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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Kim-Kwong Chan and Alan Hunter, *Prayers and Thoughts of Chinese Christians*. Boston, MA: Cowley Publications, 1991, vi + 105 pages.**

This book is a collection of materials on the spiritual pilgrimage of Christians in China. The variety and vibrancy of Chinese spirituality are constituted by six distinctive traits: perseverance in suffering, moral conduct, Christocentric devotion, nationalism and patriotism, cultural continuity (e.g. with Taoism), and evangelism.

Tertullian's phrase "the blood of the martyrs is the seed [of the church]" finds its approval in Chinese Christians, who have already recognized that dying, as well as living, provides them with ample opportunities to declare their faith within their concrete social, cultural and historical contexts. The giants of the faith (e.g. Wang Ming Dao) understand that a "yes" to the cross of Christ is at the same time a "yes" to their own crosses. For them, suffering is not a sign of being outside God's family; rather it is constitutive to being a member of God's family. The cause of suffering is not because of any public scandal or vice but, because of their moral conduct that flows out of their union with the living God.

Union with God, for Chinese Christians, as for the Reformers (Luther and Calvin), cannot be achieved independently of Christ. They cleave to Christ, desiring a deep and mystical union with him which subsequently provides them with consolation and strength to withstand trials and suffering. The evangelistic call to repentance and faith in Christ, which was the chief purpose of foreign Western missionaries who came to China, continues to be of high priority. However, the humiliation that China has suffered at the hands of Western powers in the past 150 years has generated anti-Christian feelings. Their attempt to dissociate themselves from foreign powers has given rise to nationalism and patriotism, in virtue of which Chinese Christians assert their national identity, seeking their independence from foreign economic power and missionary assistance, and the establishment of indigenous Chinese Churches. Despite the fact that the Christian spirit, symbols and ideas have permeated various strata in China, there remains a deep-seated continuity between Chinese culture and Christianity as is evident in Chinese classical poetry.

In China, as in other countries, Christians harbour different convictions on doctrinal, political and other issues. Watchman Nee and his fellow-yokers espouse a spirituality which has been primarily concerned with issues such as grace, salvation, repentance and devotion. On the contrary, Bishop K. H. Ting's spirituality is primarily concerned with socio-political issues such as justice, freedom and human dignity. Indeed Chinese spirituality has recently begun its concretization in the social-political realm, perhaps in its

extreme form. For example, June 4, 1989 witnessed hunger strikers in Tiananmen Square, demanding democracy and human dignity under an atheistic totalitarian regime. Perhaps what is needed in China is a blend of Nee's and Ting's spirituality, accentuating both an orthodoxy and an orthopraxis. Philip Mechlanton's advice to Martin Luther in the sixteenth century is one worth embracing by contemporary Chinese Christians: "In essentials stress unity, in non-essentials stress liberty, and in all things stress charity."

Dennis Ngien  
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**Walter Chantry, *Call The Sabbath a Delight*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1991, 112 pages.**

From the pastoral pen and heart of Walter Chantry comes another challenging book, *Call the Sabbath A Delight*. Like *Today's Gospel, Signs of the Apostles*, and *God's Righteous Kingdom*, the author's latest book seeks to address biblically a topic that is of real concern, and even contention, in Baptist and Reformed circles today. Chantry is very concerned about the moral decline in our culture. In his introduction he makes this conclusion [p.11]:

There can be no other answer to straighten out our crooked generation, nothing but a weekly day of worship will begin to touch the ignorance which has gripped humanity. This alone, under God, can save families, churches, schools and governments from total moral collapse.

Further, he writes [p.13]:

It is, then, urgent that Christians be clear in their thinking about Sabbath observance. We should consider it nothing less than shockingly unacceptable for Bible teachers and ministers to undermine the practice of the worship and service of God by teaching against the Sabbath.

