelling.

There are two components that comprise the Kroegers' case. First, they argue for a particular reading of 1 Timothy 1:12, based primarily upon philological evidence. And second, they present an argument for the existence of a gnostic or proto-gnostic heresy that existed in the first century of the Christian era. This purported gnostic heresy, the Kroegers argue, provides the historical context for the apostle's prohibition in 1 Timothy 2. Because this prohibition arose within this context and is based upon the threat of a particular heresy facing the Ephesian church at the time of the writing of 1 Timothy, it is no longer binding upon the church today. Written in the first century, possibly by the apostle Paul with assistance by another writer, this epistle can only be understood against the background of the heresies confronting the early church in Ephesus.

In the first part of the study, the Kroegers' attempt to make a case for the possible translation of 1 Timothy 2:12 as follows:

> I do not permit woman to teach nor to represent herself as originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures] [or that she keeps it a secret.] For Adam was created first, then Eve.

What evidence do they offer for this reading of the text?

The Kroegers begin by suggesting that, because the verb διδάσκειν ("to teach") and its related forms often has a positive or negative connotation, it may have the meaning here of "to teach a wrong doctrine." The problem with this suggestion is that there is no instance that the Kroegers are able to cite in which this is the meaning of this verb! The supposition that this is its meaning in verse 12 is only that

— a supposition. The Kroegers do not produce any evidence for this meaning. Similarly, the Kroegers' attempt to translate ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ εἶναι ("to be in silence") as "be in conformity [with the Scripture]" or "keep it a secret" has no real warrant. The insertion of a reference to the Scripture is simply gratuitous and is served by an odd shifting of the meaning of the word for "silence." Though the Kroegers rightly note that the word for "silence" in this verse can have the connotations of "peace" or "harmony," this does not warrant the *semantic shift* they indulge by rendering it "conformity." It is also a mystery how they move from "to be in silence" to the possible rendering "to keep a secret."

When it comes to the translation of the key verb in this text, αὐθεντεῖν ("to exercise authority"), the Kroegers' case is not much better. Though they endeavor to show that this verb can mean "to represent oneself as originator of" or "to proclaim oneself author of," they are not able to produce any evidence contemporaneous with their own dating of the epistle in which this verb is used with the meaning suggested. Indeed, the only evidence offered for the meaning they prefer comes from the fourth century A.D. But, as if this were not enough, the Kroegers also attempt to show that this verb can mean "*claim to* originate." Their claim at this point, as another reviewer of their study has pointed out (Al Wolters, *Calvin Theological Journal* 28/1 [April, 1993]:210), is based upon a mistranslation of an entry in the sixteenth century Latin dictionary of Stephanus which offers *praebeo me auctorem* as a meaning of αὐθεντέω. The Latin idiom simply means "to originate," not "to claim to originate" as the Kroegers suppose. The Kroegers compound their error at this point by suggesting that Stephanus may have had access to Greek manuscripts in which the verb has this meaning, though these manuscripts are no longer available.

Further observations of the Kroegers' handling of the evidence for their proposed translation of αὐθεντεῖν could be made. They omit an important article that does not support their translation, but which supports the common translation of this verb (L. E. Wilshire, "The TLG Computer and Further References to Αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12," *New Testament Studies* 34/1 [1988]:120-134). And they confuse the noun, αὐθέντης, which has the negative connotation of "murder" prior to the first century, with the verb, αὐθεντεῖν, which does not have the meaning "to murder" until the tenth century A.D. None of this lends credence to the Kroegers' promise that their study will be an exception to the general rule of evangelical scholarship.

Those readers who might anticipate an improvement in the second area of the Kroegers' study will also be disappointed. Here their attempt

to sketch the main lines of a gnostic or proto-gnostic heresy in first-century Ephesus suffers from the same deficiencies of scholarship and evidence found in the first part of their study. The reader cannot escape the impression that the Kroegers have drawn upon a widely disparate body of sources and pieces of evidence, representing geographically and historically diverse phenomena, and forced them to fit a hypothesis that serves their purpose. The use of the evidence cited betrays their prejudice and over-anxiousness to find evidence, of whatever kind, that might lend plausibility to their case.

The main thesis of the Kroegers' argument is that there is evidence for the existence of a kind of religious feminism in Ephesus during the first century, to which the prohibition of 1 Timothy 2:12-14 is specifically directed. This gnosticism, as they conceive of it, was comprised of four major tenets: (1) Eve was the origin of Adam; (2) Eve came before Adam; (3) it was Adam that was deceived, whereas Eve was the enlightener of the human race; and (4) childbearing is something religiously unworthy.

Now it has long been known that Ephesus was a center of worship of a female state goddess, Artemis Ephesia (the "Diana of the Ephesians" in Acts 19:23-40). The statuary that remains, depicting this goddess, even suggests that she might have been a fertility goddess. However, the evidence for the latter is rather weak, since she is often referred to in ancient sources as "Artemis the pure" or a "vigilant maiden," language that suggests she was a chaste virgin. But the evidence for the kind of gnostic feminism the Kroegers imagine to have been present in Ephesus during the first century simply does not exist.

