

It is not surprising that LT as presented by Gutierrez arouses strong feelings. He expects conflict, as it is integral to the gospel. He is clearly familiar with many of the standard objections as soon as the political implications of conversion to the gospel are spelled out. 'What is the good of changing the structures without a change in the human heart?' As he points out, this is only a half truth for changing the social and cultural structures *is* a way of changing the human heart. Surely this emphasis on politics and structural change reduces the gospel. 'Yes', he answers, 'if we keep the gospel prisoner of an ideology in the service of the capitalist system'. But he is well aware of the dangers and since it would be much easier to classify him as yet another theologian who has confused politics with religion it is worth hearing him on this point. 'The gospel message is a message that can never be identified with any concrete social formula, however just that formula may seem to us at the moment. The word of the Lord is a challenge to its every historical incarnation and places that incarnation in the broad perspective of the radical and total liberation of Christ, the Lord of history' (69).

It is not surprising that Rome may feel a strong challenge from this sort of theology. Others may just feel exasperated at the constant reiteration of certain phrases, like 'option for the poor', 'liberation and justice', 'the exploitation of the oppressed' which he hammers out on page after page. Gutierrez in a footnote quotes someone who was getting irritated at the Puebla documents: 'It's wearisome. All you find here is the poor, poor, poor'. He points out that they are not only in the documents but in the streets too. There is no sign that the poor are diminishing in the world. Gutierrez's book offers a rather uncomfortable suggestion of how they might be helped.

DAVID SANDERS OP

GENESIS 1—11: A COMMENTARY, by Claus Westermann, translated from the German by John J. Scullion SJ. *SPCK*, London, 1984. Pp. 636. £25.00.

Westermann's commentary on Genesis 1—11 is a monumental work of scholarship and its translation into English is greatly to be welcomed. It appeared in German in 1974 as the first part of a massive three-volume commentary on Genesis in the *Biblischer Kommentar* series, the other volumes being on Genesis 12—36 and 37—50. To my knowledge Westermann's Genesis commentary is the largest commentary ever written on a book of the Old Testament. Translations of the other two volumes are in preparation, so the whole of Westermann's great work will soon be more accessible to English readers.

After an introductory section on Genesis 1—11, the main body of the commentary is divided into the following sections: the Creation of the world (1:1—2:4a), the Creation of man and woman and the expulsion from Paradise (2:4b—3:24), Cain and Abel (4:1—16), the Cainites (4:17—26), the succession of generations in the primeval period (5:1—32), the Sons of the Gods and the giants (6:1—4), the Flood (6:5—8:22), blessing and covenant (P) (9:1—17, 28—29), Noah and his sons (9:18—27), the table of the nations (10:1—32), the tower of Babel (11:1—9), and the genealogy of Shem (11:10—26). There is a concluding section on the formation and theological meaning of the primeval story, as well as some useful indices. In keeping with the regular format of the *Biblischer Kommentar* series, each of the sections of the main body of the commentary listed above is further sub-divided into the following sections: literature (i.e. exhaustive bibliography), text, literary form, setting in life, commentary, and purpose and thrust. Such clear signposting facilitates the use of the commentary.

The work contains a vast amount of detail on all aspects of Genesis 1—11, so that scholars will constantly wish to refer to it. However, it is not dry as dust. As is characteristic of the work of this Heidelberg scholar, it contains a wealth of theological insight. As a result the work will be found useful not only by professional scholars and students of the Old Testament but also by other theologians and preachers.

Westermann manages to combine meticulously detailed scholarship with a broader concern for the meaning of the text for the Church and modern man.

Some of Westermann's distinctive viewpoints may already be familiar to English readers from his volume on *Creation*, also translated by John J. Scullion and published by SPCK in 1974. One thinks, for example, of his insistence that Genesis 1–3 have traditionally been read too much in isolation from their broader context in Genesis 1–11. Cain's murder of Abel in chapter 4 is as much an expression of the Fall (though Westermann prefers not to use this term) as the story of the expulsion from Paradise in Genesis 3. The neglect of this fact within the Church has led to an excessively individualistic understanding of sin which ignored its social dimension.

In a short review one cannot note all the positions taken by this vast work but a few random points may be mentioned. In Genesis 1 he thinks it inappropriate to ask whether there is a doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*; the question would not have occurred. In Genesis 1 : 26f. he rightly argues that man's being made in the image of God refers neither exclusively to his spiritual nature (as Christian theology traditionally affirmed) nor simply to a physical likeness but to both, since the Hebrews saw man as a psycho-physical totality. In his discussion of the strange story in Genesis 6:1–4 about the sons of (the) God(s) and the daughters of men, Westermann holds that the former are gods rather than angels (the view that they are human is now almost universally rejected). On a couple of points of translation it may be noted that in Genesis 1:2 he renders *ruah 'elohim* as "God's Spirit", rightly in my view, whilst in Genesis 6:14, in the account of the construction of Noah's ark, he resists the temptation to emend *qinnim* "rooms" (lit. "nests") to *qanim* "reeds".

It may seem churlish to criticize such a magnificent piece of work but there are occasions when Westermann's exegesis fails to carry conviction. In Genesis 1:26 God's words "Let us make man" are taken as a plural of deliberation but the evidence for the existence of such a construction is not entirely clear. It is more natural to see an address to the heavenly court (cf. Genesis 3:22, Isaiah 6:8, Job 38:7, Psalm 8:6, ET 5). Again, Westermann's claim that Cain is not the eponymous ancestor of the Kenites is surely wrong, since the same word Cain (in Hebrew) is used to denote the Kenites in Numbers 24:22 and Judges 4:11, and the nomadic lifestyle to which Cain is doomed corresponds with that of the Kenites. Again, I am unconvinced by Westermann's attempt to play down the parallels between the antediluvian heroes of Genesis 5 and those of the Sumerian king-list. Can it be simply coincidence that Enoch, the seventh in the biblical series, lives 365 years when the seventh in the Sumerian list, Enmeduranki, was associated with Sippar, the city of the *sun-god*? Also, Westermann occasionally makes dogmatic statements that require further justification, as when he states that not even the biblical writers intended the seven days of creation to be taken literally (p. 90) or Eden to be equated with a specific geographical location, in spite of the references to the actual rivers Tigris and Euphrates in Genesis 2:14 (p. 216).

Nevertheless, this is a fine piece of work that should be in every theological library. The price may be prohibitive for some people, so a paperback edition would be a good idea. The translation is in general well done, although there is an unfortunately high number of minor errors and misprints.

JOHN DAY

THE GOOD NEWS ACCORDING TO LUKE by Eduard Schweizer (translated by David E. Green). SPCK, London, 1984. Pp. xvi + 392. Hb.

Professor Schweizer, who retired from the University of Zurich in 1979, has made many distinguished contributions to New Testament scholarship and English-speaking readers can count themselves fortunate that most of them have been well translated for their benefit. His writings include a set of three commentaries on the synoptic Gospels which appeared originally in the German series *Das Neue Testament Deutsch* which is