It is obvious from these quotations that the author holds to the viewpoint that the fourth commandment in the Mosaic Law is, in principle, to be carried over into the New Covenant, and applied and obeyed in the Sunday observance of the Lord's Day.

There are many aspects about *Call The Sabbath A Delight* that commend themselves to the concerned reader. First, it is just over a hundred

pages. A lot of material is covered in relatively little space. Second, it is very readable. Chantry is able to present things clearly and concisely. The book moves and is very interesting. There is always a good blending of what to believe and what to do. Third, it is a classic presentation of what might be called the Christian Sabbath view. In a modern, readable style, he presents that view of the fourth commandment that was standard in Presbyterian and certain Reformed circles. The Sabbath is a Creation ordinance [p.100], the fourth commandment is part of God's moral requirement for all people, at all times [p.23], and the day was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week because of Christ's resurrection [p.83].

While Chantry's book is excellent in many ways, I do feel that there are some important areas that it needs to further examine. For example, the Sabbath issue must be studied in light of the broader issue of continuity and discontinuity between the Old and New covenants. As well, the issue of the Sabbath being a creation ordinance seems to be assumed rather than exegetically proven. Also, the Sabbath as being a sign of the Mosaic covenant (Exod 31:12-17) needs to be expounded. Furthermore, when we come to the New Testament epistles we find no example of a writer pointing out that Sabbath breaking is a sin of mankind, nor of any church or member violating the commandment. The letters seem to warn more against being enslaved in Sabbath keeping, rather than desecrating the day.

The Sabbath issue is a very important subject for the church in our day. We need to know what we believe in this area and live in the light of it. *Call The Sabbath A Delight* is a passionate and maybe persuasive presentation. It will be well worth your time and effort to grapple with its argumentation and its implications for your own life and that of your family and church. Good reading.

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**Erroll Hulse, *Give Him No Rest: A call to prayer for revival.* Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1991, 144 pages.**

Here today's themes of Church Growth, Life-Style Evangelism, Vision 2000, Discipleship and Cross Cultural Missions come together in yesterday's terms: revival and awakenings. Errol Hulse has written a sharp, clear and concise "call to prayer for revival" with a daring title: *Give Him No Rest*. It is the daring that we should have by applying our Lord's teaching in the parable of the importunate widow. This is a call to the supreme method of experiencing genuine spiritual life and conversions: *prayer*. It is biblical, historical, theological, and practical.

The mighty and sovereign work of God the Holy Spirit in bringing renewed life is well defined by Hulse. He distinguishes renewals from divine visitations, adopting Edwin Orr's distinction: " 'Revival' is something which properly affects the churches. It produces deep repentance and greater holiness, with a new release of power in witness and evangelism. 'Awakening,' however, refers primarily to the conversion of unbelievers, who are awakened from spiritual death and brought to life in Christ." Let us give God no rest until we have revival and awakening!

The essential characteristics of a revival that Hulse identifies are:

1. The sense of God's nearness and especially an awareness of his holiness and majesty.
2. A greatly intensified work of the Holy Spirit in conviction of sin and giving repentance and faith.
3. A marvellous increase in the numbers added to the church.
4. Powerful preaching of the gospel.

Hulse answers the questions that unnerve people when attempting to pray. Will prayer work? How does prayer for revival fit our sovereign God's plans? What can we expect? What promises has God given us? All our spiritual and emotional needs are answered so that we will be encouraged to give God no rest.

His reasons for specific prayer for revival are:

1. The biblical doctrine of repentance demands it.
2. The history of the church dictates it.
3. The example of our predecessors encourages it.
4. Our present decline compels it.
5. The promises of Scripture urge it.
6. Present-day revivals inspire it.

Hulse has aimed at the average believer, not at a supposed elite who are trained in theology. He has kept the book brief, so that working people will have the time to devour it. Every believer will profit from this book. The main points are well illustrated from life and history. The theology is clear and accurate, yet deep and well presented. The bibliography is helpful, and relevant.

