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

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

Book Reviews

KINGS The Daily Bible Study A. Graeme Auld

The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh 1986 259 pp. £4.25 ISBN 0 7152 0523 4

This book is a good illustration of the fact that the sort of questions which scholars ask are somewhat different from those which concern the man in the street. From the scholarly point of view, the author handles his mass of material (remember he is dealing with both 1 and 2 Kings in just over 250 pages) very well indeed. He is clearly informed and up-to-date in his understanding of the text and its setting. One is concerned at times about his tendency to speculate beyond the text, and his readiness to find alternative explanations for the supernatural in the book, but on the whole he is careful in his exegesis, attempting to help us to read the books as they were written.

However, from what we have come to expect from *The Daily Bible Study* series, there seems to be a dimension missing. Anyone prepared to take up the mantle of William Barclay must face a daunting task, but there could have been a great deal more application of biblical principle. Perhaps the scholar can easily move from what the Bible says to what it is saying, but the average person needs the sort of guidance which has been the hallmark of this series in the past. Of course, it could be that the sheer length of the books dictated the limits to what the author could do, and maybe if the editor had divided the work between First and Second Kings, it might have given him a better opportunity to tell us how our daily Bible study should affect our daily living.

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JOHN BALCHIN

ECCLESIASTES A Practical Commentary Series 'Text and Interpretation'

J. A. Loader, translated by John Vriend.

Paternoster, Exeter 1986 136 pp. £6.20 softback ISBN 0 8028 0102 1

In this 'practical commentary' J. A. Loader expounds Ecclesiastes as consisting entirely of 'polar opposites' (an expression coined in the title of his 1979 monograph). By this he means that the Preacher's method is to confront every thought with its counterthought, yet so as to arrive not at a synthesis but in each case at a demonstration of the tension within which we live. In his earlier monograph he likened this tension to a persistent headache, remarking that in neighbouring literatures the pain was always eased eventually by one device or another, but 'in Qoheleth's head the migraine throbs continually'.

This scheme is rigorously followed through; perhaps too rigorously, for while there is much that is acutely argued, it is difficult to avoid the impression that in those places where data and hypothesis sit uncomfortably together it is the former that must be squeezed a little. Even the cheerful pericope on the theme that 'two are better than one', for instance, has to be persuaded to take the smile off its face. Likewise the picture of the genial sage in 8:1 must be given a wry twist, for it is 'a veiled reference to the

Preacher himself and to his own wisdom'—namely (here's the rub) his teaching 'that wisdom is worthless' (pp. 93, 94).

Predictably, the orthodox conclusion to the book is seen as an intrusive non-sequitur; and wherever Qoheleth appears to answer his disturbing observations with the 'yet I know' of faith, the latter must not be taken at its face value. Nor (which is more serious and more revealing) must such words as 'sinner' and 'wicked' have their customary moral content. In line with, for example, H. L. Ginsberg, Professor Loader takes these terms to mean here simply those whom an arbitrary God does not happen to favour. '“Sinful” for (Qoheleth) means only . . . incorrect' (p. 89). 'We note that “wicked” and “foolish” are synonymous . . . and do not describe moral and intellectual aberration and failure' (p. 92). Moreover this God is not only capricious but irresistible. 'If God preordains all things, he also preordains evil. For that reason there can be no real human responsibility' (p. 86).

An unusual feature of this commentary is the appending of a Christian counterpoise to each small section under discussion—since (we are told) Qoheleth, 'the radical spirit, who ascribes arbitrariness and even injustice to God, fulfils the rôle of “a schoolmaster to Christ”' (p. 103).

While applauding the commentator's Christian concern, however, and agreeing that the Preacher, rightly understood, is escorting us towards Christ, one must face the fact that Paul's 'schoolmaster . . . to Christ' was not a work of scepticism, as this is made out to be, but a law which was 'holy and just and good'. Against *any* work that deeply misrepresents God (as this commentary considers Ecclesiastes to do) the gospel will of course shine the more brightly; but such a work would be no escort, but rather a gaoler whose only service to his prisoners would lie in his sharpening their impulse to escape. In that case his place in the canon could as well be occupied by the works of Nietzsche or the Epic of Baal.

At many points this is a commentary to be reckoned with, in its detail rather than its overall thrust. The author is an analyst of formidable tenacity, and of a personal faith which is as orthodox as his hero's is heterodox.

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DEREK KIDNER

A COMMENTARY ON THE MINOR PROPHETS VOLUME 2: JOEL, AMOS AND OBADIAH

John Calvin

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1986 513 pp. £6.95 hb ISBN 0 85151 474 X

John Owen, the Editor of the 1846 Calvin Translation Society edition of this commentary, of which this volume is a reprint, says of Calvin's Expositions: 'that the more maturely he considers them, after having compared them with those of others, both modern and ancient, the more satisfied he is with them, and the more he admires the acuteness and solid judgment they display. Perhaps no individual . . . produced Comments so original and so valuable.' The same must surely be said of this great Reformer and Expositor today notwithstanding the fact that commentaries on most books of the Bible abound and appear to be multiplying rapidly. Sadly the Minor Prophets represent a neglected portion of Scripture. Evangelicals in particular have lost sight of what these books teach concerning the character, plans and

purposes of God. It is not fashionable to speak of God the Judge today. Yet, here in this volume we find some 'priceless' (to quote Spurgeon's description of Calvin's expositions) comments on those three prophecies that declare God's judgments on the nations of Judah (Joel), Israel (Amos) and Edom (Obadiah). These comments represent the substance of Calvin's extempore lectures on these Minor Prophets. He gave ten and twenty respectively on the eighth century B.C. prophets, Joel and Amos, and two and a half on the sixth century B.C. prophet, Obadiah. Where Calvin scores so heavily as a commentator is on his ability to put each verse and passage within its context. He is not just concerned with a phrase or sentence but also with its wider setting. Thus each verse is interpreted in relation to the passage in which it occurs, each passage in the context of the book as a whole, and each book in the light of revelation (Scripture). Inevitably there will be differences of opinion with regard to the finer details of exposition. Is, for example, Calvin right in asserting that 'a nation' in Joel 1:6f. represents another judgment from God on Judah or should we see this as a further explanation of the effect of the judgment by locusts described in v. 4 of the same chapter? But as to the general meaning of a passage and the comments that Calvin makes upon it, one finds this expositor of immense value. His application is always apt and topical. See, for example, his remarks about ministers on page 33 where he discusses the summons to repentance found in Joel 1:13ff. In common with other volumes in this series this one includes at the end Calvin's translation of these books from the original, and throughout the commentary itself some helpful marginal notes penned by the Editor. The Editor's notes on Calvin's interpretation of those prophecies that speak of the future restoration of the Jews to their own land (pp. vi-ix) are well worth reading and provide an essential backdrop if one is to reap the most benefit from this excellent volume.

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GEORGE CURRY

ORACLES OF GOD Perceptions of Prophecy in Israel after the Exile
John Barton

Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1986 324 pp. £12.95 pb ISBN 0232 51666 9

The subtitle of this book may be somewhat misleading: 'after the Exile' refers to the whole period of Second Temple Judaism, including New Testament times. Indeed, the upper limit of the period is somewhat vaguely defined: rabbinic literature is frequently, and patristic literature occasionally used, to illustrate points. The New Testament is also, quite correctly, used as evidence of Jewish views in the period. The meaning of 'Ancient Prophecy' in the subtitle is also somewhat vague, since Barton argues that all inspired scripture was in this period regarded as prophecy. The subject of the book is therefore not confined to the understanding of Old Testament 'prophecy' in the modern sense or even to the interpretation of 'the Prophets' in the sense of the second division of the traditional Hebrew canon. The book is really a general essay on biblical hermeneutics in Second Temple Judaism, though the main focus of interest is the interpretation of 'the Prophets' and some of 'the Writings' (in terms of the traditional divisions of the Hebrew canon). But

as evidence of how 'prophecy' in this sense was understood in the period frequent use is also made of the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, since Barton holds these to be 'pseudo-prophecy', that is works purporting to be the same kind of thing as inspired scripture from the prophetic age. What people thought ancient prophecy was can therefore be deduced from what they wrote when they tried to imitate it.

The first third of the book concerns the growth of the canon of the Old Testament and challenges the consensus view of this, along with some of its variants. Many of Barton's criticisms of the consensus view need to be taken seriously, but I am not convinced of his central contention: that the tripartite division of the Hebrew canon was unknown until well into the Christian era. He holds that during the period of canonization only a bipartite classification (the Law and the Prophets) was known, and that, whereas the Torah was already a *closed* collection of authoritative literature, 'the Prophets' encompassed *any* other book of scriptural status and was an undefined body of literature, open to the inclusion of any work thought to belong to the prophetic age (thus the pseudepigrapha were intended by their authors to rank among 'the Prophets' and did so for some readers). He may have shown that the tripartite classification was less widely used than is usually thought, but: (1) his interpretation of the prologue to Ben Sira as referring to the Law, the Prophets and *non-scriptural* books does not seem plausible to me; at any rate, such an interpretation would need more detailed and careful argument to establish it; (2) the fact that all inspired scripture was regarded as prophecy does not prove that there could not also have been a usage in which 'the Prophets' were distinguished from 'the Writings'; after all, the Torah was also—indeed, pre-eminently—prophecy, but this did not inhibit the use of the distinction between 'the Law and the Prophets'; (3) Barton's discussion of 4 Ezra seems to miss the point that, although the seventy esoteric books are put on a higher level than the twenty-four, nevertheless the twenty-four constitute a defined body of literature: a canon to which the seventy are added as a second canon.

Chapter 3, on the way the ancient prophets themselves were regarded in this period is a rather disappointingly sketchy treatment of a subject on which there is abundant evidence. There is no mention, for example, of *The Lives of the Prophets*, and insufficient recognition of this period's stress on the theme of the rejection and martyrdom of the prophets. Chapter 4 contains a very curious argument that 'the people who wrote most of [the pseudepigrapha] did not trouble their heads about genre at all, but simply looked at their scriptures and wrote more of the same' (p. 149). Hence the pseudepigrapha are as 'formless' as most of the books of the Old Testament! This judgment seems to derive from applying inappropriate criteria of genre to the pseudepigrapha (e.g. their failure to distinguish 'wisdom' and 'apocalyptic' does not mean that these writers did not have their *own* notions of genre distinctions). It is hopelessly inadequate as an explanation of the continuities and discontinuities of genre between the Old Testament and the pseudepigrapha. Why, for example, do prophetic oracles, so prominent a feature of the Old Testament prophetic books, occur so very rarely in the pseudepigrapha? Why does the testament—not an independent literary genre in the Old Testament—become so prominent in the pseudepigrapha? Thoughtless imitation would certainly not produce such results. I find the

implication of this argument—that Barton's own study of the pseudepigrapha has been superficial—alarming for a book which purports to give considerable weight to the evidence of the pseudepigrapha.

The book's major contribution comes in chapters 5–8, which deal with four 'modes of reading the Prophets' in Second Temple Judaism. The idea is that readers 'adopted some uniform model of what an "inspired" book could be expected to contain, and applied this as a hermeneutical key to whatever book they might be reading' (p. 154). Thus the first mode is that of reading prophecy as ethical instruction. It takes Torah to be the model of what scripture is and reads the rest of scripture for instruction on conduct (*halakah*). The second mode reads scripture for its prophetic foreknowledge of the present day. Although Barton insists that this mode has no necessary connexion with eschatology, the chapter is actually concerned with the interpretation of scripture at Qumran and in early Christianity, where it was understood as eschatological prophecy being fulfilled in the present experience of the community. This chapter includes some discussion of 'apocalyptic', which considerably reduces any supposed distinction between prophecy and eschatological apocalyptic, and claims that the so-called apocalyptic writers 'showed themselves true heirs of the great prophets' (p. 211). While this discussion makes valid—though not novel—points, the alleged modern scholarly concept of an apocalypticist as 'someone who had a long-term view of world history' (p. 199) is surely a straw man.

