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## REVIEWS

### **Integrative Theology: vol 2: Our Primary Need: Christ's Atoning Provisions**

Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990; 574pp., \$34.99; ISBN 0 310 39240 3

The authors of this very substantial work claim 'a new and distinctive approach to theology' which starts with a defined problem, surveys alternative solutions, reviews biblical material, in consequence formulates a doctrine, defends it and finally applies it. In fact, the novel element over against standard conservative works consists only in the first two steps. Whereas standard treatments start with the general and draw in particular problems, this approach starts with a problem and progresses to the general. The method of course mimics doctrinal history. It also runs the risk of a self-imposed selectivity. However, it enjoys the virtue of being educationally sound by 'scratching where it itches'. It also avoids the sanitised detached calm of much traditional doctrinal theology. It has recognised that most people do not hunger for systems but nearly everyone poses problems and asks questions. As a response to this challenge the book is a success. It captures the interest through posing problems and holds it by surveying solutions. It does not lack courage in seeking integration of varied views where it can and defending a moderately conservative position where it cannot do other. But the programme seems too ambitious. It attempts too many tasks at once, a trap facing all who attempt to treat doctrine 'in the round' today.

The result can be too hurried a handling of quite complex matters. Even the problem or question at the head of a section can be too naive or oversimplified. Christology begins with the heading 'The Statement of the Problem'. But there is more than one problem in Christology. If the title is a reference to the so-called 'Christological Problem' then stating it in the form, 'How could the Eternal Word of the divine Spirit become a temporal child of human flesh?' is not enough. The 'Christological Problem' is much more complex and nuanced than that. The next chapter, 'The Messiah's Divineness and Humanness', is nearer to it. This is only one example of what seems an oversimplistic approach that will not help the defence of orthodox views which the authors seek to justify. This raises the problem of the book's purpose. It is very readable and practical and has an entry-point character, setting out mainly basic material. This suggests it is written for the theological student or thoughtful non-professional. Yet terms like 'Whiteheadian', 'relationist', 'Functionalist' are introduced without explanation. Another, though less damaging, symptom is the introduction of important names without background, initials or references.

In the end, the ultimate challenge which proves too much is the book's own ambitious programme. It simply is not possible to follow through all the set stages with the required thoroughness and carefulness that an academic work requires. It is not even possible to do this with the biblical texts alone if the treatment intends to be critical. Imagine how long a book would be that had the title *Christ in the Bible: a Critical Consideration of All the Texts!* A book with a broader task can only hope to serve as an introduction and cannot therefore claim to settle too many problems, quite a difficulty for a book that claims mainly to address problems. In that case, it should not assume too heavy a mantle. A better title might have been *Introductory Theology – an Integrative Approach*. If the reader approaches it in this way and does not worry too much about some oversimplifications there is much to be gained. The summary of the main issues over evolution and creation, for instance, is excellent. The book has the supreme merit for non-theologians of not being too compressed. Nor is it arid in style. A theological student would certainly find it useful though lengthy. Verdict: a courageous assault on the impossible.

Roy Kearsley, Glasgow Bible College

## **Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination**

Walter Wink

Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1992; 424pp., \$18.95; ISBN 0 8006 2646 X

In a world dominated by multi-national corporations, banks and political systems, Walter Wink has brought prophetic insight to how the church should fight the good fight. Following his previous works, *Naming the Powers* and *Unmasking the Powers*, the final book of the trilogy investigates how faith relates to the biblical concept of 'the principalities and powers' in the world today. He challenges us to discern, engage and resist the powers which all too often have captured the church as an institution.

In this volume, Wink presents the powers as propping up systems which dominate all human life. He analyses the violent nature of domination systems from the Ancient Near Eastern creation myths, Old Testament sacrifice and the meaning of the cross to the Nazi holocaust. The thesis thread through is about a myth of redemptive violence which has been pre-eminent throughout human history. Today it is alive in foreign policy, nationalism, militarism, the media, comics and cartoon shows. Wink is critical of Frank Peretti's best-selling novel *This Present Darkness* for failing to relate evil spirits to the systemic evil of racism, sexism and political patronage.

