

# Book Reviews

## **GOOD NEWS FOR EVERYONE**

**EUGENE A. NIDA**

*Collins 1977 24pp 75p*

ISBN 0 00 625005 10

## **HOW TO READ THE BIBLE**

**JOHN GOLDINGAY**

*Oliphants 1977 160pp £1.50*

ISBN 0 551 00602 1

## **BY ALL MEANS**

**WILLIAM METCALF**

*Oliphants 1977 96pp 95p*

ISBN 0 551 00772 9

Dr Eugene Nida needs no introduction as a biblical scholar. He has worked for many years with the American Bible Society and is the executive secretary for translations. He is also translations research co-ordinator for the United Bible Societies. This little book on the background to the Good News Bible is an extremely helpful publication. In characteristically lucid and fresh style, Dr Nida gives us the background not only to the practical matters in the production of the translation for the Good News Bible but also to the underlying principles of translation which were used. For those who want to understand in detail the way in which the Good News Bible was produced, this is essential reading. He tells us that the first and central aim of the translators has been accuracy: that is to say faithfulness to the meaning found in the original Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic texts of the Scriptures. In seeking to achieve this faithfulness and accuracy, the translation reflects the principle of 'dynamic equivalence'. This, Dr Nida points out, is not a new idea and he quotes from Martin Luther to illustrate the point. The principle is that a translation should accurately indicate to the reader in the receptor language what would have been indicated to the reader of the language being translated. Dr Nida further commits himself to the idea that a translation ought accurately to convey what the writer intended to mean. These two principles are of fundamental importance in any translation work. The principle of dynamic equivalence has been much discussed in semantics and linguistics and is here reflected in a translation of the Bible. This is not just a translation which restricts itself to some kind of basic English. Nor is it a paraphrase: it is an attempt to convey accurately the sense and meaning that the author intended. We are given an example of this in Luke 16:22 where the phrase 'Abraham's bosom', according to the majority biblical scholarly understanding, refers to the heavenly feast of the righteous. Thus, because the phrase in its literal translation is misleading to the average reader of an English version of the Bible, the Good News translation is 'the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit by Abraham at the feast in heaven'. Here another principle is introduced into the translation, namely, that on matters of biblical scholarship the translators agree to accept the widest held opinion upon a particular point. A negative example of a phrase which scholars have some difficulty in explaining is the way in which the Good News Bible deals with the phrase 'urim and thummim'. These were employed in some way to determine the will of God, and here in the Good

News Bible there is an explanation of the phrase given in the margin.

One of the interesting things to be revealed in this book is the fact that the translators did attempt to reflect in their translation the concerns of the women's liberation movement. By and large this has been simply done by substituting pronouns in the plural where the term man is used in a generic sense for mankind. So, for example in the first part of Psalm 1, the Good News Bible has 'Happy are those . . .' rather than 'Happy is the man who . . .' Modifications that have been made along this line are very modest in comparison with the representations which the translators had received.

John Goldingay's book is an ambitious attempt to give a short summary of the way in which the Bible reflects the story of the people of God. Thus he considers first of all the story of God and his people, and then secondly the word of God to his people. The Bible is analysed in relation to these twin themes and then a third shows how Israel responds to God, where there is discussion of prayer and praise, doubts and certainties. The great bulk of the book is concerned with the Old Testament, there being really only two sections which deal with the New Testament, though some of the NT material is incorporated into chapters which deal with OT material. What we have here is a very clear and useful thumbnail sketch of the framework within which one might intelligently and usefully read the Bible. This kind of guide is immensely useful and it is to be hoped that many readers of the Bible will have John Goldingay's guide not only available to them but firmly in their minds as they read their Bibles.

The final chapter on 'The Bible Today' treats in a general way of the Bible as a whole but is very largely concerned with the question of how Christians today might fairly properly regard the OT. This in some ways reflects the concern of the book as a whole with the OT. Perhaps this may be a reflection of the author's enthusiasm for the OT, or perhaps we should wait for a second book from him on how to respond to the post-Easter Christian tradition.

The book by William Metcalf is a very interesting and useful handbook for different ways of making Bible-study groups interesting and effective. His basic thesis is that a Bible-study group ought not to get itself fixed on one method of studying the Bible but should use every possible means available to it. Too often the author rightly says that Bible-study groups get themselves rooted on to one way of reading the Bible together, and as a consequence the activity of group Bible study either becomes uninteresting and even dull or that which people get from it is a somewhat attenuated understanding of the biblical message. Three cheers for Mr Metcalf. He has provided his Bible-study group leaders with a very useful set of exciting ideas to make their Bible study more effective. One question, however. Should a group of Christians who meet together to encourage one another, and build one another up in their Christian faith as a regular thing, restrict themselves simply to Bible study? Ought they not perhaps to study occasionally other things, and ought they not perhaps to study actual contemporary questions so that they discover not only through the pages of the Bible but through the current experience of Christians what God's will today is for the members in that group?

BRUCE KAYE

## TRADITION AND THEOLOGY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

edited DOUGLAS A. KNIGHT

SPCK 1977 336pp £10.50

ISBN 0 281 02986 5

Until the second half of the nineteenth century the Old Testament was generally regarded as the work of inspired individual authors such as Moses, Samuel, David and Solomon. Although question marks had been put against some aspects of this assumption from the Reformation onwards, the rise of form and traditio-critical methods at the beginning of the twentieth century showed once and for all that the growth of OT tradition had been a complex matter. Even if it is felt (as the reviewer feels) that claims for the objectivity and results of the form and traditio-critical methods have been exaggerated, a sober critical approach to the OT cannot but accept that the inspired individual author theory no longer does justice to the facts. This being so, what are the theological implications? In the book under review, thirteen scholars discuss the relevant issues.

The most important essay is provided by the editor, entitled 'Revelation through Tradition'. He argues that it is a mistake to try to recover from the OT specific events or words which are then held to be divine revelations. Rather, we are to be concerned with the witness to such events and words in OT tradition. That tradition was a growing phenomenon, interacting with the community, shaping its pre-understanding of the world, and in turn being modified as the community faced new situations in its life. The community, indeed, had its vital part to play in the process of revelation. Out of this interplay emerged central features indicating the nature of the God with whom Israel had to deal (cp. also the essay by W. Harrelson, 'Life, Faith, and the Emergence of Tradition'), features which could constitute the basis for theological description of the OT.

Knights' essay is an able contribution to the discussion; but it must be questioned whether its implied view of the relation between tradition and community allows for the complexity of ancient Israelite life and belief. Is it true that "traditioning" is a function of the community' (p 177)? Is there not also need for the creative individual, or the remnant which remains faithful in the midst of apostasy and indifference? The essays by O. H. Steck ('Theological Streams of Tradition'), P. R. Ackroyd ('Continuity and Discontinuity') and J. L. Crenshaw ('The Human Dilemma and the Literature of Dissent') go some way towards illustrating the complexity of Israelite society and its responses to tradition. Ackroyd draws attention to the importance of the ritual laws in maintaining communal life, whereas Knight has ignored this side of the question, concentrating mainly on tradition in the sense of tradition about historical events.

As initiating discussion in an important area, the book is to be welcomed. At the same time, it has to be remembered that some OT scholars are interested in literary structuralism and the final form of the biblical text, in some cases as a result of frustration with the form and traditio-critical methods. The collection would have been enhanced by a contribution from this school of thought, and would also have profited by an essay from a systematic theologian. It is to be doubted whether OT scholars can hope to make progress on a matter such as the theological import of

studies of tradition without some sort of inter-theological collaboration. Also, it needs to be asked whether the insights to be contributed by folklorists and social anthropologists can be ignored (they are recognized as important by Ackroyd and by R. Lapointe among the contributors). Ruth Finnegan's stimulating *Oral Poetry* (1977) appeared too late to be noted by the contributors; it is to be hoped that this, and other relevant publications from related disciplines, will be taken into account in the continuing discussion.

J. W. ROGERSON

## GENEALOGY AND HISTORY IN THE BIBLICAL WORLD

ROBERT R. WILSON

Yale UP 1977 222pp £12.60

ISBN 0 300 02038 4

Scholarly estimates of the historical value of biblical genealogies have fluctuated wildly, but very few have attempted to justify their preconceived notions by comparing biblical genealogies with oral genealogies handed on in tribal cultures or with the written genealogies from other peoples contemporary with the Old Testament. Wilson's important study attempts to set biblical scholarship on a sure footing by utilizing the resources of anthropology and Assyriology.

The first chapter deals with the form and function of oral genealogies in tribal societies. Wilson notes that genealogies are not primarily preserved out of historical interest, but for practical purposes. They are used to describe the relationships between tribes and families or to support an individual's claim to an office. Thus within a single group of people somewhat differing genealogies may be preserved to explain different situations. But while the outside observer may be inclined to view these different genealogies as mutually contradictory, they are not seen in that way by those who recite them. Indeed, though tribal genealogies do not function as historical records, they are not contrived and are regarded as true by those who pass them on.

The second and longest chapter deals with the use of genealogies in Mesopotamia from the third to first millennium BC. These ancient genealogies serve much the same sort of purpose as modern tribal ones. They were used to legitimate kings and dynasties and were regarded as reliable records of the sequence of past generations, even where modern interpreters may note a certain fluidity in their composition. Some cases of drastic telescoping of genealogies are known. For example, 62 generations are omitted at one point in Esarhaddon's family tree.

The third chapter examines in some depth the genealogies of Cain and Seth (Genesis 4-5), Esau (Genesis 36) and Jacob (Genesis 29f, 35, 46). Wilson argues that motives similar to those he examined in the preceding chapters governed the composition of the biblical genealogies. They were regarded as reliable records of ancestral relationships, but were not usually composed for this purpose. Where we have more than one genealogy covering the same family, different functions must underlie them. For example, the genealogy of Cain in Genesis 4 tells of the continuation of the curse of Cain, while the genealogy of Seth in Genesis 5 points to the

perpetuation of the divine image in man. Here, and in Genesis 36, slight variations in the names are no proof of multiple authorship, for such differences would not have seemed contradictory to the original writers. Finally the genealogies of Jacob show no significant fluidity: their fixity and general character indicate that they must date from the judges' period or earlier.

In short, this is a most valuable and, by and large, convincing discussion of biblical genealogies, which will have to be taken into account in all future work on early biblical history.

G. J. WENHAM

## THE EARLY HISTORY OF ISRAEL      ROLAND DE VAUX

*Darton, Longman and Todd 1978 886pp (two volumes) £16.00*

ISBN 0 232 51242 6

When he died in 1971, Roland de Vaux was writing a monumental 'History of Old Testament Israel'. These two volumes are a readable English translation of the work he had then completed, comprising an extensive introduction on background questions, followed by major treatments of the patriarchs, the sojourn in Egypt, exodus, and Sinai, the settlement in Canaan, and the period of the judges.

For some time, the 'Alt-Noth' and 'Albright-Bright' approaches have dominated the investigation of Israel's early history. Fr de Vaux accepts that Noth was right to begin with literary and traditio-historical analysis of the sources, but he can profit from two decades of scholarly discussion of this approach, and he is generally more positive in his estimate of the sources' historical value than Noth was in his *History*. He is consequently able to assimilate much of the archaeological insight utilized by Bright's *History*, while also taking account of critiques which have suggested points at which this approach is simplistic.

