

# Book Reviews

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THE CONCEPT OF GOD. *Keith Ward*. Blackwell, 1975. 236 pp. £5.00.

The main thesis of this book is that 'God' is not the name of a logically peculiar being but a concept that serves to articulate the believer's response to experiences which for him are pointers to a transcendent reality and the means of finding meaning and value in life. 'God' is a term of practical rather than speculative usefulness. God's existence cannot be proved and explains nothing. Recognition of the transcendent itself is not logically compulsory but is the subject of a Harean 'blik'. Keith Ward is rightly anxious to emphasise both the reality of whatever religious experience points to and the freedom of the faith that responds to it. It is not clear however how a 'blik', by definition invincible to argument, can give access to reality, particularly as the examples given of transcendence commonly accepted in non-religious contexts do not stand up well to scrutiny, the factors leading to the adoption of a belief being sometimes confused with the reasons that justify it.

Ward is emphatic that 'God'-statements can only be understood within the context of a particular religious tradition, of worship and practice as well as belief, and the latter part of the book traces the consequences for Christian theology of a broadly Catholic strain. He has much to say here that is interesting and valuable, especially about Christology, for anyone who wants to accept the positive insights of radical theology without feeling obliged to throw away the divine baby with the bath water.

FRANKLYN DULLEY

PROPHECY AND TRADITION. *R. E. Clements*. Blackwell, 1975. 104 pp. £2.25.

Old Testament studies have become increasingly complex in recent years, and it is hardly possible for even the professional scholar to keep fully abreast of new developments in the field. Blackwells are therefore performing a timely and invaluable service to the non-specialist in providing a series of paper-backs on 'Growing Points in Theology'. The latest addition to this series, all of which so far are on Old Testament topics, is an examination of some of the current issues in the study of prophecy.

The mantle of H. H. Rowley has fallen on Dr. Clements, and in this work we are at once brought up to date with major recent work on the prophets, and helped to see what are the important questions at the present time. The book is by way of an interim report rather than a definitive text-book, but Dr. Clements' judicious survey will not only enable a wider public to participate in this study, but also contribute to the next stages in the debate by clearly articulating the questions that need to be considered, and by showing how a number of popular hypothetical positions can no longer be sustained in the face of a more searching review of the evidence. Topics covered include the relation of prophecy to cult, Law, Covenant, Wisdom, Apocalyptic and the Deuteronomic movement, and the criteria for distinguishing false from true prophets.

This is a book which is to be welcomed without reserve and commended alike to students, clergy and teachers, and theologians of other disciplines.

A. GELSTON

**JESUS: THE FACT BEHIND THE FAITH.** *C. Leslie Mitton.* Mowbrays, 1975. 152 pp. £1.75.

Dr. Mitton has written this book (first published in America in 1973) for the Christian layman who is disturbed by the view that the Gospels cannot be relied on to tell us the historical facts about Jesus and his teaching. It is not intended to contribute to the scholarly debate, and anyone versed in that debate will find it elementary. But it will be of value not only to the layman, but to the minister or theological student who needs to find his bearings in this area, and it would make salutary reading for the non-Christian who bases his scepticism on 'what scholars say' about the historical value of the Gospels.

A survey of 'Historical Jesus' study since the 1920s (of particular interest as it covers the period of the author's personal involvement in the theological scene) is followed by a critique of the view that faith has replaced fact, and an argument for a real historical concern in the early church. Various factors indicating the historical value of the Synoptic Gospels (in general, not in every detail) are discussed, but the Fourth Gospel is treated as a less reliable witness.

Having established a positive stance towards the historical reliability of the (Synoptic) Gospels, Dr. Mitton turns to the currently fashionable criteria for distinguishing the historical elements from later accretions. Here he is not as positive as the preceding chapters had led one to hope, and the remainder of the book consists of a listing of traits, incidents, and elements of teaching which pass the tests. His list is longer and more satisfying than many critics would approve, but the uneasy feeling remains that it would have been more consistent with his positive stance to have assumed the substantial reliability of the tradition except where there was evidence to the contrary, rather than demand that authenticity be proved in every case, however generous the criteria adopted.

A good and helpful little book, but one which will leave the conservative unsatisfied.

R. T. FRANCE

**JESUS WHO BECAME CHRIST.** *Peter de Rosa.* Collins, revised ed, 1975. 287 pp. £3.50.

This book is written with wit and warmth, vivacity and sincerity—the most attractive statement of a would-be Christian radical position that I know.

De Rosa, a Roman Catholic indebted particularly to Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Bultmann and R. H. Fuller, was won over to radical critical views of the Bible and of his own church's dogmas. The experience evidently brought darkness, but existentialist thought enabled him to see the dawn and say: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen.' He believes that modern biblical studies enable us to dispense with almost the whole of post-biblical theology (e.g. the Trinity: 'Jesus was a man full of God'), with almost the whole of the post-biblical church's understanding of Bible history (especially the gospels) and with all the difficulties raised by scientific uniformitarianism.

The magic key is the realisation that four writers of genius discovered 'a unique and breathtaking literary form' for presenting the gospel of the crucified and risen Christ—the mythological, kerygmatic story. The evangelists were little concerned as to whether there was some history mingled with the mythology—the myth conveyed the theological truth and brought it home to the reader in the present. So the virgin birth, the walking on the water, the feeding of the multitudes, the accounts of the empty tomb and of the appearances of Jesus were *never intended by the authors to be taken literally*.

This is held to be the key to true exegesis. But the astonishing thing is that no one seems to have understood this literary form till the twentieth century. The problem of how to interpret the New Testament teaching about Christ is an ever-pressing one. The early catholic church claimed that because its understanding of the Trinity was taught in all the churches founded by the apostles, Arianism was a novel interpretation. This has been the catholic position ever since. So we reject Arianism and Socinianism. But the present-day Arians, the Jehovah's Witnesses, can certainly trace back their Christology to the fourth century, and the present-day Socinians, the Christadelphians, can certainly trace back their Christology to the sixteenth century. But this notion that the evangelists did not *intend* to teach that the man Jesus was born of a virgin was lost without trace between the first century and the twentieth. Both Luke's prologue and the declared intention and solemn attestation of the Fourth Gospel indicate careful attention to historical truth. Mythology is not a gospel form. The supposed exegesis is not exegesis, it is a rationalisation to justify a certain type of historical criticism.

Though some aspects of Jesus' teaching, as for instance his preaching of the kingdom, are movingly and penetratingly expounded by the author, the overall picture is terribly emasculated. All the features in the gospels which suggest that he made himself equal with God are stripped away as being the product of post-resurrection faith. The Jesus of history is said to be a uniquely God-loving man, but he is neither more nor less God than we are.

Superficially all seems lucid, but on deeper consideration the problems created seem greater than those of historic Christianity. 'God the Mystery' is neither the God of Greek philosophy nor the God of the Old Testament—unless perchance the unique and breathtaking literary form found in New Testament history is the literary form of the Old Testament as well. (The obvious place to begin to look for this would be in the book of Jonah, but even here even Philo seems not even to have heard, nor even to have thought of such an interpretation!) 'God the Mystery comes to us through a man, like ourselves in everything except that he did not fail his Father.' 'The human in Christ is the divine expressing itself in the only (sic) possible way.'