Wink's insight into the principalities and powers is basically a Reformed one. (Thomas McAlpine's *Facing the Powers* provides an overview of different theological perspectives.) The powers were created good, but they have fallen and demonstrate a tendency to evil. However, they are reconcilable and able to be redeemed. Following G.B. Caird's work (*Principalities and Powers*), we understand that the vocation of the powers is to worship the Lord as they did at creation (Job 38:4-7). But far from praising the Lord of creation and establishing order, the powers are at work to undo creation. Under the guise of the social, economic, religious and moral order they make for chaos and corruption. Their power is the power of death, but along with creation they will ultimately be reconciled to Christ (Col. 1:20). 'The goal is not only our becoming free from the Powers, however, but freeing the Powers: not only reconciling people to God despite the Powers, but reconciling the Powers to God.' The transformation will extend to the basic structures of the world and 'every aspect of reality, even the social framework of existence'.

In my view, some of the biblical interpretation rests far too heavily upon methods of redaction criticism, which is unsatisfactory because it is basically unverifiable and speculative. Further critical study is required to examine whether the ethic of non-violence can be supported. I particularly appreciate his exposition of an integral world view which takes us beyond the paradigms of the Enlightenment and the divisions of spiritual / material, sacred / secular, supernatural / natural. Wink applies God's dominion-free order to racism, the family, law, women and children, healing and exorcism, but I am surprised at the lack of attention given to the environment and our relationship to the planet. How is the environment a fallen power? What does this mean for the ozone layer, fishing and farming, destruction of rain forests, waste disposal and recycling? Is there an interpretive framework here for understanding the mystery of creation's 'acts of God'? The last section considers the place and power of prayer in the spiritual battle with evil systems in today's world. 'History belongs to the intercessors... Recognition of the role of the Powers in blocking prayer can revolutionise the way that we pray.'

I believe that this is a book which we must read. Its subject is one which we cannot ignore and should not trivialise. Understanding the principalities and powers is of missiological significance for the church and the world.

*Robert Calvert, St Mark's Church of Scotland, Drumchapel, Glasgow*

## **Worship: Adoration and Action**

Edited by D.A. Carson

Paternoster, Carlisle, 1993; 252pp., £13.99; ISBN 0 835364 523 X

This is the fifth and final volume of a series produced by the Faith and Church Study Unit of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. Previous volumes dealt with biblical interpretation, text and context, prayer and justification.

The Study Unit under Carson's direction aimed to produce a volume which would not merely look at the mechanics of worship, but pay greater attention to establishing a biblical and systematic theology of worship and at the same time offering some theologically based critique of current worship practices. Carson freely confesses in the introduction that the book falls short of achieving these goals and that 'the disagreements of the Study Unit have not been papered over'. It may well be that the strength of this volume lies in its disagreements rather than in an unrealistic offering of conformity.

It consists of basically four sections. The first contains two long papers under the heading 'Toward a Biblical Theology of Worship'. Yoshiaki Hattori offers a 'Theology of Worship in the Old Testament' and draws an historical line from creation to late Jewish history in the period before Christ, pointing out the development of theological thinking about worship as time and the historical situation (e.g. the exilic period) of the Israelites progressed. While some may find this overview helpful, many will regret that Hattori fails to draw attention to any major underlying theme and offers us a summary of different Old Testament approaches to worship rather than a directive approach. I suspect that a more unified approach could have been argued for.

In contrast to this, David Peterson's chapter on 'Worship in the New Testament' may be criticised by some for being not open enough to different approaches. Peterson moves beyond thinking about worship in terms of prayers and songs and examines it in the theological context of Jesus as the object of worship. Worship is our life lived in submission and service to him. This is a majestic chapter, quite worthy of publication in its own right.

The rest of the book – examining worship in the heritage of the Magisterial Reformation and in some 'Free Church' traditions, as well as from a systematic perspective – varies in value according to the contributor and the perspective of the reader. One doubts, for example, if all within the Presbyterian tradition would agree with Edmund Clowney's solemn chapter, which reads more like a lecture from church history than a paper on worship. There are moving accounts of worship from the Reformed to the charismatic, from Bolivia to Guatemala.

As readers close the book they may feel no further forward in their search for the answer to the question 'What is worship about?', for they will have been given not only one but many answers. Yet this 'failing' that Carson mentions in the introduction is the strength. Are we not enriched as we learn from each other and share in different worship traditions?

The book has indexes of names and Bible passages. There are extensive notes for each chapter.