The third mode finds in scripture a providential plan of history, with an eschatological prospect but (unlike the second mode) not an *imminent* eschatological expectation. (I am dubious about the sharp distinction that Barton draws between the second and third modes, though it is useful to draw some distinction. Many of the apocalypses cited on p. 229, for their 'historiographical' interest, do also have an imminent expectation, while Barton seems to be picturing imminent expectation too much in terms of 'ardent, bated-breath expectancy' [p. 218]. History shows that an imminent expectation can be held with very varying degrees of fervency and conviction, and can become a largely formal belief.) The fourth mode reads scripture as a source of speculative and mystical theology.

The scheme of four modes of reading scripture is a useful heuristic device, which does illuminate what is going on in the literature of Second Temple Judaism, including the New Testament. For this we should be really grateful to this book. Moreover, Barton's challenges to existing views—such as the doubts which he repeatedly throws on P. D. Hanson's model of post-exilic Judaism as a conflict between a theocratic establishment and an apocalyptic movement of protest—are certainly worth making. But the fact that the argument is conducted at a high level of generalization, with little opportunity for detailed exegetical discussion of the evidence, means that important features of the subject are overlooked. In the chapter on prophetic foreknowledge, for example, the impression given is that Qumran exegesis consisted in a rather arbitrary application of prophecy to the history of the community. There is no indication of the fact that it employed elaborate and precise exegetical *techniques*, which must have given the exegete the same kind of confidence about the correctness of his interpretation as historicocritical methods give the modern exegete. The second half of the book is a useful introduction to the biblical hermeneutics of Second Temple Judaism,

but remains at a relatively superficial level. At such a level I doubt whether one can be as sure as Barton is that no one in this period really understood the classical prophets.

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RICHARD BAUCKHAM

GOSPEL PERSPECTIVES Vol. 6 The Miracles of Jesus
Edd. David Wenham and Craig Blomberg

JSOT Press Sheffield, 1986 pp.457 £8.85

ISBN 1 85075 009 2

This sixth and concluding volume of the series under the able editorship of David Wenham and Craig Blomberg addresses itself to the problems associated with the miracles of our Lord; are the accounts historically reliable? This question of course raises (in the scholarly mind) a host of deep and troublesome queries: What do we mean by 'historically reliable'? Are miracles in any case credible? Is it in principle possible for them to be validated? How can they be reconciled with what, on any reasonable view of things, science has taught us of the nature of the world? Do the gospel writers mean us to take what they have written in its *prima facie* sense? and so on. Questions which the simple reader takes in his stride the trained mind cannot pass over so easily. This is part of the burden it has to bear. Wittgenstein is reported to have said that 'philosophical analysis, if properly done, leaves everything as it is'. We may one day perhaps be able to say the same of the critical examination of the Gospels. There are already signs that just as logical positivism, so far as it was destructive, methodologically undermined itself, so will the destructive aspects of biblical criticism.

The first essay in the present volume is by W. L. Craig on The Problem of Miracles considered historically and philosophically. Then G. Maier contributes an essay (in German) on miracle exegesis in the 19th and 20th centuries. Edwin Yamauchi follows with a long and well-researched essay on Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Demons and Exorcisms. It is not true, he argues, that all ancient aetiologies of disease were demonic; such a view is patently (and widely) false. Barry L. Blackburn considers the question of whether the hellenistic notion of the 'divine man' has moulded the miracle stories in the gospels. He places a question mark against this common idea. Richard Bauckham defends the often-denigrated Matthaean story of the coin in the fish's mouth. It has far more in it than is usually recognised. B. D. Chilton writes on Exorcism and History: Mark 1.21-28. P. W. Barnett concludes, in a very careful comparison of the accounts in Mark 6/John 6 that Mark's and John's sources were probably independent. Miracles of Revivification in the Gospels are discussed by Murray J. Harris; Craig Blomberg writes on Miracles as Parables. There is a coherence about the teaching of our Lord and His reported miracles which argues for the historicity of the latter; only philosophical bias opposes this conclusion. Graham H. Twelftree discusses again the question of exorcisms; was Jesus in fact an exorcist? If so, what method did He follow? And what importance did He attribute to this work? Apologetic and Apocalyptic: the miraculous in the Gospel of Peter is David E. Wright's subject. The volume is concluded with an interesting essay by a philosopher, Stephen T. Davis, on The Miracle at Cana; and some Reflections on Miracles and *Gospel Perspectives* by Craig Blomberg. This

editor ends his essay with a significant comment: 'The quest for the historical Jesus has made remarkable strides in recovering ground lost during the years in which Bultman proclaimed its demise. We believe the recovery is not yet complete and offer these volumes as yet one more expedition in reclaiming territory that need never have been abandoned'. A fine volume.

Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY VOL. 45
F. F. Bruce

Word Publishing (U.K.), Milton Keynes, 1986 228 pp. £8.95 pb ISBN 0 85009 441 0

The editors of the *Word Biblical Commentary* series make an ambitious claim for it in their preface, namely 'something for everyone who may pick up and use these volumes'. To realise this aim the text is divided into manageable sections, each of which is dealt with under five headings. There is a full and detailed *Bibliography* for that particular section. That is followed by the commentator's own *Translation* of the original with footnotes on the text. The next heading is *Form/Structure/Setting*, dealing with more technical questions raised by modern scholarship. The fourth heading, *Comment*, introduces a phrase-by-phrase exegesis of the text in the original, and the final *Explanation* draws together the commentator's conclusions in a more free-flowing prose style.

There is an introduction dealing with the standard questions of background, authorship, date, theology, etc., and there are four indexes: Ancient Authors, Modern Authors, Subjects and Biblical Texts.

In this volume F. F. Bruce brings his not inconsiderable skills as a historian and exegete to the text of I and II Thessalonians. As commentaries go this one could be classed as 'light-heavyweight', and the 'something for everyone' claim would have to be understood in the light of that. This volume will be particularly valuable to the student grappling with the Greek text for the first time and to the minister who wants to keep his Greek alive.

F. F. Bruce's stance is unmistakably conservative. On the authenticity of I.2.15f. and the source of the 'word of the Lord' in I.4.15 he faces up to the difficulties in the light of scholarly opinion and does not pretend to offer a facile solution. Accepting the authenticity of both letters he admits that its theology is not distinctively Pauline but reflects the generally accepted doctrine of the primitive church. He allows for the joint-authorship of Silvanus 'in a substantial and not a merely nominal sense'.

The activity of Satan (I.2.18) is interpreted as political action, not illness. Identification of a man's 'vessel' (I.4.4) with his wife is rigorously refuted and I Samuel 21.5 is adduced as a proper parallel. Both the restraining power and the personal restrainer are identified as the secular power of the Roman Empire. There is a ten-page excursus on the Antichrist.

This first British edition is a facsimile of the American edition first published in 1982. It is a pity that the publishers did not take the opportunity of correcting a couple of minor misprints: the omission of 'sure token' from the translation of II.1.5, page 147, and the insertion of 'removed' for 'revealed' on page 172 line 19. As another minor criticism I found the smaller

print of the paperback edition much less comfortable than that of the larger hardback format.

This is a worthwhile addition to the literature on the Thessalonian correspondence, and its attention to the detail of the Greek text is to be welcomed.

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IAN MACNAIR

INTRODUCING JESUS

Roy Clements

223 pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 86065 403 6

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Gerald Bray

186 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 86065 400 1

UNDERSTANDING JESUS

Alister McGrath

184 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 86065 509 1

Kingsway Publications Ltd, Eastbourne, 1986–1987

This is an extremely enterprising series written by men who are well informed theologically. Despite the progression in thought they do not quite fit in together as each approach is so different. The first, based on John's Gospel, comprises thirteen sermons delivered at Eden Baptist Church in Cambridge. The second is also based on John's Gospel but was especially written for the series as was the third which is the most markedly written as a theological treatise.

Dr. Clements' style is attractive and readable, which is not always the case with printed sermons. It is, therefore, worthwhile reading a chapter at a time. It would also prove a suitable book for evangelistic purposes, particularly as it contains so many illustrations from everyday life. Dr. Clements' method is to go faithfully through each passage, some of which are based on the seven discourses found in the Gospel. As Dr. Stott states in his introduction 'The marks of authentic Christian preaching are here'.

Dr. Bray's approach is rather different as there are few illustrations. His is a running commentary of the main points in the Gospel and written in a way that is most readable. Furthermore his knowledge of the Scriptures is to be seen in the way he draws out the truths in John's record of the life of the Saviour. It is a book that lives up to its title. It should be as popular as one which bore a similar one some years ago.

Dr. McGrath's method is that which befits a systematic theologian. He states his purpose as attempting to explain the identity and significance of Jesus Christ and its consequences. I was left wondering, however, whether this was a light enough touch for a Lent Book for the ordinary church-goers. Unlike Dr. Bray, Dr. McGrath's book is full of quotations to make his points. Furthermore there is the mark of the lecturer as he gives more than one point of view. In view of the purpose of this edition, I found it irritating to be told that future chapters would deal with explanations later. I also found rather unfortunate on p. 99 that he has to write 'Let us agree that Christians believe that man is saved only through Christ Jesus. This is rather a bald summary of the many statements of the New Testament on the matter, but it is good enough for our purposes'. He also follows the suggested

Churchman

solution to justification by faith given in A.R.C.I.C. II (and the Good News Bible paraphrase) when he states 'The notion of justification is based on the idea of being "put right" rather than being "made righteous" or "declared righteous"' (p. 127).

Dr. McGrath makes it clear that the only way we are going to grasp the identity and significance of Jesus Christ is through our understanding and acceptance of Christ's death on the Cross. He spends three chapters in dealing with its importance while at the same time pointing out the weaknesses of certain approaches to its significance. He makes it clear in the third chapter that Christ died that men might be forgiven, though he leaves readers to decide which theory of the atonement to accept.

Although I warmed to the later chapters I still wondered whether it was not too academic for a Lent Book.

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JOHN BOURNON

JOHANNINE CHRISTIANITY

D. Moody Smith

T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1987

ISBN 0 567 09447 2

This is a collection of essays originally published between 1967 and 1982 in a series of different journals and symposia, and gathered here in the form of a general survey of recent work on the Fourth Gospel. The book was originally published in the U.S.A. in 1984, which may explain why there is no discussion of John Robinson's *The Priority of John*, though Robinson's ideas are mentioned here and there in footnotes.

Moody Smith regards himself as 'critically orthodox' and occasionally betrays his Evangelical origins, or the time before his mind was 'illuminated' by theological study. As a critic, he is fairly middle of the road, regarding Bultmann's famous 1941 commentary as the basis of modern study. He generally avoids coming down too decidedly on one side or another in the main debates, and usually he shows a willingness to accept other points of view and to find something good to say about almost everyone. Given the depth of controversy which has surrounded this Gospel in the past, Moody Smith's eirenic approach, which he hopes will lead to an eventual convergence of views, is to be welcomed, even if some of his willingness to accept certain critical positions is not.

