the issue of the biggest obstacle, namely our dread of being branded losers because of our sins — and above all, our fear of admitting to ourselves that we’re nothing but what Ephesians 2:1 says we are: dead in our trespasses and sins. In this chapter Capon addresses the issue of the preacher’s faith in a manner that might sound harsh to modern ears. Unless we’re willing to admit we’re sinners, and welcome the annihilation of our glittering images of moral success and clerical reputability, our words will be nothing more than the words of fakers, and we’ll never come within a million miles of that astonishment at grace which alone can make the words come alive. Chapter 5 addresses the ‘Grim Pills’, religion, spirituality and morality. Capon calls them grim pills that we take to kill the agony of not having control over our lives. Religion is described as our attempt to seize the management of history and to defend our usurpation of it in order to control creation. Religion has three constituent elements: cult, creed and conduct. In a most entertaining manner Capon explains that cult is the ceremonial rigmarole that you have to go through in order to persuade God to continue being pleasant to you. Creed on the other hand is all the things you have to think correctly about in order to be religious, while conduct is the struggle to comply with the long lists of spiritual or ethical requirements you have to fulfil if you want to be in God’s good books. Chapter 6 consists of antidotes. Capon states that the best preachers work in the dark. They never try to get their old religious vision back; they learn to walk through Scripture by listening — and by being empty enough to let the Word they hear speak through them. In Part 2, ‘The practice of preaching’, the emphasis falls on the ‘mechanics’ of preaching. Capon starts with a discussion of the ingredients of preaching. Of the utmost importance is to actually hear the Word in the original Greek and Hebrew. This is followed by an illustration of how to preach effectively using notes, giving instructions for day by day preparation. Especially those preachers who are familiar with personal computers will find the suggestions Capon makes helpful.

This is a well-written and well-reasoned book, and is definitely worthwhile reading, although the freshness and frankness of both the style and approach may be a bit strange to some. It is to be recommended, to all who are in the business of preaching. It may also be recommended for any form of group discussions held by preachers. It will definitely stimulate the debate on preaching by its challenging approach.

Collins, A Y, 1996 — Cosmology and eschatology in Jewish and Christian apocalypticism


Reviewer: Prof P M Venter (University of Pretoria)

Collins is first and foremost a literary analyst. In this work she shows her skills in reading apocalyptic and related texts from the pre-Christian as well as Christian era on an intertextual basis. She deals with these texts from the viewpoint of Gattungs-analysis, penetrating into the world of their Sitze im Leben. In her opinion a text has both meaning and significance. Meaning is found when the text is read within
its original historical and cultural context. Significance is created when the text is read within the religious and cultural framework of the interpreter. Although the author does deal with the aspect of significance, for instance the inadequate way in which apocalypses are read today (pp 15-19), or the use of the expression 'Son of Man' in the contemporary understanding of the historical Jesus (p 157-158), this aspect does not in general receive the attention due to it in this book.

Defining the genre of apocalypse *inter alia* in terms of narrative framework, a transcendent reality which is temporal and spatial, and the intention of interpreting earthly circumstances in the light of the supernatural, Collins identifies three bodies of literature in which these topics are dealt with. In the prophetic literature of Israel, the Greek magical papyri and contemporary as well as later Jewish mystical texts, she finds the appropriate material for finding the meaning of the apocalypses. Although she emphasizes that these texts are to be read against the background of millenarian movements, using contemporary methods of sociologists and anthropologists, her work is much more dedicated to descriptive analysis and comparison of texts according to mutual themes and ideas, than anything else.

In the chapters dealing with the seven heavens and numerical symbolism in Jewish and Christian apocalypses, the origin of these motifs, their functional use in contemporary literature for ordering time and space and their meaning are indicated. In two chapters dealing with the term 'Son of Man' the author indicates that this term was rather used of Jesus by his disciples and the author of Revelation than by Jesus himself. In another chapter, dealing with Revelation, Collins comes to the conclusion that holy war traditions are used in this book for indicating that martyrdom is part of the eschatological process hastening the eventual end. In a last chapter the author studies the religious phenomenon of Christian baptism in contemporary literature.

Although this monograph can be read by any one interested in the subject, some of the chapters do need specialized knowledge and the ability to read and understand Hebrew and Greek. The book is not a general introduction to apocalyptic writings but rather focuses on some of the themes in the field of study. The erudition of the author, the use of literature from such a wide spectrum and the use of both Old and New Testaments, make this an attractive publication. It is recommended for any one academically interested in apocalypticism.

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Evans, Craig A & Flint, Peter W (eds), 1997 — Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls

Grands Rapids, Michigan & Cambridge, U K: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co

Resensent: Prof Sjef van Tilborg (Nijmegen, Nederland)

Vijftig jaar na de ontdekking van de eerste teksten uit Qumran is er opnieuw een zekere belangstelling voor deze teksten. Deze interesse is sterk gestimuleerd door het uitgeverslawaai van een aantal jaren geleden met slogans dat nu eindelijk de laatste teksten gepubliceerd werden en dat de volledige waarheid bekend zou worden. Wat gebeurde was minder dramatisch dan voorgesteld. Het ging, zoals allang bekend was in de wetenschappelijke wereld, vooral over een groot aantal snippers die in de betere gevallen hoogstens een aantal woorden opleverden; en hiernaast over een zoer beperkt aantal langere teksten die dus wat toevoegen aan onze kennis van Qumran. De teksten kunnen nu geïntegreerd worden in wat we al

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