

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Book Reviews

THE CHRISTIAN AND OTHER RELIGION. A.K. Cragg. Mowbrays, 1977. 138 pp. £2.95.

Far too little thinking has been done so far on the relation of Christianity to other faiths, and it would be hard to find one more competent to tackle this theme – so important to us in multi-racial Britain – than Bishop Kenneth Cragg. Yet after a careful reading I must confess to some disappointment. Cragg with his profound grasp of Asian monism as well as of Islam frequently takes off into regions where at least one student of these themes finds it impossible to follow him. It is partly a matter of style and language – I found three words absent from the shorter O.E.D. But I believe there is a real obscurity of thought, which would require a genius like his own to unravel.

That said, there is much to be thankful for. He begins with a chapter on the meaning of religion (and irreligion) and the meeting of religions in the world of today. He moves on to courtesy and controversy between the faiths, and thence to revelation and expectancy, pointing out the stark divisions between monistic and theistic religions. The central chapter 'The Measure of Christ' seeks to reach the heart of things, seen in Calvary. Here must be 'the criteria of our relationships' with other faiths; we must 'look to discover every "in Christ" quality or feature or accent . . . in other religion . . . with a lively and generous hope.'

In the next chapter Cragg examines some of the attitudes to other faiths that go 'beyond tolerance.' C.F. Andrews, who went deep into Hinduism and almost came to see Christ with Hindu eyes, yet strongly rejected Gandhi's doctrine of 'no conversion'; Hendrick Kraemer who sharply distinguished the Gospel both from empirical Christianity and from all other faiths and affirmed Christian exclusivism; David Brown with his emphasis on inclusiveness and recognition that those who practise other faiths have a living relationship with God; John Hick, who pleads for a 'Copernican revolution in religion', with God, not Christ, at the centre and the Incarnation true *only* in the truth of the attitude it invokes in the believer; the Roman Catholic view of the 'latent Christ'.

The final chapters touch on some recent debates between different faiths and on man's desire for meaning and its fulfilment in Christ. For all its difficulty the book contains that which is helpful and luminous. Let one quotation speak for many: 'What inspires and warrants us in going out to seek partnership in the actual world with men of other creeds is not a syncretistic nonchalance about the differences but a positive confidence in the will and relevance of Christ.'

R.W.F. WOOTTON.

Churchman

THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS. *Jean Holm*. Sheldon Press, 1977. 118 pp. £1.60.

THE UNIVERSE NEXT DOOR. *James W. Sire*. IVP, 1977. 236 pp. £1.95. The major difference between Jean Holm and James Sire is that of the problem and the solution. Holm is concerned to outline the nature and multiplicity of problems which face the study of religions. This is an introduction to religious studies in a gently academic fashion. The level is simple and clear. There is a clear attempt to define religion and to clarify what possibilities there are, once you have some idea what you are looking for. Questions of the scope of religion lead to question of understanding. The emphasis is entirely descriptive. Problems of language, concepts, and sources are outlined and a clear statement of differences and difficulties made. There are helpful illustrations drawn from the major religions, which help earth the theoretical. Her aim is to give content to a cross-cultural approach to the study of religions and to avoid the distortion which results from looking at aspects of religions out of their proper context. Thus context, authority and the direction of a religion are examined. The final section is on questions of truth where the making of judgments and the nature of dialogue are sketched.

Essentially we are offered a sketch. A brief description which may whet the appetite of the student of religions, but does not (nor is intended to) satisfy the thoughtful reader. The meaty questions of truth and objectivity are skimmed. The book does one thing well. It will help you sit on the fence more comfortably.

Sire's books begins from a stated view of truth and objectivity – the orthodox Christian – and proceeds to examine the philosophical forces which have shaped our modern world views. Sire analyses alternative world views to show their inadequacy. There is no pretence of neutrality, but a blunt evangelistic approach. Theism, deism, naturalism, nihilism, existentialism and pantheism are described, dissected and discarded. This is much more comfortable for the reader. You can react for or against such a definite stand. There is a certain swashbuckling flavour, but that may be inevitable and even desirable in a popular book. One longs for more detail and inter-connection, but as a basic guide and reaction it will be difficult to beat. One drawback is the overt Americanism of the book which grates, because the references are often obscure. The chapter on the new consciousness is too far removed from the British scene to be of much help. But nit-picking apart, if you want to learn what difference philosophies have made to our views and the way they condition our presuppositions, then this is for you. The fences are far too sharply drawn for anyone to sit on. E. DAVID COOK.

FAITH AND REALITY. *Wolfhart Pannenberg*. Search Press, 1977. 138 pp.

This collection of essays must be warmly welcomed. Spanning about fifteen years they offer a conspectus of Pannenberg's thought through its whole development. But this by no means exhausts their interest, for they are linked by a vital theme: How can Christian belief be credible in the modern world? It was, of course, precisely this question that motivated Bultmann's programme of demythologisation. Such a procedure is firmly rejected by Pannenberg for whom reality is to be defined in terms of God's action in history; not in isolated events, but in a series of actions, each throwing new light on the past, and holding a promise for the future. The resurrection of Jesus, whose facticity is defended in the sixth essay, is central to this view, for it is no less than the prolepsis of the *eschaton* of all history, the resurrection of the dead. A faith and a theology that is grounded in the objective realities of historical events can have no time for subjectivist theories: chapter three, the most 'theological' of the essays, is a fine attempt to overcome some modern subjectivist pneumatologies. Equally, Pannenberg's theology can speak relevantly to issues raised by contemporary events, to which the last three essays are devoted.

This book hangs together better than many such collections. The translation is not altogether free of 'Germanisms', there is no index and the price is exorbitant, but well worth it for those who can afford it. The book is an excellent introduction to work that may be considered the best alternative to Bultmann's in the realm of history and eschatology.

RICHARD GRIFFITHS.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE BIBLE. A Study of the Bible in an Age of Rapid Cultural Change. Dennis Nineham. Macmillan Press, 1976. 295 pp. £10.00.

Before the publication of the present volume, Dr Nineham produced at least four essays on the subject of the use of the Bible. Even in 1963 he alluded to 'the deep gulf between its (the Bible's) context and our situation'; but at that time he accepted a solution which today he describes as a dangerous half-truth. He remarked, 'After all, we share the basic humanity of the biblical men and women' (*The Church's Use of the Bible*, SPCK, 1963. p. 166). In his second essay of 1969 Dr Nineham concentrated his attention on elaborating a distinction between 'what the New Testament meant' and 'what it means'. (*B.J.R.L.* 52, 1969, p. 181). In the two essays published in 1976 great emphasis is laid on the distinctively modern world-view which 'integrity compels us to share', in contrast to that of the ancient Biblical writers (*Christian Believing*, S.P.C.K. 1976 p. 81). 'Modern man is aware in a way that his predecessors have not been, of the historically conditioned character of all human experience' (*N.T. Interpretation in an Historical Age*, Athlone

Churchman

Press, 1976. pp. 55).

The present volume brings out all these points more fully, but I confess that I find it much more difficult to assess than the four short essays. The reason for this is clear. The essays, at least those of 1976, reflect a Troeltsch-like perspective on historiography and the modern world. Such a view is open to three criticisms. Firstly, it exaggerates the problem of historical distance, with an enthusiasm characteristic of nineteenth-century historical scholarship. Secondly, it looks superficially like an exercise in phenomenology, but on closer inspection it emerges that far from being value-neutral it is tinged with a kind of positivism, which is necessarily hostile to any notion of the supernatural. Like the Enlightenment view of myth, it sees belief in the supernatural as being bound up with a pre-critical world-view. Thirdly, this approach completely ignores the hermeneutical insights provided by the tradition of German philosophy running from Schleiermacher through Dilthey and Yorch to Hans-Georg Gadamer. Dr Nineham's large volume falls victim to the third criticism, and to some extent to the first. But whereas his lecture *N.T. Interpretation in an Historical Age* also definitely falls victim to the second, the book is so full of caveats and qualifications that it is difficult to see how much of this Troeltsch-like perspective Dr Nineham really wishes to defend. Has it died the death of a thousand qualifications or not?

The book itself begins with some assertions about cultural relativism. The view that human nature does not change is an irrelevant half-truth. 'Even the most revolutionary thinker must speak and think in the language of his day' (p. 14). This means inevitably that, for example, Biblical writers will think in terms of miracles. But to believe in miracles today 'is to hold a quite different belief from that which was held by the Biblical writers', because such belief is not part of *our* world-view, as it was of theirs. (p. 33). Dr Nineham then turns to his earlier pre-occupation with the problem of 'present meaning'. We must not assume that each passage *necessarily* has something to say to the present. Next, the author examines four possible approaches to the use of the Bible. He exposes the problems of (1) Pre-critical orthodoxy; (2) the liberal theology of Troeltsch and Harnack; and (3) 'salvation-history' perspectives, including the positions of Barth, Cullmann, and Richardson. On the basis of salvation-history, God's mighty acts occupy only a tiny segment of world-history (p. 86). Dr Nineham then defends a fourth approach in which historical method is given full play. For example, we see the exile not so much (casually) as a divine punishment, but in terms of political causes and effects. The sixth and seventh chapters, which follow, discuss particular problems of the Old and New Testament respectively, before the author goes on to elaborate a theory of history and story inspired largely by Professor Maurice Wiles. This is one of the most interesting parts

of the book, and it is a pity that the author did not allow himself the opportunity to expand it further. A chapter on the Bible and doctrine includes a discussion of Bultmann, who is duly charged with being 'a Biblicist' (p. 221). Finally, the study concludes with a series of warnings against a simplistic view of the Bible which makes it the object of blind obedience and ignores the problem of cultural relativism.

I wish I knew precisely how much or how little Dr Nineham wished to *assert*. The mood of the book is clear enough. On every page it says 'Careful — let's not be simplistic' — we are truly modern men and women'. As a warning in broad terms it is thoroughly valid. But although Dr Nineham constantly alludes to the tendency to see doctrines as facts, he still seems to stop short of saying that there *cannot* be *any* supernatural event in the Bible, or that the Bible only narrates story. Perhaps we can only settle for a kind of agnosticism, because we can never again reach 'behind' the text to see *when* supposed facts merely reflect doctrines. It is all very well to say of the Bible 'What a relief to acknowledge its pastness frankly' (p. 192); but that is what most Biblical scholars and many intelligent churchmen think they already do. Dr Nineham has been so concerned to defend himself against all possible criticism, that assertion is often displaced by suggestion. Each time I try to write down a generalising verdict, I imagine the author replying, 'But on page x I say . . .', so perhaps (in the mood of Dr Nineham) I can only say that *to me* the book came over as being unduly pessimistic and negative. To make three specific points: (1) I think that the problem of historical distances and relativism, whilst being a real one, has been exaggerated; (2) I am not sure how much weight can be placed upon the particular sociologists cited by the author; (3) it is a great pity that he did not draw more positively on the philosophical tradition represented by Gadamer. A.C. THISTELTON.

A BOOK OF VESTRY PRAYERS. *Compiled by C.R.N. Wallwork*. Epworth Press, 1976. 117 pp. £1.50.

The publishers describe this as a 'unique collection of prayers', and so it is. I do not know of any other compilation which provides prayers expressly for vestry use on such a lavish scale. As such the collection meets a quite specific need.

