

---

# Biblical Theology

by

## John Owen

being the first ever English translation  
of

### Theologoumena Pantadapa

Soli Deo Gloria Publications 2nd. Printing 1996

ISBN 1-877611-83-2

#### A REVIEW AND APPRECIATION

**B**iblical Theology! Well, all Christian Theology is Biblical, isn't it? We hear of 'Systematic Theology', and 'Dogmatic Theology', 'Elenctic Theology' and 'Polemic Theology', they're all Biblically based, so what's unique about this 'Biblical Theology' written by John Owen?

First, then, an explanation. 'Biblical Theology' is uniquely different to all the other marques of Theology principally with respect to its method of organisation. It is no less and no more 'Biblical' than the others in terms of being founded upon exegesis of Scripture. But it is called 'Biblical' because its method of organisation follows the general historical course of Divine Revelation as unfolded in the Bible. It is useful to compare 'Biblical' with 'Systematic' (or 'Dogmatic') Theology, to gain a view of how they differ. Then, having established this, we can move on to examine John Owen's fine exposition of 'Biblical Theology'.

Systematic Theology is founded on exegesis of Holy Writ. Scripture is the foundation of all Christian theological activity, and the first level of theology is therefore the correct interpretation of the text of Scripture. This we call 'exegesis'. The word is prefixed with the preposition 'ex' meaning 'out of'. Thus, 'exegesis' is the process of gaining the correct meaning 'out of' Scripture.<sup>1</sup> Once the correct inter

---

<sup>1</sup> Contrast the reverse: '*eisegesis*'. Here the word is prefixed by the preposition 'eis' meaning 'into', and hence it signifies what a Christian may never do, that is, to 'put a meaning into Scripture'. The process of exegesis, however, is fundamentally controlled by simple honesty before God, and an application of the principles of interpretation. An excellent introduction to 'how to interpret Scripture' is that of **Louis Berkhof**: "*Principles of Biblical Interpretation*" (Publ. Baker, many reprints 1950 on.)

-pretation is gained, a second process can be initiated, that of assembling the full results of complete Biblical exegesis according to category by subject. In Dogmatic or Systematic Theology data flows are established which channel the Scripture teachings into categories under the headings of the six loci of Dogmatics, namely: Theology; Anthropology; Christology; Soteriology; Ecclesiology; and finally, Eschatology. Thus, for instance, to gather everything the Bible says about the "Doctrine of the Last Things" means that one has to trawl, so to speak, through the whole of exegeted Scripture, and, (to continue using the analogy of a fisherman), 'net' every item taught in Scripture with respect to that subject, then finally 'land the catch', as it were, under the heading of 'Eschatology'.<sup>2</sup> This whole process is often condemned as being 'scholastic', but it is a necessary methodology if ever one is going to obtain a comprehensive view of what the Word of God teaches on a particular topic.

In contrast, in Biblical Theology, we see again a process of organisation founded on exegesis, but this time the organisation is not as per subject category, or the six loci of dogmatics, but is governed by the Biblical outline of historical time. In this method, the data flows from all over Scripture, not into "boxes", so to speak, labelled "Eschatology" or "Soteriology", but into "boxes" each of which encompasses a particular period in Biblical history. Each "box" contains within it a comprehensive panorama of God's dealings with the human race at a particular time, indicating with this the unfolding redemptive revelation. Thus Biblical information flows into the box for the pre-fall Adamic period, not only from the first three chapters of Genesis, but from other Biblical books as well. This is because, for instance, Genesis 1-3 does not tell us everything about Adam in his pre-fall state, but we find that the Holy Spirit revealed much information to St. Paul, which we find in such texts as Romans 2 : 14-15; Romans 5: 19 and 21; and 1 Cor. 15:21-22, Eph. 4 : 24; etc., from which texts we are able to infer that Adam must have known the Ten Commandments, for instance. Likewise, an insight is gained into the spiritual state of the post-fall Adam, and his progeny, not only from Gen. ch. 3 to 11, but also from practically all over the rest of Scripture. In collating together all this information from all over Scripture, a penetrating spiritual and panoramic view of the human history under God's providential control can be obtained, not only initially for Adam and his immediate descendants, but for virtually any period of Biblical history one wishes to analyse. As a result, one obtains an overall panorama of the development of God's dealings with man, it is not so much a 'Biblical History', (in which one may major on matters geographical, archaeological, political, military, economic, and cultural), but more of a "theological history", in which one sees the