His conclusions include the following. The patriarchs were part of the *habiru* (an ethnic, not a social, group). They were nomadic shepherds beginning to live settled life, living in the early second millennium, and worshipping Shaddai, the God of the Father. The traditions about them reached connected form before the sojourn in Egypt. There is no real basis for the 'Kenite hypothesis' as to the origins of Yahwism. There was an exodus under Moses in the thirteenth century (though other Israelites were expelled from Egypt on another occasion). The exodus and Sinai events were not traditio-historically independent. Mount Sinai cannot now be located. The Sinai covenant does not follow the treaty pattern. The decalogue may well be Mosaic. The Israelites occupied Palestine mainly during the late thirteenth century by a combination of infiltration and conquest on the part of various separate tribal groups in different areas (Jericho was captured, but Ai was unoccupied at the time). The subsequent relationship between the Israelite tribes was rather loose and is not helpfully characterized as an amphictyony.

Fr de Vaux's work marks the end of an era, precisely because it provides a definitive *History* written within parameters suggested by the Alt-Noth and Albright-Bright approaches. These parameters are now widely ques-

tioned, however. The nature of the patriarchal stories has been approached with a new form of radicalism by T. L. Thompson and J. van Seters, and many of the accepted hypotheses of pentateuchal criticism have suddenly ceased to be accepted. Where all this will lead, no one knows. Perhaps the materials upon which historical method (as we currently understand it) has to work will not yield any assured results for early Israelite history: Fr de Vaux's reconstruction may be right, but there is no way of knowing. Perhaps, in fact, the value of his work is not this reconstruction but the actual historical interpretation of Old Testament texts. At first I was inclined to see it as a fault in the work that its balance of concerns is not determined by the normal interests of the historian but by the concerns of the biblical material (some of them, anyway). But perhaps this is rather a strength.

JOHN GOLDINGAY

## HANDBOOK OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM RICHARD N. SOULEN

Lutterworth 1977 191pp £2.95

ISBN 0 7188 2344 3

Most academic disciplines have their esoteric abbreviations, technical terms and (less excusably) jargon; biblical criticism, with its obsessive love of German tags, is worse than most. This book is a beginner's guide to the maze, alphabetically arranged, including also brief sketches of critical methods, guides to literature, and biographical sketches of some leading scholars (no longer living). Articles range from one line to four pages (hermeneutics), covering biblical studies as a whole though with a bias to the New Testament. Textual criticism figures prominently.

The stance is American liberal Protestantism, which results not only in such Americanisms as 'methodologies' for 'methods' and a reference to 'the increasingly dominant milieu of the state university' (p 28), but also in a heavy emphasis on the current American structuralist scene. References are to American editions throughout.

The list of bibliographical abbreviations is sensible, but apparently does not reproduce any one of the currently competing conventions; an indication of their existence and of where they may be found would have helped. Some of the Latin terms listed are wrongly or misleadingly translated (*apud*, *ipso facto*, *praem.*, *recto/verso*); *idem* and *ibid.* are identified, resulting in a glaring misuse of *ibid.* on p 191; and I wonder how helpful it is simply to translate *deus ex machina* and *obeliscus* literally without explanation.

But perhaps we should not expect too much sophistication in a guide designed for 'the student who... thinks a Nestle Text is the label on a can of chocolate mix.' It should serve him well enough, so long as he remembers its declared limits.

DICK FRANCE

## COMMUNITY OF THE NEW AGE: Studies in Mark's Gospel HOWARD CLARK KEE

SCM Press 1977 225pp £6.50

ISBN 0 334 01948 6

Two thoroughly healthy tendencies, among others, characterize current

New Testament studies: to restore apocalyptic to its rightful place in the interpretation of the traditions, and to incorporate sociological perspectives into the study of developments in the early communities. Both tendencies are at the heart of this fascinating book. Addressing himself to the question of what sort of community is presupposed and addressed by Mark, Professor Kee argues for a church located in rural and small-town southern Syria and dated in the late 60s. This community sees itself radically alienated from those who hold political and religious power; understands itself as the new people of God; and articulates its faith along lines well-attested in apocalyptic groups such as those responsible for the book of Daniel, i.e. the assertion of God's rule which will involve the defeat of all hostile powers (demonic and cosmic), the redefinition of the community of faith, and the insistence on persevering faithfulness to the End to that interpretation of the will of God laid down by the original founding figure. The book of Daniel provides a literary and theological model for Mark, and Professor Kee is able to illuminate the shape of the Markan community and its charismatic leadership modelled on the prophetic charismatic figure of Jesus by drawing repeatedly on what is known about the community which produced Daniel and on what is known of the social and cultural factors producing other similar communities.

The basic datum for the study of Mark is, of course, a document, and literary enquiry is rightly seen by Professor Kee as an indispensable complement to sociological enquiry. Yet here it may be suggested that his touch is less than sure. In an attempt to set Mark in its overall tradition, pre-Markan collections are isolated and particular attention given to the influence on Mark of the miracle-form or miracle-cycles of the Elijah-Elisha type. Accepting the work of P. Achtemeier on miracle *catenae*, Kee goes on to construct another pre-Markan collection consisting of 1:23-26; 1:29b-31; 1:40-43, 44b; 2:1b-5, 11-12a; 3:1, 3, 5b; and 3:23b-27. This collection, he says, presupposes a group informed by Jewish apocalyptic ideas and regarding Jesus as the end-time agent sent to overcome Satanic power. That may be true of some parts of the material in question but can only be drawn with difficulty from other parts (e.g. by involving a *Lukan* feature in Mark 1:31), while the unity of this collection is scarcely demonstrated. Indeed, H. W. Kuhn's suggestion of a pre-Markan collection underlying the four stories in Mark 2, and clamped together by the two sayings about the authoritative, earthly Son of man (2:10, 28), is not directly confronted. Similar doubt may be registered over a pre-Markan collection defined as 4:3-9, 21f, 24b-32, in view of evidence that 4:14-20, 33 belonged to the pre-Markan parable collection. Indeed, had this been taken up along lines opened up by Kuhn, it would have strengthened Kee's overall conclusions.

An extended survey of the community-consciousness and Christology of Mark is one of the most insightful parts of the book. Two questions here, however: Is the parallel between the 'holy one of God' reference in 1:24 and the 1 Kings 17:18/2 Kings 4:9 material determinative for the *Markan* view? When Mark himself constructs an editorial section in 3:7-12 with 'son of God' language corresponding to the 'holy one' language, the parallelism on the *Markan* level suggests a connotation closer to 'heavenly being' (cf. Dan. 3:25, 28). Perhaps Wrede was right after all that the

Christologies of Mark and John are closely related. That leads into the second question: Is the parallelism between Jesus and Daniel as agents of revelation pressed through so consistently as to eliminate an alternative pair of Daniel-based correspondences between Jesus and the angelic intermediary, and between the disciples and Daniel? Certainly, Jesus and Daniel are formally comparable at certain points. But just as the Elijah comparison is used flexibly by Mark (Jesus in 1:16-20 but John in 1:6 and 9:13), so too the Daniel comparison is perhaps used flexibly in order to be superseded. In this respect, setting Daniel 10 alongside the Transfiguration story (especially Mark 9:3 and Dan. 10:8, surely an extremely inexact correspondence) is not entirely persuasive, and when epiphany-type fear/awe so constantly attend revelatory acts of Jesus it seems to place him again firmly on the heavenly side of the divide.

Even when it is not wholly persuasive this penetrating volume provokes much reflection — and at most times it is both persuasive and a breakthrough in Markan studies. A final comment: most uncharacteristically the SCM Press has allowed a series of errors to creep into the text.

DAVID CATCHPOLE

## PAUL: Apostle of the Free Spirit F. F. BRUCE

*Paternoster Press 1977 491pp £9.60*

ISBN 0 85364 209 5

St Paul described himself as being in debt both to the wise and the foolish. Professor Bruce, at the end of his distinguished tenure of the John Rylands chair in Manchester, has put specialist and beginner alike in *his* debt with this magnificent study of the Apostle to the Gentiles. This is both a full biography and an introduction to the epistles and their theology, written in a style whose ease belies the complexity of the issues and the thoroughness of the underlying research. The basic text could be understood and enjoyed by a beginner, while academics will profit continually from the learned and often lengthy footnotes which reveal a firm grasp of recent work in the field, both at home and abroad, including several unpublished theses.

The best thing about the book is undoubtedly that it is written by a top-class historian. Reading Bruce prompts the thought that has also come to mind reading Jeremias and Hengel: what a world of difference there is between those who write about historical method and those who actually write history! While some bemoan the problem of knowing anything at all about the past, Bruce patiently sifts actual evidence, weighs probabilities, and reaches conclusions in a way which would be applauded by any (other) competent Ancient Historian. He demonstrates once more how to be conservative without being gullible or naive, refusing to go beyond his evidence, though prepared to acknowledge clear but unprovable possibilities (e.g. that the Onesimus of *Philemon* was the Bishop of Ephesus referred to by Ignatius). And if anyone wants to know what sort of a place Pisidian Antioch was, what sort of a person Felix's wife was, or what sort of legal machinery there was to deal with appeals to Caesar—or any one of a thousand other details—he can now look them up in Bruce and find



everything detailed, discussed and documented. (Looking things up has some problems, however. I hope the second edition will include an index of biblical references, and another of topics. The present index has no topics, and names ancient and modern are lumped together with books of the Bible. Of what use is a list of the 67 pages where Acts is mentioned –not least when spot checks reveal that it is not exhaustive?)

If history is the main contribution, theology is not far behind. The epistles are introduced and discussed as their life-settings appear in the narrative; and there are several chapters devoted entirely to theological themes, such as flesh and spirit, Paul's religious experience, his view of the historical Jesus, and his treatment of the law. Bruce's main emphasis is indicated by the subtitle. Inevitably there are lacunae (why, for instance, is there no discussion of 'the righteousness of God?') and disagreements (I am still not convinced that Paul thought the law was abolished in the sense that Bruce understands. It is a pity that E. P. Sanders' book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* appeared after Bruce's work had, presumably, gone to press). But these are small quibbles beside the large areas of clear and helpful discussion.

In particular, there is a wealth of exegetical detail. At literally dozens of points I noted down stimulating discussions to which I shall return, not least where support is given to an unfashionable position. I think particularly of the cautious discussion of the Pastorals; of Bruce's support for an Isaianic 'Servant' background for Phil. 2:7; of his assertion (against Dr Hooker) that there really were false teachers in Colossae; and of his clear discussion of the relationships of Acts and Galatians.

This last point prompts a question. Bruce has incorporated some of his *Rylands Bulletin* articles in this book, particularly the ones on St Paul and Rome; but his series on Galatians is not even mentioned here. Does this mean we are to expect a full commentary on Galatians in the near future? It is tempting to ask, as well, whether Professor Bruce, having written this book (as he says) *amore Pauli*, might not spend his retirement writing an equally good, and equally necessary book on an even greater subject, *amore Christi*?