*Ian G. Yule, Kirkintilloch Baptist Church*

## **Orthodox Perspectives on Mission**

Aram Keshishian

Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, 1992; 138pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 7459 2685 1

This is a concise and clear treatment of several topical themes, written by the author for different contexts between 1978 and 1992. Keshishian is the primate in Lebanon of the Armenian Orthodox Church, and currently moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. In each article or transcribed talk he presents the Orthodox understanding of theology and human life, and how his Confession's views can contribute to, and in some cases correct, traditional Western and WCC thinking.

*Justice, Peace and Creation.* Justice is the gift of God, his mercy and love towards humankind – not a human achievement. Western theology introduced a dichotomy between God and humanity, and creation; for the sake of human progress, the latter had to be exploited; in contrast, Orthodox theology maintains a dynamic unity between humanity and creation. The first two chapters have excellent biblical word-studies on the three topics, and assert the importance of a theocentric, rather than a christocentric, understanding of human endeavour. In the following two chapters, Keshishian brings in the eucharist, and presents it as central to mission – perhaps in contrast to Protestant views which would normally see baptism as the marketplace sacrament, and Communion the sacrament of the upper room. During an interesting look at anthropology, this ecumenical statesman manages to quote Tillich, Barth and Athanasius all in one paragraph! He insists that the anthropological dimension is essential for Christian theology, for otherwise the latter is reduced to metaphysics.

*The Holy Spirit.* Chapters 4 and 5 were written in preparation for the Canberra WCC Assembly. The treatment is congenial and non-controversial – which means that readers will not find the answers to most of their questions! Keshishian takes a high view of baptism ('a personal Pentecost'). He raises two pivotal questions for the WCC: a)

how will it deal with 'renewal' movements and new forms of Christian life? b) how can mainline churches 'come out of the ghetto'? This section includes some interesting comments on the Middle East, which should be read along with an earlier paper delivered in Hungary in 1989 and included later in the book. He cites Pope Shenouda, 'Christian division started in the Middle East. Christian unity must start from the Middle East.'

*Authority, Unity and Mission.* First a critical introduction to Vatican I, and a look at infallibility – Evangelicals and the Orthodox are at one here. He goes on to discuss the papacy, and is happy to concede a 'primacy of honour', but not of authority. In the Middle East, he sees mission primarily as dialogue without compromise, and disavows 'the conversion of Islam' as a goal of mission. Keshishian presents Orthodox theology as a living ingredient in the WCC, not as a 'sort of flavour in the overwhelmingly Protestant structures', and lists the influence he claims his communion has had on the WCC in eight areas.

The Orthodox Church is much better known than it used to be, and books like this will help. Evangelicals will no doubt warm to its spirituality and its insistence on the priority of God, and note that it easily embraces former Protestants like Andrew Walker and George Dragas in Britain. They will remain perplexed by the now well-publicised scale of intrusion by the secular powers into the Orthodox Churches of former Eastern Europe. This publication is an excellent and economical way of finding Orthodox theology expounded by a church leader living in a far more dangerous place than most of us.

*Jock Stein, Carberry Tower, Musselburgh*

### **The Life of St Augustine**

F.W. Farrar, edited by Robert Backhouse

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1993; 189pp., £5.99; ISBN 0 340 57773 8

### **The Life and Letters of Martin Luther**

Preserved Smith, edited by Robert Backhouse

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1993; 256pp., £7.99; ISBN 0 340 57772 X

These are the launch titles in the series 'Spiritual Lives', which aims to provide 'challenge and inspiration from Christian greats of the past drawing on acknowledged autobiographical and biographical classics'. That Augustine and Luther qualify is beyond question. Farrar was a public-school headmaster and prominent Anglican of broad evangelical sympathies, best known for his lives of Christ and of Paul. His Augustine comes from his two-volume *Lives of the Fathers* (1889), here

shorn of the scholarly apparatus of footnotes (which has left unidentified some of the Victorian verse Farrar likes quoting). It is reliable (within the limits of Augustinian study in his day), seriously readable and inclined to moralize, but I doubt if it comes near to qualifying as a 'classic'.