Perhaps the most difficult part of the book is the theological section at the end. The critical analysis is lucid and engaging, which makes one expect some new insight into Johannine thought. But all we get is an acknowledgement that John's Gospel presents Jesus as God (more or less), and the assertion that this needs to be balanced by the more human portrayal of the Synoptics. Has all this scholarly work really gone to produce such an obvious conclusion as this? Students of theology may well wonder at the end of the day whether all the effort has been worth it, or whether the author has merely dipped his toes into what many would regard as the deepest of all the New Testament writings.

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GERALD BRAY

THE FALL OF A SPARROW A Concept of Special Divine Action**Vernon White**

Paternoster, Exeter, 1985 208 pp £7.50 pb

ISBN 0 85364 415 2

This is a study of divine providence which adds another volume to a rapidly expanding series of books in philosophical theology which have been pouring off the presses in recent years. The revival of interest in these questions has pervaded modern theology to such an extent that it is now virtually impossible to write a book about God without examining them in detail.

Vernon White tackles the subject from the philosopher's angle, and tries to open up points of contact with theology and even with popular belief and practice. The title of the book is characteristic of the style and approach—deep philosophical issues expressed as far as possible in homely phrases and examples.

To do this well is not an easy task, and it must be admitted that the author of this book has probably fallen between two stools, if not between two schools of thought in the attempt. His philosophising is wide-ranging but obscure to the non-specialist, whilst his attempts to simplify merely confuse and mystify the reader. The titles of the chapters are themselves scarcely less opaque than their contents, for example, 'The Riddles of Experience', 'The Compromises of Theology' and so on.

Specialists in philosophical theology will find interesting points to debate, but the general reader will quickly be lost as he tries to come to terms with this book. The author gives the impression of having bitten off more than he can chew, and few others will find the material easily digestible.

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GERALD BRAY

COME TO ME! Tom Wells

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1986 113 pp. £1.50 pb ISBN 0 85151 471 5

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. On its pages you find a clear, fresh and stimulating presentation of the Christian faith. It is an evangelistic tract. The author writes as though he is speaking personally to the reader. He uses short, punchy sentences and begins each chapter with a brief summary of the ground already covered. His style is engaging and endearing, although I must confess that at times I found myself questioning the grammar ('Not then, at least,'—a sentence without a verb on p. 47), vocabulary (auto, gasoline p. 32), and spelling (Savior—eleven times on p. 39—favor, center). However this all served to remind me that, although printed and bound in Great Britain, this book is written by an American preacher and writer. None of this should detract from the fact that here you have a good evangelistic tract that you can confidently put in the hands of a thinking enquirer. Tom Wells's starting point is the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 11.28. His first concern is to introduce the reader to God. This he does in chapter one where he speaks of God as Creator, Lawgiver and Judge. In chapter two we learn about ourselves and the barrier that exists between us and God. We are spiritually dead, corrupt, guilty and content to live without God. The demands of Jesus' invitation are explained in the next chapter. The key words/concepts here are submission, personal allegiance, faith and repentance. In chapters four to eleven the implications of this invitation are

expounded. The truly penitent and believing acknowledge Jesus Christ as Saviour (chapter four), Lord (chapter five), Sustainer (chapter six), Teacher (chapter seven) and King (chapter eight). On him alone are we to depend (chapter nine). Such trust is for ever (chapter eleven). All this, says Tom Wells, is implied in this great invitation. But, that is not all, for the Lord Jesus also invites us to turn to him immediately. This is the message of chapter ten. It also explains the reason why this book is subtitled 'An Urgent Invitation To Turn To Christ'. In his conclusion (chapter twelve) the author stresses the importance of both Bible study and Church membership. His guidelines here are precise and sensible.

Who should read this book? First and foremost it is for the unconverted. It is an evangelistic tract. But it is probably true to say that it is best suited to the questioning and thinking enquirer. It ought to be widely used amongst students. A place for it should be found on every church bookstall. And, moreover, every minister and outreach committee ought to consider purchasing some copies for pastoral distribution. Existing church members should be encouraged to read it too. We all need to be reminded of the essentials of the Christian faith. This presentation of it is both refreshing and thought-provoking. Finally, ministers ourselves ought to buy, read and inwardly digest this tract. It will help us fulfil our ministry of proclaiming the Gospel in a faithful and relevant manner. Mr. Wells has trodden a path we do well to follow.

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GEORGE CURRY

NO HOLINESS, NO HEAVEN! Richard Alderson

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1986 108 pp. £1.95 pb ISBN 0 85151 495 2

This book represents an excellent introduction to a much neglected subject, namely Antinomianism. The author is primarily concerned with the ever topical question 'What is the Christian's relationship to the Law of God?'. In the space of a mere 100 pages Dr. Richard Alderson, one time Deacon of Westminster Chapel, London, and a Senior Lecturer in English as a Foreign Language, carefully exposes some of the errors and pitfalls faced by many young Christians. From start to finish it is the author's contention that lawlessness has made deep inroads into the life of the Church today. Some, says Alderson, have succumbed to that carnal reasoning that Theodore Beza called 'the Devil's logic', Luther 'a blasphemous impiety', and Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones 'one of the most subtle, dangerous heresies'. Instead of following the 'Divine Logic' of Paul, as expressed in Romans 6 and 7, where the great Apostle provides a devastating exposé of Antinomianism, they teach that because we are justified by faith alone we may live as we please. This history of this heresy is outlined in a very helpful manner in chapter two. Both personalities and movements are mentioned. Dr. Alderson establishes that Antinomianism represents an attack on the Law of God. He also asserts that Antinomians (a term coined by Luther) fail to understand the biblical doctrines of human guilt and sin, repentance, faith, justification, sanctification and assurance. A distinction is made between 'practical' (practising) and 'doctrinal' (theoretical) Antinomianism, but the author also states that in time the latter tends to become the former. Probably the most important

point made in this book is that the 'Antinomian error is a fatal confusion of justification with sanctification' (p. 5). We need to take to heart this message for many have fallen into error here. For example, traditional Roman Catholicism confuses these doctrines. In effect, A.R.C.I.C. II does the same. The use of the term 'Law' in Scripture and the place of the (Moral) Law in the Christian's life are discussed in chapter three. In chapter four the false distinction, made by modern Antinomians, between the Ten Commandments and the Law of Christ is exploded. In chapters five to nine the biblical doctrines of sin, repentance, faith, assurance and sanctification are explained, summarised and applied in a relevant and racy manner. The thorny subject of sinless perfection is tackled in chapter ten. In chapter eleven the author presses home the point that the justified have no grounds for treating sanctification as an optional extra. Whilst in the last chapter of the book we are presented with seven reasons for saying that holiness is necessary for salvation. The quotations from Calvin, (John) Murray, Spurgeon and others in the Appendix are both apposite and helpful. All in all this is a stimulating and challenging book. It is written for the ordinary Christian as well as for theologians. Very few—if any—will have any difficulty in following Dr. Alderson's argument. We all need to hear his message. I hope that many give this volume the careful attention it deserves.

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Low Elswick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

GEORGE CURRY

RELIGION IN ENGLAND 1688–1791 Ernest Rupp

Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986 584 pp. £45.00

ISBN 0 19 826918 8

This major work of ripe scholarship is a comprehensive survey of a formative period in English church history. With meticulous care and at great depth the author has opened a window on the complex issues that characterised and at times befogged ecclesiastics and the Establishment after the accession of William and Mary. Published in the month of Rupp's death, it adds brilliance to a man who has given to the public historical works of great value. This Methodist scholar, well known for his studies in Lutheranism, has devoted his last effort to what may become an accepted text-book for the religion of that era.

It is a large tome, more a compendium, sections of which, like that on the Evangelical Revival, could well stand on their own. It fills a gap on what Rupp describes as the present tendency of young men to 'leap from the Reformation to the Nineteenth Century which they suppose to be more "relevant" to their ministry in the modern world', p. viii. Hardly any matter misses his attention, not least the way Protestantism has spawned parties, sects and denominations. An unusual feature of his treatment of history is the valuable inclusion of potted biographics, some being of length. This not only adds interest to what may have become arid facts, but reveals how history is formed and directed by great personalities. Nor does he omit their warps, as those of John Wesley whom he strips of the romanticism that surrounds his person, and shows him to have been over-bearing, wife-neglecting, and rough towards his dying father.

The book moves from a study of 'Names, Sects, and Parties', through the 'Dissidents' to the exponents of inward religion and active benevolence.

finalising in a broad sweep of Evangelical Religion and the Establishment. Of the Revival, Rupp offers unassailable evidence of how little the Methodists and Evangelicals had in common. Few would question his verdict that 'In the Revival Wesley's Arminianism is the odd one out', p. 325. An equally profound observation is his point that had not Whitefield sailed to Georgia when Wesley returned from there 'the history of the Evangelical Revival in England must have been greatly altered, if not certainly for the better', p. 342. Of note also, is the interest in ecumenicity in various decades to which Rupp draws attention (as Archbishop Wake's ordination of Swiss students) on grounds of the historic episcopacy and the Anglican Liturgy, albeit confined to the Reformed churches.

Certain defects mark the book, such as an infinite number of small details and the many quotations that have a tendency to obscure the broad sweep of his subject at hand. Rupp has also a habit of using phrases and epigrams by others as though they were his own. The use of slang terms such as 'boozers . . . come-uppers . . . set to . . . tick off', although facile, are unnecessary, though some readers may find his linguistic roughness intriguing and stimulating. Well known for his wit, his asides, for example his referring to seventeenth and eighteenth century 'coffee house religion' that he thinks resembles B.B.C. religion in its discussion of daring topics, are extremely lively.

Of more serious intent is his underlying desire to unfold the eventualities that emerged from the 1688 Restoration and in this he shows a profound insight into the Church of England. On this ground alone his book, as part of the Oxford History of the Christian Church, is commended to Anglicans everywhere, amongst others. It should be on all ministers' book-shelves.

Munden, 5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

THEOLOGY IN TURMOIL Alan P. F. Sell

Baker, Grand Rapids, 1986 199 pp. \$9.95 pb

ISBN 08010 8246 3

This is a short but fairly comprehensive study of the liberal-conservative debate among Protestant theologians in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain and America. The impact of German thought, particularly that of Albrecht Ritschl, is obviously not ignored, but the book focuses on the controversies surrounding the Fundamentalist debates and attempts to explain why the British scene presented a less polarised picture than its American counterpart.

It must be said that the treatment is semi-popular, and that this is really an introduction to the whole question. This does not reduce its value (though no doubt specialists will be disappointed) but rather increases it. Too many students today have little real knowledge or understanding of what happened during this important period, and most of what is available to explain it is beyond ordinary reach. For that reason, if for no other, this book deserves to occupy a place of honour in every theological library.

The actual treatment of the subject is balanced and fair, especially to the conservative side, which is refreshing. Dr. Sell gives credit where credit is due, and has something positive to say even about people and movements with which he obviously disagrees. He himself must be placed in the

conservative camp, though not to the extent of saying that he is an open apologist for the traditional conservative positions. Any bias of that kind is carefully excluded from the text, which makes it both more readable and more enjoyable.

The book is easy to read, and the notes are full, clear and helpful. Baker Book House has filled a gap for the theological student, who should be encouraged to read this book as soon as possible.