Read this book in conjunction with E. M. Bounds on Prayer. Read it along with Martyn Lloyd-Jones on Revival. Then do as it says and give God no rest. What a welcome antidote to our shopping-list prayers which have no urgency, no theology, no wrestling with God and no significant results. It seems that it is only in the Western world, where we are accustomed to freedom and affluence, that we enjoy our ease so much as to give God rest! Let us learn and do what Hulse calls us to: Give him no rest!

John Bonham  
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**Peter Jones, *The Gnostic Empire Strikes Back*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992, 112 pages.**

Is the church sleep-walking its way into persecution? Yes, claims Peter Jones, a boyhood chum of John Lennon (of Beatles fame), now serving as Professor of New Testament at Westminster Seminary in California. This brief but trenchant treatment of the ancient heresy of Gnosticism claims that many in the Western world (including many professing Christians, like Vice-President Al Gore) are unwittingly embracing this implacable enemy of biblical faith through New Age ecology, feminism, and spirituality. Jones is not an alarmist, but his convincing demonstration of the deep connection between Gnostic theology and the New Age outlook (the “appetizer” for his forthcoming major study of Gnosticism) cannot fail to alarm Christians. His book calls the church to greater commitment to the Creator-Redeemer God of the Bible and to His Word. He bluntly warns [p.95]:

Christian ministry in the New Age of Aquarius will not be for the faint-hearted. The defeat of ancient pagan Gnosticism and its so-called Christian counterpart was only gained by deep spirituality, hard theological work, and often physical martyrdom... Without an extraordinary degree of prophetic commitment and self-sacrifice from a new generation of leaders, the church of Jesus Christ is no doubt headed for a period of significant persecution.

Jones foresees serious suffering because of the radical monism (all is one, one is all) which undergirds both Gnosticism and its modern child, the New Age movement. Monism leads inevitably to an identification of Christ and Satan, a rejection of creational structures (particularly for sexuality), religious syncretism, and the inversion of female and male roles—all of which Gnostic themes reappear in the New Age agenda.

An essential doctrine of Gnosticism is that divinity is within us [p.22]: “Sparks of authentic divinity were accidentally infused into humanity by the bungling Demiurge. Gnostic believers know that they are imprisoned in evil matter, and they need to find a way of escape from its cosmic structures.” The Gnostic (and New Age) way of “salvation” is clear [p.24-25]:

Though caught in matter, humanity can once again become part of the universal whole by a process of self-knowledge and self-realization (which, according to Genesis, is the root of sin). This quest is based upon...the consubstantiality of the self with God. In this system Christ does not deal with sin by his vicarious atonement. He comes rather as a revealer of *gnosis*, the knowledge of one’s own divinity...Gnostic believers are “saved” when they realize who they are—a part of the divine; capable of anything; and

untrammelled by human traditions, creational structures, or divine laws.

A more diametrically opposed alternative to Christianity could hardly be imagined, yet it is precisely this Gnostic (New Age) outlook which is gaining mainstream support in society. Witness the new code of student conduct adopted in 1992 by Stanford University and 124 other colleges which eliminates "hate speech." A laudable aim? Think again. Included as "hate speech" are "calling homosexuality wrong or Hinduism a false religion" [p.97]. Christians, with their intractable insistence on biblical norms for conduct, and their non-negotiable faith in a Creator-Redeemer God distinct from the world, pose an obvious threat to global oneness in the New World Order. Hence the inevitability of persecution, if Gnostic (New Age) ideas prevail.

But Jones is not a pessimist. God has given His people a weapon which can deliver them from error and spiritual death. That weapon is the Bible [p.101]:

The New Testament writings, Paul's letters in particular, have already faced the early manifestations of Gnosticism. They gave not an inch to goddess spirituality, sexual perversions, and the destruction of creational structures in the home and in the church. Their deep understanding of the unity in God's creative and redemptive work gives us radical and potent answers, as well as a methodology, for our struggle against the same rejection of the Creator and Redeemer by New Age Gnosticism.

