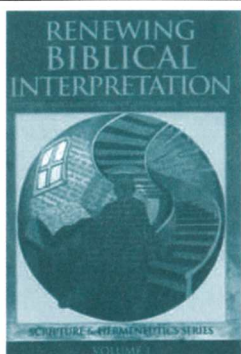


SCRIPTURE AND HERMENEUTICS SEMINAR

CRAIG BARTHOLOMEW



SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I WAS THINKING HARD ABOUT WHAT WE COULD DO TO TRY TO REOPEN THE BOOK FOR OUR CONSUMER CULTURE. CONSUMERISM IS VERY BAD NEWS FOR THE BIBLE. A consumer culture turns

everything it touches into a product that can be bought and sold, and which you use as long as it meets your desires. Thus, in the West you can purchase any sort of Bible you may desire nowadays. There are thousands of brands to choose from. This should not be mistaken for indicating that the Bible is an open book in our cultures. We need a way of hearing the Bible so that it can critique our consumerism – the great idol of our day. So long as the Bible is another consumer product, we will not be free to hear the Bible as God's address; it will remain a closed Book that is not embraced as Scripture.

In the context of a shake up of the academy, as a result of postmodernism, it seemed to me that Christian scholars should take the initiative to try to renew biblical interpretation from the foundations up and help forge creative new ways for reopening the Book in our day.

In 1998, the University of Gloucestershire, in partnership with Bible Society, brought together some twenty-five inter-disciplinary Christian academics to assess the flux in biblical interpretation and to consider ways forward. At this consultation it became clear that any attempt to renew biblical interpretation would require a longer process, attending in depth to a series of key issues. Thus was born the Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar, a ten-year project.

Since then we have been encouraged in various ways. First, it has been gratifying to see the Seminar take shape and begin to be taken seriously by many of the best Christian scholars around. We have been successful in forging a flexible Christian community of scholars across the disciplines – inter-disciplinary work is crucial for biblical studies – who enjoy meeting one another and who have learnt to discuss with one another around the crucial issues that pertain to biblical interpretation. I suspect this is no mean achievement in our days of specialisation and fragmentation. Secondly, three volumes in the Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, which are published jointly by Paternoster Press in the UK and Zondervan in the USA, are already available and the fourth volume will be out in November 2003. As I move around it is gratifying to learn that emerging scholars and existing scholars are taking the volumes seriously. And, thirdly, the University of Gloucestershire is receiving a steady stream of fine applicants wanting to do doctoral research in the area of biblical hermeneutics.

In September 2003 the Seminar will be launching its website www.sahs-info.org where you will be able to obtain further information about the project, details about each volume and some of the most helpful contemporary resources on biblical hermeneutics, such as The Revd Canon Tom Wright's "How Can the Bible be Authoritative?"

THE SCRIPTURE AND HERMENEUTICS SERIES

Volume 1 *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*

Edited by Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene and Karl Möller

ISBN 0-85364-034-3.

RRP £19.99 Offer Price £16.99

Volume 2 *After Pentecost: Language and Biblical Interpretation*

Edited by Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene and Karl Möller

ISBN 1-84227-066-4.

RRP £24.99 Offer Price £21.99

Volume 3 *A Royal Priesthood? The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically: A Dialogue with Oliver O'Donovan*

Edited by Craig Bartholomew, Jonathan Chaplin, Robert Song and Al Wolters

ISBN 1-84227-067-2.

£24.99

Volume 4 *"Behind" the Text: History and Biblical Interpretation*

Edited by Craig Bartholomew, C. Stephen Evans, Mary Healy and Murray Rae

ISBN 1-84227-068-0.

Forthcoming in November 2003 and available in the UK from January 2004

Special Offer

Buy Volumes 1, 2 & 3

for £55

To order phone UK free on 0800 1958473, or from outside the UK on +44 1228 611791.

Fax +44 (0)1228 514949; email: etm@stl.org.

Please quote promotion code SAHS03. Offer ends 30 September 2003.

Carriage not included. Please add £2.95 per copy or £3.95 for orders over £30.

