
Africa: A Season for Hope
by W. Dayton Roberts
Regal Books Ventura, Calif. USA, 1985
\$4.00

Five of seven chapters in this small, thought provoking book, are written by World Vision staffers. The other two are written by Festo Kivengere, Bishop of the Church of Uganda and team leader with African Evangelistic Enterprise, and Robert Clobus a Catholic Missioner in Ghana. As the title suggests the authors collectively believe that this is a time of great hope for Africa.

The theme of the book is the famine situation which is present in such large sections of the continent Bishop Kivengere sets the under lying tone when he *describes* the heart breaking situations that he has seen in the refugee camps – the suffering and hunger and nakedness. Then he points to the basis of hope when he quotes the woman who said "if it were not for Jesus in my heart I would have died long since".

One of the urgent pleas of the book is for "Missionary Earthkeeping". Fr. Clobus points out our need as Christians to do more than just prepare people for the next world; we need to help them have a better world to live in now. One is reminded of John Wesley's word that there is no holiness that is not a social holiness.

The chapters on "current food conditions" and the country by country survey of needs are very helpful, though it would seem that even by the time this review is published, they will be somewhat out of date. They are however, the chapters which helped me to realize how widespread and serious the problem is.

This book should be read by all Christians in Africa for it will challenge us to pray for those in need, as well as seeking how we might be able to help. It can be read in one evening, but the burden it will lay on you will last a long time.

Earle A. Bowen Jr., Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology

Universe: God, Man and Science
by Adam Ford
(Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1986)
pp. 220, Kshs. 187/-

Windows on Science and Faith
by Tim Hawthorne
(I.V.P., Leicester, 1986)
pp. 128, Kshs. 74/50

Not infrequently my students return from youth camps amazed by the sophistication of the questions posed about the relationship between science and the Christian faith and it is not just A level students who are perplexed about

evolution theory or the possibility of miracle. The problem is that most of the apologetics texts used in our theological colleges are drastically out of date. This century has seen some amazing breakthroughs in scientific knowledge from quanta and quarks at the micro-level to the Big Bang and quasars at the macro, from relativity theory in physics to the mapping of the D.N.A. molecule in biology. All this calls for a shift in apologetic strategy. For example the challenge now is no longer reconciling the Bible with a causally enclosed, mechanistic universe but with a cosmos governed at the most fundamental levels of matter and life by pure chance, for the experts inform us that both the activities of sub-atomic particles and genetic mutations leading to evolutionary development are of a purely random nature. We need, therefore, a new generation of authors who are both committed to Christ and conversant with contemporary science to help us begin to answer the pressing intellectual problems of today's intelligentsia.

We can be grateful then to Prof. Tim Hawthorne for updating his *Questions of Science and Faith* (1980) and for Rev. Adam Ford's contribution. The two authors have much in common. They both acknowledge the inadequacy of scientific reductionism, and the tentative nature of modern scientific descriptions of the world (Hawthorne quotes with approval the words of the space physicist Robert Boyd: scientists "know they do not really understand but merely picture to themselves the behaviour of God's world by insubstantial images of an ever elusive reality" pp. 19-20). They both reject the semi-Deistic God-of-the-gaps in favour of an all pervasive, sustaining deity. Both cover much the same subject matter: The New Physics, the origin and destiny of the Universe, miracles, evolution and the origin of life, and the question of whether man is qualitatively different from the animals. As one might expect, Hawthorne as Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Nottingham Medical School concentrates on the biological issues while Ford, a keen amateur astronomer, focuses on cosmological questions. Ford also provides a chapter on theodicy and one on ecological issues.

Their scientific views also have much in common. For example, they both assume the truth of evolution theory and the great age of the cosmos. Both reject mind/body dualism in favour of the monist view. Needless to say many fellow Christians would take issue with them on their conclusions. They do, however, disagree on whether sub-atomic events and genetic mutations are intrinsically random. Hawthorne says no, the Bible teaches that God ordains everything, there is no such thing as chance (Prov. 16:33). Ford says yes, God instituted purely random processes and he did so in his wisdom to ensure, for instance, flexibility in life forms as they are enabled by chance genetic mutations to adapt as evolving species to drastic environmental changes. This contention constitutes an important element in his theodicy.