Jones apparently wrote this book because many Christians seemed unaware of the looming danger of New Age Gnosticism. As a prophetic call to a slumbering church, it succeeds admirably, and deserves wide circulation.

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**H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1987, 850 pages.**

To detail the history of Baptist witness in the world since their origins in the 1600s is indeed a daunting prospect, and H. Leon McBeth is to be warmly commended for having undertaken the task and having produced a book that will certainly be widely used. McBeth is rightly convinced that the Baptist story needs telling since Baptist denominations are still viable expressions

of the Christian faith [p.5]. Moreover, he has sought to write from "a sufficiently catholic perspective" [p.5] and tell the Baptist story in its many facets by including mention of most of the various Baptist groups which have graced the scene of history. Thus, there are brief treatments of such minor groups of Baptists as the Seventh-Day Baptists [p.706-711] and the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists [p.373-374, 720-721], as well as lengthy studies of major denominations, like the Southern Baptist Convention [p.381-391, 412-447, 609-701].

Yet, it should be no surprise that in a work of this size that there are some factual errors. Richard Hooker (d.1600) was certainly not a Puritan leader [p.24], nor did Praise-God Barebone (ca. 1596-1679) ever become a Baptist [p.47]. In fact, Barebone was a keen defender of the validity of infant baptism. While William Carey (1761-1834) certainly admired *Help to Zion's Travellers* by Robert Hall, Sr. (1728-1791), there is no evidence that I know of that this book helped Carey to come to Baptist convictions [p.184]. John Ryland, Sr. (1723-1792) is confused with his son and called "Dr. Ryland" [p.185]. The Scottish Baptist pioneer in the Ottawa Valley, William Fraser (1801-1883), went to Breadalbane, not Breadbane [p.339]. While there were dispensationalists among the pastors and members of the churches which followed T. T. Shields [1873-1955] out of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, it is somewhat misleading to describe them as being "under the influence of radical dispensational millennialism" [p.557-558]. The formation of the Banner of Truth Trust took place in 1957, not the "late 1940's;" it sought to revive evangelical Calvinism, not "Fundamentalist Calvinism"; and it took its name from Ps 60:4, not a note in Spurgeon's introduction to his reprint of the *Second London Confession* [p.771].

Alongside such minor factual mistakes there are some larger areas of interpretation which call for comment. While, in many respects it is true that the fundamental problem facing Canadian Baptists in the nineteenth century was whether they would follow "the British Baptist pattern of church life (including open communion), or the pattern of their aggressive brethren in the United States (including closed communion)" [p.342], can this choice of alternatives be used to explain the existence of different Baptist groups in this century? McBeth believes it can and identifies the Baptist Federation as generally representing "the British tradition, while the Regular Baptists [presumably the Association of Regular Baptist Churches], the Evangelical Baptists [presumably the FEBC], and more recently the Southern Baptists, embody American patterns" [p.516]. But what "British tradition" and what "American patterns" does McBeth have in mind? For instance, is the British tradition that of the evangelical Calvinism of men like Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) or C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892), or the "minimal doctrinal moorings" [p.510] which McBeth says is characteristic of the Baptist Union in this century? Moreover, in recent years, the British Baptist tradition of men like Fuller and Spurgeon appears to have been much more influential on the



Association of Regular Baptists than any “American patterns.”