Two prayers are provided for all the Sundays and principal Holy Days of the Church's year and also for those 'special occasions' which inevitably arise, more especially in Free Church circles. The first prayer in each case is in traditional collect form, while the second employs contemporary (Series 3 style) language. The prayers are derived from a diversity of sources and considerable care has been taken to match the prayers to the theme in question. Norman Wallwork is to be complimented on the work he has done, not least on the prayers which he himself has written for this collection.

Churchman

GOD B.C. *Anthony Phillips*. OUP, 1977. 96pp. £2.50/£0.95.

This is a good book, comprising four chapters on major themes of the theology of the Bible. The first on 'The Jealous God' concerns what pre-exilic law and prophecy reveal of God's concerns, as regards Israel's attitude to him and to the personal rights of other people. He notes that the laws were not concerned with property (i.e. with civil law). Dr Phillips goes on to examine the writings of the exile, and finds an increasingly clear statement of the 'Gospel of the Old Testament', 'that God's grace triumphs over his law – that man and God are ever to be in communion.' The third chapter looks at the post-exilic questioning of God in the Wisdom books, especially Job, which asserts both that man can address hard questions to God, but also that it is no use one expecting one will ever find all the answers. One has to be content to be an agnostic believer. The last chapter of the God-with-us of the New Testament is a *multum in parvo* on the relationship between the Testaments. Jesus confirms and extends the law's concern for God and one's neighbour. He confirms and radicalises the exilic emphasis on grace, which now embraces even those who are beyond 'the fence of the law'. He lives out in real experience what was a story in the book of Job. There are points with which I disagree (e.g. Dr Phillips' universalism), but this is a fine birds-eye view of major Biblical themes.

JOHN GOLDINGAY.

NUMBERS. *J. Sturdy*. Cambridge University Press, 1977. 264 pp. £7.50/£2.95.

Commentaries on Numbers are a rarity, so in spite of its price this one must be very warmly welcomed. Its author, Dean of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge is well known as a translator of Scandinavian and German works; this, I believe, is the first book from his own pen.

Like other commentaries in the Cambridge Bible series it is based on the NEB translation and is geared to meet the requirements of students and school teachers. They, and others looking for a compact summary of current scholarly views about Numbers, will find out just what they require in this book. Those planning to preach about Numbers or wishing to read it devotionally will find some hints about the theological purpose of the book in the introduction and in the comments on various passages.

Unusually for this series Sturdy deviates from the norms of critical orthodoxy. It is generally held that Numbers was compiled from three sources J (c.950 B.C.), E (c. 850) and P (c. 500). But Sturdy maintains that there is no trace of E, at least in Numbers. He prefers to think in terms of only two main sources J and P.

G. J. WENHAM.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY. *P. C. Craigie*. Hodder and Stoughton,
344

1977. 424pp. £5.75.

For years there has been a dearth of serious conservative commentaries on the book of Deuteronomy. Now suddenly within a short time we have two excellent volumes, J.A. Thompson (IVP) and P.C. Craigie. Craigie's volume is the second in the New International series edited by R.K. Harrison, a series it is hoped will serve the late 20th century as Keil and Delitzsch served the late 19th century.

Certainly in this commentary we have a thorough and strikingly original contribution to Deuteronomy studies. The commentary itself is preceded by an introduction in which the main historical, critical and theological issues are discussed. By and large Craigie accepts the arguments of Kline and Kitchen that Deuteronomy in its present form reflects second-millennium Hittite treaties rather than first-millennium Assyrian treaties. The covenant/treaty form of Deuteronomy, he argues, demonstrates its unity and backs up its claim to be Mosaic. The treaty pattern gives the clue to the theological interests of the book, and suggests that Deuteronomy must have been considered canonical from the time that it was composed.

He also examines the main planks of the standard critical view of Deuteronomy, namely its composition in the late 7th century BC, and finds them wanting. Though Deuteronomy was discovered in the course of Josiah's reformation, a plain reading of the texts rules out the possibility that it was the cause of these reforms or the product of them. In fact the principal themes of Deuteronomy, monotheism, God's kingship, the promises to the patriarchs, and holy war, are remarkably akin to those of the Song of the Sea in Exodus 15, which is almost universally acknowledged to date from the Mosaic era.

Craigie offers his own fairly literal translation of the Hebrew text, which the publisher has ~~readily~~ set in fairly small type so as not to diminish substantially the space ~~available~~ for commentary. The commentary itself is full and sober: the ~~notes~~ will be a mine of information for scholars looking for parallels between OT and other Near Eastern literature. On one or two points I would venture to question his exegesis, but by and large he has done a most competent job.

How does Craigie's commentary compare with Thompson's? Thompson's is shorter, about three-quarters the length of Craigie's, and somewhat cheaper. On the critical issues Thompson gives a wider survey of opinion, but Craigie is the more incisive in his grasp of the key issues and their implications. As far as exegesis is concerned, Craigie is the more detailed, but Thompson more often points to the NT relevance of Deuteronomy's message. In short the commentaries of Thompson and Craigie complement each other and will long be of service to the church.

Churchman

May future volumes in this New International series match the high standards set by L.C. Allen and P.C. Craigie. G.J. WENHAM.

THE PSALMS: Translated by Peter Levi with an introduction by Nicholas de Lange. Penguin Classics, 1977. 239 pp. £0.95.

This addition to the Penguin Classics provides yet another translation of the Psalms in contemporary English, suitable for private reading rather than for either public or private worship.

The introduction by a young Rabbi is excellent (despite a misprint on p. xix, where 116 should read 106). It is very readable and covers in outline the usual questions of introduction as well as setting the psalms in the context of both Jewish and Christian worship. A short note on Hebrew poetry is appended, and a few verses are set out in transliteration with a literal translation phrase by phrase. Unfortunately there are no introductory notes or comments with the individual psalms, so that the general reader will need to turn to a commentary for help in understanding them.

The translation however is disappointing. It is mostly accurate so far as the reviewer's sampling goes, but literal to a fault and occasionally banal, as the following examples will show:

'My spirit has withered for your freedom' (119)

'mercy is with God and continued rescue' (130)

'the grilled and the burnt offerings' (51)

'I have loved your tents, O God of armies' (84)

'O blessings of that man who has not paced about among the wicked or stood in a sinful road' (1)

The last example illustrated the self-confessed limitations of the translator's Hebrew, as does the misunderstanding of the construct state in 'the mountains of his holiness' (87). The general reader who wants to become familiar with the psalms is likely to gain more from reading them in one of the standard versions of the Bible. A. GELSTON.

A TIME TO MOURN, AND A TIME TO DANCE: Ecclesiastes and the way of the world. Derek Kidner. IVP. 110 pp. £1.20.

It is not always easy to make preaching both strongly biblical in content and acutely relevant to the modern world. Few preachers would instinctively turn to Ecclesiastes as a potentially fruitful source for sermons of this quality, but Mr Kidner's admirable exposition will stimulate them to do so. Its main emphasis is on the relevance of the questions Ecclesiastes raises to modern life, questions like the hazards of experience, the futility of much human endeavour, the question-mark placed against all human values by the universality of death, and the ever-pressing problem of theodicy. If much of the

book's message is an incisive criticism of the secular outlook, surely this is just the kind of pre-evangelism that is needed today.

Sound and informed scholarship lie beneath the surface of this lucid and readable book, occasionally coming out in detailed footnotes or judicious evaluations of modern translations (TEV especially comes in for some criticism), and in the pertinent illustrations from the literature of the Ancient Near East. Ecclesiastes is set firmly in the wider context of Scripture, but not forced to say what is said elsewhere; on occasions its limitations are clearly pointed out. Mr Kidner accounts for the tensions within the book as 'insights of a single mind, approaching the facts of life and death from a variety of angles', rather than by diversity of authorship, but he recognises the hint of Solomonic authorship as a temporary stance of the author rather than evidence of his identity.

Once again IVP has given excellent value for money! A. GELSTON.

COVENANT AND PROMISE: The Future in the Preaching of the Pre-exilic Prophets. *John Bright.* SCM Press, 1977. 207 pp. £5.75.

For a number of years John Bright has been among the ablest exponents of 'conservative' views concerning the history and authority of the Old Testament. This latest study is a welcome excursion – not his first – into the realm of Biblical theology, examining important religious themes from the pre-exilic period.

Bright contends that the prophetic hope for the future is derived less from external influences, and more from elements inherent in Israel's faith. The history of two key religious threads is examined – that of grace and obligation associated with Mosaic covenant, and that of unconditional promise associated with Davidic covenant and Zion. These themes receive different emphasis in different prophets, and give distinctive shape to their respective eschatologies. Bright concludes that both themes were essential to the faithful functioning of Israel as the people of God, and that error followed imbalance. The final pages show 'unconditional promise' and 'obligation' as integral to the New Testament.

The influence of the book's background in a series of lectures is strongly marked in frequent recapitulation and in the style generally. Some may find this irritating, but they are fine lectures, and many will appreciate the clarity with which the argument develops.

Scholars who dissent from Bright's conclusions about Israel's history and religion will find nothing here to make them change their opinions. It is not that sort of book. Those who will learn most are students studying the topic for the first time, and clergy in need of 'refresher' reading.

P.J. BUDD.

Churchman

JESUS IN CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL RESEARCH *Gustaf Aulen*. SPCK, 1977. 167 pp. £8.50.

Bishop Aulen (aged ninety-four when he wrote this book) surveys the work of scholars who since 1960 have done significant research on the question of the historical Jesus. The scholars chiefly discussed are H. Braun, C.H. Dodd, W.D. Davies, J. Jeremias, N. Perrin, B. Gerhardsson – and writers on the parables such as Funk and Via.

Claiming to be no expert himself in New Testament exegesis, Aulen declares his interest to be in the results rather than the methods of research on the historical Jesus. He finds a significant agreement – even amongst scholars with very different starting-points – on three basic issues: (1) Jesus' central message was about the 'kingdom of God' which was about to come, but which was already somehow embodied or represented in Jesus himself. (2) Jesus' ethical preaching was dominated by a radical interpretation of the demands of love. (3) Paradoxically, it was characteristic (and unique?) of Jesus not only to make radical demands but also to demonstrate in his conduct and teaching (especially his parables) the forgiving grace of God.

Included among these basic themes are reviews of scholarly opinion on question such as: how committed was Jesus to an apocalyptic type of eschatology? Was his ethical demand meant to be relevant for all men, or only for his followers? And there is a fairly brief treatment of Jesus' relation to Christological titles. There is as the author observes, wide disagreement among scholars as to whether Jesus claimed for himself such titles as Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God. 'Whatever may be the case with the titles, it remains clear that Jesus acted with total sovereignty on behalf of God, enigmatically sovereign in both word and deed. And compared to this fact, the question of the titles is secondary' (pp. 118f). That is all right as far as it goes, but the titles are so crucial for our understanding of Jesus' relationship to God that they are bound to keep coming to the foreground in debate.