Yet the most significant disagreement between the two authors is at the epistemological level. As an evangelical, Hawthorne maintains that the Bible is a divinely inspired document and therefore authoritative in all it teaches. It is not a scientific text book but science should be expected to harmonize with what Scripture does teach. Hawthorne himself believes that Adam was a product of the evolutionary process and the fact that he had human contemporaries may be inferred from eg. Gen 4:14,17, 6:2. Physical death preceded Adam, and the Fall only entailed spiritual death. Adopting the Day/Age theory, he feels that the evolutionary sequence is marvelously presented in Gen. 1 (he omits to mention the awkward fact that birds [Day 5] precede the land animals [Day 6]).

In contrast, theologically Ford is a modernist. Certainly, he believes, the Scriptural writers were inspired in the sense that God elevated their insights so that they were drawn to record their thoughts using their own fallible words and concepts but we the reader and the scientific enquirer may expect to receive equal inspiration. Ancients like Adam and Noah are relegated to myths without historical basis. Fundamentalism is pilloried. Creationism is a "Kindergarten image" which should be discarded along with "a nursery Noah's ark" (p. 75). In fact, Ford informs us, "The literal interpretation of scripture....can be traced back to the sixteenth century, and could be argued to be a heresy which resulted from the Reformation" (p. 93). Unfortunately Ford ignores the fact that the only explicit Biblical teaching on inspiration (II Tim 3:16) affirms that it is the *writings* (graphe) that are inspired, and would he really prefer to revert back to the pre-Reformation hermeneutic where fanciful allegorisation held sway? Reformation exegesis was not in fact characterised by wooden literalism, it sought rather to arrive at the plain meaning of the words while taking such factors as genre and figures of speech fully into account. At its best, modern fundamentalism follows the same methodology. Sadly, like many neo-liberals Ford seems to find a greater affinity with the optimistic evolutionary mysticism of Teilhard de Chardin (pp. 104 - 109) than with Biblical Christianity, and the Eastern sages seem to hold a great fascination for him (see pp. 55, 72, 107). While avoiding the Deist frying pan he is in danger of falling into the pantheist fire.

Notwithstanding its inadequate theology, *Universe: God, Man and Science* is the more profound book of the two and the author has done a better job in integrating his religious faith and scientific beliefs. He is also the better communicator. Again and again Ford's prose borders on poetry as he evokes the awe and grandeur of God's universe. Here is but one example early in the book where the world is described at the atomic level:

Even steel girders and mountains are no more than a gossamer of energy. In a telling phrase the physicist Paul Davies has said that we and all other material things have been 'spun from a frolic of Nothingness.' All hard things, which seem so solid to us - tables, paving stones and heads - are in fact like fine three-dimensional lace, a sort of ghostly spider's web woven from energy as energy performs its unending cosmic dance. (p. 17)

Ford has produced a better written, more passionately enthusiastic book which manages to press home the evidence for God implicit in such modern discoveries as the finely tuned nature of physical laws, the tiniest variation of which would result not only in the cessation of all life but the disintegration of matter itself.

Hawthorne is more tentative and prosaic (perhaps as befits a professional scientist) and when writing on his own area of expertise he becomes somewhat hard to follow. Yet he sometimes borders on the simplistic when venturing into other scientific disciplines (e.g. he claims the cosmos began as an "immensely dense ball of matter" ,p. 46, whereas as Ford correctly informs us on p. 53, physicists believe

that it was a million years after the Big Bang that the first atoms began to form.) Occasionally he seems to miss the point. For instance he rebuts Monod's contention that life developed purposelessly as a result of totally random genetic mutations by arguing that in fact God is instrumental in the production of these mutations and they are therefore purposive. However, Monod has a stronger case than this suggests. His main point is well paraphrased by D.J. Bartholomew, "Mutations are entirely consistent with the hypothesis that all change is by accident. The expected linkage between action and outcome which is the characteristic of purposive action is entirely lacking" (*God of Chance*, S.C.M., 1984, p. 19). In other words there is no sign of purpose or plan or intentionality in these mutations; most are *not* conducive to the survival of the species.