---

<sup>2</sup> This is an important function of Christian thinking. One finds many modern evangelicals, particularly many amongst Brethren and Charismatic groups, who are suspicious of this procedure, yet carry it out nevertheless themselves quite ardently if not quite correctly when they major on such topics as the Second Coming of Christ, or Spiritual gifts.

development of theology as the primary factor.<sup>3</sup> And the theology one sees in this panorama will, barring mistakes of exegesis and inference, be one and the same in substance as that of 'Systematic Theology', though very different in form. No theological contradiction exists between the two.

One might conclude this introduction by saying how analogous this all is to the methods by which one might describe a human being. One and the same human being can be analysed and described according to subject category, viz. : Physiology; Psychology; Neurology; Sociology; Biology; Bio-Chemistry; etc., and then again, from a totally different angle, *historically*; i.e., Biography. In a perfect world, no contradictions would arise between the analysis of the man under one category, and analysis of the same man under another category. They would all be complimentary one with another. Working from Scripture, therefore, which is perfect, no contradictions should arise between any information in the Loci of Dogmatics, internally between one locus and another, or externally with "Biblical Theology".<sup>4</sup>

Thus then, we come to John Owen's "Biblical Theology" or "Theologoumena Pantadapa". Written roughly at the mid-point of Owen's career, it reflected not only his massive erudition, but also the fruitage of mature thinking. It was, really, the first ever *successful* Biblical Theology<sup>5</sup> when it appeared (publ. in Latin in 1661), and pre-dated, by 16 years the famous "Economy of the Covenants between God and Man" (first published in 1677) by the Dutchman, Herman Witsius, and by 287 years, the "Biblical Theology" of Geerhardus Vos, published in 1948.

Yet it is only now, within the last two to three years the Christian world has begun to wake up to Owen's pioneering work. Until two years ago, I had never even heard of it! It was never reprinted with the modern BOT reprint of Owen's works, and the whole volume seemed to have been shuffled away into forgettery. Why? Well, firstly, it was never translated from the Latin original. That in itself presented a formidable task, given the sheer size of the work (861 pages plus). It is, I believe, also right to say that much of the teaching contained within its pages did not exactly find too much sympathy with a lot of people, particularly the later generations of the 17th century, and those of the ensuing centuries. And there were other matters

---

<sup>3</sup> Not to be confused with "*Historical Theology*" a la William **Cunningham**. Cunningham deals with a complete Bible as the foundation, "Biblical Theology" is in fact tracking the development of the Bible as a major part of its structure.

<sup>4</sup> **Geerhardus Vos** wrote a "*Biblical Theology*" (publ. Eerdmans 1948, BOT reprint 1975.) Cf. pages 15 - 16 where Vos says: "There is no difference (between Systematic and Biblical Theology) in (terms) that one would be more closely bound to Scripture than the other. In this they are wholly alike".