For example, in an appendix the Kroegers describe the Ephesian women as follows:

> In Ephesus women assumed the role of the man-slaying Amazons who had founded the cult of Artemis of Ephesus. . . . The female dancers at the temple of the Ephesian Artemis clashed their arms, so lethal weapons were part of the priestesses' religious accoutrements. There are reasons to suspect that the dances may have contained a simulated attack on males, especially as they were performed with spears. . . . They would surely have inspired terror; and this, Strabo tells us, was one of the purposes of the dance (186-187).

In this description, the Kroegers refer to Strabo, a Greek historian from Pontus who died around A.D. 20. Strabo describes the dancing of certain "Kouretes" (religious officials) who performed a ritual associ-

ated with the mythology of Artemis' birth. The problem is that these religious officials, based upon the evidence available, appear to have all been *men*, not women as the Kroegers assume. And though there were women priests in Ephesus, there is no evidence that they were the kind of proto-feminists the Kroegers presume them to have been.

This misreading of the historical evidence, however, is not isolated. However impressive to the casual reader may be the wealth of historical material the Kroegers amass in this portion of their study, it will not escape the careful reader's attention that *none of it* directly supports the existence of the gnostic feminism, with the four tenets earlier mentioned, in Ephesus during the first century. Most of the evidence cited stems from a much later period and from a variety of places and contexts. The *composite* of all of these strands of evidence produces something like the gnosticism the Kroegers claim was present in Ephesus. But the strands of evidence do not themselves originate from the time and place required for the Kroegers' thesis to be valid. They have been composed or brought together in order to fit the hypothesis the Kroegers have supposed. (Incidentally, to show something of the weakness of their case, it is interesting to observe that the fourth tenet claimed to be integral to this gnosticism, the disparagement of motherhood, blatantly contradicts their earlier claim that this gnosticism "acclaimed motherhood as the ultimate reality" [112]).

Needless to say, a review is not the place to enter into a complete discussion of all the aspects of the Kroegers' thesis and argument. These comments should suffice, however, to show that this is a badly flawed book which fails to fulfill its opening promise. The excellence of scholarship, which the Kroegers argue has often been missing from evangelical treatments of the question of the ordination of women, is not evident in this study. As a matter of fact, this study, like so many on this controversial subject, appears to have been driven by ideological interests.

This does not mean to say that the Kroegers are wrong in suggesting that the historical environment may have something to do with our understanding of 1 Timothy 2:11-15. It is a standard feature of a Reformed hermeneutic to acknowledge the legitimacy of such environmental factors as an aid to *illumining* the meaning of a text. But these factors may never be contrived, nor may they be the dominant consideration in our exegesis of any biblical text. The *text itself* must be central and dominant in our exegesis. Were the Kroegers to have honored this latter principle, they might have given more attention to the *reasons indicated in the text itself* for the prohibition of 1 Timothy 2:11-15. These

reasons are two in number: the priority of Adam in creation and the role of Eve in the fall into sin. Since neither of these reasons is local to the circumstances of the church in Ephesus in the first century, it should have been apparent to the Kroegers that, whatever the historical circumstance within which this text was first written, its prohibition is founded upon non-local considerations and is, therefore, still binding upon the church today.

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*Gott: Philosophisch-theologische Denkversuche,* by Ingolf U. Dalferth. Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1992. Pp. 269. DM 59.00.

This book in the German language consists of a series of seven essays, plus an introduction, on the subject of God. The author originally gave them as lectures at universities and conferences during the past ten years.

As the title of the book indicates, the essays are philosophical-theological in orientation and therefore not a study of Scripture revelation so much as they are an examination of what some of the better minds of the western world have had to say about God.

Professor Dalferth's essays cover such subjects as: the ontological argument of Anselm; the process philosophy of Whitehead; Charles Hartshorne's "The One Who Is Worshipped"; and a theodicy on the subject of whether God can sin.

In his development of the essays, the author deals with a number of interesting questions. Some of them are as follows.

In what way can it be maintained that God exists? For example, are Anselm's ontological argument and Aquinas' theistic proofs still valid after the critiques of Hume and Kant? Dalferth does not think so, if the rationalistic method be employed. But if God be postulated by faith, as Anselm did with his ontological argument (i.e., "*Credimus te esse aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari nequit,*" Prosl.2 [234]), he who thus comes to God knows both that he is and why he is (94). While Anselm's method makes clear the fact that man has an innate knowledge of God, it remains questionable that, apart from special revelation from God himself, this innate knowledge leads to the true God or only to an idol.

Another question Dalferth deals with is: If God is almighty, can he not also sin? Dalferth's essay in answer to this question lengthens to some twenty-four pages and concludes with a number of theses

connected with sin, God's sinlessness, freedom, and God's freedom. Some of these theses are questionable, to say the least; for example, Dalferth maintains that "[I]t is false to say that God does not sin because he cannot sin; on the contrary, it is correct to say that, because God doesn't sin, he cannot sin" (150). This answer may be satisfactory to a philosopher/theologian, but we are left wondering, just what really does it mean? Is God to be understood merely by what he does or doesn't do; or isn't he also to be understood by what he is? The latter, however, is beyond man's natural sphere of knowledge and would presuppose the necessity of special revelation.