Hawthorne is at his most thought provoking when he shares the latest discoveries in molecular biology which he claims provide independent evidence for evolution. Evidently the nature of the proteins within different species show varying degrees of relatedness such that computers can use the data to construct family trees which are remarkably similar to those constructed from the fossil record. "In fact, if the fossils had never been discovered, this molecular study would push us to much the same conclusions as those of Darwin" (p. 67). This kind of correlation weakens the view that evolution falls short of a true scientific theory on the grounds that it is non falsifiable. This is a discovery of the greatest importance in the evolution debate and yet it is not widely known. It is not discussed, for example, in N.M. de S. Cameron's recent study *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible* (Paternoster, 1983).

Both books are informative and stimulating reading. They point up the danger on the one hand of fundamentalist obscurantism whereby, in the words of Ford, "the major and most exciting insights of modern science are rejected as godless frauds" (p. 50) and on the other hand the subjective natural theology which Ford seems to put in its place. Hawthorne provides a middle way: all truth is God's truth and his Word and works will surely cohere when correctly interpreted.

However, the task of the correct interpretation of each is an ongoing one in which Biblical exegetes and Christ centred scientists should be energetically and humbly engaged. While the results are still coming in we should avoid unwarranted dogmatism and take heed to Prof. Hawthorne's timely advice: "Perhaps it is more important to be 'in love and charity with our Christian neighbours who differ from us, than to adopt any particular position" (p. 7).

Rob Cook, Scott Theological College

Pauline Theology & Mission Practice
by Dean S. Gilliland
(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983)

This book, following many of the arguments of Roland Allen's classic *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (1923), goes way beyond Allen's treatment of Pauline Theology to application to such areas as church planting, discipleship, leadership, discipline, worship and finance in the Church in the 1980's.

Gilliland, with 20 years of missionary experience in West Africa, challenges church planters and pastors alike to look to Paul's teachings not as a systematic theology or theological treatise, but as principles and insights for effective "missionary" effort and practice. In every part of the book, the author directs the reader to Paul's ministry as revealed in the Acts of the Apostles, and the Pauline Epistles, pointing to the relevancy of Paul, the greatest missionary in the history of the Church, to our methods for today. Not only does the author draw on scripture and personnel missionary reflections, but the book contains a healthy discussion of missiological literature and practice relevant to Pauline teaching.

The author contends that Paul's theology has four main characteristics as it relates to evangelism, conversion, the convert and the church. First, Paul's theology is *dynamic*, oriented to the present as well as the future, able to adapt to the needs of a people in a particular situation or place. This dynamism must be part of the Church's theology, as it contextualizes the message of the gospel to the needs and problems of the hearer. However, according to Gilliland, the Church both in the West and Africa, has too often taught a dogmatic theology, oriented to the past, which has often made the Church so rigid that it could make little impact on those it has been commanded to reach.

In addition to a dynamic theology, the author suggests that before all else, the theology of Paul was *evangelical*. While not neglecting the total man, Paul called his work "the ministry of reconciliation", pointing people to the cross. Yet, too often we see Paul only as the preacher of salvation. His theology is also *holistic*, dealing with the home (Col. 3:18-27); marriage (Eph. 5:22-25); social ethics (II Thess. 3:10); politics (Rom. 13:1-7); health (1 Tim. 5:23), personal relationships (Col. 3:13), etc. For Paul, "practical application of Christian truth was more important" than precise understanding of the content.

Lastly, the author sees Paul putting the cure and care of souls before any other issue in his ministry, making his theology *pastoral*. Right doctrine and correct belief were not so important at the outset, as whether the Christian had given allegiance to a new authority.