Oak Hill College, London N.14

GERALD BRAY

A CLOSER LOOK AT CATHOLICISM: a guide for Protestants

Bob Moran

Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1986 259 pp. £4.75

ISBN 0 8499 0514 1

This simple, even naïve book was written, says Father Moran, to 'build bridges of understanding across what has for too long been an awesome chasm . . . Catholics have reacted negatively to some evangelical preaching and evangelization. And evangelicals have seen Roman Catholicism as an unbiblical religion . . . Those who read this book may not of course be persuaded that "Catholics are right", but my hope is that they can begin to see us through a clearer lens'. In pursuance of his aim and concerned at the number of his young people who were being drawn away into the excitement of evangelical Protestantism, Father Moran took a year's sabbatical to study at Wheaton College to find out what made evangelicals tick. The result is this book, which in a very pleasant and simple way sets out the story of his own spiritual journey and of what the spiritual life consists of for him as a Catholic. The outcome is not a theological statement of depth, but a confession which helps us to understand how a simple Catholic believer thinks. It is irenic and charming; with much of it the evangelical will be in full agreement. Father Moran is Chaplain and Director of the Newman Centre at McGill University, Montreal.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS SPANNER

THE AUTHORITY OF A BISHOP

John Halliburton

S.P.C.K., London, 1987 104 pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 281 04224 1

This is a book by someone who has been brought up to esteem the authority of bishops, and as befits an ex-Principal of Chichester Theological College it brings with it a solid academic approach. Being a member of the Church of England Doctrine Commission and a consultant to A.R.C.I.C., he seeks to justify the position from history of the place of bishops in the determining of doctrine and their place in the restoration of unity. He writes with the premise that episcopacy and church are inseparable (p. 61). In view of this he sees unity as being the reconciling of churches and not of ministries. 'The bishop', he states, 'is very much a man of the people, drawn from them, representing them, serving them. He speaks their faith, and in so doing is the sign of their union with all other churches who profess the same faith' (p. 51).

Anglo-Catholics have always sought to see in bishops those who truly

express the faith and thus acknowledge that they have an authority that calls for obedience. They endeavour to hold this view in tension with the actual situation and often find it difficult, just as Evangelicals find it difficult, to see that certain bishops defend the faith as they are exhorted so to do in their consecration. Yet Canon Halliburton seeks to find an answer in a representative capacity and states 'no bishop is received by the local church without reassurances that he will maintain their historic faith and work with them for its interpretation to the modern world'. (p. 22). He, therefore, emphasises the importance of the bishop's enthronement because it commits him to the mission of the church and, being installed in the cathedra of the diocese, the importance of teaching the faith. This, he says, necessitates constant consultation with the whole body of Christians in his diocese in order to listen with them to what the Spirit is saying to the church. Honourable as this may be, one is left wondering how far it is practicable in view of the size of a diocese and the number of committees which a bishop attends. Further this leads him to conclude that presbyters were almost certainly not original to the Christian Church at its foundation (p. 27). They were appointed to share the burden of the bishops. 'They were simply an extension of the first order from its centre in the bishop of the diocese (p. 28)—they are the bishop's delegates and they are the bishop's council'. (p. 29). As can be seen the thesis of this book is based on the primacy of the episcopal office, which is essential in ensuring that the Gospel and its truth is maintained, for we are told 'the Anglican's conviction is that the same gospel is to be found in the Scripture as is to be found in the exploration and that task of exploration is committed to the koinonia which lives in the fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit' (p. 20).

Canon Halliburton has produced a book which shows how Anglo-Catholics are attempting to come to grips with the church of today with their particular view of episcopacy which is rather different from that of such theologians as Lightfoot in the excursus in his commentary on Philipians.

Stamford, Lincolnshire

JOHN BOURNON

MISSION TO LONDON Phase 2 Who Went Forward?

Peter Brierley

Marc Europe, Bromley 48 pp. £2.25 pb

ISBN 0 947697 28 4

MISSION TO LONDON

Peter Brierley Phase 2 Who Went Forward?

Marc Europe, Bromley 48 pp. £2.25 pb

ISBN 0 947697 28 4

These are two companion reports on the visits of Billy Graham and Luis Palau to England in 1984, researched and presented with the attention to detail that one would expect from the publishers of the U.K. Christian Handbook. They look at the six missions (not Sheffield) comprising Billy Graham's central part of Mission England, and Luis Palau's six weeks at Queens Park Rangers in London. Basically statistical or numerical records, they contain no thrilling stories of conversion, though the thrilling story of what God was doing is plain enough for those who can read between the lines. The reports and diagrams are easy to read and well laid out.

Philip Back looks at the attendances of the Mission England meetings and the proportion that came forward for counselling (1:11 overall), and how the

figures varied according to the venue, the day of the week (Sunday lowest), the temperature (good response when very cold!), the weather, the theme of the talk (strangely, both Graham and Palau found that Mark ch. 8 produced the highest response rate), the time of the meeting and even the soloist; and the figures are broken down by age, sex, occupation and denominational background. He also examines the impact made on the geographical areas surrounding the different mission centres (e.g. nearly half (over 40,000) of those attending the Ipswich mission came from over 30 miles away). Those who spent many hours on different Mission England area committees will be interested to see the figures that relate to their meetings, and they will be able to provide the local knowledge needed to understand the patterns of response in the different parts of their region.

Peter Brierley follows the same sort of approach for the central Mission to London meetings, managing to slip in touches of humour and glimpses of individual lives being touched. He also seems reassuringly aware of what is involved at grass-roots level for a mission of this kind.

These useful reports will have to be read by anyone writing seriously either on these missions or on this kind of evangelism in Britain; and by anyone planning similar ventures in the future. They will be interesting to students of mission. Caution will be necessary before drawing conclusions from the figures; both authors (especially Brierley) are cautious about this, but they make helpful suggestions from them for the future.

These books will also interest those who would like to know such matters as: how many of the men who came forward were industrial workers (1:10), how many changed lives are there now in Bath (1000), how many people over 60 made a first-time commitment to Christ (1800), what percentage of those accepting Christ were under 19 (64%), and how many lumberjacks came forward for counselling (one).

St. Matthew's Rectory, St. Leonards on Sea, Sussex

ROGER COMBES

OSTRICH CHRISTIANITY Self-deception in popular Christianity
Van B. Weigel

University Press of America, 1986 254 pp. \$24.50 hb ISBN 0 8191 4974 8
 \$12.75 pb ISBN 0 8191 4975 6

Christianity has many forms of distortion, and no doubt we all suffer from one or another. That is why we need 'God's Word Written' to keep us straight. It is a pity therefore that this book, which has some important emphases to make, is so negative and disparaging on this matter. It is a sustained criticism of what it defines as 'the constellation of religious ideas which are typically (but not necessarily) affirmed by the conservative wing of the Protestant religious public' in America; that is, presumably, fundamentalism and all that. Now every considerable religious movement attracts to itself second-rate followers and even a lunatic fringe; but theological battles can never be won by directing one's fire at these. To do so may provide easy victories, but never final success. It is a pity therefore that the present author, like so many who write against the conservative position, avoids any real engagement with its worthier representatives.

The author fairly early and rather self-consciously arms himself with an

analysis of self-deception. This enables him to show quite easily how ostrich-like the opposition are. Some of his arguments are telling; others are quite wide of the mark. He sometimes descends to triviality: the Gospel of St. Nick. (Santa Claus), for instance. Some of his biblical exegesis is very questionable, though dogmatic; but in any case he has only limited respect for the body of Scripture. There is a 'Canon within the canon' by which the rest of Scripture must be judged; he finds this in the Two Great Commandments. I could not help feeling as I concluded this book, that the Analysis of Self-Deception might well on occasion have been put into reverse.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS SPANNER

IMAGING GOD Dominion as Stewardship
Douglas John Hall

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 248 pp. £7.95

ISBN 0 8028 0244 3

The subtitle of this volume by the Professor of Theology, McGill University, Montreal—Dominion as Stewardship—characterises its essential message. The book is one of the series of the Library of Christian Stewardship all of which major on the one theme. Several times throughout the pages of the work under review Hall uses the phrase 'the theology of the world'. That precisely is what Hall seeks to provide. He would provide a theological framework for the present worldwide ecological concern. He urges the churches to accept a new understanding of the cosmic order and take their stand against the deterioration of the natural environment under the impact of a rampant technological society.

Throughout history Hall regards the church as revealing a certain ambiguity in its relation to the world. Sometimes it has counselled withdrawal, sometimes contemplation. At one time it has regarded the world as essentially corrupt, to be left for its final dissolution by God's own decisive act; at other times the church has posed as the avant-garde of a new social order in which all men could live together as one happy human family.

Hall is sure that the natural order is God's order for human existence. He therefore argues that 'a precondition that must be met by any who want to take up the task of re-forming our society's image of the human' to be 'the twofold recognition that a) the present forms of our self-understanding are both wrong and dangerous, and b) there are resources within the tradition and spirit of biblical faith that provide the basis to challenge the existing *imago humanis*' (pp. 16, 17).

This leads him to the affirmation, 'the crisis of nature forces us to rethink our whole understanding of the relation between humanity and nature'. Essentially this declaration focuses on a consideration of the connotation to be given to the image of God in man. Historically this concept has been read in terms of man's separatedness from and domination of the natural world. He would have the term understood as that of stewardship—dominion in stewardship. For Hall the image of God is a relational concept designed to characterise man's relation to the natural order (of the dust of the ground) and to God (let us make man in our own image). Man is only understood in relation to both: to both he has responsibility. This leads Hall to a

consideration of the cosmic and physical reality of Christ's saving action. God is, to be sure, the sovereign God; and man is, to be sure, a free being. But God's sovereignty can be exercised through man's freedom so that by co-operation of the divine and the human a new social order may be established free from the threat of nuclear annihilation, species destruction, and environmental pollution. The Christian is challenged to lift his stewardship well above and beyond the confines of a pragmatic ethic. For the 'motivation for our stewardly acts of preservation as Christians, is not merely utilitarian (as when, for example, it is said that human beings need to preserve forests because we ourselves, or future generations of our kind, are going to need our forests). Rather, as preservers and conservers of all life, we have our commission as a sacred trust that inheres in our new identity—or, more accurately, this old identity into which we are newly born through grace and repentance' (p. 200).

Much of what Hall has to say is good and challenging. It may be taken as supporting a remark of G. K. Chesterton that, 'The absence from modern life both of the higher and lower forms of faith is largely due to a divorce from nature and trees and clouds' (*Christmas and the Aesthetics*). It is right and proper for Hall to remind Christians that the total cosmos is the object of God's concern and to relate themselves to it as his world knowing themselves to be stewards of its manifold gifts.

But there are, however, a number of things that cannot be accepted in Hall's presentation of the thesis. Two especially we list here. Unacceptable for the Evangelical believer is a) his implied universalism, which is in fact at odds with his own emphasis on human free-will. Unacceptable also b) is his view that the eschatological aspect of the kingdom of God will have its fulfilment in a this-world context. The Marxian dream of a universal stateless and classless state can never be realized with the historical process. It is beyond history that the new heaven and new earth in which dwells righteousness will have its being. This does not, of course, exempt the Christian from the recognition that the world in which he presently lives is God's gift which he holds in trust in the 'dominion of stewardship' until that kingdom comes that shall have no end.

Therefore to Chesterton's remark must be added as a fuller expression of the truth one by the poet Browning. 'Do you care for nature much?', a friend asked him, 'Yes, a great deal', he said, 'but for human beings a great deal more'.