McBeth repeats the standard perspective on the state of the Particular Baptists in the eighteenth century: they were in decline and it was mostly the fault of “hyper-Calvinism,” best represented by the doyen of mid-eighteenth-century Baptist theology, John Gill (1697-1771) [p.152, 172-183, *passim*]. Yet, as B. R. White has noted in his review of McBeth’s book, “this seems to have been only part of the story” [*The Baptist Quarterly*, 32 (1987-1988), 256]. McBeth appears to know of other reasons for this decline—for instance, the problems attending pastoral formation [p.189] and the erection of specific places of worship [p.191]—but he never explicitly includes or develops these reasons in his discussion. Nor does he question whether the picture of widespread Calvinistic Baptist decline in this period is indeed an accurate one. He is aware that a tradition of evangelical Calvinism continued to exist and thrive at Bristol Baptist College throughout the 1700s [p.194] and that there were others before Andrew Fuller who protested against hyper-Calvinism [p.178-181]. But it is only with Andrew Fuller in the 1780s that an “evangelical form of Calvinism” is launched [p.152], which effectively challenges the reign of Gill. Could the reason, however, that “Fullerism” was so eagerly embraced be the fact that it enunciated what so many already felt and believed? Further investigation of this remarkable period is a pressing need.

The problem facing any general study of a major Christian tradition is simply the mass of detail that has to be mastered. McBeth has done extremely well in producing a coherent and readable account of the Baptist tradition; yet, as B. R. White wondered in his review of this book, “perhaps, the next ‘universal’ Baptist history should be done by a team of scholars,” each of whom is able to investigate his or her particular area of speciality.

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**Stuart Olyott, *Les Trois sont un: ce que la Bible enseigne sur la Trinité*.  
Chalon-sur-Saône: Europresse, 1990, 108 pages.**

Voici un excellent petit livre [108 pages] pour réévaluer l’orthodoxie de notre doctrine triunitaire. L’enjeu est grand! «Dès le moment où nous concevons Dieu différemment, notre notion de son être ne correspond plus à celle des Écritures. Nous avons alors créé un Dieu selon notre propre imagination, et ceci équivaut à de l’idolâtrie» [65].

L’auteur est un chrétien enthousiaste: le chapitre 1, ‘O Dieu, que tu es merveilleux!’, nous présente les qualités de Dieu. Il est théologien: les chapitres 2 à 8 développent l’unité de Dieu, la divinité du Père, du Fils et du

Saint-Esprit, la distinction des trois personnes, la génération éternelle du Fils et de la procession éternelle du Saint-Esprit. Il est professeur: les chapitres 9 et 10 résument la doctrine et trois erreurs à éviter: le trithéisme, le monarchisme et le modalisme. Parfois [p.89,95 et 97], il rappelle les pages précises de son ouvrage qu'il faut revoir pour combattre telle déviation. Il invite même à mémoriser certains passages. Et il est pasteur: le chapitre 11 décrit la Trinité comme une vérité que nous devons croire, aimer et vivre— le lecteur est exhorté à s'approcher de ce Dieu triunitaire.

Pour la forme, on trouve quelques coquilles: p.18, «C'est de lui...»; p.40, «...ils employèrent...»; p.52, «influence». À la p.39, le sujet n'est pas clair pour la phrase «Lors de son procès...». À la p.31, des virgules après «Ésaïe» et «aussi» seraient bienvenues. Il y a quelques imprécisions: à la p.20, l'auteur parle de la Trinité comme s'il venait d'en «esquisser les traits» alors qu'il n'en aborde l'étude qu'au prochain chapitre. La p.25 contient une hyperbole: «Presque chaque page de la Bible nous montre cela». Mais ceci ne ternit en rien la valeur et les belles trouvailles de ce livre. La grandeur de Dieu est bien décrite [p.13], l'anecdote concernant l'adversaire de la divinité de Christ percutante [p.42], l'expression «la tri-entité de Dieu» bien choisie [p.63], et la discussion sur les trois personnes équilibrée [p.63ss].

Pour le fond, Stuart Olyott est capable de fine exégèse, comme dans son traitement de Ac 13:33 [p.76].

Cependant, après avoir suscité l'intérêt dans toute cette question de la génération éternelle du Fils (ce qui aurait pu déstabiliser notre christologie en rendant le Christ inférieur au Père), la conclusion du chapitre n'est pas très ferme. Concernant Ac 13:33, je crois, comme F. F. Bruce, que la phrase 'Tu es mon fils, je t'ai engendré aujourd'hui' s'applique au jour du baptême de Christ lorsqu'il est entré dans une nouvelle phase de sa relation filiale au Père.