Jesus is the representative man and the church is his body. It is this man (and ourselves in him) to whom we are encouraged to apply the sacred name of 'Lord'. The mythology encourages us even to say to him: 'My Lord and my God'. It is a very small step from this to pantheism, which is the diabolical opposite of biblical theism, identifying God with man and good with evil.

And what becomes of faith? Is 'I believe in God (the Mystery)' the same as 'I believe in Jesus Christ (like ourselves in everything)'? Furthermore, how much do we know about Jesus anyway? If de Rosa's assessment of the evidence were demonstrably correct the answer would be 'not very much'. But on his own showing some able scholars sharing the same critical premises reject much more. Faith is thus presented to a serious enquirer as a walking on the water to an unknown Jesus. But biblical faith is not a leap in the dark. Prevenient grace is as it were a dawn, and saving grace greets the sunrise.

Certainly we are presented with a different (and difficult) doctrine of God, Christ, man, faith, salvation and revelation. Yet, because it is couched so largely in scriptural phrases, it may sound very attractive to those who look for quick conversions to see every passage of the gospels as an evangelistic sermon. But to those who are justly suspicious of the competing claims of rival religious experiences, it looks like subjectivism run riot, mere wishful thinking. Indeed it makes the evangelists and early Christians look both careless and credulous. The religious experience of New Testament Christianity is sane and solid because it is grounded in objective truth which God brings home to the humble seeker. As to revelation, the Bible has a clear doctrine, which includes the concept of the divine inspiration and consequent truth of Scripture. If this doctrine is true, it will provide indispensable checks in the conduct of biblical criticism. In the end the church will have to come back to the authority of Jesus as its teacher and to his view of Scripture, even though it means the overthrow of a mountain of ill-judged criticism.

This week I had the unpleasant task of laying rat-poison. The rat finds it pleasant to eat, but it kills him. This is precisely the effect which destructive biblical criticism and the philosophy which motivates it has on an unwary church. Liberalism has destroyed the vitals of the churches of the Reformation and it is now destroying the Roman church—so that in this country alone it is losing a quarter of a million adherents a year. A theologian at present living in great peril behind the Iron Curtain once said this: 'In fifty years all the might of an atheist state has been unable to destroy the church; but if the church were to be captured by Bultmann's teaching, it would be destroyed in ten.' Oh, that the first streaks of dawn seen by de Rosa might lead on to the perfect day of a full and rich biblical faith, and that his great gifts might be used for the building up of a renewed church!

JOHN WENHAM

THE MURDER OF CHRIST. *Wilhelm Reich*. Souvenir, 1975. 227 pp. £3.00 and paperback £1.75.

It sounds promising when the publishers tell us that the author 'believes that the social crisis we are living through in the mid-twentieth century is basically due to the inability of people in general to govern their own lives. . . . Reich, one of the century's most outstanding psychiatrists, turns his attention to a

profound analysis of these modern problems. He sees them as part and parcel of the same 'Emotional Plague of Mankind' that caused the agonising death of Christ, and which has haunted man with guilt all through the ages.'

Reich, founder of Orgonomy, 'the Science of Life Energy', writes with sufficient vigour (and audacity) to have had five books published. He has found the cure to all the world's ills in the acceptance of the 'pure genital embrace'. Of Jesus he says: 'It is unthinkable that a man with a glowing body and a sane mind . . . lived in abstinence with the women he knew, and there is no indication in his whole being to such effect.' Even the posthumous introduction says: 'The solutions to these problems, given in *The Murder of Christ* are immature, emotionally blurred, insufficient or lacking completeness.'

How mad can the world become?

JOHN WENHAM

VICTORY OVER VIOLENCE. *Martin Hengel*. Introduction by Robin Scroggs. S.P.C.K., 1975. 93 pp. £1.30.

Although this book appears at first sight to be a typical brief paper-back of contemporary if not ephemeral importance it soon reveals itself as something very different. Martin Hengel is a learned German scholar who has already written an important work on the Zealots and is an authority on the period of history between the Testaments. Many of us have not studied this period since we read Edwyn Bevan's famous book *Jerusalem under the High Priests* and it is interesting to see this ground covered again but with a very different emphasis. Hengel is writing a political treatise, although being faithful to the facts of history and Biblical interpretation.

His thesis is that the violence which followed upon the imperialistic policy of Alexander the Great and all his successors down to the Roman Empire provoked in return a counter-violence, particularly in the form of successive revolutions and rebellions on the part of the Jewish people. Although it has been customary to admire the courage and patriotism of Judas Maccabaeus and his followers in their desperate fight against Antiochus Epiphanes, Hengel shows that the way of military rebellion was doomed to failure from the start and that it produced tyranny, oppression and bitter internal strife among different sections of the Jewish people themselves. It was in fact a *cul-de-sac*.

In contrast to all this Jesus teaches an indifference to political rule and an inner freedom resulting from love to all, including enemies, which in turn is based upon a response to the love of God who sends His rain on the just and on the unjust and makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good. The writer traces the same attitude in St. Paul and in primitive Christianity generally and sees in its rejection of the law and its proclamation of the unity of all men in Christ as a further reaction from the violence and hostility of the various Jewish rebellions. He gives a modern touch by continually referring to the rebels as 'freedom fighters', 'revolutionaries' and 'liberators'.

In the Introduction Robin Scroggs, writing from an American point of view, relates the whole thesis to the discussion now being carried on as to whether violence by and on behalf of oppressed people is or is not to be justified, especially when all else has failed. The Introduction sets out the arguments on both sides of this vexed question and does not anticipate fully the answer which is only to be found at the end of Hengel's short but very closely packed argument. For the serious student every page is packed with

long and detailed footnotes referring almost entirely to German works.

However congenial to some of us the conclusion of the argument may be, one cannot help wondering whether the evidence would say the same thing to someone who started from different assumptions! But is not that true of all history? We only see what we are looking for and in the present confused state of Christian theology on this matter Hengel's little book cannot fail to be very good value for money.

RONALD LEICESTER

PAUL'S INTERCESSORY PRAYERS. *G. P. Wiles*. CUP, 1974. 351 pp. £7.20.

Professor Wiles began this study (SNTS Monograph 24) of Paul's intercessory prayers in the context of his awareness of a 'crisis of piety' in the Christian church, that men could no longer pray. He thus began first to investigate the function of intercessory prayer in Paul's ministry with reference to 1 Thesalonians; but this book is of wider scope, in that it covers all the Pauline letters, narrower in intention in that it deals with the significance of the intercessory prayer passages in the letters.

This more literary character of the present study gives it its strength and its weakness. On the one hand the study is tied to the text by the terms in which it is conducted, and therefore we are held to a close exegetical presentation. This is particularly valuable, in that the reconstruction of the pattern of piety of the early Christians is not just a difficult matter in itself from an historical point of view, but it is seldom done with full historical rigour, since writers are often preoccupied with their own practice and needs. On the other hand, however, the study is not easy to read because of the way in which the literary analytical sections are presented. These sections are outlined in the second chapter and the rest of the study deals with the background to the intercessory wish-prayers, blessings and curses, prayer reports, and exhortations about intercessory prayer.