N. T. WRIGHT

## PAUL'S LETTERS FROM PRISON

G. B. CAIRD

OUP 1976 224pp £2.25

ISBN 0 19 836920 4

The New Clarendon Bible Commentary and G. B. Caird really need no introduction. This particular commentary follows the design of previous commentaries in this series except that the biblical text has been omitted. There is a brief introduction to the four letters, showing how the fact of the author being referred to as in prison holds them together as prison letters. There is a general discussion of where the prison might be and it is concluded that the references are to a single prison and that the balance of probability rests with Rome. There is a brief introduction to each of the epistles preceding the notes on the text. The introduction to the commentary on Ephesians is very interesting in that the difficulties of ascribing the letter to the authorship of Paul are clearly recognized but not

felt to be as great as the difficulties of attributing it to an imitator of Paul. Therefore Dr Caird provisionally accepts the traditional ascription of Ephesians to Paul. The notes for each section of the epistles are preceded by a paraphrase of the argument, and this paraphrase provides a very valuable connecting link between the various sets of notes in the commentary. It is a real strength in the commentary.

It is difficult to select details for comment in such a book as this, but it is very interesting to notice how the question of the imminence of the *parousia* is discussed in relation to the first chapter of Philippians, where the important distinction is made between imminent in the sense that it must happen within a given period on the one hand and imminent in the sense that it was likely to occur at any time. The discussion of the various hymns in these letters is also interesting, and he is very sympathetic to seeing them as Pauline and particularly in seeing them as part of the epistle in which they occur. In this respect one might have hoped for some more detailed discussion of the relationship between the hymn in Colossians 1 and the way in which some of the material in that hymn seems to be used in chapter 2. This, however, is a small complaint about a fine and judicious commentary which many people will find very valuable.

BRUCE KAYE

**THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER: An Exposition of  
Ephesians 6:10-20** D. M. LLOYD-JONES

*Banner of Truth* 1977 363pp £3.50

ISBN 0 85151 258 5

The sermons on Ephesians 6 which form this volume were preached on Sunday mornings in Westminster Chapel from October 1961 to July 1962. Originally there were 34 sermons, and these have been reduced to 26 chapters. It is interesting to compare the original sermons issued monthly in the *Westminster Record* with the present edition; it may be arguable that more severe editing would have improved the book by removing repetitions suitable in preaching but less so in a book to be read.

The sub-title refers to the book as an exposition of Ephesians 6. In truth it is more of a connected series of studies in sermon-style relating to the passage. The first ten chapters, for example, move us no further than verse 10, the starting point, which is used as a peg on which to hang splendid teaching of a wide-ranging kind on such topics as reading Scripture (p 22), ministry of angels (p 32), false views on sanctification (p 40f), justification and sanctification (p 127f), preparation of sermons (p 134), activism (p 141) and how to view the book of Revelation (p 157). Some of these are in the nature of preachers' asides, some illustrate the theme, and some are tantalizing tangents on which the preacher embarks. But some are major expositions of passages quite other than Ephesians 6: chapter 6 is largely an excursus into Hebrews, and chapter 7 is an extended exposition of 2 Peter 1. Added together, these first ten chapters form a splendid set of sermons about the glorious status of the believer in a hostile world rather than an exposition of Ephesians 6:10. It is only in the second half of the book that the writer settles to exposition of verses 11-20. The intention of course is to set the scene at length before getting into the passage. As

exposition, however, the result is unbalanced and the book seems to end in a hurry as if we had run out of space.

This is not a commentary but the recorded preaching of a great preacher. Collectors of these anthologies will know and love the style. It makes easy reading, but is sometimes wordy and repetitive. Each chapter begins with a resumé, longer or shorter, of the previous chapter; this fits the original context of weekly sermons, but becomes somewhat tedious in a book. Again, more rigorous editing would have removed dated topical references and inserted more relevant up-to-date equivalents: for instance, the once famous reference to 'meeting atheists in heaven' (twice quoted, pp 16 & 195), which was a live talking point in 1961, could surely have been replaced by some such reference as to mistaken Christology as a better illustration of the evilness of the day in 1977.

Dr Lloyd-Jones' exposition of the armour is, as always, superbly detailed and helpful. He opts, with many another commentator, for the division of the six pieces into two sets of three, the 'fixed' pieces and the 'movable' pieces, and makes much of the words 'having' and 'taking' as applied to each group. I find this a little artificial, especially as it seems to lead to little fruitful application. Dare I say that a better way into the passage is found via the imperatives and present participles of the Greek, which reveal the construction of the passage as '*Stand... having the belt, breastplate, shoes and shield; and take helmet and sword... praying and watching?*'

But these are matters of emphasis which do not detract overmuch from the enjoyment, encouragement and spiritual profit this volume will afford, especially to young Christians unsure of basic scriptural teaching on justification, sanctification and the crucial relationship between 'trying' and 'trusting'. There is an excellent working over of the familiar texts and passages oft quoted in addresses on sanctification, and the conclusion is crystal clear: 'Surely the answer is that, though it is our activity, the Lord provides the power for the activity. Paul does not tell us to do nothing. Indeed he tells us to exert ourselves for all we are worth, but that the power given to us to do so is His, and from Him, and that we must learn increasingly how to rely upon that power.' (p 54) That, in a nutshell, is the nub of the argument.

KEITH WESTON

## THE EPISTLE OF JAMES      JAMES ADAMSON

*Eerdmans 1976 227pp \$8.95*

ISBN 0 8028 2377 7

This volume in the New International Commentary is the first second edition in that series. The commentary by the late Professor Alexander Ross on the epistles of James and John was first published in 1954, and this present commentary on the epistle of James replaces it in the New International Commentary series. This is part of a policy on the part of the publishers and general editor to keep the New International Commentary up to date in the way in which other major commentary series are. In this commentary there is no attachment to a particular English translation as in the first editions, and the commentator has constructed his own translation of the epistle of James within the commentary.

The comments on the text are uniformly clear and full, and reflect the wide reading which the author has done, particularly for his PhD thesis at the University of Cambridge in 1954. The text of the commentary is entirely in English or transliterated Greek and the footnotes contain guidance to further literature and to the details of the Greek text. The commentary is notable in a number of respects but particularly for the thesis which is argued in it. Doctor Adamson sets out to refute the idea, widely held, that there is no coherent plan or thought in the epistle. He thinks there is a clear line of thought, and in a short summary at the beginning of the commentary he tries to show how that line of thought develops. James is trying to set forth the way in which Christians who know the rudiments of Christianity should live according to God's law. James' task therefore is mainly practical: to help the sincere to live up to their faith and very often to correct errors, misunderstandings and backslidings resulting in conduct unworthy of the Christian faith. Furthermore, Dr Adamson thinks that James assumes that his days are the last days and that the first generation of Christians is also to be the last. In this sense, therefore, the epistle takes us back to the infancy of the Christian church and to what Dr Adamson calls 'the purple dawn of Christian enthusiasm and the first glow of Christian love.' Indeed he thinks that the epistle belongs to the period of the Jerusalem church which had no real inclination to separate from Judaism and where the salvation of the Jews was for a time at least the paramount immediate practical problem.

It is very useful to have available such a clear thesis argued in this commentary—not least because it provides a counterpoint to the more usual interpretation of the epistle. Given Dr Adamson's interest in the method of James, and his concern with the way in which his readers should live the Christian life, it is a little surprising that he does not develop further the references to the Christian group in James 2:2 and 5:14. On the first passage he seems somewhat too easily to accept the interpretation of 'ecclesia' given some time ago by K. L. Schmidt in the Kittel Dictionary. These two passages in James bear further, more careful, elaboration to discern the social structure of the group to which the epistle is apparently addressed.

The publishers have failed to put in the page numbers for author and Scripture indexes on page 8.

BRUCE KAYE

**EXPLORATIONS IN THEOLOGY 1**

*SCM Press 1977 212pp £3.95*

**EXPLORATIONS IN THEOLOGY 2**

*SCM Press 1977 198pp £3.95*

**D. E. NINEHAM**

ISBN 0 334 01971 0

**C. F. EVANS**

ISBN 0 334 01972 9

One of the most interesting passages in these two volumes is one in which Dr Nineham relates his own testimony of finding in the Christian church peace, fellowship with God, and power for service (p 88). It is the focusing of faith and Christian experience on the church that makes it possible to live with the historical problems raised by modern approaches to the Bible, which are a central concern of these essays. Dr Nineham has no doubt that

the church has its origin in Jesus Christ, but he sees huge obstacles to going with any certainty beyond such fundamental assertions—as his essays on the Markan outline, on ‘Eye-witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition’, and on ‘The Genealogy in Matthew’s Gospel’ show. But alongside this hesitation regarding the gospels’ historical value, there is an interest in appreciating the gospel narratives for what they are. Professor Evans offers positive illustrations in his studies of ‘The Passion of Christ’, examining the narratives’ use of the Old Testament and considering the actual narrative in Mark, Luke, and John. He also notes some literary approaches to the parables and considers the relationship of ‘Parable and Dogma’.

Dr Nineham’s paper on the Matthaean genealogy illustrates particularly clearly a further aspect of the problem of interpreting the Bible in a historical age. The manner of thinking reflected in the production of this genealogy is one which we cannot enter into. And this is only one instance of the ‘historically conditioned character of all human experience, speech and institutions’ (p 148) which makes any other culture impossible to enter into in any full sense.

Further, even if we can come to understand the writings of this strange biblical culture, can we identify with it and appropriate it? One of Professor Evans’ papers pictures theology, which had replaced one dancing partner, philosophy, with a second, history, as now in need of a new partner again. Dr Nineham nominates sociology. And sociology relativizes everything it touches: it sets the Bible in its context more radically even than history does. Thus, though we can learn a great deal from it, ‘we cannot make the biblical story our own’ (p 143). Dr Nineham’s paper on Schweitzer illustrates this problem.

Casually over lunch one day I asked one of our students how he would characterize the difference between college and university here. To him, the Christian commitment of the college’s teaching was clear, but precisely because of this there could be a question mark over its rigour. The university guaranteed rigour but could therefore be short on commitment. Dr Nineham and Professor Evans are caught in this tension, as any theologian is in one way or another. On one side, the actual content of the Christian faith they are committed to is full of its and buts. It remains rather opaque even in Professor Evans’ three lectures on ‘The Christian’, though the correlating of ‘The Christian Past—Tradition’, ‘The Christian Present—Existentialism’, and ‘The Christian Future—Eschatology’, is suggestive. On the other side, in his approach to the Bible Dr Nineham seems to want to surrender his cake but still eat it: to take everything away (historical reliability, accessibility, and meaningfulness) but then to maintain that nevertheless the New Testament is, after all, reliable over what matters, that we can understand it if we try, and that we can be enriched by it if we listen to it in its historical particularity (p 162-3). Perhaps these positions can be reconciled (the one is the potential, the other the actual situation?). But they are not here clearly reconciled. So is rigour taken seriously enough in the end? Does Dr Nineham find it difficult to live with the logic of his position? Or is the point that we must recognize the magnitude of the historical/hermeneutical problem, but that as long as we do recognize it we can then overcome it?