One of the most interesting sections of the work, to this reader, is his chapter (4) on the "Dimensions of Conversion". The author notes that Paul talks about conversion both theologically and existentially. Conversion is first theological; we have access to the Father because of God's work through Christ of "forgiveness, cleansing, redemption, justification, liberation, reconciliation" and similar theological sounding activities. Yet, conversion has a certain ambiguity, according to the author, if we attempt to confine the experience to a particular point in time. "Conversion is both a completed and a continuous act." To understand conversion more clearly, the author points to the process and existential nature of the experience. Conversion is a "turning" (*epistrepho* - mentioned over 35 times in the New Testament), a change in direction and allegiance. The movement is now to God instead of away from him. Gilliland contends that it is not the absolute degree of attainment which proves that one is a child of God, but rather a noticeable progress in the right direction:

Too often the tendency is to emphasize "how a Christian ought to act" and to confuse that with what God does in conversion. With all respect for my African brothers who ministered with me in Africa, I confess that I was unhappy when, once people publicly decided to follow Christ, certain restrictions were immediately imposed as evidence of conversion. For example, after a morning worship service, when a call was made for those who wished to "accept Jesus", very often the pastor would ask those who came forward, "Do you promise not to work on Sundays? Do you promise not to drink alcohol and be faithful in attendance at Church?" While these questions reveal the ethical code that the church expected of converted people, giving the "proper" answer to these questions did not constitute conversion...This is not a matter of omitting a rite formerly practiced or performing a new ritual. It is being a new person." (pp. 106-7).

With many of the author's illustrations from the African milieu, and numerous applications to the special problems and opportunities in the African context, I strongly recommend this book to the full-time Christian worker and layperson alike. Many will profit from its concise approach and will be stimulated to a richer understanding of Paul and his theology, and how to apply Pauline principles to the growth and strengthening of the Church on this continent and beyond.

Robert J. Oehrig, Daystar University College

Hebrews: The Communicator's Commentary Vol. 10
 by Louis H. Evans Jr.
 (Word Books, Waco, Texas, USA)
 pp. 259. \$15.95

The Communicator's Commentary series brings together excellent biblical scholarship, popular approach, vivid and impelling illustrations, exciting application and valuable outlines, to give help to the preacher and teacher in preparing to communicate God's word. The commentaries combine fresh insights to Scripture, rich illustrative material and innovative ways of utilizing God's vibrant truth. A

prime objective is for each reader to find that God speaks with newness through the Scriptures. The series further presents personal faith, caring for individuals and social responsibility as essential parts of biblical Christianity. The New King James Version has been chosen as the basic text for the series.

What about this volume? These are some of the claims: 'A new commentary for a new age'; 'This stimulating commentary'; 'Excitingly clear and relevant'; 'This stunning commentary';... will become one of the most cherished and used commentaries for the exposition of the epistle today'. These are stirring words. So I looked forward to great things as I prepared to read this book while rereading Hebrews.

The commentator begins by introducing himself to us as well as telling us of his family background (Calvinistic and Mennonite). He describes his pilgrimage into an ever deeper faith, and his heart concerns for the Church. These are essentially in terms of a renewed commitment to Christ and all that that means in terms of belief and practical living. This is further developed in two themes that run through the commentary: purity and strength of faith, and social concern for justice. His overriding desire is to be 'a servant to your growth'.

He lists a number of reasons why this letter is largely avoided: the rejection of the liturgical significance of blood sacrifice; the demythologizing of Jesus, and the foreignness of atonement principles to modern technology; the emphasis of the Church on social concerns to the detriment of a personal relationship with God; the complex structure of the epistle.

This last point is taken up in his discussion of the letter's style. But he is misleading when he says 'More than any other N.T. writer, our author is classical in his Greek style'. Although his elegant Greek is closer to Classical Greek than the other writers, it is still Hellenistic not Classical Greek.

In common with most scholars he makes no attempt to identify the writer of the epistle. He puts the date that it was written shortly before the destruction of the temple in AD 70. The recipients were Hellenistic Jews. He argues that they were Jews of the Greek-speaking provinces; other commentators preferring Rome, or Palestine (but not Jerusalem); but he recognises that we cannot be certain about this. His purpose was to convince and urge his readers to a committed Christian discipleship; particularly in light of the pressures of loyalty to Judaism.