This leads to a third interesting question: In what way must one think about God? Here Dalferth is quite positive in maintaining that without special revelation from God, and specifically Scripture, one cannot really know who God is. With revelation, however, one learns of his triuneness, his redemptive love in Christ, and his indwelling presence by means of the Holy Spirit. Lacking in the discussion, however, is any mention of the judgmental side of God and his wrath against unforgiven sinners which is also a part of the data of Scripture. However, Dalferth specifically omits this by maintaining that, while God is almighty, he works only that which is good for us, i.e., only that which is connected with his salvation-will (*Heilswillen*, 145).

Whether it is the author's intention or not, the essays make clear the fact that, when the incomprehensibility of God is not properly maintained (as he reveals this by means of the special revelation of Scripture), the blurring of the distinction between God and his creation inevitably occurs. This is most evident in the essay about process philosophy/theology. In fact, Whitehead's six principles of the fundamental structure of the universe (176) make it clear that, according to him, God is the unifying ground of all being and diversity. This, of course, is a form of panentheism.

As is true of most German scholarship, a knowledge of Latin by the reader is presupposed. The book has twenty-five pages of bibliography and indices; but there is no Scripture index, which also makes clear the deliberately philosophical nature of the book.

The usefulness of the book is intended for philosophers and theologians who are interested in apologetical approaches to God.

*Raymond O. Zorn*

*Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction*, by Michael Goldberg. Second edition. Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1991. Pp. 292, including index. $15.95.

Written originally as a dissertation at the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley, the publication of this introduction in a second edition attests to its popularity and importance as an exposition of the distinctives of narrative theology. Michael Goldberg, a Jewish rabbi and theologian, aims in this study to provide an overview and defense of narrative theology which answers some of its critics and justifies its claims. He hopes thereby to fill a gap in the literature on narrative theology, most of which is expositional but not critical and apologetical in nature. Thus, this volume serves as a kind of apology for the necessity and benefit of narrative theology in general, whether of a distinctively Jewish or Christian stamp.

In an introductory chapter, Goldberg attempts to demonstrate that there is a growing awareness among theologians that *narrative* or *story* is the fundamental mode of religious discourse. Religious convictions, though often the primary and immediate interest of theology, are themselves derivative of the story or narrative that undergirds them. They do not stand alone, but express the implications of the basic story or narrative that defines a religious community and its members. As Goldberg argues,

> . . . the primary claim of a "narrative theologian" is that in order justifiably to elucidate, examine, and transform those deeply held religious beliefs that make a community what it is, one must necessarily show regard for and give heed to those linguistic structures which, through their portrayal of the contingent interaction between persons and events, constitute the source and ground of such beliefs. In short the fundamental contention is that an adequate theology must attend to narrative (35).

For example, just as the story of the Exodus defines the Jewish people and their sense of historic destiny and purpose, so the story of Jesus Christ defines the Christian community and its members. Who God is and who we are, becomes evident only in the narrative that identifies the characters and plot of human existence and history.

The problem, according to Goldberg, is that this growing awareness of the importance of narrative has not been accompanied by a careful analysis and defense of the distinctive approach of narrative theology.

Ours is a day which thinks of narrative or story as "pre-scientific" and therefore as an inadequate vehicle for the communication of conviction. Furthermore, it is also a period which is keenly conscious of the hermeneutical question, how do we ascertain the meaning of a particular historical text or story? The approach of narrative theology seems to many, therefore, to be pre-scientific and hermeneutically uncertain. Indeed, narrative theology seems to many to be overly concessive to relativism and perspectivism. Since religious convictions are always expressive of the particular, divergent narratives of religious communities, there seems to be little prospect for determining universal or binding truth. It is in order to answer these common objections that Goldberg presents his introduction to and defense of narrative theology.

The subsequent chapters of Goldberg's introduction to narrative theology begin with a defence and illustration of the place of stories in the biblical tradition. Contrary to the usual categorizing of stories under the headings of "fable" or "myth," accounts of events which neither occurred nor could have occurred in space and time, Goldberg insists that the biblical narratives recount the history of the relationship between God and his people. Though they are not "scientific" histories which ignore the issues of meaning and significance in order to relay simply the "facts," they are stories of God and his people that identify and shape the religious convictions of contemporary believers. In this connection, Goldberg devotes two chapters to two kinds of narrative or story, biography and autobiography, each of which illustrates the capacity of narrative to identify and illumine the meaning of our lives. Such stories have the capacity, he claims, not only *to be true*, but also *to ring true*, to express the significance of our own lives and to determine for us what is good and true.

In the two most important chapters of his study, Goldberg addresses first, the role of story in the biblical narrative and second, the warrant or justification for stories as communicators of truth. The first of these chapters he entitles, "'The Story of Our Life': Biblical Narrative"; the second he entitles, "'Reviewing the Story': How Can a Narrative Theology Be Justified?"