43, The Rough Newick, Sussex

DERMOT McDONALD

CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Anthony A. Hoekema

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids; Paternoster, Exeter, 1986

264 pp. £12.95

ISBN 0 85364 446 2

Anthony Hoekema is emeritus Professor of Systematic Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary. He thus writes from a Reformed position, at once scholarly and conservative. But he is broadminded in the best sense: his examples of the 'great saints' include not only Paul, Luther, Calvin, but also Francis of Assisi, Bonhoeffer, Mother Teresa and Billy Graham. He has

definite views of his own (with most of which your reviewer finds himself in agreement); but he is very fair to those of other schools, and his comments on them are never ungenerous nor inconsiderate. The style is not compressed nor technical, in fact quite the reverse. It is easy to read and in places repetitive; but this is not a fault in a work possibly aimed at second year theological students or well-informed laymen. The references to the work of other theologians are weighted more than usually towards the Dutch schools: Aalders, Bavinck, Berkhof, Berkouwer and Ridderbos are often referred to, but Aquinas, Augustine, Barth, Calvin, Irenaeus, C. S. Lewis and John Murray are also included. His coverage of the subject matter is wide, wider in fact than the title suggests: the importance of the doctrine; man as a created being and as a person; the image of God in biblical teaching, in historical understanding and summarised as a theological tenet; the question of man's self-image; the origin of sin, its spread, its nature and the influences which restrain it at the moment; the matter of the whole person, and the meaning of freedom. This is not an epoch-making work of pioneer theology; but it is a very valuable introduction to a subject of great importance, biblically well-based and didactically well-designed to open up the subject. I have enjoyed reading it, and the pastoral impact of the chapter on one's own self-image remains vividly with me. I hope it finds wide use in theological schools.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS SPANNER

ETHICS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: Change and Development

Jack T. Sanders

SCM Press Ltd. London, 1986 144 pp. £5.95 pb

ISBN 0 334 00399 7

This is a paperback version of a work first published in 1975, updated with a new preface. The author is Professor of Religious Studies in the University of Oregon, and his controversial thesis, 'which has not been countered in the decade since it first appeared', may be summarised in two quotations: 'Jesus does not provide a valid ethic for to-day' (p. 29); and '... we reached the conclusion that neither his teaching, nor his life, nor the Jesus who confronts the hearer of the church's *kerygma* is able to transcend the time-bound character of imminent eschatology' (p. 31). The trouble with New Testament ethics, the author maintains, is that it is all dependent for its validity on the idea that the kingdom of God was just about to materialise. It is only practicable policy on that assumption. Since events proved the assumption false, and the *parousia* has failed to arrive even yet, the New Testament cannot provide us with the ethical guidelines we need to-day. Thus the parable of the good Samaritan fails to meet our case; 'the only hope of the one who accepts the demand of the parable is that the righteous God should come shortly . . . otherwise he will either starve to death or end up a derelict'. The author acknowledges the overwhelmingly negative emphasis of his conclusions. However there are some positive things to be said. 'We are now at least relieved of the need or temptation to begin with Jesus, or the early church, or the New Testament, if we wish to develop coherent ethical positions'. But he does not enlarge on why we should wish to develop such, given that eschatological incentives are denied us; nor why we should be bothered about 'Christian' ethics at all.

This book struck me as the sort of ivory-castle theorising that is proved false by the testimony of countless holy lives. Whether the *parousia* is delayed or not, those who wholeheartedly trust Christ and follow Him find a satisfying fulfilment in their own hearts of what, the author implies, the early Christians expected but did not obtain. I suspect that somewhere the author has missed what is hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS SPANNER

RESURRECTION AND MORAL ORDER An Outline for Evangelical Ethics

Oliver O'Donovan

I.V.P., Nottingham, 1986 284 pp. £14.95 (cloth)

ISBN 0 85111 745 7

By any standard of measurement, Professor O'Donovan's long-awaited book on Evangelical ethics will be a milestone in its field. It is a work of outstanding erudition, taking the reader through the entire history of ethical thought in the Western world, and demanding of him a considerable prior knowledge of it. The New Testament and the work of St. Augustine are the central texts around which everything else revolves, and the concluding chapters on love as the end of the moral law are as able a restatement of traditional Augustinianism as one is likely to find.

Of course, this also means that Professor O'Donovan finds himself in the typically Augustinian dilemma of having to apply a moral standard, which by its nature must exist in the public domain, to a world in which Christianity has been relegated to the realm of private practice. The long discussion of Church discipline and the admission that excommunication is now a practical impossibility in a Protestant Church merely highlights the difficulty which the evangelical moralist faces, and which he cannot resolve without fundamentally rejecting the circumstances in which we find ourselves at the present time. Professor O'Donovan wisely refuses to do this, and tries to resolve his dilemma within the bounds of modern reality.

It is at this point that the meaning and force of love come to the fore, because only by love, which is essentially a personal ordering of social relationships, can a solution to the problem be found. The final chapters of this book are among the most moving and persuasive in it, with the closing vision of the Last Judgment an appropriate finale to the whole work. Professor O'Donovan recognises and celebrates the provisional character of all human effort, and therefore of all human ethics, and concludes with the reaffirmation of the centrality of man's response to God's grace as the foundation of a truly Evangelical morality.

The book is divided into major and subsidiary sections throughout, rather in the style of Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. The subsidiary sections develop a wide range of arguments, and demonstrate the breadth and depth of Professor O'Donovan's learning. For theological professionals they are among the most exciting parts of the book, though the general reader may find some of the detail hard to follow at times. Indeed, it must be emphasised that in intellectual terms, this is not a book for midgets, but for very tall giraffes! That may lose it some readers, but the gain in seriousness for those who make the effort to come to terms with what Professor O'Donovan is

saying will more than make up for that loss in the life of the Church.

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GERALD BRAY

COME HOLY SPIRIT David Pytches

Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1985 286 pp. £2.50

ISBN 0 340 38513 8

The importance of this book lies in the fact that it is aimed at, and has helped to mature a growing movement within the Church. Although this book was first published nearly two years ago it warrants review, not just for the above reason, but also because it is still a best seller.

In its favour, this book unreservedly draws our attention to the whole issue of the function of the so called 'Gifts of the Spirit' within the wider ministry of the Church. Equally positive is the emphasis placed on the teaching ministry of the Church being a practical one that demands practical action; 'The meeting place is the learning place for the market place' (p. 118).

Bishop Pytches's frequent use of Scripture *should* be the most positive facet of the book, but unfortunately this is not the case. His use of Scripture is, to put it mildly, curious, and to put it strongly, highly questionable. It seems as if Pytches views Scripture as being somehow subordinate to 'experience'. This theme underlies the whole of his work, nowhere explicitly expressed, but nevertheless implicitly present. This experiential trait is seen quite clearly in chapter 12, which points our attention to the subject of 'words of knowledge'. He commences with a definition that fits nicely with the four pages of modern day examples of the phenomenon. But this same definition contains no points of Scriptural reference, and is seemingly devoid of any Scriptural content. The first Scriptural reference comes on the chapter's second page, where we find sixteen different texts that supposedly refer to this phenomenon. But it should be noted that not one of these texts explicitly refers to this 'gift' by name: we have to wait until the seventh page of the chapter before he actually refers to the text that yields the title 'word of knowledge', (I Cor. 1. v.8). Once again we see experience standing dominant over Scripture in the section entitled 'How is the Gift exercised?' Here he lists fifteen guidelines to assist in the use of the gift, but we do not see one reference to Scripture, or any overtly Scriptural content.

The shallow, even naive way in which he uses the text is demonstrated most clearly in chapter 15, which is entitled 'Falling under the Power of God'. Once again he attempts to explain an experience prevalent in the charismatic wing of the Church, by quoting many Scriptures, none of which actually refers to any such phenomenon. For example, the first Scripture he quotes is Ezekiel 1. v. 28, saying 'The Prophets sometimes fell as the Spirit came upon them, . . . ' (p. 149). But Ezekiel 2. v. 2 tells us the opposite: ' . . . the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet . . . '

Whilst this book draws our attention to the whole issue of the use of Spiritual Gifts in the Church today in an honest and brave way, the author's naive, cavalier and sadly inadequate handling of the texts surely draws the validity of this attempt into question.

SPEAKING IN TONGUESEdited by **W. F. Mills**

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1986, distributed by Paternoster, Exeter

537 pp. £22.20 pb

ISBN 0 8028 0183 8

A contemporary Christian of some years' standing who has never heard of modern tongue-speaking can only be living on a desert island. The phenomenon as experienced among the nineteenth century followers of Edward Irving was not known very widely, and even Pentecostalism, beginning in 1900, was somewhat unfamiliar to Christians whose contacts with other believers were chiefly within their own denominations. The Charismatic movement, however, from its commencement in 1959, touched denomination after denomination before tendencies towards a new denominationalism, in the so-called House Church movement, began to develop.

This major book will be of value to research students, teachers of theology, ministers and others concerned to evaluate the phenomenon. The editor says (p. viii):

In the course of a quarter century of research certain evaluatory models emerged as methods for examining the phenomenon, enabling it to be studied from different perspectives. This volume attempts to bring together examples of these methodological approaches so that the reader can appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective.

Much of the material consists of reprints of articles published in various journals. The volume opens with the editor's Introduction and Survey of the Literature. Part One, entitled 'Exegetical Studies', is the longest in the book. Despite the term 'exegetical' it is not all Biblical, for it includes a survey of glossolalia and related phenomena in Non-Christian religions (incidentally with a very useful seven page bibliography). Disappointingly, it concentrates on the more obvious Biblical passages, but detailed exegesis of other passages sometimes interpreted in terms of glossolalia (like Romans 8:26-28), would have been useful.

Part 2, 'Historical Studies', ranges from the wide survey, 'The Significance of Glossolalia in the History of Christianity' to Nathan Gerrard's fascinating localised study of the holiness movement in Southern Appalachia.

Part 3, 'Theological Studies' is almost unbelievably thin and is most disappointing. Here was a missed opportunity for including previously published or new contributions on such issues as the relationship of glossolalia to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit generally; its place in the *Heilsgeschichte*, with studies of the theological significance of Pentecost and the meaning of Baptism in the Spirit, etc.

Parts 4 and 5 present psychological and sociocultural studies respectively. To many readers, even those not sharing the reviewer's disappointment with the exegetical and theological sections, these will probably be the most stimulating and instructive parts of the volume. The two articles 'Psychological Observations' by John P. Kildahl and 'Personality Differences between high and low dogmatism groups of Pentecostal believers' makes specially interesting reading.

The very useful Bibliography extends to 35 pages and will be invaluable for research students. It does not, however, include

Churchman

books treating glossolalia in a wider context, and mentions nothing by Owen, Warfield, Kuypers, Stott, Suenens or Dunn! F. D. Bruner is included, although F. W. Beare in his article appears to identify him as a Pentecostal whereas he is a critic of Pentecostalism.

So this is a useful and stimulating, but, in important ways, a disappointing volume.

Bible Training Institute, 731 Great Western Road, Glasgow

GEOFFREY GROGAN

A HANDBOOK OF THE MINISTRY A Guide to Ordination in the Anglican Communion

W. R. F. Browning

Mowbray, Oxford, 1985 146 pp. £4.75 pb

ISBN 0 264 66902 9

The Author is well qualified to write on his subject, having for a good number of years been the Bishop of Oxford's Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Director of the Oxford Diocesan Non-Stipendiary Ministry Course. In this book, subtitled *A Guide to Ordination in the Anglican Communion*, he gives a survey of the history of the ministry and considers the contemporary scene, with reference to the N.S.M. and readers' and women's ministries. He is obviously up-to-date on his material which he supplements with five useful appendices: on taking the first steps towards ordination; grants and stipends; colleges and courses; useful addresses; and a select bibliography.