One of the most useful features of the book is Bishop Aulen's summary of works in German and Swedish. Less useful is his occasional habit of citing critical opinions without either giving the reasons on which such opinions are based or attaching them to any particular scholar. See, for example, his comments on 'invention' of miracle stories (pp. 57f); the statement that in Mark 1:15 'we are hardly dealing with authentic words of Jesus' (p. 85), and that the words of Matthew 5:18 'all too evidently stand in opposition to what must be conceived as authentic for Jesus' (p. 137).

STEPHEN TRAVIS.

FIRST CHRISTIANS: Pentecost and the Spread of Christianity. *Paul L. Maier*. Mowbrays, 1977. 160 pp. £3.50.

Dr Maier re-tells the story of the early church, following the outline of the *Acts of the Apostles*. The lively style - echoes of Michael Green and John Hercus? - is already familiar to readers of the author's earlier books, *First Christmas* and *First Easter*. And, as one would expect from a Professor of Ancient History, insights from non-Christian writers of the first century and from archaeological findings are woven into the narrative. So the world of the New Testament is brought to life, and the personalities, the triumphs and the controversies of the early Christian mission are dramatically portrayed.

Occasionally a vivid phrase provokes the reader to ponder - e.g., 'Martyrs are protected from their future mistakes, but persecutors are not' (p. 32). And there are forty photos, though a few are of mediocre quality.

For the record, Dr Maier equates Paul's visit to Jerusalem described in Galatians 2 with the Council of Acts 15. And he thinks the purpose of *Acts* was to show how the gospel spread from Jerusalem to Rome.

The oddest part of the book is where the author argues that we should not expect the same kind of miracles to happen today as happened through Jesus and the first Christians (pp 109-111). It fits awkwardly with the narrative style of the rest of the book. The most intriguing part is his original suggestion that Paul's arrival at Puteoli in the Bay of Naples (Acts 28:13) *might* have occurred on the very day that Nero was attempting to murder his mother by sending her home from a party across the Bay in a sabotaged cabin cruiser.

STEPHEN TRAVIS.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF WITNESS. *Allison A. Trites*. C.U.P. 1977. 294 pp. £12.00.

E.G. Selwyn's request, in the *Festschrift* for C.H. Dodd, for a full-scale monograph on the 'witness' word group in the N.T. has been answered. In the latest addition to the S.N.T.S. monograph series (31) A.A. Trites makes a thorough study of the concept of witness, its background in Greek and Jewish thought and its meaning in the N.T. His thesis is that the N.T., concept of witness is best understood against the background of O.T. legal imagery, and especially the 'lawcourt scenes' of Isaiah 40-55. According to Trites, Isaiah 40-55 presents a sustained use of controversy, a controversy between Yahweh and the false gods.

Upward of 200 uses of *martus* and its cognates in the New Testament are masterfully organised by Trites. The heart of this discussion is chapters 8-10, the concept of witness in John, Acts and Revelation. In all three New Testament writers, and indeed elsewhere in the New Testament the juridical character of witness comes to the fore. Trites sees in John's gospel a controversy very similar to that found in Isaiah 40-55. Juridical words, questions

Churchman

and events tell in favour of this interpretation. The Fourth Gospel is thus viewed from a legal perspective: it has a case to present. The successive signs are evidence in the developing controversy.

Lawcourt imagery also provides the background to Acts, where the two witnesses required in Deuteronomy 19:15 are the witness of the apostles and the witness of the Holy Spirit. To these is added the witness of the Old Testament scriptures, which together provide a compelling case for Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

Revelation, written against the background of persecution, makes extensive use of juridical terminology, and it is against this background that the words 'witness' and 'testimony' are to be seen. The seer of Patmos presents Jesus as the archetypal witness, whose example of faithfulness Christians must follow. The expression 'the testimony of Jesus' refers not to the testimony concerning him, but to the testimony borne by him. Other N.T. writers make less of the concept of witness, but Trinites does not therefore ignore their contribution. His discussion of the expression *eis marturion autois* in the synoptics is most illuminating.

The juridical character of witness is all-pervasive in the study, and Trinites' emphasis of this fact, and of its background in Old Testament imagery of the lawcourt is a solid contribution to scholarship. But not all will agree as to the extent of influence of Isaiah 40-55 in the New Testament and especially in John. First century Christian writers probably did not consider these chapters as a distinct entity, as do moderns. Furthermore, the use of witness in Paul is probably not given sufficient weight. This may be because of Paul's failure to develop the lawcourt imagery, which for Trinites is all important. The appended chapter on the use of witness in Rabbinical literature seems like an afterthought. Its inclusion in the main body of the discussion could have shed light on the New Testament peculiarities. A chapter on Patristic developments (Trinites lists only 10 Patristic references in his index) could have helped further to set the New Testament usage in clear perspective.

Finally, it is encouraging to find a competent scholarly presentation conclude with practical implications. Trinites closes by applying his research on witness to contemporary questions facing Christians: historical foundations, the sceptical, questioning character of our age, suffering and persecution, and contemporary preaching. By 'earthing' his research, Trinites has provided both an example and an encouragement for others.

PETER R. RODGERS.

PAUL AND JESUS. F.F. Bruce. SPCK, 1977. 87pp. £1.50.

This little book by Professor Bruce contains lectures which he gave in

Toronto and provides a brief summary of the central issues concerning the relationship between Jesus and Paul. The old picture of antithesis between the historical Jesus as the preacher of the God of love and the apostle Paul as the preacher of a dogmatic Christianity is clearly set aside in this book. The first lecture is concerned with the vital question of the very different position of Jesus and Paul in the perspective of history. Jesus stands during his life-time before his crucifixion and resurrection whereas Paul during his life-time looks back to these two events. The crucial words in 2 Corinthians 5:16 are given some considerable discussion by Professor Bruce. He rejects the view that Paul had known Christ as men had known one another, that is to say, he had seen him with his own eyes but he no longer sees him. It is not that it would have been impossible for Paul to have seen Jesus during his lifetime especially if W.C. van Unnik's suggestion that Jerusalem was the city of Paul's boyhood and upbringing is accepted. However that such a reference is being made in 2 Corinthians 5:16 is, according to Professor Bruce, extremely doubtful. Bultmann's interpretation that this verse is an indication of Paul's lack of interest in the historical Jesus is also rejected since it so deprecates the Jesus of history as to make the rest of the Pauline epistles exceedingly difficult to understand. The contrast which Paul is making, according to Professor Bruce, is one between his former attitude to Christ and his present attitude to Christ and he warmly accepts the translation of the New English Bible. Finally he rejects the interpretation of Wrede that Paul's own conception of the Christ as a celestial being, a divine Christ, was superimposed on his understanding of Jesus is rejected. As a matter of fact the truth of the matter is exactly the opposite to this. Once Jesus had appeared to him and Paul came to believe that Jesus is Lord then he had to completely change his previous understanding of the Christ. The Christ is not the figure Paul formerly imagined him to be, the true Christ is the crucified Jesus risen from the dead and glorified. As for the Christ of Paul's former 'worldly' imagination, henceforth he knows that Christ no more.

The book then goes on to discuss Paul's gospel as revelation on the one hand and as tradition on the other, and then looks at the key themes in the way in which salvation is thought of by Paul; justification, Father and the Spirit and salvation history. The fifth chapter is concerned with the way in which, and the extent to which, the teaching of Jesus appears in the letters of St Paul and the last chapter is concerned with the meaning and sources of the confession that Jesus is Lord.

It is no real criticism of this book to say that there is not a lot here that is new in the sense of being novel. However, many readers will be grateful to Professor Bruce for a lucid and concise summary of the principal issues

Churchman

involved in the discussion of the relationship between Paul and his master Jesus. BRUCE KAYE.

PAUL AMONG JEWS AND GENTILES. *Krister Stendahl*. SCM Press, 1977. 133pp. £2.80.

This book is a collection of a number of essays and lectures the main body of which were prepared and delivered or published in the early 1960's. The first long section of the book, 'Paul among Jews and Gentiles', is concerned with various themes in Paul as they illustrate Stendahl's basic thesis that Paul's primary concern was with the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. He seeks to show how the doctrine of justification by faith, for example, was hammered out by Paul in order to defend the rights of Gentile converts as full and genuine heirs to the promises of God to Israel. Thus in an analysis of Romans chapters 9 to 11 containing his reflections on the relation between church and synagogue, constitute the climax of that letter. This thesis that Paul's primary concern was with the relationship between Gentile Christians and the Jews is illustrated by the consideration of a number of themes and, in order to sharpen his position over against what can be somewhat loosely called the Augustinian interpretation of St Paul, Stendahl speaks of call rather conversion, justification rather than forgiveness, weakness rather than sin, love rather than integrity and unique rather than universal.

During the course of these sections Stendahl repeatedly comes back to the question whether Paul is concerned with the inner religious problems of man or with the position of Gentile converts in relation to Jew. In this thesis Stendahl naturally comes into conflict with the Lutheran and Kasemann interpretation of St Paul and in the final chapter he considers Kasemann's extensive critique of his earlier essay on the apostle Paul and the introspective conscience of the West. This is a most important book not only for what it says about the interpretation of the Letters of Paul but also because it touches on fundamental questions of the interpretation of the Bible across centuries of human experience and development. BRUCE KAYE.

ROMANS: An Exposition of Chapter 8:17-39. *D.M. Lloyd-Jones*. Banner of Truth Trust, 1977. 457 pp. £3.00.

Here is another magisterial volume – the sixth to date – in Dr Lloyd-Jones' series on Romans. It shares with its predecessors the writer's characteristic strengths: a clear grasp of the overall message of the book, a careful and minute attention to detailed exegesis, and a clarity of thought coupled with the ability to convey those thoughts with power and richness. At the same time Dr Lloyd-Jones knows well that many of the doctrines in this sublime

passage have raised enormous questions both in themselves and in relation to other parts of the New Testament, and he consequently includes long sections devoted to doctrinal issues, of which perhaps the most notable is the discussion of perseverance in relation to Hebrews 6 and other passages. In this, and in the account of predestination, powerful exposition is coupled with sensitivity ('I refuse to deal with these matters in a controversial manner, for they are inscrutable . . . I do not claim that I fully understand them, but I believe them, and my task is to expound them'). He often illuminates not only the text under consideration but also other Pauline passages (e.g. p. 420 on Rom. 4:25, and p. 222 on Phil. 3:12) and whole areas of Christian thought and experience (e.g. pp. 120ff., which gives us much fresh and profound thought on prayer). In particular, the whole book is itself alight with the sure hope of 'the glory that is to be revealed'. The intention, and the effect, of such powerful theology is, as ever, to warm the heart by instructing the mind in the detailed meaning of scripture: 'If you would see something of the glory, if you really want to know something of the love of God, and if you would have an unshakable assurance, hold on to every detail, every word, every letter. Learn to view your salvation in terms of the mind and eternal purpose of God'.

It is hoped that Dr Lloyd-Jones will not rest content with covering only the first half of the epistle.

N.T. WRIGHT.

THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS. *Maurice Wiles*. SCM Press, 1977. 190 pp. £2.50.