JOHN GOLDINGAY

## CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

edited R. A. EVANS & T. D. PARKER

SPCK 1977 272pp £3.95

ISBN 0 281 02980 6

Based on the teaching method of Harvard Law School, we discover a new method of approach to theology—the case method. It runs parallel with J. Fletcher's contextual approach to ethics in that it attempts to lead to the mastering of doctrines by studying cases in which it is embodied. The claim is that this approach allows the best blending of history, tradition, precedent, authorities and the empirical situation. We are presented with nine cases organized on the basis of themes from the Apostles' Creed. Each case has a theological introduction, then the case study of a specific situation which highlights a practical problem, and finally a set of theological briefs written to the case by a number of theologians from a wide variety of backgrounds and positions. The contributors of the theological briefs range from Ellul, Ogden and Altizer to Braaten and Henry (Carl). The range helps to ensure that there is ambiguity and difference over how to proceed and the decision to be made. This is exactly what is required, it is argued, for the student to develop his own understanding of theology in the modern world: 'The focus in the case method is towards owning one's decisions and developing intelligible rationale for one's stance.' (p 4)

Behind the exercise is the vision of overcoming certain gaps in theological education: that between theory and practice, and between learned theology and 'owned theology'. The realm of doctrine is supposedly all too far removed from real life to be of value. This is overcome by concentrating on 'an experientially based situation or case with the added dimension of critical reflection from a variety of perspectives.' (p 9) There is implicit in this a desire to provide common theological ground for future ecumenical dialogue by creating a dialogue between different theological perspectives.

We must welcome any approach which seeks to develop analytical and creative skill in theological reflection. It is praiseworthy to encourage students to integrate their doctrinal framework with their own experience of life; and to begin to see how Christian decision-making functions, and on what basis. What is open to doubt is whether this method will provide all that it claims; and when and if it does, whether we will be happy with the results. In the end it reduces everything to the pragmatic. 'Does it work?' will be the concern, rather than 'Is it true?'. It can conceal the assumptions people make by dealing with hard cases rather than normal situations. Exceptional cases make bad laws. It could be a tool to indoctrinate students and clergy by the biasing of material and the theological briefs. What is perhaps most distressing is the assumption that we must not only accept but actively encourage the move to theological pluralism. Thus lies the route to relativism and the reduction of Christian and doctrinal truth to simply one possible set of motives and understandings.

We need to examine the method and to take the cases and the theological reflections seriously, but this in no way must lead to the acceptance of the case method approach as normative for theology. It may have its place, but beware of the price!

E. DAVID COOK

## **RUDOLF BULTMANN'S THEOLOGY:**

**A Critical Interpretation      ROBERT C. ROBERTS**

*SPCK 1977 333pp £4.95*

ISBN 0 281 02981 4

The point of departure in this book is, I am sure, the right one. Bultmann, the author insists, divides reality into two 'by a Kant-like separation of the objective and personal worlds.' Thus his entire work is stamped by a dualism between nature and history, between possession and event, between statement and address, and so on. Hence Roberts entitles his first chapter 'Freedom from the World', understanding the 'world' as lying on that side of the dualism which stands in contrast to faith and decision. Unbelieving man, in Bultmann's view, tries to master the world and to secure life in it. 'World' is that which man can control. The world is also the sphere of the concrete, the tangible, and the visible. By contrast, faith is never an achievement; it is never something on which man can rely. It must be renewed moment by moment.

On the basis of this starting-point, Roberts mounts a persistent and relentless attack on the whole of Bultmann's theology. The New Testament writers themselves, the author points out, far from setting faith and security in contrast, see faith as an assurance grounded in historical facts. They are not embarrassed by offering objective grounds for belief, including miracles and especially the resurrection of Christ. The author of Acts uses words like 'argue' and 'prove'. By contrast, Bultmann himself offers only a kerygma which is without content, and has no 'historical-factual' grounding. Everything, Roberts argues, falls victim to Bultmann's existentialist interpretation. This is seen specifically in his proposals about myth, in the course of which he simply assumes without proof that the New Testament view of heaven, miracles, and the nature of man can no longer be accepted by modern man. But 'surely one of the ways a Christian in any century distinguishes himself from the rest of the world is to believe that with God all things are possible.' (p 148) It is Bultmann himself, Roberts urges, who falls victim to the spirit of the age. The author follows these criticisms with a further attack on Bultmann's view of language and meaning. For instance, why must 'general truths' be opposed to address, as if one could not also be the other? The fault lies in his sharp distinction between linguistic reference and linguistic expression. A good test-case of Bultmann's attempt at translating exegesis is his handling of the doctrine of creation, which the author successfully shows is inadequate. The book concludes with further attacks on Bultmann's work in the case of the doctrine of God, ethics, and faith.

The general direction of the author's criticisms is valid, and there is an excellent streak of common sense in his observations and examples. But I am not sure that he has done full justice to the complexity and subtlety of all Bultmann's thought. This is largely because, although he talks in general terms about Bultmann's debt to Heidegger, little is made of his other important debts to Hermann, Dilthey, Neo-Kantian epistemology, nineteenth-century Lutheranism and especially to dialectical theology. The Bultmann I meet in these pages is a seriously diminished figure by contrast with the Bultmann whom I meet in his own writings. This is, of course, part of the author's aim. But whilst sometimes this end is rightly

achieved by sound theological argument, there are also times when what the author attacks is only a simplified or at least one-sided, version of the original. As a critique of Bultmann, therefore, this book cannot stand on its own, and must be supplemented by writers such as Malet, Schmithals, or especially Johnson. Nevertheless it has much to commend it, and is one of the better treatments of the subject so far from a conservative and orthodox writer.

ANTHONY C. THISELTON

**COLLECTED WRITINGS OF JOHN MURRAY**  
**VOLUME 2: Systematic Theology**

*Banner of Truth* 1977 417pp £4.50

ISBN 0 85151 242 9

The prospect of taking copious doses of neat Calvinism into the system can be a heart-sinker, for dullness and orthodoxy tend to keep company. Happily, John Murray's style combines substantial fare and a Scots economy of language (no frothy illustrations here) with a presentation that somehow holds the reader's interest. The publisher, with rare candour in the commercial world, admits to 'an inevitable unevenness'—something one might expect in material prepared originally for college lectures or public addresses.

This second volume of the late professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, has as its main themes Man, Common Grace, Christ and Redemption, Sanctification, Church and Sacraments, and the Last Things. In the 36 chapters of varying length, sub-headings and Murray's concern to explain technical theological terms encourage the non-specialist to read on. Footnotes and bibliographical references point to a surprisingly catholic collection of sources.

In a splendid chapter on 'The Nature and Unity of the Church', Murray insists that we speak not only of the church universal, but of the churches of God throughout the world, the plurality of the church of God. It is good, incidentally, to see that respectable word 'ecumenical' used in that proper sense which has no necessary connection with the World Council of Churches and allied industries.

Murray's conviction that the presbyterate is the form of government for the church of Christ naturally leads him on to discuss how this relates to the unity of the body of Christ, and to reject the view that every unit 'exists governmentally in complete independence of all other units'. The unity of the body, Murray declares, must be expressed in every phase of the church's activity. Independency and *koinōnia* are uneasy fellow-walkers. The Jerusalem Council settled matters not just for Antioch, but for all the churches—and that in the era of special revelation.

A reasoned section on 'elder' and 'bishop' in the New Testament as identical in office and function is followed by what may be regarded as one of the few partisan points in the whole book: that the NT bishop 'must not be associated in the remotest way with the hierarchical denotation or connotation that has come to be attached to (the term) in the course of history.'

Altogether this is a valuable and well-balanced work, written with



lucidity and the sort of gracious spirit that brings an eirenic tone into even the discussion of church discipline and restricted communion.

J. D. DOUGLAS

**CRUCIFIXION      MARTIN HENGEL**

*SCM Press 1977 99pp £2.25*

ISBN 0 334 01959 1

The translation of an article originally entitled 'The utterly vile death of the cross', this book surveys with magisterial authority the phenomenon of crucifixion in the ancient world. With an astonishing and masterly control of the literature, Professor Hengel examines the social, political, aesthetic and religious connotations of so brutal and nauseating a practice. After pondering this book no sensitive reader can fail to feel repugnance for any tendency to decorate and idealize the cross or to use it as a sterile shibboleth in theological argument. This book is therefore a 'must' for anyone who will understand Christian mission. For the exegete its contents throw a flood of light on 1 Cor. 1:18 and Phil. 2:6-11 but its relevance is broader than that. Let the author have the last word:

The earliest Christian message of the crucified messiah demonstrated the 'solidarity' of the love of God with the unspeakable suffering of those who were tortured and put to death by human cruelty... In the death of Jesus of Nazareth God identified himself with the extreme of human wretchedness... To assert that God himself accepted death in the form of a crucified Jewish manual worker from Galilee in order to break the power of death and bring salvation to all men could only seem folly and madness to men of ancient times... Reflection on the harsh reality of crucifixion in antiquity may help us to overcome the acute loss of reality which is to be found so often in present theology and preaching.

DAVID CATCHPOLE

**HOLY SPIRIT: A Biblical Study      MICHAEL RAMSEY**

*SPCK 1977 140pp 95p*

ISBN 0 281 03586 5

In this very readable paperback, the former Archbishop of Canterbury combines breadth of reading and scholarship, a balanced grasp of the subject and a fairly popular style. After reviewing the principal strands in Hebrew conceptions of the Spirit before Christ, he devotes one chapter to the Spirit in the mission of Jesus, one to Luke's, three to Paul's and two to John's treatments of the Holy Spirit in their writings, ending with 'Some Other Writers' and 'Afterthoughts'. In the latter he looks at the themes of the Spirit and the triune God, the Spirit and the World, and the Spirit and Renewal.

The best section in the book is on the treatment of the Spirit in St John. But Bishop Ramsey is at pains to stress the emergence of a clear underlying unity in the NT doctrine of the Spirit—a healthy corrective to the fashionable obsession with the alleged doctrinal pluralism of the New Testament. Although the book is full of seminal thoughts, its limited compass unfortunately prevents its author from following up any of the themes studied in any real depth. Your reviewer would also have liked to see the conclusions, where drawn, stated a little more definitely in some

places (e.g. on the Trinity and the personality of the Spirit). There are a few misprints, and one or two non-biblically based ideas slip in as asides here and there. But for anyone wanting a competent, brief introductory study of the Holy Spirit in the NT, be they theological student, pastor or layman, one could do a lot worse than Ramsey.

JOHN P. BAKER

**CATHOLIC PENTECOSTALISM**      **RENÉ LAURENTIN**

*Darton, Longman and Todd 1977 239pp £3.30*

ISBN 0 232 51386 4

Professor Laurentin, a French Catholic theologian who teaches at the University of Angers, has produced one of the most significant books on the charismatic renewal yet to appear from the Catholic side, mainly because of his ability to advance from experience and testimony to theological reflection on the issues involved, and to set them in the widest context of Christian teaching and tradition.

Although not personally participant in the renewal, he writes with a sympathy which always gives the charismatics the benefit of the doubt; which makes a pleasant change, even if sometimes it makes him over-indulgent towards dangers and difficulties which those involved need to see and face.