The conclusions at which Professor Wiles arrives are, however, very general. Intercessory prayer is a recognisable type of prayer; the prayer passages epitomise the dominant message of the letters in which they come; the prayer passages are located strategically in the letters and thus reflect Paul's currently central interests; the prayers were grounded in and directed by the gospel of Christ. Paul's heightened eschatological and adventist perspective added increased urgency to his thanksgivings and intercessions; exhortations to intercession reflect Paul's desire that his readers should take responsibility for one another; Paul relied upon the ministry of intercession.

These points are well made, but they do not tell us what was the position of prayer in the life of the Christian according to Paul's understanding, nor do they tell us much about the problem which motivated the study, the present 'crisis of piety'. This is no fundamental criticism of this book, but it is rather to point out that this book is really a compendium of the evidence in the letters, and therefore a useful preliminary contribution only to the question the author is concerned about.

B. N. KAYE

ST. PAUL'S OPPONENTS AND THEIR BACKGROUND. *J. J. Gunther*. E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1973. Supplements to *Novum Testamentum*, Volume 35. 322 pp. 96 guilders.

The purpose of this monograph is to present data from non-conformist Judaism and apocalypses to illumine what may be deduced concerning the

doctrine and life of Paul's opponents. The suggestion is that there is evidence (presented in the study) for viewing the substance of the beliefs of Paul's opponents, and their practices, as being akin to contemporary esoteric Palestinian Judaism, qualified by the teaching of Jesus. The setting out of these parallels is not intended to suggest that most converts to Christianity from esoteric Judaism scorned or resisted Paul, or that they alone did, but it is intended to suggest that this is the type of Judaism in the background of Paul's opponents.

The method of the study is simple. Certain elements in first century esoteric Judaism are taken because they resemble those echoed by Paul's opponents in more than one of his letters. These elements are then expounded in detail according to the documents of this esoteric Judaism. There is no rigorous attempt to show how particular opponents in particular letters might be located in, or associated with, the church to which the letter is written. No attempt is made to examine the actual historical circumstances, and to relate these to the question under discussion.

The first chapter is given to an overview of the sources to be used, and then the elements are taken chapter by chapter; legalism, asceticism, sacerdotal separatism, angelology, messianism and pneumatology, apocalyptic mystic gnosticism and apostolic authority. There is also a chapter on 2 Corinthians 6. 14-7. 1 which is taken, for no precise exegetical reasons, to be a non-pauline interpolation. It may well have been written by his opponents, and if not written by them, at least its teachings provide illustrative contemporary parallels to the thought of the Apostle's opponents!

We are to be grateful for a useful exposition of some elements in certain aspects of first century Judaism. But because of the quite faulty historical method employed no secure relationship between this exposition and Paul's writings and activities has been established.

B. N. KAYE

**THE BOOK OF REVELATION.** *Edited by G. R. Beasley-Murray.* New Century Bible. Oliphants, 1974. 352 pp. £4.75.

Dr. Beasley-Murray's expertise in eschatology makes him a logical choice to write a commentary on Revelation and what a fine commentary he has written! He has a wide acquaintance with the relevant literature and a sympathetic penetration into the meaning of the book. While there is much about judgment, he sees Revelation as written, not 'in order to hold threats of damnation before sinners, but to encourage saints to press on, despite all opposition, and to win the inheritance' (p. 27). The commentary shows how the encouragement of the saints was carried out and the way the realities of power were brought home to those first century servants of Christ.

The commentary begins with an Introduction which discusses the form of the work (epistle, apocalypse, prophecy), the content and structure, the authorship and date, and the abiding significance of the book. All this takes up 48 pages, so that the bulk of the book is commentary, as it should be.

Dr Beasley-Murray finds chapters 4 and 5 the key to the whole book, for there we find both a fuller understanding of the Christ who dominates the preceding section and also the initiation of the judgments that follow, to which these chapters also supply the form. In this respect these chapters constitute the pivot of the whole structure which holds the book together, for the rest of the visions dovetail into this main structure' (p. 108). Our author finds the three series of judgments to describe in different imagery the same short period

of history, the time of the end just before the coming of Christ's kingdom. This has the disadvantage of making a good part of the book irrelevant to most of the church's history, even if it does give a unity to the three series.

Not only does Dr. Beasley-Murray write with a full recognition of what has gone before, but he writes with a scholarly reserve which refrains from making judgments on doubtful points. For example, he deals fairly with both Zahn's contention that the book sealed with seven seals must be seen as a testament and Roller's view that it must not. In the end he finds himself unable to side with either. This refusal to be dogmatic where the evidence is inconclusive is characteristic.

Let me conclude by paying a tribute to the careful exegesis which is evident throughout this work. It is a splendid commentary on a difficult book and one for which many Christians, both scholarly and uninformed, will be grateful.

LEON MORRIS

**THE CARDINAL PROTECTORS OF ENGLAND: ROME AND THE TUDORS BEFORE THE REFORMATION.** *William E. Wilkie.* CUP, 1974. 262 pp. £4.50.

The Cardinal Protectors of England and the place they played in English politics during Henry VII's reign and that of Henry VIII to the break with Rome are a subject which has not been carefully investigated before. Consequently this book makes a very interesting contribution to the history of the period. The period actually dealt with is from 1485 to 1539 and the Cardinal Protectors are stated *seriatim* but the author deals mainly with Cardinals de' Medici (later Clement VIII) and Cardinal Campeggio, who were both Cardinal Protectors of England, initiating the King's business in the Rome consistory, but who were of course more famous in being the Pope and the Judge in the matter of the King's divorce.

The book unveils the machinery by which the King's will with regard to the appointment of bishops in the unreformed church was given effect to. The general impression that the book creates is of a church in which venality was the ordinary attitude of church leaders. Reading it, it is difficult to remember the little band of spiritually minded men and women who wrote and suffered in the same church at the same time as the events described in this book.

The well known events connected with Henry VIII's efforts to divorce his first wife are here seen in their Roman setting which adds a valuable perspective to their story. I noticed one small, though interesting misprint: vicegerent is misspelled viceregent on page 236, turning Cromwell from a politician into an academic!

D. B. KNOX

**THE LIVES OF PHILIP AND MATTHEW HENRY: TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.** *J. B. Williams.* Banner of Truth Trust, 1975. 488 pp. and 323 pp. £2.95.

Matthew Henry is, of course, best known for the massive Bible commentary which has been widely read and admired since it was first published early in the eighteenth century. He also wrote a life of his father, Philip, who although an obscure Flintshire pastor was revered in his own day both for his preaching and ministry and for his response to persecution under the Clarendon Code.

Reprinted in this volume are Matthew's life of his father, edited and enlarged by J. B. Williams, and Williams' own life of Matthew first published in 1828. Both biographies enrich with much illuminating detail the professional and domestic lives of their subjects. If Matthew has had the more considerable reputation, his father clearly merited the affection and esteem



in which he was held by a wide circle of friends and the national reputation he enjoyed, a reputation no doubt helped by reports of his pithy savings, many of which Matthew incorporated into his Commentary.

