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Book Reviews

- 1, 2 KINGS, WORD BIBLICAL THEMES** T. R. Hobbs
Word Publishing, Waco, Texas 1988 104pp. No price ISBN 0 8499 0795 0
- ISAIAH** J. D. W. Watts
120pp. ISBN 0 8499 0669 5
- HOSEA—JONAH** D. Stuart
121pp. ISBN 0 8499 0789 6
- JOHN** G. R. Beasley-Murray
116pp. ISBN 0 8499 0624 5
- 1, 2 CORINTHIANS** R. P. Martin
131pp. ISBN 0 8499 0623 7
- 1, 2 THESSALONIANS** L. Morris
105pp. ISBN 0 8499 0797 7

These small hard-back volumes are designed to be a companion series to the *Word Biblical Commentary* which is being published at great speed at the moment. Most of the authors writing on the 'themes' have previously contributed to that commentary series. For example, Hobbs, who writes on themes in 1 and 2 Kings wrote the commentary on 2 Kings. The only exception to this among the volumes listed above is the work by L. Morris which complements the commentary written in the series by the late F. F. Bruce.

On the whole, I have found these useful volumes. They draw out themes from the biblical books that are usually noted in the commentaries but not developed. Where those themes are developed in the commentaries, it is frequently difficult to follow them through due to the rather complex format of the commentaries themselves. These books are reasonably straight forward to read. They all pay careful attention to the text and all offer useful insights into the author's purposes and teaching through his whole work.

Watts, in his book on Isaiah, deals at length with two great themes of the revelation of God himself and the service of God. The first part looks at how we know this God who is revealed to us in his world and among his own people. The second part examines how God is to be served and how this is part of his plan. God is said to need servants at every level of society to work with him towards his goals. He is in complete control of all things including his choice of servants. As in all the books, there is every intention to ensure that the truth learned should be applied to today. After discussing God's control over nations, Watts points to modern parallels to the political events of Isaiah's day. He says:

The writer of the Book of Isaiah would not hesitate to claim for God these great movements and changes in history, politics, society and economics. He would challenge us to look for God's strategy that would bring people from all nations and tongues to worship at his feet . . . (p.60).

The theme of Davidic kingship is developed as a sub-section of God's sovereignty over government. It is a pity not more is developed here and that the whole is not expanded considerably. A big advantage of this smaller work, which is true of several of the volumes, is that the more controversial aspects of dating, authorship, and even of some parts of interpretation are, for the most part, ignored in favour of concentrating on the themes. This volume certainly helps open our eyes to some of the themes of this great prophecy in a way that is reasonably useful for a person who may be planning a series of sermons on Isaiah.

An excellent volume is that by Douglas Stuart on Hosea-Jonah. Sadly, it is too short to do justice to all these minor prophets, but there are excellent sections especially on 'social justice' and poverty and wealth in Amos, 'forgiveness' in Jonah and 'corporate and individual sin' and 'covenant' in Hosea. The one on John by G. R. Beasley-Murray tries to cover too much and does not give enough depth to add to some of the excellent other works available which deal with themes in John.

Of special note, and perhaps an example of what can be done with this format is the volume by L. Morris. It is clear and concise and has a feel for consistent biblical and Pauline theology that is often lacking in the other volumes. Themes examined include, 'Jesus Christ our Lord', 'The Last Things', 'The Defeat of Evil', 'The Christian Family'.

These volumes are accessible and worth reading. It is to be hoped some of them will later appear in paperback. They do offer some basic and useful insights that can well be used helpfully to draw the biblical truth out of the text for preaching purposes.

The Vicarage, Hartford, Northwich, Cheshire

PAUL GARDNER

MATTHEW FOR TODAY Michael Green

Word Publishing, Waco, Texas 1990 301pp. \$8.99 pb. ISBN 0 8499 3181 9

This is a book of value to both pastors and people, as the title implies. Michael Green has followed fairly closely the suggested structure of Elizabeth and Ian Billingham. Observing that the first section (1 v.1-13 v.58) covers the Galilean ministry and the second section the ministry in Jerusalem (14 v.1-28 v.20), it is shown that there are blocks of teaching which might well be derived from the idea of the Jewish Torah. Thus the evangelist, it is suggested, has arranged his subject matter topically (or logically) rather than chronologically.

Within this analysis Green has brought to bear his skill both as theologian and communicator. The reader can read the book right through and see the sequence of thought, or can dip into it to discover illuminating, exegesis. Although he makes clear that there is no justification for those who would claim that Jesus bore our sicknesses as well as our sins upon the cross, there appears a hint that some charismatic interpretation is to be found, in that he states that healing today is a sign of the Kingdom.

The helpful pastoral guidance given, however, outweighs such and for this reason alone it would be very worthwhile obtaining a copy. Matthew is seen as more than a Gospel for the Jews, as some have suggested. It is seen to be a

message for the Church to encourage it to come to grips with the life and message of the Messiah and put it in the context of today.

14 Cambridge Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire

JOHN BOURNON

THE MAKING OF MARK: AN EXPLORATION Harold Riley

Mercer University Press, Macon 1989 288pp. \$25.00 ISBN 0 86554 359 3

One of the first things every theological student learns is that Mark was the first gospel, and that Matthew and Luke used Mark together with other sources. That lesson is enshrined in the text books and is the basic assumption of a whole theological industry of source- form- and redaction-criticism. But here is a book which argues that this edifice of criticism has been built on sand. Riley voices the alternative view, whose founding father was J. J. Griesbach, that in fact Mark is based on Matthew and Luke, and the whole Synoptic relationship has to be read the other way round.

Riley begins by making a *prima facie* case for regarding Mark as the last of the Synoptics to be written—he shows how Griesbach's thesis *could* be right. The bulk of the book is a section-by-section analysis of the gospel to show how it *might* be right. Finally the Appendices show, from the characteristics of the Gospels and from ancient testimonies, how it *ought* to be right. But the reader reaches the end of the book still waiting for the conclusive argument to show that it *must* be right.

The strongest arguments which Riley marshals are those from passages which, if Mark came first, show a strange 'sharing out' of Mark between Matthew and Luke, but which, if Mark has used the others, show that Mark has drawn together material from Matthew and Luke. Riley finds such material both at a structural level, in the building blocks of the Gospel, and at the level of particular phrases in Mark which indicate, he argues, that Mark has conflated what he found in Matthew and Luke.

Matthew, Riley concludes, was the first Gospel; first both in order of time (although later worked over for a second edition, which is our canonical Matthew) and also in status as the premier Gospel of the primitive church. Matthew was written for a Jewish readership, and was an ecclesiastical product from the first (though with the figure of the apostle Matthew firmly behind it). Luke-Acts was the work of an individual author, by contrast, and also betrays a Gentile interest. Both of these were teaching Gospels. Mark, though, wanted to produce 'a handbook for the evangelist preaching to potential or new converts rather than for the pastor teaching baptized Christians' (p.50). For this reason Mark cut out large blocks of teaching material from his sources, and other matter such as the infancy narratives, concentrating attention on portraying the urgency of the *kerygma* 'by way of anecdotes' (Riley's interpretation of Eusebius' phrase *pros tas chreias*: p.254f.). Mark's Gospel was probably produced for the Roman church. Riley argues for traditional authorship of the Gospels and very early dates. He envisages the whole process of Gospel composition as an essentially bookish business—the words 'oral' and 'tradition' scarcely, if at all, appear here! The published review comment on the back cover may imply a hidden agenda of attacking Marcan priority as 'the ultimate bastion of modern liberal biblical criticism'.

By drawing together arguments from the historical background of the Gospels, as well as from their literary contents. Riley's work makes a thoughtful contribution to the growing number of studies which are questioning the foundations of the text-book approach to the Synoptics.