L'auteur attribue la déclaration de Jésus, 'Le Père est plus grand que moi' au contexte de son humanité [p.48]. Ne serait-ce pas plutôt celui de sa filialité au Père.

Serait-ce un lapsus monothéiste lorsque M. Olyott déclare que les trois personnes ont «une seule volonté» [p.65]? La prière de Jésus à Gesthsémané démontre une volonté distincte de celle du Père.

L'auteur déclare catégoriquement qu'il «n'existe aucun moyen d'illustrer le mystère de la Trinité». Il est vrai que les illustrations traditionnelles (racine-tronc-branches, eau-glace-vapeur, etc.) ne font pas justice à la personnalité du Dieu triunitaire. Mais Christ souhaite voir la même unité chez des frères divers que celle qui existe dans la Trinité. Et il me semble que l'Écriture suggère aussi une analogie dans le motif des deux personnes du couple qui ne forment qu'une seule chair (1 Co 6:16-17). Puisse ce livre nous aider à viser et à atteindre cette merveilleuse unité.

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**Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990, 167 pages.**

This handbook of modest proportions proceeds without superfluous material to fulfil its stated purpose: to present a methodology for exegesis of the thirteen New Testament epistles traditionally ascribed to the Apostle Paul. The author makes clear both the intentions and the limitations of his work, and then offers a well defined program of interpretation in nine stages, corresponding to the nine chapters of the book. He leads the reader, beginning from general and introductory considerations of a given epistle progressively to the goal of synthesizing Pauline thought for contextually responsible exegesis.

Most helpful and inviting is the honesty with which the book is written. One need not try to read between the lines to discover the author's presuppositions, for example, for they are clearly laid out in the introduction (such as the non-contradictory nature of the Bible; the parity of the intended meaning of the author of Scripture with that of God). Acknowledgements are generous and complete. Interpretive suggestions are given with evident deliberation but do not hint of dogmatism, so that the author becomes an example of the open-mindedness which he commends to the student.

Each chapter is divided into units of material agreeably subtitled, but a general index is not provided. Since most of the chapters are short, this is not a great obstacle except in the case of the fifth chapter, "Diagramming and conducting a grammatical analysis." Here are given 33 illustrated syntactical constructions, and the beginner might be well served by making his own index for these to provide more ready reference. The publication seems generally free from the annoyance of errors (but certainly Paul addressed the book of Titus to Titus and not to Timothy, cf. p.125f). Greek is given without transliteration, and the Greek type-face is attractive.

The chapter order provides the general outline for the author's recommended methodology of exegesis. First are general considerations concerning the character of the epistles (genre; formal features of diatribe, parenthesis, hymns/confessionals; and occasional nature). Due caution is advised regarding a stiff literary analysis such as might be effected by rhetorical criticism. Practical suggestions are given to guide the reader into a judicious reconstruction of particular historical backgrounds.

The second chapter discusses only briefly the matter of textual criticism, and the reader is directed elsewhere for detailed instruction. Matters relevant to the Pauline corpus are highlighted, however, and helpful illustrations are given to emphasize the importance of establishing a given text before proceeding with translation and interpretation.

A similar treatment follows with respect to translation. The student is encouraged to invest the time necessary to become comfortable with the Greek language; but rather than reproduce information attainable elsewhere, the author gives a suggested list of grammars and other resources available. Interlinears are not recommended.

Investigation of historical and introductory issues is the subject of the fourth chapter, and once again an up to date bibliography with descriptive comments is provided. (This consistent provision of relevant bibliographical information is in fact one of the strengths of the book for which the reader will be indebted.) Schreiner himself accepts the Pauline authorship for all thirteen letters, but he is gracious in his comments about room for disagreement. He recommends both primary and secondary reading, but encourages the student to be aware of the theological position of any given scholar whose introductions he might read. The book of Acts is to be used whenever possible in reconstructing a historical background.