Williams' editorial methods are somewhat suspect by modern standards, but apart from his tampering with Henry's prose we have little cause for complaint. At nearly 900 pages and very attractively printed and bound, this volume like all Banner of Truth reprints is remarkable value. Both works are copiously documented with much supplementary manuscript material—more than the most dedicated reader is likely to want, but there is something to be said for having everything available and being able to make your own selection.

OWEN C. WATKINS

A CHOICE OF MILTON'S VERSE. *Edited by D. J. Enright.* Faber, 1975. 128 pp. £3.50 (paper £1.25). A CHOICE OF COWPER'S VERSE. *Edited by Norman Nicholson.* Faber, 1975. 96 pp. £1.95 (paper £0.85).

These two latest volumes of a series that has quickly established both its own particular character and reputation maintain the standard of their predecessors—and this is saying something really significant about a poet so difficult to anthologise as Milton. Both he and Cowper wrote long poems and no one should think that they will really get a satisfactory idea of either poet from volumes that have to be so rigorously slim as these.

Nevertheless, Mr. Enright has done a really impressive job in making his admirably connected choice of extracts from *Paradise Lost*. Not one of major importance is missing. He has surely done right to concentrate on this most important of Milton's works. Inevitably, others have suffered, and this reviewer at least would have preferred to see more of *Samson Agonistes* even at the expense of the little there is from *Paradise Regained*; and whilst there might be an argument in the circumstances for confining *Comus* to three passages of moderate length, there is surely none for excerpting from such short poems as 'L'Allegro', 'Il Penseroso' and, above all, *Lycidas*. The answer seems simpler in every way—either all or nothing.

Cowper is at once less and not less of a problem. He has a number of shorter poems which can be given *in toto*, though, sharing as I do Mr. Nicholson's admiration for the great and unjustly neglected hymn 'There is a fountain filled with blood', I cannot understand why he has failed to include it. Cowper is not less of a problem than Milton because of his own long poems. Indeed, he is perhaps more of one, for these poems do not possess the narrative line, the poetic strength or the intellectual power of Milton. The result is that any selection will be at once less obvious and more questionable. The twenty-odd pages from *The Task* will do for my money, but then I would not be prepared to pay a lot for any parts of that poem. With the exception of one or two of his terror-stricken religious pieces, Cowper's is the voice of the gentle, retiring creature that he was.

To review two collections together is to be reminded of the lion lying down with the lamb. The trumpet voice of Milton is ill accompanied by a penny whistle, or at best a flute. But, of course, the flute is sometimes more welcome than the trumpet. It is a pity that neither editor had within the confines allotted to him the space to give much useful thought to his poet. Mr. Nicholson concentrates more on biography, whilst Mr. Enright both skilfully defends the once unjustly maligned style and also, doubtless wanting to have his Milton without the theology, suggests universal psychological allegory,

not forgetting the obligatory dose of sex. He ends by proposing an ingenious twist to the idea of the fortunate fall: 'If now our first parents know evil, they will be able to know God too, more sharply than hitherto.' Somehow, I don't think that Milton or Milton's God would have agreed with him.

ARTHUR POLLARD

**MEN OF THE COVENANT.** *Alexander Smellie.* Banner of Truth, 1975. 535 pp. £2.75.

This is essentially the story of the Scottish Church from the Restoration to the Revolution Settlement. Who were the Covenanters? What made them what they were? What sustained them through weary years against cruel men? Who were the persecutors? And who essayed an impossible neutrality? Even the chapter titles are eloquent: 'The Short Man Who Could Not Bow' (James Guthrie), 'Their Graces Enter and His Grace Departs' (Episcopacy enforced upon Scotland), 'Blot Out His Name Then' (Lauderdale), 'He Seemed in a Perpetual Meditation' (Robert Leighton), and 'He Was of Old Knox's Principles' (James Renwick).

Dr. Smellie's book was first published in 1903; this is a reprint from the 1924 edition, but the present publishers have omitted Professor Archibald Main's 'Biographical and Critical Appreciation' without substituting any other account of the gentle giant of the Original Secession Church. It would be difficult to cite another volume on Scottish church history more beautifully written, more knowledgeable about those persecuting times, and more concerned to understand motives and good points about those portrayed as villains.

The publishers have added a helpful outline of Scottish church history from the martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton (1528) to the restoration of spiritual liberty after the flight of James VII (1688). The democratic principles of the English-speaking world reflect that stand for civil rights which, as Dr. Smellie's moving narrative shows, was courageously made by the Men of the Covenant.

J. D. DOUGLAS

**HISTORY OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (1893-1970)**, compiled by a Committee of its Synod. Free Presbyterian Church, 1975. 427 pp. £2.00.

In 1893 the Free Church of Scotland passed a Declaratory Act which some regarded as a departure from 'the scriptural pattern of a Christian Church.' Two ministers and a ruling elder subsequently formed the Free Presbyterian Church, which claims direct descent from the Scottish Church of the Reformation and holds to 'a fully inspired Bible and unmodified Confession of Faith.' F. P.'s have never numbered more than a few thousands and that figure is dwindling. No church in the world is more Calvinistic, more outspoken in condemning the evils of the age, more generous and self-sacrificing in support of its missionary projects.

The first part of this history was published in 1933; this has now been revised and the story taken on to 1970. Appended is a statement of differences between F. P.'s and the four other Presbyterian bodies in Scotland. The reviewer profited greatly from this volume, but it left a feeling of profound sadness that the testimony of Christ's Church in Scotland should so often have been diverted and eroded by the disputings of believers.

J. D. DOUGLAS

THE MODERN HISTORY OF ISRAEL. *Noah Lucas*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975. 500 pp. £6.00.

One of the world's major danger spots centres on Israel, yet the attitudes of experts and lay folk alike are based more on prejudice and emotion than facts. This is due partly to most literature on the subject being propaganda, partly to the lack of interest in the world press, except when it can report violence or destitution.

The book is not concerned with the official history of Zionism, on which there is more than sufficient history, but with the development of the Jewish community in Palestine between 1882 and 1967, with an epilogue bringing it up to date. Even here the author is interpreting rather than giving a mass of information readily available elsewhere. He tends to concentrate on far-reaching events all too little remembered today and on the inner ideological differences among the Jewish settlers, which determined Israel's development. Though he is clearly in favour of Jewish settlement in Palestine and later on the setting up of the state, he is throughout critical of very much in the leadership, though he is concerned with what has been, not with what hindsight suggests might have been. He is for example deeply appreciative of Ben Gurion's greatness, but he recognizes his many weaknesses clearly.

This is no book for the casual reader, but it will be treasured by those who really want to understand the background of the Middle East situation, even if, like the present reviewer, they do not always agree with his judgments. It will, however, bring little consolation to the optimist who anticipates an easy solution to the problems of the area.

H. L. ELLISON

MARTIN SHAW: A CENTENARY APPRECIATION. *Erik Routley*. Available from the Centenary office, 77 Archway Street, London SW13 0AN, 1975. 26 pp. £0.45 post free.

Dr. Routley has given us an informative account of Martin Shaw's life with his usual literary panache.