But we might be wise not to throw our text books away just yet. The standard problems with Matthean priority remain. For example, on the structural level, why do Matthew and Luke diverge most clearly when Mark has no parallels with them, especially in the infancy and resurrection narratives? Mark the preacher may well have had little use for the infancy stories, but why no resurrection appearances? Riley's handling of Mark's ending is cautious, but uneasy. Or on specific issues: Riley sees no difference between the disciples' rebuke of Jesus in Mk.4.38, and their prayer in Matt.8.25, but many readers will detect a greater reverence in Matthew, which for this reason appears secondary. Riley notes Mark's fondness for Aramaic words and phrases, for which Mark provides translations. It is curious, surely, that Mark should have introduced such phrases in places where Matthew and Luke do not have them. It is not clear either where these phrases came from or what rôle they can have played in his '*kerygmatic*' gospel in Rome. Riley maintains that Mark's Aramaic does not indicate primitiveness—but what does it indicate?

This is not an easy book to read straight through; the style is certainly readable enough, but the Commentary itself calls for sustained concentration, preferably with an open Synopsis in front of you. Even if Riley has not provided the answer to the Synoptic Problem, this is a book worth persevering with, if only to be reminded that text books need not necessarily be right.

Holy Trinity Vicarage, Aberystwyth, Wales

WILL STRANGE

**VERBAL ASPECT IN THE GREEK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
WITH REFERENCE TO TENSE AND MOOD Stanley E. Porter**

Peter Lang Publishing 1989 582pp. \$84.50

ISBN 08204 0847 6

This book is the first in series of 'Studies in Biblical Greek' under the general editorship of Prof. D. A. Carson of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

In his introduction Prof. Carson explains that 'the series is devoted to a fresh philological, syntactical, and linguistic study of the Greek of the Biblical books, with the subsidiary aim of displaying the contribution of such study to accurate exegesis.'

This is a highly detailed specialist grammar described by the publishers as a 'book that will serve both as a textbook for advanced language classes and as a reference tool for Greek language research.' The author's thesis is that the 'semantic category of synthetic verbal aspect provides a suggestive and workable linguistic model for explaining the range of uses of the tense forms in Greek.' If this sounds tough going, the opening sentence of the author's preface is even more discouraging. 'The major assertion of this work in biblical Greek linguistics is that the category of synthetic verbal aspect—a morphologically-based semantic category which grammaticalizes the author/speaker's reasoned subjective choice of conception of a process—provides a suggestive and workable linguistic model for explaining the range of uses of the tense forms in Greek.'

Reduced to simpler language Dr. Porter's thesis is that the way that the tenses are used in Greek and especially in the New Testament is not governed strictly by the aspect of time, that is, past, present or future, but by the way in which the author or speaker views the action taking place. He suggests that there are basically the following three aspects, which he calls:

1. Stative. The Perfect tense is used for a state or condition of the grammatical subject as viewed by the speaker.

2. Perfective. The Aorist is used for a process seen as complete; It often is the 'default' tense when time is not stressed.

3. Imperfective. The Present and Imperfect are used for a process viewed as in progress.

For example, 1 Tim. 5:9 'Let widows be enrolled being sixty years old' (perfect tense—in a state of having reached the age of sixty) and being borne witness to by good works (present tense for a process in progress).

In the Gospels we frequently find that the scene is set by an Aorist followed by the unfolding of the action with an Imperfect or Historic Present, for example, Mark 3:1,2. 'Jesus entered again into the synagogue (Aorist). There was there a man (Aorist) with a withered hand (Perfect—in a state of having been withered) . . . They were watching him (Imperfect—action in progress). Verse 2: Jesus says to the man . . .' (A vivid Present continuing the action in progress.)

These aspects are worked out in meticulous detail tense by tense throughout the New Testament, and a wide range of Classical and Hellenistic authors. In fact he refers to about fifty per cent of all the verses in the New Testament. It is this which makes this book a useful reference volume for 'accurate exegesis'.

Weymouth in the introduction to his translation of the New Testament refers to the 'Jewish Greek of the New Testament,' and speaks of 'this admixture of Hebrew as well as Greek forms of expressions.'

So Porter establishes that the *Koinē* was a language in its own right, with its own tense usages. He tries to forestall objections by minimizing the Semitic influence especially in the uses of the tenses in the Greek New Testament. However in general he seems to underestimate the Jewishness of the New Testament and especially of our Lord's thought. Our Lord's teaching was expressed in Hebrew poetry. An analysis of the balance of line and thought shows his supremacy in this poetic form and explains in some measure the way in which his followers remembered his exact words so well. See for example Kenneth E. Bailey's *Poet and Peasant* (Eerdmans/Paternoster).

In many cases the author can be accused of special pleading in his interpretation. His treatment of Matt. 7:15 is a case in point. He is contrasting the expectation expressed by the future with the possibility expressed by the subjunctive. He writes:

Jesus reportedly instructs his listeners not to cast pearls before pigs lest they can be expected to trample the pearls under their feet, and then may turn on them and tear them up. Jesus implies by his use of the future that whereas it is likely the pigs will trample the pearls they may not necessarily attack the men.

At first sight this appears attractive, but in fact ignores our Lord's use of parallelism (and chiasmus) of which these verses are a typical example:

- (A) Do not give dogs what is sacred; (Dogs)
(B) do not throw your pearls to pigs. (Pigs)
If you do, (B) They may trample them under their feet, (The Pigs)
(A) and then turn and tear you to pieces. (The Dogs)

The parallelism would seem to show that both results are equally likely. Again in Rom. 6:11. He translates 'What he died, he died to sin once for all. But what he lived (Present with past reference), he lived to God.' This it seems is totally incorrect. The present tenses refer to Christ's continuing life. Headlam and Sandy (I.C.C. Romans) say simply 'Christ died for Sin, and lives henceforth for God.'

There are a few slips. On p.299, (Rom. 3:3.), *katargesei* is not to 'establish' but the opposite, 'to make of no effect'. On p.397 (Luk. 2:36.), 'Sarah' should of course be 'Anna'.

I found that this book made me realize once again the accuracy and care of our New Testament authors, (to apply Porter's words on John 1:1-9 to the whole of the New Testament, it is 'well-crafted'), and consequently made me study more accurately what they say and how they say it. This is the value of this book for the minister in his study and makes the effort of reading it worthwhile.

42 Jonas Drive, Wadhurst, East Sussex

SETON MACLURE

CONTEXTUALIZATION: MEANING, METHODS AND MODELS

David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1989 281pp. £16.95 hb. ISBN 0 85111 413 X

In his foreword George W. Peters says he believes that this book, produced by scholars of the School of World Mission and Evangelism of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 'is the most comprehensive treatise on the subject produced by evangelical scholars. It clearly draws the line between legitimate and nonlegitimate contextualization.' It shows that contextualization

can be done without whittling away the sharp cutting-edge of the biblical Gospel. The Gospel is relevant to all ages, but its communication must be contextualized in order for it to be experienced as the living message of God.

The first section of the book deals with the history of contextualization, starting with the Old Testament and New and the early church, and finishing with the modern development of the term in the works of the Theological Education Fund established by the I.M.C. which is now the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. There is, however, no generally accepted definition of contextualization. Some would even think of it as a process of decontextualization where for example we must try to free ourselves from our own preconceived cultural biases before seeking to adapt the biblical message to other cultural contexts.

Owing to the great variety of approaches to this subject, the second section therefore gives examples of contextualization from various parts of the world. This is useful in showing how easily local problems dominate the thinking of the writers to such an extent that the Gospel becomes distorted.

This is perhaps especially true in the case of the Latin American advocates of 'Liberation Theology'.

The third section of the book examines the question of contextualization from various perspectives, philosophical, theological, anthropological, and so on. The last section gives some suggested approaches suitable to different national audiences.

In this review it is not possible to deal with all the authors quoted. I am therefore commenting on those whose works I know, namely Prof. John S. Mbiti and Dr. Byang Kato, and Kenneth E. Bailey.

Professor Mbiti's *Concepts of God in Africa* has become the standard work on African Traditional Religion. Mbiti reviewed anthropological works covering nearly three hundred different tribes in Africa and contends that all believed in a 'High God' the Creator and knew God before the Europeans brought them the Gospel. He believes that missionaries have been at fault in seeking to supplant these African religious beliefs which he feels should be supplemented and not supplanted. Prof. Mbiti commands immense respect throughout Africa. His books are required reading in all African Theological Colleges. He has forced Christians to take African Traditional Religion seriously. He provides an answer to the underlying sensitivity and possible inferiority-complex aroused by those who if not by their words yet by their attitude seem to belittle the traditional African as a superstitious pagan bound by fear and witchcraft. Many second or third generation African Christians have had very little experience of the religion practised by their grandparents. They welcome an affirmation that this was God's revelation to Africa, and are quite unaware that Prof. Mbiti could be wearing mental blinkers or rose-tinted spectacles. But no missionary today would deny that what is good in the old African culture and beliefs should be built on and affirmed, and Prof. Mbiti is to be thanked for this.