<sup>5</sup> The Dutchman **Koch** (Cocceius) had published in 1648 a work that was probably the first pioneering attempt at a "Biblical Theology", but his work suffered from certain idiosyncrasies from which Owen's work is free.

therein, which those later erstwhile heirs of the Puritans would have been embarrassed about anyway, and which they believed had been successfully debunked by academics both of Owen's day, and of subsequent generations. So the great tome lay, unknown to anyone conversant with Latin, for over 330 years. Here and there, during those centuries of 'forgettery', one finds a voice that praises the volume, for instance, Ryland of Northampton speaks of it as worthy of being ranked in theological literature on a par with Newton's "Principia" in Science. Goold, editing the 19th century edition of Owen's Works, reprinted it in Latin, had evidently studied it, and held it in esteem, though he demurred from Ryland's high estimate. Goold preferred the "more cautious and studied language of Mr. Orme : the work discovers a vast extent of reading, and a profound acquaintance with the whole compass of profane and sacred learning".<sup>6</sup> Goold admits, though, that herein Owen's learning was vast, and that "no contemporary name" could have claimed superiority to Owen on the evidence manifest, as to spiritual wisdom, variety of erudition, and sheer general learning. Whereas such qualities are manifest in all of Owen's English works, Goold averred that this Latin work outshone in these respects everything else Owen had written.<sup>7</sup>

Now, at last, the volume is in English. Dr. Stephen Westcott, of Bristol, who had successfully undertaken doctoral research on Owen, has completed the enormous task of translation from the Latin. In this he has been ably assisted by two modern classical scholars, Mr. E.J. Young of Scunthorpe, and Mr. A.E. Jones of Ware, without whose labours the final result would "not have seen the light of day". Soli Deo Gloria Publications of the U.S.A. have printed the result of their combined labours, with all the usual top rate standards of quality one has come to associate with that firm. With a foreword by Dr. Jim Packer, the 861 + L page volume could get no finer recommendation. Indices and bibliographies have been added, plus helpful Prefatory Notes from the hand of Dr. Westcott. Lest the reader should now take a deep breath, sigh, and say "Yes but this is Owen.....so prolix, so complicated, so difficult to concentrate on..." it needs to be pointed out that this tome is easy to read. It appears that Owen probably spent most of his time *thinking* in Latin, and hence his Latin prose reads much more easily when translated into English than do his works initially written in English. Dr. Packer notes that Owen's "Latin is taut, brisk, clear and tidy, and in translation reads more easily than do his twisted paragraphs in his mother tongue."<sup>8</sup> The volume is a veritable theological treasure, and is now in its second printing since its first appearance only two years ago. Included in it is a first time translation of Owen's "Defence of Scripture against Modern Fanaticism" which appears as an Appendix of some eighty odd pages at the end of

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Goold's prefatory notes to the Latin edition, reprinted pp.XIV - XV in the English translation here-with under review.

<sup>7</sup> Goold : Ibid. p.XV

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dr.Packer: foreword to Owen's "*Biblical Theology*" pp. XI - XIII..

the book, its material being apposite to and supplementary to the thesis of the main work.

Owen has divided his "Biblical Theology" into 6 books, or, sections, thus:

**BOOK ONE:** Natural Theology. Herein 9 chapters and two digressions look into the Natural Theology of the first man. After examining "Theology in General" Owen points out that Adam basically had correct theological knowledge by nature, though this would not have been exhaustive. A text like Romans 2 vv. 14 - 15 tells us enough to know that Adam would have had the Law of God written in his heart, and would have correctly interpreted the phenomena of the created world around him as pointing to, and revealing much about, God Himself. And all this would have been active within the context of God speaking and fellowshiping with the pre-fall Adam, the direct Divine Revelation acting as the controlling framework for Adam's understanding and interpretation of everything. Owen goes on to examine the effects of the fall, and emphasizes how Natural theology went into demise, with that fall. Again, Romans 2 : 14 - 15 gives us the picture which can be inferentially read back into the Edenic narratives of Genesis. Natural theology post-fall is distorted, because man's nature is distorted by sin, the Law of God is apparent in him now imperfectly, it has come 'off-centre' from its proper focus on Jehovah, and instead, is self-centred, even to the point of self-deification. Likewise, the loss of fellowship with God, and the loss of Divine Revelation, leads to a serious lacking in understanding of the phenomena of creation and providence, and an ever-increasing distortion of interpretation of the same. Owen points up the "Insufficiency of Natural Theology for Salvation", and follows this up with a 35 page "Digression on Universal Grace". In this he was flying full in the face of both the Arminianism and the Amyraldianism of his times. These two "half-sister" theologies wanted room for people to be saved apart from the preaching of the Gospel, their standard position being that if a person make the best use of their natural light, even though they never hear of Christ, God will save them.<sup>9</sup> And all this, of course, was a logically necessary corollary to their avowed position whereby they asserted that "God wants to save all men without exception". Owen answers these notions in characteristic style :