Martin studied at the Royal College of Music under Stanford, Parry, and Walford Davies. But throughout his college days Martin knew that something was missing from his musical experience, and this was later described as 'Englishness', because it had been assumed too easily that the musical Kremlin was located in Germany. He held a ferocious hatred for this country, particularly after his younger brother and actor, Julius had been killed in the First World War. So Martin and his contemporaries, Holst and Vaughan Williams discovered their grass-roots or 'Englishness' in folk-song music which was waiting to be injected into our culture.

The influential people in Martin's life were Gordon Craig, a dynamic revolutionary in the theatre who introduced him to orchestras that led to subsequent engagements abroad as a conductor; Percy Dearmer, a devotee of Anglican ceremonial and liturgical practice, who had the sense to appoint Martin his director of music at St Mary's, Primrose Hill, Hampstead—and what a partnership this was to become, for Dearmer also appointed him musical editor of the liberal *Songs of Praise* and, with Vaughan Williams, of the *Oxford Book of Carols*, his most important contribution to English church music; and lastly, his wife Joan Cobbold.

Martin was a zestful communicator and musical evangelist, who gave English music-making its initial bite. A composer of faultless integrity,

his 300 works include opera, chamber music cantatas, an oratorio, songs (*Cargoes*), anthems, popular hymn-tunes (*Marching and Little Cornard*), and the best setting of the Parish Communion Service since Merbecke's. And he even found time to edit the *Chelmsford Diocesan Festival Book*.

When Martin was eighty years old, his great friend Dr Ralph Vaughan Williams gave an address in Southwold Church. He soon departed from his prepared text and spoke with great dynamism about the sad state of English church music, towards the end of which the old lion roared, 'Cursed be all who do not listen to Martin Shaw!' As humbler members of the animal kingdom we must listen too, and perhaps, our stuffy worship will become a joyful and liberating experience ready to be shared by all.

PAUL CHAPPELL

**NO BETTER THAN I SHOULD BE: THE MAKING OF A MINISTER.** *James L. Dow.* Hutchinson, 1975. 224 pp. £3.25.

This is the autobiography of a man who is 'widely known as a broadcaster, . . . as a journalist and novelist, as a Burns expert, and as an accomplished amateur actor.' But all the time he was busily engaged in those pursuits he was a Church of Scotland parish minister. Despite the sub-title, his book tells us little of his spiritual experience; he does say there is such a thing as conversion, but adds that he had no such experience. During university days, we are told simply, he 'had decided to be a minister.' No one will deny that he worked hard at his 'trade,' particularly in industrial Greenock where he got close to the working-man.

His book is highly entertaining, a little coarse in places, and unashamedly conceited as though Mr. Dow were writing tongue-in-cheekily. He refers to himself in the third person by surname. He sets out to shock, once illustrating manse poverty by lamenting that he and his wife 'hadn't the price of twenty Capstan' between them.

Young ministers, he suggests, will be unable to afford the price of his book, 'though without being immodest, I would suggest it would do them more good than many of their prescribed . . . volumes.' William Barclay, an old friend who writes the Foreword, agrees with this. Without being immodest, I think they are both wrong.

J. D. DOUGLAS

**TESTAMENT OF FAITH.** *William Barclay.* Mowbrays, 1975. 124 pp. £2.75.

It has rarely been my lot to receive books for review which I actually *want* to possess and read, but what a pleasure it was to open the editor's package and find Willie Barclay's autobiographical testimony staring at me. To have sat under the man's pulpit ministry—even occasionally—is as stimulating an experience as I know. To have chatted with him over coffee—as I once did at a Conference in Oxford—is to carry an indelible memory of his rumbustious humanity and gravely encouragement. And that is to say nothing of his writing and broadcasting.

And yet this book—eagerly anticipated—left me strangely disappointed. The personal history is both interesting and revealing. The self portrait is candid, honest and, seemingly, accurate. Barclay knows himself to be an unoriginal, hardworking communicator with a gift for reaching ordinary mortals—no common ability among professors of Theology that—and an easygoing fellow who loves the world and its comforts not a little. So far

so good.

It's when you reach the chapter on Barclay's personal belief that the dissatisfactions creep in. It is, of course, no secret that he came from an Evangelical home and developed fairly early into a Liberal Protestant (I think that's a fair label to pin on him). A fairly typical case, it would seem, of reaction against the kind of harsh orthodoxies which characterise the worst sort of unthinking Evangelicalism. What is disappointing is his failure to grapple with the development of the post-war Evangelical-revival type of theology. It isn't hard to share his revulsion at some of the abuse he has received. It is hard to take his liberalism seriously when he defends it so inadequately.

He concludes with an excellent section on preaching and teaching and then spoils the balance of the book by launching into a second, and potted, version of the chapter on his faith, full of repetition and, frankly, an anti-climax. As in all his works, Barclay draws deeply on his bottomless quotation file (the book is worth the money for the quotes alone) but I very much hope that his hint that this will be the final volume from his pen isn't meant too seriously. For a man of such capacity to end it all with this volume would be little short of tragic. Let us hope he is keeping the best wine till the end.

MICHAEL SAWARD

THE GOODNESS OF GOD. *J. W. Wenham*. IVP, 1974. 224 pp. £1.65, paperback £0.90.

This book is intended to continue the argument that Mr. Wenham began in *Christ and the Bible* (IVP, 1972) in which he contended for the Gospels' witness to Christ's authentication of the Old Testament as true, inspired and authoritative. He now faces the long-standing moral difficulties felt about the Old Testament particularly, as to the practices and sentiments evidently held to be godly and righteous by the writers but which offend the consciences of many who would urge that their objections are based upon Christian thinking and outlook. The book is to help such people particularly. The author writes for Christians, and, in so doing, reminds them that there must always be much in the works and ways of God that is beyond our grasp. There are ten chapters and an additional study on 'The Doctrine of the Good God' and an additional note on 'Evil in the World of Nature'.

The first chapter, 'A Series of Stumbling Blocks' points out that the problem is not confined to the Old Testament, it has parallels in the New. Resort to 'critical scissors' will avail nothing; there will be the problem of where to stop, and it can be no more than a device for avoiding the general problems of divine providence in the ordering of the universe. It is better to stay with and wrestle with the problem. The next chapter is concerned with the subject of Hell, of doctrines of universalism and of conditional immortality, and ends with a call for further sustained study. Chapter 3 deals with 'Some Inadequate Solutions', notably the denial of God's sovereignty and of His goodness. Then follow three chapters on 'Good Features in an Ugly World'; they take up the nature of man as free but fallen; of the good in sin being linked with suffering as a deterrent; and of the value of retribution for sin, including the value of this being delayed. The sixth chapter takes in the discussion of the importance of corporate solidarity, often unrecognised in the atomistic individualism of our contemporary world and then goes on to argue for the limitation of suffering as a benefit, just as

its acceptance can be sanctifying; but suffering finds its supreme place of understanding in the atoning death of Christ, even though here and elsewhere there is much that is beyond our understanding.