This reissue of an earlier work with the same title in the series 'Knowing Christianity' shows Maurice Wiles at his most positive. As an exposition of the doctrinal teaching of the Fathers it is generally reliable and even appreciative. The frequently underestimated Cappadocian Fathers receive fuller justice for their achievements and even the full rigours of the Augustinian system and the motives which led to its formulation are fully explained. The Fathers were not simply theologians but men of the church and full weight is given to the place which the experience of salvation and the sacramental life occupied in their theology. The author is emphatic that a dialogue with the classical tradition is a necessary stage, though not the final goal, in the construction of a contemporary theology. The main charge brought against the Fathers is the quest for undue precision but this is more readily justified in their doctrines of the church and the sacraments than in the key doctrines with which they were principally concerned.

For Professor Wiles the Fathers are important but hardly normative or authoritative. This emerges most clearly in his value judgments on Nicea and Chalcedon. It is doubtful whether the Nicene settlement was as purely

negative as he claims. Taken together with the doctrinal work of the Council of Constantinople it not only provided the anchor word for the exclusion of Arianism but also the doctrinal framework for the flowering of a full Trinitarian theology both in East and West. Admittedly the primary task of Chalcedon was not to produce a Christology of its own but to delimit the ground which could be held in common between the two rival traditions. But Professor Wiles considerably underestimates its potential for the production of a viable modern Christology. He repeats the modern charge that fidelity to Chalcedon resembles an uneasy walk along a narrow ridge separating the chasms of Apollinarianism and Nestorianism and counsels us to look for a way down into a more fruitful valley. The attempt may certainly be made but for many of us the Chalcedon ridge is not as narrow as he would persuade us and, as he admits himself, it is by no means certain that there is a practicable descent. If an alternative track were discovered I should myself be surprised if it did not lead either to a contemporary form of Apollinarianism or (more probably) Nestorianism or if it did not bear a surprising resemblance to the balance between the two indicated by Chalcedon. But, value judgements apart, this is an admirable introduction to the theology of the Fathers, not overweighted with detail but identifying and clarifying the issues with which the Fathers were concerned. H.E.W. TURNER.

JUST MEN. *Gordon Rupp*. Epworth, 1977. 181 pp. £2.75.

Professor Rupp has always been noted for lively, readable historical writing, and this virtue is seen at its best in this collection of occasional pieces, written on very various occasions during the past decade, but all concerned to interpret the lives of great Christians of different traditions, Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Puritan and Methodist. Most of them are from the ranks of the all-time greats: Benedict, Francis, Luther, More, Tyndale, Knox, Wesley, Newman. But space is given to a paper on Gerard Manley Hopkins, the poet; another on Hort, the New Testament scholar (this is Rupp's inaugural lecture as Dixie Professor at Cambridge); and another on William Bedell, a seventeenth-century Protestant Irish bishop who claims no place in the Oxford or International Dictionaries of the Church, but who stands revealed in seventeen moving pages by Rupp as a truly great Christian. This, and the sensitive study of Archbishop Parker, I find to be the best items. Professor Rupp is of course a Reformation specialist, but the contribution on Luther is the least satisfactory, because it is a review of recent studies of Luther now ten years out of date. This is an inspiring book which disapproves the generalisation that good historical writing does not preach. Here is a true setting forth of the God of history through a tuning in to the authentic experience of those who, in both senses, were just men.

JOHN TILLER.

A HISTORY OF THE CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA. *Robert T. Handy*. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 1977. 471 pp. £9.50.

This volume in the Oxford History of the Christian Church offers a readable introduction to the religious history of North America. Handy's style is fluent, and he covers a remarkable amount of territory without sacrificing depth to compression. The danger in writing surveys of this kind is to lapse into merely cataloguing names and institutions. Although (as the title of the book suggests) Handy tends to focus on church organisation and denominational structures, he by no means ignores either theology or the wider social context. For instance his treatment of the First and Second Awakenings in the U.S. is quite sensitive. Insofar as Handy's sympathies emerge from the text, he seems to identify with the liberal theology and the social gospel of the earlier twentieth century, but his treatment of other viewpoints is quite even-handed. The volume concludes with a useful and comprehensive critical bibliography.

One or two comments seem appropriate about the structure and the scope of the book. First, the treatment of Christianity in Canada and the U.S. together is a useful experiment, but it is not clear that Handy brings it off. The religious histories of the two nations (like their respective stories from other points of view) took such different paths that only in the first two and the last chapters can Handy discuss them together. A synthetic study contrasting in depth the religious experience of the two nations might be a useful exercise, but it would be hard to produce that and an introductory survey at the same time. As Handy's book stands, there is a good deal of skipping back and forth across the border. Second, the final chapter (carrying the story roughly up to 1970) manifests the journalist's difficulty in evaluating a trend or movement while still *in medias res*. Handy points to the contemporary 'decline of Christendom' as a culture based on biblical norms, and to the churches' disarray as they grapple with this phenomenon, and he foresees a sore testing time for them. Had he been able to take into account the contemporary Evangelical resurgence, his prognosis might not have been so gloomy. But the universal fate of final chapters is to be rewritten. Taken as a whole, Handy's survey is useful, readable and compact. L.P. FAIRFIELD.

THE BURNING HEART: John Wesley, Evangelist. *A. Skevington Wood*. The Paternoster Press, 1977. 302 pp. £4.20.

The re-issue of this book, first published ten years ago, is timely. It makes available a work of mature scholarship at a price which (for these days) is

Churchman

reasonable having regard to its length and format – what a joy to have footnotes for reference on the same page again! Under the sub-headings 'The Making', 'The Mission', and 'The Message' of an Evangelist, the author is covering ground which, while familiar to many, yet highlights the unique contribution of John Wesley to the spiritual life of Britain two centuries ago. This was in the field of evangelism, and Dr Skevington Wood sets out to analyse the nature of the Gospel and Wesley's urge to communicate it with passionate zeal to the people of his day. The challenge of field preaching to many indolent clergy who for years excluded him from their churches; the healthy realism of his approach; the combination of urgency in proclaiming the gospel with restraint in prejudging its effect – all these factors, together with administrative genius, resulted in the spiritual revolution in the country which marked the progress of Wesley's life and work.

Particularly important in these days of theological uncertainty is the author's interpretation of Wesley's doctrinal position in chapters XX to XXIII. Here is set out his clear submission to biblical authority; his teaching on justification, on sin, redemption and the Holy Spirit, who brings joy, peace, and assurance, and also Wesley's eschatology. This fascinating review of Wesley's position is comprehensive yet skillfully composed, and Dr Skevington Wood is to be congratulated anew on bringing before a wider public such a valuable and inspiring survey of one of the few really great evangelists produced by this country.

COLLISS DAVIES.

SLAVERY'S MARTYR: John Smith of Demerara and the Emancipation Movement 1817-24. *Cecil Northcott*. Epworth Press, 1976. 136 pp. £1.50. John Smith was a soldier's son who received his only education at Rothwell Independent Sunday school. After an apprenticeship in a biscuit bakery he was accepted as a missionary to serve in Demerara and sailed with his wife, Jane in 1817. Smith fell foul of Governor Murray by saying he wanted to teach the Negroes to read. There was nothing seditious in his preaching, though in expounding the Scriptures he was expounding tracts of liberty, and eventually Bethel Chapel became a centre for hundreds of workers on the plantations from a wide area.

In 1823 the British Government promised 'amelioration'; rumour went round the slaves that they were promising 'freedom'. From this came the uprising in which the slaves put their masters in the stocks but were themselves shot down in considerable numbers. Governor Murray was convinced that 'missionary Smith' was the rebel leader. As a rebel he was court-martialled and sentenced to death but he cheated the gallows by dying of consumption on 24 January 1824.

Dr Northcott writes so that the situation in chapel, on the plantations and in the law courts, is extremely clear. He has used new material on either side of the Atlantic. He claims that Smith's influence prevented bloodshed by the rebels in 1823, that he became the embodiment of the emancipation cause in Demerara; and that after his death emancipation was inevitable.

MICHAEL HENNELL.

A CENTURY FOR CORNWALL: The Diocese of Truro 1877-1977. *H. Miles Brown.* Oscar Blackford, 1977. 141 pp. £3.50.

Among the many anniversary celebrations taking place, whether royal or ecclesiastical, welcome should be given to this book recording the achievements of the Truro diocese in its centenary year. The author, well known for his studies of Cornish churches and clocks, gives a most readable survey of the founding of the diocese, the building of the cathedral, the episcopate of E.W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, and his successors. Nor does he forget the outstanding parochial clergy of the period such as Hawker of Morwenstow, poet, initiator of harvest festivals and lonely eccentric.

After the early controversy on whether the see centre should be at Truro or Bodmin had been settled, and sufficient income guaranteed, Frederick Temple, Bishop of Exeter, supported the division of his diocese, and in 1876 the bill to establish the Cornish bishopric was passed. Since then, eleven bishops have presided over its development, witnessing the building of a cathedral, and the strengthening of spiritual life generally. There was a surge of church restoration, and beautifying of buildings, with numerous gifts of embroidery, hangings and vestments, while organs replaced harmoniums to lead the music. Unfortunately there was much bitter religious controversy, through the swift rise of the Anglo-Catholic party. Those who preferred less colourful worship left the Church of England and joined the Methodists, already strong in the county. The impact of two world wars in thirty years brought an aftermath of disillusionment and cynicism to Cornwall, as to England in general, a situation not improved during the period 1920-50 by a succession of bishops of widely differing churchmanship. But for the last twenty-five years, realistic pastoral and economic policies have brought to this diocese new vigour and encouragement to Anglican clergy and laity alike. The author is to be congratulated on giving a readable yet scholarly survey on diocesan life, with its past achievements, and confident outlook on the years ahead.

COLLISS DAVIES.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER. *Eberhard Bethge.* Fountain, 1977. 867 pp. £3.00.

As a young lecturer at Berlin, Bonhoeffer once said that the sorry plight of the

Churchman

church is always also the sorry plight of the theological faculties, and pointed his students to Luther who both wrote effective theology and preached a relevant message. He cried, 'Why cannot we do that? Who shall show us Luther?'

This is a valuable clue to help us to evaluate Bonhoeffer. Like Luther, Bonhoeffer's concern was first and last Christological: his consuming search was to understand who really is, and in that discover who Christ is for us today. He understood Christ not as an object of religion, but rather as the Lord of the world. It is less a matter of preaching a gospel, more of telling the world that the content of the Gospel was Christ. He saw the task as one of claiming the contemporary world in and through Christ: not by opposing man at the strong point of his worldliness, but, on the contrary by confronting him with God on this very front. It was his Christology that gave him his ecclesiology, and which further provided his great unity of faith, prayer and action. Even the sermon was an incarnation of the word as it accepts and bears human nature. His struggle was less a struggle against the state, but first and foremost a struggle for true faith within the church: he turned into a political plotter when, in his own particular situation, it would have been a worse evil to have remained neutral and, not to have done anything against the regime. He died with unclean hands, (which of us will not?), but even his executioners were awed at his faith and discipleship.

Bethge has written a book which casts a great deal of light on those twelve black years of German history, and further, a book which is an emotional, intellectual and spiritual challenge. He has also managed to be most objective and critical: here is no concealment, no camouflage, no hagiography. Here is captured Bonhoeffer's invincible faith and total commitment to a God who always gives before he demands. A churchman with a total concern for modern, secularised, post-religious man, living as though God did not exist. Yet he knew that man was never beyond the scope of God's love. To him divine grace was the ability to suffer with God as Jesus, the man for others, suffered. Grace was never cheap, simply free.