The real core of the work is found in chapters five and six on diagramming and tracing the argument respectively. In these chapters practical step by step methodology is described and illustrated. One appreciates the author's explicit commitment to facilitating sound interpretation without insisting inflexibly on exact reproduction of his system. However, he makes clear the necessity of grammatical understanding as prerequisite to proper interpretation, and thus underscores at least the ability of the exegete to do diagramming. The examples chosen to illustrate diagramming are deliberately unambiguous and free from complicating appendages. Grammatical terms are used without explanation for the most part, but once again resource materials are listed.

If the material on tracing the argument should seem overwhelming to a student, the illustrations will indeed clarify. Three are given of increasing length and complexity, and by studying these one will grasp both an overview of and appreciation for the system presented. The system begins by forcing one to break a passage into its component "propositions," and then to determine and describe their coordinate and subordinate relationships. The author leads through each illustration step by step and the resulting schematics offer a visual representation of the respective argument, or at least of the author's interpretation of it.

Chapter seven discusses lexical study, and while Schreiner recognizes that some would place this step earlier in the process of exegesis, he argues that the context needs first to be established to serve as arbitrator for lexical interpretation. He focuses on issues particularly relevant to Paul rather than lexical study in general. Cautions are raised against assuming technical meanings of words, and against interpretations based immediately on systematic theology.

This is not to deny the validity of systematic theology, however, for in chapter eight Schreiner addresses the issue of the general theological framework of Paul's thought. Here circular reasoning is admitted, for one

is encouraged to allow any given text to challenge one's developing understanding of Pauline theology; yet a synthesized theology provides some boundaries within which a given passage must be understood. Working from the presupposition of non-contradiction, and rejecting the idea of a perceptible evolution of Pauline theology within the extant epistles, Schreiner prefers to allow apparent paradoxes to test and enrich theological synthesis.

Meaning and significance are rightly left to the final chapter where issues of culture and occasion are balanced against principle and application. The author suggests guidelines for dealing with problem areas, and the several illustrations he gives expose both the rewards and the uncertainties which such inquiry evokes.

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**Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1991, 301 pages.**

Harry S. Stout, the John B. Madden Master of Berkley College and Professor of American religious history at Yale University, has produced what one scholar has called a "deftly crafted" book. Its chief value is the due prominence it gives to a man who has long been sadly discounted by historians. It shows George Whitefield not only to have possessed unequalled powers as an orator, but to have been one of the foremost figures of the English-speaking world during his entire adult lifetime. This is true of the book throughout but it is particularly evident in the chapters "An Uncommon Friendship," where Whitefield's association with Benjamin Franklin is delineated, and "American Icon," which declares his wholesale acceptance in the thirteen Colonies. All who admire Whitefield and believe the gospel that he preached will rejoice in this emphasis.

Nonetheless, the chief message of this book is false. It appears in the title, *The Divine Dramatist*, and continues on virtually every page. It argues that Whitefield was a superb actor and that his evangelism was accomplished solely by his dramatic power. Professor Stout tells us:

Given Whitefield's unprecedented success in marketing religion in the eighteenth century we have to wonder what techniques he employed. My search for an answer took me to a most unexpected and ironic source: the eighteenth-century English stage....Whitefield became an actor preacher, as opposed to a scholar preacher.

Having decided on this theory that Whitefield was above all an actor, Stout weaves it into his entire account of the evangelist's life. He begins with a chapter that he entitles "The Young Rake," in which he falsely charges that as a boy George was characterized by his dissolute behaviour. He also asserts that the Whitefield family had fallen from its goodly status and that the lad determined to achieve such success on the stage that he would raise it to its former position again. This jumping to unfounded conclusions is symptomatic of the author's style. Examples of such mistakes abound.

