non-Anglican venues. Of course, many of the women whom Beecon brings to life were opposed to the ordination of women. Others, such as Christian Howard (b. 1916) worked tirelessly in the Movement for the Ordination of Women without a vocation to ordained ministry themselves.

Beecon depicts women’s long-standing capacity for leadership and transformational change in general; he tends to present it as a one-way road to ordination, but that issue really only arose with the general movement for women’s rights in the later nineteenth century. It has now gone so far that it is hard for those outside the Church to understand why obstacles still remain for women’s leadership. When the Church of England appoints its first women bishops, Beecon hopes for new female vision: more collaborative ministry, enhanced inclusion and deeper spirituality. Feminist antennas may detect a certain essentialism here, but the book as a whole is a splendidly hopeful cheering-on of the cause.

ALISON PEDEN
Holy Trinity Church, Stirling

MARK’S BAFFLING NAZARENE

This new commentary distils the learning and enjoyment that are the fruit of three decades of scholarly engagement with the second evangelist. It is written in a lively style, marked by a combination of pace and depth that seems intended to evoke St Mark’s own combination of the immediate and the mysterious not-to-be-told. The tone is lightened by a vivid turn of phrase, noting for example the ‘baffling Nazarene’, ‘flabbergasted spectators’ and their ‘dumfounded disagreement’. Black’s Mark is a brilliant narrator of an ‘amazing story’, Black discerns in him a genius for enabling the reader to feel present at the events, and yet to remain ever perplexed at the experience, gripped and fascinated by the boundless mystery into which he has been drawn.

The watchwords defining the aims of the commentary series are ‘compact’ and ‘critical’. Black’s contribution fulfils both of these intentions.

SEVEN SPIRITS AND FIRST-CREATED ANGELS

Reading this book feels like marvelling at the patterns of filigree on a finely wrought goldwork. The wonderful exegetical skill of the author detects tiny details in ancient texts and through them opens up an unexpected world, structured by a celestial hierarchy where a heap of angelic spirits minister in a manner previously concealed. His learned and insightful book makes a significant contribution to the study of early Christian pneumatology.

Bucur revives and develops an obscure thesis developed by Christoph Oyen in the mid 1960s concerning Engel pneumatologie in Clement of Alexandria. He argues that Clement’s fragmentarily preserved works have been unjustly sidelined in scholarship, and while he draws some texts from the Stromateis (esp. 4.25.125; 5.6.35; 7.2.9), he focuses chiefly on Ese 10.11-1, 27 and Ecl 56.57. He shows that Clement probably received a tradition from the ‘elders’ of seven ‘first-created’ angels (protopsitos), placed third in the hierarchy of the universe, below the Face of God and the Son/Logos but above the archangels, angels and humans. The elders envisaged the possibility of rising by transformation from one rank into the next, but Clement interiorised this idea of ascent. Although Clement’s theology remains fundamentally binaristic – only God and the Son/Logos are objects of worship – the protopstist pneumatology is central to how he conceives the Christ’s unity as multiplicity. This book shows that while Clement did not envisage a hypostatic spirit as did later theologians, he did have an interesting pneumatology, far beyond what has previously been recognised by scholarship. Bucur prefers the term ‘angelomorphic pneumatology’ to ‘angelic pneumatology’ (pace Oyen’s Engel pneumatoLOGIE) because the angelic qualities of the spirits do not yet allow them simply to be identified as angels.

Bucur argues that similar angelomorphic pneumatology is detectable in other early Christian texts: he focuses on Revelation, Shepherd of Hermas, Justin Martyr, and Apophat of the Persian Sage. In Justin and Apophat, as in Clement, he finds a combination of Matt 18:10; Zech 3:9; 4:10 and Isa 11:2-3 informing the idea of seven angelomorphic spirits, while in Hermas and Apophat he detects a link with ascetic teaching on the indwelling of the Spirit. His readings involve digging deep into details and concentrating closely on ideological connections, but despite the paucity and fragmentary character of his material, his arguments are sure-footed and compelling.

JANE HEATH
Department of Theology and Religion
Durham University