The reviewer read this book again during the Easter break and was made keenly aware of what Christendom owed to Bonhoeffer, and to all those others who said with him, 'Here I stand!' – and stood. He asked himself the question, those be-medalled, black-hearted tyrants who strutted the German stage, where are they now? Who would be in their shoes, whether in time or eternity? The cost of Bonhoeffer's discipleship was high indeed, and how poorer modern Europe is without him, but this realistic book of a true disciple reminds us all of the cost of discipleship, theologically and politically.

The only complaint to this very long book is that the reviewer would have liked more of Bonhoeffer's exciting theology in it, but the obvious

answer to that is to turn again to his writings.

JAMES ATKINSON.

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY: An Invitation to Reflection upon the Christian *Muthos*. *Theodore W. Jennings Jr.* SPCK, 1977. 184 pp. £3.95.

This is a fresh and invigorating book which may well prove useful to those who find a more traditional approach to theology going dead upon them. It is primarily addressed to the American scene but is rightly critical of some recent tendencies in the mainline American churches. The book contains a fair amount of theological jargon which is compensated by many shrewd and often humorous comments which pin-point attitudes and problems.

The author describes theology as a process of reflection upon the Christian *muthos* or the unified symbolic structure included within and arising from the *kerygma*, the documents which attest it, the liturgical practices of the community, theological reflection upon it and its embodiment in credal forms. To this the primary response is to be found in Christian imagination which in its turn becomes the object of reflection which we call theology. There is a givenness of God which is mediated through but not part from the *muthos* in a manner similar to Barth's insistence that God cannot be known except through his revelation. Within theology there is a series of continuing dialectics between the phenomenological and the kerygmatic, the past and the present, the individual and the communal, identity (or fidelity to the past) and relevance (the quest for universality) – at the expense of the particular. This reads like the quest for a Hegelian synthesis or of a middle road between the opposite extremes but turns out to be a plea for the full exploration of both approaches. The author is equally suspicious of the ossification of theology into a series of 'isms' and of a reductionism which evacuates Christianity of anything distinctive or particular. Theology is concerned since it is concerned with meaning and meanings astray lead lives astray.

This picture of theology is more open than some traditional methods but there are many indications that it can be employed with a more conservative intention than might appear at first sight. The discussion of Scripture and Tradition, acceptance of the fact of Revelation and the frequent use of grace as a key concept (sometimes in contexts where it is least expected) and above all the claim that theology is concerned with truth of meaning indicate that the author is not making another plea for reductionism, or the jettisoning of the cargo of the past. Everything depends upon the adequacy of his conceptual framework to support the pack which he obviously intends it to carry. As to the first it is necessary to study with great care the definitions and clarifications which he offers of his leading concepts. For the second we must await further books in which he applies

Churchman

his theological methods more directly to the leading themes of systematic theology. The author describes this book as a prologue which anticipates the drama it precedes, an introduction and invitation to what is to come. I, for one await the fulfilment of his promise 'Let the play begin' with eager anticipation!

H.E.W. TURNER.

THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS. VOL. 14. *Karl Rahner*: DLT, 1977. 336 pp. £5.50.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE TODAY. 88 pp. £1.50; MEDITATIONS ON HOPE AND LOVE. 85 pp. £1.95. *Karl Rahner*. Burns & Oates, 1977.

As the Agreed Statement on Authority between representatives of the Anglican Communion and of the Roman Catholic is a matter for close and critical scrutiny, the fourteenth volume of Rahner's *Theological Investigations* appears at an appropriate moment. Most of the contents, as separate articles, have been given or have appeared in print during the 'seventies', and some have not in fact been previously published. Their relevance to the present discussions may be illustrated from the titles in the first section on Ecclesiology; thus chapter 4 'On the concept of Infallibility in Catholic Theology' or chapter 5 'The Dispute concerning the Church's Teaching Office'; or elsewhere, in the third section of 'The Church in the World', chapter 14 'Some problems in Contemporary Ecumenism' or chapter 15 'Ecumenical Theology in the Future'.

But looking a little further, the first chapter – 'Basic Observations on the subject of Changeable and Unchangeable Factors in the Church' readily leads us to an approach and a methodology which is important for the understanding of contemporary Catholicism. Here there is a frank facing of the historical and cultural relativising of statements, as to which 'it would be naive to suppose that such concepts are raised to the status of absolute immutability' so that a distinction comes to be drawn between what a statement at any time was intending to mean, compared with the actual terms of its expression in terms of the historical conditions then obtaining. Rahner here examines this approach in relation to dogma, ethics, church order and the argument needs both careful appraisal and some further debate as to its further implications. Again in chapter 2, 'The Faith of the Christian and the Doctrine of the Church' Rahner is loosening the customary rigidity of the Roman Catholic Church as to heresy, not merely on his own account but as interpreting the trend in contemporary attitudes in the church, exploring further what he has previously urged in these volumes, the significance of pluralism in modern ideas for the convictions of the believer. He would place the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as the simple but fundamental and irreversible core of the church's faith and teaching, around which

the wider concretions of doctrines and traditions may offer situations when individuals have to stand back with questions, but in a responsible fashion as making a contribution to the church's awareness of faith, and, at the same time avoiding the limitations of individual capriciousness. Infallibility or indefectibility; the contrast drawn out by Hans Kung, is taken up in the third chapter, and on into the fourth. Rahner characteristically is more concerned to find an existential rooting of assurance, a basic unity between experience of Jesus as Saviour and Lord and the discerned meaning of total existence, of which faith in Jesus provides the true explication. It is around this assurance that the community of faith gathers, and affirms its faith in certain propositions, which themselves strengthen the believer. Rahner can see that there can be a fairly straight line drawn towards the Roman doctrine of infallibility, but he commits himself to the statement that the church's own sureness is sustained by the sureness of the individual's belief without reliance upon the teaching of the church itself (p. 62). He further expects 'infallible' statements to be reformulated as and when necessary. The whole matter of infallibility is further explored in the fourth chapter, with a rigour that might with profit be applied to the 'Agreed Statement' and with the further comment that it is not nearly so important a dogma as it was made at Vatican I. Rahner again emphasises the importance in Catholic doctrine of the individual conscientious decision, apart from the influence of official dogma, on which non-Roman Catholics need to be better informed in the too popular view of the *Protestant* right to 'private judgement'. A further, pastoral, expression of this broadening of the basis of authority in the church, is the argument that national synods ought to express local characteristics, not conform to some over-all uniformity; and that they should take lay members fully into the decision-making.

The second section — 'Questions in the Church' — deals with three main issues: sacraments, ministry, and the influence of modern attitudes into the standard spirituality of monastic orders. On the sacraments, there is an ecumenical approach set out in relating them to the proclamation of the Word, and it would be interesting to hear Rahner's response to Peter Martyr's teaching herein. But Rahner's deep concern to relate specific Christian faith and churchly action to the terms of basic human existence, takes him in the next chapter to expound the Eucharist particularly as the 'symbolic manifestation of the liturgy of the world'. All this is closely related to the doctrine of 'uncreated grace' which is the potential and purpose of human experience, as a development of the *analogia entis*, and of the divine omnipresence in grace, which is yet 'through Jesus Christ' as the Gospel in fact makes explicit. It is this existential anthropology that informs

Churchman

all his approaches, and underlies his continuous method of relating it to almost all issues, not least, that of 'the anonymous Christian', already the subject of statements in previous volumes and here again returned to in the third section, in answer to some criticisms.

But before turning to that section, two chapters in the second, on the episcopal office and on the presbyterate, again exemplify Rahner's theological adventurousness, even if (like the General Synod on the ordination of women) he covers doctrinal affirmation with pastoral caution. He can base episcopacy on what sounds like a simple church decision at some time after the apostolic age as a sufficient basis for the office, and then also remark that there is nothing in Catholic theology to require episcopacy to be monarchical and not collegiate. He sees the difference between the RC church and Presbyterian churches in this as not in terms of how the office is actually held but rather as to its nature. In terms of current developments in church life in society, he argues for bishops to be more in terms of the patristic model of the chief minister in a single church in a locality. In similar fashion, he discusses changes in the terms of priestly ministry, especially in the light of the widening exercise of gifts in the congregations, and wider possibilities for priestly ministry.

In the third section, the chapters on ecumenical issues repeat what has been written before with fresh emphasis upon the common union in justifying grace of all Christians involved, and of their common task in such a world as this in affirming the truth of the Gospel together, wherein they may well find increasing unity in practice. He comes to a final suggestion of a church united as one institution, yet able to contain utterly diverse types of theology and practice, yet without violating the faith of members. Whether he has been looking over the fence into the Anglican Communion to view what can be possible, or hoping that geographical distance might so often some variances, it is difficult to say. But here is an adventurous step suggested beyond what we have yet heard from the Roman Catholic Church. It is perhaps then, not altogether surprising that the book concludes with a valuable chapter on a different theme, though verbally a suitable ending; 'On the Theology of Revolution'. The volume as a whole has quite a lot of this in other ways.

The two smaller books exhibit Rahner drawing out his existential anthropology in the pastoral terms, first of all in addresses to monks and nuns (*The Religious Life Today*), in which chapter 4 'Being the Church Together' is a valuable word for wider reference. The other provides a series of sermonettes for Advent and Christmas and one for Good Friday. Rahner's expression and mode of exposition make one wonder how easily he was followed, although there is a good biblical exposition and not a

complicated theme or structure. At one or two points one might complain that his concern for grounding the great affirmations of the Gospel in genuine human situations has led him to overdo the existential approach he uses, so that the theme 'God with us' at Christmas is not the Immanuel-Jesus but a recognition of the omnipresence of God in the fundamental dimensions of human existence. But they are noteworthy examples of RC preaching in a modern mode that others can learn from and profit by. G.J.C. MARCHANT.

SPACE, TIME AND RESURRECTION. *Thomas F. Torrance*. The Handsel Press, Edinburgh, 1977. 196 pp. £5.00.

For Professor Torrance, the resurrection is significant, and its intelligibility is guaranteed, because it took place within our world of space and time. It must therefore self-consistently interact with the world as understood by natural science, and any attempt to spiritualise it away, or to demythologise it into 'the rise of the Easter faith of the first disciples' is to be vigorously resisted as a complete evisceration of the meaning of resurrection.

From that starting-point, we find ourselves led by Dr Torrance into an understanding of the necessary self-consistency of the full-blooded and traditional faith, in which the spatio-temporal reality of a bodily resurrection is the guarantee behind all other aspects of Christian doctrine.

Thus in relation to the Person of Christ, the resurrection discloses that the Virgin Birth was the act and mode of the Creator's entry into his own creation, and corresponds to the kind of Person Jesus Christ was in his own Being (the author's capitalisation). In relation to Christ's atoning work, we are reminded that Paul told us that if Jesus is not risen, we are still in our sins. And — mark well — it is *bodily* resurrection to which Paul here refers, for the empty tomb shows the wholeness of our redemption in the whole Christ — no docetism, gnosticism, or demythologisation! The resurrection of the flesh is the redemption of a man's perishable form of existence. Bodily resurrection is the pledge that the whole physical universe will be renewed (the subtlety of the distinction between 'body' and 'flesh' is not here drawn out).