Chapter seven on 'Sub-standard Saints and Imperfect Laws' points out not only that the Bible presents sinful situations unvarnished, in the lives of godly men, but also that their failures, though recorded, are not always provided with comment. Going on with the specific provisions of OT law, Mr. Wenham argues for their actual justice in practice, together with their wise and indeed merciful implications, and is able to point out that while they are not intended to be a pattern for present imposition, yet there is a good deal in modern society that might well learn from them; for example the modern punishment of imprisonment for life. Some of this may still seem to be special pleading, when the case of the death penalty for juvenile delinquency—the 'stubborn and rebellious son'—is justified in terms of a merciful release to a psychopath or sociopath. It is not certain at all that it was a law for such cases only. In fact such a one is described as 'a glutton and a drunkard'. To think of death by stoning as a merciful release takes a lot of accepting. In the eighth chapter 'The Abominations of the Heathen', the rather more familiar theme of the justification of Israel's fulfilment of the *cherem* or ban unto utter destruction of the Canaanites, on account of the necessity of preserving the spiritual integrity of the covenant people, is worked through with thoroughness. This is followed by chapter nine on cursing, and a good deal of careful marshalling of the Biblical themes for the vindication of God's name and for His sovereignty strengthens the case for rejecting many careless and biased views on the matter of the imprecatory psalms and other places that offend.

The final chapter on 'The God with whom we have to do' makes clear that the groundwork of this whole approach lies in its defence and exposition of a doctrine of God, that speaks as surely of His severity as of His goodness; the two are inter-related. The book is both a contribution to that part of the philosophy of religion that defends the moral government of God, His providence and judgment, as well as a piece of Biblical theology. It is strongly argued, and any further discussion of these matters will have to deal with its doctrinal and Biblical thrust, and not allow the subject to be dismissed—as is so often the case—with dramatic but superficial phraseology.

G. J. C. MARCHANT

LAST THINGS. *Werner Elert*. Concordia, 1974. 56 pp. \$2.50.

This monograph is the final major division of Professor Elert's book *Der Christliche Glaube* (of which an earlier extract has already been published in English under the title, *The Lord's Supper Today*). Professor Elert agrees that there is an eschatological element in all the Christian doctrines, but he sees it as important also that the consummation of all things be given its own special chapter at the end of dogmatics.

In a day when millennial studies are widely read it is good to have this treatment of eschatology from a quite different perspective. The author deals with topics like 'The Last Day', 'Antichrist and Parousia', 'The Resurrection of the Dead', 'The Last Judgment'. He refuses to 'date' the parousia and indeed argues that to do this is 'secularisation' (p. 35). There are interesting discussions of the meaning of 'God's time' and its relation to our time, of the imminence of the day of judgment, of the meaning of 'the man of sin',

of the relationship between the biblical teaching on justification by faith and that of judgment by works. All in all this is a very timely treatment of a very important subject. It will be widely welcomed by all who are interested in eschatology.

LEON MORRIS

PRO-EXISTENCE. *Udo Middelmann*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1975. 126 pp. £0.60.

Udo Middelmann is an associate of Francis Schaeffer. The climate of his little book is the same mixture of fog and sunshine that makes Schaeffer's own books such exasperating reading. The cover of the book is a parable of its contents; a glorious alpine view, snow, sunlight and open sky, and, by contrast, the ugly neologism of the title, *Pro-Existence*. The L'Abri fellowship, one gathers, sets great store by a simple life-style. I wish someone would teach them to write simply.

Pro-Existence, says Middelmann (and there is no dictionary sufficiently up-to-date to contradict him), describes the task of Christians in a materialistic society. Christians are 'called to live in the corrupted broken world and to show forth the character of God by placing him in the centre of their lives'. This is well worth saying but there was no need to shroud the truth in jargon. In fact the incoherence of this book is more than an inelegance of style. One is left with a suspicion that this is not a book at all but a collection of loosely connected essays disguised as a book. The sequence of chapters lacks a sense of direction. The overall framework, such as it is, is provided by a preface contributed, curiously, by 'The Publisher'.

The book raises all the big questions about God, man and the world, which Schaeffer and his followers have always insisted must be settled before we turn to the smaller questions. So discussion about the Christian's stance in the world must be set in the context of 'the full circumference of reality'. (Contexts do not come wider than that.) Middelmann has twenty dense pages telling us what is real, or telling us that the Bible tells us what is real. Kant, Descartes, Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein—all make brief appearances in this chapter. None of them gets very high marks. One suspects that these great men—even if they were wrong—had a greater respect for the size of the questions they were considering than Middelmann does. On several issues, notably the Christian's attitude to work, to property, and to the state, Middelmann writes more clearly and indeed is forceful and convincing. There are hints too of what is not in dispute, the good that is done at L'Abri.

JOHN PRIDMORE

NEW WAYS FOR CHRIST. *Michael Wright*. Mowbrays, 1975. 87 pp. £1.25.

As the author observes, '... books about the life of the church in a parish are few and far between'. Writing from his experience of parish ministry and of his work as Editor of ACE, he offers a contribution to help fill the gap.

This is a practical book, for church members. It deals with management principles in the church, personal and corporate Christian living, lay participation in ministry, and communications in the parish. It offers some helpful comment on establishing parish objectives, and an interesting discussion on a common discipline for church members, based on the Coventry Cathedral model. The chapters end with questions for group discussion.

It is a book that will win most response from the more traditional Anglican congregation, and will prove useful, not because it offers any notable new insights, but because it gathers together a range of tried ideas for developing church life. Those looking for radical solutions to their problems will not be satisfied. The discussion of shared ministry and the place of house groups is not carried to the point where it seriously threatens the generally accepted patterns of church life. There remains an emphasis on the priesthood of the minister.

Covering such wide ground the book would have been enhanced by the inclusion of suggestions for further reading. Some suggestions will not win everyone's approval. I find it hard to be enthusiastic about yoga meditation, and prayers for the dead. However there is useful material here in a well presented, though slightly expensive format.

PETER ASHTON

THANK GOD IT'S FRIDAY. *Leslie Timmins*. Geoffrey Chapman, 1975. 96 pp. £1.25.

No one who has watched Leslie Timmins at work in the Churches Television and Radio Centre at Bushey—he is the Director and the moving spirit behind the place—will need to be reminded of his expertise in the field of mass communication. Here is a man of sharp brain and shrewd judgment who combines the ability to demolish pompous clerics on training courses (all done so graciously that they rarely feel hurt) with that of speaking on radio both persuasively and fluently.

You do not have to agree with all that Timmins says to be able to recognise a skilful master at work in the preparation and delivery of these talks. Personally I found that reading them was much less interesting than letting my imagination allow his voice to say them to me—which is only to remark that they're better spoken than read.

The talks—given on Radio 4 on Friday mornings at the ungodly hour of 6.45—are models in at least one respect. They say one thing and one thing only. There's hardly an ounce of fat on any of them. They constitute a body of 'lay theology' ranging from belief in the numinous (there are fairies at the bottom of our garden) to the practical outcome of the Anglican-Methodist debacle. They each conclude with a pithy little prayer which is the best part of the book for my money.