Preserved Smith was a distinguished American historian of the Reformation who ended his career as Professor of History at Cornell. His *Life and Letters of Martin Luther*, first published in 1911 (and similarly abridged by the series editor), has deservedly achieved a longer shelf-life than Farrar's Augustine because of its extensive quotation from Luther's correspondence, and occasionally from his table-talk. This prominent thread gives the account a lively immediacy that Farrar cannot match. It also distinguishes this biography of Luther from others on the market and justifies this reprinting. I would not myself have called the book a classic, but readers familiar with Bainton's *Here I Stand* or other commonly available biographies will find a freshness in the direct encounter with Luther's letters.

*D.F. Wright, New College, University of Edinburgh*

## **An Evangelical Response to Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry**

Edited by Paul Schotenboer

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1992; 60pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 85364 513 2

The World Council of Churches Faith and Order paper *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)* has been more widely discussed than any comparable modern document. Better late than never the World Evangelical Fellowship has produced a 20-page response, here published together with the full text of *BEM*. It is always courteous, acknowledging the strengths of each section of *BEM* before advancing criticisms. It makes no reference to other evangelical assessments (such as the Rutherford House Forum Paper by the present reviewer published in 1984).

It has clearly not been an easy task for a body as diverse as WEF (whose membership includes some who do not hold to baptism or eucharist at all) to formulate an agreed response. At several points its comments make explicit the lack of a common mind among its constituency. Its main complaint against *BEM* is its 'sacramentalism', which seems to mean a belief that 'sacraments are efficacious signs, conveying the grace that they contain, and that grace is communicated by virtue of the rite'. This is not a wholly happy definition (in respect of 'contain' and 'by virtue of the rite'), but the general contention is clear enough.



Of the three sections, I judge the response to *BEM* on ministry the strongest, and that on baptism the weakest. The latter reveals the almost endemic evangelical inability to take Scripture at face value on baptism, e.g. in denying that 1 Corinthians 12:13 has anything to do with baptism, and in claiming that 'to base unity on the rite of baptism is entirely foreign to Scripture'. What about Ephesians 4:5, 1 Corinthians 1:13 (and, of course, 1 Corinthians 12:13)? A major difficulty here is the response's rejection of the role of sacraments as 'effective signs', which distances it from almost all the sixteenth-century Reformers. So be it; the Reformers were but interpreters of Scripture. On this point, however, I will side with them rather than with much of twentieth-century Evangelicalism.

*D.F. Wright, New College, University of Edinburgh*

### **Sermons on 2 Samuel**

John Calvin (translated by Douglas Kelly)

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1992; xvii + 678pp., £19.95; ISBN 0 85151 578 9

One of church history's greatest scandals since the Reformation must be the fate that befell the manuscript copies of Calvin's sermons. The library of Geneva sold them off in 1806 as scrap paper! Some of the lost manuscripts were salvaged later, but sadly many are probably lost for ever. Thankfully the series on 2 Samuel were among those recovered. This series comprises a total of 87 sermons of which we have 43 translated into English from Calvin's French in the present volume. Calvin preached these sermons during 1562 and 1563 – in other words towards the close of his ministry and of his life (he died in 1564). These sermons, then, represent Calvin in full maturity. Moreover, they are especially valuable because Calvin produced no commentary on 2 Samuel.

Professor Kelly has given each sermon a title. This is helpful, but could be misleading to those unfamiliar with Calvin's style of preaching. Calvin did not preach on topics, but worked his way through biblical books, expounding them sentence by sentence. Thus one sermon could touch on a number of topics, depending on the portion of Scripture used. One thing that would have been helpful would have been to have had the Scripture texts printed in bold, as Calvin frequently refers to them during his exposition. This would not have been out of character with Calvin's method of giving running expositions and it would have given the book added value as a commentary. These, however, are minor quibbles and we are most grateful to have this volume available in English. We must congratulate Professor Kelly for producing a very readable translation. This is clearly a labour of love on his part! There is a brief, but useful

introduction that gives some helpful background to Calvin's preaching and to these sermons in particular.

As we glance through these sermons what strikes us at once is the diversity of subjects they cover. Calvin's subjects range from the inner spiritual life (*e.g.* the nature of true prayer, Sermon 26) to the nature of a just war (Sermon 30) and God's judgement on murderers (Sermon 11). This will strike many modern ears with some disparity. Those who advocate a shrunken form of Christianity and seek to limit their faith and the authority of Scripture to the inner spiritual life will find little profit here. For Calvin true prayer and just wars were not unrelated because he believed in a Sovereign Lord who claims every area of life and who, in Scripture, has revealed a comprehensive plan relating to the whole of reality. Expository preaching is the best antidote for narrow pietism. The expository preacher can duck no issue, but must relate Scripture to the whole of life – because Scripture relates to the whole of life. These sermons remind us of this and though we may not want to copy Calvin's style we must follow his goal.