Resurrection is therefore the redemption of space and time — not their abrogation, but their healing, their re-creation, their restoration. The ascension cannot be demythologised — it sends us back to the world of space and time, a world in which incarnation is possible, the world of a historical Jesus, the world in which God's Word can be implicated in a Space and Time of which Jesus is Lord.

'This book', says the blurb, 'is meant mainly for the ordinary membership of the Church to deepen and strengthen faith'. Most of us will find it tough going; but if we want our faith in the physical resurrection

Churchman

undergirding, Dr Torrance will do it for us splendidly. MICHAEL PERRY.

MISSION TRENDS NO. 3. THIRD WORLD THEOLOGIES. *Ed. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky.* Paulist Press/Eerdmans, 1976.

Here is a 250 page book designed to haul western theologians (& missionaries) out of their theological provincialisms. There are 28 articles, arranged in 4 groups: I. Theology in Context (6); II. Latin American Perspectives (7); III. African . . . (9); IV. Asian . . . (6). They range in length from twenty page papers by Richard Neuhaus and Mortimer Arias, to one page poems by Nestor Paz, a Bolivian guerrilla, or a revolutionised Lord's prayer by a Zimbabwe nationalist, Canaan Banana.

The authors include priests, pastors, bishops and an archbishop, Roman Catholic and Protestant; theologians in the third world and the west, none, it appears, resident in East Asia; President Kaunda; a journalist, a guerrilla who starved to death; black nationalists; a missionary nun; officers in WCC or WCC-related movements and finally there are joint declarations by churchmen. A few names are well-known: Mbiti; Gutierrez; Camara; Bonino; Kaunda. Elsewhere all of us will meet strangers.

The articles vary in type. There are speeches (Camara, Kaunda); theological papers (Mbiti; Arias, Fashole-Luke – in my opinion the most substantial articles); conference statements, confessions, study documents or protest (from Korea) (pp. 132, 192, 227); discussion starters with questions (pp. 189, 155); and attempts to relate imaginatively to Third World concerns – extracts from a guerrilla's love letters and diary; poems; a study of African proverbs from Christianity; and a meditation while going barefoot up an escalator to a famous Rangoon pagoda.

Those of us who live in or near the Third World (and some of us live much nearer than we suppose!) are obliged to listen thoughtfully and humbly to examples like this of a new theological agenda, to deliberate 'mental decolonisation'. What do we hear? We hear some sloganeering or rhetoric, some very question-begging. We hear some careful and critical analyses of writers, theologies and programmes. We hear a little (not enough) to make our imaginations soar. We do not hear much serious exegesis of the Bible. And we hear some dull and turgid stuff, ugly, unintelligible and wing-crippled (examples on pp. 22, 24, 57, 67, 124, 220). We must not forget that all these essays are in English. Perhaps, after all, it is Mother Theresa and nameless other thousands who by their compassionate service and self-sacrificing love are the real theologians. The writer is dangerously exposed to an unjust judgement by his readers, who know only what he writes.

The book finishes with a bibliography of 95 books in English for further reading, by 49 separate individual authors (and 23 editors). These

books are published in USA (46; 30 by Orbis books); Asia (27); Europe (14); Africa (7); Caribbean (1); surprisingly none from Latin America. Almost all the books are published in the 70s. The oldest is Panikkar's well-known *The Unknown Christ*. . .

HOWARD PESKETT.

MAX WEBER THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM. *Introduced by Anthony Giddens*. George Allen and Unwin. 1977. 292 pp. £2.95.

The relationship between ideas and their impact upon history has always been a most difficult thing to demonstrate. The republication of Weber's famous thesis concerning the relationship of Protestant religion and capitalist development may serve to revive the discussion.

Anthony Giddens has written a short and very helpful introduction to Weber's thesis. He has reminded the reader of the idealistic philosophical stable from which Weber's thought came, of the liberal side to Weber's thinking, and of his desire to challenge some aspects of the developing Marxist thought. Mr Giddens also points to Weber's deep and passionate distaste for what he considered to be the restrictive and philistine effect upon culture of Calvinism and the puritan tradition. The thesis adds up to a sustained attack upon both Protestant ethics and unfettered capitalist economics.

The links between Reformation doctrines of the Christian life and modern capitalism are very hard to forge. Weber's thesis has largely collapsed. A study of the Reformation could lead to a very different construction of economic order. Calvin's Geneva was highly organised and hedged about by legal restraint. It could be argued that modern capitalism owes much more to the Enlightenment with its emphasis upon freedom and the rights of man. To do this, however, brings us back to the basic problem which Weber himself attempted to tackle — the relationship between ideas, the consequent construction of reality, the formation of attitudes, and their effect upon events and societal structures. To believe in the connection is one thing, to prove it is quite another. History can always supply the exception to disprove the rule.

Weber worked upon all religions of the world to investigate the out-working of ideas. There can be no doubt that religion has a formative influence upon most aspects of living. One of the problems with a general historical approach to the question is that religion appears to work itself out differently in different contexts. There is a dialectic between religion and the prevailing structures of society. This is why it is probably more important for us to think through the questions as Troeltsch set them rather than as Weber set them.

JOHN GLADWIN.

Churchman

EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE. *Brian Wren*. SCM Press, 1977. 145 pp. £2.50. The Co-ordinator of the Third World First programme has written a very exciting book. He is concerned to share with his readers what a Christian understanding of justice means for aims and methods in education. If being fully human means to be self-conscious and aware, then education for justice must have as its aim the bringing of people to full critical self-awareness. That awareness will be political, religious, and personal.

Brian Wren calls into question any structure of education which takes its starting point from the expertise of the teacher. In education for justice the expertise of the educator is exercised in drawing out the experience of the group in process of learning. In so doing, people become fully aware of the truth about their life, its circumstances and possibilities. Thus education must be a dialogue in which the group grows into an awareness as it becomes both literate and critical of its own life. Other methods of education do not take the humanity of the learner sufficiently seriously. The illustrations which he uses from literacy programmes in South America are dramatic. Literacy leads to a detached critical awareness of the causes of poverty and oppression. Small wonder that the oppressive regimes in that continent are opposed to such work. The whole book is full of striking illustrations which make the point about justice and education.

The author is not afraid to tackle the question concerning what justice is. This is the first serious criticism which I have seen from a Christian angle of John Rawls' important book, 'A Theory of Justice'. John Rawls, in the tradition of the Enlightenment and Kant, wishes to revive the social contract theory. Brian Wren gives sympathetic attention to Rawls' thesis and points to its shortcomings as a fully adequate theory of justice. He then goes on to examine the Christian concept of justice. In this he is Biblical, clear and provocative.

The book completes its task with a postscript on methods. This section of the book confronts church educational practice front on. Parishes which have never discussed their methods in their educational work will be stirred to think in new and potentially exciting ways by this part of the book. Imagine what it would be like if large numbers of churches actually succeeded in developing congregations of folk who are critically self aware, able to think and decide for themselves – growing up to a maturity of faith for which we long but rarely see. This book is too good to miss! JOHN GLADWIN.

HIS LIFE IS MINE. *Archimandrite Sophrony*. Mowbrays. 128 pp. £2.95. No, I thought, as I began to read this book. This is too abstract and too densely written for me to appreciate. Like so many books on prayer and meditation, it will entrance me while I am reading it, and I shall collect a

couple more passages for my commonplace book, but in the long term that will be that.

How sad it would be to bounce off this book because it contains some hard phrases and a whiff of Greek theology! It also contains some splendid prayers and much fine, Biblical meditation on the nature of God and man.

As I read, it was borne in on me that these were the thoughts of a man who had devoted his whole life to prayer. 'Stay your mind upon God, and the moment will come when you feel the touch of the Eternal Spirit in your heart'. For years the author sought this touch, and when he felt it he devoted the rest of his life to learning the way of the Eternal Spirit of Christ. His teacher was the Staretz Silouhan of Mount Athos, and this book draws much on what he learnt there.

The final section makes sense of the Jesus prayer for those unfamiliar with its hallowed place in the Orthodox tradition. It is a way of 'staying the mind upon God', the God who is burning and vibrant and active, and at the centre of these meditations. We are called to share in the life of God; to participate in his suffering and his humility; to experience his glory.

NICHOLAS SAGOVSKY.

THE MONASTIC JOURNEY. *Thomas Merton*; edited by *Brother Patrick Hart*. Sheldon Press, 1977. 185 pp. £4.95.

Although Thomas Merton died in 1968, he, like Teilhard de Chardin, left sufficient material for a number of books, which have been published at frequent intervals.

This book discusses the monastic vocation as it concerns the monk himself in his withdrawal from the world for the contemplative (not inactive) life. A Christian monk seeks God as revealed in Christ, as opposed to the earnest pagan who 'has to struggle upward to union with the "Supreme Being" – the Absolute – by sheer force of his own will and by his own fortitude' (p. 47).

There is a helpful chapter on contemplative prayer, centred in both the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, and another on the changes in monastic life today. The difficulties of life in the world are met by the monastic life both as 'a remedy for the ills contracted in the world, and a fulfilment of legitimate needs which the world of this particular time arouses without being able to satisfy them' (p. 126).

Obviously much of what the monk seeks to practise is relevant for Christians outside, which makes this book more than merely descriptive. Even the Christian loner may gather some crumbs from the last forty pages, which give a justification for the life of a hermit.

J. STAFFORD WRIGHT.

Churchman

CONTEMPLATIVE INTIMACY. *Herbert Slade SSJE*. Darton, Longman & Todd, 1977. 218 pp. £2.95.

In twenty years time this book will either be quoted as a trail-blazer or simply left on the shelf. It depends on whether the church as a whole goes the way of corporate mysticism. At the moment the attraction of the book will be for mystics rather than hard-headed theologians; mystics who plunge into creation rather than withdrawing; mystics who develop their experience, especially bodily experience, in fellowship such as exists in Herbert Slade's Anchorhold community, rather than alone with God.

On the basis of quotations in the book one can imagine the author sitting in happy fellowship with William Blake (to shatter dead theology and dead morality), William Wordsworth (to sense intimations in creation), Teilhard de Chardin (to see God in creation), Solomon (to give readings from the Song of Songs), an eastern sage (to open up the inner world), and Athanasius (to show the relevance of Trinitarian and Incarnational truth), a happy band of pilgrims.

The book is in every sense positive. Christ and Christian love are obviously central, with some eastern concepts peripheral. The Christian experience of Christ, following on regeneration, may grow through every physical sense (and *chakra* centres) in response to the creation of which we all partake. The author is very practical in describing this in the chapters on Doors of Perception. Love of God, others, and ourselves form themes of other chapters. 'So often attempts are made to limit fellowship to part of the whole humanity so that it is reached in mental agreement or in emotional approval, and no notice is taken of that harmonious physical relationship which is the basis of everything else' (p. 131).

'Physical relationship'. To one who shies away even from clapping and waving in hymns and choruses much that Slade commends in body relationships, such as pushing, embracing, dancing, and occasional nudity, would not be helpful – though perhaps Slade would reply that I need it all the more!

He needs fuller recognition of those who cannot think pictorially or in dynamic symbols, but I enjoyed the book and shall keep dipping into it, not least into the happy paraphrase and application of the so-called Athanasian Creed in the appendix.