" Some have taught a general willingness on God's part for the salvation of all mankind, and have suggested that the works of creation and of providence provide a sufficient revelation of the divine mind to allow a response of acceptable obedience from men. Leaving aside the fact that they are thus forced to ascribe to God contradictory wishes, unfinished purposes, and intentions which He cannot or will not fulfill<sup>10</sup> - and no scope at all for the revealing of His attribute of mercy - their

---

<sup>9</sup> Amyraldus certainly taught this unBiblical dogma, though some of his followers soft pedal this fact Cf. François Laplanche : "*Orthodoxie et Prédication*" (Presses Universitaires de France 1965) and page 276, where he writes: "The Professor of Saumur (Amyraut) did not hesitate to admit the theoretical possibility of salvation for the non-evangelised". (ET mine, Ed.)

<sup>10</sup> Pace our moderns who claim to follow Calvin!

definitions are of such a nature, and their statements restricted within so narrow limits, that they must admit that such a revelation (general, or natural revelation) was never of the slightest use to anyone for salvation, nor ever will it be so.”<sup>11</sup> The “digression on Universal Grace” which follows almost immediately is a gem.<sup>12</sup> “The revealing of Christ the Mediator”, he says, “through the preaching of the Gospel is absolutely necessary for the winning of souls to salvation”<sup>13</sup>

Owen concludes his “Book 1” with three chapters each under the heading “Natural Theology Under Total Depravity”. His vast stores of knowledge gained from his studies in Classics and Antiquities emerge with force, as he is able to adumbrate the general results of “Natural theologizing”! He says:

“That feeble and flickering light within human nature was roughly taken in hand by human vanity, and led round and about in weary confusion until, at length, it was bogged down in the mires and quicksands of idle curiosity, endless squabbles, and useless speculations, until it was all but choked to death!”<sup>14</sup> And, as if in anticipation of modern aberrations teaching “common grace”, he goes on, “Let us now lay it down as a doctrine, as a fact, that God has, by His grace, placed all teaching concerning morality, virtue, and right thinking, elsewhere than under the law of nature, where at first it reposed. These innate ideas from which ethics sprang can only look back to the primal order long since done away with, as described earlier, *and there is now no true virtue except that bountifully granted to the faithful by the new covenant*. No moral good is truly good or beneficial to the doer unless it springs from the inner experience of a new birth, and proceeds from a human body into which has been infused a renewed heart”.<sup>15</sup> (Emph.mine. H.W.)

Owen draws “Book 1” to a close with a detailed demolition of Cardinal Bellarmine’s Romanist “Notes” of the Church.

In **Book 2** Owen traces out the development of Theology from Adam to Noah in

---

<sup>11</sup> Owen : “Biblical Theology” p.46

<sup>12</sup> One notes Owen’s characteristic style emerging here as in all his other Works. Every facet of the subject has to be subjected to exhaustive examination. Every erroneous position likewise has to be minutely analysed, critiqued, dismantled, and then consigned to the theological dustbin.