My advice: if you have Calvin's commentaries make room on your shelf (between Joshua and the Psalms) for this volume; if you do not have his commentaries – shame on you!

*Tony Baxter, Sheffield*

### **Bridge-Building: Effective Christian Apologetics**

Alister McGrath

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1992; 286pp., £6.95; ISBN 0 85110 969 1

This is a book characterised by both courage and humility. There is the courage which takes seriously the demanding task of building bridges between the gospel and the world. There is also the humility which acknowledges that such 'points of contact are not in themselves adequate to bring people into the kingdom of God'. McGrath stresses that 'Apologetics is at its best when it is aware of both its goals and its limitations.... Apologetics aims to create an intellectual and imaginative climate favourable to faith; it does not itself create that faith.'

McGrath is concerned with apologetics that is both effective and Christian. The Christian content of apologetics must not be lost. Our goal is 'to bring people to a specifically *Christian* faith'. We may not settle for a 'natural knowledge of God'. This may be 'a starting point... (of) real potential and value'. Nevertheless, without the Christ-centredness of the gospel, it remains 'a distorted knowledge of God'. This concern to keep Christ at the centre of apologetics may be seen in McGrath's discussion of suffering and pluralism: 'To discuss suffering without reference to the suffering of Christ is a theological and spiritual

absurdity'; 'It is... not Christianity which is being related to other faiths; it is little more than a parody and caricature of this living faith.'

In stressing the importance of *effective* apologetics, McGrath displays a good deal of sound commonsense, together with a deep-seated awareness that this is a spiritual task and not merely an intellectual game. He emphasizes 'the need to listen carefully, in order to maximise the effectiveness of apologetics to its potential audience'. He stresses that 'the general question [What stops people becoming Christians?] needs to be particularized: What stops *this* person coming to faith?' Emphasizing that 'effective apologetics is oriented towards individual situations', he insists that 'the apologist cannot be content to mumble vague generalities about the gospel, adopting a "to whom it may concern" approach which blunts the force of the gospel.' This work is much more than purely academic debate: 'dialogue may be long and difficult, involving patience as much as intelligence, and loving care as much as argument'.

This book is written in a popular style. It is very readable. It will not go over the heads of its readers. Nevertheless it should be pointed out that a great deal of learning is hidden in the background. McGrath's grasp of history, philosophy, theology and science is impressive. There are over 250 wide-ranging endnotes. Together with the list of books for further reading, these will prove a useful resource for those who wish to pursue certain matters further.

*Charles M. Cameron, St Ninian's Parish Church, Dunfermline.*

### **The Bolsec Controversy on Predestination, vol. 1: Theological Currents, the Setting and Mood, and the Trial Itself**

Philip C. Holtrop

Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, NY, 1993; xxviii + 1033pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 7734 9248 8 (Book 1), 0 7734 9250 X (Book 2)

These two books constitute the first volume of a projected two-volume work on the controversy between Calvin and Bolsec (a projected second volume will contain translations of the relevant primary literature). Massive in terms of both size and scholarship, it will no doubt be a standard resource for future students of Calvin and the Reformed tradition.

Holtrop's work stands firmly in the tradition of Heiko Oberman (who, incidentally, writes the introduction). Attempting to resist the temptation of an ahistorical abstraction of theology from history, he analyses this most theological of disputes in terms not only of doctrine but also of social, political and personal tensions within and without Geneva. Calvin's pursuit of Bolsec is shown to be motivated not simply by his

desire for doctrinal purity, but also by his need to assert his power in the political realm. In the process of doing this, Holtrop attempts to show that Bolsec was not heterodox by the standards of Reformed orthodoxy at the time, and was not really that far removed from the position of other major Reformers, such as Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich.

While Holtrop's scholarship is exhaustive (the bibliography takes up 55 pages!), the work is vulnerable to criticism on two fronts. First, the sheer size of the work makes it a most intimidating read, and the blow-by-blow accounts of exchanges of letters and legal proceedings make the book ungainly and overlong. Furthermore, the vast number of endnotes (543 in chapter 1 alone) impede progress and serve to break the flow of otherwise coherent arguments. Many of these notes do contain very interesting and important material, but a different editorial policy might have made reading easier. Perhaps these drawbacks are a small price to pay for such a rich mine of information.