Those who know Canon Browning will be familiar with his standpoint and will not be surprised at some of the positions which he quotes with approval but which others of us would question, for example, T. W. Manson's idea on p. 6 that Jesus did not go to Jerusalem to die. On the other hand the view of apostolic succession on p. 11 is a very enlightened one, and views such as Jerome's of the priesthood are admitted to be distortions (pp. 19-20). There is a sensitive picture of the bishop's work on pp. 35-36 (though the comparison between them and rural deans in relating to junior clergy is rather a sweeping generalisation). The opportunity of occasional offices is discussed with enthusiasm for weddings (p. 49), though the author has little sympathy with baptismal rigorists (p. 34).

This is a useful addition to Mowbray's series, and should be given to all who are contemplating any form of ministry in the Church of England.

Christ Church Vicarage, Ware, Hertfordshire

DAVID WHEATON

SPIRITUALITY AND PASTORAL CARE

Kenneth Leech

Sheldon Press, London, 1986 149 pp. £4.95 pb

ISBN 0 85969 520 4

Originally given as lectures, this paperback offers a new type of spirituality other than that known to the mystics and writers on the spiritual life. The author's aim is 'to overcome the gap between spiritual life and practice' by offering views on the foundations and ministry of spirituality, and illustrated

by four Priests he knew. In doing this he ignores the Catholic three-fold path of Purgation, Illumination, and Union, and makes no reference to the vast body and clear insights of Puritan and Evangelical thought. He majors on the Desert Fathers, St. John of the Cross with his 'Dark night', liberation theology, Kingdom concepts, and sociological norms. He has much to say about the need of silence and struggle, but is less happy about scripture, and has no time for crusading fundamentalists (a term that he does not define), as being hostile to Christianity, unintelligible, and too selective. But he rightly says it is easy to study texts and not to be confronted with the Word. Written by a High Churchman the book takes little account of a spirituality that fructifies into a desire for evangelism. His main concern is that it should prove itself by transforming human society, rather than in seeing Christianity as a remedy for man's sin and inner dereliction. Its effect, he thinks, should be the creation of wholeness of character for social and political purposes. To this end he looks for spiritual renewal by the Eucharist through which the Priest becomes 'a Eucharistic person, a walking sacrament of Christ's sacrificial presence'. Such language, even if understood, can have little appeal to those who root their faith, life, and spirituality in scripture.

Leech says much about the Kingdom of God as a social order concerned with nuclear disarmament, the poor and feminism from the standpoint that 'biblical spirituality is social spirituality'. It is questionable whether his use of the hackneyed remark that 'God is on the side of the poor' is a scripture truth. Were not the Patriarchs, King David, Joseph of Arimathea, Lydia and others rich?

Alongside of this he tends to make religion the servant of depth psychology, and questions the value of case-work counselling. What is missing in his book is any note of the cross of Jesus as a reconciling force that integrates personality; and it is this neglect that is unlikely to attract evangelicals who regard Christ's death (not the Kingdom) as being central to the New Testament, and the dynamic of the spiritual life. Lacking too, is any compelling note on the personal work of the Holy Spirit as a main element in spiritual growth.

Of more general value is Leech's closing chapter on a renewed Priesthood through spirituality. To 'multitudinism' (Martin Thornton's phrase) he attributes much of the stresses and problems clergymen face, and looks for an ideal Priesthood in character and identity rather than in managerial success. He has severe words to say about the concern for Church Growth that he believes may indicate spiritual decline and loss of a personal worth when a church's saturation point is reached. These are wise and cautious sentiments that the Church at large needs to hear; as also his examination of 'Spiritual Direction' as 'a deeply spiritual ministry within the Body of Christ'. Here, he has little time for new syncretistic spiritual cults. And as for the charismatic movement, he sees it crying out for direction, and in danger of separating itself from the orthodox Christian tradition.

In spite of the above criticisms and weaknesses, this is a book to read, ponder on, and pray over. Although written from a High Church standpoint, it has in it much of value for evangelicals and radicals.

Churchman

DYNAMICS IN PASTORING

Jacob Firet

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1986

319 pp. £22.50

ISBN 0 8028 3625 9

Jacob Firet has been Professor of Practical Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam since 1968, and this book, first published in Dutch in 1973, has now been translated for an English readership. The original title in the Dutch was literally 'The Agogic Movement in Pastoral Rôle-Fulfilment'—a better description of its contents than its English title.

'Agogic' is a somewhat puzzling word at first encounter. 'Agogy is the objective functioning, psycho-spiritually—with pure receptivity, clear discernment, and creativity—of one human being in relation to another, for whose becoming he bears responsibility, **in order that** the other may function independently.' If that sounds complicated, it must be said that this is one of the more straightforward statements in the book! To express it, hopefully, more simply: a key purpose of pastoral work is to bring about the beneficial change God wants in people's lives. This change—the author suggests—is not achieved by 'a know-it-all, meddlesome or facile attitude' on the part of the pastor, but by thinking things through with an individual, according to biblical principles, and then saying, in effect, 'Now it's up to you!'

He examines in considerable depth and detail the way in which a pastor fulfils this rôle in preaching in a worship service, in systematic instruction, and particularly in one-to-one counselling or exhortation, especially as it arises through special needs and crises in people's lives.

Helpful insights are shared, and not least those relating to ministerial training and the need of the pastor to be always learning. The important point is made that the study of theology is not identical with studying to be a pastor, although a pastor must study theology. In theological education instruction is seen as helping in the learning process. Instruction must not simply be a matter of lectures but must involve the student in considerable personal activity in the teaching process.

The pastor is urged to become conscious and critical of his self-image and rôle-concept, so that he may become what people and God expect of him. Firet makes the significant point that we can only communicate effectively if we are both competent and trustworthy (i.e. we say only the things we genuinely believe).

The book, however, is incredibly complicated, and one of the most difficult that I have ever read. It is full of specialised language—such as 'agogy'—and it requires more than usual application to tune into it. It suffers from being a doctoral dissertation presented in 1968. Doctoral dissertations seldom make good reading. The book would have been immeasurably more helpful if the author had presented us with his basic reasoning and conclusions, with plenty of practical application, free from jargon, rather than compelling us to go through all his necessary arguments for the presentation of a dissertation. The list of works cited, for example, takes up 13 pages at the conclusion of the book.

No doubt Professors of Practical Theology will welcome it, and theological students will plough through it, if so directed, but few pastors will find it as helpful as the book's title might suggest. It raises an important question—

Should works on pastoral theology be written by academics or pastors?

11 Midmar Gardens, Edinburgh

DEREK PRIME

EARTH AND ALTAR

Donald Gray

Alcuin Club/Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1987

248 pp. £10.50 pb

ISBN 0 947547 55 9

When one reads the latest Alcuin Club publication by Donald Gray, Rector of Liverpool and soon to move to Westminster Abbey, one comes to believe that the parish clergy of the Church of England are still sometimes 'Stupor mundi'. Originally written as a thesis for a Ph.D., Dr. Gray's book is carefully and indeed painstakingly researched and yet reads with the fascination of a novel. It is fully annotated and there are three useful indices including a very full bibliography which will provide the reader with an excellent guide to further study. There is also an interesting index of churches referred to in the text which brings a note of sadness to the mind when one realises that some of those buildings are no longer in use for worship.

The somewhat misleading title may put off many people but this is, in fact, an important book on the history of the Parish Communion movement in this country, starting not with the publication of Hebert's book but tracing its origins far back into the early history of the Tractarian Movement and the partly overlapping and partly parallel Christian Socialist groupings. In one sense it seems that Canon Gray has made too much of the Christian Socialist origins of the movement for it is surely clear that there were many who took up the idea of the Parish Communion without any concept of the socialist overtones which it certainly had in many parishes during the early days.

But what makes this book particularly useful is the fact that there is, within these covers, an accurate, interesting and fascinating study of three major elements of the English Church in the past one hundred years or so.

First, there is a masterly summary of the rise of the Tractarian and Anglo-Catholic party in the Church of England with a most interesting exposition of how it came about that the Anglo-Catholic movement began to propagate the idea of Fasting Communion. The reader is given a very accurate assessment of the strengths and failures of the Anglo-Catholic Movement and the way in which it was made up of at least three sections: the Roman ritualists, the Prayer Book-Enriched school and the Christian Socialists.

The second and major part of the book is a painstaking survey of the various movements and societies which made up the Christian Socialist Movement with its insistence that worship often 'has little relationship to his moral character and purpose as it is seen in Christ's intense love for the poor and the oppressed, in the spirit of justice, in his indignation with injustice and the denial of human rights' (Jim. Wilson in *The Leap*). It is instructive and saddening to find that Canon Gray can find little evidence of Evangelical involvement either in the socialist movement or in the fight for justice during this period. One suspects that this was because Evangelicals lacked a coherent philosophy of social concern and action and were over-involved in relieving the needs of the poor without changing the structures that made them poor and powerless.

The third section of the book charts the gradual establishment of the Parish Communion as a norm for a great many Church of England parishes. Again the treatment is clear, interesting and judicious. One is left with the question as to why it is that so few Evangelical parishes have in fact gone down this road in spite of the 1967 Keele Conference's recommendation. It said: 'We determine to work towards the practice of a weekly celebration of the sacrament as the central corporate act of the church'. The answer is perhaps that Evangelicals have always had one eye on the need to evangelize and they have not been convinced that a diet of Holy Communion services is in fact the right way to bring new people into the church and to the Lord. It is for this reason that Family Services have become the preferred option in recent years and of course the debate continues. What is quite certain is that Dr. Gray's book will help to clarify the issues for assessing the way forward in the next twenty years or so.

I have only one objection to this book and that is its title. Could I suggest that, if it is reprinted, as it should be, a sub-title is provided—perhaps 'A history of the Parish Communion movement'. This is a book which should indeed be read in theological colleges as well as elsewhere though it will be difficult for the librarians to classify being both history and liturgy.

We can thank God that Evangelicals are now at long last coming to grips with the issues recounted in this book. We still need to pray that God will show us the way ahead.

34 Milner Street, London S.W.3

JOHN PEARCE

TWENTY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON ARMS CONTROL, DISARMAMENT AND DEFENCE

The Council for Arms Control, 1986 39 pp. £2.00

Where the talk is of fusion and fission, first use, first strike, and star wars, it is good to have this handy reference work produced by a body claiming to be independent of governments, lobbies, or dealers. If the number twenty is a mere device, since many questions are complex and combined, that is part of its overriding aim of clarification.

The text is supplemented by diagrams, a glossary of nearly fifty common abbreviations, and a map of the nuclear 'balance' for 1985–6. Its attention to detail is marred only by 'Navy' for 'Nagy' in referring to a former Hungarian government; otherwise, clarity comes first, as in the useful summary of N.A.T.O. and the Warsaw Pact.

The merit of objectivity has a danger; rarely do we visualise the actual effect on human beings of the kind of 'arms' under discussion—which are hardly those envisaged by the Thirty-nine Articles. Here are nuclear escalations, integrated battlefields, targets, destruction, and of course 'the enemy': 'Poison gases were used with considerable effect . . . Biological agents are designed to infect enemy populations', and so on. This is to contribute to the abuse of language and the desensitizing of the mind.

It is like the technical descriptions of sex which we all deplore when they are severed from moral considerations, only worse. Or Gulliver setting down with studious seriousness the footling disputes of the Lilliputians. 'Value judgments', says the Foreword, 'we leave to the reader'.

The booklet came just too soon to mention Chernobyl, and is just too factual to say much about risk, error, or fallout. These are vast areas where even experts are ignorant.