His treatment of baptism in the Spirit is fresh and stimulating, even to those who might be tempted to think there is nothing new left to say on the subject. In contrast to much recent writing both inside and outside charismatic circles, he insists that baptism in the Spirit language has a sounder scriptural source than is often recognized.

His discussion of the relationship between faith's recognition of the hand of God in acts of healing and the kind of scientific criteria for miracle demanded at Lourdes is fascinating and pertinent, and those evangelicals who want to know what renewed Catholics are saying about Mariology may well be surprised at how much they can agree with in his chapter on 'Mary, the Model Charismatic'.

Professor Laurentin's conclusion precisely describes the present situation of the charismatic renewal in its Roman Catholic expression: 'It is certainly true that the movement is profiting from the enthusiasm that characterizes all beginnings. The decisive test will be in the desert through which it must pass after the liberation from Egypt... It is by the test of time that we will be able to gauge the scope and historic importance of the movement. Will it fall victim to an excess of fervour or a loss of fervour? It is too soon to answer these questions. The answers will depend on how those who take part in the renewal use their freedom.' (p 191)

THOMAS A. SMAIL

**MEDITATIONS ON FREEDOM AND THE SPIRIT**

**KARL RAHNER**

*Burns and Oates 1977 115pp £1.95*

ISBN 0 86012 047 3

There are three sections to this small book of meditations, each of which

has a different translator, which results in quite a different type of treatment, mainly between the second and the other two. The three parts deal with 'Faith as Courage'; 'Freedom and Manipulation in Society and the Church'; and 'Toleration in the Church'. In the first section, Rahner briefly discusses the theme of faith-courage as a fundamentally simple matter, even though he wishes at the same time to understand courage in a radical relation to all human existence. The very word 'courage' is one of a whole class that reflects human existence in one of its many evaluative dimensions, and is not to be thought of in terms of the many other definitive terms which scientific precision requires. It is deeply associated with hope, personal transcendence and freedom, out of which arises faith reaching out to God who is our goal and by whose grace such self-transcending vision and resolution are possible. It is within this context that Rahner then would speak of Christian faith, centred in Jesus Christ, reflecting back upon all existence.

The second section examines freedom and manipulation in society in their own terms and in relationship together. Rahner is aware of the transcendent, indeed the mystery, aspect of freedom but is determined to be severely practical in his consideration of it, noting the close relation between social and religious freedom and the need for 'space' or room to exercise it. Indeed, Rahner urges that we must not think that the vision of God is enough to replace the losses caused by denial of such room; religious or spiritual freedom is conditioned by our social freedom. But one man's freedom in theory is the limitation of another if not with his consent, and the question arises how this kind of manipulation of another's freedom is moral. It is a feature of all society, which in its sinful aspect Rahner relates to the traditional theme of concupiscence, but, in the inevitable tension between freedom and social manipulation, never finds final resolution and makes human history therefore one of perpetual struggle. Rahner explores the way that this gives the Christian character to eschatological hope, both as eluding the grasp of history yet giving inspiration to the process, even though a Christian view must also involve a certain scepticism about actual achievement—yet without disposing to a cynical conservatism, nor yet to an other-worldly pietism. Rahner, in fact, sees the importance of maximizing freedom in our near future to ensure genuine survival; but he does not spell out what he sees as implied by this remark. This tension between freedom and manipulation is further examined in the life of the church, and particularly in the experience of the Roman Catholic Church; the rigidities of its system once more come under Rahner's censure, and the call is repeated to drop the older feudal and paternalist attitudes assumed by authority. The responsibility to develop true freedom within the proper and acceptable constraints of a corporate body is the church's own continuing struggle to express both its hope of becoming what it is called to be, and its love between all its members. Underlying Rahner's strictures is the hint that there is a good long way to go in any contemporary satisfactory pursuance of such a process. It has to be noted that the translation of this second section leaves a good deal to be desired, making some sentences or phrases unnecessarily obscure (on p 13 the phrase 'even if...' ought to be 'even though...' and there are others).

The third section continues this theme of internal struggle within the Roman Catholic Church as Rahner maps out the meaning of genuine toleration both by the church's authorities and by individual members, and gives practical suggestions as to the ways the church should look to its responsibilities to its members and the individual members recognize the limits of their own attitudes and actions while they claim membership. But it is not entirely of interest only to Roman Catholics; the chapter on 'Doctrine and Authority' has certain words of wisdom to what goes on in the Church of England; for example, what degree of toleration a theologian can claim when he openly calls in question fundamental tenets that maintain the witness of the church to the gospel.

G. J. C. MARCHANT

**GOD'S TOMORROW      DAVID BROWN**

SCM Press 1977 88pp 90p

ISBN 0 334 00590 6

What is God's Tomorrow for the world? Not so long ago, most evangelicals would have answered—some still do—the imminent return of Christ. This bold assertion was based on the conviction that all events supposed to herald the *parousia* had now taken place. What point, then, in Christians devoting time and energy to making society more conformable to the ideals of the kingdom of God? Evangelism was the almost total concern of mission. The Lausanne Covenant in 1974 marked a shift of emphasis for evangelicals. Social and political involvement are essential to the Church's mission. But to what end? The building here and now of God's kingdom?

David Brown has no doubt that to seek God's kingdom in the tomorrow of the world, as well as in its today, is the work of mission. Having affirmed the continuing purpose of God shaping the process of evolution in the complex development of the natural world, he sees the present time as critical. A great new leap forward for mankind is possible. We are in the birth-pangs of a new age. And therefore what mankind needs is a dream, a vision. Secular leadership in the world sees the need for a new concept of world community, lest disaster overtake mankind. The Bible presents the vision of the new Jerusalem. Can we relate the secular and biblical visions? David Brown believes they 'complement each other and merge together, but their boundaries do not coincide.' (p 22)

The book expounds this theme, ranging broadly over God's mission in history, in Christ and through the church. While he cannot avoid the risk, to those attempting a wide survey in short compass, of selection to fit the theme, there is much to stimulate the search for the meaning of mission today and tomorrow.

Two chief doubts remain for the reviewer. Is too much packed into the concept of mission? ('If everything is called mission, nothing is mission'—Stephen Neill.) And has the author given sufficient weight to evil in mankind and the vindication of God's holiness in the atonement? Evil seems to be defined mainly in terms of its spoiling effects for man, and the atonement in terms of God's unconquerable love in bearing the pain and disappointment of man's failure.

COLIN CRASTON

## GOD OF THE OPPRESSED      JAMES H. CONE

SPCK 1977 280pp £3.95

ISBN 0 281 03566 0

The present author is now well known as the leading exponent of Black Theology in the USA. This book, originally published in 1975, is his fourth major work.

In many ways it is a personal testimony of the meaning of theological reflection, felt from inside a black skin. Cone endeavours to share with his readers what he calls 'his *personal* history in a particular socio-political setting', because he believes that only as theologians reflect upon the non-intellectual factors which shape the opinions they advance can theological discussion be equally honest and fruitful.

Therefore, after a personal introduction to his own spiritual and intellectual pilgrimage, he tries in the early chapters to trace the historical factors which have shaped his kind of theological thinking. In particular, through the rich heritage of 'spirituals' and the characteristic preaching of black pastors, he gives us an insight into the formation of black religious consciousness and its great difference from the white religious tradition.

In a further chapter, he elaborates on the important insights of the 'sociology of knowledge' with regard to the cultural and ideological context of contemporary theologizing, showing how black and white Christian thinkers perceive differently the task of theology. For the black person thanksgiving is essentially telling a story—the biblical story as seen through the reality of his own suffering.

In the rest of the book, Cone theologizes in this way. He expounds the biblical meaning of liberation from the thoroughly biased slant of 250 years of black history in a white society. Of course, his presentation is very much more sophisticated than that of either the black preacher or the writer of songs and blues. He touches, for example, on the issue of the relationship between theology and ideology, and on the hermeneutical question of the meaning of Jesus Christ for today. He writes an excellent chapter on the meaning of suffering within a black perspective—no theoretical debate!—and grapples with the problem of a relevant basis for Christian ethics in the light of God's action to liberate the oppressed. His final chapter tackles the important issue of reconciliation within the perspective of black and white attitudes to social justice and change.

Though Cone, in this book, is no less intransigent in his rejection of the cultural and ethical values which have conditioned white theologizing, he states his case in a way more conducive to an open and honest discussion than in former books.

Had this book been written first, those of us born white, but conscious of the perennial domination of theological thinking by white cultural norms, might have been able to understand better the reasons for the anger and dogmatism of earlier black theology. Now Cone has presented us with a well-argued account of how many black people view the theological task today. We need to listen very carefully to the basic points he is making.

J. ANDREW KIRK

## THE CHRISTIAN-MARXIST DIALOGUE AND BEYOND

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

Darton, Longman and Todd 1977 122pp £2.50

ISBN 0 232 51390 2

## HOPE IN CAPTIVITY: The Prophetic Church in Latin America

DEREK WINTER

Epworth Press 1977 136pp £2.25

ISBN 7162 0283 2

In some respects the author of the first of these two books is well-qualified to write on what he himself calls a 'dangerously emotive theme'; he is a convinced Catholic who has made a thorough study of the various Christian approaches to Marxism during the last 20 years. More importantly, he has been engaged personally in the dialogue, being present at the celebrated encounter held in Czechoslovakia in 1967. He wrote the preface to the English edition of Machovec's *A Marxist looks at Jesus*.

The book, then, is very simply an account of the way the dialogue between certain Christians and certain Marxists has developed. It finishes up with the author's assessment of how a Christian should respond to the powerful, intellectual and existential challenge of Marxism.

The dialogue has been going on basically in Europe and Latin America, and the author manages to clarify the difference of approach on the two continents. However, he is less than fair to the Theology of Liberation, for he has picked on one strain in this movement—that of action—giving the impression of a certain superficiality on the theological front. He has failed to note that liberation theologians have tended to exaggerate deliberately certain points—for example, the priority of praxis—in order to highlight the distinctive way in which they view the purpose of theological reflection today.

The author makes valuable points regarding the excessive political optimism generated by a rediscovery of certain Marxist insights on reality. Unfortunately, however, his discussion is quite limited: on the one hand, by his Catholic stance, which has apparently biased him to ignore olympically the majority of Protestants engaged in the dialogue, e.g. Gollwitzer, Hromadka, Lochmann and Moltmann, a gigantic omission in a book on this topic; on the other hand, by his donnish background, for the challenge of Marxism to Christian faith is equally in those areas of life and the world where it would be hard for an Oxford don to appreciate the full force of the human issues involved.

The book, then, is useful, but needs to be complemented and extended. We have by no means yet heard the end of the debate. Miguez-Bonino (p 39) is not Brazilian, but Argentinian.

Derek Winter's book is a very readable account of the politically radical wing of the Latin American Church. The author himself spent 13 years as a Baptist missionary in Brazil, but curiously enough during that time did not come across the debate about Christian involvement in the struggle for liberation.

Five years after leaving the continent he returns on a sabbatical leave of absence, and visits some of the key people who have been immersed in the debate. Over a period of a few weeks, having arrived from Europe in Lima, symbolically in a Russian jet (though, this travel is also cheaper!), he visits successively Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile.