The second area of criticism is theological. Holtrop's work is throughout flavoured by his own theological agenda. He is quite open about the 'personal concerns' that led him to write the work: originally a scholastic Calvinist, he has since come to hold a position on election which, as far as I am able to judge, is very similar to that of the eminent Dutch theologian G.C. Berkouwer. It just so happens that Holtrop regards Bolsec as an early advocate of substantially the same position, and so the scene is set for the traditional use of church history as a polemical tool for the theology of today. The reader is left in no doubt that Bolsec's 'Christological' position represents the truth, while Calvin's 'theological' position is seriously deficient.

Church history must inevitably play an important role in the theology of today, but the historian must attempt as far as humanly possible to present historical theology in terms of its own historical context and not that of twentieth-century concerns, whether scholastic or neo-orthodox. In a way, this is what Holtrop has done, with his close analysis of social and political forces underlying the Bolsec debate. However, his openly partisan stance on the dogmatic issues involved make it impossible for the reader to assess the evidence presented dispassionately: if the book is, in part, aimed to alter the views of scholastic Calvinists, it is unlikely to do more than irritate them. It remains vital for those who wish to inject a dogmatic agenda into historical theology to engage in solid biblical exegesis. If, like Holtrop, they fail to do this, they are themselves vulnerable to the same criticism which they level at others: that they have a doctrine of God based on their own philosophical concerns rather than on revelation. This is not to pass judgement on Holtrop's views, with which I myself have some considerable sympathy, but simply to say that, while his excellent historical research has been exhaustive, he has left his self-imposed dogmatic task unfinished. The only way to convince others of the truth of his position is to show them that it

coincides with what divine revelation teaches, not with what Bolsec, Bullinger or any other fallible theologian, past or present, taught.

*Carl R. Trueman, Department of Theology, University of Nottingham*

## **The Doctrine of God**

Gerald Bray

IVP, Leicester, 1993; 281pp., £12. 95; ISBN 0 85111 890 9

Gerald Bray's impressive work here is the first volume of a series entitled *Contours of Christian Theology* of which he is also the general editor. The contributions on major doctrines aim to complement the existing textbooks and to tackle contemporary issues. The series looks not only to defend but also 'rework' evangelical orthodoxy, yet in a style that is understandable to ministers, theological students and educated non-professionals.

Gerald Bray has certainly given us a very fine work. He has packed into a small space many needed clarifications, visions and delicious myth-breakers, all of this with a commitment that goes well beyond the cerebral. A typical example is the formidably informed discussion of early Christianity and classical culture: Christian thought led to pressure on Neoplatonism, not the other way round! On the other hand the fearless and unfashionable claim that we should regard 'omnipotence as God's fundamental attribute' will rustle a few feathers in evangelical nests too! We meet bold innovation all the way. Bray blazes his own trail whatever the subject: the divine attributes, the relation of time to eternity, election and reprobation, Islam and Christianity, Judaism and Christianity, or hermeneutics. One cannot always follow. Although otherwise excellent on Tertullian, he surely exaggerates when calling him a unitarian! No unitarian could have Tertullian's Christology.

Bray's most impressive contribution, though, is his case for seeing in the Reformers, especially Calvin, a way forward on the doctrine of the Trinity. It is superior to, though indebted to, the traditional Cappadocian and Augustinian approaches. His main contention is that formulations have fallen down by allowing a dominance to divine 'substance', so undermining the full integrity of the persons. We would do better to follow Calvin in respecting the limits of human knowledge of the divine 'substance' and rather focus upon the divine community of persons revealed in the gospel. This involves varied patterns of order but unity of operation. In this way, Bray follows through for Evangelicals the modern re-visiting of Trinitarian Christianity. As a bonus, he leaves us with a splendid summary of the doctrine's chequered history, an account of its centrality to all doctrine and a convincing case for its place at the heart of Christian spirituality.

However, this wide-sweeping and erudite treatment of the doctrine of God constitutes the main difficulty in relation to the brief for the series.