Goldberg distinguishes three general types of narrative theology in contemporary theology. The first type of narrative theology concentrates primarily upon *how* the truth is expressed in the biblical narrative. This type, which Goldberg terms "Structuring the Story," is less interested in *what* the biblical narrative expresses than in the manner in which the truth is expressed. Among the representatives of this type, Goldberg lists Hans Frei and Sallie McFague. The second type of narrative

theology concentrates not so much upon how the truth is expressed in the biblical narrative as it does upon *what* is expressed. Goldberg calls this type, "Following the Story," because it is chiefly interested in the hermeneutics of story or narrative, in determining the meaning expressed through the story. Here Goldberg mentions as representatives, Paul Van Buren and Irving Greenberg. The third type of narrative theology focusses upon the ethical implications of the story. This type is termed by Goldberg, "Enacting the Story," because it aims to determine how the story shapes human conduct and ethics. Stanley Hauerwas and John Howard Yoder are listed as representatives of this type.

Goldberg concludes his study with an attempted justification of narrative theology. Rejecting the traditional approaches which either appeal to divine revelation, to criteria of validity used in other scientific disciplines, or to some shared and self-evident truth, Goldberg argues that there are three broad criteria that need to be satisfied in order to show the rationality of a narrative theology. The first and primary criterion of justification is the existence of a narrative or story that can be properly identified and whose *meaning* is discernible. By this primary criterion of justification, Goldberg has in mind those requisite conventions and linguistic criteria that distinguish narrative or story from other forms of discourse. Goldberg speaks in this connection of *the necessary primary conditions* for the justification of a narrative.

The second criterion of justification is the *representative condition.* By this representative condition Goldberg means the "historical facticity" of persons, events and the like (214). This representative condition is required in order for a narrative or story to be *true*; it must answer to, or be representative of, a true state of affairs. In this respect, a narrative or story that meets this representative condition is distinguishable from all forms of fiction or fable or myth.

The third and final criterion of justification is the *affective condition.* By the affective condition, Goldberg means the ethical implication or moral impact of the narrative or story. This condition must be met in order for the narrative to have rationality, to serve as a reasonable account of human existence and morality.

According to Goldberg, a narrative or story is justified when it meets each of these three conditions. When the narrative is meaningful (it is genuinely a story, meeting the linguistic criteria and conventions for story), true (it represents a state of affairs), and rational (it calls for a particular pattern of conduct), it may be said to be justified. Though these criteria are admittedly formal, that is, they can not adjudicate the

truth claims of fundamentally divergent stories, they may serve to measure their rationality and viability. In a remarkable statement of the limitations of these formal criteria to justify a narrative theology, Goldberg concludes by admitting that

> [J]ust as there may be more than one justifiable ethic, so too, there may be more than one justifiable theology — just so long as there are the required narrative foundations, the requisite fulfillment of the conditions at each of the levels of justification, and the necessary attention to the formal criteria of rationality (239-240).

Goldberg's study fulfills its promise to serve as a kind of introduction to the main emphases of narrative theology. It provides a good survey of the literature and the debates in recent decades regarding this approach to theology. Though it is not always easy to follow his argument, Goldberg does manage to clarify this approach and provide the reader with a basic understanding of its more important themes.

However, rather than fulfilling his additional promise to provide an account of the justification of narrative theology, Goldberg manages to illustrate rather than resolve its fundamental problems. Consistent with a great deal of contemporary theology, Goldberg is unable to overcome the *pluralism* and *relativism* under which narrative theology has historically labored. The criteria he sets forth to warrant the rationality of a particular narrative are, by his own admission, merely formal and capable of accommodating a rich variety of basically incompatible stories, expressing conflicting sets of religious convictions. They can accommodate, for example, a variety of substantially different stories, whether of a feminist, Afro-American, or liberationist sort.

Furthermore, it is apparent throughout that Goldberg regards some of the biblical narratives, though they give every indication of being descriptions of "historical facticity" (to use his terminology), to be merely mythical or parabolic. This holds true not only for the biblical account of creation, but for many of the biblical stories, especially when they recount the miraculous deeds of God in the fulfillment of his redemptive purpose. It is ironic that the biblical story, which everywhere presumes the authenticity and trustworthiness of the Word of God, is not permitted to function authoritatively in Goldberg's own judgments about various biblical passages. Despite his own repeated insistence that there are no material criteria of truthfulness that are independent of the particular story to which the theologian is committed, Goldberg apparently subscribes to enough of the tenets of the modern world's

story since the time of the Enlightenment to regard a great deal of Scripture as non-historical myth.

Consequently, though Goldberg has written a good introduction to narrative theology, he has not overcome some of its pitfalls. It is one thing to acknowledge the legitimacy of narrative theology's recognition of the integral place and prominence of story in the biblical revelation. It is quite another thing, however, to concede Goldberg's unwillingness to recognize the truthfulness and historicity of the *whole biblical story.*

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*The Theater of His Glory: Nature and the Natural Order in the Thought of John Calvin*, by Susan E. Schreiner. *Studies in Historical Theology*, vol. 3. Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1991. Pp. 196. $30.00 (cloth).

