

BOOK REVIEW

Stephen C. Barton, ed. *Holiness Past and Present* (London & New York: T & T Clark/Continuum, 2003), paperback, xvii + 511 pp., ISBN: 0-567-08823-5, US\$ 60.00.

This important book called *Holiness Past and Present* is a collection of essays about the understanding of the meanings and implications of holiness in antiquity and in the contemporary world. This kind of volume is of interest to Pentecostals who put emphasis on holiness. The editor, Stephen C. Barton, chose scholars from different disciplines to reflect on the idea of holiness. The editor provides an introduction to the articles and points out that to talk about holiness means “to attend to a matter that lies at the very heart of what it means to be and become fully human” (xvii). Barton states that “the broad coverage and interdisciplinary of these essays will make them a significant resource for further reflection and investigation into holiness past and present.” (xvii) The contributors are social scientists, biblical scholars, systematic theologians, church historians, religion philosophers and moral thinkers. The range of topics dealing with holiness is wide, from biblical to ethical, from theological to social, from historical to cultural, and from philosophical to practical. *Holiness Past and Present* is one of a kind. It is filling a vacancy in the available literature about holiness. The essays included in this volume are publications of the seminars and lectures made during the academic year 1999-2000 at Durham Centre for Theological Research in Durham University.

The range of subject areas covered by the different articles is an essential quality of this volume. Part I of the book deals with the understanding of holiness in different hypothetical frameworks. “Holiness in Theory” covers the topics “What is Holiness?” (Rogerson), “Rudolf Otto’s *The Idea of the Holy* Revisited” (Crowder), “The Sociology of Holiness: The Power of Being Good” (Davies), and “Changing Your Holy Ground: An Ecology of Sacred and Secular in Cities of the Centre and the Periphery” (Martin). Part II explores the Judeo-Christian tradition of holiness from the perspective of the Bible. This segment of the book is called “Holiness and Scripture” which has five articles: “Holiness in the Priestly Writings of the Old Testament” (Jenson), “‘Holy, Holy, Holy’: Isaiah’s Vision of God” (Moberly), “The Sanctification of Time in the Second Temple Period: Case Studies in the Septuagint and Jubilees” (Hayward), “Jesus and Holiness: The Challenge of Purity” (Dunn), and

“Dislocating and Relocating Holiness: A New Testament Study” (Barton). Part III is entitled “Holiness and Christian Tradition” which covers the broad range of the Church’s historical eras and the representative institutions of the Christian historical traditions. This includes a wide range of subjects such as “Holiness and the Vision of God in the Eastern Fathers” (Louth), “Finding a *via media*: The Moderation of Holiness in Fourth-century Western Asceticism” (Harrison), “Benedictine Holiness” (Mayr-Harting), “Holiness in the English Tradition: From Prayer Book to Puritans” (Mursell), “Holiness in the Evangelical Tradition” (Bebbington), “Holiness in the Roman Catholic Tradition” (Gilley), and Mother of God, Mother of Holiness: A Meditation from Orthodoxy” (Guroian). Part IV is a collection of essays that survey the understanding and implications of holiness in current concerns. “Holiness and Contemporary Issues” contains the articles “Bonhoeffer, Holiness and Ethics” (Ford), “Holiness *in extremis*: Jewish Women’s Resistance to the Profane in Auschwitz” (Raphael), “Holiness Ungendered” (Parsons), “The Communion of Saints and Other Religions: On Sainly Wives in Hinduism and Catholicism” (D’Costa), “Material Poverty or Poverty of Spirit? Holiness and the Liberation of the Poor” (Turner), “Whose Sanctity of Life? Ricoeur, Dworkin and the Human Embryo” (Song), and “Worship and the Formation of a Holy People” (Hardy).

Due to the format of this volume as a collection of various essays on holiness, not every article can be reviewed. However, because the volume is coming from the perspective of the Judeo-Christian tradition the articles of Jenson about the priestly source of holiness, Moberly’s Isaiah chapter 6 vision of Yahweh’s holiness, Hayward’s understanding of holiness in the second temple Judaism, Dunn’s discussion of holiness in the teaching of Jesus in terms of purification, and Barton’s study of the location of holiness in the New Testament are all helpful. It is appropriate to select three articles as representatives. Apart from the discussion of the meaning of “holiness,” “holy,” “sanctification,” “spirituality” and “sacred” in different historical and sociological contexts by Rogerson (3-21), Davies (50-7 & 66-7), Mursell (280-1 & 282ff.), Ford (365-70), Parsons (402-7 & 417ff.) and Hardy (479-82), there are three articles that personally benefited me. They are the articles of David Martin (68-90), Andrew Louth (217-38) and Denys Turner (441-59). Martin’s article is about the “sacred geography.” The author maps out in his article the way major cities in the world were designed in terms of the arrangement of cathedrals and churches, religious monuments and artifacts, city squares and public centres and sacred spaces. Louth’s contribution on the patristic understanding of God’s “uncreated

light” provides insights on how a deeper encounter with God is possible from the perspective of the Eastern Fathers of the church. He expounded on the patristic exegesis of the transfiguration of Jesus. The contention of Turner that the tools of “modernity” and “post-modernism” cannot solve the problem of the dichotomy of “material poverty” and “poverty of Spirit” but the perspective of “pre-modern” tradition is rightly argued. In particular, he utilizes the hermeneutical traditions of the medieval mystics like John of the Cross and Meister Eckhart.

The materials in general are substantial. The discussion on the theological, ethical and moral aspects of holiness primarily from the Judeo-Christian perspective is narrowed down to the historic faith of the Church. Although the contributions are inter-denominational in nature the articles will be of profit to Pentecostal readers. It is unfortunate that there is no specific Pentecostal representation or one whole article in this collection of essays about holiness. The articles were clearly written and carry less technical discussions in the footnotes. The volume can be recommended for informed laity. It is a good resource book for ministers and scholars alike. Seminary students and serious Bible readers can benefit from the articles on how to appreciate holiness in teaching of the biblical text, especially in Part II. Probably, these essays were published as they were originally presented in the seminars and lectures by their authors. It seems that the authors of this volume were not cross-referencing each other. It is surprising that there is no after word or epilogue provided by the editor. It could be helpful if there is a kind of summation or evaluation of the editor at the end of the volume. The introduction could have been longer and more elaborate to help the reader understand the connection of the articles with each other and how they were grouped and orderly arranged.

Such an anthology of essays has both positive and negative sides. The obvious major gains are the handiness of this kind of reference book and the compact interdisciplinary approaches on a single subject matter in one volume. The disappointment is the huge diversity of articles which lack cohesiveness in a single volume. The disagreements and variations of views among the authors are not immediately noticeable. Another observable setback of this volume is the uneven treatment given by each author to the subject matter. Some articles are highly critical in approach while others are simply interacting with the current status of scholarship in the subject matter at hand. Since the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition of Christianity is thriving in an unprecedented way so that tongue-speaking Christians would only be second in number to the Roman Catholics, it would be advantageous if there was a major contribution from the Pentecostal-

Charismatic view of holiness. Although Bebbington included a section on “*Charismatic Renewal*” (312-4), he directly connected the movement with evangelicalism. It should not be forgotten that the Protestant mainline denominations and the Roman Catholics were the ones who first embraced the Pentecostal-Charismatic experience, rather than the mainline Evangelicals.

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