<sup>13</sup> Owen In loc. p. 57. This is an important Scriptural point, established on the firm exegetical basis thus: Rm. 10:14 “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” “Practically all breeds of modern Evangelicalism, Arminianism, and even much moderate Calvinism and Amyraldianism walk away from this Scripture.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p.88. Owen is speaking here of course about that remnant of the Law of God which “ghosts” as it were, in every natural man. Cf. Romans 2 : 14-15. His outline of the course of natural theology leaves modern notions of “common Grace” looking a bit sick.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* pp.92 - 93. Again, this makes the modern “common-grace” dogma look sick! It has to be said however, that elsewhere in his works, notably Works X pp. 134-5 Owen did talk about “common grace”. But he explains what he means by this as being “in the *external* revelation of the will of God by His word, with some illumination of the mind to perceive it”. (Emph. H.W.). Elsewhere he refers to this concept under the terms of “common effects” of grace: Works III p. 236; XI pp 640 ff. The distinction is noteworthy, and highlights the misleading tendency evident when one wrongly calls this “grace”.

---

three chapters. There was, he avers, after the fall, a renewal, a reformation of Theology. We can infer from many Biblical texts that a knowledge of sin and the need for blood sacrifice formed an intrinsic part of the Post-Lapsarian Theology, as the narratives concerning Cain and Abel indicate. And of course the Promises God made to our fallen first parents indicate that Divine revelation was active amongst those early patriarchs. Apostasy and godliness developed in parallel, and the situation worsened until God undertook the second great Reformation at the time of the great deluge, when God destroyed the world in the same act in which He saved the world! Owen's insight and wisdom at this point is something rare, he notes *why* God destroyed the world, and thereby isolates something which the Scriptures clearly teach, but which hardly anyone seems to have noticed! Owen not only notices it, but he also notices the significance of it, and one might add, one then sees the significance of it all for our present day situation too!

**Book 3** traces the development of Theology from Noah to Abraham in 14 chapters, exegeting the details of the Covenant with Noah, and the subsequent wholesale apostasy amongst the later generations. Owen is at pains here, however, to note that the apostasy this time was radically different in form to that of the pre-Flood Apostasy, even if at rock bottom sin was again the cause. And this difference of form in the apostasy is highly significant.<sup>16</sup> Owen traces out the history of this apostasy using his copious knowledge and understanding of Classics and Antiquities...the result is a harrowing tale of human wickedness in religion, the sort of narrative that surely would tend to give a "common gracer" severe doubts about his theology, were he to read this material carefully and prayerfully.

Fascinating in this section is Owen's discussion of "The Original Language of mankind" and the Tower of Babel incident. Noting that prior to Babel, human language had been uniform,<sup>17</sup> and that this uniformity can be traced right back through Noah to Adam, Owen draws attention to the Scriptural fact that it was the ungodly masses of apostates that set about erecting the Tower of Babel, and that the godly line descending from Noah, through Eber, and thence on down to Abraham would never have been involved with the construction of this godless project. It follows, then, says Owen, that the godly, not being present among those who built the tower, would not have been smitten with language confusion amongst themselves, and so would have carried on using that same old language, the very tongue that God had gifted Adam with at the moment of his creation. And this language, Owen goes on, was perpetuated down through the godly line... on down through Abraham and his descendants, and known by the name "Hebrew", from "Eber", the

---

<sup>16</sup> Again, one might see how under the aegis of "Biblical Theology", certain insights into the Scriptural Revelation are possible which are normally hidden from view under the aegis of "Systematic Theology."

<sup>17</sup> Obviously, of course, because the Word of God instructs us that human language did not become a plurality of languages until after God had smitten the human race with the Confusion of tongues as in Genesis 11 vv. 6 - 9.

ancient patriarch in the godly line from Noah through Shem, and on to Abraham, and the Israelites.( Gen. 10:21). Thus Owen deduced that Hebrew is the original language of Eden. Now I suppose many a scholar would want to raise his eyebrows at all this! But it seems to me eminently a Biblically-based argument.

