

make clear his absolute rejection of evolution. He has taken up the themes of sanctuary imagery which have been ignored in most other commentaries. The excursus on the human soul is steadfastly against the idea of a disembodied existence, and comments on the creation of women strongly espouse a naturally subordinate role of women.

Though Mathews may find Scripture to be an infallible unity in theory, in practice he is selective concerning which texts are allowed to interpret Genesis. On occasion even high-profile texts are passed over. For instance, commenting on 1:29-30 (175) Mathews is lukewarm on understanding this text as describing a vegetarian paradise, and is quick to point out that in Genesis 9:3 meat is explicitly included in the human diet. Significantly, Isaiah's vision of the paradise to come (11:6-9; 65:25) has no part in his understanding of paradise lost. Only when commenting on 9:4 (402) does Mathews take seriously the sacredness of animal life in these early chapters of Genesis. Although Acts 15:29 is listed in the discussion of 9:4, this NT text does not enter anywhere into his comments on the Christian appropriation of the text.

Concerning the "sons of God" in Genesis 6:2, Mathews concludes that the reference is to a class of antediluvian humans, not supernatural beings. Though many conservative evangelical commentators have allowed 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Jude 6 to influence their understanding of Genesis, Mathews passes over these studies in silence. Though Mathews is selective concerning the biblical texts which he will allow to affect his understanding of Genesis, he is not any more biased than most other commentators. As with any other commentary on Genesis, this one must be read critically, noting both the presuppositions of the author and the places where these presuppositions are applied inconsistently. In conclusion, Mathews' commentary on Genesis 1-11 represents a significant contribution to scholarship on Genesis, which means it must be read critically.

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McGrath, Alister. *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. 287 pp. \$21.99.

Joining the current evangelical discussion on the relevancy of truth in a postmodern environment, Alister McGrath asserts in this book that evangelicalism has an intellectual foundation and coherence that demonstrate its credibility in the academic world. The book is best understood as a prolegomenon to the formation of an evangelical mind and builds upon other contemporary evangelical works on this subject, particularly his *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995). For the most part, McGrath does very well at explaining why evangelicalism's passion for truth has a coherence and logic of its own and cannot be accommodated within a postmodern context.

The book is divided into five chapters which fall into two parts. In the first part, McGrath articulates how the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture are of direct relevance to the intellectual coherence of evangelicalism. In chapter one, he begins by affirming the pivotal place of the person and work of

Jesus Christ in the evangelical worldview. In spite of modern and liberal attempts at reducing the relevance of Christ in the Christian faith, McGrath "insists that it is of paramount importance to remain as faithful as possible to the New Testament portrayal of Christ, no matter how complex and nuanced this may prove to be" (30). Thus, for McGrath, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most significant foundation for evangelicalism and all theology is ultimately responsible to him.

In chapter two, McGrath discusses at length the authority of Scripture in evangelicalism. He endeavors to affirm its authority over that of culture, experience, reason, and tradition, showing how each is incapable of being the prior determining factor in applying the authority of Scripture. Although he realizes that an evangelical appeal to Scripture is not without its difficulties, since biblical criticism has rendered the notion of the 'authority of Scripture' problematical, this is not really a problem for him. Making a clear distinction between issues of hermeneutics and issues of authority, he welcomes evangelicals who have used the critical method while denying that its implementation necessarily undermines the historic Christian conviction of the authority of Scripture. His present concern is only the authority of Scripture. Hence, to recover the legitimate place of Scripture within theology, he invites evangelicals to recognize the narrative character of Scripture to allow "the fullness of biblical revelation to be recovered" (107). Clearly, McGrath does not advocate a propositional biblical revelation (like that of Carl Henry) but adheres to a more dynamic Barthian approach. He also believes this is the way evangelicalism should go to conserve its passion for truth while rejecting the discredited rationalist approach to Scripture inherited from the Enlightenment.

This is where, I believe, many evangelicals will part with McGrath. Issues of revelation and inspiration are underestimated in this discussion. It is incorrect to assume, as he has, that issues of hermeneutics can be separated from issues of authority. How one interprets Scripture ultimately impacts upon how one views its authority. Furthermore, McGrath's appeal to recover the narrative character of Scripture over its propositional revelatory character will ultimately undermine its moral authority in transcultural contexts. This approach to the authority of Scripture will be perceived by many as part of the compromise with culture which the author seeks to avoid.

In the second part of the book, McGrath addresses the internal contradictions and vulnerabilities of evangelicalism's contemporary intellectual rivals: postliberalism, postmodernism and pluralism. For each approach he gives an excellent detailed introduction of the movement, its philosophical presuppositions, and its impact on theology. McGrath shows a wonderful mastery of numerous authors and theologians and their thoughts as he critiques these three approaches from an evangelical perspective.

In chapter three, McGrath notes that evangelicalism's critique of postliberalism includes issues of truth, the authority and relevance of Scripture as a source of Christian ideas and values, and the centrality of Jesus Christ within the life and thought of the Christian church. His most serious criticism against postliberalism is the reduction of the concept of 'truth' to 'internal consistency.'

"There can be no doubt", he says, "that intrasystemic consistency is a quality which is to be admired. However, it is perfectly possible to have an entirely coherent system which has no meaningful relation to the real world" (153). His critique highlights the inadequacies of postliberalism's commitment to extralinguistic and extrasystemic realities.

The chapter on postmodernism begins with a good assessment of the impacts of the Enlightenment and modernity on evangelicalism and then follows with a short critique of postmodernism. Although accurate in his criticism, McGrath could have elaborated longer on the vulnerabilities of postmodern ideology. He limits himself to issues of truth, openness and tolerance in the writings of Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard, and to postmodernism's inconsistency to innocently declare itself 'true'.

In the last chapter, McGrath addresses religious pluralism and its attempts at reducing religious experiences to universal categories. He spurns such attempts as reflecting western cultural biases. He believes that discussions "about religious pluralism have been seriously hindered by a well-meaning but ultimately spurious mindset which . . . suppresses or evades the differences between faiths in order to construct some artificial theory which accounts for commonalities" (215). McGrath asserts that evangelicalism can make a contribution to religious dialogue by first acknowledging honestly some fundamental differences between religions and then appealing to the Augustinian religious impulse in all humans as a point of convergence between religions. Christianity has particularities to contribute to this dialogue in its understanding of God as revealed in Jesus Christ through Scripture which should be respected with integrity.

Thus, based on his understanding of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture, McGrath affirms that evangelicalism is internally coherent and is an intellectual approach capable of shaping and renewing the life of the Christian church in spite of the challenges posed by its contemporary rivals. His book is a positive and thoughtful contribution to the current discussion on the place of truth in evangelicalism and western society. In spite of some shortfalls regarding the authority of Scripture in relation to hermeneutics, *A Passion for Truth* will, I believe, encourage confidence in the intellectual integrity and relevance of the gospel message.

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Naden, Roy C. *The Lamb among the Beasts*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996. 300 pp. Cloth, \$23.99.

Probably the greatest difficulty in studying the Book of Revelation is to draw out personal and practical implications for everyday life. The author's contribution towards this goal is noticeable. Dr. Roy C. Naden is a gifted Australian who has successfully worked in many arenas: pastor, evangelist, musician, television producer, university professor, author, and a genuine friend to his many students. In each of these vocations he has challenged conventional wisdom, and sought to communicate new paradigms of thought for both spiritual and secular audiences. Such a diverse background may help to explain his clear and