The strongest criticism of the ardent advocates of African Traditional Religion as God's revelation for Africa comes from another African, the late Dr. Byang Kato. It is unfortunate that his book *Theological Pitfalls in Africa* is not more widely known outside Africa. He suggests that the key to understanding much that is confusing in African traditional religions is a recognition of 'the paradoxical yes-and-no principle'. He writes:

In these religions man both seeks to find God and also seeks to escape from him. In the past many have emphasized the 'no' and have simply regarded these religions as devilish and idolatrous. Currently many are emphasizing the 'yes', and are seeking to elevate them to the same status as biblical Christianity. This latter approach results in relativism and syncretism, both of which are inimical to true faith.

This perceptive judgment is most helpful.

Kenneth E. Bailey's *Poet and Peasant* written from the background of the peasant culture of the Middle East, takes a different approach to contextualization, dealing more with the understanding of the context and culture of the writers of the New Testament than that of the modern readers. We need to appreciate the life and culture of those times to understand the effect on the hearers of our Lord's parables and teaching. He also seeks to analyse the literary structure of our Lord's teaching, and shows that an understanding of the poetic structure of the parables will explain Christ's methods and purpose and make clear the response that he was seeking. 'A knowledge of both the

culture that informs the text of biblical parables and the literary structures used are crucial to an accurate understanding of them'.

This is the approach that will appeal most to the Christian minister whether serving in a cross-cultural situation or seeking to preach the Gospel to his own congregation.

It is well illustrated by the last chapter of the book which finishes with a 'Contextualized Sermon for nominal Christians in Central or Northern Europe on The Lordship of Christ'. There is a shrewd assessment of the situation in Europe in which nominal secularized Christians of today would be offended by the suggestion that they did not believe. But in fact the object of their faith and commitment is not to Christ himself but to some externalized form of institutional Christianity or to social work or charity. The sermon is an excellent exposition of Heb. 1:1-4 bringing out the meaning of the text in its context, its implications and application to the world of to-day. This is the best and truest contextualization.

42 Jonas Drive, Wadhurst, East Sussex

SETON MACLURE

THE BIBLE IN THE MODERN WORLD James Barr

S.C.M. Press, London: Trinity Press International, Philadelphia 1990

xiv+193pp. Unpriced, pb.

ISBN 0 334 00113 7

This is a re-issue of a book first published in 1973; the text has been left unchanged. There is a brief new preface in which Prof. Barr makes some significant remarks. In 1973 his book was, he says, 'mildly prophetic' in its perception of trends which have since materialized. Scholarship has moved away from an older paradigm based on history to a newer one based on literature; the interest in the *canonical* character of scripture has greatly deepened; and the then rising problem of fundamentalism has (contrary to the hopes of many) become 'perhaps the most serious existential trouble of all religion'. This last comment is unfortunately left in this tendentious form, for Prof. Barr goes on later to use the terms 'fundamentalist' and 'conservative evangelical' interchangeably, which sadly sometimes conveys a somewhat bitter flavour to his otherwise scholarly temper.

His chapters are as follows. *'How we Reached our Present Situation'* is a quick and interesting review of the changing attitude of theology to the Bible since the Second World War. Then follows *'Some Leading Concepts'*, a discussion of ideas commonly used to try to characterize scripture satisfactorily—'Inspiration', 'the Word of God', 'Authority', 'Function'—of which the last seems to be Barr's favourite. *'Cultural Relativism and the New Radicalism'* deals critically with the ideas of such writers as Nineham and Evans, with whom Barr is evidently not altogether in agreement. *'The Bible as Literature'* handles the question, Can its literary properties alone explain the immense influence the Bible has had and continues to have? Hardly. Then comes *'Event and Interpretation—the Bible as Information'*: the important point here, he maintains, is really the theology of the individual writers rather than the detail of the historical matter that they record. *'The Bible in Theology'* is a crucial chapter. It calls in question the whole status of the Bible as the fundamental basis of our theology. In his succeeding chapters Prof. Barr tries to provide an answer to the question of just what should be then our estimate

of this remarkable Book. '*A Basis for Construction*'; '*Theology and Interpretation*'; '*Limitation and Selection*'; '*Word and Meaning*'; '*Letter and Spirit*' bring the work to an inconclusive close. What can we say about it?

Prof. Barr is of course a scholar of international repute, brought up in evangelical circles but long since a strong, even violent, opponent of conservative views. He has a finely intellectual mind, and one cannot but admire the analytical skill which he brings to bear on the questions he discusses. His prose is a pleasure to read, though I was often left wishing he would give examples to illustrate the points he was making, as for instance where he asserts that the Bible as 'theologically imperfect' (p.119), not merely as a consequence of the limitations of human language but more radically. [I wonder incidentally on what criterion he bases this judgment, since he seems ready to envisage a theological world of total relativity. 'In the future we shall judge theologies not by their antecedent criterion but by their output, their results.' (p.51) But surely these results will themselves need an 'anterior criterion' by which to be judged? So where are we?]. His attitude to the Bible is in fact completely naturalistic; it should not be described as the 'Word of God', but rather as the 'Word of Israel' or 'Word of some leading early Christian' (p.120). There are no elements in it 'transcending historical investigation' (p.119). This attitude is of far-reaching consequences, not least for Christology; for Prof. Barr acknowledges that 'There is no doubt that Jesus, as depicted in the Gospels [our sole evidence on this point], accepted the ancient Jewish scriptures as the word of God and authoritative' (*Escaping from Fundamentalism*, p.18). That being so, His teaching on this subject has misled the church for nearly two millennia, and sown the seeds for 'the most serious existential trouble of all religion', a remark quoted above.

I am no scholar, let alone one on a level with Prof. Barr. But I may I think make two general comments. Prof. Barr is so devoted to analysis that he seems to fail to appreciate the wood for the trees. Or to change the metaphor, he has his eyes constantly on the ground. To me, the view of the Bible he commends comes nowhere near doing anything like justice to the stupendous magnitude of the Bible viewed merely as a phenomenon. Within our own lifetime this old book has by its own intrinsic power compelled a large army of scholars of the top rank to devote hours of laborious toil to translating and re-translating it, in constantly multiplying versions; and it continues to hold captive countless multitudes of educated men and women who make it their daily spiritual fare and who, despite all that Prof. Barr can argue to the contrary, regard its authority as a matter beyond dispute—and that, not because they have been brain-washed into doing so, but because that is how it presents itself to their reflective minds. My other point is this: a logical argument is necessarily built up on certain basic presuppositions. These ought to be reasonable; but their validity is not demonstrable. They are a matter of choice; that is, one has a degree of freedom in selecting them. Prof. Barr's presuppositions are those of naturalism; there is nothing in the origin of the Bible, he chooses to believe, 'transcending historical investigation.' This is a presupposition that the conservative evangelical refuses to accept. It cannot be established by any compelling logic; at root it is just a dogmatic article of faith. We prefer as conservatives to choose another: the validity of our Lord's testimony to scripture as recorded in the very Gospels which Divine Providence has put into our hands. This seems to us to make

much better sense of the emphatic witness of scripture to the God 'who also is wise', who is sovereign over history, who formed the tongue, and who speaks to men in actual *words*, the very sort they use themselves. The liberal position, also, as Prof. Ian Ramsey remarked of theology in general today, 'has lost the sense of God's presence'. It has 'become insensitive to God.' It is no wonder it does not speak to the common man. It has nothing to offer him.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

LOVE UNKNOWN Meditations on the Death and Resurrection of

Jesus **John Barton**

S.P.C.K., London 1990 79pp. £4.95 pb.