In **Book 4**, in three chapters and two digressions, Owen traces out the development of Theology from Abraham to Moses. The two digressions are highly controversial, and extremely unlikely to be subscribed by hardly any scholars today, if at all. Owen goes to great lengths to try and prove that the origin of alphabetic writing can be traced to the work of God writing the 10 commandments on tablets of stone in Sinai. Now certainly, it seems that alphabetic signs were first developed in the Middle East, but today's scholarship avers that this was "Proto-Canaanite<sup>18</sup>. As far as I am able to check this out, such letters were developed in that area approximately in the historical period of Moses.<sup>19</sup> And it is generally taught today that the Hebrew alphabetic signs were derived from the later Phoenician development of the "Proto-Canaanite." Owen would say that it was the other way around! No doubt, it was with topics like this in mind that Dr. Packer, in his forward to this volume, says that though "the treatise draws on a very wide range of learning, .....some of the learning is, inevitably, out of date."<sup>20</sup> But it must be said here, that the modern scholarly position is fundamentally based on a skepticism concerning the Bible, and its standard approach is to regard everything Biblical and Hebrew as being an amalgam of original Canaanite, Phoenician, Aramaean, and Babylonian elements.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly too, modern scholarship, even amongst Reformed schools of thought, would regard Owen as outdated in his digression in **Book 5**, namely, on the "Antiquity of the Hebrew Vowel Points". Here, as in Works Vol 16, Owen was asserting that the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament carried vowel points, at least from the time of Ezra. Owen fought hard against the up-and -coming humanistic Biblical Criticism that was then developing at the Theological Academy of Saumur at the time of Moise Amyraut. Amyraut's colleagues, Testard, Cappel, and LaPlace were active in undermining Protestant orthodoxy, effectively overturning Protestant rapport with the Bible as the authoritative Word of God.<sup>22</sup> Part of this

---

<sup>18</sup> From epigraphic evidence scholars today inform us that in its earliest written stages Hebrew and its cousin Semitic languages like Aramaic and Ugaritic first appeared in Cuneiform 'syllabic' script. The Alphabetical script of early Hebrew from the late 2nd millennium BC is held to be Proto-Canaanite, which developed into the angular script of the Phoenician alphabet. Hebrew, it is claimed, followed in line with Phoenician. Cf. "An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax" by Waltke and O'Connor. (Eisenbrauns, USA, 1990 p.17.)

<sup>19</sup> Owen does not contend against the fact that syllabic signs and pictograms (hieroglyphics, cuneiform, etc.) were extant prior to the time of Moses. He contends rather that the 'giant leap' of literacy propagated by alphabetic signs was directly provided to Moses by God.

<sup>20</sup> Packer: In loc. p.XII.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. E. T. Ryder: "The Languages of the Old Testament" in Peake's Commentary (very critical modernist, publ. Thomas Nelson 1962) p.66 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. François Laplanche : "L'écriture, Le Sacré et L'Histoire," APA Holland University Press 1986.



attack was headed by Cappel, and centred on the Hebrew vowel points. It was made out that since ancient Hebrew was not written with vowels, only consonants, one could not always be sure what the original was saying. One can appreciate this if one writes in English in consonants only, do the letters HT, for instance, mean HOT, HAT, HUT, HET, or HIT ? Usually, the context will deliver the answer. But with an ancient tongue, it was alleged, we can not be sure. Owen, along with other great Reformed scholars of his age, like the Buxtorfs, believed that Ezra, working under the Divine theopneustic inspiration, had devised, and put in the Hebrew vowel points at the time when Hebrew was falling out of daily use as the spoken tongue amongst the by then largely Aramaic-speaking Jews who had returned from Babylon in the 6th and 5th centuries BC. But from Saumur, it was alleged that the vowel signs were the later production of the Jewish Massoretic scholars some time from about 600 to 1000 AD. Today, this is the established scholarly position. However, it fails to answer certain telling data which Owen advances in this work, and certainly it seems to me that another, and less skeptical look ought to be taken into the evidence.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from this, the rest of Book 5 is an able elucidation, in 16 chapters, with four digressions, on the development of Theology from Moses to Christ. Finally, **Book 6** in 9 chapters and one digression (On Philosophic Corruptions of Theology) is an elucidation of "Evangelical Theology", that is, the Theology founded on the completed Divine revelation.