To be both primer *and* pathfinder is a tall order for a series, and for a topic such as this in particular. I wonder if all student and non-professional readers will persevere to the end of the book. They *ought* to, if only because of its sheer learning and swashbuckling confidence. Many parts of the book do meet the accessibility criteria. However, the faint-hearted may be tempted to turn back when they meet unexplained terminology such as 'absolute substance', 'theories of relativity', 'random energy', 'realistic narrative' and 'eternity-in-time'. In the same way the author dwells rather selectively upon matters sometimes technical (for example the Greek culture and terminology) just long enough to lose the marginally motivated. Teachers of theology will certainly lap up this invaluable resource but it would be a great loss if their students could not be persuaded to do the same.

*Roy Kearsley, Glasgow Bible College*

### **Christian Liberty. A New Testament Perspective**

James D. G. Dunn

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1993; 115pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 85364 528 0

This book had its origins in the Didsbury Lectures delivered at the British Isles Nazarene College in Manchester in 1991. After an opening discussion of the nature of liberty, chapters deal with 'Jesus and Authority', 'Liberty and the Self' and 'Liberty and Community'. The last is a discussion of Romans 14:1-15:6, in terms of 'the more conservative' and 'the more liberal', with some helpful comments on the indispensability of diversity to unity. The main interest of 'Liberty and the Self' lies in its summarising the fruit of Dunn's extensive recent writings on Romans and Galatians and contributions to the ongoing debate about Paul and the law. In these terms, 'freedom from the law itself' means 'freedom from those specific laws which expressed and maintained Israel's difference and distinctiveness from the other nations'. On such an interpretation, and its undergirding, the jury is still out.

The chapter on Jesus stresses that he worked within, rather than in defiance of, the political authorities of the time. His freedom in relation to the Torah is identified as freedom *within* it rather than from it. This chapter, too, reflects recent scholarly discussion, *e.g.* of the place of the Pharisees within the religious spectrum of contemporary Judaism.

The balance of this book is indicated by its concluding quotation of John 8:31-2: 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'

*D.F. Wright, New College, University of Edinburgh*

## Called to Account

Richard Higginson

Eagle, Guildford, 1993; 266pp., £7.99; ISBN 0 86347 074 2

Richard Higginson's self-declared aim is 'to bring together Christian theology and business practice in an exciting way'. As Lecturer in Christian Ethics at Ridley Hall Cambridge and Director of its Foundation for the study of 'faith and work' issues, he is well qualified for this task and brings to it a considerable wealth of observation and contact.

The conjunction of theology and business is attempted by a series of chapters each considering the relevance to business practice of a different major doctrine. Thus the gap between 'believing that...' and 'being committed to...' is bridged by an album of snapshots that do not declare a common perspective or theme, such as other titles may. Nevertheless the direct application of a doctrinal truth to working practice is both invaluable and stimulating. God installed a sound structure before introducing his crowning innovation... in the Fall there is arrogance, distortion of relations between the sexes and buck-passing... Jesus' (management?) style combined accessibility, empathy and the capacity to challenge... eschatology includes the audit of judgement as well as the prospect of bliss. And there is a recurrent suggestion of the concept of 'adding value to the original resource', uniting both service to the consumer and gain for the producer - though perhaps easier to apply to some enterprises than others.

Much of this may simply make explicit what a biblically oriented mind might sense as 'instinctive'. Where this is the case, Higginson at least provides the valuable service of making the connections explicit. And where such connections are not yet even subconsciously made, the service rendered is correspondingly greater. It is eminently readable, liberally sprinkled with actual or at least 'true-to-life' illustrations. Many of the examples may be only too familiar: the workaholic whose style reflects a 'taskmaster' God, the conscience wrestling over whether or not it is facing a resignation issue. But such is the range of observation and contact available to the author that he extends the understanding of most of his readers as he generally avoids potted solutions in favour of numerous valuable pointers to decision.

An 'odd chapter out' is that on 'Pulling It All Together': a 'method for moral decision-making' that broadly compares with David Cook's in *The Moral Maze*. Here Higginson confesses to being less optimistic for a 'hierarchy of duties' than he did in, say, his own *Dilemmas: a Christian Approach to Moral Decision-making*. The final chapter repeats the plea that the church cease to ignore the business life of its members.

Most readers seeking to relate their business practice to their faith will find this a rewarding read and themselves challenged to take the exercise further. Nor must it go unrecorded that many of the 'connections' made in the process have their application to areas of life far removed from the

world of business. Are there not indicators here for a more satisfying approach to Christian ethics in general?