ISBN 0 281 04440 6

John Barton is well known as University Lecturer in Old Testament and Vice-Master of St. Cross College, Oxford, and as the recent author of *People of the Book?*, a strong attack on the conservative view of the Bible. This was reviewed in an earlier number of *Churchman*. The present little book is a series of Easter meditations written in a pleasant devotional style, and divided into twelve short chapters. Dr. Barton is evidently a man who loves the Lord, and there is some fine writing here, and some things well said. It is often good to see the way those of other traditions of theological thinking regard topics with which as Evangelicals we can be perhaps almost over-familiar. Some of the things in this book I appreciated; but I am bound to say that the overall outlook of the author left me profoundly unsatisfied. The chapters are headed by fairly long extracts from the Gospels and Epistles, but these seem to be there more to embellish the author's remarks than to give them a biblical basis. The author's theology owes a lot to the requirements of his theodicy: how does one account for suffering in a world created by a God of love? He bases his on the supposition of a creation to which God has built-in a vital element of chance and unpredictability, so that even He does not know the way things will turn out. How can He? Thus contrary to the witness of the New Testament, the death of Jesus was not divinely planned (p.21); it was arbitrary, cruel and casual (p.67). John's gospel, in presenting the Cross itself as a place of light, and the moment of Jesus' death as the moment of glory, is 'flawed' (p.67); though I am sure St. John (or the unknown author of his gospel) would have been grateful for the acknowledgement that he 'was not wrong to present Jesus' sufferings as a matter of his own free choice' (p.34). The meaning of the Cross is Abelardian; if the Creation suffers appallingly, at least the loving Creator shows us that He is willing to come down among us and suffer alongside us. What then of the Resurrection? It is God's seal on the sort of life that He approves, a life which arose by 'mutation' [chance?] in the course of human evolution (see Dr. Barton's *People of the Book?*, p.52). God would seem therefore to be in some sense an opportunist, waiting for the right man to turn up. I hope that is not being unfair to the author, but that seems to me to be the way his theology points, and it is a far cry from the Bible's God 'Who works all things after the counsel of His own will'. But it is not only God's Sovereignty which has vanished in this treatment; there is no trace of His holiness, His righteousness, or (needless to say) of His wrath against sin. So His forgiveness becomes a poor pale shadow of its rightful self. Dr. Barton has a perceptive chapter on

Mary Magdalene in the garden. His readers might well be grateful for it; but I wonder how they would feel if they knew that he did not believe the incident really happened as recorded? (I believe that would describe his view).

The book is well-produced, and one can appreciate the devotional spirit of the writer; but the understanding which it offers is a far cry from the historic Christian position. It is symptomatic that it refers at a critical point to Helen Waddell's novel *Peter Abelard* and quotes a lot from the prayers of Janet Morley's *All Desires Known* (Movement for the Ordination of Women); also that it attempts very little exposition of the scripture passages used.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

WILL THE REAL JESUS STAND UP? John Blanchard

Evangelical Press, Darlington 1989 192pp. £2.95 pb. ISBN 0 85234 258 6

The book's purpose is to present the truth about Jesus Christ and this it does in a very able manner. The book is divided into nine chapters. Chapters One to Eight each deal with a different aspect of Jesus and his life and ministry. Chapter One is an introduction and at its end we are asked the question: 'Will the real Jesus stand up?' The second chapter deals with the historicity of Jesus and the veracity of the Bible. Chapter Three looks at the Old Testament promises concerning a coming Messiah. The author gives a potted history of Jesus' descent from Abraham and looks at in some detail ten prophecies concerning Jesus and all fulfilled during his last hours. The chapter closes with a section dealing with Jesus' claim to be the Son of God. The fourth chapter looks at the birth of Jesus, especially at the aspect of the Virgin Birth. He closes the chapter with eight questions for the sceptic to answer.

Chapter Five discusses the humanity of Jesus, covering three areas, physical, emotional and spiritual. He then goes on to the matter of the sinlessness that separates Jesus from anyone else in history. The chapter closes with a discussion of the three charges brought against Jesus. These charges are adequately refuted.

Chapter Six is a long chapter and examines the death of Jesus and its significance. Both in this and the previous chapters, the author makes the point that in most biographies little is told about a person's birth or his actual death, whereas in the case of Jesus there are lengthy chapters in the Gospels about his conception and birth and that one third of the Gospels is devoted to his death. The seventh chapter is also a long one and it is concerned with the resurrection of Jesus. He goes through the alternative theories of how the tomb was empty and proves them each to be without foundation. Examining the facts concerning the resurrection we are led to only one conclusion. From page 131 I quote, 'Jesus did and the explanation lies in his identity'. That identity is looked at in Chapter Eight where the deity of Jesus is discussed. He concludes this chapter with the ultimate question and answers it by examining seven statements from the New Testament. The ninth and last chapter is called 'The Verdict'. The reader is asked to make a decision: Jesus is God, or he is not God. The book closes with a section entitled 'Moment of Truth' in which the reader is urged to 'Turn to Jesus and trust him as your saviour' and 'Submit to Jesus and acknowledge him as your Lord'.

I found the book very readable and would have no problem in giving it to a non-Christian to read. Any person willing to spend the time reading this book will, at the end, be in no doubt where he or she stands as regards the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a book to put on the shelf to gather dust, but to be in constant circulation.

A must for every church library and for Christians involved in witnessing.

London, S.W.6

ROGER COOK

JESUS AND WORLD RELIGIONS Ajith Fernando

S.T.L. Books/MARC, Eastbourne 1988 192pp. £2.50 ISBN 0 281 04471 6

It is good to see a book on this subject which is in no way an armchair production, but comes out of years of Christian experience in an inter-faith context. Ajith Fernando is the National Director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka. The book is written at an easily understood level, and is firmly based on the Bible. The footnotes point to a wide range of scholarly publications.

Part One is an exposition of Paul's approach to the Athenians in Acts 17, seen as a pattern to follow in approaching people of a different religious background. He gives a helpful treatment of the ticklish subjects of inter-faith dialogue, contextualization, syncretism, cultural distinctives, 'felt need', and God as Father. He argues at length against the idea that Christ's own claims to uniqueness are Johannine expressions of the church's belief, and not the words of Jesus.

In Part Two Fernando answers critics of the traditional [Pauline] view of evangelism, who claim that it is narrow, intolerant, arrogant and imperialistic. There is an interesting discussion of the presence of truth in other religions. Fernando has the memorable principle that it is sin, not other religions, which is the cause of evil. Hence whatever is good in other religions may be affirmed.

Two chapters, based on Romans 1-3, are devoted to the question of those who die without hearing the gospel. He explains why he believes the Bible offers no alternative to salvation through hearing and responding to the gospel. He ends the book with a plea for interest in conversion.

Some constructive criticism is in order. The author follows Bruce Demarest's *General Revelation* in saying that there are three sources of knowledge apart from the Bible, arising respectively from God's original revelation to Adam, man being in the image of God, and observation of the universe. It is not always clear, however, whether we are considering truths about God, truths about other than God, or true [good] things (such as music). Then Fernando tells how, as a youth, he was thrilled by Hindu religious music, while being deeply troubled about its religious aspect. This is only to state the problem. His solution, that good music is an expression of the image of God, calls for more discussion.

The principle of meeting other faiths at their highest (p.92) is, of course, valid. However, Hinduism, for instance, means different things to different Hindus. For one, the highest is the Vedantic quest for the experience of oneness. For another, it may well be the receipt of a boon asked for at the famous temple at Tirupati, South India.

Fernando states that God will reveal the gospel to the sincere seeker, but that we only know of this happening through the proclamation of the gospel

of Christ. He illustrates this by two accounts of conversions. First of all, we must be careful to include private reading of the Bible under 'proclamation'. Secondly, the first conversion, although it may illustrate the point, is so presented that the words, 'he was conscious of a Saviour's presence' (p.134), do not clearly refer to a time after hearing the gospel.

Finally, there are further positive points. The author stresses the need to understand other faiths, and shows how a Christian may avoid the accompanying pitfalls. He warns of the danger of excessive absolutism in the Church, as an over-reaction to the surrounding relativism. Numerous illustrative examples give insight into Asian attitudes. There is an important description of five signs of true conversion.

This is a useful book to read.