Limehouse Rectory, London E.14

CHRISTOPHER IDLE

THE GOSPEL COMMUNITY AND ITS LEADERSHIP

John Tiller and Mark Birchall

Marshall Pickering, Basingstoke, 1987 168 pp. £4.95 ISBN 0 551 01398 2

Having worked in a parochial situation with a team for over twenty years, I approached this book to see how we could have benefitted should it have been available when our teams were evolving. In common with most of what is said our situation arose from a pastoral need. Not that it can be taken as a blue-print and I am sure that the authors would concur. It is for those who know God is calling them to exercise a ministry of corporate leadership. This is not the John Tiller of the Report fame, but one who draws on the experience he has had in a parish, a theological college, an administrative post and now the canonry of a cathedral. One wonders, however, whether the establishment, which he now serves could stand some of the suggestions which he makes, biblical as they are. Nevertheless, this is a worthwhile attempt to assess, and to a certain extent, formulate methods of strengthening Christian witness in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Based on the rediscovery by the whole church of the 'Priesthood of all believers', including the Catholics as well as Protestants, it is shown that this is a form of renewal which needs to be carefully nurtured and extended. It has its difficulties and these are genuinely stated. Frustration with existing denominations has often led to the formation of yet another grouping under the 'House Church' movement with its varying rallying points and personnel. If the situation of those who are frustrated is carefully and prayerfully handled then they will remain within the established churches. And 'this book is written in the conviction that there is a far more important way of appealing to biblical authority when it comes to altering the church's structure'.

The opening chapters analyse the reasons for the position and practice of the organised church. It is suggested that clericalism, cultic religion and institutionalism are cramping what should rightly be a 'Gospel Community'. Unfortunately the training of the clergy, at least in the Church of England, has often led to many a minister being afraid of 'letting go of the reins' and allowing a team situation with all its implications to develop. We have inherited a form of religion which calls for one man to lead the flock and to look after 'his people'. Called he may be, but no one can exercise all the gifts needed even in the smallest company of God's people. Church growth researchers have drawn attention to the limitation on numbers created by a one man ministry and at the same time have discovered that growing churches are those which have small groups working within them. As the authors state 'to put it bluntly, the gospel community is unsuitable for fulfilling the religious needs of mankind which continue to demand the provisions of shrines and cultic priesthods'.

The New Testament pattern of ministry and leadership is traced in chapter six, where it is concluded that corporate leadership is to be found more often

Churchman

than has been acknowledged in the past. The ordained minister exists to provide oversight, a focus of unity and a representative authority, sustained by the charismatic gifts of the ascended Christ.

Part 3 covers the changing scene, corporate leadership and its lessons and the clarification of the vision. Examples are given, problems stated and principles enunciated. Finally the advice is given 'We have always moved slowly, we have taught, explained, persuaded. There are always some people whose security is threatened by change. We were determined to carry the whole congregation with us'.

Here we have the clues to a real team ministry, which is different from those advocated in official circles based on a clerical caste. The Appendix reveals what a dilemma can be caused and what such a ministry faces when it comes to Holy Communion.

Stamford, Lincolnshire

JOHN BOURNON

THE SILICON SOCIETY

David Lyon

Lion Publishing, Tring, 1986 127 pp. £2.95 ISBN 0 86760 802 1

It is perhaps too late to say that the rise of Information Technology, based on the silicon microchip, is comparable to 'the cloud no bigger than a man's hand' which Elijah's servant reported; yet the comparison is otherwise not inapt. The silicon chip is a small fragment of the semi-conducting element silicon (very abundant in the earth's crust) which by mass production methods can be fashioned very cheaply into an electronic circuit containing perhaps the equivalent of 10,000 transistors, the whole occupying no more space than a wire paperclip. This amazing little invention has initiated an explosion in what is called Information Technology: the handling, storage, processing and delivery of every conceivable kind of information, from TV signals, tax returns, bank payments, the bearings of targets, instrument readings, numbers, mathematical functions and much else. Already the impact of this new technology is widespread, and most of us have come across it in some form or other: home computers, digital watches, word processors, bar-coding on goods from the supermarket, phones with memories and so on. Less happily, we know it is connected with the guidance systems of inter-continental missiles, bugging devices, homing weapons and other engines of war. In many modern factories (as in the automobile industry) work once done by skilled workers is now performed by chip-controlled robots; and in the most up-to-date offices secretaries and clerk are being replaced with electronic devices. Allied with new means of telecommunication (such as optical fibre cable networks and satellite broadcasting) the way is opening for business to be conducted without the sort of person-to-person contact hitherto the rule. A revolution is rapidly moving upon us, as profound as (or profounder than) the industrial revolution. What is going to be the effect on human society? Is the new technology going to be servant, or master? The result is by no means a foregone conclusion, especially with the possibility of 'Artificial Intelligence' fifth-generation computers within the next decade.

Dr. Lyon, who is studying the social aspects of information technology as a research fellow at Leeds University has given us a very challenging call to

face up to the issues which will increasingly confront us. It is a task which requires some degree of engineering know-how, and it is earnestly to be hoped that biblically-informed technical experts will feel a call to give their time to facing it for the rest of us. My impression is that given man's fallen nature this whole field is one which contains some very threatening possibilities. I could have wished that his last chapter *What can be done? Practical proposals* had been rather more on the common man's level, for all of us need to be alerted.

The book contains the substance of lectures given at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity in 1985. It is well-written and holds the attention to the end.

Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

THE BOOK OF PRAISES 70 Psalms for Singing Today

Edited and Compiled by David G. Preston

Carey Publications, 1986 110 pp. £2.80 pb

ISBN 1 870315 00 6

£3.50 spinal bound

ISBN 1 870315 01 4

Full marks to David Preston. This is the type of Psalm book that many of us have been waiting for. Here you find 71 (although it says 70 on the cover) modern English Psalms in metrical form. 33 are from the pen of Preston but Christopher Idle (14) and Timothy Dudley-Smith (6)—whom the compiler/editor correctly acknowledges as 'two of England's finest living hymn writers'—are well represented. However, it should be noted that a further 14 are the editor's adaptations of earlier metrical psalms by Watts (8), Browne, Cowper, Lyte, Montgomery, Spurgeon and Tate and Brady. Throughout Preston has kept to the meaning and mood of the original text. It is here that his book scores so highly over others on the market. His psalms, unlike those of Idle and Dudley-Smith, excellent though they are, instead of being based on or taken from the original, are actually metrical versions of the original. The recommended tunes, though not all easy (see San Rocco, Psalm 108), are in the main familiar and easy to follow. It is evident that they have been chosen with great care (to suit the mood as well as the metre) and should be preferred to those of a similar metre. Some are printed (27 in all). The others are available in other hymn books. For example, I found all except four of the recommended first tunes (namely Cornwall, Belgrave, Cuddesdon and Salzburg Hintze) in *Christian Hymns*. The introductory essay (pp. 3-6) deserves careful attention and the few editorial comments found throughout the text are helpful to both organist or pianist and singers alike. (Incidentally, should not the preposition on line 2 of the note on page 33 be 'in' instead of 'by'?)

I wholeheartedly and unreservedly commend this book. It will help to transform congregational psalm singing in many churches. It certainly will in mine, where chants and chanting disappeared long ago. For sometime we have been on the look-out for a Psalm book in modern English that is both faithful to the original and suitable for congregational use. At last we have found it. Well done, Mr. Preston. All we want to know now is, when is volume 2 (with the remaining 79 psalms in metrical form) being published?

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Low Elswick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

GEORGE CURRY

In Brief

A GLORY IN IT ALL

John Knox

Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1985 150 pp. No price

ISBN 0 8499 0511 7

This is not, in the accepted sense, a devotional treatment of the subject of old age, but rather a series of very entertaining essays giving the Author's reflections on various aspects of growing old. As John Knox mentions in his foreword the essays are wide-ranging and miscellaneous in subject. Each essay stands on its own feet. The reader who is looking for a series of 'proof-texts' will be disappointed, although the book is clearly written from a Christian standpoint. It is encouraging that an educationalist of the calibre of John Knox should write of the danger of the Church, with the aim of making its faith more acceptable, bringing its teaching 'completely under the aegis of a secular intellectualism'.

This is a thought-provoking book revealing a depth of understanding and a breadth of knowledge on the part of its author. It touches on such subjects as education, realism, racism, compromise and death. Not surprisingly a fair proportion of space is given to the last subject but the book as a whole is not confined to the musings of an octogenarian preoccupied with coming to terms with the inevitable.

Those who cherish a special love for the Authorised Version of the Bible will find strong support from Dr. Knox. While he admits that 'on the whole, the better of the new translations are more accurate as well as more understandable' he 'deplores the extent to which they are displacing the older versions in general attention and regard'.

78 Hallowell Road, Northwood, Middlesex

GILBERT KIRBY

ALL ARE CALLED: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF THE LAITY Essays from a Working Party of the General Synod Board of Education

Church Information Office, 1985 85 pp. £3.50 pb

ISBN 0 7151 9034 2

This symposium consists of an introduction by the chairman (Bishop Patrick Rodger, formerly of Oxford), a common statement of the working party's convictions concerning the vocation of the laity, and then a series of essays by the individual members. These are grouped under three headings: critique, reflection and reconstruction.

There is much food in this brief compass for the thoughtful Christian, from the call in the Common Statement for the People of God to 'learn to discern and discriminate and sometimes to say a sharp "NO" to the subtle influences all around us' (p. 4), to the Study Guide published with the Report and which could with profit be used by deanery synods or parochial church councils.

All the essays deserve a careful reading: this reviewer was particularly challenged by Sara Maitland on the position of women (must sexual equality be seen as uniformity?); and encouraged by Mark Birchall (who will be known to many *Churchman* readers) on the case for corporate leadership in the local church—an area of which he has made a special study.

Christ Church Vicarage, Ware, Hertfordshire

DAVID WHEATON

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA**Robert Murray McCheyne**

Reprinted by Christian Focus Publications, Tain, Scotland, 1986

55 pp. £1.75

ISBN 0 906731 518

Any writing by Robert Murray McCheyne always has its appeal. This great man of God, who in his short life had such a profound impact upon his native land continues to have an effect upon certain circles of Christians in these days. There are still those who find his devotional approach and insights enrich their spiritual lives, as did those who gathered for prayer in St. Peter's, Dundee 150 years ago. The writings bear the mark of their purpose and period, but this does not mean that they cannot be read without one's soul being stirred—and that to prayer.

Stamford, Lincolnshire

JOHN BOURNON

THE HOLINESS OF GOD**R. C. Sproul**

Scripture Press Foundation (U.K.) Ltd., 1986 222 pp. £2.50

ISBN 0 9465 14 X

This small book is like the curate's egg, 'good in parts'. If a reader is prepared to accept the author's Americanisms, and his treatment of the subject by way of personal experiences, Bible characters, and extraneous allusions he may find it a popular apologetic for a holy God. But if he expects a theological exposition of holiness he will be disappointed. At times the author's modern idiom breaks forth with telling force, as 'The Christian life is a life of nonconformity, i.e. doing the opposite of what the world does? Or, his suggestion that in Christ's death God signed a peace treaty. Or, that Habakkuk had a 'wrestling match with God, but walked away with wobbly legs.' Sproul does not shirk perennial problems, as, How can a creator God allow human suffering?; What is the relationship of his love to his wrath?; In what way is God's law conditioned by his grace? Of particular merit is the chapter, 'Be Ye Holy', in that it outlines what is meant by living within God's holiness. In general, the book has much to offer to perplexed Bible Christians and to those seeking inspiration to walk the way of God's holiness.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

FUNERAL SERVICES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN ENGLAND

The Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1986 97 pp. £3.50 (cloth)

ISBN 0 907547 53 2

This book contains the main funeral services currently being used in English crematoria, and gathers together in one volume all that the average clergyman is likely to require. There is the service composed by the Joint Liturgical Group, the A.S.B. Funeral Service, the Series 1 service and the Roman Catholic Funeral Rite, plus a selection of twenty-five hymns at the end. The presentation is clear and easy to follow, and the joint collection will make it easier for clergy to use the type of service they prefer, rather than just being stuck with what the crematorium happens to have.