It is symptomatic of the strong influence of the theology of Karl Barth and neo-orthodoxy upon the study of Calvin's theology that so few studies have addressed Calvin's doctrine of nature and the natural order. Barth's aversion to natural theology, even to the doctrine of general revelation, influenced many interpreters of Calvin's theology to downplay the significance of his understanding of creation and the revelation of God in what Calvin termed this "theater" of God's glory.

This study of Susan Schreiner, a revised version of her dissertation written under the direction of David C. Steinmetz of Duke University, ably begins to redress this lack in Calvin studies. Though not the first study of the doctrine of creation and the natural order in Calvin's theology (Richard Stauffer's *Dieu, la creation et la Providence dans la predication de Calvin* [1978] looks especially at Calvin's sermons), it is the first study to investigate Calvin's position on the basis of all his writings, the *Institutes*, commentaries and sermons. It is also a study which does not permit the debates within neo-orthodoxy to shape the way the questions are posed to Calvin's theology or to prejudice the outcome. Schreiner deals with Calvin's view in a clearly *historical* manner, addressing the doctrine of the natural order in Calvin's thought within the context of earlier patristic and medieval Christian theology. Throughout, Schreiner shows clearly the dependence of Calvin upon earlier theologians and exegetes in the Christian tradition, drawing extensively upon secondary literature on the history of exegesis and theology. As she indicates in her introduction, she approaches "Calvin's treatment of creation themes primarily from the perspective of the ancient and medieval traditions" (2).

story since the time of the Enlightenment to regard a great deal of Scripture as non-historical myth.

Consequently, though Goldberg has written a good introduction to narrative theology, he has not overcome some of its pitfalls. It is one thing to acknowledge the legitimacy of narrative theology's recognition of the integral place and prominence of story in the biblical revelation. It is quite another thing, however, to concede Goldberg's unwillingness to recognize the truthfulness and historicity of the *whole biblical story.*

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*The Theater of His Glory: Nature and the Natural Order in the Thought of John Calvin*, by Susan E. Schreiner. *Studies in Historical Theology*, vol. 3. Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1991. Pp. 196. $30.00 (cloth).

It is symptomatic of the strong influence of the theology of Karl Barth and neo-orthodoxy upon the study of Calvin's theology that so few studies have addressed Calvin's doctrine of nature and the natural order. Barth's aversion to natural theology, even to the doctrine of general revelation, influenced many interpreters of Calvin's theology to downplay the significance of his understanding of creation and the revelation of God in what Calvin termed this "theater" of God's glory.

This study of Susan Schreiner, a revised version of her dissertation written under the direction of David C. Steinmetz of Duke University, ably begins to redress this lack in Calvin studies. Though not the first study of the doctrine of creation and the natural order in Calvin's theology (Richard Stauffer's *Dieu, la creation et la Providence dans la predication de Calvin* [1978] looks especially at Calvin's sermons), it is the first study to investigate Calvin's position on the basis of all his writings, the *Institutes*, commentaries and sermons. It is also a study which does not permit the debates within neo-orthodoxy to shape the way the questions are posed to Calvin's theology or to prejudice the outcome. Schreiner deals with Calvin's view in a clearly *historical* manner, addressing the doctrine of the natural order in Calvin's thought within the context of earlier patristic and medieval Christian theology. Throughout, Schreiner shows clearly the dependence of Calvin upon earlier theologians and exegetes in the Christian tradition, drawing extensively upon secondary literature on the history of exegesis and theology. As she indicates in her introduction, she approaches "Calvin's treatment of creation themes primarily from the perspective of the ancient and medieval traditions" (2).

Schreiner opens her study with a chapter on Calvin's general doctrine of providence. Confirming earlier studies by Bohatec and Milner, Schreiner finds a "passion for order" throughout Calvin's descriptions of creation and providence. Following ancient Christian tradition, Calvin taught a doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* and of providence in which God the Creator continues to sustain, uphold and govern the life of his creatures. In his development of the doctrine of providence, Calvin also joined many of the medieval theologians in their polemics against Aristotle's view of nature. While acknowledging Calvin's admission of God's use of secondary causality in his providential ordering of the creation, Schreiner notes that there is an "ambivalence" in Calvin's thinking on the subject of secondary causality. Due to his insistence upon the direct and immediate involvement of God in the providential care and rule of the creation, Calvin hesitates to ascribe too much independence to the acting of the creature. Furthermore, because Calvin viewed the fall into sin in terms of its profound influence and disordering of the creation, he also regarded providence as the means whereby the Creator protected the creation against chaos and disruption.