There is a useful section dealing with Jewish principles of interpretation which gives valuable insights into the way the argument of the epistle so often flows. The truths of Scripture were drawn out using rules of interpretation called 'Middoth'. He gives a summary of several important Middoth, explaining that they were recognised as giving the grounds for authoritative proofs which would convince another of the truth of an argument. He looks at these again on pages 108-110 when Christ is compared with Melchizedek.

He makes a distinction in his outline between the passages of teaching and exhortation. This is needed in order to bring out the full clarity and development of the teaching. As an additional aid the exhortation sections are shown in the outlines using italic type.

One of the claims of the series is for fresh and exciting innovations. Does this volume meet the standards set? Yes, there are many new and unusual illustrations. For the brightness of His glory ch. 1:3, the illustration used is of radiation, drawn from atomic physics. However the terrifying nature of accidents at atomic power stations is hardly what the author had in mind when referring to

the radiance (NIV) of God's glory, the radiance of the sun is a far better example. The leaking of a dead car battery pictures the warning about drifting away in ch. 2:1. The warmth of belonging as part of an extended family is admirably caught when he discusses the word 'house' in the early verses of chapter 3. An incident from his flying experience illustrates the peace and calm of rest in contrast to panic and anxiety. Making a surfboard out of fibreglass pictures the way assurance of hope acts as a catalyst to set our hearts immovable on Christ. Cyclotrons and radio-active isotopes help us to understand how easily we lose our vitality. These last few illustrations, while excellent for his Western readers, have little relevance in Africa.

There are some very fine points in this commentary. One is the theme of social justice for all, regardless of colour, race or creed. Another is his treatment of Jewish interpretation. A third is the explanation of the Semitic background to the use of Oaths. There is a fine survey and discussion of Atonement, looking in particular at its necessity and its effect on the worshipper. But why does he twice draw from the *Mishnah* rather than from Leviticus 16, particularly when the *Mishnah* does not agree with Leviticus? When he reaches chapter 11 there are two excellent sections dealing with 'faith and obedience' and 'faith and the future', the latter section being especially helpful. The exhortations of chapter 13 are well applied to today's situations, even though it means reading African for American, Nairobi and Lagos for New York and Washington.

In spite of its fine points the commentary is very uneven. There are places of great detail which are very helpful, but these are followed by sections passed over with only a few general remarks. There are times when the detail highlights a word here or a thought there, but misses the main point. True, the details often lead to an innovative illustration, but it is the illustrations that often seem to decide what will be commented on and what will be skimmed over. For example, 'what is man that You are mindful of him?' hardly carries the idea of God focussing on an individual with an awesomely powerful telescope. Then he really strains his exegesis to find in 6:1-3 the three aspects of the early Church's understanding of the Christian life and discipleship: the invitation from Christ, teaching/nurture, and the 'Go' of the apostolic mandate.

It is the writer's use of Greek that I found most disturbing. Frequently he simply quotes it alongside the appropriate English word without explaining its significance. For those who know Greek it is unnecessary; for those who don't, it contributes nothing. More serious are those times when he uses it incorrectly; the point he is making may be correct or helpful, but it is supported by faulty evidence.

Referring to the verb forms in the first two verses he says that the first form indicates a *progressive* past. The context does indicate a process, but the verb form does not indicate what is progressive. Discussing the meaning of *apostle*, the author asserts that when we remove the prefix of the Greek word we are left with *stolon* (it should be *stolos*). He then describes the way biologists use the word *stolon*, giving the impression that this is a Greek word, whereas it is an English word derived from the Greek. The word *enlightened* is common in the NT, almost always meaning a radical transference from darkness to light; This is correct, but the four verses he quotes in support do not even use the word. He is not correct in saying that *misantos* translated *undefiled* in 7:26 also means without any moral blemish. The word refers to what is unstained

or uncontaminated, whereas the word *amomos* is used for the absence of moral and physical blemishes.