Naturally, he carries back impressions. Some of his observations are inevitably based on inadequate acquaintance with the situation he describes—such as, for example, the reality of the United Seminary in Buenos Aires (ISEDET)—but this is balanced by extensive conversations with leading liberation theologians and activists, his own knowledge of Latin American culture and wide-reading.

The final chapter, as in Hebblethwaite's book, is devoted to a personal assessment of the relationship between Christian thinking and action and revolutionary theory and activism. His understanding of the place of Marxism in the ongoing discussion is much more positive than the former's.

Some Christians in Latin America who refuse to be identified with either revolutionary or reactionary forces in the churches believe that the time has come to do creative theological thinking in dialogue with currents other than merely Marxism. Unfortunately, they do not appear in either of these two books, though their beliefs may be much more significant in the long-term.

J. ANDREW KIRK

## **THE CHURCH: Its Changing Image through Twenty Centuries** **ERIC G. JAY**

### **VOLUME 1: The First Seventeen Centuries**

*SPCK 1977 248pp £3.50*

ISBN 0 281 02990 3

### **VOLUME 2: 1700 to the Present Day**

*SPCK 1978 227pp £3.50*

ISBN 0 281 02991 1

Students of the work of Christ have long been grateful to Dr Robert S. Franks for his book *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (1918), republished in 1962 under the title *The Work of Christ*. Professor Jay has put students of ecclesiology similarly in his debt. These two volumes provide a thorough, if somewhat pithy, account of the developing understanding of the church from the New Testament to the present day.

His method is simply to expound the main points in the thinking of key people and movements throughout the church's history. His aim is neither to argue a case nor to advocate one ecclesiology over against another. Rather by skilful use of quotation and a discerning isolation of themes he seeks to allow the author or movement to speak for himself. In several places he points out some of the problems presented by particular views, or the way one theology was developed by other theologians. He does so, however, without any noticeable bias.

The first volume begins with a short section on the church in the New Testament which looks both at the use of the word 'ecclesia' and at the central images used by the writers. He then turns to the patristic period and traces the development of thinking about the church up to Augustine and Jerome, who only merits one page! His discussion of medieval theology includes a useful section on the opponents of papalism from the Albigensians to Wyclif, Hus and the Conciliarists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as well as looking fully at the main protagonists of the theory. The volume ends with an account of the ecclesiology of Luther, Calvin

and the English Reformers, with Zwingli and Bucer receiving but passing mention.

Volume 2 is in some ways even more selective, though the opening chapter, helpfully if all too briefly, sketches the trends of theology from Newton and Locke to the Catholic modernists, with a passing look at Wesley and the evangelical revival. Thereafter he concentrates on Schleiermacher and Ritschl, the Church of England in the nineteenth century, F. D. Maurice, the development of the Anglican Communion and the Lambeth conferences before turning to the twentieth century. Here there are helpful chapters on the ecumenical movement; Vatican II; 'Church and World', which looks at writers like Troeltsch, Bonhoeffer and Harvey Cox; and a longer exposition of the ecclesiologies of Karl Barth, Paul Tillich and Hans Küng. In a postscript he anticipates the inevitable comment of reviewers that his treatment is too selective by pointing out some of his omissions—Karl Rahner and Lesslie Newbigin. There are several others, including Emil Brunner, for example.

A book like this obviously suffers by trying to cram a quart into a pint pot—it is easy to point out the gaps, and the compression which has done less than justice to one's favourite author. To satisfy everybody, however, the books would probably have had to be three or four times as long, and five times the price! Within his self-imposed limits, Professor Jay's selection and judgement is fair and wise. The extensive footnotes show both a familiarity with the major literature on the subject and also provide the student with the necessary leads into further research. It should prove a readable and valuable addition to the library of all who want to pursue a study of ecclesiology.

IAN CUNDY

**THE FIRST FOLLOWERS OF JESUS: A Sociological Analysis  
of the Earliest Christianity** GERD THEISSEN

SCM Press 1978 131pp £2.50

ISBN 0 334 00479 9

In this readable and concise sociological study of the first Christians, the Professor of New Testament at the University of Bonn considers their patterns of behaviour, the social influences which were exerted upon them, and the social consequences of their movement. In each section, the Christian movement is compared with other contemporary movements of religious reform. I found the result in part illuminating, in part disturbing.

The author of any such study is faced with a dearth of source material. This problem is to some extent relieved if a radical position in gospel criticism is adopted. Such a position is implicit in Theissen's study. He believes that the social experiences of the early Christians influenced the traditions of the words of Jesus recorded in the gospels. Many of the sayings attributed to Jesus thus become informative expressions of social conditions, rather than the words of God. Different sayings which appear inconsistent are believed to reflect the differing social conditions of groups of Christians, notably 'wandering charismatics', and settled local communities.

The latter parts of the book are better. Here we have an illuminating study of the social environment of Christ's disciples and the first Christian



communities. Theissen gives attention to the influence of economics, ecology, politics and culture on early Christian behaviour, and considers the impact of the movement on the wider society. He rejects a social *causation* of Christian belief, and instead concentrates on the *interaction* between beliefs and social factors. His theological convictions are occasionally apparent; for example the doctrine of the atonement is presented as a rationalization of the Messiah's 'failure' (p 108).

A sociological study of the earliest Christianity is an exciting project, though hampered by the shortage of source material. How far it is possible to pursue such a study without espousing a critical position unacceptable to conservative students remains an open question.

ROGER CURL

## THE CHURCH IN LONDON 1375-92

edited A. K. McHARDY

London Record Society 1977 126pp (unpriced)

ISBN 9009 5213 X

It is useful to be able to draw attention to this book; for many of the more valuable volumes on church history lie, often unnoticed, among the publications of local record societies. This book is, of course, a specialist work. It consists of a calendar of three main groups of source material relating to the churches in London over a short span of only 18 years. Six tax returns are printed, all from the troubled years 1379-81, and since they were poll taxes, the names of parish clergy and other ecclesiastical persons are listed. The second record is a survey of property and income belonging to ecclesiastical bodies in the city in 1392. Finally, a collection of *acta* of the Bishop of London (1375-81) is calendared, helping to fill the gap left by the loss of the bishop's register for all those years.

If we are really to understand the development of the church, it is in such local details that we are best able to make comparisons and contrasts. In a short introduction, Dr McHardy describes the documents and some of their most important contributions to knowledge, but she has not provided the description of the Church in London which her title suggests. The large number of parish churches (more than 100 in the city alone); the very large number of clergy serving these churches; the extremes of wealth and poverty and the sources of income; the involvement of the clergy in the economy (and by inference in the political struggles) of the capital—all of these are illuminated by these documents. The only topic discussed at length is the taxation of the clergy by the crown, and there is (as the editor is most aware) much more still to be said on this issue. But at least her volume reveals that a great deal can be known about the local churches in the Middle Ages.

ALAN ROGERS

## A DIALOGUE OF COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION

THOMAS MORE edited FRANK MANLEY

Yale UP 1977 331pp hardcover £16.20

ISBN 0 300 02082 1

paperback £5.00

ISBN 0 300 02185 2

*A Dialogue of Comfort* must be considered More's greatest English work,

written in the Tower during the fifteen months which preceded his execution on 6 July 1535. Composed in those momentous months, daily expecting death, the *Dialogue* was conceived to strengthen the resolve of all those facing religious or political persecution, to give comfort to his family and friends, and to intensify his own resolve. The occasion makes the book his virtual last spiritual testament, and beneath its urbane format lies More's own starkly biographical witness. More is aware of larger issues than his own fate: his plight is the plight of mankind.

The *Dialogue* falls into three books. Book One is concerned with the necessity of faith and the positive handling of tribulation to strengthen, not weaken, faith. Book Two takes this thinking into the grim world of actuality, and uses Psalm 91 as his scriptural foundation, giving verse 6 on the incursions of the devil at noonday his closest attention. This he develops as plain, open persecution in Book Three, exhorting to hope and trust in God in the most sober and rational terms. More concludes by identifying Christ's passion with the suffering of all those who die in defence of the faith under persecution. It behoved Christ to suffer and thus enter his kingdom: we must walk the way he walked.

What a pity such a good man was dead wrong on the Reformation. A greater pity he was Henry's spokesman on something he never understood. He actually classes Luther in these pages with the infidel and heretic, the destroyer of the faith, and makes sport of the Lutheran Christological preaching. Was there more to Erasmus' pun *In Praise of Folly* (MORIA)?

The text is an unabridged modernized version of the new Yale Edition with excellent notes for students, a fine introduction and an extensive bibliography.

JAMES ATKINSON

## CHURCHES AND CHURCHGOERS: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700

R. CURRIE, A. GILBERT and L. HORSLEY

Clarendon Press and OUP 1977 244pp £12.50

ISBN 0 19 827218 9

Church growth is the talk of the moment; while national statistics show a decline for all churches except the Roman Catholics, spectacular examples of growing congregations attract attention and emulation. It is therefore salutary that this book, by three eminent historical sociologists, should appear at this time.

Its argument (like the statistics on which it is built) is incontrovertible. By studying the various churches in England from 1700 onwards, most of which passed through successive periods of rapid growth, stagnation and decline, the authors have discerned a number of trends. All churches and sects (except for the very smallest) have passed into a phase of 'denominationalism' (there is an analysis on page 2 which distinguishes between 'sect', 'church' and 'denomination'), in which they recognize the validity of other denominations and make relatively few demands on their members. Such attitudes are characteristic of the period of decline in church membership.

Losses of membership are related to patterns of growth; and these in

turn are related to the structure which surrounds all churches—a series of concentric circles of members, adherents and a wider religious constituency. Growth of members comes from the ‘adherents’ and these in turn from the ‘religious constituency’; only in periods of very rapid growth have new members come directly from ‘outside’ and, when they do, the subsequent loss rate is very high. Most new members at other times come from adherents (especially the children of members) and these both stay longer and tend to become rather more ‘exclusive’ and inward-looking in their attitudes, leading in turn to a slowing down in the processes of growth.

Since, then, church growth really depends on the size and nature of the religious constituency which the churches cannot control, the conclusion of the book is that ‘church policy is on the whole of less significance than external influences such as secularization, industrialization, urbanization, trade fluctuations, political changes and war’; it is still doubtful how far a church is able to generate its own growth, for example, by recruitment and church-building programmes.’

Disappointing? The book is concerned with the national picture; and the statistical work which covers just half the volume will provide a solid basis for all future church historians. But it omits the local congregation, the individual preacher, the parish church or the chapel. It can in fact be a work of support, of stimulus, if read aright, for it will help those involved to decide whether to concentrate their efforts on ‘the religious constituency’, on ‘adherents’, or on members. Any real increase in our understanding of the processes involved in church growth will help to put that growth on a safer foundation than some of the current models of induced growth which circulate at the present time.

ALAN ROGERS

## **POLITICS AND THE CHURCHES IN GREAT BRITAIN 1832-1868** G. I. T. MACHIN

*OUP 1977 438pp £15.00*

ISBN 0 19 826436 4

Dr Machin’s mature study of the churches and politics in an age of reform is authoritative and lucid. Reflective of a wide scholarship, it must surely become the standard work for this crucial area of nineteenth-century history. It tells the story of how religious pluralism came to be established in Great Britain and of how the established church was maintained whilst the penalties of dissent were removed. At every juncture the scholarship is impeccable: it is good to see so many commonly held misapprehensions properly disposed of here.