Thrown in for good measure—and somewhat tangential to the rest of the book—is a thirteen-page apologia in which Timmins sets out his theology of communication and also, in a sense, his theology of theology. Frankly I could have done without that in a book of prayers. For 96 pages the price is steep and I cannot imagine who is going to buy this kind of thing—36 short talks for £1.25—sadly I have to confess that I certainly wouldn't.

MICHAEL SAWARD

READINGS. *Denys Thompson*. CUP, 1974. 276 pp. £4.00.

In his Introduction Mr. Thompson indicates that *Readings* is a contribution to the debate about School Assembly currently proceeding among professing Christians engaged in education. It is a practical demonstration of the kind of assembly he advocates. When he says 'The assumptions that lay behind the 1944 requirement that the school day should begin with collective worship no longer hold good', he is overtly acknowledging that the debate stems from contrasting interpretations now being placed on the religious clauses of the



Education Act. For several decades it was generally accepted that, when the Act required religious instruction according to an agreed Syllabus in all county schools, 'religious' meant Christianity except in predominantly Jewish neighbourhoods. But the combined result of increasing secularisation and commonwealth immigration is a pluralist society, and a consequent increase of support for the view that the county school is no longer the vehicle of a Christian adult society nurturing its young in the historic faith of these islands, and therefore 'religious' is not to be identified with 'Christian'. Instead, religious education can be justified only on purely educational grounds i.e. as providing some explanation of Christianity's part in shaping the national culture, and as helping the young to find a philosophy of life by which to live. These kinds of arguments make possible the new controversial Birmingham syllabus, which includes Communism as one of its options.

In this situation what is to be done about School Assembly? The answer of one of the Birmingham protagonists has just been published under the title: 'School Worship: an Obituary'—a title which speaks for itself. Mr. Thompson, however, takes a different line—namely so to expand the bounds of school worship as to include nearly all, if not all, the Birmingham options. He is very widely read, and the readings he offers, grouped and expounded under such chapter headings as Creation, Animals, the Riches of the Earth, Family, Death, Praise, Wealth, Poverty, Colour, Violence, War, Prison, Refugees, Love, Peace, Religion, Protest, Work, and Quality not Quantity, cover writers dating from the ancient East to the modern West. It is a most impressive array.

But Mr. Thompson is not just setting out a descriptive catalogue of human wisdom. 'The purpose of this book is didactic,' he says, and as the reader examines the selections being offered he soon discovers what is being taught. He finds that a liberal or 'radical' interpretation of the Christian faith—pacifist, penal reformist, anti-authoritarian, anti-Pauline, and almost agnostic humanistic—is being inculcated painstakingly and continuously, passage by passage. In short, assiduous indoctrination in all these, but hardly any doctrine in the final section, which is called 'The Christian Year'. Those who think that, even in a County school, School Assembly can rightly provide children with some of the values of Christian worship, will nevertheless find much useful material in *Readings* provided they know how to be selective.

H. J. BURGESS

THE SECRET COUNTRY OF C. S. LEWIS. *Anne Arnott*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1975. 127 pp. £1.60.

It appears that there is an entirely serious debate among educationalists about whether children should be 'exposed' to the Narnia stories. There could hardly be more appalling evidence that schools are no longer safe places to send children. If Narnia is thought unsuitable for children, if Aslan is regarded as bad for them, one trembles to think what, on such an inverted scale of values, is the reading matter deemed fit for them. It is a joy to share a child's excitement as he discovers Narnia and his growing delight as he makes that enchanted world his own. Children are so quick to register the precise quality of this 'secret country'; their intuition about what kind of a land is Narnia is often surer and swifter than that of the adult who insists on fitting the Narnia stories into some predetermined category, often quite inappropriate.

Anne Arnott's brief biography of C. S. Lewis for young people is informed by affection admiration, and—not always retained in viewing those we love—a sharp insight. Her suggestions of how some passages in the Narnia stories reflect important episodes in Lewis's own life are fascinating and entirely convincing. It has of course to be asked how far Anne Arnott has attempted the impossible. C. S. Lewis wrote brilliantly for children, but whether you can write for children about C. S. Lewis is another matter. No one else is likely to come nearer to succeed in this than does Anne Arnott. But in the last analysis all the most exciting events in Lewis's life happened in his mind. To be sure there is a wonderfully human story to be told and this book tells it well. But the unique distinction of Lewis was the marriage in one mind of massive intelligence and Christian humility, of erudition and simplicity, of learning and love. What brought him to this point was an intellectual journey which it is far from child's play to follow.

JOHN PRIDMORE

THE JESUS FILE. *Desmond Leslie*. Sidgwick & Jackson, 1975. 208 pp. £3.75.

The writer had a good idea. He concocted a series of reports, memoranda and court transcripts giving details of events in Jerusalem connected with the trial, execution and resurrection of Jesus (code-named Salvator). The book is lavishly produced and the imperial letterheads, etc. give it an impressive appearance of authenticity. The most telling part of the text is the regimental order regarding the Roman method of crucifixion. Read aloud in a dry military manner, it would be harrowing.

But there are shortcomings. On the first page or two is a reference to 'Ab Urbis Conditae 753' and then comes the word 'bacchanaliae'. The High Priest's grammar is distinctly shaky and the reference to the 'Holy Jewish Church' rings untrue. On page 65 'Council' and 'whose' are mis-spelled in the same line. We can forgive the writer his little jokes—naming the astronomer who reports on the star of Bethlehem as one Patricus Plurimus.

JOHN C. KING

CONTEMPORARY SERMON SUGGESTIONS. *R. E. O. White*. Pickering & Inglis, 1974. 226 pp. £3.50.

Sermons do not usually make good reading. The good sermon is written for the ear and not the eye. This book of 52 sermon suggestions will therefore be of use primarily to those who have to prepare sermons. The selection follows the Christian year but could have been more useful if there had been a discernible sense of direction in the arrangement. As it is, the sermons cover a wide variety of texts with no obvious theme or link between them.

This is a dangerous book if it is seen as a model for the preacher who ministers to his people Sunday by Sunday. The sermons are almost all evangelistic, apologetic or devotional in character. There is little doctrine and one looks in vain for pastoral topics. On at least one occasion—a text relating to mixed marriages—the opportunity is explicitly avoided. Consequently although there is much exhortation to Christian people there is little practical help for them as they try to apply their faith in the hard business of living daily for Christ. In short, this book displays the typical weaknesses of much modern Evangelical preaching—my own included.

Unconnected sermons proceed from week to week. Little attempt is made to explain *how* to be a Christian. IAN D. BUNTING

HEARING CONFESSIONS. *Kenneth Ross*. SPCK, 1974. 113 pp. £1.95.