A possible criticism is that the Traditional Language service is Series 1 and not the B.C.P., though the differences between them are not enormous.

Churchman

Nevertheless, it would probably have been preferable to have printed the B.C.P. instead—for one thing, its authorization does not run out in 1990! There is also a Welsh edition with the Joint Liturgy Group and the Church in Wales Funeral Service being printed in both languages, together with eight additional hymns in Welsh at the end. Altogether this is a most useful little book which clergy will want to have and use when circumstances require.

Oak Hill College, London N.14

GERALD BRAY

A HANDBOOK FOR NEWLY ORDAINED CLERGY AND OTHER CLERGY

F. Vere Hodge

Mowbray, Oxford, 1986 237 pp. £4.75

ISBN 0 264 67071 X

Prebendary Vere Hodge's book is truly a *Vade Mecum* for the clergy—whether newly ordained or experienced incumbents. It is in fact a complete practical pastorialia on matters of business. The author includes subjects like a 'Baptism check list' of things to do before the service, what to do on 'Blessing a home', 'Videotaping', 'Terriers', 'Clerical Etiquette' and the like. It is not too much to say that if all the clergy of the Church of England put into practice Prebendary Hodge's precepts, the Church of England would become at last an efficient and caring body.

34 Milner Street, London S.W.3

JOHN PEARCE

A FAITH FOR LIFE

Various authors

Lion Books, Tring, 1985 191 pp. £7.95 hb

ISBN 0 85648 578 0

This lavishly and brilliantly illustrated book is intended for twelve to fourteen year olds but will have a usefulness much wider than that—for example, in less sophisticated parishes, it could be usefully given to adults as an introduction to the Christian faith, or used in Confirmation classes.

It is divided into six sections which are obtainable separately. There is also a teachers' handbook. But this book as it stands will be an excellent resource for all who teach the Christian faith.

34 Milner Street, London S.W.3

JOHN PEARCE

PREMARITAL COUNSELLING: A Manual for Clergy and Counsellors

John L. C. Mitman

The Seabury Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1980 124 pp. No price ISBN 0 86683 879 1

John Mitman is an experienced minister and premarital counsellor. He is currently the Episcopalian Chaplain at Michigan State University, U.S.A. This book presents a much needed systematic approach to premarital counselling—a guide, which any minister, no matter how little experience he has had, should find a valuable help.

The author places premarital counselling into the context of society today with its rising divorce rate. He asks the question 'What should the rôle of the church be with regard to premarital counselling?'—a rather different question from 'What *is* the rôle of the church in this area?' Premarital

counselling is seen as an opportunity for evangelism. The point is made that, although counselling is time-consuming, prevention is better than cure! The author challenges the church to consider its rôle in premarital counselling—a somewhat neglected area. The book is offered by the author as a guide, not the final word.

The author starts with theological considerations. This chapter, although laudable in its attempt to put the rôle of marriage into a theological context, was somewhat confusing in trying to cover so much material in such a short space. What is impressive about the book is its practical approach and clear layout. The appendix contains straightforward outlines for each interview—covering all the aspects to be considered. There is an excellent coverage of all the vital areas which need to be explored, such as finance, rôles, spiritual leadership. The different areas are treated openly but with sensitivity.

This book would need slight adaptation in presenting the material to British couples, in particular the chapter on 'the rehearsal and wedding', however even with this chapter the principles remain the same. This reviewer would have no hesitation in recommending this book as a good clear guide for premarital counselling.

Oak Hill College, London N.14

CLARE WOODHOUSE

EXPLORING CHURCHES

Paul and Tessa Clowney

Lion Paperback, Tring, 1982 128 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 85648 929 8

This lavishly produced edition of a study-guide to ecclesiastical buildings will do much to create and maintain the interest of tourists and others in Churches and Church architecture. It aims to teach the essence of the Christian faith and the way Church buildings and their usage express it. To that end it offers a comprehensive survey of their exterior and interior throughout Great Britain and Europe, including those of the Orthodox Faith. Neatly divided into two parts—a Field Architectural Guide, and The Story of Church Buildings, enhanced by splendid coloured photographs—it is, in the authors' words 'a guide to help you see and ask questions. Perhaps it will help you touch, smell, hear and imagine history'. Unfortunately, the location of some of the churches reproduced is not given, and it is difficult to place a number of others. A section that identifies topographical areas by the styles of churches might have been useful: for example, the towers of Somerset churches, the soaring spires of the East Midlands, and the Hertfordshire 'spike'—a short spire above the tower.

But as one of the best books of its type in print, and at a reasonable price, it should do much to stimulate enthusiasm for Britain's church heritage and an exploration of its ecclesiastical buildings.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

PREACHING ON FAVOURITE HYMNS

Frank Colquhoun

Mowbray, Oxford, 1986 xii + 143 pp. £4.75

ISBN 0 264 67054 X

This is another volume in Mowbray's series on preaching. It consists of short

Churchman

chapters of about four pages on each of thirty-four well-known hymns, made up of both interesting background material and simple comments on the verses. The choice of hymns is wide, and authors as different as Isaac Watts, Sarah Adams and Cardinal Newman are represented. Compared with the author's earlier book (*Hymns that Live*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1980) the treatment is briefer; only one hymn (When I survey) is common to the two collections, so it is worth while having both. I can imagine this book being very useful for parish Songs of Praise services, as well as for private reading.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS SPANNER

INDEX OF REVIEWS

ALDERSON, <i>No Holiness, No Heaven!</i> (G.R. Curry)	68
AULD, <i>Kings</i> (J. Balchin)	58
BACK, <i>Mission England: What Really Happened?</i> (R. Combes)	72
BARTON, <i>Oracles of God: Perceptions of Prophecy in Israel after the Exile</i> (R. Bauckham)	60
BRAY, <i>Knowing Jesus</i> (J.R. Bournon)	65
BRIERLEY, <i>Mission to London, Phase 2: Who went Forward?</i> (R. Combes)	72
BROWNING, <i>A Handbook of the Ministry</i> (D.H. Wheaton)	80
BRUCE, <i>1&2 Thessalonians: Word Biblical Commentary Volume 45</i> (I. Macnair)	64
CALVIN, <i>A Commentary on the Minor Prophets Volume 2: Joel, Amos and Obadiah</i> (G.R. Curry)	59
CLEMENTS, <i>Introducing Jesus</i> (J.R. Bournon)	65
COUNCIL FOR ARMS CONTROL, <i>Twenty Questions and Answers on Arms Control and Defence</i> (C.M. Idle)	84
FIRET, <i>Dynamics in Pastoring</i> (D. Prime)	82
GRAY, <i>Earth and Altar</i> (J.F.D. Pearce)	83
HALL, <i>Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship</i> (H.D. McDonald)	74
HALLIBURTON, <i>The Authority of a Bishop</i> (J.R. Bournon)	71
HOEKEMA, <i>Created in God's Image</i> (D.C. Spanner)	75
LEECH, <i>Spirituality and Pastoral Care</i> (A. Bennett)	80
LOADER, <i>Ecclesiastes: A Practical Commentary</i> (D. Kidner)	58
LYON, <i>The Silicon Society</i> (D.C. Spanner)	86
McGRATH, <i>Understanding Jesus</i> (J.R. Bournon)	65
MILLS, <i>Speaking in Tongues</i> (G.W. Grogan)	79
MORAN, <i>A Closer Look at Catholicism: A Guide for Protestants</i> (D.C. Spanner)	71
O'DONOVAN, <i>Resurrection and Moral Order</i> (G.L. Bray)	77
PRESTON, ed., <i>The Book of Praises: 70 Psalms for Singing Today</i> (G.R. Curry)	87
PYTCHEs, <i>Come Holy Spirit</i> (R. Whitehouse)	78
RUPP, <i>Religion in England 1688-1791</i> (A. Bennett)	69
SANDERS, <i>Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development</i> (D.C. Spanner)	76
SELL, <i>Theology in Turmoil</i> (G.L. Bray)	70
SMITH, <i>Johannine Christianity</i> (G.L. Bray)	66
TILLER, BIRCHALL, <i>The Gospel Community and its Leadership</i> (J.R. Bournon)	85
WEIGEL, <i>Ostrich Christianity</i> (D.C. Spanner)	73
WELLS, <i>Come to me</i> (G.R. Curry)	67
WENHAM, BLOMBERG, ed., <i>Gospel Perspectives VI: The Miracles of Jesus</i> (D.C. Spanner)	63
WHITE, <i>The Fall of a Sparrow: A Concept of Special Divine Action</i> (G.L. Bray)	67

Churchman

IN BRIEF

CLOWNEY, CLOWNEY, <i>Exploring Churches</i>	91
COLQUHOUN, <i>Preaching on Favourite Hymns</i>	91
HODGE, <i>A Handbook for Newly Ordained Clergy and Other Clergy</i>	90
KNOX, <i>A Glory in it All</i>	88
McCHEYNE, <i>The Seven Churches of Asia</i>	89
MITMAN, <i>Premarital Counselling: A Manual for Clergy and Counsellors</i>	90
SPROUL, <i>The Holiness of God</i>	89
VARIOUS AUTHORS, <i>All are Called: Towards a Theology of the Laity</i>	88
<i>Funeral Services of the Christian Churches in England</i>	89
<i>A Faith for Life</i>	90

Other Books Received

- Banner of Truth Trust** G. Whitefield, *Select Sermons with an account of his life* by J. C. Ryle, reprinted 1985, £1.95; J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke Volume 1*, 1986, £2.95, *Volume 2*, 1986 £3.50; *Expository Thoughts on Matthew*, 1986, £2.95
- Christian Focus Publications** C. H. Spurgeon, *Around the Wicket Gate*, 1987 No price
- Darton Longman & Todd** A. Skevington Wood, ed., *The Gift of Love: Daily Readings with John Wesley*, 1986 £1.95
- Focus Christian Ministries Trust** W. Tyndale, *Select Works*, 1986, £4.95
- Hodder & Stoughton** J. Pollock, *Shaftesbury: The Poor Man's Earl*, 1986 £1.95
J. Murray, *Proclaim the Good News: A Short History of the C.M.S.*, 1985 £2.95
- Inter-Varsity Press** W. & S. Lees, *Is it Sacrifice? Experiencing Mission and Revival in Borneo*, 1987 £1.95
- A. R. Mowbray** J. Coggan, *A Pilgrim's Way*, 1986 £6.95
- Navpress** L. Crabb & D. Allender, *Encouragement, the Key to Caring*, 1986 £1.95
- Oxford University Press** *The Oxford Cycle of Prayer*, 1986 £2.95
- S.C.M. Press** D. Juel, *Luke—Acts*, 1984 £5.50
- S.P.C.K.** W. Carr, *The Priestlike Task*, 1985 £3.95
- University Press of America** W. R. Johnson, *A History of Christianity in Belize 1776 - 1838*, 1985 \$13.25