After this opening chapter on Calvin's doctrine of providence, Schreiner devotes a fascinating chapter to Calvin's angelology. Noting that this doctrine has often been neglected in Calvin studies, Schreiner demonstrates the prominent role ascribed by Calvin to angels in caring for and protecting the church in the midst of her enemies. According to Schreiner, Calvin's angelology is marked by two emphases. First, contrary to some of the speculative and elaborate angelologies of the late patristic and medieval periods, Calvin insists upon staying within the limits of Scriptural revelation. Second, Calvin views the primary function of angels to be their protection and guardianship of the church of Christ, in a world which threatens with many enemies. However, though Calvin ascribes a prominent role to angels in the corporate protection of the church, he rejects the veneration of angels sometimes practiced by the medieval church and insists, consistent with his downplaying of secondary causality within God's providence, that "one God is better than a universe of angels"!

Within the context of Calvin's doctrine of providence, the means whereby the Creator sustains and orders the life of the creation, threatened as it is with the disorder of sin, and of angelology, Schreiner addresses the important issues of Calvin's doctrines of the *imago dei* and natural law. Here her study displays the kind of independence from the pressures of a neo-orthodox reading of Calvin's theology mentioned

earlier. On both of these doctrines, Schreiner locates Calvin within a long tradition of Christian exegesis and theology.

Schreiner finds in Calvin's doctrine of the *imago dei* something of the distinction drawn in later Reformed theology between the image of God in a "broader" and "narrower" sense. When Calvin identifies the image of God with man's immortality and the natural endowments of reason and will, he lays the basis for saying that the image of God remains, at least in "relic" form, even after the fall into sin. These distinguishing features of man's creatureliness continue to characterize his uniqueness even after the fall. However, when Calvin identifies the image of God with man's peculiar relationship to God, in his life *coram Deo* in the service and praise of his Creator, he insists that the image has been lost. Schreiner's discussion of this difficult subject in Calvin's theology is well-balanced, recognizing both Calvin's insistence upon the corruption of man's nature through sin and the continued uniqueness of man among all creatures after the fall.

According to Schreiner, Calvin's view of the uniqueness of man as an image-bearer of God even after the fall into sin is also evident in his understanding of natural law and societal life. Throughout his writings, Calvin echoed the long tradition in Christian theology which taught a doctrine of natural law. Though Schreiner does not believe Calvin developed a full-orbed "theology of natural law," she does maintain that Calvin recognized the "general equity" or "natural order" through which God the Creator organized the life of his creatures. This natural order, concretely expressed and administered in the Mosaic dispensation through the ten commandments, is accessible to fallen man and provides for the preservation of life and civil order in society. Though never appealed to by Calvin to mitigate the pervasive consequences of sin in the creation and human life, this natural order provides an environment within which human life can flourish and disorder be restrained. Schreiner notes that, in this connection, Calvin drew a common distinction between "natural" and "heavenly" things. Calvin recognized the usefulness of conscience and natural reason to the ordering of the civil realm, and he also acknowledged the good gifts of rhetoric, eloquence, medicine, law and the sciences, as these continue to function within the natural order.

In her concluding chapter, "Creation Set Free," Schreiner points out how Calvin never succumbs to a narrowly anthropocentric view of salvation or concedes the legitimacy of the Anabaptist withdrawal from the devilish world. For Calvin, the final end of salvation is the restoration of all things to their proper order and the creature to a life of

praise. According to Calvin, redemption restores creation to its original purpose. The assessment of some Calvin interpreters, that Calvin had an overly pessimistic view of human nature and the prospects for creaturely service, is challenged. The "activism" of Calvin's ethics is undergirded by this creation-embracing view of redemption and the positive value of various vocations to promote order and equity in human society.

Schreiner has produced a fine study of Calvin's theology of creation and the natural order. In a concise yet comprehensive manner, she accurately accents the distinctive features of Calvin's views, while acknowledging continuities with earlier Christian tradition where appropriate. Unencumbered by some of the prejudices born of the era of neo-orthodox interpretations of Calvin's theology, her study offers a balanced appraisal of Calvin's doctrine of creation. Students of Calvin's theology and contemporary heirs of the Calvinian tradition will find this a thought-provoking and stimulating study.

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*The Saviour of the World*, by B.B. Warfield. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1991 reprint. Pp. viii + 270. $16.95.

This handsomely bound little volume contains a collection of nine sermons or meditations of Benjamin B. Warfield, well-known professor of systematic theology at Princeton Theological Seminary at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. These meditations were first delivered at the Chapel of Princeton Seminary to an audience of faculty and students. First published in 1916, they have now been published as a reprint by The Banner of Truth Trust.

Though these sermons are formally cast as extended meditations upon various texts relating to the person and work of Christ, they provide a delightful taste of the biblical insight and piety that marked the teaching of Warfield and his colleagues at the "old" Princeton. They are a model of careful submission to the Word of God, rhetorical excellence and biblical piety. The Banner of Truth Trust is to be commended for making them available again.

*Cornelis P. Venema*

*Order in the Offices*, edited by Mark R. Brown. Duncansville, PA: Classic Presbyterian Government Resources, 1993. Pp. 304, including annotated bibliography.