There are a few errors. In the middle of page 140, "faith" should read "patience". Towards the bottom of page 191, *moncin* should read *mencin*, "great" on page 257 should be "greet". The most careless error occurs on page 84. He is describing the Israelites grumbling for meat saying that they were tired of manna while waiting to cross the Red Sea with the Egyptians hard behind them. Manna was not given until they were in the desert after crossing the Red Sea while the grumbling for meat happened after leaving Mt. Sinai, as recorded in Numbers 11. The bibliography omits reference to the fine commentaries on Hebrews by F. F. Bruce and P.E. Hughes.

This is a lively and readably commentary with a wealth of novel ideas; however, all too often the text is made to fit the innovations. The book is full of good ideas for preachers, but as an exegetical model it leaves a great deal to be desired. One is left with a feeling of disappointment that a commentary which promised so much produces so little.

Colin H. Densham, Moffat College of the Bible, Kijabe.

Forgiveness and Atonement

by H. D. McDonald
(Baker Book House 1984)
\$5.95 137 pp

'The idea of the forgiveness of sins is central in the Christian message.' So the book begins, and over the 8 chapters the author explores the scope and reach of the forgiveness of sins and its relation to revelation, Christ, grace, justification, guilt, experience, and atonement. McDonald's primary concern in this book is not forgiveness between wronged human parties but rather God's forgiveness of human sins, although the spill-over is inescapable: 'Christians are a people divinely forgiven; therefore they are, and therefore they must be, a people who forgive divinely.' (p. 51)

No true Christian can ever doubt the central importance of the forgiveness of sins. When the culpable sinner, by trusting in Christ as Saviour, crosses the threshold from death to life, he enters through no other door than the door of forgiveness; from then on he treads on forgiveness ground and breathes forgiveness air. However, while the Christian accepts this truth readily enough, the modern climate of opinion is against it. For this reason McDonald devotes the first chapter to addressing two basic questions: Is forgiveness necessary? and is it possible? For no matter how feasible forgiveness may be, if it is not necessary it is irrelevant; and however necessary it may be, if it is not possible it is a cruel, tantalizing illusion.

In an illuminating chapter on Revelation and Forgiveness, the author searches for the source of the notion of the forgiveness of sins. He shows that nature knows little or nothing of it: 'The consideration of God's works (ie nature) will not help a man to the knowledge that there is forgiveness with God' (John Owen). And conscience, for all its value as an umpire in the conflict between right and wrong, is unable to forgive the wrong to which it has drawn the sinner's notice. 'Forgiveness of sins contradicts the teaching of conscience' (Otto Borchert). It is rather to revelation alone that we owe the idea that 'there is forgiveness with God.' It is a surprise; something that we would never have imagined, had not God Himself told us in His word.

More specifically, Chapter 3 discussed forgiveness in relation to Christ. Again and again Christ talks of the forgiveness of sins in His teaching. He emphasises the Father's willingness to forgive. But beyond that, He himself dares to pronounce the word: 'Your sins are forgiven', and we realise that Jesus is not merely pointing away to forgiveness, but in some way is actually providing it, effecting it.

Forgiveness and grace go hand in hand, the former one of the clearest possible expressions of the latter. God is not compelled to forgive: 'To say that we are saved by grace is to say that we are saved both without merit on our own part, and without necessity on God's part' (A. H. Strong). This fact should forever banish that sort of impertinent, blasé carelessness expressed by Heinrich Heine, who on his deathbed declared: 'God will forgive; that's His business (*C'est son metier*)'. No, rather as J. I. Packer explains, 'Grace is free in the sense of being self-originated, and of proceeding from one who was free not to be gracious.'