Kenneth Ross, who died in 1970 after a very short tenure of a canonry at Wells, will be best remembered as the vicar of All Saints, Margaret Street. An all-too-brief memoir of him by Canon Gordon Hopkins appears at the beginning of this book. What he wrote for the guidance of others was evidently a reflection of his own notable pastorate. Many who read this review will not be in the habit of hearing confessions (at least in the sacramental sense); some will give well-formulated reasons for disapproving of the practice. Yet all could profit from this book by one who so clearly wanted above all things to bring people to Christ. They will not find here any narrow insistence on the obligation of a auricular confession for all, but a sweet reasonableness. 'The Catholic need not regard the appeal to Scripture as Protestant or the appeal to history as treachery, simply because it is hard to find in Scripture or history the distorted sacramentalism of the nineteenth century; and the Protestant need not feel that he has disposed of sacramental confession when he triumphantly demonstrates the absence of the nineteenth century form of it from the pages of Scripture. For both Catholic and Protestant can recover the fullness of truth from patient study of Bible and history.' Ross quotes with approval a passage on the danger of clergy tying people to their apron strings from John Stott's *Confess Your Sins*, a book which he describes as 'disappointingly negative, but with good positive insights'. It is for the positive insights of this posthumous work that I commend it even to those least likely to agree with its conclusions on controversial matters. The book is a hard-back, excellently produced.

MARTIN PARSONS

COLLECTS TO ACCOMPANY THE LECTIONARY FOR HOLY COMMUNION SERIES 3: A REPORT BY THE LITURGICAL COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. GS230. SPCK, 1975. 38 pp. £0.50.

This long-awaited comprehensive set of collects comprises three sections. First collects for the Temporale, then the Sanctorale arranged from January 1st, and finally collects for the Commons which also cover various intentions such as Peace, Unity and In Time of Trouble. All collects are described as 'for' in place of the irritating 'collect of'.

The principles of the revision are listed in the Introduction. These include relation to the themes of the lessons (but these themes are *not* printed beside the collect), preservation of much traditional material, replacement of archaisms, use of 'you' form of address and consequential dealing with the relative clause in a variety of ways. Each collect is lined out, which enables its structure to be seen more clearly. The thematic yardstick is to be welcomed but it is doubtful whether it has been adhered to 'on every occasion' as the Introduction claims. The occasions where second themes are given for the second year frequently defeat this. It is doubtful whether one collect can ever relate effectively to two disparate themes. Epiphany 3 succeeds, Septuagesima does not seem to link with the given lections, Christmas 2 only to one theme.

A good deal of entirely new material has been provided—40 out of 70 in the Temporale are new compilations. Transposition of Prayer Book collects to different days has been done in 14 cases. More than one collect has been provided for eight occasions, including Christmas Day. Doubling occurs where the Temporale collect is used at the appropriate place in the Sanctorale and sometimes in the Commons as well. The Commons use nine collects from the other sections. The loss of 29 Prayer Book collects has occurred; some will not be missed but the exclusion of Epiphany 1 is a pity.

By design it is not a radical revision, we still have a few tortuous phrases, but on the whole the prayers read easily and there are a few memorable phrases amongst them. It will be of great value ultimately to be able to use official collects going some way towards fitting the weekly lectionary themes. Altogether here is more realistic and purposive praying for the late nineteen seventies.

PETER R. AKEHURST

**DAILY PRAYER FROM THE DIVINE OFFICE: THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS ACCORDING TO THE ROMAN RITE.** Collins, 1974. 1,679 pp. £11.00.

As a non-Roman Catholic, unused to the subtleties of the Breviary, it took me some time to find my way about the revised Liturgy of the Hours, but as I did so I began to wish that I had the chance to use the volume as it is intended to be used: for the regular sustaining of community prayer. There is such a wealth of carefully selected material here, chosen to fit the needs of every season and every time, that even for those unable to use it regularly, it is a most worthwhile anthology of psalmody and prayer.

The principles of revision are set out in the Apostolic Constitution printed as a preface. This is intended to be a book which will meet the needs not just of clergy, but of any who care to use it. The hours at which one says the prayers are treated flexibly—to fit in with the way most people live now. Prime has gone. The weekly reading of the Psalter has been replaced by a four-weekly cycle. There is a wider use of scriptural material and a splendid anthology of religious poetry. All that is missing to make this a complete instrument for daily prayer and meditation is a full lectionary.

The price is forbidding, and I wonder if the binding is strong enough to stand up to the wear and tear of daily use. The eclectic use of translations—other than the admirable Grail psalms—is a reminder that it will be a long time before we can settle again to well-worn and well-loved phrases. However, there may be those outside the Roman Catholic community who are unsettled about a daily discipline of prayer. They could do far worse than to buy a copy of the new Breviary and use it—wherever possible with other people.

NICHOLAS SAGOVSKY

**I WILL BE THERE.** *Michael Hollings.* Mowbrays, 1975. 125 pp. £0.60. **TEACH US TO PRAY.** *André Louf.* Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974. 112 pp. £1.25.

The flow of books of prayers is now being increasingly augmented by books about praying. Of the latter these two are notable examples. In *I Will Be There* Michael Hollings provides a series of meditations on Christ's great 'I Am' claims. 'I Am,' he suggests, may be read 'I Will Be There': 'I Will Be There' as the Good Shepherd, the Door, the Vine, and so on. When we pray He is there as such, and we may meditate on what this means for us. The book's method is to teach meditation by involving the reader in meditating, and the

author calls it a 'ponder book'. He is at pains to tell us not to read quickly, admonishing the reader to stop 'now' and spend two minutes 'pondering' before trespassing across the narrow strip of white paper into the next paragraph. Apart from occasional pedagogic overtones when giving such directions the book is a winsome piece of work with some deeply thought and felt notions about our relationship to God in Christ. Nobody is going to argue with the strongly urged need to give to prayer and Bible reading their necessary times of silence for meditation and contemplation, and used in the way the author suggests the book helps one to come to grips at a deep level with the profound simplicities of prayer. Coming from a Roman Catholic priest this is another of the growing number of popular books in which it is virtually impossible to detect the author's denomination from the text alone.

André Louf's book, attractively translated from its Belgian author's original version, is academically a more serious work, and provides an illuminating review of one way classical Catholic spirituality survives and flourishes at this end of the twentieth century. It is not, says a note on the cover, to be read in a hurry. Michael Hollings urges us to pause in an easy-to-read book. André Louf's pauses are self induced and need no urging. He tackles a wide spectrum of subjects and writes in a style, which while lucid, is highly condensed. Treasures culled from a life-time of prayer are there in plenty. One doesn't need to know that the author is Abbot of a Trappist Monastery to know that prayer is the central activity of his life, and one can sense the community's presence in his mind. He writes out of his own experience, but this is enlarged by what he has observed and shared in his community.

It is not only the condensed style and wide subject-range which call for periodic pauses. There are some intriguing, not to say quaint, notions to cope with. There is the idea of 'prayer' being 'sown' in the heart of an infant at baptism, of one growing to discover what prayer is as one gets to know what has been sown in the heart, and of arriving thereby at a knowledge of one's true self. Evangelicals in particular would want to ponder such propositions, probably seeing them in terms of prevenient grace and of the Spirit's prayer for, with and in us in terms of Romans chapter 8 verses 26 and 27. And there is some rarified thought about the esoteric matter of the relationship of celibacy to prayer. But when we arrive, as we frequently do, at the central theme of the true self coming together with the true Word in a new creation we have some powerful writing which provides a touchstone for understanding some of the less familiar ideas.

It would be impossible for anyone to read these books without benefit, and each will repay in different ways the re-reading they deserve.

DICK WILLIAMS