The digression "Philosophical Corruptions of Theology" reveals Owen's uneasiness about Aristotelianism, and Scholasticism. But what he understands by those terms is far from making him denounce "Systematic Theology". (Indeed, Owen himself effectively indulged in "Systematic Theology" on a large scale, witness the full concatenation of his writings!) What he is concerned to show is that "a philosophical method of teaching spiritual matters is alien to the gospel"! He is hard on Thomas Aquinas, on Duns Scotus, on Occam, and against any intermingling of philosophy with Scripture. "It is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit which alone can free men's minds from the bondage of inherited prejudices and the meshes of philosophy" he writes.<sup>24</sup> He follows this up in Chapter 9 by an excellent analysis of the actual spiritual processes and means whereby the Holy Spirit is isolated as the central dynamic force in the matter of men learning properly the truths of Scripture. And "True Theology", he writes, "therefore is nothing but the disciplined efforts of the student's intellect (directed according to the rule of Scripture) to enhance and improve those inner spiritual gifts and saving light which constitute true, heavenly wisdom".<sup>25</sup> This chapter is in itself worth the price of the book. Owen in no way deprecates the study of Theology and all associated studies, to the contrary, he here

---

<sup>23</sup> It would be too digressive and extremely protracted to go any further into these matters here.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Owen in loc pp.679 -684.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* p.688.

with encourages it. And that includes the study of the Biblical languages, a difficult enough nut to crack for most students in training for the ministry. To all this Owen wants to add the study of Logic and Rhetoric, which, he says, are requisite for effective preaching. But no matter what great lengths are gone to in the study, all is no avail without that inner working of the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit no amount of learning will provide for the needs of a congregation. For all aspirants to the ministry of the Gospel, Owen would have them make this dual preparation, that of the inner man being in constant communion with, and dependant on, the Most High, and a zealous study of the Holy Scriptures, *directly*, not merely through the medium of other theologians. "Continuous and heartfelt prayer" side by side with the deep study of the Word in the original tongues was Owen's high standard, in which he emphasized how dependent a man is on God in all of this.

This is an amazing tome. It tracks the parallel course through history of two kinds of Theology; one the natural theology based on the remnants of the original Adamic nature, of which the course is ever downwards and away from all truth. Then, the other, glorious revelation gradually unfolding through Biblical history, reversing the apostasizing motion of human nature, and opening the inner spiritual eyes of the elect, unto salvation. Appropriately, Owen has drawn the work to a close with a short treatise on "The Defence of Sacred Scripture". The first chapter in this section is headed "Why Scripture is, and may be termed, the Word of God." Owen herein takes up the cause against Quakers, and all "inner light" merchants, then goes on to discuss the real meaning of the 'Logos' wherewith he is concerned, in putting forward the truth, to "flush out these heretics from their refuge," he shows that the 'Logos' is the three-fold Word of God:

1. It is the substance or eternally existing essence
2. It is the conception or thought in the Divine mind
3. It is the outgoing utterance of the 'Word of God'.

For anyone whose theological studies may have involved them in heavy attention to Karl Barth in this very area, which Barth addresses in the first volume of his 'Kirkliche Dogmatiek', this final treatise in Owen's book is essential corrective reading. Owen is sure footed, and Scriptural, compared to Barth's flights of philosophical fancy. Owen is never in any doubt concerning what he called the "perfection" of the Holy Scriptures, and that they are indeed, surely the "Word of God".

What more could one say? To this vast volume we have not really done justice in this review. It is so full of important information and insights that we cannot possibly cover everything in in these pages. It is indeed a volume which richly pays the rewards of intensive study, is edifying, encouraging, and fascinating. It is, in itself, a thoroughly rewarding course in "Biblical Theology".

H.L. Williams