J. STAFFORD WRIGHT.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Christianity and Psychological Research. *E. Garth Moore*. Mowbrays, 1977. 131 pp. £2.50.

This is one of the best Christian introductions to psychical research that I have read. Naturally there are realms of psychic experience that are no more specifically Christian or non-Christian than gardening or a cup of tea. But a Christian should have a philosophy which relates gardening to God's

creation and a lazily neglected garden to the devil, and finds a relevance in tea together. So an experience of telepathy, clairvoyance, and seeing a ghost, may come to anyone, but a Christian will try to interpret and use such experiences differently from a non-Christian.

Chancellor Garth Moore is an expert who is able to explain things simply. He gives facts, alleged facts, and theories in the field of psychical research, quotes the best pieces of evidence, and gives good documentation. Some aspects must remain academic, but cases of healing in Christian and non-Christian contexts, and also demonic attacks, brings us into the realm of intense practicality, and this is how the author treats them.

Since he quotes me kindly, he and I know that we differ over the Old Testament attitude to mediumship, but his book made me go back over the evidence to incorporate in a paper to the Victoria Institute. I still think I am right, and that the *obh* is a control spirit, and not a squeaky skin bag used by phoney practitioners.

J. STAFFORD WRIGHT.

HIPPOLYTUS: A Text for Students. *Geoffrey J. Cuming*. Grove Books, 1977. 32 pp. £0.65.

There are many people who will be grateful for this cheap edition of the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus. Probably written in the first part of the third century in Rome, but claiming to describe 'the tradition which has remained until now', the *Apostolic Tradition* is of great interest for it contains the earliest surviving text of a eucharistic prayer, as well as texts for ordinations, and baptisms, with details of church order. The advent of Series 2/3 has aroused new interest in Hippolytus, where in a plea for a kind of 'liturgical fundamentalism' there has been a move (unsuccessfully) to base the canon of Series 2 on the eucharistic prayer of Hippolytus.

The major edition of the *Apostolic Tradition* is that of Gregory Dix, and Geoffrey Cuming is not claiming to replace this. However, for the ordinary student or interested layman, Dix's work with its massive footnotes has proved rather overwhelming. This edition, whilst acknowledging the problems that surround the very corrupt text, makes it digestible for the ordinary person. On one of the most debated points, it is interesting to note that Cuming is happy to keep the *epiclesis* (prayer for the Holy Spirit) in the canon, which Dix and Ratcliffe rejected as an interpolation, saying 'as an invocation on behalf of the worshippers, not specifying the effect on the elements it seems quite credible'.

This is a most valuable contribution to Grove Liturgical Studies, and although published with the student in mind, will prove of great interest to anyone interested in the life and worship of the early church.

RICHARD MORE.

Churchman

TRUTH TO TELL. *David Pawson*. Hodder, 1977. 159 pp. £0.80.

JUST IN TIME! *Derek C. James*. IVP, 1977. 123 pp. £0.75.

THE CHRISTIAN DIFFERENCE. *Hugh Silvester*. Falcon, 1977. 112 pp. £0.95.

Since the death of C.S. Lewis those who have essayed to put Gospel teaching into readable terms have to a greater or lesser degree demonstrated the great difficulty of the task. Between the Scylla of predictable orthodoxies garbed in jargon and the Charybdis of flighty superficialities there is a channel which few have found.

David Pawson steers the course one would expect from a man who has, over the last twenty-seven years, earned a reputation as a helpful preacher. He addresses himself to the orthodoxies and illuminates his points by amusing anecdotes. Sin, conversion, the Second Coming — all are dealt with on the basis of 'the plain words of the Bible'. Somewhat surprisingly the pre- or post-millennial issue is covered, and spiritual gifts get sympathetic, though not extended, treatment. I once had a most spiritually-minded deputy churchwarden who would occasionally be absent from the Sunday evening service (and from my sermon) to listen to a recorded sermon by Francis Dixon; I believe he and others like him would find this book similarly rewarding.

Derek James throws caution to the winds and trusts his sail-power to take him through. Which is to say that he adopts a breezy style, throws off school-boy puns left, right and centre and beguiles his reader into sticking with him into the next chapter. One issue after another is smartly despatched and nobody is allowed to feel bored for a moment. The residual impression is one of super-abundant energy, breathless haste and of a form of Christian faith untrammelled by convention or tradition. Probably this book would suit a young football supporter who has a suspicion that there might be something in religion after all.

Hugh Silvester sets out to get his reader seriously involved in the business of searching out answers for himself. Illustrating his points from experience in this county and East Africa and making no attempt to hide his own inadequacies and failures, he adds biblical references and questions for discussion at the end of each chapter. He acts as the honest broker setting out to introduce buyer to vendor and to do a fair deal by both. This book would lend itself to use by discussion groups in which newish church members were anxious to find their feet and think through basic doctrines.

Until another C.S. Lewis comes along we can add these three publications to our shelves and use them as discretion dictates. It is important to get the right book into the right hands or the consequences could be dire.

JOHN C. KING.

THE FORMATION OF ISAIAH 40-55 (BZAW 141). Roy Melugin. de Gruyter, 1977. 186 pp. DM 68.

I, HE, WE AND THEY: a Literary Approach to Isaiah 53 (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 1). David J.A. Clines. JSOT, 1977. 65 pp. £1.25.

These two volumes are significant as pointers to the way the wind is, may be, or ought to be blowing in the study of Isaiah 40-55.

The most creative work on these chapters this century has been the form-critical analysis of the prophecies. Dr Melugin spends a third of his book examining the different types and concludes that, while influenced by traditional genres (how the priest spoke in worship, how a legal suit was conducted, and so on), the individual units reflect at least as much the prophet's own creative work. What, then, of the linking of the units? Dr Melugin spends the rest of the book examining the arrangement of these chapters by means of the method of 'rhetorical criticism'. He demonstrates that the units are not assembled haphazardly or according to a mechanical catch-word principle, but that they are purposefully linked so as to comment on each other. There is much exegetical insight in the study of these chapters, not least on the servant passages. Dr Melugin is committed by his principles of approach to taking these in their context and thus to exploring how the servant can both be identified with Israel (as is sometimes explicit), yet also be distinguished from Israel (as seems to be required by other passages). The prophet himself, 'is the servant, but only in the sense that he shares in Israel and embodies Israel in a certain sense. His ministry is a kind of archetype for the mission of Israel'. Finally, in a tantalising taster in his last few pages, Dr Melugin takes the study of these chapters full circle by showing how we shall not fully understand their message till we see them in their place in the Book of Isaiah as a whole.

Just before the end, he notes that the last 'servant song', Isaiah 53, remains somewhat of a mystery. It is this mystery which Mr Clines seeks to shed light on, in this first in a series of supplements to the new *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*. 'Isaiah 53 has become a casualty of historical-critical scholarship', which 'is bound to mistreat a cryptic poetic text when it regards it as a puzzle to be solved, a code to be cracked. What of the force of the poem . . . lies in its very forthcomingness, its refusal to be precise and to give information, its stubborn concealment of the kind of data that critical scholarship yearns to get its hands on as the building-blocks for the construction of its hypotheses?' With the servant and Isaiah 53, 'it is of its essence that unequivocal identifications are not made and that the poem in this respect . . . is open-ended and allows for multiple interpretations'. The attention of the poem 'is focussed almost entirely on

Churchman

the relationships of the *personae* and the alterations that occur in those relationships', which Mr Clines also examines by means of the approach of rhetorical criticism. But the most suggestive part of the book is its climax, where Isaiah 53 is examined in the light of the new hermeneutic. Like Jesus' parables, Isaiah 53 creates a 'topsy-turvy world', which 'is the world that the reader is bidden to give his assent to — or rather, to enter . . . The figure of the servant seizes, imposes itself upon, a reader . . . and insists upon interpreting the reader rather than being interpreted by the reader'. Isaiah 53 is not a puzzle to be decoded; it is a challenge to be met.

JOHN GOLDINGAY.

RELIGION AND RESPECTABILITY. Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850. *Thomas Laquer*. Yale University Press, 1977. 293 pp. £10.50.

'The period 1780-1850 witnessed the birth of a working-class culture that was deeply rooted in that ethic of education, religion and respectability which was embodied in the Sunday school.' Historians, by concentrating their efforts on a few large schools, two London-based societies, and a handful of prominent Evangelicals, have obscured the part played by men and women of the 'lower orders' in improving the lot of their children! Mr Laquer has come to these conclusions by studying the histories of Sunday schools in many parts of this country during this crucial period. He says that Sunday schools grew up as part of the Evangelical Revival, but that they were to some extent, indigenous institutions of the working class community rather than an imposition from outside. They had their own governing bodies, were often independent of church and chapel, and were often of enormous size. Leek and Buxton had over a thousand children under one roof and management; Stockport had a peak enrolment of 6000. The controversy as to whether writing was to be taught in Sunday schools divided on political lines; Conservatives such as Mrs Trimmer, Hannah More and Jabez Bunting were against it; Radicals, like James Montgomery were for it, as were the schools with a working-class membership.

If Mr Laquer is right then the working-class leadership of the Sunday schools was responsible for a culture which laid emphasis on self-help, respectability, diligence, thrift, and sobriety; it also means that E.P. Thompson's thesis that Sunday schools were started by the middle class to keep working class members in habits of subordination cannot be substantiated on a significant scale as so much Sunday school leadership and initiative was working-class.

This is an admirable and most informative study. One book that is missing from both text and bibliography is E.R. Wickham, *Church and People*

in an Industrial City. It would be interesting to know if Mr Laquer agrees with Bishop Wickham that the working class as adults have been outside the churches from the emergence of the large towns, and why, in view of the magnitude and success of the indigenous working class Sunday school movement, this should be so.

MICHAEL HENNELL.

KARL BARTH: *His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts.* Eberhard Busch. S.C.M., 1976. 569 pp. £10.00.

Until the mid-sixties Karl Barth was the Colossus of twentieth-century theology. Since then he has been more like Banquo's ghost, the accusing conscience of western religion. He lived long enough to rival Origen in sheer quantity of literary output. He bequeathed a theological system as distinctive as Calvin's or Aquinas's, and more christocentric than both. He himself compared his unfinished *Church Dogmatics* with Strasbourg Cathedral with its lopsided, solitary tower. But perhaps it was more like the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool. Who in his right mind would set out to construct such a grandiose edifice today? Surely something more functional and on a smaller scale is more in keeping with the mood of the last quarter of the twentieth century. Yet down the years there have been many who have had cause to thank God that Barth has consistently kept out of step with the times. His great commentary on Romans was hardly an exposition of the text, but it was calling men to think about God with a compulsion unmatched by any other theologian. During the war years many a pastor found fresh hope and strength as he pondered the pages of the *Dogmatics*.