The context in which these new relationships were developed was the dynamic one of changing political aspirations, urban development and the ongoing problems of Irish administration. Successive governments had to balance the interests of Anglican conservatism against dissenting demands: the abolition of the Anglican monopoly of marriage, the removal of church rates, the alleged liability of places of worship to poor rate, the absence of a mechanism for the civil registration of births and deaths, the inability of Dissenters to be buried according to their own rites in parish churchyards, the ending of religious tests at Oxford and Cambridge, and the granting of

a non-sectarian charter to a new university in London. The need to give state aid to education and to resolve the problems of a minority established church in Ireland only served to increase the difficulties, as did the growth of Tractarianism within the Church of England herself. That is, not only was there the question of liberty with regard to dissent outside the church but the problem of control of divergent opinions within the church. It was not simply that the state had to react to the pressures of the dissenting Liberation Society on the one hand and papal aggression on the other; it had to think out what establishment meant in a pluralist society, and in particular what measure of self-government could be allowed to the church within an erastian framework. The readjustment that took place was not simply at the expense of the Church of England, for in the process, with the cautious restoration of synodical life through convocation, Anglicans themselves rediscovered something of their own churchmanship.

The approach is chronological and it may be argued that this overloads the account with too much detail, but against this it can equally be argued that this kind of careful telling of the story in its appropriate context is what history is all about: for my part I find the blend of narrative and interpretation authentic and illuminating. Use the index entry for Gladstone and see how his liberalism on so many issues of church-state relationships developed and you will appreciate the value of Dr Machin's detailed account. It is not enough simply to record that church rates, for example, were abolished by legislation in 1868; the question is how did a Parliament that had so often decided in their favour come in the end to dispose of them so easily. But in 1868 the question remained as to how much further territory the establishment principle would have to yield: disestablishment in Ireland and the removal of church rates to some seemed the slippery slope to general disestablishment. That one hundred and ten years later established churches would survive in England and Scotland would have surprised attackers and defenders alike. The question that churchmen should address themselves to is to compare the health of the disestablished churches in Ireland and Wales with the health of those that remain established in England and Scotland, and thereby to test the theories of establishment and voluntarism by the evidence of the years.

JOHN BRIGGS

**SITTING IN JUDGMENT 1913-1963: An Interpretation  
of History** ULRICH SIMON

SPCK 1978 166pp £3.50

ISBN 0 281 03572 5

It was with diffidence that I agreed to review this book. Over some eight years I saw a good deal of the author for whom I came to have a profound respect as one of the true prophets of our time. My diffidence has been increased as I have read this book, returning repeatedly to meditate on certain passages. My reluctance to assess it and offer a critique is not due simply to the range of Ulrich Simon's knowledge of theology, literature and music, which have contributed to his deep understanding of man. Rather, it is because I can only listen in humility to one who has come face to face with the demonic in human existence, wrestled with it, and

then insists that life must be seen as 'The Divine Comedy', not as tragedy. Professor Simon does not allow us to escape any of the darkness of the world. Nor does he allow us to rest content with any human solution, political, technological or religious. As a result he shows the true significance of the gospel of life through death and the real hope it offers. He also compels us to stand under judgment and to seek forgiveness for the ways in which we have softened and manipulated the gospel so that it matches what we falsely believe to be the problems of our time. I can only commend the book gratefully to those who have ears to hear.

†GRAHAM TRURON:

**CONVICTIONS DONALD COGGAN**

*Hodder and Stoughton 1978 320pp £1.25*

ISBN 0 340 21668 9

The Archbishop of Canterbury, even in this secular age, still occupies a commanding position in the life of the country. People will listen to what he has to say, and his high office gives him the authority to offer a lead on religious and social matters. Dr Coggan is a humble and holy man with no trace of prelatical pomposity, and his obvious sincerity appeals to the ordinary man and woman. His recent Holy Week addresses on television were wholly admirable in their simplicity and appeal: the only sad thing was that the television authorities put them on at so late an hour in the evening.

The Archbishop has gathered together in this book lectures, sermons, and talks given during his thirteen years as Archbishop of York and during the opening months at Canterbury. He writes: 'I hope that this collection, for all its faults, will serve both to illustrate what are some of the most important issues which have exercised my mind in recent years, and what have been—and are—some of the basic convictions by which my ministry is undergirded.' Certainly anyone who wishes to know something of the Archbishop's mind will find the answer here. The range of subjects discussed is wide—new translations of the Bible, Shakespeare, the ethics of scientific farming, healing, the ordination of women, the death penalty, authority. Dr Coggan's interests and concerns are wide and inevitably sometimes the treatment must seem slight, but even when this is the case the reader is encouraged to pursue the subject in his own thinking. It is good to find Dr Coggan, in an age when some clergy have been in much confusion and uncertainty about the nature of the ministry, insisting on the importance of the full-time ministry and the necessity for its maintenance. The Archbishop recognizes the high importance of the pastoral ministry in the parishes, and the fact that there is no substitute for this.

O. R. CLARKE

**YOUTH, BRAINWASHING AND THE EXTREMIST CULTS  
RONALD ENROTH**

*Paternoster Press 1977 221pp £2.40*

ISBN 0 85364 215 X

There are a number of books that deal with the standard heresies, such as

Jehovah's Witnesses, but in the last few years there has been an outbreak of an entirely new type, about which it has been difficult to obtain information. These new cults are more violent, in that they change personalities by the breakdown methods that have been used on the political scene. The difference here is that the converts go in willingly in search of some satisfying experience.

The position in America and Canada is so serious that parents have combined to trace their children, bring them out (sometimes by kidnapping), and use experienced help to deprogramme them. The essence of the deprogramming is to make them think for themselves instead of being blindly led by the authority figures and groups within the cult.

This book selects the Hare Krishna Movement, the Children of God, the Love Family (Love being the leader's adopted name) or the Church of Armageddon, the Unification Church, The Way, and the Divine Light Mission. Half the book relates the experiences of individuals who were completely caught up in one of the cults before being rescued. The telling of their stories shows how the movements operate. Their disciplines are certainly rigorous, and poor food, lack of sleep, and prolonged meditation help the breaking-down process. Often leaders do not make similar sacrifices, but enjoy the good things of life, including a good share of the members' sales in the streets of candles or candies.

Christ gives place to the leaders. Thus the Unification Church sees him as a failure whose mission must be retrieved by Moon. The leader of The Way has a book, *Jesus Christ is not God*. In Divine Light, Maharaj Ji emanates knowledge for living.

The second part of the book is a careful analysis of this cultic commitment and its processes. Since we are dealing with new phenomena, even psychiatrists would probably find this a most useful book for reference. For the average intelligent Christian, including Christian students, who sooner or later will meet these new cults, the book is invaluable.

J. STAFFORD WRIGHT

## ISSUES OF LIFE AND DEATH      NORMAN ANDERSON

Norfolk Press 1976 130pp £3.95 hardcover

ISBN 0 85211 019 7

Hodder and Stoughton 1976 130pp £2.25 paperback

ISBN 0 340 20967 4

Here we have another collection of papers on the medico-ethical problems of the day. Unusually, but perhaps not surprisingly from the recent Director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, there is also a chapter on capital punishment, violence and revolution.

Now the reviewer must admit to bias. He looks upon pronouncements of non-medical writers on such matters with considerable suspicion. Often the pontifications of theologian or philosopher seem inane on a day such as today, when there have been seven requests for abortion to decide upon. Do Sir Norman's attitudes make sense for those who have to *do* ethics, who have to be icons of Christ to their patients? And the answer is 'Yes'.

Uniquely this work aims at a single specific readership: committed evangelical Christians. Anderson therefore does not have to pussyfoot around as most of us do. This tremendous advantage he uses to the utmost.

In his foundation chapter on the sanctity of life he can boldly say 'There is a very real sense in which it is only in Christ that we can see humanity as God intended it to be, and only in him that we can become truly human.' He is not afraid to tackle such thorny subjects as whether man is a trichotomy or a dichotomy; or the present whereabouts of the Christian dead. At the end of the book he can face up to the practicalities of how the Christian doctor or scientist is guided, emphasizing the importance of their personal spiritual life, and of their minds being remade every day. Solid, sensible advice.

The major part of the volume is made up of a workmanlike discussion of genetic engineering, artificial insemination, birth control, sterilization, abortion, prolongation of life, transplant surgery, euthanasia and suicide. Possible Christian responses are indicated while extremes and dogmatism are avoided. This is well done.

Not everyone will agree his stance. Perhaps there is more to be said for AID than he grants. Having discounted the mistaken views of Augustine and Aquinas on sex, and recounted with approval the change in Christian views towards sex within marriage and contraception, he cannot bring himself to admit that sex is fun. Perhaps it is his editor's fault that there is a detailed commentary on Genesis 9:1-7, without the script. Do they really believe that every reader will break off to reach for a Bible, even those reading on the bus? Or are they afraid Moses will sue? The admirable proof reader has nodded on p 62 where the quotation marks are surely misplaced.

These petty criticisms do not affect one's admiration for Sir Norman's whole approach. The negative embattled-fortress attitude of much Christian writing on these subjects is absent. 'Every advance in scientific and medical knowledge is God-given, not wrestled from an unwilling deity ...' The Christian is right to be engaged in research, otherwise he may be 'guilty of disobeying the divine command to "subdue the earth", of laying his "pound" in a napkin instead of using it to God's glory.'

'Glory': this is the word which makes this the book for me. Anderson at the beginning looks up at the galaxies, and ends by quoting C. S. Lewis: 'It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses.'

For those wishing an overview of current problems, these lectures (in no way outdated by the two years or more since they were delivered) provide an adequate and sound guide. Strongly recommended.

REX GARDNER

## **PRISONS AND PRISONERS IN ENGLAND TODAY** **GENERAL SYNOD BOARD FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

*Church Information Office 1978 72pp £1.50*

ISBN 0 7151 6552 6

'Out of sight—out of mind' is a phrase that could be applied to our prisons and prisoners. This report, although only 72 pages, helps to bring the whole prison set-up more into sight—and therefore more into our minds. The Working Group has taken a well-rounded look at the prison structures and gives plenty of general information which helps to set the scene. In the past, society (and the church) said that men and women must be

punished when they break the law. It was at this point that society (and the church!) seemed to forget that it was also responsible for making sure what went on behind the prison walls. The report answers the basic questions such as 'How many prisoners?', 'Where are they?' and 'Why are they sent there?' Sadly the statistics will soon date and in five years' time these sets of figures will almost be of historic interest only. However, the basic questions that the Working Group asks will still be just as relevant then as today. My first introduction to prison was as an assistant chaplain to Leicester Prison. Although previously I had worked with young people who were heading for Borstal—or who had just been released—Leicester Prison was my first introduction to the focal point of 'crime and punishment'. On being introduced to the prison governor he made a statement which I found to be true then—and I have been reminded of it again as I read the Working Group's report. 'Inside these prison walls you will find a distillation of the world's theological problems', he warned (or was it a challenge?).