Forgiveness and justification are so bound together in the 'salvation event' that they are almost inseparable. Thus Karl Barth can declare: 'The forgiveness of sins or justification of the sinner by faith is *the* gift of the Holy Spirit by which all others, so far as they are really that, must submit to be measured; that is the common denominator, so to speak, upon which everything that can seriously be called Christian life must be set.' Certainly Christian experience would neither wish, nor be able, to divide them apart. From the standpoint of theological definition, however, a distinction can be made: ...Forgiveness is conceived negatively, as the blotting out of one's past deeds by wiping the slate clean, while justification is defined positively, as the admission of the forgiven soul into a position of right relationship with God. Thus, while justification is a legal term looking at God and man in terms of Judge-convict, forgiveness is filial privilege, seeing God and man in terms of Father-son.

The whole question of guilt is much discussed in modern psychology, and since Freud and Jung various ways have been sought to relieve guilt by explaining it away. The chapter on Guilt and Forgiveness establishes a helpful distinction between false guilt and true guilt. Paul Tournier points out that 'Any guilt suggested by the judgment of men is false guilt if it does not receive inner support by the judgment of God.' A further distinction is made between subjective guilt (the feeling of unease and shame when we are reproached by God in our innermost soul) and objective guilt (a broken relationship with God with or without accompanying feelings). It is when guilt is acknowledged before God that release is possible. 'The Christian life is one of assured forgiveness of sins and presupposes the removal both of the sense of guilt and of guilt itself' (Henry).

Chapter 7 emphasises the importance of actually experiencing forgiveness.

The poet Keats declared: 'Nothing ever becomes real until it is experienced; even a proverb is no proverb to you till it is experienced.' Perhaps nowhere is this truer than in the matter of forgiveness. Knowledge about it can never substitute for the experience of it. The author quotes another poet, this time John Donne: 'He that cannot define repentance, he that cannot spell it, may have it; and he that hath written whole books, great volumes on it may be without it.' How then is it possible to experience the forgiveness of God? By repentance and faith in Christ. The discovery of forgiveness is made to faith alone. In Christ, God's forgiveness is offered to man; by faith it is personally accepted by man. The author approvingly quotes John Owen to insist that faith has priority over feelings: 'That may be believed which is not 'felt'; yea, it is the will and command of God that faith should stand and do its work where all sense fails.'

Up to this point the book might have been entitled merely 'Forgiveness'. That it bears the full title 'Forgiveness and Atonement' underlines the foundational importance of the atoning death of Christ (Chapter 8) for although forgiveness is free to the sinner, it cost God nothing less than the death of His Son. If there is forgiveness with God it is realised solely on the grounds of Christ's atonement. But how? While McDonald approvingly quotes R. W. Dale when he declares: 'It is not the *theory* of the death of Christ that constitutes the ground of forgiveness but the *death itself*, he himself insists that theologically that death should be understood as *sacrificial* and *substitutionary*. He concludes (p. 135); This then is the nature of the atonement: 'God Himself in love has satisfied the ethical demands of His divine nature by substituting Christ's penal sufferings for our just punishment and thus established the grounds for His righteous pardon of human guilt and sin.' In support he quotes Romans 3:23-26, the passage Luther labelled 'the very centre and kernel of the Epistle and of all Scripture.'

To sum up: Here is a book I heartily recommend. It is expensive for its size, and there are two or three printing errors, it is not earth-shakingly controversial, but it would be a valuable addition to the library of the serious Bible student, the preacher, the teacher of theology, - valuable indeed to anyone who desires to understand better the grounds of his standing before God and who longs to be able to explain more clearly to others 'the hope that is within him'. There are several places where the prose seems to lift off into pulpit eloquence, and one suspects that parts have been transposed from sermons McDonald has preached, but it is hard to blame him for this is stuff to thrill both the mind and the heart.

One final remark. The book (as should be evident from this review) is liberally strewn with lucid and memorable quotes from theologians, poets, hymnwriters. As there is no index or bibliography in the book, I made a list of these writers and observed that they represent some 15 or 16 centuries, many different countries from Africa (Augustine) to Europe, and from America to Asia, and many different theological persuasions. Not only does this enhance further the value of the book, but also it is entirely appropriate in a book on this subject. For every member of that multitude that no man can number, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne of God, is there because of the forgiveness of sins which God has provided through the atoning death of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Gordon Molyneux, former director of Bunia Theological Seminary, Zaire