Most glaring are Stout's omissions of important elements in Whitefield's life. In a painfully garbled account he speaks of his conversion as a humanly contrived experience copied from the Puritans, but the transformation it effected in his life is almost entirely overlooked. He portrays Whitefield as having no interest in theology, but disregards, for example, the doctrinal content of the first ten sermons that he published and of letters that he wrote during his second passage to America. He knows nothing of the fact that Whitefield was the first founder of Methodism and that in preparing to sail to America he invited John Wesley to give leadership to his work; that during his absence Wesley sought to turn the people against him and that when he returned home he found Wesley had succeeded in his endeavour to the extent that he had but a hundred or so left to hear him. So he started over again and within two months his great congregations were restored. Stout fails to recognize that a movement then sprang up under Whitefield's ministry, giving him in three years as large a body of followers as Wesley had, and that he held the first Methodist Conference—an accomplishment that Wesley later copied. Stout also fails to see that upon Whitefield's return to England after his third visit to America, he determined to give up the leading of his own movement and to become "but the servant of all"—to assist any pastor, whatever his denomination as long as he was sound in the faith, and above all, to help Wesley. This remained his chief endeavour throughout the last twenty years of his life. Without recognizing these important elements of Whitefield's career we have his life only in a sad distortion.

Mention must be made also of Stout's assumption that Whitefield was lacking in physical courage. In reporting an event in which Whitefield was standing on a short flight of stairs in order to address a crowd, and was attacked by an unruly mob, Stout makes it appear that Whitefield was in fear of his attackers and that in this action he ran away from them. In fact, Whitefield leapt down the stairs towards them and it was they who fled. Whitefield was constantly in danger in his open-air ministry in England and Wales and every day of his life he exhibited more courage than is required by the average man or woman in a lifetime.

Although Stout at times recognizes Whitefield's sincerity, he continually portrays his ministry as simply superb acting. He pictures him as aiming only at maintaining his personal prominence. Whitefield's quoting the words of the Apostle Paul, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the

Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" thus becomes the basest of hypocrisy.

The book also abounds with outright errors of fact. This reviewer has marked his copy with the term "false" written in the margin where these mistakes occur and has done so more than three hundred times. For instance, Stout confuses Howell Harris the Welsh evangelist with Gabriel Harris, a businessman of Gloucester. He pictures Whitefield as arriving at his open-air meetings, proud to be conveyed there in William Seward's grand carriage but Seward tells us that upon being converted he had sold his carriage—this before he ever knew Whitefield. He speaks of Whitefield as putting on his revivals in town after town, but Whitefield never referred to the results of his work as "revival" and virtually never used the word. He would have used the term, as biblically-oriented people have ever done, only as a description of a work done by God. He charges that Whitefield's pronunciation was so poor that he spoke of the "Lord God" as the "Lurd Gud," yet Whitefield's preaching won the high praise of such masters of the English tongue as Lord Bolingbroke and the Earl of Chesterfield.

The author makes no mention of the *sine qua non* of the study of Whitefield, Richard Owen Roberts' *Whitefield in Print*, a tome of 765 pages and which lists 8,285 works on its subject. In reading *The Divine Dramatist* this reviewer found his mind often reverting to the Scripture, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: . . . neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." The knowledge of Whitefield which had long been degraded by Arminian writers is further dishonoured by this book which portrays him as chiefly a self-promoting actor.

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## BOOKS RECEIVED/LIVRES REÇUS

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Gaddy, C. Welton, *The Gift of Worship*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992, 240 pages.

Hare, Douglas R. A., *Matthew*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, xiv + 338 pages.

Jasper, David, *Rhetoric, Power and Community. An exercise in reserve*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, xii + 172 pages.

Books mentioned above may or may not be reviewed later in *The Baptist Review of Theology*. La mention de ces livres sous cette rubrique n'inclut ni n'exclut une récénsion ultérieure dans *La Revue Baptiste de Théologie*.