Interserve, Whitefield House, 186 Kennington Park Road, London S.E.11 TONY STONE

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS: Second Edition J. B. Lightfoot

Edd. J. R. Harmer and M. W. Holmes

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1990 347pp. £11.95 (cloth) ISBN 0 85111 762 7

This is an extremely attractive and well-produced edition of Lightfoot's classic, with new introductions and updated bibliographies by Michael Holmes. The translation is essentially that of Lightfoot himself, though occasionally it has been corrected and updated to accord with current English idiom. Professor Holmes has done his work well, and is to be congratulated for having produced a fine book.

All in all, this is an extremely useful book for students and ministers to have, except for one thing—the original texts have been omitted. This is a great pity, since it would not have cost that much more to include them, and many of the people who want a translation of this kind will also want to check the original wording from time to time. This means that a secondhand copy of the 1891 edition is still to be preferred, if it can be obtained—which is a pity. Perhaps a future reprinting will be able to include the Greek and Latin texts as well, making this volume a truly useful addition to the corpus of Early Church materials available to students.

Oak Hill College, London N.14

GERALD BRAY

THE FAITH OF ISRAEL William J. Dumbrell

Inter-Varsity Press, Nottingham 1989 286pp. £9.95 ISBN 0 85110 664 1

'With the fall of the Israelite state, the dawn of the New Testament age had virtually begun' (p.93). Such a statement makes you 'sit up' and look to see what the author means by that.

Deuteronomy dealt with in themes: Land, Holy War, Promised Land as Sanctuary, Rest, Law and Love, Deuteronomic Humanitarianism.

Parallels of creation and redemption drawn between Genesis and Chronicles.

These are three random examples taken from *The Faith of Israel* which make Dr. W. Dumbrell's book so fascinating. The back cover 'blurb' says, 'This

book helps the reader to do two things: to grasp the message of each book of the Old Testament and then to relate it to the Old Testament as a whole'. Personally I have never read a book which combines such masterly historical/theological accounts of the message of each book with an account of its place in the unfolding history of Israel. These 'book accounts' are succinct—twelve pages for Genesis, fourteen pages each for Isaiah and Jeremiah, two for Obadiah—yet they are far from being superficial.

And what an encouraging book it is! The conclusions of some of the studies on the Minor Prophets really strengthen our faith:

Hosea—'The marriage which began at Sinai will continue, for in the ideal depiction of this relationship Yahweh permits no divorce'.

Obadiah—'. . . sees in the events of his time the foreshadowing of the inbreaking of the kingdom'.

Jonah—'God is the initiator of crises in human experience, and God resolves them. We are dependent upon . . . grace'.

The Faith of Israel is worth reading (and buying; it is amazing value for its price, these days) for its summaries alone, the brief summaries of a paragraph or so at the end of the chapter on each Bible book and at the end of major sections such as the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets.

A readable and enjoyable addition to the bookshelves!

1 Evington Park Road, Leicester

MARGARET MANTON

CLERICAL CELIBACY IN EAST AND WEST R. Cholij

Fowler Wright, Leominster 1988 226pp. No price pb. ISBN 0 85244 154 1

The Council in Trullo (691 AD) has much to answer for. It is also called the Quini-Sext Council, because the Eastern Orthodox Church regards it as sharing the authority of the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils, and it issued or re-issued a large body of canons, including some of an extremely questionable character. However, the Council has never before, to my knowledge, been held responsible for the present discipline of the Eastern Orthodox Church over the marriage of the clergy, and whether this is to the Council's credit or discredit is a point on which Anglican and other Protestant readers would be likely to disagree with the author.

The author is a Ukrainian Catholic priest in Great Britain, and his book is written in defence of the Roman rule of clerical celibacy. As is well known, the Eastern Orthodox Church does not accept this rule except for its bishops, who are usually taken from the monasteries. Its priests, though they may not marry after ordination, may and usually do marry before it, and live a normal married life thereafter. The contention of this informative work is that, until the Council in Trullo, priests of the Eastern Church renounced sexual relations with their wives upon ordination, as was also the custom in the West, and that therefore it is the Roman Church, and not (as is usually thought) the Eastern Orthodox, which has kept closer to the practice of Christian antiquity.

Obviously, this is a historical question, and other opinions will be expressed and argued. What is beyond dispute is that celibacy was greatly

esteemed in Christian antiquity, but that the attempt to *compel* the clergy to observe it has led, and still does lead, to a great deal of immorality. The *most* ancient Christian tradition is that expressed in the New Testament, that it is better to marry than to burn (1 Cor. 7:9) and that the forbidding of marriage is the work of heretics (1 Tim. 4:3). We can therefore be thankful that our first reformed archbishop of Canterbury set an example of faithful clerical marriage, and that our second wrote a treatise in defence of it. Article 32 is their joint work.

Latimer House, Oxford

ROGER BECKWITH

ON BEING THE CHURCH Edd. Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy

T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh 1989 263pp. £12.95

ISBN 0 567 09501 0

This book is a collection of essays by academic theologians of different church traditions who hold that the modern church has lost the theology of its being. It offers a largely consensus view that the church's nature should reflect the sociality of the Holy Trinity. From this general *motif* the essayists raise such matters as, How can the church be a community in view of its hierarchical structure?; What function has an ordained ministry in the body of God's people?; What is the church's relation to the gospel?; Why has the church no theology of the laity? These and other matters are seen to be parallel to a lost identity of western civilization, and the church's development of monarchical and military models. While each of the six essayists expresses his own ideas their total reasoning is within a common framework, namely the belief that 'ministry is a function of the ecclesial community as a whole', p.6.

D. W. Hardy stresses that the problems of western society have affected religious society and have led to the disintegration of both. Hence, the need to grasp a doctrine of creation and redemption to counter the loss of a transcendental view of God that has led to an ethical and pragmatic view of man. He argues for a love of the truth as the foundation of a social community as a kind of 'transcendental universality' manifested in individuality and practical living. His liberalism leads him to believe that God's work in Christ accepted by individuals divides humanity, whereas mankind is created a social entity. From this he holds that St. Paul's call was not to missionize but to find people in his travels already Christ-like.

In considering the Church on earth Colin Gunton asks, 'What is the Church for?', and answers it by rooting it in the Trinity. Starting from the early Church Fathers he traces its growth from what he considers was an over-layer of philosophy and politics, weakened by the conflict between orthodoxy and heretics, and the Institution and the Spirit. In his view the belief that Jesus created the church lays too great a stress upon his divine nature. In terms of ecclesiology greater emphasis must be laid upon his humanity, not that he was omniscient and infallible. He looks to the Spirit as the activator of Jesus rather than the Word made Flesh. Hence God's being is the common factor in the Church's being and life. His viewpoint is that as the persons of the Trinity interact upon each other, so the community of the Church on earth should witness a like sociality as the visible expression of God.

The essay on 'Community and Authority' raises the issue, 'Where does the Church's authority lie?'. The writer sees that faith in Christ is a communal response to God's call, and that the Eucharist is at the heart of the Christian community in which God's presence in the world and in history is manifested. He notes that the Church's authority is rooted in God's authority but has emerged and continues in one group of people, the clergy. His view is here coloured by the Roman Catholic Church; whereas the Church is a community of laity and pastors that should function as a unit. In view of the ecumenical movement his strictures are especially valuable, for to him ecumenicity is the product of committees without involvement of the Church at large.

The essay, 'Creature of the Word' is an attempt by its writer to recover the Reformers' view of the Church, the insights of whom are of crucial importance for the present age, especially relative to the issues which have divided Anglicanism. He gives special consideration to Luther and Calvin and to the opinion that the Church is both God- and man-orientated. But he rejects the claim of the Church to distribute God's grace, as being presuming upon God. Having created the Church by his Word man can therefore only respond to him, and in doing so he enters a given community. As to Apostolic Succession it is one of faith not of orders. Dr. R. H. Roberts's thesis on 'Lord, Bondsman, and Churchman' needs little comment, being the most contentious of all, and includes a strong attack on the views of Professor S. W. Sykes. Like the other essayists he gives attention to the lack of a theology of the laity due to a lack of a theology of the church.

