

BOOK REVIEWS

Geoffrey Stonier (ed.), *The New Thematic Concordance*, Christian Focus Publications, Ross-shire 2004, ISBN 1-85792-931-4.

We have here a very useful tool for its intended audience. It opens with an 'Editor's Preface' written by Daniel Morrison Miller: "The plan of this book is to provide topical outlines of a variety of major themes for the guidance of students and workers engaged in Christian service at home and in all parts of the world". "In many foreign countries, nationals are often without either a concordance or a Bible containing references, and here is a compilation of vital subjects that cannot but give direction and inspiration, and provide sure foundations, for a healthy and useful Christian upbuilding". Miller also informs us that the original manuscript of the volume "made its appearance over one hundred and fifty years ago" and that this book is "an up-to-date issue, slightly revised and edited to meet present-day requirements".

Geoffrey Stonier himself, who is the International Director of Preachers' Help, informs us in "A Word of Commendation", that this volume is, as it claims, "a concordance and not a commentary"; yet one should consider it as "a small book of theology" since one finds therein outlines of thematic development: "Under each topic, you will find many headings and Bible verses arranged in such a way that they lend themselves easily to become the 'points' of a sermon". This is what makes it "an essential tool for busy preachers".

How does this concordance function? It functions very much like a concordance. It first has the name of the theme, given in bold print and in caps. Then one finds the articulation of the theme and the first biblical text where the theme is developed. At times more than one text is given. As example we shall take the theme labelled the first theme under the letter A: 'Access to God'; beneath the title we find in normal font these subtitles: 'Is of God' citing Ps 65,4; 'Is by Christ' citing Jn 10,7,9; Jn 14,6; Rom 5,2; Eph 2,15; Heb 7,19,25; 10,19; 1Pt 3,18; 1Tim 2,5; 'Is by the Holy Spirit' citing Eph 2,18; 'Obtained through faith' citing Acts 14,27; Rom 5,12; Heb 11,6; 'Follows upon reconciliation with God' citing Col 1,21-22. And so forth. At times there exists a sub-theme and some examples from Scripture embodying the theme. As example we shall take the theme Adoption: there is first the development of the theme (p.8); but then we find a sub-paragraph to tell us what Adoption should

produce in Christians (pp.8-9). At the end of the entry we read that this theme is illustrated in Joseph's sons (Gen 48, 5.14. 16.22), Moses (Ex 2,10) and Esther(Esther 2,7) and typified in Israel(Ex 4,22; Hos 11,1;Rom 9,4). Then we read that an example of Adoption may be seen in Solomon (p.9).

An index of the themes and sub-themes in their alphabetical order is offered on pp.193-205.

I would commend this book for publication by Bible Societies. But we should keep in mind that it offers examples of biblical theology, that is, theology based on the Bible read as a single 'book' not as a compendium of books. Secondly, it seems to be addressed to a target audience coming from a Protestant background though people from other denominations who base their spirituality upon the biblical text will find this book useful.

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