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**Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, Volume 20:  
Daniel 1 (Chapters 1-6)**

Translated by T.H.L. Parker

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1993;  
300pp., £12.99; ISBN 0 8028 0750 X, 0 85364 573 6.

A very warm welcome indeed from the pulpit ministry to the first of these Rutherford House Translations of Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries. They follow in the wake of the now well established New Testament Commentaries of post-War publication. The first of this second series is a tribute to its translator, the veteran Calvin scholar Dr. T.H.L. Parker.

Dr. Parker has given us a distinctive presentation of Calvin's lectures on the Book of the Prophecies of Daniel, taken down by the effort and industry of Jean Budé and Charles Joinviller, originally published in Geneva in 1561. Written in a clear and pleasantly smooth-flowing style the translation is well fitted for the late twentieth and twenty-first century reader of serious theology, a fair distance away from the somewhat stilted language of the Calvin Translation Society's nineteenth-century version, with which most readers of Calvin have hitherto had to be content.

A further difference from the CTS version is to be found in the presentation of the biblical text under review. Instead of the familiar Latin passage side by side with the AV (KJV) text, Dr. Parker has given us, in English, the 'on the spot' translation from the original which Calvin made spontaneously during his lectures, together with Calvin's variants and own preferences printed in bold in the midst of the text and set out in italics. It is, however, a little irritating for the reader to have to try to sort out the text at the beginning of each section before moving on to the exposition.

The form of commenting, although presented as lectures, is near enough to that used in the expositions of the New Testament. Calvin moves in his customary manner systematically through the book from unit of thought to unit of thought. The main difference is that it is presented in lectures (which take no notice of biblical chapters); thirty-one in all, each beginning with a reference to the exposition of the previous day and ending with a prayer in the form of a collect, that the message of the lecture may be suitably applied to the hearers' (or readers') own circumstances.

After a brief but sufficient consideration of the background, Calvin concentrates his comments on the attitude and actions of the One who is the principal participant in the drama, that is, emphatically, God himself,



in his dealings with mankind, redeemed (warts and all) and unredeemed, expounded through the activities of the principal characters of the narrative.

Daniel is assessed by Calvin to be one of the three greatest saints of the Old Testament. While the kings exhibit all the traits of unredeemed human nature, they show no recognition that it is God who sets kings up - and casts them down! They readily forget the fate of their forbears and arrogantly place themselves above the laws of man and God. Even when his judgement falls upon them or they see his incredible deliverance of Daniel, they come to no true understanding of him. Admittedly, they place him above all the gods, yet still hold on to their own lesser deities. 'God will have no associates,' Calvin remarks.

There is no doubt in the mind of Calvin that the fourth person in the furnace with Shadrach, Misach and Abednego was Christ himself in a pre-incarnation visitation, sustaining them and protecting them from instant extermination. Nor is there any question for him that the rock which destroyed the statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was to be the kingdom of Christ, standing supreme against all great empires of time, particularly those of the ancient world.

Calvin's scholarship, not only in biblical literature but in other disciplines, is inevitably outdated by modern standards. His lengthy refutation of Rabbi Barbinel's six arguments against the fifth kingdom being the kingdom of Christ is tedious and of little interest to the modern reader, although it occupies almost the entire eleventh lecture. Again, he knew nothing of modern psychological research and, in his discussion of dreams, can only appeal to the opinions of classical philosophers.

Yet because of his theological stance, it would have made no difference to him if he had had such knowledge. Nebuchadnezzar's dream and that of Belshazzar, together with his vision, were unique; as far as Calvin was concerned, they came down from God himself and belie all theories.

Dr. Parker's translation does not smooth out the occasional polemic or aptly abrupt remark which is so familiar to Calvin's style. Nor yet does it entirely rid it of a certain dourness more evident in his commentaries on the Old Testament than the New, which strike a melancholy note in his otherwise bold and heart-warming theology. Could it be that his Old Testament studies made him more 'frightened by God's threats' than 'drawn by his sweetness'? Compare his prayer at the end of Lecture 19 (p.175). Whatever the reason, Calvin repeatedly points to a safe way along the reader's perpetually threatened pilgrimage, both in his comments and prayers that they 'take heed' and 'consecrate themselves entirely to his obedience'.

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