The value of the report is that it faces the theological issues involved in punishment and imprisonment. Although it is obvious that such a slender volume could never hope to deal fully with the theological questions, yet at least it sets the ground. It rightly faces us with the theological questions about man (and his free will) and God (and his justice and love) and puts them in the setting of today's community life. It also looks at the alternatives to a custodial sentence. It points out that one of the prime movers against any reform is the attitude of the community and its willingness and capacity to play a part in respect of the non-custodial treatment of offenders. It also points out that inadequate resources are one element in the debate. It could have hit harder in this matter, which in the end should ask the question 'How much are we prepared to pay, as a nation, to reform our old prisons?' It reminds us that the production of mail bags is still in the hands of the prison establishment (I still regard this as one of the most soul-destroying scenes I know: rows of grey-uniformed prisoners sewing brown sackcloth with black waxed threads—in a slow steady rhythm). This report also could have spoken more of the care that the church should have toward the prison staff (always under tension and pressure).

It is a report that should be read not only by those in the structures of the prison service but also by those who have to show pastoral care for ex-prisoners, prison staff and probation officers. The Working Group has done a good job and the report deserves to be studied by those whose ultimate responsibility it is for the present and future systems of punishment—and that is every concerned citizen.

DON IRVING

## HUMAN SEXUALITY: New Directions in Catholic Thought

edited A. KOSNIK and others

Search Press 1977 322pp £4.95

ISBN 0 85532 368 8

'The land of the free' is never more so than in the realm of sexual behaviour. This study, commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America,



gives us insight into the American scene, its sexual attitudes, and the current debate within the Catholic Church. These insights have only an applied relevance if we are able to make the cultural and the Catholic-Protestant jump. Few will find the effort required sufficiently rewarding in the lessons gained.

The method is to examine three sources of attitudes to human sexuality—the Bible, Christian tradition and the empirical sciences—and to pass critical comment. The conclusion for each section is minimal. It seems as if these areas are to be taken seriously, but none of them actually makes much difference. The interesting question of an hierarchy between the three is ignored.

Towards a Theology of Human Sexuality (Section IV) is the central thesis. 'Sexuality serves the development of human persons by calling them to constant creativity, that is, to full openness to being, to the realization of every potential within the personality, to a continual discovery and expression of authentic selfhood.' The remaining two thirds of the book is the application and comparison of this principle to pastoral situations. Marriage, parenthood, chastity, contraception, the single life, and homosexuality are all put to the analysis and test of 'whether any given sexual behaviour is truly creative and integrative of the human person or destructive and divisive' (p 175). Such a mass of supposed case-study is too general and repetitive to inform the reader.

More intriguing than the book itself is the exercise. The writers are engaged in a tactful attempt to differentiate Catholic sexual morality from the traditional hard-line stance. This shift is claimed to be the fruit of Vatican II, but reads more like making everything fit in with the preconceived standard of human integration and creativity. The crude argument is that Catholic practice is denying Catholic dogma; therefore the dogma must be changed. The subtlety lies in the claim that the dogma is really changing (Vatican II) but does not *seem* to be so (Papal Encyclicals).

The weakness throughout is the begging of the question by ignoring the real problem for the Catholic. How is the authority of Scripture-tradition related to the individual conscience?

E. DAVID COOK

## DICTIONARY OF MEDICAL ETHICS

edited A. S. DUNCAN, G. R. DUNSTAN & R. B. WELBOURN

Darton, Longman and Todd 1977 335pp £4.90

ISBN 0 232 51302 3

The cover proclaims a dictionary from the pen of 116 eminent contributors. The aim is to provide 'rapid access to a brief but authoritative statement' on medical subjects which have moral or ethical implications. Initially with doctors in mind, the editors are all too aware of the danger of isolationism facing the medical profession and so hope that this dictionary will be of use to the whole community—especially clergy, teachers, social workers and the like. The emphasis is on description and this is carried to extreme, giving a solid, rather boring, effect to the articles. There will be little help here for those seeking to find an argument for a particular moral attitude towards a subject. Objectivity rules OK. Each article is followed by a

succinct reading list, which is genuinely helpful to the serious scholar and to those concerned to see the flesh and blood of moral debate.

The medical side rightly is given most weight, and this sometimes gives the impression that the ethical is a poor second. While no one would suggest that the doctors involved have given little thought to the moral dilemmas involved, there is a distinct need for a more thoroughgoing account of the different ethical frameworks and how such differences radically affect attitudes towards the particularly sensitive issues of abortion, euthanasia etc. The ethical base seems narrow, without any explication of the reason for such a method.

I doubt that the average reader will be very much the wiser after reading most articles than he was before. It tends to fall between the stools of detailed medical description and that of careful moral expression which together make up the content of medical ethics. A book to consult from the library rather than to invest in, but not one to be ignored for a starting-point in many thorny medical issues.

E. DAVID COOK

## THE GRIEF PROCESS      YORICK SPIEGEL

SCM Press 1978    384pp    £6.50

ISBN 0 334 00591 4

Yorick Spiegel's painstaking research has made a major contribution to the current study on aspects of grief (in the exclusive sense of a reaction to the death of a close loved one). *The Grief Process* is a scholarly work, heavy going in places, which sets the study of grief in a multi-disciplinary context. Dr Spiegel is both an ordained minister and a professor of practical theology in the University of Frankfurt. He came to this study through his own experience of grief.

The book is divided into three parts. The first deals with 'The Individual Aspect' and includes a summary of some psychoanalytic theories of bereavement and loss. Dr Spiegel evolves and describes his own analysis of the phases of development in the normal grief process—shock, control, regression, adaptation—and works on them throughout. He also discusses special problems resulting from anticipatory, inhibited or pathological grief.

In part two, 'The Social Aspect', extensive treatment is given to ethnological and sociological forms of human behaviour in grief ritual and to the psychic interaction of individuals when facing death. There is a most useful section on 'care giving agents' (not only for the various professionals but for everyone) which should prove invaluable to people who have to counsel the bereaved (or are themselves bereaved).

Part three, 'The Mechanisms of Coping', is another useful section in which Spiegel examines eleven of the reactions and defences which people adopt as they work their way through grief. Each mechanism is discussed from a psychoanalytic and then a sociological point of view, liberally illustrated with case material. Then theological material is presented. Finally there is an epilogue on the death of Jesus and the way his disciples handled grief.

Throughout Dr Spiegel attempts to establish a pastoral theology of

grief. 'A theology that continues to develop statements systematically and subsequently seeks to apply them to the existential situation is of no help. It must be a theology "from the ground up".' I am not qualified to comment on the statements of a professional theologian but I welcomed his attempts to merge the horizons between the objective and the subjective.

This book was translated from German into American and SCM Press have presented it to the British public in that form. It contains a good deal of unwieldy syntax and psychoanalytic terminology. Its usefulness is diminished by the lack of an index but there is a good bibliography. Nevertheless, this book contains much accurate, instructive and helpful material for pastoral use and for study, and opens up new dimensions of understanding.

MYRA CHAVE-JONES

### THE POWER TO HEAL FRANCIS MacNUTT

Redemptorist Publishers 1977 254pp £2.50

Those who appreciated Francis MacNutt's first book *Healing* will be yet more appreciative of the second. Written three years on from the first, it is a deeply reassuring discussion of many of the complex questions inevitably in the minds of those engaged in healing ministry.

MacNutt is critical of attempts to sharpen issues concerning healing into black and white alternatives. Rather he is convinced that healing is a question of degree as to the power and gifts of those exercising the ministry, the time devoted to the ministry, the relative difficulty of healing different sicknesses, the extent of healing, and the direct or miraculous hand of God. Since he writes as one for whom 75 per cent of the people for which he prays 'are either healed completely or experience a noticeable improvement', his words are encouraging to those of us who know much less success.

'I am not God, but only share in his life', he remarks. 'In consequence, many of the people I pray with are not completely healed but are *improved*.' Healing ministry, he believes, is for all, and its effectiveness increases with our experience of the life of God and according to such particular gifts as he bestows for ministry.

Another more personal section tackles the tension between the compassionate outgoing to all in need, and saying 'No' for the sake of rest and relaxation. Then there is the shame of a former President of the Catholic Homiletic Society being known as theologically lightweight and something of a 'faith healer'. But MacNutt is convinced that some loss of academic respectability will be necessary if healing is to get back into the marketplace where it belongs.

Those who felt that the first book was theologically lightweight will not find much to encourage them. Plenty of good theology could be developed to support MacNutt's arguments but this is still largely absent. However, he makes a few assertions very strongly. Sickness is to be viewed as the work of an enemy who has brought about a fallen world, in which original sin is a major feature. God is good and because of his compassion he desires to heal and does so. The popular view that 'sickness is God's will—a cross which will bring blessing if we bear it' must be replaced by more positive assertions as to God's will to heal in general: a truth which allows believers

to know that God loves them. But MacNutt is wise enough to know the drawbacks of his perspective and he presents a clear understanding of the incompleteness of redemption in the fallen world until the last day.

Those who found objections to his 'Eleven Reasons Why People are not Healed' (in *Healing*) may prefer the section in this book acknowledging that sickness and suffering are a mystery. But we still await the more complete theology which can undoubtedly be developed to match the mature practical wisdom.

GRAHAM DOW

## THE GIFT OF INNER HEALING RUTH CARTER STAPLETON

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Amongst the spate of books on healing this one immediately attracts interest since its author is sister to President Carter. Ruth Stapleton obviously shares something of her brother's personal charisma, for the Lord has given her a remarkable ministry of inner healing; it stems, as with so many, from her own personal experience of healing.

For the initiated, her style could be described as something of a cross between Victorious Ministry and Clinical Theology styles, perhaps better than both. In plain language, her ministry encourages a person to imagine the entry of the Lord into hurtful circumstances of the past and to picture him in word and action there such that hurtful memories are transformed by his presence. In spite of some loose terminology such as 'heal the traumatic episodes', she is quite clear that what is happening is 'one means of instilling positive images deep in the mind'. 'I learned that those images greatly determine how we respond to each moment in life', she writes. In other words, more positive attitudes are being promoted towards events of the past and the people concerned with them. It is also refreshing to find out how aware she is that this is not an instant therapy but one which belongs in the context of growth. 'Growth requires time and repeated reinforcement of the new positive pattern forms habit', and 'inner healing is a ladder, not a single rung; a process, rarely a one-time event.'

By means of vivid examples, Ruth describes the range of her ministry—from a woman whose mother died when she was four years old, to a homosexual. In the former example, the suggestion of Jesus' mother, Mary, as a substitute mother in the imagination of the person is likely to make our Protestant hairs stand on end! Nevertheless, I found this to be an authentic and moving book bearing witness to a method which I have since used and found to be very effective. By contrast with the Victorious Ministry method, the reconstruction of the imagined scene is done by the 'client' and not by the minister, and hence is more likely to be authentic.

There is nothing academic about this book. A section answering the charge that this ministry is unscriptural takes refuge in Peter's three affirmations in John 21, to reconstruct the denials, and in a curious application of Peter's dream in Acts 10. She wisely concludes by saying that 'a practice or belief can be "scriptural" if it's in harmony with the Spirit and with the teachings of Jesus.' She believes that her ministry is, and I agree with her.

GRAHAM DOW