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THE ORLANDO MEETING, A REPORT

The Quaker Theological Discussion Group meeting last November in Orlando enjoyed two excellent papers, one by Arthur Roberts (included in this issue) of George Fox University and a second one by Grace Jantzen, “Margaret Fell and Early Quaker Women,” of Oxford. In addition to these papers, Gayle Beebe moderated a stimulating review of Paul Anderson’s book, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel* (Trinity Press International, 1997), which brought together several of the finest New Testament scholars in the world to comment on this important book by a Quaker author. A summary of that discussion follows.

A sad fact is that Raymond Brown, who was scheduled to review Part III of the book, died unexpectedly last August. Professors Alan Culpepper (president of Mercer’s McAfee School of Theology) and Graham Stanton (Lady Margaret’s Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University) graciously stepped up to fill the gap. While the reviews themselves and a response by Anderson are scheduled to be published as a feature in the first edition of *Review of Biblical Literature*, summaries of the reviews are as follows: D. Moody Smith (Duke Divinity School) introduced the session and sketched the history of his being asked to write the foreword. Upon looking at the book again, Smith commented favorably on the impressive research reports, especially those in the introduction and the first chapter. He also commented on the work’s extensive engagement with Bultmann’s work and its creative use of works by James Fowler and James Loder in teasing out John’s christological tensions. Smith mentioned the importance of Appendix VIII (arguing Luke made use of John’s tradition, also highlighting an overlooked first-century clue to John’s authorship) as seminal for some of his own thinking and described one of his doctoral students (Mark Matson) who had just completed successfully his dissertation in extending Anderson’s argument further.

Bob Kysar (Candler School of Theology, Emory University) reviewed Part I involving the literature reviews. As a leading authority on Johannine secondary literature, Kysar spoke appreciatively of Anderson’s approaches and outcomes. He expressed gratitude for the

public opportunity to agree with Anderson's criticism of his 1974 essay (arguing that John 6 is the showcase of disparate sources underlying the gospel) and declared his own abandonment of source-critical approaches to John. Kysar did have some questions about Anderson's historical enterprise being "too optimistic" and asked whether the cognitive operations of the evangelist can really be known. Nonetheless, Kysar spoke appreciatively of Anderson's contribution to the dialectical and ambiguous character of John's distinctively and dynamic christology. Sandra Schneiders (San Francisco School of Theology) reviewed Part II involving an assessment of Bultmann's treatment of stylistic, contextual, and theological aspects of John's unity and disunity. Schneiders spoke as one who was in basic agreement with all of Anderson's approaches and outcomes, but nonetheless had some questions. She asked whether the interdisciplinary use of cognitive theorists, such as Fowler and Loder, might on one hand be profitable, while on the other hand be a reflection of an overconcern for scientific objectivity in biblical studies. Likewise, she expressed anxiety over stylistic issues. Then again, she weighed the value of a methodological approach in terms of what it produces, and affirmed Anderson's work. If she were to take one book on a retreat with the Fourth Evangelist, it would be this one.

Alan Culpepper (McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University) reviewed Part III involving an exegesis of John 6 and explorations regarding John's tradition, literary artistry, and history of Johannine Christianity. While Culpepper was very appreciative of the integration of these approaches into a meaningful whole, he questioned the judgment that graphic, nonsymbolic detail may be reflective of oral, eyewitness traditions. He wondered if Psalms 77 and 107 may have been the source of the Johannine feeding and sea crossing rather than events themselves. Nonetheless, he appreciated very much Anderson's sketching the rhetorical function of the Johannine misunderstanding dialogue, complete with its exposing of three or four crises within the Johannine situation. Culpepper was especially drawn to the implications of Table 20, which sketched seven ways in which the "Keys of the Kingdom" passage of Matthew 16 was balanced by distinctive parallels (corrective ones?) in John. Graham Stanton (Cambridge University) commented on the work's implications for New Testament studies. Stanton's favorable impressions included Anderson's analysis of: John's "Prophet-like-Moses" Christology, the importance of Matthew and John for developing churches, ways we

come to know, the interrelation between oral and written stages of gospel traditions. Questions included whether Matthean Christianity was really all that structured and hierarchical, and whether Johannine and Matthean forms of organization were all that different. Stanton also wished to see some of the other christological motifs in John (the prologue, for instance) treated more directly.

Alan Padgett (Haggard School of Theology, Azusa Pacific University) commented on Anderson's work as a theologian. While appreciating the work and its implications for theology, he felt the use of Fowler and Loder was not much of an improvement over Barrett's work on dialectical theology in John. Mainly, Padgett criticized Anderson's treatment of sacramentology issues, arguing that saving faith in Christ is not dichotomous with the employment of Christian rituals. In this sense, he felt Bultmann and Anderson were off base in questioning the meaning of "eating the flesh and drinking the blood" of Jesus as a formalized Eucharist. He appealed to Wesley and Brown in doing so.

To these comments Anderson responded, and a lively discussion followed. Among Anderson's points: Structures of thought can be inferred and analyzed, even if the author remains unknown (re. Kysar); if Bultmann's stylistic evidence is compelling it should be taken seriously—although it is not compelling, even when measured on his own terms (re. Schneiders); given three independent traditional representations of the feeding and sea-crossing narratives (Mk. 6, 8, and Jn. 6), these appear to have been actual events, thus John may represent a dramatized history rather than an historicized drama (re. Culpepper); it was not Matthew as a written text to which John was responding, but the employment of the "Keys of the Kingdom" motif by others (see 3 John) which called forth John's ideological corrective to rising institutionalism (re. Stanton); and, inferring ritualized sacraments in the first-century church is anachronistic; further, "unless you eat/drink...you have no life in yourselves" (v. 53) is indeed incompatible with John's Christocentric thrust if referring to a ritual; the reference is to accept a suffering Jesus and a corresponding willingness to embrace a costly discipleship (v. 51, re. Padgett).

The Editors