*Order in the Offices* is an anthology of the writings of past and present authors on the subject of the offices of minister and elder in the church. It is a major effort to ground the three-office view of church leadership in the Scriptures, and in the history of Presbyterian and Reformed theological reflection and ecclesiastical practice. While the book has been published to take one side in the ongoing "two-office" versus "three-office" debate, which is especially current among conservative Presbyterians, it comes out to be considerably broader than a one-dimensional work. Indeed, the broad range of subjects relating to this debate which are covered, and the thoroughness of their treatment, make this volume an excellent study on the larger questions of the nature of the Christian ministry and of the place of office in the church. Furthermore, the book gives a real sense of the history of Presbyterian teaching on these matters, since contributions have been gleaned from the writings of a large number of authors, some of them long since passed from this life.

The "two-office" versus "three-office" debate in Presbyterian and Reformed circles focuses on whether the ministry of the gospel and the "lay" or ruling eldership ought to be considered essentially one office, or actually function as two separate offices in the church. Both sides in the debate agree that the diaconate is a separate office, thus the "three-office" versus "two-office" terminology. This debate began in America in earnest after the civil war with James Henley Thornwell and Robert Dabney of the southern Presbyterian Church in the U.S. taking the two-office view and Charles Hodge and the northern Presbyterians taking the three-office view.

The debate has again arisen in this century among members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America, continuing conservative remnants, respectively, of the northern and southern Presbyterian churches. This debate is important because it speaks to the nature of the offices of both minister and elder, and thus to the heart of Reformed and Presbyterian church life. Continental Reformed churches have taken the three-office view in their creeds and church order documents, and the debate has not reached critical mass among them. On the other hand, the two-office view has evidently unseated the three-office view among Presbyterians of the denominations mentioned here, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has

amended its *Directory of the Public Worship of God* to allow more fully for the two-office view.

*Order in the Offices* includes articles by such nineteenth century notables as Charles Hodge and Thomas Smyth, who both wrote extensively during the first phase of the debate. Editor Mark Brown has also gathered articles from a number of modern writers, notable among whom are Edmund Clowney, Robert Rayburn and Ian Murray. Other current scholars such as Steven Miller, Leonard Koppes and Charles Dennison weigh in with strong arguments. Altogether, the selection of writers and their particular treatments of subjects on and surrounding this debate are excellent.

Major arguments given for the three-office view include those of Thomas Smyth who concludes that *episkopos* or "bishop" and *presbuteros* or "elder," as these words are generally translated, are used in the New Testament only of ministers of the Word. While the majority of the other authors do not take this rigid position, they all argue that the ministry is a separate teaching office which also embodies the same ruling function as that which is found in the non-teaching eldership. Several authors focus on the roots of New Testament leadership in the Old. It is maintained that the Old Testament elder's office and functions were quite distinct from the teaching function of the priests, the latter continuing in the ministers of the Word in the New Testament. A number of the authors demonstrate through references to Calvin, other Reformed authors, and Presbyterian and Reformed usage, that historic Protestant teaching has overwhelmingly favored the three-office view. Robert Rayburn specifically answers an article by Dr. George Knight III favoring the two-office view. The crucial passage in 1 Timothy 5:17 receives attention from most contributors.

This book is a major contribution to the debate at its focus. Nevertheless, it deserves to be read not only by Presbyterians on both sides, but by all who take the offices of elder and minster seriously and who wish to learn from history and sound exegetical work. It is definitely a *tour de force* in the discussion. As such, it is not a book for casual reading. Each author vigorously presents worthwhile material that needs to be pondered as well as read. The book will well reward those who give it such attention. Copies may be obtained from the publisher at 807 Peachtree Lane, Duncansville, PA 16635.

*Robert E. Grossmann*

*Commentary on True and False Religion*, by Ulrich Zwingli, edited by Samuel M. Jackson and Clarence N. Heller. Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1981. Pp. 415. $15.95.

Zwingli is largely the forgotten Reformer, eclipsed by Luther, Calvin, and Knox. And yet, as the contemporary of Luther and Melanchthon, he was clearly the pioneer of the Swiss Reformation, preceding Calvin by a full generation.

Many (though not all) of his views still remain the basis of the Reformed Protestant heritage. For example, especially with respect to the sacraments, he taught: (1) do not add to God's work of salvation, whether by means of the sacraments or (good) works of any sort; (2) do not limit God by means of any sort, even those he has appointed; and (3) the state of the recipient's mind and heart is the all-important matter with respect to the use of the sacraments.

It is also a historical fact that, though the Reformation in Switzerland initially proceeded as a development parallel to that which was taking place in Germany under Luther, the fact that the Swiss German sector under Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, and the French sector under Calvin united, is a tribute to Zwingli; for their union is a testimony to the basic doctrinal agreement that was theirs as followers of the pioneer efforts of Zwingli.

Zwingli has been faulted for his rather man-centered conception of the Lord's Supper, and in this he was not followed by Calvin. But there are better views he advocated which his spiritual heirs should know about. We may therefore be grateful to the Labyrinth Press for once again making available Zwingli's volume on true (Reformed) and false (Roman Catholic) religion which was originally published in 1525, only four years after Melanchthon had published his *Loci Theologici*. Zwingli's work, however, written in less than four months, is clearly the earliest of Protestant systematic theologies, not to be exceeded until the appearance of Calvin's *Institutes*.