Eberhard Busch has placed the entire church in his debt in compiling this unique source book not only of Barth's theological pilgrimage but of the wilderness wanderings of his entire generation. As Barth's personal assistant in his last three years, Busch had a unique access to all manner of letters, papers and personal contacts. With infinite pains he has succeeded in weaving them into an interpretative chronicle of Barth's career. This description is used advisedly, for on its own profession this work is not so much a portrait as materials for a portrait. It is a meticulously scholarly study with the fascination of a gossip column. We see Barth drafting the Barmen Declaration in a Frankfurt hotel drinking strong coffee and smoking Brazilian cigars, while the two Lutheran colleagues deputed to assist enjoyed their afternoon siesta. In Marburg we find him visiting Rudolf Otto 'looking just like an Indian rajah'. There is the long and painful relationship with Bultmann who in the early days was an advocate of Dialectical Theology. After the war Barth purchased a gramophone which virtually became the centre-piece of the home, whilst Mozart became the centre-piece of his record collection. He justified this on the grounds that 'in relation to him Bach is merely John the

Churchman

Baptist and Beethoven Origen, if not the Shepherd of Hermas'. Although every page is packed with a wealth of personal reminiscences, the author deliberately stops short of asking pertinent questions which could distress the Barth family. No doubt the time has not yet come to ask what everyday life was really like in St Albanring, Pilgerstrasse 25 and Bruderholzallee 26. In some respects we are overwhelmed with detail; in others we are left with a silence that is more enigmatic than eloquent.

Many of Barth's contemporaries were puzzled by the contrast between his stance against the Nazis and his acceptance of Eastern block communism. His pronouncements on these issues are amply documented here, but the riddle remains. In theological debate Barth emerges as a kindly, jovial figure with whom one could discuss things – up to a point. But where his premises were not accepted, the shutters would come down and the dialogue would come to an abrupt halt. This attitude was by no means confined to the question of natural theology. The declining years were marked by the pathos of international renown and dwindling influence. Perhaps in twenty years' time it will be possible for someone to make a portrait which answers the questions which Busch prefers to leave unasked. But anyone who attempts the task will have to take Busch as his starting point, and it is difficult to imagine that he could unearth anything that Busch has either said or deliberately left unsaid.

COLIN BROWN.

PRAYING THE PSALMS. *Leslie E. Stradling*. SPCK, 1976. 119 pp. £1.50. The psalms have always been a mainspring of the Church's prayer life. In practice this is a fading tradition, with the Eucharist becoming *the* service of Public Worship, and the priest's obligation to say the Daily Office questioned. Bishop Stradling loves the psalms and wants to re-instate them in personal and public prayer. Saying the Psalter by rote is 'one of Cranmer's least happy innovations'; a fresh approach is needed. In this book 26 psalms are set in a wide context of Bible Study and reflexion, exemplifying the tradition of individual meditation on the Psalter in relation to one's own experience of life. The experience he brings is that of a former bishop in an African missionary situation.

The psalms chosen are grouped as Prayers of Praise, Prayers in Time of Stress, and Prayers for Others. The selection is personal – psalms which 'had something to say to me at particular moments of my life.' He invites readers to go direct to the Psalter to find and make their own meditations, 'to join me in praying the psalms and in listening to what God has to say to us through them.' There is an Introduction and a Bibliography.

The result is a mixture of helpful Bible Study with apt commentary, and a wealth of contemporary illustration and application (cordon bleu

cooking and cognac on Ps. 50.12-13!) He is skilled at putting our situation beside the Psalmist's, relating both to Christ, and frequently finds eucharistic contexts. His re-writing skills are seen in regard to Pss. 107, 139 and 30. Top marks from this reviewer to those on Ps. 139 and 8. Here is a valuable preparatory commentary but in the end you must do the praying yourself – which is only proper!

PETER R. AKEHURST.

ONE MAN'S PRAYERS. *George Appleton*. SPCK, 1976. 89 pp. £1.25. This book was first published in 1976 with 56 pp at 3/6; it is now re-set in short lines and larger type, allowing for easier meditation phrase by phrase. The numbering of the prayers is not identical. The titles of four originals have been changed, and two dropped. Nine of the prayers are new, including a pithy general intercession (91) and a completely new section of five prayers 'Prayed in Jerusalem'.

The 'thou' form of address is retained and regrettably there is no subject index. The prayers are arranged in groups – first a series of 108 general prayers, then the five 'Prayed in Jerusalem', another 26 follow the structure of Holy Communion, and these are followed by four Christian prayers to fit the Buddhist 'Divine Exercises'. A Hymn of Faith rounds off the book.

These prayers are intended for personal rather than public use. Prominent interests are world religions, with streaks of universalism (and it wouldn't be vintage Appleton without), contemporary affairs, Teilhard de Chardin, and a deep longing for unity. Scripture symbolism is here in plenty, with the compassion and pastoral sensitivity to be expected from the author's prayer desk. Not all will relish the occasional petition for the departed; and a rather curious No 63 addresses God 'for the sake of Nathaniel'. Altogether this is a very pleasantly produced stimulus to prayer and meditation.

PETER R. AKEHURST.

PRAYER AND CONTEMPLATION: An Invitation to Discover. *Mark Gibbard*. Mowbrays, 1976. 175 pp. £0.75p.

PRAYERS FOR IMPOSSIBLE DAYS. *Paul Geres*. SPCK, 1976. 51 pp. £0.95p.

Mark Gibbard again writes on prayer 'provisionally', sharing his own experience, inviting one on a journey in discovery. He believes that contemplation is within the reach of all; that it is a means of personal growth; that you don't have to solve problems of faith before you begin; that its starting point is in all sorts of moments of perception of oneself, the world or other people; that it is geared to world transformation – God's through us.

'Prayer means marvelling at God's love, receiving it, responding to it.

Churchman

being united with it and sharing it in the world.' Drawing heavily on the analogy of friendship and love, he has chapters on spontaneity and pattern, the use of words and images, prayer-methods (reflective reading, meditation and contemplation), all in the context of corporate prayer, worship and eucharist. In a valuable critique of Transcendental Meditation he asserts a specific object, goal and relationship for Christian meditation.

This secures ready assent as you go along but at the end what is contemplation? Gibbard calls it 'perceiving receptively' and says that 'in specifically Christian contemplation it is not so much that we have something to perceive, but rather Someone to love us'. So contemplation is becoming aware of love and responding to it — a long way from the article later wrapped in its techniques. Concentration on the techniques of love is notoriously counter-productive; is this so with contemplation? Gibbard says, 'It is like collecting and arranging sticks and twigs in preparation for a bonfire . . . but the real thing doesn't happen until you put a match to it . . . the essence of prayer is the blaze of love between God and you'. Contemplation is one of the sticks for the prayer bonfire.

This book cannot but deepen one's own praying. As a commentary for a journey through known and loved territory, full marks; as a guide to unknown country, a question mark.

'It is seldom much good reading other people's prayers. We need something which is our own' (Gibbard). 'Prayers for Impossible Days' are 26 prayers written from some point of frustration in personal life. Heart-searching, sometimes bitter, but deeply honest, this could be a new way of praying for some — naming it as it is. Everyone on his good days ought to know it is still possible to pray in such situations; that you don't have to be 'good', to know what is right, before you can pray.

This is more a spiritual diary than an actual prayer-book; knowing its contents, one might be able to use this method or pass it on. But remembering the avowed frustrations from which the prayers grew, does Christ offer no more than bearing and acceptance? Would I want to pray this?

PETER R. AKEHURST.

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER from THE DIVINE OFFICE. Collins, 1976. 1214 pp. £3.00 (De Luxe £4.00).

One major project that came out of Vatican 2 was the revision of the Roman Catholic Church's daily prayer. This was completed in 1971, and the English translation of the new breviary, entitled 'The Daily Office', appeared three years later: three large and extremely expensive volumes. Since then those volumes have acted as a quarry from which Collins have dug out a number of books and booklets to meet various needs. *Morning and Evening Prayer* is

the most important of the subsidiary publications, because it provides lay people with a reasonably-priced but comprehensive tool for prayer. The essentially monastic discipline of *The Daily Office* is here reduced to proportions that might fit a working man – the proportions, incidentally, of the Anglican clergy.

This is a real advance over a previous volume, *Daily Prayer*, which was twice the price, less durably bound, and included little extra material. At £3.00 this volume is a bargain. Anglicans who wish to use it will have to get used to turning backwards and forwards according to the day and the season – but is this any worse than using three or four little books? For those who use only this book supplementary reading of the Bible would be essential.

The most important aspect of this publication is the way that it restores to the whole people of God the privilege of daily, united prayer, wherever they may be. Is the next stage a provisional Anglican/Roman Catholic adaption?

NICHOLAS SAGOVSKY.

THE CHURCH IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT. *Jurgen Moltmann*. SCM Press, 1977. 407 pp. £6.95.

Having once divulged to a colleague in the next parish that I had found a certain learned book difficult to read I was rewarded with the remark that he had found it 'as easy as a novel'. I hesitate to admit that I have found this book difficult to read – and I do not altogether know why because I am familiar with Dr Moltmann's thought and have read his previous books with pleasure and profit. Am I out of my depth? Or is the book unnecessarily obscure? Both are probably true. I am undoubtedly out of my depth (and perhaps the author is out of his depth too) when he writes about 'The Church in the Trinitarian History of God'. But there is a needless obscurity also which arises out of the formal arrangement of chapters and sub-headings. So often I found myself asserting to the argument in one section, without being able to connect it with the sections which preceded and followed it. This is where, of course, the lecturer has the advantage over the writer and it may be that we simply lack the joints which would hold the whole thing together. So my verdict has to be – difficult to read; but also – well-worth reading. Take this for example on the relationship between the old and the new Israel:

'. . . the task of mission, and with it the relationship to the religions of the world, is founded, in fact and in time, on the church's relationship to

Israel; that, further, the church's relationship to the state, and the political commitment of Christians, is determined by their understanding of the Old Testament and their relationship to Jewish messianism; and, finally, that the relationship to nature and our hope for this relationship is dependent on the acceptance or suppression of Israelite thinking. Israel in Christianity's original, enduring and final partner in history.'

Or this is the connection between activism and the life of prayer:

'No one who prays in Christ's name and cries out for redemption can put up with oppression. No one who fights against injustice can dispense with prayer for redemption. The more Christians intervene for the life of the hungry, the human rights of the oppressed and the fellowship of the forsaken, the deeper they will be led into continual prayer.'

Or this on the so-called recession of the church:

'Although the quantity of the church's life is less, in many churches we can discover a new and increasing quality in the Christian life. It is true that the number of church-goers is diminishing, but the number of communicants is growing. The number of passive members is decreasing, but the number of active participants in religious seminars, theological courses, spiritual exercises and retreats is on the increase, as well as the number of people who are engaged in charitable activity and liturgical, pastoral social and political work in their communities. The "pastoral" church is

losing its effectiveness and its capacity for influencing and directing the whole of Christian life; but to the same degree processes of growing independence are apparently developing, and many Christians are grasping chances of personal responsibility.'

But the book is worth reading if only for the aim which it avows – 'To point away from the Pastoral Church that looks after people, to the people's own Communal Church among the people'. Yes, that much at least I understand and say Amen.

STUART EBOR:

Writers in this Issue

JOHN GOLDINGAY is Director of Academic Studies at St. John's College, Nottingham.

BISHOP STEPHEN NEILL was formerly Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi.

PETER ADAM is a Tutor at St. John's College, University of Durham.

ALAN ROGERS is a Lecturer in the Department of Adult Education in the University of Nottingham.