Perhaps the most valuable of all essays is the last one on 'Faith in the City'. Here, D. F. Ford contrasts modern cities with that of Corinth. In it the Bible comes into its own. In view of the Anglican-Methodist re-union failure he sees no hope of the aims set forth in the 'Faith in the City' report of a closer co-operation between the churches. His exposition of the Corinthian situation needs close study in relation to such issues as church leadership, the ministry of women, and the place of the laity.

The book as a whole is a radical approach to the doctrine of the Church. Its attempt to analyze the church from secular patterns will not satisfy those who accept biblical rather than philosophic standards of faith. The reader needs also to have some knowledge of theological terms and modes of expression. Social theorists will, however, find in it room for thought.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

THE MAKING OF ORTHODOXY Ed. Rowan Williams

Cambridge University Press 1989 340pp. £35 (cloth) ISBN 0 521 35188 X

This outstanding collection of essays by a number of Britain's leading Patristic scholars will be deeply appreciated by everyone engaged in teaching and research which covers the Early Church. The sixteen articles range from the second to the eighth centuries, and touch on the major controversies of the time, without being too esoteric. In fact, one of the great merits of the book is that it deals in many instances with unfamiliar aspects of standard themes. Thus for example, Gerald Bonner discusses Augustine and millenarianism, and Lionel Wickham studies the impact of Pelagianism in the East. J. C. O'Neill takes us back behind Anthony and Pachomius, to delve into the Biblical and Jewish roots of monasticism.

Different aspects of the Arian controversy are examined by the late Richard Hanson and by Maurice Wiles, while Christopher Stead considers the problems posed by a doctrine of divine 'simplicity'. All these matters are of great importance in themselves, and it is valuable to have them discussed together within a single volume. Inevitably some of the papers are more detailed than others, and one or two, like Alasdair Heron's on Didymus the Blind, will be of interest mainly to specialists. But to balance articles of this type there are several which are more in the nature of a survey, like the very interesting study of iconoclasm by Sister Charles Murray, and Rowan Williams's introductory piece on pre-Nicene orthodoxy.

In some cases the emphasis of the particular paper is open to question and may have to be revised in the light of further work; this seems to be the case particularly with W. H. C. Frend's study of heretical and dissident movements, where new material is constantly appearing. In several of the others it will no doubt be possible to question particular views here and there, and we must expect many of the articles in this volume to be cited and discussed further in the years ahead. But that in itself will be a magnificent tribute to this labour of love in honour of Henry Chadwick, whose magisterial contribution to the whole field is gratefully acknowledged by the authors of this *Festschrift*.

Oak Hill College, London N.14

GERALD BRAY

MEAT NOT MILK Harry Blamires

MARC, Eastbourne 1988 192pp. £2.50 pb.

ISBN 0 86065 621 7

Words such as challenging, fresh, perceptive, realistic and stimulating are not out of place when it comes to describing this book. The author calls himself as an 'apologist and expounder' (p.22). He lives up to his claim. Although not a theologian, Harry Blamires has the all too rare gift of being able to expose the shortcomings and failings of the secularist society in which we live, in a popular and easily read style.

Carefully and methodically he demonstrates, in chapters 1-3, that 'we are fallen creatures living in a fallen world' (p.24); that 'we live in a society in which, by and large, the fact of the Fall has been ignored and forgotten' (p.55); that 'unfortunately, the infection of modern secularist thinking has so permeated the minds of well-meaning Christians that they too become neglectful of man's fallen condition' (p.56); and that 'there is no non-Christian remedy for the malaise of the fallen human condition' (p.83). In chapters 4-6 Mr. Blamires describes the world in which we live; takes apart the fashionable liberalism of our day; and calls us to hunger for meat rather than being content with milk.

The central message of the book is that we must take the Bible's teaching about the Fall and redemption in Christ seriously. In particular we must recognize that 'the Christian worldview is the only integrative counterpoise to a secularism that is decomposing our civilisation; (p.10). However problems confront us. Most notably that of professing believers who 'all too often succumb to the epidemic of *anorexia religiosa* which destroys all appetite for progress in Christian understanding and commitment' (p.9).

This book is a bargain at the price!

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

GEORGE CURRY

SCRIPTURE, TRADITION AND REASON A Study in the Criteria of Christian Doctrine Edd. B. Drewery and R. J. Bauckham

T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh 1988 308pp. £16.95 hb.

ISBN 0 567 09482 0

This volume consists of essays in honour of the eminent scholar R. P. C. Hanson who died in the year of its publication. The sub-title indicates its theme. It opens with a brief biographical memoir by Benjamin Drewery, followed by an account of R.P.C.'s writings by his twin brother A. T. Hanson. Then comes the first Part: *Scripture in Relation to Tradition and Reason* which is in fact also the title of the late F. F. Bruce's essay. (This illustrates the pattern for each of the three sections: first, a general overview of the field of discussion from the perspective of each one of the three categories in turn, succeeded by two practical case studies). It is followed by *The Virgin Birth in Lucan Theology and in the Classical Creeds* by A. Robert and C. Leaney, and *Scripture, Tradition and Priesthood* by Reginald H. Fuller. Part Two, *Tradition in Relation to Scripture and Reason* starts with an essay by Richard J. Bauckham of that title, followed by *Scripture and Tradition in the Early Irish Church* by Joseph F. Kelly, and *The Use of the Patristic Tradition in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* by Leslie W. Barnard. Part Three, *Reason in Relation to Scripture and Tradition* again starts with an essay of this title, this time by David A. Pailin, followed by *Theological Construction and Research: Origen on Free-Will* by Henri Crouzel, and *Evelyn Underhill and the Mystical Tradition* by Susan K. Smalley. Finally, there is an *Epilogue* by Henry Chadwick.

This book will be of interest to those who are concerned about the question of the locus of authority for the Christian faith. Prof. R. P. C. Hanson, a brilliant scholar of the classical tradition, was of course of very liberal persuasion; a constant thesis of his was that 'the use of the term "inspiration" in connection with scripture is only misleading and should be dropped in favour of "witness"?' Like other liberals he tried to locate authority in 'the rule of faith' which his brother's article defines as 'the drift, scope, or aim of scripture as understood by the Church'—no doubt with great deference to modern ways of thinking, and certainly not in the sense of *sola scriptura*. It is interesting that when Dennis Nineham's *Use and Abuse of the Bible* came out R.P.C. reviewed it and put his finger on 'a fundamental weakness of Nineham's argument', (as James Barr did too). Nineham in turn reviewed the Hansons' recent *Bible without Illusions* and remarked that 'their discussion of relativism, as well as their general approach, reveals a failure to grasp the real nature and scope of what is involved'. This spotting of major logical inconsistencies and other faults in one another's work provokes a wry smile when one reads in Prof. Leaney's essay, after he has emphasized what he regards as Luke's 'historical solecisms', 'Moreover we should never overlook a point made all the stronger by our modern ability to observe so acutely the logical inconsistencies . . .', presumably in the Biblical writers. This may be intended ironically, but I do not think so. Contrary to this, however, it is noticeable how many grave 'logical inconsistencies' have

almost ruined the work of *modern* thinkers, witness A. J. Ayer and his Verification Principle! I suspect that much critical work may succumb for the same reason, and pass likewise into the limbo of discredited theorizing.

The three key essays I found the most interesting. In the first, the late F. F. Bruce has some important things to say about scripture and its traditional interpretation, a subject which has great significance for us as evangelicals. Among other things he discusses the concept of the *sensus plenior*. Richard Bauckham expounds first the four views of the relationship of tradition to scripture of A. N. S. Lane—the coincidence, the supplementary, the ancillary and the unfolding. He then seeks to vindicate tradition in the face of the Enlightenment's prejudice against it—the latter a waning influence, he maintains. Following this he introduces what to me is a novel series of diagrams illustrating his New Model: Scripture, Tradition and Context. David Pailin deals most adequately of all the authors (as would be expected since he is a philosopher) with what we mean by 'reason'. This has led to a lot of confusion in the past, for reason is often surely a very necessary instrument in consulting scripture, at least in wrestling with Paul's epistles! What then do we mean when we speak of reason in antithesis to scripture? The answer would seem to be, reason *operating with what may in the broadest sense be called 'scientific' data*, that is data *in principle accessible at will to man as man* (Michael Foster). Pailin does not put it quite like this, but I think he would agree. With this understanding of Reason it can be seen that it is indeed in direct antithesis to Revelation (cf. Matt. 16.17; 1 Cor. 1.21). What is his conclusion then?

