

David Jones. The only difficulty with the book is that its very richness of reference, and Bennett's technique (reminiscent almost of a patristic commentator) of following up the many verbal reminiscences which a line of poetry suggests to a mind as learned as his, means that the book is by no means easy to read: like the poems he examines, his book must be savoured slowly. But students of theology and of Church History; those interested in the history of taste and in the power of poetry will find the effort to assimilate this book worth while.

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**CREATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (Issues in Religion and Theology 6)**  
Edited by Bernard W. Anderson. SPCK/Fortress Press, 1984. Pp. xiv + 178. £3.50.

This sixth volume in the series *Issues in Religion and Theology* is to be welcomed, for (as the Editor, B.W. Anderson, points out) from Barth to Bultmann creation theology in the sense of origination has been regarded as peripheral. This situation is in part the fault of Old Testament scholarship itself influenced by von Rad's thesis that the Old Testament doctrine of creation was never able to attain to independent existence in its own right but was always subordinated to soteriological considerations. As a result, over a century after the publication of Darwin's *The origin of Species*, discussion of the Genesis narrative continues to be undertaken on the false antithesis of fact or fiction, science or the Bible—totally inappropriate for the poetic character of the material. The merit of this collection is that it not only establishes the centrality of the doctrine of creation within the Old Testament, but also its importance in the questions facing contemporary theology in the nuclear age.

After an excellent introduction which stresses the importance of Davidic theologians, the collection begins with an extract from Gunkel's classical work *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895) and continues with the well known essays of von Rad, 'The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation' (1936) and Eichrodt, 'In the Beginning: A Contribution to the Interpretation of the First Word of the Bible' (1962), both of which are criticised in subsequent contributions. There then follows McCarthy, "'Creation" Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry' (1967); Westermann 'Biblical Reflection on Creator-Creation, (1971), Schmid, 'Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation: "Creation Theology" as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology' (1973); and Hermisson, 'Observations on the Creation Theology in Wisdom' (1978). The collection concludes with two topical contributions on 'Creation and Liberation' by Landes (1978) and 'Creation and Ecology' by the editor (1983).

While to-day Gunkel's conclusion that Gen. 1 was 'faded myth' deriving ultimately from Babylonian tradition is taken as axiomatic for Biblical research, scholars equally recognise the importance of the already existing Hebrew traditions of J in shaping the material, whether or not (as seems more likely to this reviewer) an independent P source ever existed. Although the editor rightly stresses that the literary function of the text in its overall Biblical context cannot be ignored, it is only Landes who brings out the tension between Gen. 1 (man made in the image of God) and Gen. 3 (man grasping at divinity). Indeed, the Priestly account is not in the end primarily concerned about creation at all (which, as Westermann holds, was always presumed to have been by God since there was no alternative) but rather with Israel's universalistic mission within creation. Following her defeat and exile, did her election still hold, and hold for what?

But as Deutero-Isaiah affirms, creation theology cannot in the end be reduced to origination: it includes both maintenance and consummation as well. Otherwise God would be reduced to an absentee landlord, and man become both master and prisoner of his own destiny.

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