reconstruction of P5 at this point remains an issue in debate. It is surprising that
the notes make no mention of the judgment of the original editors on this impor-
tant variation. Grenfell and Hunt had noted, "The lacuna here is larger by the
space of one letter than in the two lines preceding. It would therefore be hardly
filled up by the reading δ υψολχ. Moreover, in this MS, υψος would naturally have
been written in the shorter form υς (B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt Oxyrhynchus Papyri,
Part II (1898) p. 7).

Elliott and Parker are well aware of the importance of line lengths, and it is
governing factor in their decisions. For example, on the same page (29)
at line 22, they note "ed. pr. prefers to read σμονος πετρος υς εκδυν." In our judg-
ment this is too long for the space available." Similar argument is found with
regard to line length at p. 34 line 19. Our editors should have been equally as
tuned to the argument from line length at this important variant at 1:34. However,
their oversight here seems to be the only significant error in the volume.

Small errors might be noted, such as the sudden failure to indent paragraphs
toward the end of the introduction (pp. 5-6), but this does not detract from the
overall impression of a volume that greatly advances our understanding of the text
of the New Testament in a form that is both useful and elegant.

PETER R. RODGERS

Oscar Cullmann, Das Gebet im Neuen Testament. Zugleich Versuch einer vom Neuen
Testament aus zu erteilenden Antwort auf heutige Fragen (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr
With Answers from the New Testament to Today’s Questions; tr. John Bowden (London:
SCM/Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), xviii + 190 pp.

Ora et labora! This Benedictine banner for their common life not only encapsu-
lates the theology of prayer in the New Testament for Oscar Cullmann but also
epitomizes this uncommon nonagenarian’s own “theology of life.” With the publica-
tion of the German edition in 1994 at the age of 92, Professor Cullmann has
given the century that he has spanned in its entirety yet one more labor of prayer
and intellectual acumen that is a fitting crown to his rich array of scholarly books
and articles which open up the meaning of the New Testament. This contribution
is one of only a rare number of comprehensive studies of the significance of prayer
in all of the major sections of the NT: the Synoptic Gospels (Part II, I [pp. 16-
69 ET]), the Pauline corpus (II, II [69-89]), the Gospel of John and the Johannine
Letters (II, III [89-111]), and the Other NT Writings (II, IV [111-18]). But its
significance goes far beyond its filling a gap in the scholarly literature or of its con-
stituting a final(?) work of a prolific author. For this is the book that for many
years Professor Cullmann has wanted to write as an expression of his deepest con-
victions and insights concerning the possibility at all of speaking of a “theology”
of the New Testament: talk about God is possible only as it articulates talk with
God! It is only as the one God who is love has chosen to communicate Himself
definitively in the God-human Jesus Christ that the unity of the New Testament
amidst the diversity of its several witnesses can be conceived and legitimately claimed.
However nuanced the various notions of God, all the major voices of the NT join
in the jubilant chorus that God through Christ desires, even requests humans to
converse with Him in order that they might enter into this loving will “by which
he created human beings in his communication of himself” (143). By constructing
this foundational premise for a theology of the NT, Prayer in the New Testament thus
forms a companion volume to C.’s Unity Through Diversity [Einheit durch Vielfalt, 2nd

© E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1997 Novum Testamentum XXXIX, 1
ed., 1990] in which the unity of the church(es) is envisioned through the very diversity of the Spirit’s gifts (charisms) which alone enable God’s new creative act, the creatures of the “body of Christ,” to return appropriate speech to their Creator as well as to communicate this love to the rest of creation. In both works, we see the mature fruits of Cullmann the exegete and ecumenical theologian fully blended.

Similar also to his Unity Through Diversity but different from previous monographs, C. in this latest work places his exegetical deliberations in the framework of contemporary arguments concerning both the possibility as well as relevance of prayer. In Part I (1-13) C. introduces difficulties in praying such as God’s silence—particularly to petitions against evil—or to the routinization of prayer into meaningless ritual or to the rush of modern life which squeezes out quiet meditation or pith decisive action over against the passive paralysis of prayer (2-5). He also poses “fundamental objections to prayer,” including such illuminating “post-theistic” critiques of the “personal” transcendent and yet immanent God by a D. Sölle or to more “traditional” post-enlightenment arguments against all intercessory prayer to the immutable God of natural or moral law by a Rousseau, Schleiermacher, or Ritschl, etc. (5-13). C. concludes, echoing Luther, that there is a reciprocal relation between a particular view of God and the exercise of prayer which inevitably informs that view. It will behoove any reader of the NT, then, constantly to enquire what view of God underlies or is reflected in the various conceptualizations and practices of prayer.

Accordingly in Part II, C. turns to the New Testament itself and proposes to let the authors speak as much as possible on their own terms, without imposing modern problems of prayer into their conceptions, but also to see if the NT has anything to say with respect to those issues:

1. Contra most exegetes, the sixth petition of the Pater Noster asks God to spare the suppliant—even in view of the greater plan of salvation which includes God-ordained testing—of being led into any and all temptation or testing which exposes one to evil. The following “petition” then qualifies that request: If one should not be so spared, “then please grant the strength to overcome or be rescued from that exposure” (Matt. 6:13a,b) (58-67). This tandem is echoed in Jesus’ request in Gethsemane (Mark 14:35-36, par.), which, in fact, serves as a paradigm for the distinctive “biblical” God and the possibilities of conversing with Him. Jesus exhibits a childlike trust (cf. Abba, Mark 14:36) to a God whose plan may finally be unalterable (“not my will but your will”) but One, nevertheless, for whom “all things are possible” and who desires to incorporate human wishes uttered in such faith (65-66). God’s “will includes the possibility that we may even turn to Him with a wish which perhaps cannot be fulfilled, just as a child in hopeful trust makes a request to parents without being sure whether it will be granted” (65).

2. At the heart of Paul’s theo-logy of God’s grace is the experience of the Spirit praying within him. The crux is Rom. 8:12-27 where Paul, beginning with the cry of Jesus in the “Our Father”/“Abba” (8:15), construes all prayer as the necessary articulation of human concerns by the Spirit because of the fundamental inadequacy of any human utterance to speak to God (72-80). C. even suggests that the “sighs [of the Spirit] which cannot be uttered” (8:26) describe the same phenomenon as “speaking in tongues” (glossolalia) “because the utterance of the Spirit which takes place in all prayers in this case [i.e., v. 26] makes itself known particularly clearly by excluding the human understanding” (79) (cf. 1 Cor. 14:15).

3. The Johannine writings manifest most palpably the theological ground upon which C. builds a “theology of prayer” and which enables the unity of the NT to be comprehended. The “stream of love” which stems from God through Christ through the disciples to the world forms the “inner bond of love” which enables one in prayer to encounter God “in Spirit and truth” through the exalted “incarnate one,” who continues to speak on the prayer’s behalf (esp. 110-11).