Reason . . . is the final arbiter of what is to be maintained but it is a reason which is well aware of its limitations and more conscious of how it is to seek understanding. Scripture and tradition no longer offer replacements for its inadequacy nor norms by which to test its conclusions. They are an important source, though, of the insights upon which it reflects, and out of which it seeks to find that understanding which is the faith that lightens everyone who lives in the world.

Well, that would seem to be a fair and clear statement of the liberal position, and we can be grateful for it in the current preference for ambiguous, evasive or catch-all definitions. It shows us what it is we are confronted with as conservative evangelicals, and should therefore help us in the task to which we are called, the defence and confirmation of the Gospel.

There is no index.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

HOWELL HARRIS AND THE DAWN OF REVIVAL Richard Bennett
Evangelical Press of Wales 1962 210pp. £3.95 pb. ISBN 1 85049 035 X

It is of much importance that Richard Bennett's re-issued outline of Howell Harris's early life should be before the public in view of the 1990s 'Decade of Evangelism' and the growing interest in past revivals of religion. Copious extracts from Harris's early life inscribed in his private diaries reveal the deep spirituality that animated his work.

Their three years set the pattern of rich devotion to God and the love of souls that characterized the eighteenth century revivalists. It is of point that the Welsh religious awakening began before Wesley and Whitefield emerged into public view. Born in 1714 Harris lived a normal life until, after a period of soul-searching, he was arrested in 1735 by a remark of the Vicar of Talgarth that if anyone was unfit to come to Communion he was unfit to pray or to live. Some weeks later he passed into a deep experience of God's love that began to spill over into the lives of others. He is said to have originated itinerant preaching, once walking two thousand miles in two years. From it, religious societies sprang up in which members were taught scripture. As a schoolmaster he supported Griffith Jones's Welsh schools, later becoming their superintendent.

Although opposed by the clergy he never lost his attachment to the Established Church, its Prayer Book having a profound effect upon him, though he later found fellowship with the Independents. These activities speak of devotion to God and love of souls, but it is the extracts from his early diaries that most move the heart. These, Richard Bennett quotes frequently. They alone make of the book a spiritual classic.

If read prayerfully they will prove an antidote to dryness of heart and a spur to a greater zeal for Christ's kingdom. The new edition includes a valuable index and a brief bibliography. The book should be read by every minister and lay person who longs to see another religious awakening.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

HUDSON TAYLOR AND CHINA'S OPEN CENTURY: It is not Death to Die! A. J. Broomhall

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1989 718pp. £10.95 ISBN 0 340 50270 3

This is the seventh and concluding volume in A. J. Broomhall's massive survey of the contribution that Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission made to the spread of Protestant Christianity in China during the hundred or so years when that great nation was open to missionary work. The author has drawn extensively upon archive material in assembling this great chronicle. Henceforth any research on Christianity in China must take account of these seven volumes, and Hodder and Stoughton are to be congratulated on having the courage to back the whole project.

However it should not be thought that these books make dull or dry reading matter. Far from it, and this last volume in the series is no exception. There is much here to inspire and teach the Christian church today. In this work Broomhall recounts events from 1886 onwards. He mainly focusses on the last two decades of Hudson Taylor's life, although the last chapter surveys events in China from the fall of the Manch dynasty in 1912 to the present day.

It is hard to summarize all that emerges from these fascinating pages. However it may be said that three main issues dominate the period covered by this book. There is the growth of the China Inland Mission into a vast international organization, leading to new problems with which Hudson Taylor had to wrestle. Then there is also the developing controversy over the rôle of Protestant missions in China. The mission had to decide on whether to

concentrate on preaching the gospel or whether to expand its emphasis on educational and social institutions. Much abuse has been directed at the work of missionaries in China, here the record for the China Inland Mission at least is set straight.

Finally this volume also relates the chilling events of the Boxer Rising in which so many missionaries met martyrs' deaths. One can only wonder whether the same spirit of self-sacrifice is to be found within our churches today.

48 Harold Court Road, Romford, Essex

MARK BURKILL

SO I SEND YOU John Marsh

Monarch, Eastbourne 1988 277pp. £2.95

ISBN 1 85424 091 9

THE CHURCH DOWN OUR STREET Michael Wooderson

Monarch, Eastbourne 1989 190pp. £2.99

ISBN 1 85424 031 5

As the Decade of Evangelism impinges upon the consciousness of the Church of England it is good to have these accounts from two ministers who write from experience of the task of outreach in ordinary parishes. Although the authors focus on different aspects of evangelism within their respective books, these differences are by no means contradictory.

Michael Wooderson is well known for his booklet *Good News Down the Street*, and this book is mainly an account of how he developed and used the material found there. Here there are many personal stories which flesh out the statistics that he provides concerning his work in two parishes. The reason why the contents of this book are very instructive for parish evangelism is that we see the flexibility and imagination which lie behind the outreach that Michael Wooderson has led. It is especially useful to see how this was conducted in two contrasting areas of the West Midlands.

However the big danger of such a book is that it is seen as simply a method of filling church pews. It is clear that Michael Wooderson would be alarmed to see it being used in such a way. In the end there is no substitute in evangelism for lay people who know what the gospel is and who have an enthusiasm to share it with others. This book is a vehicle for channelling and enlarging that understanding and vision, and as such it is to be warmly commended.

The starting point of John Marsh's book is the words of Jesus in John 20:21, 'As the Father sent me, so I send you'. He sees the mission of the church as continuing that of Jesus, and in each of his chapters he shows how this is to be done in various ways. As he studies the biblical material he relates it to his own parochial experience and contemporary issues.

The fundamental call to service which John Marsh stresses is as vital for Christians today as it ever was, and there is much biblical material here which will challenge and stimulate to that end. However a note of concern with this book does need to be sounded. Throughout the work there is an underlying assumption that Christians are called to precisely the same mission as Jesus, and that we must do the works that Jesus did. That of course is the point of the title. This assumption must be challenged. More careful thinking must be done about the way in which the mission of the church on the one hand is

similar to Jesus' own example, and yet on the other hand differs from it in very important respects. Marsh implicitly recognizes this distinction in his excellent chapter on the unique work of Jesus on the Cross, but he fails to consider seriously the possibility that the other areas he discusses may be unique to Jesus' ministry too. In consequence the whole book needs to be used with discernment.

48 Harold Court Road, Romford, Essex

MARK BURKILL

REVIVAL: A People saturated with God Brian H. Edwards

Evangelical Press, Darlington 1990 303pp. £6.95

ISBN 0 85234 273 X

I approached this book with the anticipation that it would be well worth reading and I was not disappointed. The book is divided into six sections. After the introduction there are three sections entitled 'Before, During and After Revival'. Then comes a section concerning our response to revival and lastly a section containing eye-witness accounts from various revivals.

In the Introduction, on page 15 we read this comment: 'But let them slip out into the sunshine [those who consider Christianity in the United Kingdom is doing well] for a few minutes and watch the thousands of families crawling round the M25 in search of their chosen exit to a day's happiness'. This sums up what we in the church, face today, The intention of the book is to inform the mind and influence the heart towards revival. Also in the Introduction the author deals with the definition of revival. Revival is 'something that God brings about' and is 'a community saturated with God'.

The 'Before Revival' section consists of eight chapters. In the first, we look at the state of the church and the nation. One of the issues stressed is that society no longer thinks about eternity. This is reflected in many Christians seemingly more concerned with the here and now than with the future. The next chapter looks at the men that God uses in revival. Throughout the book, the author uses the revival under King Hezekiah as a Biblical example. The next chapter in this section deals with the aspects we need before revival. Like Hezekiah, there is a need for a deep and personal relationship with God. Not experiences or gifts as some seek for today, not the self-assertive leadership techniques on offer today, but men with a humble idea of their own ability. There is a need for men and women who fear God and sin and nothing else. I quote from page 62, 'Hezekiah did not see God as a "Big Daddy", but an awesome, holy, heaven-enthroned and sovereign Creator'. There is a need for people to be obedient to the Word of God, to have great courage and maintain self discipline. I particularly found the chapter on the need for urgent prayer very challenging. On page 83 we read 'They [Peggy and Christine Smith] prayed until they knew that God was going to send revival'.