Though the book reflects the pressures of haste which were put upon the author, it nevertheless is a good summary of Zwingli's theological thinking, while at the same time revealing the power of Scriptural truth which, under the blessing of God, became responsible for the reforms that characterized the Reformation. Zwingli devotes pages to such subjects as: God, man, religion, the gospel, repentance, law, sin, the church, the sacraments, marriage, infant baptism, the Lord's Supper, purgatory, prayer to the saints, etc. As Zwingli corrects improper views while teaching views that have been informed by

Scripture, it becomes increasingly obvious to the reader that Zwingli (and the other Reformers) were not the advocates of a new religion in opposition to the position of the mother church they were leaving; but rather, by virtue of their repeated appeals to the teaching of the early church fathers, they were the spokesmen of a return to the original faith once for all delivered unto the saints, and from which the church of their day had departed (247).

Zwingli's notable disagreement with Luther about the meaning of "this *is* my body," which occurred at the colloquy in Marburg five years after the publication of this volume, is clearly reflected in Zwingli's high regard for the significance of Jesus' statement in John 6:63, "the flesh profits nothing" (26, etc.), a cardinal truth in the light of which Jesus' statements at the institution of the Lord's Supper could be interpreted only symbolically rather than literally (as Luther and the Roman Catholic church, in their own respective ways, maintained).

Other notable views of Zwingli were: his maintenance of the validity of infant baptism on the basis of the inclusion of Old Testament infants into the family of God, thereby anticipating the continuity of the Covenant of Grace (257); his averment that the "gates of hades" (Matt. 16:18) refer to the force and power of the hosts of darkness (162); his correct insight that parables have essentially but one meaning (289); Scripture is to be interpreted in a grammatico-historical way, though it is true that Zwingli at times (like Luther) was not above allegorizing (111, 368). Moreover, while he is undoubtedly wrong about the perpetual virginity of Mary (the Roman Catholic church's assertion notwithstanding), he is certainly up-to-date in his views about the necessary separation of church and state (305, 308, etc.).

Zwingli's book is clearly a pioneer effort. But it is nevertheless worthwhile perusing, for in doing so the reader is placed squarely within the turbulent milieu of the Reformers and their epoch-making activity. Under the blessing of God they brought about changes whose benefits the heirs of the Reformation still reap today.

The book as a paperback lacks the production quality it otherwise deserves. However, in addition to Zwingli's commentary and an extended answer to Jerome Emser, a Roman Catholic critic, the book contains a forty-two page introductory summation of Zwingli's work, together with subject and Scripture indices.

*Raymond O. Zorn*

*Patterns in History: A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought*, by David Bebbington. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. Pp. 219. $10.99.

Much recent historiography is governed by relativistic revision ideals, especially on the North American scene. Recently, the highly ahistorical and socially revisionist National History Standards were soundly trounced by the U.S. Senate, 99 to 1. Allan Bloom, in his *Closing of the American Mind*, also has decried this revisionistic effort.

In our consideration of historical meaning and values, one can run the gamut of definitions of history from Henry Ford's "History is just one damn thing after another," to the value-laden approach of George Santayana, "One who is ignorant of history is destined to commit the same errors of the past."

For a redirection to a distinctly Christian view of history, we can be very grateful for the reprinting of David Bebbington's *Patterns in History*. Bebbington is Professor of History, University of Stirling, Scotland.

Bebbington thoroughly treats the major views of history and concludes that the Christian view alone affords a workable, though not infallible, meaning to history. It is indeed a very difficult matter to arrive at factual data in much of secular history. Added to the problem brought about by incomplete, or misdirected original sources is the fact of the historian's individual bias. While the goal is objectivity, one necessarily writes from his own presuppositions, dealing with fallible source materials. There exists only one historically infallible account and that is the Bible.

Even nineteenth century Leopold Van Ranke, celebrated as one of the modern objective historians, claimed to tell history as it "essentially" happened (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*) and not as it "actually" took place. While the church historian may claim, due to biblical and prophetical directives, more exactitude in charting the church's course, even he can lay no claim to infallibility.

With these guiding principles in mind, Bebbington proceeds to examine thoroughly six views of historical interpretation: the cyclical view, Christian history, the idea of progress, historicism, Marxist history, and the modernist view (historical, not theological).

The meaningless repetitive cyclical view (that of Eastern religions, ancient Greeks and modern historians) is shown to be deficient, from a Christian perspective, in terms of lacking the Creator-creature relationship, general and special providence (including redemptive

history) and a linear progression leading to the consummation of the eschaton.

Other value-laden views such as the progressive, historicist, and Marxist theories, while borrowing various elements of the Christian view, all are shown deficient in the basic Creator-creature relationship with its attendant effects.

The modernist view proposes a complete denigration of absolute standards, while capitulating to basically a Nietzschean cynicism and atheism.

This book may be used as a text in both college and seminary historiography courses. The reviewer has used its previous edition as a text repeatedly with great success. This new edition contains an appendix update.

*Joseph H. Hall*