In the first chapter of the 'During Revival' section, we are warned not to limit God to bring revival in exactly the same way that He did before. During revival there is a return to Christ-centered preaching and a very high view of Scripture: so much lacking in some of what passes as evangelism today. On page 112 we read this: 'Neither loud excitement nor sombre quietness, and not even love and gifts, are any necessary evidence of revival. But a deep conviction of sin and Biblical holiness are'. After the chapters on a revival of

holiness and of prayer, the author turns to revival in worship. A lesson here surely for those churches which claim to have revival in their worship. We then come to revival in evangelism. Evangelism is, it seems, the most spoken of, the most planned of, but the least done of, the activities of the church. In revival, we are told, there will be a passion for evangelism. This section ends with chapters on revival in giving and revival among children and young people.

In the 'After Revival' section, the author looks at four things. Statistics, benefits, errors, and opposition and testing. The trend today is to publish figures for decisions, converts or enquiries at the end of various missions and crusades. Sadly, many of these people never grace the inside of a church, let alone grow in faith in Christ. The chapter on statistics stresses the difference when there is revival. In the chapter on errors, the author deals with various aspects. I quote from page 204: 'I want this special experience.' This same demand is heard from many Christians today.

The fifth section of the book is called 'Our Response to Revival'. In this part a number of human responses are considered. Opposition, cynicism, doubt, fear, discouragement and longing. Finally, there comes the section where we are able to read five eye-witness accounts of revival. These are a great blessing to read.

At the end of the book is a very helpful book list for those who wish to read deeper into the various revivals mentioned throughout the book.

Reading this book was a great encouragement to see what God has done in the past. This land of ours so desperately needs a God-sent revival. This book has certainly led me to long and pray more for revival and I trust that it will have the same effect on other readers.

London, S.W.6

ROGER COOK

ATONEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION: ENGLISH EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY 1640–1790—An Evaluation Alan C. Clifford

Oxford University Press 1990 268pp. £30 (cloth)

ISBN 0 19 826195 0

There are few books which purport to introduce a massive sea-change in our perception of the development of Christian doctrine. R. T. Kendall's controversial work, *Calvin and the English Calvinists to 1649* was one of these, and its conclusions have provided much of the inspiration for this latest volume. Dr. Clifford examines the positions of John Owen, Richard Baxter, John Tillotson and John Wesley on the key themes of atonement and justification, in order to demonstrate that the 'Arminians' of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were closer to Reformation Calvinism than the self-declared 'Calvinists' of that period were. As revisionist history it makes exciting reading, and it is to be hoped that it will spark off a lively debate on this subject.

Uncontroversial will be Dr. Clifford's statement that Richard Baxter and John Tillotson, formally divided by the Act of Uniformity (1662), were in fact very close to one another theologically and could have united in a single church if political and social circumstances had allowed it. This has long been recognized by fair-minded people and it is one of the great tragedies of the period that the schemes which the two men devised for reconciliation were frustrated.

Also uncontroversial will be Dr. Clifford's generous assessment of the spirituality of the four men, marked in all cases by a strong Puritan bias, whatever their formal theological allegiances may have been. This demonstrates something which is all too easily forgotten, *viz.* that the controversialists of the period in question were united by spiritual ties which drew them far closer to one another than to either the Roman Catholics or the Deists. It is important for us, who live in a more ecumenical age, to remember this, and to emphasize it whenever possible, in the hope of healing ancient divisions in our own time.

Difficulties with Dr. Clifford's position will begin with his interpretation of John Owen as a Calvinist led astray by Aristotelian method. The theme is a familiar one, and common in studies of Beza, who is presented as Owen's mentor far more than Calvin himself. The problem, as always, is to know how Calvin would have interpreted the subsequent systematization of his thought. Would he have followed Beza and Owen, or would he have objected to them, along 'Arminian' or 'Amyraldian' lines? It is this unanswerable question which sparks off the controversy, and here Dr. Clifford comes down firmly on the side of the revisionists.

Also controversial will be his interpretation of Wesley as a true Calvinist in the Reformation tradition, hampered only by what extremist followers and unartful theologians (notably Baxter!) had done with this legacy in the meantime. Bringing out Wesley's latent affinities with the Calvinist tradition is certainly a valuable exercise, and corrects an imbalance which has become all too common in recent studies. Nevertheless, one feels that there is a lot of special pleading here which needs some careful examination. In particular, it would have been useful to have had a clearer statement of why the Calvinists of the Evangelical Revival felt unable to make common cause with him, even though they were so obviously sympathetic to his general approach.

Readers of this book will find it refreshing to move in a theological atmosphere in which the leading contemporary Anglican theologians are John Stott ('Arminian!') and J. I. Packer ('Calvinist'), and in which the current wave of liberalism is dismissed as a historically irrelevant sidetrack, detracting from the main issues of theology. This is a bold claim to make, and Dr. Clifford is to be congratulated for making no concessions on this point.

A final word about the printing. The Oxford University Press ought to set a standard in proof-reading for others to follow, and it is therefore with some sorrow that we must report that there are a number of typographical errors in the text. In particular, the Greek has been reduced to gobbledygook—a sad decline for such a famous press. Perhaps greater care will be taken of this in future, as it greatly reduces the pleasure and ease with which such an interesting book will be read.

Oak Hill College, London N.14

GERALD BRAY

THE ORTHODOX LITURGY Hugh Wybrew

S.P.C.K., London 1989, 189pp. £8.95

ISBN 0 281 04416 3

Many people find liturgy an impenetrable subject, bogged down by details which are of interest only to specialists. Few understand such concepts as the use of sacred space, or the dramatization of the life of Christ, and most

liturgical scholars are unwilling or unable to explain what they mean in terms which are accessible to the ordinary person.

In this intellectual climate, Hugh Wybrew's book ranks as the great exception. It is interesting, clearly written and presented, and fair in its judgments. The Orthodox Liturgy is something which few Westerners are able to appreciate, and a guide of this sort has long been needed. At the same time, it occupies a place in the Orthodox Church which is far more significant than any liturgy in the Western Churches. This makes it far harder to reform, but also gives it a theological and pastoral rôle which those outside the tradition are bound to find almost impossible to grasp.

The book presents its material in historical perspective, showing how the Liturgy grew from early Christian practice, common to both East and West, and developed a life of its own in Byzantine times. By the fifteenth century it was both fully developed and universal in the Orthodox East, and it has changed hardly at all since that time. Readers will be surprised to learn that the West was once far more conservative liturgically than the East, which was extremely quick to absorb the latest theological trends into its worship. They may be less surprised to discover that the developed Byzantine rite is a long way from anything which could be called New Testament practice, and that the final product leaves a good deal to be desired, as well as much to be praised.

It is not the responsibility of an outsider to suggest ways in which the Liturgy might be reformed, and the author is well aware that the obstacles to change are formidable. Certainly his remarks would be unlikely to carry much weight, and might well prevent the kind of development which he appears to favour, if they were offered in a critical spirit. Instead he concentrates on what Western observers might learn from the Eastern tradition, singling out a sense of reverence as the main ingredient which is lacking in our own revised rites. It is of little use to be told that the *Alternative Service Book* faithfully reflects a primitive liturgical tradition if the spirit of worship governing its use bears little relation to the depth of spiritual awareness and commitment which surrounded its original appearance. Likewise, there is something to be said for a liturgical development which reflects the growing theological and spiritual maturity of the Church; not everything which is primitive is necessarily superior!

Here is a book which will be read with interest and pleasure by all who are concerned with liturgical matters, whether they are familiar with Orthodoxy or not. It is to be highly recommended, and the author might even be encouraged to produce a similar volume on Western liturgies, if only to help us all understand the great variety in our midst.

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- Basil Blackwell** E. Mason, *St. Wulfstan of Worcester c.1008-1095*, 1990, £49.95
- Collins Religious Publishing** G. Appleton, *Unfinished*, 1990, £17.95
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